

In a Sea of Heteroglossia

Pluri-Lingualism,
Pluri-Culturalism, and
Pluri-Identification in
the Caribbean

Edited by
Nicholas Faraclas
Ronald Severing
Christa Weijer
Elisabeth Echteld
Marsha Hinds-Layne
Elena Lawton de Torruella



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Proceedings of the ECICC-conference
Dominica 2009

Volume 2

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This annual conference provides an excellent opportunity to Caribbean researchers to share their knowledge and the results of their work. Despite the high degree of diversity and pluralism that typifies the Caribbean, there are striking similarities as well in the ways that the languages, cultures and literatures of the region have been transformed in the process of dynamic contact and dialogic/dialectic interchange. This book forms part of a two volume set, with one volume focusing on the ABC-islands (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) and this volume focusing on the other parts of the Caribbean. These volumes are designed to promote a common understanding of the challenges faced by specialists in the languages, literatures, and cultures of the Caribbean as well as of the innovative ways that they have found to face those challenges.

The conference was co-organized and co-sponsored by the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras (UPR), the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill (UWI), and the University of the West Indies Open Campus, Dominica together with the local Organizing Committee, which was expertly chaired by Dr. Francis Severin, with the able assistance of Mr. Felix A. Wilson. This publication received generous support from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba.

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The Editors

I

PLURI-LINGUALISM: MULTIPLE LITERACIES

PLURI-LINGUALISM, LANGUAGE CONTACT AND LINGUISTICS

SEMANTIC DIVERSITY IN THE CARIBBEAN: INTERROGATING THE “CREOLE” CONCEPT

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This paper is essentially about naming. More specifically, the paper is about the naming of the “New World” and the way in which the prerogatives of naming fashioned the evolution of this hemisphere from the 16th century to the present. Some may think that this is trivial but our world view, our social relations, and the way we see ourselves perceived by others are all reflected in or influenced by the semantics of our existence - and these semantic structures are couched in names.

According to Barker and Galasinski (2001: 6), “culture is a zone of contestation in which competing meanings and descriptions of the world have fought for ascendancy and the pragmatic claim for truth within patterns of power.” Cultural politics involve struggles over “naming” and the power to re-describe ourselves. The **creole** concept appears in many disciplines with varying degrees of centrality, but its meaning is very difficult to pin down. Even within the same discipline, **creole** has defied definition in spite of sustained efforts to construct one. Thus, in Linguistics, both rationalist-based theories and empirically-based theories of creolization have failed to account for all “creole” phenomena and to exclude non-creole phenomena. Are the popular vernaculars of Barbados (Bajan) or of the British and American Virgin Islands **Creoles**? This question is vacuous since we really do not know what a **Creole** is. Some scholars have been carried away by the attractiveness of the term and apply the **creole** tag to all Caribbean language phenomena that do not conform to the standard norm. Thus the popular vernacular of Puerto Rico has been called a “Spanish Creole” and that of Trinidad an “English Creole”.

In any case, Linguistics is the discipline that has come closest to offering a principled definition/hypothesis of **creole** and **creolization** although its central notion of a derivational link with “pidgin” has been losing adherents. By contrast, in another discipline - Culture Studies - the use of the concept is growing but there is no coherent definition.

This paper is a study of the term or concept “*criollo*” in popular and in academic discourse. In this first section we examine the entries under the headword “*criollo*” in historical and in current dictionaries of Spanish. This is to give us an historical as well as a regional perspective, while recognizing that dictionaries can be defective and/or out-of-date shortly after their publication. There has been some contestation surrounding the etymology of the word **creole**. We believe that a diminutive derivation from “*criado*”, i.e. from “*criadillo*” or “*criadoulo*”, is still the most plausible, based on semantic and phonetic closeness to “*criollo*”; quite instructively, the *Diccionario diferencial del español de Canarias* (Corrales Zumbado, 1996) gives CRIADO “muchacho de ayuda al pastor”, “mozo de labranza”. According to Corominas & Pascual (1984), at the earliest time, the word was used to refer to slaves born in their master’s house and who were called “*criados*”.

According to Frézier (1902, [1717]), the first attestation/documentation of the term is in 1590 (in Acosta, 1590). There has however been considerable uncertainty surrounding both the birth, date and the usage of the term. In the Prologue to the 1902 edition of Frézier 1717, the author of the Prologue, Gregorio Weinberg, states:

“El *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* de Sebastián de Covarrubias (1611) todavía no registra el vocable “*criollo*”, lo que aparentemente demostraría que aun no estaba incorporado al vocabulairio corriente en la península. Para J. Corominas (*Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana*, Ed. Francke, Berna, 1954, vol. 1, p. 943), “*criollo*” es una adaptación del portugués *crioulo*...“el esclavo que nace en casa de su señor, el negro nacido en las colonias a distinción del procedente de la trata, blanco nacido en las colonias...” Para E. Littré en su monumental *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Lib. Hachette, Paris, 1876), la etimología de *créole* que es la palabra empleada por Frézier – es dudosa; algunos la derivan, dice, del español “criar”...otros pretenden que es voz caribe; y agrega Littré: “La Academia Española dice que es una palabra inventada por los conquistadores de la Indias Occidentales y por ellos transmitida. Según O. Bloch y W. von Warburg, (*Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1950), la primera referencia a *creole* sera de 1693 y de 1680 con la grafía *criole*.”

Since then, the word *criollo* has gone through a series of changes that first resulted in a general widening, then a narrowing in meaning in specific countries. Currently the word *criollo* has six different entries according to the latest online edition of the dictionary of the *Real Academia Española*, and these allow us to see the diachronic semantic progression of *criollo*. We have summarized and translated them:

1. person born in the Americas of European parents
2. person born in the Americas of African parents

3. person born in a Latin American country who possesses qualities deemed to be characteristic of that country
4. languages which emerged in some precise areas with elements coming from more than one language

Regional dictionaries make additions: first, animals are included. Secondly some pejorative meanings emerge. Since Europeans had the prerogative of naming, they used “*criollo*” first to separate themselves from those born and growing up in the New World whom they considered inferior. Next, Africans born in the New World were separated from those coming directly from Africa – a distinction expressed as “*criollo*” vs. “*bozal*”, in the well-known colonial policy of “divide and rule”. New World Africans were led to believe they were superior to their African kin because they displayed cultural behavior which in some ways appeared to be closer to European forms, and they were not called “African”, but rather “*criollo*” or “*creole*” as the case may be. Particularly they were considered to be less prone to revolt, although this may have been more a perception or an expectation on the part of Europeans than a fact. We propose that this separation of “*creole*” and “African” has persisted up to today and serves to further marginalize people who preserve a more direct link with Africa.

Words such as “*criollo*”, “*negro*”, “*indio*”, “*mulato*”, “*mestizo*”, all of which were names coined by Europeans to advance their interests in the New World, were imbued with some pejoration and, generally speaking, “local” became synonymous with “inferior”. The speech, phenotype and cultural institutions and behavior of *criollos* in general were judged less worthy than their peninsular reflexes. As is also usual, many members of these groups accepted the pejoration. Evidence of pejoration can also be found in some dictionary entries. For instance, in one dictionary the meaning “cowardly”: *gallo criollo* is/was a cock which refused to fight. Malaret (1925) cites a derivative noun “*criollera*” as a synonym of “*cobardía*” (“cowardice”). He also states that in Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Puerto Rico and Uruguay, “*a la criolla*” meant “without elegance or etiquette”. That pejorative connotation persists in Puerto Rico where, recently, a politician referred to a solution proposed to deal with the local economic problems as “*una solución criolla*”, and in another case the stimulus package proposed for Puerto Rico by Puerto Ricans was also referred to as “*criollo*”, and the implication was that it would not work.

Among *criollos* of European origin, an ambivalence emerged in which “*criollo*”, in addition to its pejorative connotations, evolved into associative meanings. As the colonies evolved and their cultural behavior began to diverge more and more from the culture of the ruling classes whose members were predominantly born in Spain,

nationalist sentiments co-opted to some extent the concept of “*criollo*” to reflect the growing ideology of patriotism to the new environment and hostility to Spain. This culminated in the “*criollos*” liberating themselves from their European-born kin in the battles for Latin American independence. A Chilean dictionary (Medina, 1928) records a meaning “patriotic”. As we shall see, it never reached this final stage in Puerto Rico, “*Boricua*” having appropriated that semantic space.

In the *Diccionario de argentinismos de ayer y de hoy* (Abad de Santillán, 1976), the growing ameliorative use of “*criollo*” in the fight-back by the colony is recorded. A “*criollo*”, after displaying any form of this New World cultural behavior and receiving the reprobation and indignation of his European-born kin, would say “*Así somos, criollos*” (“we are *criollos*; that’s how we are”) in a “boastful and playful way”. The word’s pejorative meanings were almost always juxtaposed with positive meanings which were often implanted by the Creoles themselves.

The unfriendliness between *criollos* and Spaniards is also recorded. *Criollos* in the colony fought back by using terms such as “*chapelón*” and “*contrario*” to refer to Spaniards. This Dictionary also records the hierarchical multiculturalism of the colony with the “*criollo*” being integrated with the Spaniard through common cultural inheritance. It states that in poetry, music and dance, the *criollo* is regarded as “the pure inheritor of the aesthetic values of the Spaniards (“*cepa Española*”), but “*lo criollo*” manifests its individuality and becomes a genuine and particular form of expression”. There is no mention here of “*Africano*” or “*indígena*” (the myth of their “disappearance” seems to date from very early on) and these groups seem already to be marginalized. We will see that this integrative picture of New World society with marginalization of Africans is still with us today as the cornerstone of current Caribbean sociological theory, which uses “creole” to express this integration (see for example Brathwaite, 1971).

One other interesting use of “*criollo*” is recorded by a Peruvian dictionary (Saubidet, 1952): “*hablar en criollo*” means “speak clearly, without duplicity and with frankness”. Besides being a rare use of *criollo* in Latin America in relation to language, this expression recalls a similar association in St. Lucia and other places between “creole” and “truth” or “frankness”, and between Standard English and duplicity.

This section of the paper examines the current usage and connotation of the word “*criollo*” in Puerto Rico. In a pilot study carried out in 2008, an instrument of twelve questions was used to bring out the contextual meaning of “*criollo*”. Two questions for each of the following semantic categories were created: music, food, people, places, language and animals. The participants were asked to complete a sentence using either *criollo*, *boricua*, or *puertorriqueño*. *Boricua* and *puertorriqueño* are

deemed synonymous in the dictionary of the Real Academia Española. Thus contextual options were given to help establish more carefully the semantic domain of each of the words. The research application *Question Pro* was used to create and deploy the survey as well as to gather the data and conduct the data analysis on-line. The survey was sent via e-mail to students from five sections of Freshman English from a local university. Furthermore an invitation to participate in the study was sent through the social networking application Facebook. Finally, a link to the questionnaire was also placed on the investigator’s homepage in an effort to expand the breadth and diversity of the sample.

Participants were selected only on the basis of the following criteria. Participants needed: 1) to be Puerto Rican; 2) to speak Spanish; and 3) not to know about the purpose of the investigation before taking the survey.

The final sample consisted of eighty seven participants. Fifty nine percent (n= 51) of the participants were women while the remaining forty one percent (n=35) were male. Approximately seventy two percent (n= 62) of the participants ranged from eighteen to twenty four years of age, and seventy percent (n= 60) were undergraduate college students (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1 Participants by age

Age	N	Percentage
18 - 24	62	71.26%
25 - 34	13	14.94%
35 - 44	7	8.05%
45 - 54	4	4.60%
55 - 64	0	0.00%
65 or older	1	1.15%
Total	87	

Table 2 Participants by education

Education	N	Percentage
High School	3	3.45%
Some college	60	68.97%
Bachelor’s	17	19.54%
Graduate studies	7	8.05%
Total	87	

The following tables list the responses gathered from the survey:

2.1 Food Statement A

El arroz con gandules es comida . . . (<i>Rice with pigeon peas is . . . food.</i>)		
criolla	50	60.24%
boricua	8	9.64%
puertorriqueña	25	30.12%
Total	83	

Eighty three people answered statement A. Sixty percent (n=50) of the respondents chose *criolla* as their preference to complete the sentence; thirty percent (n=25) chose *puertorriqueña*, and ten percent (n=8) chose *boricua*.

2.2 Food Statement B

Los pasteles es un ejemplo de comida . . . (<i>Pasteles are an example of . . . food.</i>)		
criolla	42	51.22%
boricua	12	14.63%
puertorriqueña	28	34.15%
Total	82	

Eighty two people answered statement B. Fifty one percent (n=42) of the respondents chose *criolla* as their preference to complete the sentence; thirty four percent (n=28) chose *puertorriqueña*, and fifteen percent (n=12) chose *boricua*.

2.3 Music Statement A

La salsa es música . . . (<i>Salsa is . . . music.</i>)		
criolla	12	14.63%
boricua	30	36.59%
puertorriqueña	40	48.78%
Total	82	

Eighty two people answered statement A. Forty nine percent (n=40) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueña* as their preference to complete the sentence; thirty seven percent (n=30) chose *boricua*, and fifteen percent (n=12) chose *criolla*.

2.4 Music Statement B

La plena es un ejemplo de música . . . (<i>Plena is an example of . . . music.</i>)		
criolla	12	14.63%
boricua	17	20.73%
puertorriqueña	53	64.63%

Total	82	
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Eighty two people answered statement B. Sixty four percent (n=53) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueña* as their preference to complete the sentence; twenty percent (n=17) chose *boricua*, and fifteen percent (n=12) chose *criolla*.

2.5 Places Statement A

El Morro es parte de nuestro patrimonio . . . (<i>The Morro Fort is part of our . . . heritage.</i>)		
criollo	1	1.22%
boricua	13	15.85%
puertorriqueño	68	82.93%

Total	82	
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Eighty two people answered statement A. Eighty three percent (n=68) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueño* as their preference to complete the sentence; sixteen percent (n=13) chose *boricua*, and only one percent (n=1) chose *criollo*.

2.6 Places Statement B

La bahía de la Parguera es un centro turístico . . . (<i>La Parguera Bay is a . . . tourist centre.</i>)		
criollo	0	0.00%
boricua	10	12.20%
puertorriqueño	72	87.80%

Total	82	
-------	----	--

Eighty two people answered statement B. Eighty eight percent (n=72) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueño* as their preference to complete the sentence; twelve percent (n=10) chose *boricua*, and zero percent (n= 0) chose *criollo*.

2.7 People Statement A

Eugenio María de Hostos es un prócer . . . (<i>Eugenio María de Hostos is a . . . national hero.</i>)		
criollo	1	1.20%
boricua	3	3.61%
puertorriqueño	79	95.18%
Total	83	

Eighty three people answered statement A. Ninety five percent (n=75) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueño* as their preference to complete the sentence; three percent (n=3) chose *boricua*, and only one percent (n=1) chose *criollo*.

2.8 People Statement B

Luis Muñoz Marín fue el primer gobernador . . . (<i>Luis Muñoz Marín was the first . . . governor.</i>)		
criollo	0	0.00%
boricua	3	3.61%
puertorriqueño	80	96.39%
Total	83	

Eighty three people answered statement B. Ninety six percent (n=80) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueño* as their preference to complete the sentence; three percent (n=3) chose *boricua*, and zero percent (n= 0) chose *criollo*.

2.9 Animals Statement A

Los gallos de pelea son animales . . . (<i>Fighting cocks are . . . animals.</i>)		
criollos	34	42.50%
boricuas	28	35.00%
puertorriqueños	18	22.50%
Total	80	

Eighty people answered statement A. Forty three percent (n=34) of the respondents chose *criollos* as their preference to complete the sentence; thirty five percent (n=28) chose *boricuas*, and twenty three percent (n= 18) chose *puertorriqueños*.

2.10 Animals Statement B

Los caballos de paso fino son animales . . . (<i>Paso fino horses are . . . animals.</i>)		
criollos	30	36.59%
boricuas	17	20.73%
puertorriqueños	35	42.68%
Total	82	

Eighty two people answered statement B. Forty three percent (n=35) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueños* as their preference to complete the sentence; thirty seven percent (n=30) chose *boricuas*, and twenty one percent (n= 17) chose *boricuas*.

2.11 Language Statement A

La R (erre) . . . no es vulgar. (<i>The . . . R is not vulgar.</i>)		
criolla	9	10.84%
boricua	45	54.22%
puertorriqueña	29	34.94%
Total	83	

Eighty three people answered statement A. Forty nine percent (n=40) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueña* as their preference to complete the sentence; thirty seven percent (n=30) chose *boricua*, and fifteen percent (n=12) chose *criolla*.

2.12 Language Statement B

El aspirar la S (ese) al final de una palabra es una característica del habla. . . (<i>Aspirating the S at the end of a word is a characteristic of . . . speech.</i>)		
criolla	8	9.64%
boricua	37	44.58%
puertorriqueña	38	45.78%
Total	83	

Eighty two people answered statement B. Forty six percent (n=38) of the respondents chose *puertorriqueña* as their preference to complete the sentence; forty five percent (n=37) chose *boricua*, and ten percent (n=8) chose *criolla*.

Table 3 Categorical breakdown of the percentage of respondents that chose **criollo**

Sentence	Percentage	Category
El arroz con gandules es comida ...	60.24%	Food
Los pasteles es un ejemplo de comida ...	51.22%	Food
Los gallos de pelea son animales ...	42.50%	Animals
Los caballos de paso fino son animales ...	36.59%	Animals
La salsa es música ...	14.63%	Music
La plena es un ejemplo de música ...	14.63%	Music
La R (erre). . . no es vulgar.	10.84%	Speech
El aspirar la S (ese) al final de una palabra es una característica del habla ...	9.64%	Speech
El Morro es parte de nuestro patrimonio ...	1.22%	Places
Eugenio María de Hostos es un prócer ...	1.20%	People
La bahía de la Parguera es un centro turístico ...	0.00%	Places
Luis Muñoz Marín fue el primer gobernador ...	0.00%	People

Preliminary data strongly suggest that the word *criollo* in Puerto Rican Spanish has narrowed its meaning and usage to refer only to food and to some animals considered indigenous to Puerto Rico. It seems that the semantic domain of the word continues to narrow as *puertorriqueño* and *boricua*, slowly but surely, appear to be taking over domains or contexts originally reserved for *criollo*. For example, “*criollo*” is rarely used nowadays to depict people. Only one participant, in one instance, chose *criollo* to describe a person, whereas seventy six of the eighty respondents in this semantic category chose *puertorriqueño*. Although there is evidence of some overlap, the three words have different semantic functions:

- *puertorriqueño* is the official word, representing nationality, but not nationalism
- *boricua* is the word representing ethnicity and pride
- *criollo* is the word representing “local” in a geographic sense, i.e. in opposition to “foreign”. But here, “*criollo*” is being challenged by other expressions, the most current of which is “*del país*” (“of the country”, “local”).

Other data from outside the survey shows that “*criollo*” may exhibit a tinge of pejoration in the context of a lingering connotation of “not worthy” applied to things local. The decline of “*criollo*” may have been influenced or hastened by the appearance of the term “*boricua*”, widely considered to have been first used in the Puerto Rican community of New York. There, it was ethnicity rather than nationality that identified Puerto Ricans, and “*boricua*” was brought in to fulfill that function. “*boricua*” is superseding “*criollo*” in Puerto Rico for many reasons:

1. “*criollo*” was/is felt to be unfit to express the new growing sense of nationalism and patriotism, sharpened by the American occupation.
2. There was no well-defined class of people of European ancestry who were the elite and who called themselves “*criollos*” (similar to the *criollos* who led the independence movements in other parts of Latin America).
3. “*puertorriqueño*” is the official term, a term of nationality and geographical provenience; as in many other countries, including those of the Caribbean, this name is too official to serve as a strong symbol and instrument of identity. Most significantly, “*boricua*” is used to express with pride the Spanish dialect of Puerto Rico. “*La ‘r’ boricua no es vulgar*”, screams a headline in a Puerto Rican newspaper. There is no idea of using “*criollo*” to express the distinctive features of the dialect (as there was in earlier centuries; see Roberts, 2009). “Trini” serves the same function in Trinidad, “Bajan” in Barbados, “Vincie” in St. Vincent.

Trinidad displays in its relatively small space the highest semantic diversity of the term “creole”. Its Trinidadian meanings correspond to the historical semantic trajectory of the word, as follows:

1. A group recognized as New World descendants of French colonists who towards the end of the 18th century had been invited by Spain to come to Trinidad to colonize the island. Their ethnicity was expressed by their having exclusive soccer and cricket teams competing in Trinidad’s premier league and their own exclusive social club, as well as by in-group marriage and maintaining French-origin personal names (e.g. Maingot, Duprey, Molineau, de Boissiere). They can still be recognized by these names and ageing Trinidadians will still say, e.g. “he is a French Creole”. When contextualized in this way, “creole” has high social and economic value. This group is now disintegrating due to inter-marriage with other parts of the elite and to migration which has resulted in loss of the critical mass necessary to maintain strong separate ethnicity.
2. Pockets of descendants of Africans who came to Trinidad with their French owners towards the end of the 18th century. The French-based vernacular, called “creole” in the linguistics literature, but “*patois*” by its diminishing group of speakers, is moribund. *Patois* was yet another low value naming by Europeans, totally inappropriate, although there is some association with tradition and cultural legacy in foods and music. Old folk may be aware that the early *cariso* (“calypsos”) were rendered in “*patois*”.
3. “Creole” in Trinidad is similar, in part, to “*criollo*” in Puerto Rico in naming foods served at popular down scale “creole” restaurants. It is also associated with sensuality, particularly expressed in stereotypical Trini

behavior dominated by alleged love of “fetes”, as well as in its use in terms such as “creole food” and “creole bachannal” in reference to the Carnival celebration. In the 1940s and 50s “creole” horses, i.e. bred in Trinidad were distinguished from thoroughbreds, and “creole” or common fowl were distinguished from pure bred fowls imported into Trinidad. Although thoroughbred or pure bred animals were greatly valued for their performances in winning races or laying the most eggs, the “creole” horse and fowl carried a great sentimental and sensual value. These mixed reactions about things indigenous (Jetsam, a creole horse, was viewed as a “national hero” in Trinidad for consistently beating the imported thoroughbreds) and things imported evidence the ambivalence often present in the Caribbean community. Trinidadians will say that “common/creole fowl sweeter than pure bred”. To call someone “a real Creole” is flattering and is synonymous with “a born Trini”, i.e. displaying cultural behaviour that typifies (perhaps somewhat stereotypically) a person. “Trini” is surpassing “creole” as the symbol of ethnic and increasingly national identity, similar to the rise of “boricua” in Puerto Rico over “criollo”.

Trinidadian usage therefore very effectively exemplifies the semantic pluralism of the term **creole**. The existence of these multiple senses meant that the word has been used by different people in any one society for different purposes. It was sometimes a liberating concept, at other times it was associated with New World degeneracy and was shunned, as is the case of North America, and perhaps also Puerto Rico, and at still other times it was used to create a rift between Africans born in the New World and those born in the Old World. Trinidad up to the mid 20th century had a highly diversified ethnic structure with people of (East) Indian and African descent (or “coloureds”) currently dominating the Trinidad space. **Creole** is associated with “coloureds”, but only very marginally, or not at all, with Indians. **Creole** now carries the meaning “local” with some implication of “mixed”, together with a growing assertion of a dominant African historical input into the **creole** identity, with contributions from the other ethnic groups that are losing their separate ethnicity.

In Trinidad, as well as Barbados, an Africa-based identity and ideology are only now strengthening, largely due, in Trinidad, to the need felt by the *Afro*-segment of the Trinidad population for an historical identity to match the strong historically-based ethnicity of the *Indo*-group. Afro-Trinidadians, like their brothers in the United States, are struggling to find an appropriate term to represent their new ethnic awareness but many still resist *black* or *African* (a few still even use *coloured*). For them **creole** may be a more acceptable term. The group with the strongest ethnicity, the *Indo*-group, does not use the term **creole** to refer to itself (nor is the term used by others to classify

Indians), although this Indo group, like the Afro group and like those of other origins, is comprised fully of Trinidad-born members and has undergone cultural change through adaptation to the local milieu.

In summary, the term **creole** belongs to a long list of expressions in human language, in this case the languages of the colonial powers who controlled the destiny of the Caribbean in the post-Columbian era, which express the appropriation by the powerful of the prerogative of naming and thereby of setting the semantic norms of the experience of the powerless. The major instrument of this process is the imposition of the language of the powerful, with all its historically built-in semantic structures favoring its culture (values, world-view, etc.). In the same way that the color terms used to represent the major "races" were steeped in pejorative connotations in the case of "black", "red" and "yellow", and ameliorative connotations in the case of "white", so too has the vocabulary representing the ecology and ethnicity/culture of the peoples of the world. Two outstanding examples are the connotations of "jungle" and "tribe". These words in English (and their counterparts in other European languages) now connote (and may even denote) wild, uncontrolled disorder. In Jamaica, as elsewhere, the expression "law of the jungle" refers to uncontrolled anarchy, with everybody, man and beast, free to roam about hurting one another. This is far from the real state of a jungle in its pristine form, where a very clear natural order exists in which, for example, killing takes place for the purpose of satisfying hunger and in defense of self and of territory. Unmotivated, senseless acts of conflict and slaughter between and among men and beasts are not at all typical of the jungle. Such acts are in fact more typical of "civilized" cities and countries. It should be noted that this ecological phenomenon called "jungle" (derogatory) is called "forest", "glen" (ameliorative and even romantic) when the phenomenon occurs elsewhere. The word 'tribe' and its other western European cognates come from Latin, *tribus* originally had a neutral referential application. It referred to divisions of the Roman population (for example, *tribus urbana*, the city group; *tribus rustica*, country folk). 'Tribe' itself now refers chiefly to non-European descended ethnic groups, considered as still being in a pre-civilized, "savage" state. Thus the Yoruba and the Igbo are "tribes", but the Northern Ireland Catholics and Protestants are "ethnic groups", as are the Serbs and Croats, or the Basques and Catalans. In Jamaica, in a particularly insensitive usage, ultra-partisan politics is referred to as "tribal politics", and the political parties so engaged are called "tribes".

However, these are not the only cases. European languages are replete with cases of positive denotations/connotations associated with words expressing aspects of European ecology and culture, and negative ones associated with words expressing other ecologies and cultures. For example, 'classical', 'modern', 'civilized', as against 'traditional', 'folk', 'savage', 'primitive'. 'Savage' is ultimately from Latin *silvaticus* (or its colloquial variant, *salvaticus*) meaning "of the forest". In English, its etymological denotative meaning is now

subordinate to its connotative expansion -"wild", "ruthless", "cruel". Its nearer antecedent is French, *sauvage*, which, in one of its meanings – “uncultivated”, retains part of the Latin denotation. In French, *un arbre sauvage* is a "tree growing in the wild", one which has not been planted by humans. This meaning has been completely lost in English. Even "clothed" and "naked" no longer have merely simple denotative meanings but contain connotations of decency and morality, and indecency and immorality, respectively. This particularly hurts the evaluation of some groups living in equatorial climates where it is more natural and sensible for the body not to be covered (either by hair or by clothes). These same environmental factors may also responsible for higher levels of melanin that give skin a dark appearance as well as for wider and flatter nostrils. In addition to a racial hierarchy, we now have in today's world what may be referred to as a hierarchy of cultures. There is also the insidious association of ‘up’, ‘high’, ‘above’ with ‘North’ and the placing of Europe and “North” ‘at the top of map’, whereas ‘South’ is at the bottom of the map and connotes ‘under-development’.

Creole is historically a part of this process of control through language. The Caribbean is the only space for which Western science thinks there is need for a special term to express an age-old phenomenon of linguistic and cultural change arising out of language and culture contact. Science did not consider the Angles (or Anglo-Saxons) to need a special term to express – the huge changes in their language and culture under the influence of Norman French (and a host of other peoples). Nor does it consider that the Quechua people of Peru and the conquering Spaniards need a special term to express the processes of acculturation, deculturation, inter-culturation, mixture, syncretism, split and conflictual identities, that their society has undergone. Nor have the indigenous “black” people of the south of the Indian sub-continent and the conquering Caucasians of the north been in need of a special term to express their cultural history - and we could go on to cite virtually every human society and culture at some point of its history. As we said above, the term and concept **creole** is now beginning to be applied to many human societies and cultures beyond the Caribbean. This is scientifically very valid. Any entity which satisfies the theory of ‘creolization’ should be included under the **creole** rubric. For this reason, some daring scholars have proposed that English language and culture, as well as the South African Boer language (Afrikaans) and culture, is **creole**. Needless to say, both the British and the South African Boers have rejected this down-grading of their language and culture.

Creole was coined by popular discourse and later by scientific discourse because, in the colonization of what was considered the ‘New World’, it was in the interests of the powerful to make and impose a distinction between persons born in the metropolis and others born in the colonies. These latter had already begun to show cultural differences which were negatively valued and later began to show a diminished loyalty to the land of their forefathers and to act in their local interests rather than in

the interests of the homeland. Later, the term was conveniently used to make and impose another distinction important to the powerful, the distinction between slaves born in Africa and those born in the colonies. This creation of different rival groups within the ranks of the powerless is a well-known device of control utilized by colonial powers. It is the origin of the negative evaluation of things African and the continuing desire by the descendants of Africans to distance themselves in every respect from things African, be it phenotype or culture. 'Black' and 'African' became, and still are, expressions that connote this de-valuation; while 'white', 'creole', and 'brown' came to connote higher value. To say that a person spoke **creole** or '*patois*' was a notch above speaking an African language, even though **creole** and '*patois*' were held in contempt by the powerful who then succeeded in passing on this contempt to the speakers of these languages. This is the tragedy of what can be called the colonial syndrome. This same syndrome is reported for South Africa where, according to Makoni (2003: 141), "the specifying and naming of African speech forms by missionaries in such a way as to suggest differences between them which then were presented also as ethnic boundaries were linguistic inventions...structured in such a way as to encourage Africans to internalize European epistemology about themselves".

Similarly, in the Caribbean, the speech of slaves (as well as their culture and general behavior) was viewed as a sharp dichotomy between African languages and 'creole' or '*patois*', and between these latter and the European colonial language. It is probable however that, rather than a discrete language variety, the speech of slaves resembled a chain that "offered a choice of varieties and registers in the speakers' immediate environment" (Fardon & Furniss 1994: 4). For example, the Coromanti language of Jamaican Maroons seems to be closer to the rural form of Jamaican **Creole** than this Creole is to English. This allows us to adjust the structure of the Jamaican language and culture continuum by placing Coromanti language and religion, and, to be sure, Coromanti music, at one pole. As far back as 1971 (Alleyne, 1971), it was proposed that the so-called "creole" continuum is not a post-emancipation and contemporary phenomenon but goes back to the very inception of slave societies in the Americas.

As has already been suggested, the **creole** phenomenon, whether in language, phenotype, biology or social psychology, served as a refuge for those who wished or who were pushed to distance themselves from things African. This continues up to today and is embraced everywhere in the Caribbean as a positive focus of identity. The term and the concept **creole** are gaining further currency, spreading to areas such as literary criticism, sociology and political science discourses on identity. It is particularly attractive to, and widely used by current post-modernist philosophical and literary movements. Several areas of post-modern interest seem to coincide with

features of the **creole** concept. For example, **creole** is linked to the central post-modern discourse on hybridity. It has to be admitted that it is not clear whether the proposal is that hybridity is an empirical structural feature of contemporary society or whether it is an ideal waiting to be achieved. Hall (1994: 236), a leading theoretician of post-modernism, attempts to link **creole** with ‘hybrid’: “across a whole range of cultural forms there is a 'syncretic' dynamic which critically appropriates elements from the master-codes of the dominant culture and 'creolises' them”. You will note here that he puts syncretism and creolization together, whereas it may be more appropriate to consider syncretism as the recognition of an African element and creolization as the dampening of it (cf. Goudie, 2006). When contextualized in this way, **creole** has high value. In any case, hybridity seems to be a universal in the history of human society. At different periods of human history hybridization (or ‘creolization’ if you wish) has become purity, another essence. Somewhere in the future the *dougl*a (mixed Indian and African) of Trinidad may come to be seen as a pure “race”, and brown as phenotype may come to replace black and white as the purest essence of humanity.

Creolization and creole languages are considered to oppose the *meta or master narratives* of linguistic science. They do not have a single parent; in fact their ancestry is shrouded in uncertainty and they are much more “hybrids” than “pure”. In many respects creole languages defy the authoritative definitions in linguistic science. Needless to say, instead of reformulating these definitions, linguistics prefers to treat these Caribbean vernaculars as exceptional. (for an example of the reformulation of the genealogical family tree of languages see Alleyne, 1972). An essential characteristic of **creole** language, music, food and culture in general is considered to be eclecticism and syncretism – that is the combination of forms from different sources. But this is a general feature of the Caribbean even where the term **creole** is not used to refer to the phenomenon. Caribbean religions such as Vaudoun, Shango and Revival are considered syncretic (but not exactly **creole**; cf. Fernández Olmos, 2003). Even the very recent Rastafari phenomenon is seen as combining Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Marcus Garvey philosophy and Jamaican traditional culture (but yet is not **creole**). **Creole** languages (at least some of them) are considered to have blurred boundaries, ambiguity and considerable simultaneity, all being basic tenets of post-modern literary and cultural theory. It should however be pointed out that blurred boundaries are not an idiosyncratic feature of “creole” languages (or cultures) but are quite general. In some views, “language’ or at least “speech”, is not a discrete, homogeneous, bounded and “boxed” unit but “a multi-layered and partially connected chain”. In fact, the very notion of languages as discrete units, or “boxes”, is a product of European positivism and structuralism.

The **creole** concept therefore is full of ambiguity and the attitudes to it are similarly ambiguous and ambivalent. The positive attitudes stem from an affective attachment to the language, music, cuisine, and phenotype as “ours”, in other words the **creole** hypothesis has positive value as an identity marker. The other main attractive features of **creole** - both to locals and foreigners - are its evocation of sensuality (music, dance, cuisine) and, to locals, its honesty (language). The use of the standard language is sometimes in some contexts associated with duplicity and insincerity while in contrast, the **creole** language is associated with honesty and straightforwardness (Alleyne, 1971).

There has been an increasing tendency favoring the principle of designating Caribbean vernaculars which have been referred to as **Creoles** in the past in terms of the adjective of nationality of their speakers: Jamaican, Haitian, Guyanese, rather than Jamaican Creole, Haitian Creole, Guyanese Creole, etc. This principle is best observed and implemented in cases where the language is standardized and has become an official language of a nation, as is the case of Haitian. This suggests that **creole** is a social construct which may be altered or may disappear when the social conditions change. The naming principle is also relevant in cases where a people takes consciousness of their worth and, as they emerge from a period of colonialism, begins the process of the re-valorization of their language and culture. Their language becomes a strong symbol of their national identity. To answer the question: Why “Jamaican” rather than **Creole**? We may consider a psychological and epistemological progression that colonized countries undergo:

1. The Western world establishes the semantic norms through naming and value assignments.
2. European modalities become the norm and all other manifestations are judged in relation to these norms.
3. Colonial peoples accept them and undervalue their own cultural productions.
4. Post-colonial reactions attempt to re-valorize these productions which then require renaming.

In this progression countries, cities, streets, individuals, etc. are re-named. African-Americans and indigenous peoples of the Americas are engaged in a long journey to find appropriate names for themselves. The indigenous peoples of the Americas are rejecting the term “*Indio/Indian*” to refer to themselves. Kwesi Johnson, the leading exponent of the genre called ‘dub’, now finds the term limiting. “I consider myself a poet, full stop”. He sees ‘dub’ as another example of denying non-Western cultural productions their rightful place in the universal order. This order makes Christianity a religion but Vaudoun a cult; Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants are ethnic groups, while the Ibo and the Yoruba are tribes; Western music, medicine, art and

other manifestations of Western culture are full representatives of the universal canon requiring no restrictive epithet, while non-Western forms are 'ethnic' (cf. "ethno-medicine", "ethno-music"). **Creole** and '*patois*' belong to the same category as '*indio*', '*negro*', '*mulatto*', and '*coolie*'. It has to be asserted that **creole** languages are merely languages, not exotic curiosities; they fit in quite simply and unremarkably into the wide range of language and culture variation of our world. Peoples of the Caribbean may be 'Creoles', but they do not speak 'a Creole', whatever that may be; they speak different languages.

There are several currents crisscrossing human society at the present time, in some cases mutually reinforcing, in other cases conflicting and paradoxical. For example, there is globalization, the free movement of capital accompanied by the free or forced movement of people. This on the one hand produces new configurations of heterogeneity or pluralism; but on the other hand it is leading to a leveling of cultural differences and a borderless seamless modernity. For some peoples it is producing multiple identities, or even no identity with anomie as its social pathological expression; for others it is enhancing ethnic identity as a defense against social and economic and cultural marginalization, perceived or real. In a world where there is an explosion of sensuality, the **creole** concept has gained some prestige through its association with sensuality. There is a strong tendency in the world towards a sensuality associated with black and brown (music, dance, sports) and Trinidad and the Caribbean are leading the way (salsa, soca, reggae, reggaeton). In dance, the Trini "wine" and Puerto Rican "perreo", imaging quite unabashedly the sexual act, have spread over a large part of the world (cf. music and dance videos emanating from places such as Japan and India). There are of course counter-currents: fundamentalism and essentialisms are trying to re-assert themselves and may even seem to triumph (for the moment) in places such as Iran, Indonesia, Bosnia, Somalia in the face of perceived or real threats from Western neo-imperialism. Phenotype fundamentalism is also diminishing ("white" skin, thin lips, straight hair are no longer prized; nor are "black" skins, full lips, curly hair and full bottoms seen as social liabilities). There is a movement towards the middle ground ("brown" skin, either natural or induced by sun tans, lively curly hair, some fullness of lips and bottom). All this is in favour of Caribbean phenotypes and these new shifts in cultural evaluation are captured and expressed by the term 'creole/criollo' (cf. Carnival is a "creole bacchanal", *comida criolla*).

Can the outcomes of these currents be subsumed under the rubric **creole** or 'creolization'? Perhaps! In the final analysis, words are basically arbitrary symbols of meaning and can mean anything which a social consensus ascribes to them. A Chinese proverb says: "The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right name". But

Shakespeare said: “A rose by any other name is just as sweet.” Note however that even if we can live with poly-semantics in popular discourse, we need a consensus in the scientific community as to the meaning of **creole**. We also need a consensus on the terminology to be used to refer to **creole** languages. Linguists have been struggling to capture the concept and to have a name that fittingly expresses the concept. In earliest times, **creole** was used as an adjective qualifying the noun which was the name of the language, as in, for example, “Creole English”. Later, when it was realized that it may have been inappropriate to suggest that it was the English language in a special (**creole**) version (cf. also “Cockney English”), the term “English Creole” was preferred. Then, to make this term more accurate and expressive of the new approaches to the phenomenon, the term “English-based Creole” was introduced. Finally we are now at the point where the use of “English-based” is itself felt to be misleading, suggesting a general and too wide a link with English. This awareness has given rise to the rather clumsy term “Creole lexically based on English” (also condensed into “English-lexicon Creole”). In this way, linguists are saying that the only relationship which they will vouch for between English and the **Creole** is the sharing of a lexicon.

Trinidad is perhaps the best Caribbean example of the direction that world culture may be taking. In Trinidad, ethnic groups are still vying either for supremacy or for survival, maintaining or creating identities, some stronger than others, many with no ethnic identity at all (e.g. the ‘dougl’a’ and the ‘half-Chinese’, ‘half-white’, etc. but quite remarkably no ‘half-black’). At the same time, a national identity is emerging, creating multiple identities (national in addition to the ethnic, racial, social identities). The group that is making the biggest claim as the foundation of national identity is the amorphous **creole** group increasingly dominated by the “Afro-group” and the one with the weakest ethnic identity. It will be interesting to see whether this group triumphs eventually, with other ethnic groups accepting what may become a new hegemony, or whether all groups are absorbed into a generalised Trinidadian culture with a Puerto-Rican type homogeneity.

‘Creolization’ and **creole** have entered the world of academics especially in the fields of linguistics, culture studies and sociology. It is one of those rare cases of a folk taxonomy being adopted by scientific discourse with theory building. Ordinarily that would be most welcome as an expression of an egalitarian respect for the folk. But it seems that the scientific use of the terms retains the semantic pluralism of the folk usage. In linguistics, which shows the highest degree of explicit theorization, we are still short of a generally accepted definition. The most widely embraced theory which places **Creoles** as having developed out of Pidgins or a single Pidgin (a highly simplified code) has been widely criticized and it is probable that its adherents have greatly diminished in number and in influence. Culture studies related to the

Caribbean is based on some questionable interpretations or at least inadequacy in capturing the complexity of the region. The origins of Caribbean peoples are blurred, they say, discontinuous; no myths or fables of origin (note there is no recognition of the ‘Nansi’ stories as filling this void), but absolute mixture, *oubli*, shame and hiding of origins (note the masks of carnival and the bleaching of facial skin). However, we should note that not all New World societies suffer from this. On the one hand New England and New York, although fighting a brutal independence war against the British, have rejected the term **creole** and still continue to claim old Europe, Greco-Roman culture, as their own; Quechas, Guarani, the Maroons, the so-called ‘Bush Negroes’ of Jamaica and Suriname and the Rastafari are engaged in the preservation of their proud myths. In post-modern thinking, **creole** steps into this void. The **creole** person has no clear cultural ancestry, indeed no human ancestry beyond the grand- or great grandparents. Glissant (1981: 15) says “creolized people do not need the idea of genesis because they do not need the myth of pure lineage”.

In culture studies, particularly in post-modernism, it is the ambivalence and ambiguity of **creole** that is quite attractive. Post-modernism takes from **creole** anything that reflects and expresses its tenets. **Creole** challenges the master narratives of linguistics: one ancestor. Post-modernism proclaims hybridity and it finds a lot of that in the discourse on **creole** structure and origins. It challenges notions of homogeneity and standardization of language (there are indeed enormous problems, both social and linguistic, in the standardization of the **creole** languages, but Haitian and Papiamentu seem to have overcome them).

In sociology, two interpretations of Caribbean society have competed for some decades. First, the integrationist or **creole** interpretation associated with two Brathwaites (1971 and 1975). Caribbean society in this theory is unified around a common set of values. It opposes pluralism defended by Michael Smith (1991) and Sydney Mintz (1976) and perhaps Richard Price, among others. Pluralism is highly anti-Herskovitz. It claims that there is a “Black” Caribbean culture, but it does not owe very much to Africa. Caribbean people invented the culture out of their own creativity. Both theories marginalize the minorities. The **creole** position did not, could not, and still does not include Indians of Trinidad and Guyana who today are no longer minorities, while pluralism saw Blacks and others (whites and mulattoes) engaged in cultural conflict.

This study of semantic diversity has to be seen in the context of the search by New World peoples for appropriate names which express their identity. **Creole** has been embraced in some cases; in other cases, it has been thoroughly rejected, e.g. in the case of North America (cf. Goudie, 2006); and in other cases it is struggling to gain acceptance. In Trinidad, as elsewhere in the CARICOM Caribbean, a major problem is what will be the fate of the ‘Black’ or ‘Afro’ group which is now somewhat

absorbed into the larger pot-pourri **creole** (or ‘mixed’) group, but with severe disadvantages. Mixed societies, multiple identities or no identity in a **creole** world may be a thing of the future and may even be the best for the world, hopefully with erasure of traditional locations of power and prestige. But right now what is needed most is the elevation and revaluation of the cultural behavior of the Black populations and a positive and constructive (rather than destructive) strengthening of their ethnicity. Proper schools and other education and social opportunities; Government services treating them equally; respect for their language, their religions and other aspects of their culture; significant symbols and iconography lauding thick lips and flat noses and extreme melanin in a reformed concept of physical beauty. In a world where phenotype is a major factor in the social order – as a component of life-style or ‘looks-ism’ which are replacing culture as we know it, the only hope for the prototypical members of this Afro group is to engage in the catching-up game with the mixed-race creoles, through in some way breeding out these phenotypical features or otherwise artificially changing them by artificial interventions: e.g. bleaching of the skin, hair treatments, cosmetic surgery on the lips and nose. It is only when these psycho-social reforms have been made that we can talk about **creole** identity or mixed identity or no identity at all. And in the meantime let us be careful not to allow the **creole** identity to surreptitiously or insidiously continue to deny the Africa-based ethnicity. Once this latter ethnicity is validated (e.g. with some of its expressions such as language and music becoming canonized and developing ‘classical/standard’ versions), it will be able to join with other historically-based ethnicities as equal partners in the construction of national/Caribbean or **creole** identity.

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AFRICAN AGENCY IN THE EMERGENCE OF THE ATLANTIC CREOLES

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Introduction

The role of the African substrate languages in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles has been the subject of debate among creolists for more than a century. Despite the fact that significant influence from the Niger-Congo (and particularly the Benue-Kwa) languages spoken by the great majority of those most involved in the establishment and propagation of the colonial era Creoles of the Atlantic Basin would have been the null hypothesis in most other contexts, this has not been the case in creole studies. This denial of what should be obvious is due primarily to the pervasive power of the prevailing discourses of class, gender, and race to set the scientific agenda, especially in areas of study that deal with the question of agency on the part of those who have been marginalized by ‘mainstream’ history, politics, economics, and linguistics.

But the failure of arguments for substrate influence on the Atlantic Creoles to gain wider acceptance and currency within creolistics is also due in part to the way in which the case for substrate influence has been advanced by the proponents of such influence themselves. The case for substrate input has been weakened by the following assumptions:

- 1) that the monolingual, monocultural model of society that predominates in capitalist hegemonic society also applied along the western coast of Africa as well as in all of the Caribbean during the colonial period;
- 2) that the languages along the west coast of Africa share less in terms of genetic and typological relationships than they actually do;
- 3) that influence from substrate languages can be and/or must be traced to one specific African language;
- 4) that influence from any other source (superstrates, universals, etc.) can be/must be completely ruled out before a case can be made for substrate influence.

In this chapter, we use the most recent consensus among Africanists as to the classification of the languages spoken along the West African coast as well as other evidence to demonstrate how these assumptions often lead creolists to underestimate or deny agency on the part of African descended peoples in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles.

ERRONEOUS ASSUMPTIONS

1 Eurocentric Notions of Monolingualism, Monoculturalism, Unitary Identity

Many creolists assume the monolingual, monocultural model of society that predominates in capitalist hegemonic society also applied along the western coast of Africa as well as in all of the Caribbean during the colonial period. In fact, West Africa and the indigenous Caribbean are two of the most culturally and linguistically diverse regions on the planet, each with hundreds of distinct but highly interactive ethno-linguistic communities, with each community practicing pluri-lingualism, pluriculturalism, and pluri-identification in its own creative way. Cultural exchange, trade, and intermarriage between ethnic groups have always been the rule rather than the exception in West Africa and the indigenous Caribbean, so that each individual actor in society is expected to strike a dynamic balance between a strong sense of ethnic identity and a fluent command of many different cultural, linguistic, and religious codes.

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It is an acceptance, even a preference, for cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and adaptability, as well as an openness to cultural exchange and hybridity which defines the cultural, linguistic, and identificational patterns that the African, Indigenous, and Afro-Indigenous working classes created in the Caribbean, be it in maroon villages, on pirate ships, at weekend markets, in slave trading stations, or on plantations. To contextualize this idea, it is helpful to posit four overlapping waves of creolization in the Caribbean, as shown in Figure 1 below.

1st Wave	Pre-Invasion to Present: pre-invasion sociétés de cohabitation
2nd Wave	Invasion to Present: post-invasion sociétés de cohabitation
3rd Wave	Invasion to Sugar Revolution to Present: sociétés d'habitation
4th Wave	Sugar Revolution to Abolition to Present: sociétés de plantation

Figure 1 Four Waves of Caribbean Creolization

Chaudenson expanded our focus as creolists from *sociétés de plantation* to the *sociétés d'habitation* that preceded them. We propose a further expansion to include

sociétés de cohabitation (González-López, 2007) which preceded both plantations and homesteads. Just as homesteads can be seen to coincide with a wave of creolization that preceded the wave of creolization that coincided with plantations, we propose two waves of creolization that preceded *sociétés d'habitation* and which coincide with pre-invasion *sociétés de cohabitation* and post-invasion *sociétés de cohabitation*.

Sociétés de cohabitation differ from *sociétés d'habitation* and *sociétés de plantation* because in *sociétés de cohabitation*, Europeans were not politically, economically or culturally dominant. *Sociétés de cohabitation* are defined culturally by Indigenous and African pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification, with no single target or norm being imposed. In post-invasion *sociétés de cohabitation*, marginalized peoples of African, Indigenous, and European descent lived in intimate and sustained contact which fostered the sustained and widespread use of a pluri-lingual repertoire of varieties, including pidginized and creolized varieties. This challenges the monolingual, linear models for Creole development that have underpinned our work as creolists since the 19th century.

Pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification have been the norm rather than the exception throughout Caribbean history, from before European Invasion to the present. Although any island of the Caribbean could be utilized to illustrate this point, we choose the island of St. Croix in the former Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands) as an example. In the case of St. Croix, we are fortunate to have the careful observations of the sociolinguistic conditions that held on the island made in 1767 by the Moravian missionary CGA Oldendorp. Oldendorp (1777) observed that:

“English, German, Danish, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Creole are spoken in these islands [St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix]. English and High German are the languages with which one can get by everywhere. [English Lexifier] Creole [Crucian] is spoken by the Negroes, as well as...the majority of the white inhabitants of the islands Danes, Dutchmen, and Frenchmen each speak their respective language among themselves. Trade with the Spaniards...makes the learning of their language necessary....The number of languages is the cause of many people mixing one with the others, as well as for speaking many languages, though none well nor with purity. A knowledge of...English...is especially necessary in the towns....The English...do not learn Creole for the most part....There are, therefore, large areas on St. Croix where the Negroes speak...English....As a rule, Negroes have good memories. It is, therefore, not difficult for Bussals [African-born slaves] to learn the Creole language. And the children learn it in an almost unbelievably short time. One of my friends took a Negro boy...back to Germany with him, and the latter learned to speak English, Dutch, and German tolerably well in the course of the trip ...Some Negroes who are already quite old when they arrive from Guinea never manage to learn the Creole language in their life time.... Many Negroes speak this language quite well, though very rapidly. Influenced by their Guinean dialects, they

pronounce the words indistinctly, as if the word remained stuck in their mouths.”
(p. 154)

In a non-exhaustive survey, Oldendorp identified over 50 African ethno-linguistic groups present in St. Croix in 1767. He recorded samples of speech from over 20 African languages still spoken on the island, with most belonging to the Benue-Kwa Branch of the Niger-Congo Family (Akan, Twi, Ewe, Yoruboid, Nupoid, Igboid, Cross River, Bantoid, Bantu, etc.), others belonging to other branches of Niger-Congo (Atlantic, Mande, Ijoid, Adamawa), and a few belonging to the Afro-Asiatic (Chadic) and the Nilo-Saharan (Kanuri) families. Just as *sociétés de cohabitation* have persisted from before European invasion to the present, so has the pluri-lingualism that typifies *sociétés de cohabitation* persisted until the present day in St. Croix as in the rest of the Caribbean. In St. Croix today, a wide range of lects of both Crucian English Lexifier Creole and Virgin Islands Standard English are *each* spoken by over 50 % of the population. Additionally, a wide range of lects of other English Lexifier Creoles (Jamaican, Kittitian, Antiguan, Trinidadian, St. Thomas, etc.), French Lexifier Creoles (St. Lucian, Dominican, Haitian, etc.), Caribbean Spanish (Puerto Rican, Viequense, Dominican, etc.) and United States Standard English are *each* spoken by over 25 % of the population. Other Languages spoken on St. Croix today include: Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Akan, Jamaican Maroon Spirit Language, etc.

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An example of the patterns of pluri-lingualism and pluri-identification that typify present-day St. Croix society can be found in the linguistic and identificational repertoires of a typical Crucian family encountered by DeJesús (2009). This researcher found that in this family:

1. the Father/Step-Father, who sometimes says that he is Puerto Rican and at other times says that he is Crucian, speaks Puerto Rican (PR) Spanish, and pidginized English
2. the Mother, who sometimes says that she is Crucian, at other times says that she is Porto-Crucian, and at other times says that she is Puerto Rican, speaks Crucian (English-Lexifier Creole -ELC), PR Spanish (learned from her husband), and Virgin Islands (VI) (Standard) English
3. the Grandfather who sometimes says that he is Crucian, at other times says that he is Viequense, and at other times says that he is Puerto Rican, speaks Viequense Spanish, PR Spanish, Crucian ELC, and VI English
4. the Adult Son who sometimes says that he is Crucian, at other times says that he is a Virgin Islander, and at other times says that he is an American, speaks Crucian ELC, VI English, and pidginized Spanish (to his Step-Father)
5. the First Daughter who sometimes says that she is Porto-Crucian, at other times says that she is Puerto Rican, at other times says that she is a Virgin Islander, and at other times says that she is an American, speaks Crucian ELC, VI English, PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, US (Standard) English, Kittitian ELC, Jamaican ELC, and some St Lucian French Lexifier Creole
6. the Second Daughter who sometimes says that she is Crucian, at other times says that she is Porto-Crucian, and at other times says that she is Puerto Rican, speaks Crucian ELC, VI English, PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, US (Standard) English, Kittitian ELC, Jamaican ELC, and some St Lucian French Lexifier Creole
7. the Uncle who sometimes says that he is Puerto Rican and at other times says that he is Viequense, speaks PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, and pidginized English
8. the Niece, who sometimes says that she is Puerto Rican, at other times says that she is Viequense, at other times says that she is Crucian, and at other times says that she is a Rastafarian, speaks PR Spanish, Viequense Spanish, Crucian ELC, VI English, Jamaican English Lexifier Creole (ELC), and is learning Maroon Spirit Language from her husband
9. the Niece's Husband who sometimes says that he is a Rastafarian, at other times says that he is a Jamaican, at other times says that he is a proud descendant of Jamaican Maroons, and at other times says that he is Crucian, speaks Jamaican ELC, Jamaican Standard English, Crucian ELC, Maroon Spirit Language, pidginized Spanish, and is learning Viequense Spanish from his wife

This evidence indicates that the pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification that characterize the Caribbean today are nothing new. In fact, the *sociétés de cohabitation* that have fostered this pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism, and pluri-identification typified not only pre-Colonial societies in both the Caribbean and West Africa, but also were the predominant form of society during the initial period of European invasion, when Europeans were not in a dominant position politically, economically, or culturally. In most of the Caribbean, a significant number and variety of these *sociétés de cohabitation* have persisted all the way up until the present day. This means that African and African-descended peoples have always been ‘in the right place’, ‘at the right time’, and ‘in sufficient numbers’ to have had a major impact on the emergence of creole languages in the post-invasion Caribbean.

2 Outdated Classification of African Languages

Many creolists assume that West African languages are less genetically and/or typologically related than they actually are. Present day classifications of African languages are based on Greenberg (1963). Greenberg established 5 language families in Africa (Niger-Congo, Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Khoisan and Austronesian) and 6 branches within the largest family Niger-Congo (West Atlantic, Mande, Gur, Adamawa-Eastern, Kwa, and Benue-Congo, based on Westermann, 1911).

42 There is little controversy concerning 4 of these branches, but the other two branches, Kwa and Benue-Congo are problematic. Greenberg himself questioned the separation of Kwa and Benue-Congo, stating that there was no reliable evidence for the genetic unity of the Kwa branch. Those Africanists most deeply involved in the comparative study of the languages of the Niger-Congo family came to a new consensus in the 1970s concerning the reclassification of the Yoruboid, Edoid and Igboid languages from Kwa to Benue-Congo. Linguistic evidence shows that the languages spoken east of the Benin-Nigeria border which Greenberg classified within Kwa (Yoruba, Edo, Igbo, etc.) are actually closer to the Benue-Congo languages (Efik, the Bantu languages, etc.) than to the rest of the Kwa languages spoken to the west (‘Akan’, Fongbe, etc.) Hence, the New Kwa branch that they proposed is much smaller than Greenberg’s Old Kwa branch.

Furthermore, nearly all of the specialists in the classification of Niger-Congo languages have modified Greenberg’s initial groupings to combine Kwa and Benue-Congo into a single branch, which we will refer to as Benue-Kwa. De Wolf (1971: 180) provided evidence for a higher branch that unites Kwa and Benue-Congo by showing that there are no grounds for the customary separation of Kwa from Benue-Congo due to apparent differences in noun classification. Williamson (1973) demonstrated that there are no solid criteria for regarding Kwa as distinct from Benue-Congo, because no single cognate occurs in Kwa that does not also occur in Benue-Congo and the predominance of CV roots in Kwa is the result of reductions of Benue-Congo forms. Stewart (1973) posited a Volta-Congo branch ancestral to both Kwa and Benue-Congo. Bennet & Sterk (1977) combined Kwa and Benue-Congo into their South Central Niger-Congo group. Hyman (personal communication with Williamson) proposed the name Benue-Kwa for the now merged Kwa and Benue-Congo branches.

The latest classification of Niger-Congo languages by the Niger-Congo Working Group is shown in Figure 2. Here you see that the Yoruboid, Edoid, and Igboid languages have been removed from Kwa, and Kwa itself has become just one sub-branch of Benue-Kwa, which now includes all of the languages spoken on the Atlantic coast of Africa from Ghana to Angola, except for the Ijoid languages in the Niger Delta:

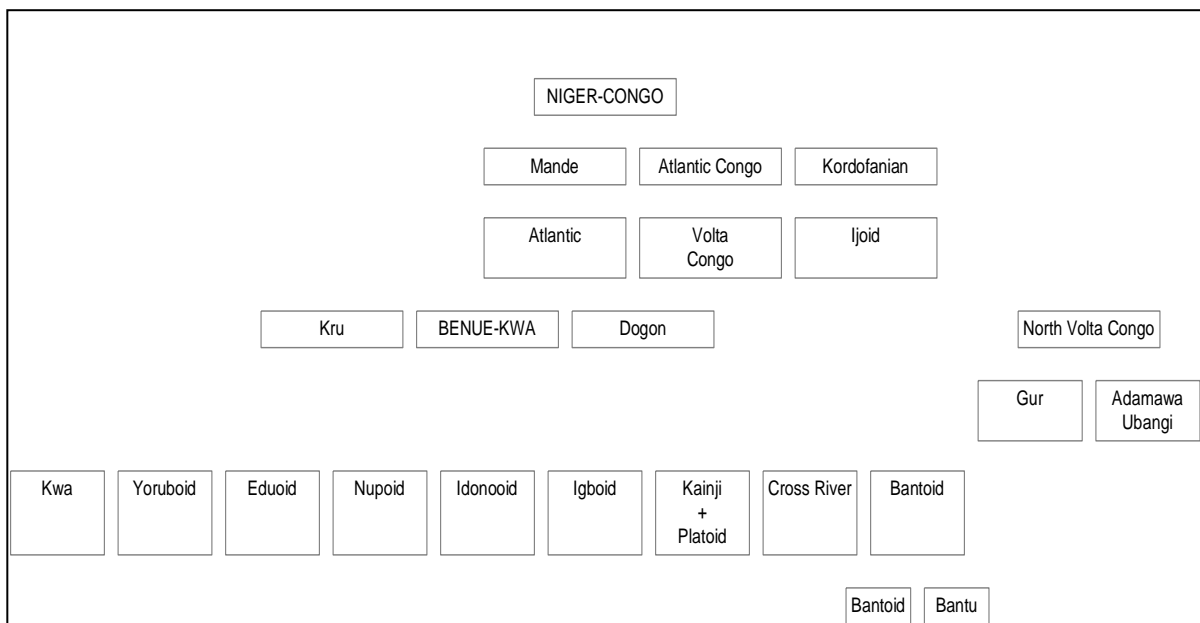


Figure 2 The Latest Classification of the Languages of the Niger-Congo Family

There are three major implications for creolists that stem from the latest classification of Niger-Congo languages:

1. Creolists have relied too heavily on distinctions between African languages that are no longer accepted by Africanists themselves.
2. Most of the slaves brought to the Americas spoke languages that not only belong to the same family (Niger-Congo) but also to the same branch of this family (Benue-Kwa), which includes ‘Akan’, Fongbe, Yoruba, Edo, Igbo, and Efik, plus Kikongo, Kimbundu and all other Bantu languages.
3. Creolists tend to ignore both the multilingualism of enslaved Africans and their descendants as well as the genetic and typological similarities among the many non-creolized, creolized, and pidginized varieties of African languages that the slaves brought with them to the Americas.

An example of how creolists have still not realized the implications that the reclassification of Niger-Congo has for our work is found in Parkvall, 2000. Despite the fact that Parkvall accepts elements of the new classification of Niger-Congo, he manages to distort the new classification to avoid its insights and to accommodate and resurrect the prejudices of the old one, especially the mythical divisions between Kwa, non-Bantu Benue-Congo, and Bantu. Parkvall (pp. 10-11) nominally accepts the transfer of Yoruboid, Edoid, and Igboid from Old Kwa to Benue-Congo, but he largely ignores the merger of New Kwa with Benue-Congo. Parkvall then proceeds to set up an ad hoc grouping which he calls ‘Delto-Benuic’ that not only re-establishes the artificial division between New Kwa and New Benue-Congo, but also separates Bantu from the rest of Benue-Congo, as shown in Figure 3:

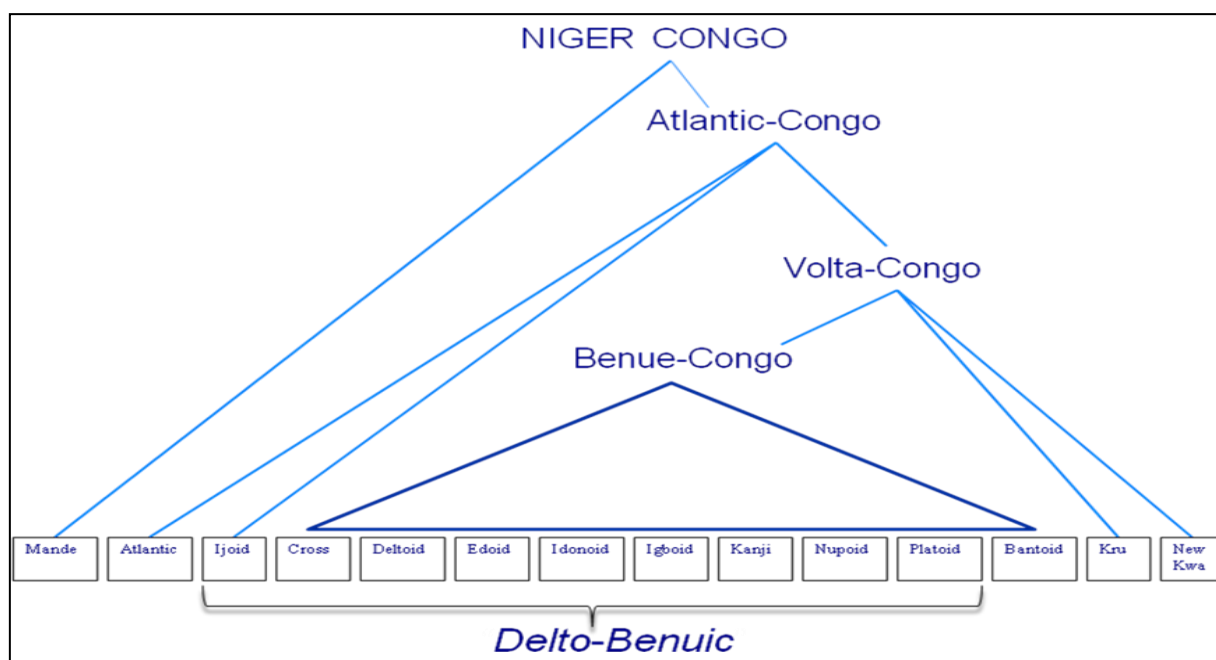


Figure 3 Parkvall's (2000) working classification of Niger-Congo

3 The 'One and Only Substrate'

Creolists who allow for substrate influence on Atlantic Creoles often try to trace this influence back to a single substrate language. These same researchers admit that most of the similarities between the Creole and the particular substrate language that they focus on could also be found in many other African languages.

This search for the 'one and only substrate' is often in response to demands that we avoid Dillard's (1970) Cafeteria Principle (the *ad hoc* assignment of substrate influences to randomly selected African languages) and that our work be 'empirically verifiable' and conform to the bias in linguistics toward simplistic mono-causal scenarios for complex human behaviors. By acknowledging the genetic and typological similarities among the languages spoken on the Atlantic coast of Africa, however, a *Sprachbund* approach to substrate influence not only accounts for the presence of individual substrate features in creole languages but also provides insight into the workings of entire creole grammatical systems.

The following comments by Parkvall demonstrate how tenacious the notion of the 'one and only substrate' language has proved to be among creolists. In some instances, Parkvall rightly criticizes those whose analyses rely on only one substrate language, such as when he states that:

“substrate studies of Atlantic Creoles suffer from two main problems...Some...have had recourse to the so-called ‘Cafeteria Principle’...others appear to have decided in advance which African language they want their Creole to resemble, and the entire Creole is described in terms of the chosen substrate.” (Parkvall, 2000: 4)

But this does not prevent him from advocating what amounts to a search for the ‘one and only substrate’ as a way to avoid the Cafeteria Principle:

“[To avoid the] Cafeteria Principle...what Smith (1999: 252) has called Bickerton’s Edict should be carefully observed, and any [*single*] language variety which is invoked as the source of a given feature must have had speakers present at the right place in the right time (Bickerton, 1981)... In addition to this, my claim is that ...universals...should by definition be considered as omnipresent in any place at any time.” (pp. 18-19)

Parkvall (p. 155) admits that most of the substrate features that meet his restrictive criteria for influence on the Atlantic Creoles can be traced to what he calls the ‘Lower Guinea languages’ (Benue-Kwa plus Kru plus Ijoid, plus perhaps Bantoid, but minus Bantu). He attributes this to a number of factors, including:“...the existence of a Lower Guinean *Sprachbund* in which many features of Kwa (sic) are shared with Delto-Benuic and Kru, and...even the peripheral Bantu languages.... Kwa (sic) speakers would thus have been supported, ...in establishing features of their own languages in the emerging Creoles, by slaves from other areas of Lower Guinea....Someone familiar with Atlantic Creoles will immediately feel at ‘home’ when browsing through a grammar of Twi, Ewe, or Yoruba...” (p. 155)

The demographic data meticulously assembled by Parkvall therefore broadly confirm that speakers of Lower Guinea *Sprachbund* languages were in the right places in the Caribbean at the right time to leave their linguistic imprint on Antillean Creoles. But despite the overwhelming evidence he himself has marshaled, which indicates a *Sprachbund* approach handles the linguistic evidence in a much more satisfactory way, Parkvall remains tied to the notion of ‘the one and only substrate’. For example, while he states that the existence of both distinctive lexical and grammatical tone, as well as ideophones in the colonial Creoles of the Atlantic basin are without doubt due to influence from West African languages, he excludes them from his analysis of possible substrate influences on the Atlantic Creoles precisely because they are unequivocally the result of *Sprachbund* influence, rather than traceable to a single substrate language. This contradiction is shockingly illustrated in the following passages:

“The use of ideophones in Atlantic Creoles could be seen as...substrate influence....while there could be an African influence behind the very presence of this lexical category virtually alien to...European languages, it is...not possible to relate this to any specific West African language.” (p. 140)

“The presence of phonetic tones ...in...Atlantic Creoles is a feature that is without a doubt an Africanism. Tones are not investigated in this study; however, because virtually all potential substrates are tone languages....Tones would thus be of limited use in determining the precise African connections of Atlantic Creoles.” (p. 155)

Therefore some of the most certain and salient African influences are excluded by Parkvall on the following grounds: 1) They cannot be attributed to a ‘one and only substrate’ language; and 2) They are attributable to influence from an African Atlantic Coast areal/typological *Sprachbund*.

4 Universals before Substrates

Parkvall and many other creolists assume that influence from universals and superstrates must be completely ruled out before any case can be made for substrate influence. Parkvall and many other creolists who claim to acknowledge substrate influences on Atlantic Creoles are prevented from seriously recognizing, appreciating, and exploring such influences, due to the widespread biases in linguistics in general and in creolistics in particular toward universals and European (superstrate) languages.

Parkvall leaves absolutely no room for doubt concerning his bias toward mono-causal scenarios for the emergence of Creole languages in which universals play the predominant role when he admits that:

“Since carrying out the research here, my focus has shifted from substrate influence to the reduction associated with pidginization.....the traces of broken transmission [pidginization] which can still be seen in...Creoles, are what sets Creoles apart from non-Creoles.” (p. 3)

“Creoles derive from Pidgins....only the period between the start of language contact and the emergence of a group of native speakers (preferably with limited competence in ancestral languages)...can properly be considered the formative period of a Creole.....Creoles can be synchronically defined on language internal grounds alone.” (p. 9)

“What is characteristic of Creoles... is the reduction associated with pidginization.” (p. 154)

Parkvall’s bias toward universals and his insistence on mono-causality leads him to set criteria for substrate influence that systematically rule out any meaningful role for African languages and their speakers in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles, except in an extremely limited number of cases. Parkvall first largely dismisses convergence among universals, superstrate influences, and/or substrate influences as a significant element in Creole emergence, thereby generally insisting on attributing the emergence of Creole structures to the operation of no more than one of these factors at a time.

Once mono-causality is established as a premise, Parkvall then insists that all cases where universals could have operated together with substrate influences be automatically assumed to be attributable completely to universals. All of this is made abundantly evident when Parkvall says that:

“I am trying to use the term [substrate influence] more restrictively than many of my predecessors.” (p. 3)

“Features which are cross-linguistically common should be put aside in creolistic discussions [of substrate influence] assuming that they represent universals.” (p. 18)

“... in order to demonstrate the influence of one language on another... features adduced as proof need to display some degree of idiosyncraticityMost of the features discussed by Holm [(1992)]...tend to be cross-linguistically common to the point of being trivial.” (p. 22)

Figure 4 represents a summary of the very restrictive criteria that Parkvall formulates for substrate influence on Atlantic Creoles. In Figure 4, the first column lists the presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in its superstrate (European lexifier) language(s); the second column lists the presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in its substrate languages; the third column lists the widespread presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in other Creoles; and the fourth column lists the presence (yes) or absence (no) of a given Atlantic Creole feature in languages universally. Parkvall’s bias toward universals is obvious (lines 3, 7, and 9-16) but another less obvious bias toward superstrates is also suggested by his differential treatment of line 2 vs. line 7.

PARKVALL'S CRITERIA FOR SUBSTRATE INFLUENCE

lexifier	substrate	other creoles	universals	PARKVALL'S CONCLUSIONS
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	1 CONVERGENCE L + S
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	2 LEXIFIER 'LIKELY'
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	3 'BIAS' OF RESEARCHERS
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	4 LEXIFIER
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	5 SUBSTRATE
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	6 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	7 'POSSIBLE CONVERGENCE'
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	8 EXTREMELY RARE
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	9 UNIVERSALS
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	10 UNIVERSALS
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	11 UNIVERSALS
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	12 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	13 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	14 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	15 UNIVERSALS
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	16 UNIVERSALS

Figure 4 Parkvall's Criteria for Substrate Influences on Atlantic Creoles

Parkvall's criteria for identifying possible substrate influence in Figure 4 above contrast sharply with the less limited and biased set of criteria that allow for convergence between universals, superstrate, and substrate factors shown in Figure 5 below. Because of his nearly categorical insistence on mono-causality and because of his admitted bias toward universals, which lead him to presume that any features found in many Creoles (column 3) automatically be assumed to be the result of the operation of universals, Parkvall only allows for substrate influence in 2 of the 16 possible configurations of evidence that he considers (rows 1 and 5 in Figure 4). When these artificial constraints and biases are eliminated, however, it emerges that substrate influence is in fact probable in 8 of these same 16 configurations (rows 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 in Figure 5).

OUR CRITERIA FOR SUBSTRATE INFLUENCE

lexifier	substrate	other creoles	universals	OUR CONCLUSIONS
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	1 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	2 LEXIFIER (+U?)
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	3 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S (+U?)</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	4 LEXIFIER
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	NO	5 <u>SUBSTRATE</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	NO	6 INNOVATION + (U?)
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	NO	7 <u>SUBSTRATE (+U?)</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	NO	8 INNOVATION
YES	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	9 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S + U</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	10 CONVERGENCE L + U
YES	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	11 <u>CONVERGENCE L + S + U</u>
YES	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	12 CONVERGENCE L + U
NO	<u>YES</u>	NO	YES	13 <u>CONVERGENCE S + U</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	YES	YES	14 CONVERGENCE I + U
NO	<u>YES</u>	YES	YES	15 <u>CONVERGENCE S + U</u>
NO	<u>NO</u>	NO	YES	16 UNIVERSALS

Figure 5 Our Criteria for Substrate Influences on Atlantic Creoles

Conclusion

Unless the erroneous assumptions that we have discussed in this presentation are problematized and discarded, the historical agency of Africans and African-descended peoples in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles will never be given the acknowledgment, recognition, significance, and importance that it deserves.

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ST. CROIX: A PLURI-LINGUAL AND PLURI-CULTURAL ISLAND¹

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1 Introduction

The beautiful island of St. Croix, with its rolling green hills and pristine blue coves, is part of the US Virgin Islands. St. Croix is nestled in the Caribbean, close to Puerto Rico and her “isla nena” the tiny island of Vieques. Part of the archipelago, stretching from Belize to the Keys and on to Venezuela, the Greater and the Lesser Antilles form an island bridge connecting Florida to Central and South America. These were the stepping stones of indigenous peoples moving up from Venezuela, out from Mexico, and down from Florida. From time immemorial and continuing still today, the changing national identity of these islands is often less important to many of the people living in the Caribbean than their physical proximity – the lure of greener places or perhaps a better life.

2 A brief history

Like the British Virgin Islands, the US Virgin Islands cluster together like scattered pebbles in the sea. Like other islands in the Caribbean, they have changed nationality, or more properly their governance has changed frequently over the years.

Today St. Croix is one of three islands, together with St. Thomas and St. John, which make up the US territory. It was purchased by the US from the Danish West India Company in 1917, for \$25 million in gold.

Indeed, the dates are interesting - remember the history: In 1898 Puerto Rico was invaded by the US during the Spanish American War and was taken over. In 1914 World War I began in Europe. But, 1917 was the year of events: The Russian Revolution began in 1917; the US, through the Jones Act, granted citizenship to Puerto Ricans, and purchased the Virgin Islands. Keep in mind that US citizens can serve in the military. Prior to purchase by the US, these islands were said to have lived under 7 flags. Over the years they were ruled by Spain, the Dutch, the English, the French, the Knights of Malta, the Danish and now since 1917, the United States.

¹ This chapter is an expanded version of the paper “St. Croix: A Pluri-Lingual, Pluri-Cultural Island”, presented by this author at the 12th Annual Eastern Caribbean Islands Cultures Conference – The Islands In-between, November 6, 2009 in Roseau, Dominica.

However, there was an 8th Flag although it is not always reported in the well-known history books. The island of St. John was taken over, and ruled in 1733-4 by formerly enslaved Africans².

Given this history which involves a kaleidoscope of cultures, ethnic groups, and nationalities, and given the geography that makes the fluid movement among and between islands seem both natural and proper, it is not a surprise that to this day, St. Croix, like many other islands in the Caribbean, has retained this composite of identities, ethnic groups and nationalities. And, as each group brings its own rhythms, flavors, music, and language, the rich and intricate tapestry continues to create the distinctive characteristics of St. Croix.

3 Population and languages spoken

Today, the population of St. Croix consists of Crucians, those who were born and raised on the island - usually of African descent, but also of European and mixed ancestry – as well as people who arrived more recently from the other Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Vieques, the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, Guadeloupe, Trinidad, Haiti, Jamaica and other nations of the Caribbean, the United States, Venezuela and other nations of Central and South America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe: indeed, the world.

According to the 2000 US Census data, there are currently about 53,000 people living in St. Croix. Regarding the languages spoken in St. Croix, the US Census focused on the 48,772 people over the age of 5 years old. The US report organizes the information according to the “ability to speak English” (their quote), and divides the population into two categories “English only, 33,212 people and Language other than English 15,560” (their quote). Further, the census data goes on to list the people who speak the “other” languages: Spanish, 11,823 people, or 24%; French or French Creole, 2,902 people or 6%; other European languages, 347 people or 0.7%; Asian and Pacific Island languages, 100 people, or 0.2%, and “other” languages, spoken by 388 people, or 0.8%.

A critical examination of the census material reveals some significant points. To begin with, the focus of the US Census – divided into English or ‘other’ - is clearly biased. Not only are there more languages spoken than English, Spanish, French/French Creole or Asian/Pacific languages, but there is a glaring omission in the absence of Crucian on their list of languages. Crucian is the English Lexifier Creole spoken by most of the people of St. Croix, and it is omitted from the list of languages in the census. What about the rich variety of African, indigenous and other creole languages, so widely spoken in St. Croix, the Caribbean and the Western Hemisphere? Are there only 388 people in St. Croix who speak all of these “other” languages combined?

² Information from Per Ankh University, Estate La Grange, St. Croix. See www.perankhu.net/about2.html

The second significant point is that the classification of language as simply “English” and “other” reveals the “intransigent monolingualism” of the US today” (DeJesús, 2009). This myopic vision represents a deficit view of language - if it isn’t English, then it falls into the marginalized category of “other”. Such a view fails to *value* languages other than English, and certainly does not appreciate the rich variety of languages that are actually spoken in St. Croix. Further, this erroneous view conveys the false impression that *everyone is monolingual* – the impression is that people either speak English or they speak something else. But, nothing could be further from the truth.

The data presented below, was collected during two separate field work visits to St. Croix, (each one a 2-week site visit) in 2008 and in 2009. During these visits, observations were made and interviews were conducted. During these visits we heard and identified at least 20 different languages and lects, and observed how people easily move from language to language depending on the situation and other factors, as described below.

4 Perception distorted

The official US government view of the linguistic situation in St. Croix, as reflected in the Census report, is inaccurate and misleading. It helps to justify an erroneous US government policy and keeps those people who are dependent on government information shielded from the actual reality of languages and cultures in St. Croix, and undoubtedly other islands and nations. It creates a dominant discourse that is accepted as a given and a truth, is internalized, and in turn becomes a justification for a narrow, profoundly monolingual perspective of the world, and a distorted perception of people from other nations and experiences.

Using the criteria, “English” and “Other”, the majority of people in the world are marginalized, because they either do not speak English, the language of the dominant culture in the US, or they do not speak it exclusively, i.e. “English Only”. Instead of seeing English monolingualism as a limitation, this approach tends to create an outlook of superiority on the part of those acculturated to the US perspective, and a sense that only English counts, since other languages are not valued or even acknowledged by the US data and official sources of information.

If English is the only language that counts, then it is a small step mentally to believe that English speakers are the only people who count. This “Us vs. Them” outlook works to marginalize the majority of people in the world. Because this view is based on the presumption that English is a world language, and is the language of technology and science, it is therefore assumed that everyone who is educated, or everyone who counts, knows or ought to know English. Thus, the dominant discourse

is established, and is seen as self-evident. Those people conditioned by the US dominant discourse have no reason to learn other languages, since they believe that their language is *the one*. This further reinforces a cultural perspective that is intransigently monolingual, and sometimes comes across as a stubborn refusal to learn other languages, and learn about other people. This attitude easily leads to an outlook that is imperialist: a profoundly distorted perception of the world.

The US view misses much of what there is to see. The majority of people in the world do not speak English. The number of English language users is decreasing proportionally, not increasing and the gap between English and “other” is growing. But for those who are conditioned by the dominant discourse and who take it as a given - the majority is invisible. Essentially, the majority of the world lives beneath their radar, and languages live beneath the radar, too.

5 Goals of this study

St. Croix, today, presents an interesting locus of languages and cultures. The purpose of this study is to observe and understand how language is used in present day St. Croix and to recognize how people in fact draw on their multiple languages and lects to interact with others. It is hoped that this study will shed light on the coexistence of languages and the cohabitation of people. The research seeks to answer the question how do people interact with each other in a highly diverse, pluri-lingual and pluri-cultural environment of St. Croix. The study examines what are the attitudes, practices and implications, if any, for linguistics in general and creole studies in particular regarding language use, language development and language transformation in a modern heteroglossic situation.

6 Methodology

The data for this study was collected during two, 2-week visits in May, 2008 and May, 2009. Site visits were not conducted in official spaces, but were focused on the places where ordinary people go as they carry out the day to day activities of their lives: stores, restaurants, waiting in line at the post office, the bank or cafeteria, in parks, and on public busses. In addition, archival and library research was conducted.

During the four weeks in St. Croix, numerous observations were made, short interviews or informal conversations were held, and more than 25 in-depth interviews were conducted of about 10 minutes each, and in some cases more.

7 Pluri-Lingualism in St. Croix today

More than 50% of the local population in St. Croix (excluding tourists) speaks a wide range of lects of the two following languages:

- 1) Crucian, the St. Croix English Lexifier Creole spoken by most of the population, and
- 2) Virgin Island Standard English, spoken by nearly everyone.

These are the two predominant languages heard everywhere, and people move seamlessly from one to the other depending on a variety of factors. In addition, at least 25% of the population speaks one or more of the following languages/lects:

- Jamaican, Kittitian, Antiguan, Trinidadian, and St. Thomas English Lexifier Creoles
- St Lucian, Dominican (from Dominica), Haitian French Lexifier Creoles
- Puerto Rican, Viequense, Dominican (from the Dominican Republic) and Venezuelan dialects of Caribbean Spanish
- United States Standard English, including Northern, Southern and other dialects

8 A Selection of representative speakers

Each of the following people was asked the same four questions: 1) Who are you? (her or his background); 2) What languages does you speak? 3) Do you think that Crucian is a language? Why or why not? 3b) When, if at all and to whom, does you speak Crucian and the other languages that you speak? and, 4) If you are speaking to a friend in Crucian in a public place, for example a store or an office, and someone comes in who you think does not understand Crucian, do you feel you should stop speaking Crucian and change languages? 4b) What language would you change to, and why?

Speaker 1

Speaker 1 is a woman in her mid-20s, an employee in a store, who has been living in St. Croix since 1986. She came to St. Croix from the US with her parents as a child. She considers herself Crucian, having lived in St. Croix for the majority of her life, and having done all of her formal education in St. Croix.

This young woman speaks Crucian, Virgin Island Standard English (VISE), and US Standard English of a Northeastern dialect. She considers Crucian to be a language in its own right, and explains that Crucian has its own grammar and its own rules, the prerequisites of a language, in her view. She enjoys speaking Crucian to her friends, and uses Crucian in some settings, such as in the store where she works, when persons speak Crucian, in ordering food at the cafeteria, or when on the bus. She speaks US Standard English to her parents only. She uses Virgin Island Standard English in most places when not speaking Crucian, such as when speaking to her teachers; her current

supervisor at work; or in offices or places where she does not know the people she is interacting with and usually in the post office. But on the bus she always speaks Crucian and will speak Crucian in the street or in a park when she speaks to people.

In response to question 4, speaker 1 feels that “you do not need to change languages, even if they do not understand Crucian. You are not speaking to them, and there is nothing wrong with speaking Crucian.”

Speaker 2

Speaker 2 is a woman in her late 20s who works in a store, is a student at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), and the mother of two small children. She came from St. Lucia as a little girl with her family. She considers herself Crucian because she has lived in St. Croix most of her life, but also definitely feels that she is St. Lucian. This young woman speaks Crucian, Virgin Island Standard English, and the St. Lucian French-Lexifier Creole, which she referred to as a “Patois”. She does not see Crucian as a language, but rather thinks it is a dialect of English (VISE). She said “if it were a language, it would have rules” which she does not think exist in Crucian.

Her grandmother and aunts do not permit St. Lucian to be spoken outside of the house. Although they speak St. Lucian at home among themselves, they severely criticize her for speaking St. Lucian to her children or to her friends. She reports that her grandmother says, “Why do you want to teach *that* language to your children?” The grandmother and aunts view St. Lucian as an uneducated language. She is worried that the St. Lucian French-Lexifier Creole will be lost in her daughter’s generation.

She speaks both St. Lucian and Crucian to her friends and many of the other students in her classes, depending on what language/s they know. She enjoys speaking both languages. If she is speaking to her professors, or to a student she does not particularly know, in the library, a store or on the bus she speaks Virgin Island Standard English (VISE).

Regarding question 4, she adamantly feels that it is improper and impolite to speak St. Lucian or Crucian in front of people who do not understand the language. In the situation posed, if someone came into a store, she said she would immediately convert to VISE, regardless of whether or not she knew the people who came in, and whether or not she knew or she thought they spoke Crucian or St. Lucian. She was unwavering on this point of never speaking St. Lucian or Crucian in front of others who do not know it, and said to do so would be extremely rude and very impolite.

Speaker 3

Speaker 3 is a woman in her 40s employed as a public school teacher. She was born in and lived all of her life in St. Croix. She said Crucian is a language, and it is her language. She said she “can speak it whenever she wants” although, she also acknowledged that some people do not feel comfortable speaking Crucian. But she said, it is “her culture and her right to speak it”. However, she also said she feels that “Crucian is a ‘slave language’”.

She said she speaks Crucian at home, “when she wants to”, and also speaks Virgin Island and US Standard English, which she said she writes perfectly. She said she uses USSE at work in the school, and when speaking to her students.

In response to question 4, this speaker said she would switch from Crucian to USSE, not VISE, if someone came into an office in the school, a store or other location where she might be speaking Crucian. She said USSE is “more general”.

Speaker 4

Speaker 4 is a woman in her late 50s, who was in an Afro-centric restaurant. Three years ago, she returned to St. Croix from the US, where she had moved with her family as a young girl. This speaker is a teacher in a private school. Since she lived in St. Croix as a child, she can speak, and can completely understand Crucian, but she rarely speaks it, and never in any public place. She said she never speaks to her students at the private school in Crucian, although the students often speak it to her, and frequently ask her to speak Crucian to them. She said she mainly speaks USSE. Besides Crucian, she can also speak VISE, and some “Patois” (St Lucian French lexifier Creole). At this point in her life she speaks VISE occasionally when she is at a social gathering, in someone’s house, or in a place where most people are speaking Crucian or VISE.

“When I was a child”, she said, “I had a very thick [Crucian] dialect and people in the US couldn’t understand me. When I went to college, they said I needed ESL classes. I was insulted, but thinking back on it now, I would have benefitted. Things were changing too fast, and people were confused and felt left behind.”

She said “People speak Crucian when they do not want you to understand what they are saying”. She feels as a person who has lived for many years in the US, if she were “to speak Crucian to people, they would feel that I am looking down at them ... as if to say that they can *only* speak Crucian, and not regular English (VISE).”

This woman feels that St. Croix is a “secret and hidden society”. She said people will “smile and smile but keep you out” and they “use the [Crucian] language to do it”. She went on to describe an experience that she said exemplifies this “secret and hidden” nature of St. Croix, where “you never really know what is going on.” She said a young woman, an African-American lawyer from the US came down to St. Croix to

argue an important case. The young woman was extremely bright, speaker 4 reported, and the young woman thoroughly prepared and presented her case. This young lawyer called it “a golden case” because it went so well. She told speaker 4 that the members of the jury were so attentive, and so positive in their expressions and their body language that she knew she had won them over. The case was logical, thorough and perfectly argued, and she was certain of a victory

Nevertheless, when the decision came down, the bright and positive young lawyer lost. Her brilliant arguments and compelling logic were ignored, and she was devastated and confused.

Speaker 4 said that she consoled the young lawyer and said it had nothing to do with the law, the logic, the arguments or her preparation. She told me that she said to the lawyer, “you don’t know who the defendant is, who his cousins are or who is sitting on the jury. The decision in this case”, she said to the young lawyer, “was decided before you even opened a book.” This society is “inscrutable”, she explained.

In response to question 4, this speaker said she thought most people would switch languages from Crucian to VISE, when a non-Crucian speaker came into the room. “It has to do with shame,” she said. The exception, she said, was when her “students, and sometimes others, such as people standing in line in the supermarket” want to “let you know that you are not included.” When asked if she thought Crucian developed from African linguistic roots, she said “no, it uses English words.”

Speaker 5

Speaker 5 is a self confident woman in her early 50s who runs a very popular Afro-centric restaurant. She says that she “speaks Crucian all of the time” because “she is Crucian” and that she can speak Virgin Island and US Standard English but rarely does so. When she writes, she only writes in Standard English.

She considers Crucian “a dialect” but explained that she speaks in Crucian always because “it is my language.” She explains that as a young woman she enrolled in the US military, and “even in the service, I only spoke Crucian”. She said that she had no difficulty at all. The people in the service told her that “she speaks funny” but, she said that her attitude was “so what?” She wrote all her documents in “perfect English” and thought that was why no one in the service objected to her speaking in Crucian. She also says that in her view, “the only difference between VISE and USSE is the accent.”

She notes that now people do not speak ‘raw Crucian’ the old Crucian of our Grandmothers. She says that today’s language is not like it used to be and she feels that it is unfortunate that the old language is being lost. She was very eager for me to meet and interview an older woman, who she said, speaks “perfect Raw Crucian” so that I would be able to hear the difference between the older language and today’s

version. The main difference between ‘raw Crucian’ and today’s language, she contends, is the vocabulary, but there are also some differences in “the way you say things” (the syntax).

Regarding, question #4, she said that since she speaks Crucian all of the time she “would obviously never switch languages just because someone came in. Let them hear Crucian!” But, when questioned further, she said she believed that many people would switch languages “because they don’t feel good about speaking Crucian.” When questioned as to why this is so, she explained that many people consider Crucian to be “not as good a language” as Standard English (VISE or USSE) and that some people think it is ‘not educated’. But, then she added cheerfully, “I’m educated and I speak Crucian all of the time.” Nevertheless, she feels that it is very important to be able to read and write in Standard English.

Speaker 6

Speaker 6 is a man in the park. When this researcher was waiting at the park for a bus, the man started a conversation, using Virgin Island Standard English. As the conversation developed, I mentioned that I came from Puerto Rico, and the man immediately switched into excellent Spanish. He explained that his family was from Vieques (the “Isla Nena” of Puerto Rico) and that he grew up speaking Spanish at home, Crucian to his friends, and Virgin Island Standard English in school. He considers Crucian to be a language and he considers himself to be Crucian.

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As the conversation evolved, the man shared the following information (still speaking Spanish). He said he did not do well in school. When he got to the high school, the administration wanted to put him into the “class for retarded students” (although he speaks 3 languages). However, his mother said “he was not retarded” and she took him “out of school”. He was never able to manage well on his own, and could never get steady work. Right now, he lives in the park (he is homeless) but was trying to get an apartment in one of the government sponsored locations. He said it was difficult because “they don’t think I’m Crucian, but I *am* Crucian.” He said he has gone over to the place to apply for government housing, but they don’t “give me an apartment, and they tell me to come back.” He also volunteered that he feels he drinks too much.

Regarding question #4, he said he would not change from Crucian to another language if someone came into the room. He did not think there was anything wrong with speaking Crucian.

Speaker 7

Speaker 7 is a businessman in his 50’s who has lived in St. Croix for more than 25 years and has a bustling and profitable business. People speaking all of the languages of St. Croix come into his store. When he deals with customers he speaks Spanish. He

was born, raised, and educated in Puerto Rico and his Spanish is perfect. He also speaks “a little chewed up English” (Pidgin English) enough to “get by in the Post Office or places like that.” When he first started his business he used Pidgin English with Crucian customers. This man explains that he taught his wife Spanish. She is a Crucian person of Puerto Rican descent, but when he met her, she spoke no Spanish, only Crucian. Now, because of his influence, everyone in the family including his daughters who were born in St. Croix, speak Spanish very well.

His wife, daughters and niece speak to the customers in Crucian, Spanish or other languages. His older daughter also speaks excellent St Lucian. This daughter went to school in the US, has an accounting degree, and now helps run the business. She speaks Crucian, VISE, USSE, Puerto Rican Spanish and St. Lucian, as well as Jamaican Creole (an English Lexifier Creole) and some Creole from Dominica (a French Lexifier Creole closely related to St. Lucian). The daughter learned Jamaican Creole from her cousin, the niece, who was born in Vieques, lived most of her life in St. Croix and is married to a man from Jamaica. The niece speaks Crucian, VISE, Puerto Rican Spanish, and Jamaican Creole.

Speaker 8

Speaker 8 is the wife of Speaker 7, who happily agrees that now she speaks perfect Spanish, thanks to the help of her husband who taught her and their children. Like speaker 4, she wanted me to meet and interview her Father “because he speaks Raw Crucian perfectly”. Her father is an older Puerto Rican who came to St. Croix years ago from Vieques, and speaks ‘Raw Crucian’, more modern Crucian, Viequense Spanish and VISE.

When asked about question #4 (changing languages) she said customers who are Crucian often do not like it when you are speaking a language other than Crucian in front of them. When she is speaking Spanish or when her daughter is speaking Spanish or St. Lucian to a customer, a Crucian speaking customer who is waiting in line will sometimes say, “English, English, speak English here.” She has to stop and tell them, in Crucian, that the customer she is helping only speaks Spanish or St. Lucian. Otherwise, she said, the customer waiting in line “thinks you are talking about them.”

Speaker 9

Speaker 9 is the older brother of speaker 7, the Puerto Rican businessman, and father of the niece married to the Jamaican man. He came to St. Croix about 5 years ago to work with his brother in the business, speaks only Puerto Rican Spanish, and a little

“chewed up English” (Pidgin English). To him Crucian, VISE and USSE are all the same – Inglés. He cannot distinguish among the three.

He tells funny stories in a hilarious code-switching style between Puerto Rican Spanish and Pidgin English about the frequent language mix-ups he has experienced, or the confusing and amusing linguistic situations in which he has found himself. When asked if he felt ashamed or embarrassed about not speaking Inglés (Crucian, VISE or USSE) he only laughed. To him, these stories are the amusing daily happenings that lighten your day and make you smile when you live in a pluri-linguistic community, where everyone speaks something different, no one speaks perfectly and everyone is simply trying to communicate, be friendly and take care of business.

Speaker 10

Speaker 10 is the Jamaican man, married to the niece of the store owner. He speaks Crucian, Jamaican Creole, VISE, and some of the Jamaican Spirit language which he learned from his “grandfather, who was the child of Jamaican Maroons, living in the mountains of Jamaica after escaping slavery.” This man works in this store, owned and frequented by Speakers of Spanish, but (so-far) only speaks Pidgin Spanish. He considers Crucian to be a language, “the language of the country of St. Croix.” His attitude about language was, he said, “very practical.” He made little distinction between VISE and USSE, which he thought was a matter of accents and some “slang” vocabulary.

When asked question 4, he was adamant: “Ashamed? Ashamed of my language? Why? Why should I change my conversation in my native dialect because someone else comes in? Are they part of the conversation? If not, why should I change the way I want to speak?”

Speaker 11

Speaker 11 is a man from St. Lucia, who was waiting on line in the above mentioned store. He thought Crucian and VISE were the same, and only a matter of a different accent from what he called “American English.” He said he would never speak St. Lucian in public, or people would call me (a word with a highly negative connotation), which he explained would mean being very ignorant or uncultivated. He also said it was insulting to him when people in a store or restaurant were speaking Spanish or another language. He asked, “how would you know they are not talking about you, or making fun of you for some reason?”

9 Attitudes about Crucian

As evidenced in the interviews summarized above, there are many prevalent attitudes in St. Croix society regarding Crucian, as well as St. Lucian and Spanish. Some of these attitudes are contradictory. While some people consider Crucian a language, with its rules and grammar, most people believe it is a dialect of English. Those who feel it is a language tend to be people who may have been educated, and therefore may have some knowledge of linguistics. They may also be people who have traveled or lived in other countries, who may have had personal exposure to other creole languages. Those who see Crucian as a language tend to have a more positive view of Crucian. For these respondents, speaking Crucian in public does not appear to make them feel insecure or concerned that they will be perceived poorly by virtue of their speaking the Crucian language.

Only two people identified Crucian as a creole language. A professor at the University of the Virgin Islands considered Crucian a creole language, but contrasted it with “raw” Crucian, the Crucian language spoken by elders. This professor felt that contemporary Crucian was rapidly becoming diluted and “Americanized” as a consequence of the impact of slang and the musical-media (especially rap and reggaeton) which is rapidly being incorporated by the youth into the Crucian lexicon. All of the respondents felt it is acceptable to speak Crucian among family and friends, in informal settings. Most felt it was very important to also speak and write in Standard English. Only a few, however, drew any distinction between US Standard English and Virgin Island Standard English.

A considerable number of people felt that Crucian is a sub-standard language, of lower status linguistically than other languages, such as Standard English. This view tended to be held by those who did not consider Crucian to be an actual language and who did not feel that Crucian should be spoken in public, in front of non-Crucian speakers. When asked to explain why, some said they would not want to offend outsiders who did not understand Crucian, or did not want non-Crucian speaking listeners to feel left out.

Some respondents may feel embarrassed about speaking a language which they believe might be perceived by others, for example the general public, as being inferior. This might make them feel that speaking Crucian would cast them in a negative light. Another interpretation was offered by the owner of one of the business sites where interviews and observations were conducted. This respondent suggested that, in a business setting, frequently, the customer thinks you are speaking about them if you are speaking a language in front of them, which they do not understand.

It was perceived by three non-Crucian respondents that their efforts to speak the Crucian language in public would be perceived as being impolite. The three who expressed this opinion were all of US background; two were European descended people, and one person was of African descent; two had lived in St. Croix for more than 20 years, but none of the three had been raised or educated on the island. The feeling they expressed was that if they, as non-Crucians were to speak Crucian, it might be perceived as if they were “looking down” on the people to whom they were speaking, as if the people “could only speak Crucian and were not educated” or as if the people “could not speak Virgin Island Standard English or US Standard English”. As one expressed it, it would be perceived that “I am speaking to them in Crucian because that is the only language they know.”

Interestingly, this attitude was not expressed by two younger respondents, who had been educated in St. Croix, but not born there. One young respondent of European descent, came from the US to St. Croix at an early age. The other was a young woman of mixed background. Both young people said they were not Crucian, but they “considered themselves Crucian” and thought their use of the Crucian language would not be negatively received.

At this juncture, it is important to note that even as this article was being written (October 2009), legislation in St. Croix was being considered regarding the definition of who should be considered Crucian in order to determine who might receive certain benefits under a new Constitution for the US Virgin Islands. Is it only those who were born in St. Croix? Or is it only those people who are African descended? Is it only those people who, regardless of ancestry, have lived in St. Croix for many years? And, if so, how many years would be required? This issue has proved to be highly volatile, and many people have asserted that they consider themselves Crucian, and will not allow any piece of legislation to challenge that sense of identity. But, the sense of personal identity, as indicated by these two young respondents may have less to do with birthright or blood, and more to do with language and cultural inclusion.

10 Attitudes about St. Lucian French lexifier Creole

Several of those who were interviewed were people from St. Lucia, who have lived in St. Croix for years, and one respondent was a first generation person from St. Lucia. Many of these respondents reported that either they or members of their families reserved their creole language exclusively for use at home, in private with family or close friends. One respondent indicated that members of her family and community highly disapproved of her teaching St Lucian Creole to her children, the second generation in St. Croix. This is in the context of concern that the language would be lost in the next generation. Based on the work of Joshua Fishman, Stephen Krashen

and Lily Wong-Fillmore, these fears are well founded. The heritage language is generally lost in the first or second generation after out-migration, especially if there is no conscious or concerted effort to teach the language to the children.

Older speakers of St. Lucian report that when speaking St. Lucian French Lexifier Creole in public, they were mocked, criticized, and called a highly offensive, disparaging name. Consequently, whether in an effort to protect themselves against harm, or a reaction to the negative outsiders, many speakers of St. Lucian adamantly opposed using it outside of private settings. One person said, “Why would you want to use *that* language?” Another person from St. Lucia said she felt the language was “ignorant and uneducated”, and only brings shame to the speaker. Others, generally the younger respondents, reported that they enjoy using the language with their friends and wanted it to survive in the St. Lucian Diaspora in St. Croix.

Preliminary evidence suggests that the first generation born in St. Croix views St. Lucian and its use differently, more positively, than the older generation, who came to St. Croix as youngsters or as adults.

11 Attitudes about Spanish

More than 40% of the population of St. Croix speaks Spanish, but like St. Lucian, Spanish is not generally being taught to the second generation. First generation Spanish speakers who know Crucian or English tend to use those languages at home with their second generation children and are not teaching or using Spanish unless there is an older Spanish speaking relative present, typically, a grandmother. Many Spanish speakers have married Crucian or English speakers, and their mixed heritage children do not typically identify as Latino or as Spanish speakers.

One notable exception was a person of African descent, married to a Crucian, who was a Crucian and Standard English speaker. Upon being interviewed, this respondent spoke about her Latino background, and said that one of her children was highly interested in the Latino heritage, and was most likely, in her opinion, to gravitate toward the Latino groups in St. Croix, and marry a Latino. This respondent was the one exception to the observed tendency for Spanish speakers to assimilate into the Crucian community. This situation appears to be broadly true for the first generation Puerto Rican community, who has come to St. Croix in great numbers, often from Vieques as well as other towns in Puerto Rico since the 1920s. Many of these respondents considered themselves Puerto Rican (or Dominican) but said their children were Crucian, even when their spouses were of Latino heritage.

There are, however, large numbers of recent immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Central and South America who are Spanish dominant, and who

speak Spanish at home. Their children quickly learn Crucian from their friends and schoolmates, as well as English in the schools. However, many of these recently arrived people, and some of their first generation children do not make a distinction between Crucian and English: they consider the languages one and the same. When speaking Crucian they feel they are speaking (Standard) English, and when they are learning Standard English, for example in school, they feel they are learning Crucian. The issue of English language learning in the public schools of St. Croix is complex, and programs have varied over the years (DeJesús, 2009).

One exception to this pattern occurs in the context of business and commerce. Restaurants and stores which cater to people who have arrived from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico or the continent, need to maintain and perfect their Spanish in order to communicate with their clients. The two exceptions of fluent second generation Spanish speakers were the children of commercial people who worked in the family business. Another, first generation Puerto Rican person revealed that she did not know Spanish until she learned it from her husband, a successful store owner, who caters to a Spanish speaking clientele. So long as there is a steady influx of Spanish speaking people, the Spanish language will continue to have a strong presence in St. Croix.

12 Speakers' perceptions

On the one hand, some respondents express concern about a negative reception if they speak Crucian or St. Lucian Creole in public. They worry they might be marginalized, misunderstood, perceived as less educated, less intelligent, or ridiculed. If respondents with these concerns are from St. Lucia, some do not want the second generation to even learn St. Lucian Creole. If such respondents are Crucian, they sometimes worry that their children will not succeed, with Crucian as their language holding them back.

On the other hand, respondents express great pleasure in speaking St. Lucian or Crucian. They enjoy speaking one or both of these languages to family and friends, they often say that these are their languages; they could and should speak them whenever they want to. They also report that they enjoy the comic side of language learning, making jokes and sharing stories about funny situations that arise from the miscues, mispronunciations and miscommunications that frequently occur. These stories produce a smile, not a wince. They are humorous, not painful, never embarrassing, and always enjoyable. The majority of respondents emphasize the common humanity we all share when trying to speak in a new language and living in a pluri-lingual environment.

The message of every story is that communication counts, not correctness. When people need to buy lunch, purchase a tool, or understand the directions of how to get

somewhere, they “use the language they know” in whatever way they can, grammatically or not, for better or worse: they try, they smile, they do not feel ashamed but laugh at their mistakes. “Everyone makes mistakes” and “it’s only human” and “life goes on”.

13 Is this a contradiction?

How is it possible that so many people who express the attitude that Crucian or St. Lucian Creole languages are perceived as being uneducated or inferior, and speakers of these languages are often ridiculed or mocked or treated derisively, are also champions of their creole languages, and experience great pleasure and enjoyment using them? Is this a contradiction? Why is there such a discrepancy regarding something so powerful and so intimately connected to survival and identity as our languages?

14 Two faces

There are two sides of this coin. Perhaps the apparent contradiction has less to do with contradictory attitudes about language than it has to do with other factors. Perhaps the difference between these two types of language situations, often described by the same people – the one humiliating and devastating, the other humorous and human – perhaps the difference is not in the language, but in the context of language use, and the conditions under which it is used.

In his classic book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Dubois said: “One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

There is a double situation, a “two-ness”, perhaps also a double standard. Separated by more than 100 years, Dubois’ observation is echoed by a contemporary observer, who explains it rather clearly. This insight comes from an interview with Mr. Lee Daniels, the young and dynamic African-American film director of *Precious*, a hugely successful movie that received critical acclaim at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for an Oscar award in the United States. When Daniels talks about language and communication in the African-American community, in the United States, he states:

“There are *two faces*” in the African-American community. Rarely are African-American people in the US “*confident enough to have one face.*” There is the “*dialog*” which becomes “*a dialect, when we’re alone.*” But, there is also the “*dialog*” we use “*to succeed in the white*

world". But, this "*feels superficial, it doesn't ring true.*" (italics inserted by the present author)

This interesting and highly honest commentary reveals the fluid way that language moves and changes when people are confident and comfortable, and when they are not. This is perhaps what Dubois meant by the "two-ness" and what may be happening in St. Croix today, depending on the context in which the speaker finds him/herself. It may explain the apparently contradictory attitudes regarding Crucian (and St. Lucian) mentioned above.

Notice, Mr. Daniels refers to "two faces" perhaps the public face and the private face. He notes that rarely are people "*confident enough*" to have only *one face*, suggesting that it is a matter of confidence, of attitude, and that rarely, in his view, do people feel self confident enough to speak their language everywhere and anywhere. The private self must be hidden and protected from possible ridicule or shame. In the interviews mentioned above, two of the speakers said they spoke their own language all of the time, whenever and wherever they wanted: Crucian, in the case of Speaker 4, the woman who runs the Afro-centric restaurant – who even spoke Crucian in the US military service – and Jamaican Creole in the case of speaker 10, the Rastafarian man now living in St. Croix. Both of these people could be regarded as highly self-confident, and perhaps are among those rare people who '*are confident enough*' to have '*one face*':

Whether it is intentional or a slip of the tongue, Mr. Daniels says "*dialog*" which becomes "*dialect* when we are *alone*" but returns to a *dialog* - suggesting learned words and memorized lines, as in a play, or words spoken as in a presentation. It is this "*dialog*" that we learn and "we use" in order to "*succeed in the white world*", the outside world, the public world. But in this "*dialog*" what we say "*feels superficial*". It is not authentic. This dialog "*does not ring true*".

Perhaps this passage explains what is happening in St. Croix, the pluri-lingual, pluri-cultural territory that lives beneath the radar of the US Census report. When people are alone, among people they trust, they feel confident enough to show their true face. Their *dialog* becomes a range of *dialects*, their authentic ways of speaking, "*when we are alone*", in private and not having to recite a "*dialog*" in order "*to succeed in the white world.*" It is only when we need to accomplish something in the world of the dominant culture that we show the second face, the one we need to present if we are "*to succeed in the white world*". But, then, the "dialog" we have to use in order to succeed is not ours. That *dialog feels superficial*, and it *doesn't ring true*. This metaphor is also used by Frantz Fanon in his classic 1967 book of essays on racism

and colonialism, *Black Skin, White Masks*. The two faces, the one true face, the other a mask used to succeed in the world of the dominant culture.

Where there is a dominant language, a dominant discourse, a dominant culture, people feel judged. They feel ignorant, ashamed, and hide their true face behind a mask. People hide their true language, their *dialect* behind a dialog (a learned speech that is not authentic and does not “ring true”) in order to protect themselves. People speak the language they think they are supposed to speak, they learn the *dialog*, but “it feels *superficial*. It doesn’t *ring true*.” In public, correctness is important since we are being judged all the time because of our language and our language skills. The mistakes we make are devastating because they make us seem uneducated. No one tries to understand us – we are always being judged. We can be so easily marginalized, ridiculed, discarded or disparaged just because of a slip of the tongue. Only the rare person who is truly confident can afford to show this face to the world of the dominant culture.

Where there is no dominant language, different people and different languages are accepted. None is given higher status than the others. All languages are simply tools for communication. People try, they speak freely, feel comfortable, show their true face, and focus on communication – not grammar.

In private, communication is important, but not correctness. In private, people don’t judge or feel judged because of their language, or language skills. In private the mistakes we make are “only human”. They are funny, not embarrassing. They lead to laughter not humiliation or shame. In private we speak our *dialect*, and it is not superficial, it rings true. We teach and learn from each other, we live and socialize, and we simply try to understand. We can show our true face, without the mask that we need to succeed in the world of the dominant culture.

15 Living beneath the radar

Just as people live beneath the radar, languages can also live beneath the radar. In private; in the local stores and markets; selling tools or homemade food, produce from the garden, fish from the sea, or crafts made by artisans people interact freely and comfortably. Under the radar, inside of one of the most fiercely monolingual nations on earth today, there exists, unnoticed by the dominant culture, not identified in the dominant discourse heteroglossia - a garden of languages, Pidgins, Creoles and lects within the context of natural and comfortable interaction between people who use the various languages to live. Language learning occurs in a variety of settings – school, at home, among friends and in intimate settings. Under the radar, language is used intentionally and purposefully to communicate, socialize and accomplish daily tasks.

In St. Croix, when people are living their everyday lives, living beneath the radar, monolingualism and monoculturalism are not the norm. When people are living in everyday environments, coexisting, cohabiting, and living their lives they speak any language they can, as best they can. When people come together in a truly plurilingual, pluri-cultural environment, when they are not under the influence of the dominant language, the dominant discourse or the dominant culture, they can remove their masks, speak their true dialects, relax and live.

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ARAWAK VERSUS LOKONO. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

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Denomination of one of the largest and geographically most extensive language families of the Americas, 'Arawak', comes from the name given at a very early stage of the Columbian era by the Europeans to a specific Amerindian group living in the Guianese coastal area in Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and Venezuelan Guayana. Borrowing from European languages - mainly Spanish, English and Dutch - integrated into the Guianese Arawak lexicon has been previously mentioned and analyzed in several studies. The reverse scenario is less well known and documented. A significant number of scientific names of the original flora and fauna of the area and a significant number of vernacular names, have been adopted by the Europeans, who first encountered simultaneously 'the name and the thing' often through contact with the 'Arawaks'. As awareness about the errors made in history has grown, indigenous people are reclaiming their past and their identity. For instance, the group known as 'Guianese Arawaks', have joined efforts in order to promote and develop a written literature. Some now prefer to use the denomination Lokono to refer to themselves. **loko** (plural **lokono**) means: 1. a member of the Arawak/Lokono group; 2. Amerindian; 3. human being. This name is sometimes preferred since it is perceived as a genuine autochthonous denomination.

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THE GUIANESE ARAWAKS

Location and history

The people known as 'Arawak' have been in contact with the Europeans since the earliest days of the Colombian era. They are mentioned in Spanish chronicles as early as the beginning of the 16th century. Their name is differently written '*Arawagoe, Arwacca, Arowacca, Arowak, Arrowouka, Arwac, Arawaca, Arauca, Arrouagues, Allouagues* or *Allouages*' depending of the origin of the writers (English, Dutch, Spanish and French). It has been most commonly retained in the literature as *Aruak* or *Arawak*. The Arawaks are reported to have been living in a vast stretch of coastal and lowland areas near the mouths of the rivers from the Orinoco Valley to the Oiapoque River, from what is now Venezuelan Guayana to Amapa state in Brazil, but

their travelling traditions extended their zone of influence over Guianese inland areas and the neighboring islands as well.

They now live in villages alternating and sometimes coexisting with the Kali'na, another Amerindian group speaking a language belonging to another stock (sometimes called the 'Cariban family' of languages). In Guyana, where they are the most important Amerindian group, the global Arawak population is estimated to be 15000; in Suriname, the 1980 census gives the figures of 700 speakers out of 2,051 individuals; in the French Overseas department of Guiana there are about 150 to 200 speakers out of a total population of 1,500 and the 2009 Ethnologue reports "a few" speakers in Venezuela (Lewis, 2009) They and their language have been named *Lokono* for some decades¹.

Archaeological and linguistic studies have emphasized the role of the Arawaks in the area. Several hypotheses have been proposed for their origin: the Central Amazon seems to be most plausible (Lathrap, 1970) There the Proto-Arawakan speakers would have developed tropical forest agriculture and would have subsequently moved in their canoes along waterways in different directions, pushed progressively by demographic pressures (Lathrap, 1970: 73). It is assumed that the Guianese Arawak/Lokono are descended from the migratory group that moved down the Orinoco to establish itself in the Guianese lowlands.

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In pre-Columbian times, the Guianese region was closely connected with Amazonia, and characterized by complex ethnic and linguistic diversity. This ethnic diversity favoured dense commercial and war contacts that allowed the extensive circulation of prestigious goods from the Upper Orinoco river such as the Amazonian green stones and the famous *kalikuli* (low grade gold plates). These items would be exchanged for a variety of culturally important goods the manufacture of which each ethnic group would specialize in. Motivated by war or trade, long distance expeditions preferably used specific water routes, by river or by sea. According to Boomert (2000), the Lower Orinoco constituted a strategic position long before the arrival of the Europeans. Located in between the Caribbean islands and the Amazonian Highlands, this region was the point where coastal and insular products such as salt and pearls could be exchanged for products of inland origin. .

Neighboring Trinidad, called *Kairi* ('island') in the Arawak language, controlled access to Paria Gulf and the mouth of the Orinoco River. For centuries the Europeans would follow the routes established previously by the Amerindians, in their futile search for the mythical kingdom of Eldorado. In 1596 one of them, Sir Walter

¹ First mentions in scholar studies are to be found in the fifties. See for example N. Hickerson (1954) and D. Taylor (1955).

Raleigh, published *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, where he mentioned the name of the aboriginal people of Trinidad:

“This Iland is called by the people therof **Cairi**, and in it are divers nations: those about Parico are called Iaio, those at Punta Carao are of the **Arwacas**, and betweene Carao and Curiapan they are called Saluaios, betweene Carao and Punto Galera are the Nepoios, and those about the Spanish Citie tearme themselues **Carinepagotos**”. (p. 3, emphasis by the author)

Arwacas and *Carinepagotos* are undoubtedly the ancestors of today's Guianese *Arawaks* and *Kali'nas*. As mentioned above, the *Kali'nas* belong to the non-Arawakan ‘Carib’ stock: they were called *Galibi* by the French and *Carib* by the English and the Dutch. Traditional enemies, *Arawaks* and *Kali'nas* were fighting for hegemony on the mainland, on the coastal area of Guiana, and on the neighboring islands. As in other parts of the Americas, the Europeans took advantage of such rivalries among indigenous peoples. Apart from on the island of Trinidad, contemporary records locate the *Arawaks* along the lowlands of the Guianese coast. This thrust them into early contact with the Europeans. Even though these contacts were many a time far from peaceful, the Europeans learned much from their experience with the *Arawaks*.

Toponymy confirms the presence of the *Arawaks* in the area. The name of many rivers can be interpreted as a compound where the second element *oni ~ini* is translatable in *Arawak* by "water" as in *Marowini* (Marowine), *Dumaruni* (Demerara), *Cussewini*, *Cuyuni*, *Mazaruni*, *Rupununi*, *Corentini* (Courantyne) ... or *aima ~ eima* "mouth": *Coppename*, *Suriname*... Similarly, the European designations for local fauna and flora often retain their indigenous names. So, **hau**, a word for "sloth" in the *Arawak* language, has certainly generated Guianese French *ai*, with the same meaning. This is also the case for a species of heron, known in *Arawak/Lokono* by the name **honoli**. This word has to be compared with *onoré* which is said to have been a generic term denoting the heron in French Guiana. “*In the past, the word onoré denoted all species of heron in Cayenne [French Guiana].*” (Le Dreff & Le Guen, 2004: 30, translation by the author). It is retained nowadays in vernacular French as for example *onoré rayé* (striped *onoré*, *Tigrisoma Lineatum*). Another example is the Scarlet Ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*), a species of ibis that inhabits tropical South America including Trinidad and Tobago; its *Arawak* name, possibly an ideophone, **korokoro**, is reflected in Venezuelan Spanish *corocoro* and in Guyanese English *curriecurrie*. The trajectory of a denomination is frequently difficult to trace: a small insect known as 'firefly' in English is called **kokuyo** in *Arawak* and *cocuyo* in Venezuela; this name has been recorded in Taino, another *Arawakan* language, once spoken in the Greater Antilles. In this case, we can assume as highly probable that it entered the Guianese *Arawak* lexicon via Spanish.

Although it is often difficult to assess the origin of a word in a multilingual society that is poorly historically documented, it is at least plausible that a good number of vernacular terms in the Guianese region are derived from the Arawak language. The name *marail* (*Penelope marail*), for example, which denotes a bird found in Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela, can be compared with Arawak **marodi**. In Dutch this bird is called *marail* (or *sjakohoen*); in French: *marail*; in Surinamese: *marai* (or *busikrakun*) and in Kali'na: *malai* (or *poli*). In other cases, the original name has been lost in the Arawak language and replaced by another one: the word **kibirole** registered by the eighteenth century Missionaries is now forgotten and Arawaks use nowadays **kibiwarha** (derived from *kapijva* in the Guarani language, reflected in English "capybara" and *capivara* in Portuguese) or **kapoa**, while the French *cabiai* retains the ancient Arawak designation.

The local flora and fauna has been thoroughly studied in Guyana by the Guyana Forestry Commission since the forties. In his analysis, the botanist D.B. Fanshawe (1949) gives an abundant list of plant names taken from the Arawak lexicon. As he points out himself: "it is largely these names or their derivatives which are in current usage in the colony" (i.e. British Guiana). More recently, an inventory of Surinamese woody plants gives a list of vernacular names and an index of scientific names (Den Outer, 2001).. Some of the list included tropical trees found in the Guyanese forest which may be best known because of their trade value. Among them, the scientific name *Kakaralli Eschweilera spp.* and the vernacular names *kakaralli* or *kakeralli* come from Arawak **kakarhali**²; similarly, *Wallaba Eperua spp.* and the vernacular term *wallaba* can be connected with Arawak **walaba**; *Carapa guianensis*, vernacular *carapa* in Venezuela, *krapa* in Surinam with Arawak **karapa**; *Simarouba amara* and vernacular *simaruba* in Venezuela and *soemaroeba* in Surinam, with Arawak **shimarupa** and *Shibadan Aspidosperma album* and vernacular *shibadan* from Arawak **shibadan** -actually a compound formed from **shiba**, 'rock' and **dan**, 'tree'.

Most often, the Arawak designation is retained in one or several of the vernacular names given to a species: for example a tree named 'greenheart' (scientific denomination: *Ocotea rodiaei*) has several common names among which *bibiru* in Guyana and *beeberoe* in Suriname, from Arawak **bibiro**. Another example is the species *Dicorynia guianensis* (or *Dicorynia paraensis*): its common name *basralocus*, reflects its Arawak origin **barhâkarhobali** -from **barhâ** 'sea', **karho** 'pebble' or 'pearl', **bali** 'similar to'- better captured in one of its vernacular names in use in Suriname: *barakaroeballi*.

² Kakaralli trees (*Eschweilera spp.*), are also known for their various medicinal properties.

Etymology

The origin of the name “Arawak” is not firmly established. Some scholars explain it as a compound that would mean “manioc eater” (said to derive from Guianese Arawak *aru*, today **harho**, ‘manioc starch’, which would be a reference to the agricultural tradition of this people); others connect it with *arhoa* which means ‘jaguar’ in the language. However, it is more likely - as Boomert (1984) suggests - that this denomination originated in a settlement named *Aruacay* situated on the left bank of Lower Orinoco, north of the present day city of Barrancas in Venezuela. By extension, the denomination would have spread in such a way that it referred not only to the inhabitants of Aruacay but also to all the individuals speaking the same language – an important population permanently connected by sea or by river.

Nowadays the word *arawak* refers also to a large linguistic stock which brings together numerous languages – not equally known and studied – widely distributed on the American continent from Belize to northern Argentina, and from the mouth of the Amazon River eastwards, as indicated on the map below



Approximate locations of the Principal Arawakan Languages (map by Rozenn Douaud, who has graciously allowed me to use it)

The Arawaks and the Arawak stock

The word Arawak thus refers thus to a specific Guianese people, its language and the family that its language belongs to. Mostly based upon the Missionary texts, the XIXth century comparativists such Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929), Paul Rivet (1876-1958) and Lucien Adam (1833-1918) situated the Guianese Arawak/Lokono language in the linguistic family it belongs to, named after this specific language.

The first person who suggests this notion is the Italian Jesuit priest F. S. Gilij (1721-1789) who lived almost twenty years on the Middle Orinoco River in the second half of the 18th century. In his *Ensayo de historia americana* (Gilij, 1965) he mentions 45 languages

spoken in the region. He discovers through comparison that some languages are as similar to one another as are Italian and French, or even as similar to one another as different Italian dialects. He thus found it convenient to distinguish between *matrix* languages and those which are dialects of the former. The “Carib” language (Kali'na) he considered as a matrix language. Another of Gilij's matrix languages is Maïpure having seven *dialects* in the region which he connects to the Bolivian Mojo. He erroneously classes Guianese Arawak (*Aruáco*) apart from Maipure, due to his own lack of knowledge of this particular language (Gilij, 1965, Vol.3: 205).

The linguistic work of Gilij was a pioneering one. His groupings of the Orinoco languages are still valuable. In particular, his discovery of the “Maipure” family (which would be called later “Arawak” or “Arawakan”) allowed for future developments in the comparison of this language stock. The name “Maipure” was retained by some later researchers, like the French, L. Adam, and the Dutch, C. H. de Goeje, (1893-1955). Nowadays it is utilised by some North American linguists to refer to a group of very closely related languages within the now well established wider Arawakan family. (Payne, 1991). The designations used in this paper are “Arawak” and “Lokono” to refer to the Guianese people and their language, and “Arawakan” for the family or stock of related languages to which the Arawak/Lokono language belongs.

THE TAINOS IN THE GREATER ANTILLES

Among the Amerindian tribes living in the Greater Antilles at the first arrival of the Europeans, the Tainos occupied a dominant position. Although the documents left by the Spaniards, chroniclers, friars and soldiers, give us a fragmentary and often biased vision of this highly sophisticated society, they nevertheless give us clues as to its identity, as well as a good number of lexical items. When the Europeans landed in America, they would call “Tainos” the aboriginal people occupying most of the Greater Antilles, including Puerto Rico, Hispaniola (Santo Domingo and Haiti) and the eastern region of Cuba. The Tainos were also present on the other islands, particularly Jamaica, the Lucayan islands (the Bahamas) and the south of what is now Florida. They were probably descended from Arawakan speaking groups that had migrated from the mainland. It is generally believed that they had reached the Antilles about 1500 years before the Europeans, introducing agriculture and ceramics to the islands. They are thus responsible for the adaptative process that resulted in the emergence of a distinct Taino cultural complex, about 300 years before the arrival of the Europeans.

The rather complex social, political and religious organization of the Taino people was perhaps unique in the Antillean region. They had developed an economic system that was based essentially on agriculture, which led them to live in big villages, ruled by a leader or *cacique*, assisted by a high ranking group class called the *nitaino*, while the rest of the people, called the *naboria* devoted itself to agricultural tasks and other services. From *nitaino* comes *Taino*, the name by which their entire civilization would come to be known.

Our knowledge of the aboriginal people at the time of the arrival of the Europeans depends essentially upon the records written by those who were responsible of their collapse. Although archeology helps in completing the image of this lost world, we must take into account that these societies had developed a culture based upon the production of perishable material. The archeological remains cannot but little reflect the high degree of civilization they had reached. Nevertheless, the contemporary records provide us with many clues, including elements of the lexicon. In a recent study, J. Granberry and G. Vescelius (2004) use these elements to formulate a new hypothesis concerning the origins and migrations of the aboriginal peoples of the Greater Antilles. According to them the Proto-Tainos, a Cedrosan Northwest Maipurean people, would have entered the Lesser Antilles between 400 BC to 0 AD, and the Greater Antilles around 0 AD.

For the purpose of this study, we note some Taino words that have been adopted into European languages, and some others that are reflected in the lexica of local dialects of European languages, mostly in Caribbean Spanish; particularly in the dialects of coastal Colombia and Venezuela.

Taino Contributions to European Languages

The Europeans found a new environment in the islands of the Caribbean. In their reports they often gave the indigenous name when they described animals, trees, plants and natural elements which were new for them. Taino (T) words denoting species of the local fauna such as **iguana** (T *iwana*), **caiman** (T *caimán*), and **manatee** (T *manati*) have been borrowed and subsequently adopted by Metropolitan dialects of European languages. Fruits like **papaya** (T *papaya*; *Carica papaya*) and **guava** (T *wayaba*) were described, and imported with their aboriginal name. Of great importance was the cultivation of manioc or **cassava** (T *cazabi*). It is believed that it was imported by the Arawaks into the Antilles from Amazonia. Corn or **maize** (T *mahici*, *mahiz*; *Zea mays*) is another important contribution to world food resources; it was wide spread through Central and South America and was known also by North American indigenous peoples. It was first made known to in the Caribbean islands and its most common denomination has a Taino origin in several European languages (Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian, French).

Natural elements previously unknown to them drew the attention of the European chroniclers: the term **savannah** (T *sabana*), designating extensive grasslands without high vegetation or flowers, now denotes this natural ecosystem typical of tropical regions in any part of the world. Similarly, the frequency and violence of the **hurricanes** (T *huracán*) motivated the importation of the Taino word to many European languages. Manufactured goods were transmitted with their local names: the **canoe** (T *canoa*) - (a Taino vessel that could contain several dozen individuals) had been retained in Arawak/Lokono as **kanoa** - and the **hammock** (T *hamaca*) was quickly adopted by European sailors. The Europeans learnt these manufactures and passed them on to other generations, together with their original Taino designations.

Taino words in Caribbean Spanish

Caribbean dialects of Spanish which developed in the situation of colonial contact, have retained in their lexica more Taino words than the Metropolitan European dialects of Spanish. Many of the Taino derived items belong to the lexical field of botany: some of them are found in both vernacular and scientific denominations. Examples are: **ceiba**, a genus of trees whose seeds are enveloped in silky hairs, or “silk-tree” (*Ceiba pentandra* is the national tree of Guatemala); **hobo** (*Spondias mombin*), fat-pork tree, **hicaco**; (*Chrysobalanus icaco* L., also *icaquier* in French). The soursop is known in the Caribbean by its vernacular name in Spanish *guanábana* (T. **guanábana**); French has derived *anone* from another Taino word, which is also retained in the scientific denomination, **annonna**. The same holds for other botanical terms. Some of them belong to the culinary legacy of the islands. Hot pepper, cultivated and crucially important in Central and South American customary food, is known in the Caribbean region as *ají* (T **ahí**). The peanut, which is used in Mexican dishes, and is processed to a paste popular in many countries, is named after Taino **maní** in Caribbean Spanish.

Most of these words, if not all, probably entered the regional Spanish language at a very early stage of Spanish expansion into the Caribbean islands and the neighboring Mainland. This applies also to other items: a kind of vine or reed named **bejuco**; a rope or cord, especially one made from pita fibre, **cabuya** (or **buya**, that would then be associated with attributive **ka-**), or animals, such as **comejen**, ‘termite’. **Bija** (*Bixa orellana*), which denotes a shrub or small tree from the tropical region of the American continent, was culturally important as the source of the natural pigment called also *bija* or *annatto* (Spanish *onoto*), produced from the fruit, which was used in bodypainting. Another name, *achiote*, derives from the Nahuatl word for the shrub, *achiotl*. It is known in French as *rocou*, from its Tupi name *urucu*. All these terms are commonly used in Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries.

The processing of bitter manioc, in Caribbean Spanish **yuca** (T *yuca*), is a technique that requires some specific tools that have been retained in Spanish: the **sebucán** (T *cibucán*), a kind of basketwork muff open at its upper and closed at its lower end, where the grated cassava is pressed in order to eliminate the toxic juice; the **batea**, a trough where the dough obtained is stored; the **budare** (T *buren*), a flat plate made of clay – or metal, nowadays – used over an open flame to griddle the cassava.

From Taino agricultural and housing patterns come also: **conuco**, small holding in Venezuela, **bohío** (T *bohio*), hut, shack; and **caney**, large shed with a roof made of thatch or palm. The manufacture of **cayuco**³, a small canoe, is still practiced in coastal Venezuela where it is still used and known by the same word in the local dialect of Spanish.

Taino *caya* (or *cayo*) ‘island’ is reflected in Spanish *cayo*⁴ English *key*, in toponymic compounds to designate small islands in Florida, for example, Key West, Key Largo. Similarly, **xagüe(y)**, ‘natural sink-hole’, has been retained in Caribbean Spanish with the form *jagüey*, ‘natural or artificial well’.

THE ‘CARIBS’ OF THE LESSER ANTILLES

Another group of Arawakan descent that inhabited the Lesser Antilles in Columbian era had a less disastrous fate than that of the Tainos. This indigenous human group is known in the literature as “Island Caribs” and “Black Caribs”, after Father Raymond Breton, the first man who described their language that he called “*caraiibe des îles*” (Island Carib). He is the first to state that the men called themselves **Kalinago** and the women **Kalipuna**, both names retained to designate their descendants. Their story is a good illustration of the cultural and ethnic complexity of the region.

In historical records, the Amerindians named **Eyeri** (or *Iñeri*, *Igneri*...) are said to be the first inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles. The linguistic data, as meager as it is, allows us to classify the language as Arawakan. The estimated time of their arrival in the Lesser Antilles is around the first centuries A.D.⁵ Although many scholars now reject the historical accounts that were written about the ‘Caribs’ during the colonial period, these accounts claim that in the course of the 15th century, not very long before the arrival of the Europeans, warlike Kali'na invaded the Lesser Antilles. These accounts (which many consider to be nothing more than legends) say that the ‘Caribs’ exterminated the Eyeri men and married the women. But it is now believed that

³ This word has entered European standard Spanish. The *Diccionario de la lengua española de la Real Academia española* defines it as: *embarcación india de una pieza, más pequeña que la canoa, con el fondo plano y sin quilla, que se gobierna y mueve con el canaleta.*

⁴ Also standard Spanish. The *Diccionario de la lengua española de la Real Academia española* gives the following definition: *(voz antillana) cualquiera de las islas rasas, arenosas, frecuentemente anegadizas y cubiertas en gran parte de mangle, muy comunes en el mar de las Antillas y en el golfo mejicano.*

⁵ Granberry & Vescelius (2004) date the arrival of the Eyeri in the Lesser Antilles 500 A. D.

another scenario is at least as plausible: this people speaking another language and traditionally opposed to the Guianese Arawaks progressively established themselves in the Lesser Antilles, infiltrating the Eyeri population in a less radical but very effective way.

Whichever way it happened, the Caribs set up home and started families with the Eyeri Arawak islander women. Thus starts a process which has been much commented upon and diversely interpreted. These newcomers appear to have belonged to a prestigious warlike group, traditionally opposed to the Guianese Arawaks. It is believed now that their language should be best considered as a trade jargon based on the Kali'na language (Hoff, 1995). It certainly gained social prestige as they gained power in the islands. In these islands, the language of the defeated *Eyeri* (Arawak stock) was generally spoken by the islanders, especially the women who were born and raised in the Lesser Antilles. The sons of these women and of the *Kaliña* men coming from the mainland (Carib stock), were educated by the Eyeri speaking women. When they grew up, the young boys would become closer to their fathers and accompany them in their activities and learn the specific lexicon recorded in Breton's writings as the 'men's language'. The descendants of these Guianese Carib men recognized themselves as members of the paternal line and identified themselves as Carib. But in early childhood, youngsters, boys as well as girls, spoke *Eyeri*, their mothers' language. Later on, when they were initiated into masculine activities they would learn elements of their fathers' language - or jargon. In any case, the so-called 'men's language' spoken by the young men was certainly greatly influenced by the maternal language, the Arawak language originally spoken in the islands.

Elements of the languages of the Lesser Antilles were hardly recorded in the earliest period of European conquest, because these islands did not interest the Europeans other than as ports of call on the way to the continent. The first substantial records of linguistic data date from the 17th century, when the aboriginal populations are besieged by the Europeans. Father Breton (1609-1679) who lived in Dominica between 1641 and 1653 describes the 'Island Carib' people and language in his "*Grammaire caraïbe*" published fourteen years after he left the Antilles (Breton, 1667). From his description, the Island Carib language clearly emerges as an Arawakan language with loans from Kali'na lexicon.

Chroniclers describe the life in the islands. The economy was essentially based upon slash and burn horticulture. Basic production of the staple food cassava was in the hands of women, with men devoting their time to hunting, fishing, house and boat construction and war. The society was based upon a clear sexual division of labor. The women were responsible for the cooking, the raising of children, and the weaving of cotton, while the men made the tools that they used in their activities. The sexual

division is intensified by the existence of a good number of taboos such as those that forbid the men from performing some female tasks.

This clear sexual division of labor was certainly partly responsible for the perpetuation of a linguistic situation which has been much discussed as an interesting and somewhat unique case of bilingualism: the existence within the community of ‘two languages’, the ‘men’s language’ and the ‘women’s language’

These so-called ‘Caribs’ resisted European conquest most effectively on two islands; Dominica and St Vincent. In 1635, two boats of black slaves ran aground near Saint Vincent. The hospitality of the aboriginals towards the shipwrecked Blacks attracted fugitive slaves from the neighboring islands. The resulting mixing gave birth to the **Black Caribs**. Even though they are phenotypically more African than Amerindian, and even if their language is basically Arawak, the Black Caribs who designate themselves as **Kalinago**, identify themselves culturally and linguistically as Caribs. They were about 10,000 Kalinago in the middle of 18th century. Some of them were inducted by the French to support them in their wars against the English. When the English finally defeated the French on St. Vincent, in 1797, almost the entire Kalinago population of about 5,000 was transported by the British first to Balliceaux island (where half of them perished) and then to the Bay Islands and the Caribbean coast of Honduras. At present their descendants are a community who call themselves **Garifuna** (plural **Garinagu**), totalling as many as 190,000 individuals⁶, in Honduras, Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua at least half of whom still speak their ancestral Arawakan language. In the meantime, in the Lesser Antilles, the ‘Carib’ communities that remained are being progressively absorbed by a mainly black population. At the end of the 19th century, they numbered several hundred. The language disappeared in the first half of the 20th century. About 3,000 people living now in Dominica and St Vincent call themselves Kalinago.

ARAWAK versus LOKONO

The denominations ‘Island Carib’ and ‘Black Carib’ are thus misleading, from both a historical and a linguistic point of view. Taken up by the modern society living now in Dominica, the adoption of the ethnic label *Kalinago* has certainly been motivated by the symbolic value of the word and the positive self-image it casts, both internally and externally. In the case of Arawak/Lokono in the Guianas, a discussion has recently arisen as to which name should be uniformly adopted as their self-denomination. Although both names ‘Arawak’ and ‘Lokono’ have been used for several decades in the areas where the language is spoken – mainly Guyana, Suriname and the French Overseas Department of Guiana – it is now much debated whether it would be best to choose one or another designation. Some leaders dismiss ‘Arawak’ because they

⁶ 1997, SIL estimation. Other estimates give a much higher figure, up to 600,000 including Mexico and USA.

consider it as having been imposed by outsiders. For example, one of the leaders of the GOIP (Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People) in Guyana maintains that: “ We don't say ‘Arawak’ in the GOIP since that word started after Columbus in 1492. ” Others, aware of its polysemy, do not accept the term ‘Lokono’. In any case, the Kalinago example shows, that the adoption of an ethnonym is less motivated by linguistic factors than by issues related to self-image, where social prestige and position in a larger, dominant society play a significant part.

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CONSCIOUS CHOICE AND CONSTRUCTED IDENTITIES: A STUDY OF WRITTEN CODESWITCHING BETWEEN CRUCIAN AND STANDARD ENGLISH IN ST. CROIX

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1 Abstract

This paper addresses codeswitching in the often neglected genre of non-fiction through an analysis of text in the public domain. The corpus encompasses writing for social purposes, information, entertainment, communication and self-expression in a wide spectrum of media including: graffiti, public signs and notices, online discussion, newspapers and published non-fiction. The data was gathered during intensive fieldwork in St. Croix, May 2010, through archive research as well as reading in public spaces. This paper will evaluate the extent to which codeswitching is present in each format and address how situational factors and subject matter influence language choice.

Analysis shows that because Crucian (the English lexifier Creole spoken in St. Croix) has rarely been written and a standardized orthography has never been devised, Virgin Islands or United States Standard English is the unmarked choice in informational “high status” text. Material written to entertain however uses codeswitching between Standard English and Crucian as a narrative or comic device and is characteristically linked to content. Code choice in online social networking varies as a conscious effort to express identity and establish group affiliation. This construction of identity is also reflected in street level, traditionally “low status” texts which use Crucian as the unmarked choice to reclaim public space. This paper seeks to demonstrate that the unique political and linguistic history of St. Croix affects language choice in the public domain and reflects a tradition of control and rebellion in which people use language as an identity marker and a form of linguistic resistance.

2 Theoretical Framework

Myers-Scotton defines codeswitching as the use of more than one language, dialect, or style of the same language in the course of a single communicative episode. This

description is elaborated within the framework of the markedness model which explains how established expectations in a community, defined as a set of rights and obligations, determine code choice to some extent in any given communicative exchange. Myers-Scotton stresses that codeswitching is a type of skilled performance in which the speaker negotiates multiple identities based on a sense of markedness regarding available linguistic codes for any interaction (Myers-Scotton, 1993). This theory proposes that all speakers have an internalized set of parameters enabling them to recognize the extent to which all language choices are more or less ‘marked’ in a specific situation. Although Myers-Scotton’s model is developed specifically with oral discourse in mind, this paper will examine how contributors to written text in the public domain also use an internalized set of parameters to negotiate identity and meaning through levels of markedness in code choice. This paper also adheres to the notion that codeswitching is not a linguistic inadequacy but a conscious choice which necessitates proficiency and metalinguistic awareness.

Diglossia, as defined by Ferguson (1959), classifies communicative interaction in communities that make complementary use of two distinct formal and informal codes. These diglossic exchanges exist within a context of language conflict whereby one ‘high’ code is used in situations of high status and the other ‘low’ code is preferred in more informal circumstances. Although I acknowledge the increasing availability of Spanish to the plurilingual speakers of St. Croix, this paper will focus primarily on the use and differing registers of a Virgin Island Standard English and Crucian (an English lexifier Creole) as they exist in diglossic conflict in the corpus of written non-fiction. This sociolinguistic context of communication in St. Croix is comparable to recent studies in Jamaican Creole and Jamaican Standard English (Hinrichs, 2006) in which Creoles are characterized as functioning alternately with another (generally European) language according to certain status expectations of the communicative episode.

3 Review of the literature

For sheer human interest and drama, the linguistic focus on Caribbean Creole has taken second place to an interest in political history. Linguistic development has likewise been explored through the genesis of national identity, inextricably bound with slavery and following the African Diaspora to the Americas, specifically in the ‘deep’ creoles of Jamaica in the Caribbean (Beverly, 2004), and Suriname in South America (Huttar et al., 2007). Creolists have often focused on fictional stories by ‘folk speakers’ to capture a sense of the traditional language as spoken by people living in rural areas. I believe however that there is significant need to concentrate on data that is more reflective of communication in the contemporary public domain. Thus, the

corpus of this study adds to the comparatively small body of research on codeswitching in non-fiction writing and computer mediated communication.

Oral codeswitching in an educational context, encompassing both peer discourse and instructional language, has been the focus of considerable attention in recent years (Moodley, 2007; Wei & Martin, 2009). Although there is currently little research on *written* codeswitching, investigators such as Losey (2009) and Rosowski (2010) are prioritizing the analysis of text based code choice in bilingual education. These studies offer sociolinguistic insights such as how oral codeswitching is regarded as acceptable bilingual talk in the community, yet language variation in the classroom is often deemed inappropriate or unacceptable, and as a deficit or dysfunctional mode of interaction (Wei & Martin, 2009). A brief reference to the ever-increasing literature on classroom codeswitching provides clear evidence of the tensions that exist in an educational context, reflective of language attitudes at a wider community level - based on the premise that school conditioning prompts many of our internalized judgments relating to preferred language choice and thus directly informs Myers-Scotton's parameters of rights and obligation.

Although there are a limited number of studies based on code choice in computer mediated communication, Van Gass (2008) explores the characteristics of Afrikaans-English code switching via internet relay chat that makes creative use of spelling, punctuation and capitalization to simulate the prosodic features of speech as a conscious effort to encode feelings in written text. She also concludes that English is the unmarked choice with variation generally correlating with different functions or topics, functioning as a discourse strategy and contextualization cue. Hinrichs (2006) stresses the importance of personal involvement over that of topic as a trigger for online codeswitching and specifically details contextual cues and discourse markers such as voicing, paraphrase, greetings and religious content that motivates deviation from an unmarked English code. The suggestion of linguistic 'triggers' is further investigated in oral codeswitching between Dutch and English in Broersma (2009) who concludes that variation occurs more frequently next to cognates and proper nouns, and that the extent of codeswitching depends on the frequency of these trigger words in any one communicative episode.

The corpus of this study is wide ranging and includes online chat which appropriates spontaneous discourse, narrative non-fiction, informational text and writing for expressive purposes in a variety of media. I have therefore made reference to a range of studies, in both the fields of written and spoken discourse including code variation and switching. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the often neglected genre of nonfiction using comparative analysis with a specific focus on constructed identities

within Myers-Scotton's markedness model which accounts for this contrastive behavior through consideration of convergence and divergence strategies aimed at constructing positive social identities. In doing so, I refer to the work of Hobbs (2004) and Callahan (2004) in applying oral language frame models to written language.

HISTORY OF ST. CROIX

4 Political history

An analysis of code choice that refers to construction of identity and linguistic resistance in St. Croix would be incomplete without proper acknowledgement of the island's unique history fraught with political rivalry and conflict between indigenous inhabitants, European powers and slaves brought from Africa. The first known Indian inhabitants of the island were fiercely suppressed and largely eliminated by Spanish royal decree after Columbus' first visit in 1493 to the island he named 'Santa Cruz'. Interested predominantly in gold to send back to the homeland, the reports that spread on the sea trading routes of a rich land attracted the Spanish, yet due to conflicts with Indians, bad weather, minimal findings and the presence of the preferred sea port of San Juan, Puerto Rico – interest rapidly decreased, and by 1596 the Virgin Islands were largely uninhabited.

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Despite Spanish sovereignty, the Dutch and English settled almost simultaneously on opposing sides of the island in the early 1600s – a situation that inevitably caused conflict between the two European powers vying to control the newly established trade outpost. During this time the lands were surveyed and distributed into plantations and rural populations vastly outnumbered urban settlers. The Spanish, uncomfortable with Dutch and English colonies on their territory, attacked them and again left the island sparsely inhabited until the French captured St. Croix in 1651, to rule during a brief period of disease and ill fortune. The island was then largely forgotten until St. Croix was bought as a private estate by the Governor of St. Kitts and deeded to the Knights of Malta for a short disorganized period until they sold the territory in 1665 to the French West Indian Company. The plantation system thrived for a short time thereafter producing tobacco, cotton, sugar cane and indigo, but drought and sickness ended this brief period of relative prosperity. The French had abandoned the island for nearly 40 years before they sold St. Croix to Denmark in 1733, after which time the plantation system was resurrected with slave labor and the sugar industry flourished.

The Danish were extremely strict with slaves and prospered immensely from their labor, but they also had trade links with the British colonies and found it difficult to maintain slavery after the British outlawed it in 1833. The Danish published a royal

decree in 1847 that promised emancipation, but not for another 12 years. A rebellion followed in which European descended landowners fled to ships in the harbor and the slaves besieged the fort in Frederiksted threatening to burn the town, resulting in an immediate emancipation decree in 1848. Economic hardship led to government imposed compulsory labor laws however and meant that the newly freed workers were still subjugated to long hours and little pay which prompted a second revolt - the Fireburn of 1878 that destroyed much of Frederiksted and many plantations around the island. The Danish government increasingly saw the colony as an economic liability and entered into negotiations to sell the island to the United States in 1865 but the deal was not finalized until 1917 under the threat of German encroachment into the Caribbean. United States citizenship was granted in 1927 and St. Croix now has democratic control over local government appointments and taxes. Since 1954 there have been five attempts to gain increased control but each time a popular referendum has rejected the changes in favor of retaining the current status.

5 Language history

Throughout its turbulent history, speakers of Arawakan languages, Spanish, Dutch, English, French, Danish and numerous African languages have inhabited the island of St. Croix. The question arises therefore as to how English came to be the dominant language, and why the vernacular language spoken in St. Croix is an English-lexifier Creole as opposed to any of the other languages in the island's history. The neighboring and Spanish speaking US territory of Puerto Rico demonstrates that despite rigorous efforts to impose English on island residents under US administration, the current status of an island as a US territory does not necessarily dictate contemporary language use. Although the purpose of this paper is not to offer an investigation into the emergence of a Crucian Creole, an overview can be gleaned from a cursory examination of administrative policy over the course of the island's history.

Before Danish rule in 1733, periods of colonization were characterized by subsequent abandonment during which time no resident population maintained a common language. After the Danish allowed immigrants from other nationalities to move into their colonies, English soon became the lingua franca between the settler populations, and consequently the language of daily conversation and trade. Under the Danish, elementary education became obligatory in 1839, and was provided free for both slave and free residents of the Island with English as the dominant language of public schools after 1850. This did not affect most wealthy Danish-speaking families however as they maintained a strict culture of separation from laborers and slave populations, sending their children to small private schools or employing personal tutors. When the US gained control of the territory in 1917 English was also imposed

as the language of law and national commerce. The Organic Act of 1936 allowed all adult residents to vote if they were citizens of the US and could read in English, further establishing the links between the English language and power on the island. Thus today St. Croix has a plurilingual population who predominantly use United States or Virgin Islands Standard English for high status educational or international communications, and an English lexifier Creole established during the time of the Danish administration as the language of daily contact.

Di Pietro notes that “the identity of Crucian English is difficult to establish” yet asserts that the base dialect definable as Creole can be placed in opposition to a standard or “high” variety – essentially allowing variation between two linguistic extremes on what might approximate a Creole Continuum following DeCamp’s 1971 model. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to Crucian as an English lexifier *Creole*, yet it is also important to recognize that there are many people (including Crucian speakers) who perceive ‘Crucian’ not as a separate linguistic code, but a low status variation of Standard English that makes liberal use of urbanized vernacular. Others see Crucian as a *patois* derived from pidgin varieties of English, Portuguese and French spread among West African slaves from the late seventeenth century onward. These perspectives are within the scope of this study as they affect an individual’s cultural values and therefore influence the parameters of the rights and obligations set as defined by Myers-Scotton (1993).

6 Methodology

This paper examines data collected in the public domain during intensive short term fieldwork in St. Croix in May 2010 and via non fiction library and online archives. Signs, notices and graffiti mostly in the urban areas of Christiansted and Frederiksted were observed, photographed and recorded throughout this period. Data was gathered from currently circulating and archived newspapers, including: *The Virgin Islands Daily News* and *The St. Croix Avis*, covering the period from April 2010 to May 2010. Although currently out of print, editions of *The Island Melee*, were reviewed in archive collections as they contribute significant data on language use in the high status genre of satirical news publication. Data posted online throughout May 2010 was used in the corpus, specifically from the social networking site *Facebook*, the political forum site *Crucians in Focus* and current affairs domain *De Man Say*. All material obtained online maintains the spelling, symbols and orthographic features of the original contributor and wherever it affects code choice, context is given as to the thread of the conversation or the article published. The lack of a standardized orthography reflects the nature of a people who are extremely creative with language, and for the purposes of this study, I will use the spelling *Crucian* although I

acknowledge that the terms *Cruzian* and *Cruxian* have been used in both academic and social spheres.

The data used in this study encompasses writing for social purposes, for information, entertainment, communication and self-expression in a wide spectrum of registers and mediums. The purpose of this distribution was to permit the examination and comparison of language variation across both medium and content. Excluding *The Island Melee*, all publications, graffiti, signs and online posts were published or observed during May 2010, and subsequently compared with archives of online posts and publications to ensure that the materials selected included characteristic features that are representative of the general nature of language use. For the purposes of this study, I will refer to authors of all text types as *contributors*, recognizing the unique nature of each written text as a contribution to an ongoing public discourse.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

7 Code choice and situational features

Lito Valls (1981) introduces his dictionary of Virgin Islands English Creole with a paraphrase of Emerson's sentiment "speak with the vulgar, think with the wise" to explain how he considers English the language of our head and Creole the language of our heart. His introductory note exposes a prejudice that permeates all forms of writing concerned in this study, namely that the language of thought and intelligence is English and in contrast Creole reflects emotive (and therefore vulgar) sentiments. This was apparent in the data collected from two high status sources *The Virgin Islands Daily News* and *The St. Croix Avis* which both used predominantly United States Standard English (USSE), and reflected local issues with emotive headlines in a more informal register or with the use of a more localized Virgin Islands Standard English (VISE) rather than Crucian. Consider for example, the May 24th issue of *The Virgin Islands Daily News* which ran formal headlines such as *Board requires emergency plan for each school* and *Diageo's construction of rum distillery ahead of schedule* using formal USSE to report articles of educational and commercial interest; both typically high status fields. A comparative USSE informal register was used in headlines for more emotive reports of a local fundraiser: *With woofs and wags, dogs aid Animal Care Center* and street violence *Guns claim kids' lives in both urban, rural areas*. The nominal alliterative use of *woofs and wags* reflects the playful nature of the content, and the emotive reference to *kids' lives* reflects the passionate response of the protective adult community. Minimal use of VISE as seen in the headline *South Africa cruises past Windies in 1st One Day International* seeks to unite communities through a shared identity, and in this particular instance appealing to West Indies supporters by invoking the nickname *Windies*.

The St. Croix Avis also used USSE in the majority of headlines in the two-month corpus, yet the register was notably more informal and there were significantly more examples of VISE. The island-specific nature of *The St. Croix Avis* in comparison to *The Virgin Islands Daily News* may explain the trend towards a more localized code, and in contrast to *The Daily News*' 'Pulitzer prize-winning' proclamation on its title page, *The St. Croix Avis* declares that the paper has been 'Locally owned since 1844' (albeit opposite a flag of the United States of America). This local pride is evident in the headline of the May 23-24th Issue; *True island grit – Special Olympians compete on STX*, which includes an informal reference to *island grit* alongside the acronym *STX* (St. Croix) to elicit emotive support for local athletes. An article celebrating the founding of Christiansted: *Birthday party – Christiansted abuzz with 275th anniversary events* also uses an informal register with the synonym *birthday* favored over *anniversary* and invoking the VISE descriptive term *abuzz*. In contrast, *The St. Croix Avis* used USSE formal register with the headlines *Protesters decry Paul's comments on civil rights* referring to a protest march in Kentucky and *Nations declare support to Somalia* reporting on a UN sponsored conference in Istanbul; the international nature of both articles perhaps motivating a more formal USSE code choice.

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Archival research confirmed the predominant use of USSE in both *The Virgin Islands Daily News* and *The St. Croix Avis*, reflecting Valls' sentiment that one must "think with the wise". The executive editor of *The Daily News* reinforced the reason behind the code selection by affirming, "we are a US territory" - a statement which speaks to the political affiliations between high status reporting and the language of power. The editor indicated that there is no official language policy, intimating that the status of the island automatically deems English the matrix language as defined by Myers-Scotton (1993) and therefore the preferred choice in high status journalism. The managing editor of *The St. Croix Avis* reflected this perspective citing the US based Associated Press guidelines yet also recognizing that headlines "will slip into Crucian from time to time" to reflect the language patterns of the readership. One example of such a "slip" can be seen in the headline *Beach Fyah 8* announcing a cultural festival in St. Thomas; the orthography of the word *fyah* (fire) directly referring to the *Fyahburn* (Fireburn) rebellion of 1878 in the marked language of the people and thus aiming to engender solidarity, pride and an increased attendance at the event. The only evidence of Crucian in the corpus of *The Virgin Islands Daily News* issues was one front-page headline announcing a *Quelbe Tramp* to announce a music carnival in St. Thomas; again using the marked choice *quelbe* (the official music of the U.S. Virgin islands) to motivate unity and pride.

Myers-Scotton explains how an unmarked linguistic choice is expected as the medium for any exchange, given the norms of the society regarding the salience of specific situational factors (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The situational factors in the analysis of these two newspapers are political status, target audience, informational purpose and print media which combine to select United States Standard English as the matrix or unmarked language with the marked or embedded language as Virgin Islands Standard English or Crucian. In traditionally high status fields “the unmarked choice is 'safer' - i.e. ‘it conveys no surprises’ because it indexes an expected interpersonal relationship” (Myers-Scotton, 1993) whereas marked codes are used intentionally for articles of local interest or which elicit a high level of emotional response seeking to create unity. This relationship between expected code (USSE) and marked code (Crucian) is emphasized on display cards in the Frederiksted Fort, used in an exhibition of colonial furniture:

Gentleman’s Liquor Box, Ca 1830
“*drunk’n man talk wah he t’ink when he sober*”

The unmarked USSE code represents a high status informational field, including date and academic abbreviation (ca – circa) and is listed first, followed by Crucian text that voices a popular sentiment, providing the emotive response and thus marked both linguistically by code choice and physically with the use of bold typeface and quotation marks. One might assume that the international demographic and informational context in the museum would predetermine the marked and unmarked code choice, yet these same features were evident in graffiti:

LEXXUS THEE “FREESTYLA” -n- RAPPER

This example of expressive vandalism, found in the Christiansted public library, cannot be said to appeal to an international audience nor claim high informational status, yet the contributor physically marks a code switch with the word “freestyla” in quotation marks. The unconventional spelling also denotes a difference from the subsequent word *rapper*, which is unmarked and written with standard orthography. It appears therefore that despite the low status situational factors relating to this banned form of self-expression, Standard English is still used as an unmarked choice and Crucian represents the marked code. This suggests that situational features alone do not determine code selection but that the written format of any text may predetermine Standard English as the unmarked code in all registers and formats.

8 Code choice as skilled performance

Conscious use of a marked code was evident in all written mediums and highlights choices that Myers-Scotton suggests “emphasize the speaker as a creative actor” (1993). Orthography, punctuation and typeface selection, as seen in the examples previously discussed, can indicate the self-awareness of marked code choice in the written medium to engender emotional response; yet seemingly subconscious context-driven code selection that imitates oral discourse is also a significant factor in published media. Richard A. Schrader Sr. is a self-proclaimed island born author, historian and *griot* whose use of codeswitching in accounts of oral history are well established and exemplify the use of marked choice as an element of skilled performance. Schrader presents his oral histories as “stories” and the collections arguably span the divide between narrative fiction and historical non-fiction, yet their relevance to this corpus of codeswitching in written media is indicative of wider trends in non-fiction and therefore deemed valuable for the purposes of this study. Both collections considered in this study: *Maufe Quelbe and t’ing* (1994) and *Under de Taman Tree* (1996) make liberal use of codeswitching that the author consciously reproduces to authenticate his narrative of the islander “in his own words” (Schrader, 1996).

Each of Schrader’s personal accounts is prefaced by a narrative introduction to the context and background of the speaker in a style that reflects the orality of the tale:

And what does the old ‘West Ender’ talk about? Three guesses...you said sports? Politics? Religion? Well not quite... (Schrader, 1996)

Thus when written codeswitching follows, it is perceived as the authentic speech of the contributor rather than a skilled reproduction on the part of the legitimate author. The majority of the oral histories in each collection use VISE as the matrix language and frequent codeswitching to a marked Crucian in situations of vocal characterization:

I took a horse with a big swollen foot and in no time got him in shape and won the race, deh bawl “Oh God! Nookie ah wuk obeah ‘pon a hwe” But it was science

[Nookie has worked witchcraft upon us] (Schrader, 1996)

Lars Hinrichs’ study of codeswitching between Jamaican Creole and Standard English identifies how Creole can be triggered by representations of voice and character in narratives; specifically to represent stock characters such as the *negative local*, *robust woman*, *country bumpkin* and *rude bway* (Hinrichs, 2006). Codeswitching in

Schrader's narrative reconstructions follows this paradigm, see above (country bumpkin) and below (robust woman):

There is silence. Then she speaks: "Ah bet yoh 'tis da chigger foot, yalla

[I bet you it's that flea-bitten cowardly]

mouth 'Philbert' who gone wid me good fowl... me best laying hen... He toh damn tief...

[Philbert who stole my good chicken ... my best laying hen...he's such a thief]

(Schrader, 1994)

The conscious use of Crucian as a marked code to represent characters extends even to animal voicing in the narrative:

He tugged...But the donkey said "no way, Jose, ah ain goin nowhe today."

[I'm not going anywhere today] (Schrader, 1994)

Although Schrader's interviewed subjects may have used Crucian as an unmarked choice in their oral discourse, the framework of VISE as the unmarked choice in the printed collection is in part explained by the medium and anticipated problems authors face when they attempt to publish bilingual text. These might include reduced readership and stigmatization by English Speaking markets and even by purist speakers of the marked language (Callahan, 2004). It is also very possible that Schrader's subjects were self-aware of their language choice and used linguistic variation as a narrative device in the re-telling of their own stories. Their language attitudes and awareness are made clear through the contributor's own use of metalanguage. One of Schrader's "speakers" remembers a time when she sang offensive rhymes to the nuns in school, using language variation as a defensive strategy:

with all that strictness, we sometimes manage to fire a few licks at the nuns. And they couldn't fire back, because they didn't know what we were saying...

"Mudda, ah da ah bou [Mother...(nonsense rhyme)]

Ah gan santapee foh bite you [I have a centipede to bite you]

Mudda, ah who ah sew foh you? [Mother, who sewed that for you?]

Tipet in meh leba hole, doan bother meh [I'm not up to it today, don't bother me]

Ah da for lick you" [struggle with that] (Schrader, 1996)

In a 2004 study of written codeswitching between Spanish and English, Callahan concluded that there is some parity between oral and written codeswitching in regard to discourse function. These findings are corroborated by a 2009 investigation into written codeswitching in the classroom suggesting that there are many similarities between the functions of informal written and oral codeswitching (Losey, 2009). The oral histories presented by Schrader adhere to these findings, with contributors commonly codeswitching to a marked local language for vocative discourse marking. The narratives are also contextualized by self-referential language in which the author foregrounds the orality and immediacy of his “speakers”. This is achieved by constructing code variation which emulates oral discourse, the purposes of which refer back to Callahan’s findings that the referential function accounts for 60% of the corpus; with the next largest category being vocatives, followed by formulaic expressions, such as set phrases, tags, and exclamations. Callahan’s studies into fiction also identify three conditions for the authentic use of two languages: that the writer must 1) select a setting in which an embedded language is naturally used, 2) choose characters who are fluent in both languages, and 3) develop thematic content with which communities can identify (Callahan, 2004). Schrader’s oral histories conform to these parameters: his setting *Under de Taman Tree* is the traditional place of storytelling, his bilingual characters – the “village elders” recount tales of daily life, thus presenting a thematic content with which island communities can identify. The marked code is thus entirely justified and yet also somewhat negated by the unmarked Standard English favored for purposes of intelligibility and access by a target audience that is larger than the communities represented.

The Island Melee, [gossip] distributed in St. Croix but now discontinued, uses this same orality of discourse in a satirical newsheet style that parodies standardized journalism with liberal codeswitching, black comedy, surreal humor and ridiculous storylines. It distorts traditional newspaper format, with mockeries of articles, letters pages, classifieds and interviews under the editorial pseudonyms Nom D. Plume and Shirley U. Jest who offer the disclaimer:

The contents of this publication not including the advertisement and the meet market is intended for entertainment only. Specifically, tis a joke Mon, a joke!

The register and use of language exemplified here is indicative of the publication as a whole; using a formal VISE matrix language within which frequent puns, vernacular expressions and direct audience address motivate codeswitching to Crucian. The majority of headlines consciously use formal VISE as a satirical tool to send up the

ridiculous content, for example: *Cupid detained by immigration officials, and motorist uses turn signal -confusion breaks out; traffic stalls*. Frequently the headline photograph undermines the formality of language: *VITran announces new faster service* (photograph of a donkey wearing the company logo) and *New hi-tech traffic signals come to St. Croix* (photograph of a drawing of a cow and the handwritten words *Slo Mon Crosin*). The use of language in *The Island Melee* plays on Myers-Scotton's rules of rights and obligations in force between the speaker and addressee, creating a false sense of context by using the high status language of informational exchange undercut by informality and codeswitching to lampoon current island affairs. Despite the paper's entertainment purposes and its own claim to publish *None of the truth none of the time* this employment of perceived linguistic deception was not positively received by one reader who sent a letter to the editor decrying the paper for being *below any kind of journalism in the very lowest form*.

It is interesting to note how readers' contributions function within the exaggerated construct of linguistic rights and obligation in the context of the satirical publication's write-in island gripe column. The title of the column - *T'ings That Does Burn Meh Ass!* encourages some readers to write in Crucian as an unmarked choice:

*Da buns does get frosted wen we has to still see dem faces of politicians
on dem phone poles an such*

[I get angry when we have to see politician's faces on phone poles and such]

and:

*What is wrong with dem folks at Human Services? I live in Peter's Rest
but ain't getting' no rest....one of dem employees is trippin'.*

[what is wrong with those people at Human Services? I live in Peter's Rest but I don't get any rest... one of those employees is mistaken]

Yet the majority of contributors choose to redefine the matrix language as informal VISE, thus marking Crucian as an embedded code:

*Dear Melee, The thing that does really "bun meh ass" is some of all of
them "government" employees who ready to retire because they
working five years longer than me, and every single time I ask them
something to help me do me government work they does say, "Me'en
no." if they working everyday for donkey years, what dey doing? They
retiring to "me'en home"?*

The formal opening and reiteration of the column title in quotation marks clearly establishes Crucian as the marked code, yet subsequently integrates a greater degree of Crucian syntax and orthography as the diatribe continues to reflect the passionate nature of the complaint. Other contributors similarly redefine the matrix language by re-wording the Crucian column title within the context of an informal VISE code:

it really burns my bottom to see how tourists are mistreated, it burns my buns to wrestle with those rows of shopping carts and it really burns my ass to be told that the government is broke.

This redefinition of the matrix language is perhaps due to the lack of a standardized orthography for Crucian that places a higher cognitive demand on the contributor inappropriate to a “gripe column” and also renders the end product overly constructed and hence lacking authenticity. Such variation may also reflect individual interpretation of the rights and obligations set in which speakers do not make identical choices in their own codeswitching practices because they have differing views regarding the relative costs and rewards of one choice over another. (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

The only article in *The Island Melee* that is consistently written with an unmarked Crucian code is the serialized opinion column on the broadcast drama *All Meh Chil'ren Dem* [the television series *All My Children*], which offers a comic take on the weekly events of the show:

Fust, Janet wid she bruk foot self gettin' help from some mon wha had been in de bush
[First, Janet with the broken foot, got help from a man who had been in the wilderness]

The low status of the televised daytime drama (as defined in Ferguson's Diglossia, 1959) and of the projected character of the “village gossip” who discusses it dictate the code choice as an element of skilled performance by the same authors who present the formal standardized headline articles. The supposed author of the piece, written under another pseudonym “Tis Yoh Business” also notably contributes a headline article in the March 7 edition (1996) concerning the perceived antics of government representatives, entitled *Oh Laaawd, tis All Meh Senators Dem*. The self-referential intertextuality is foregrounded in the title and the first paragraph:

Oh Laaawd. Now Ah noh all yoh custom to heah meh tahlk bout meh

[Oh Lord! Now I know you are all accustomed to hear me talk about my]

chil'ren dem buh Ah got toh tell all yoh bout all de melee wha had go on

[children but I've got to tell you all about the gossip that has happened]

wit de senytahs dem. Mehson, dem deh ga mo' action den wha de ga pon TV.

[with the senators. Oh man, they have got more action that there is on TV]

The renegotiation of matrix language is clearly contextualized by the 'village gossip' speaker and the framework of the daytime serialized drama analogy – thus inverting the high status language expectations of the satirical headline story. This conscious metalinguistic interplay eloquently reinforces Myers-Scotton's representation of "the speaker as a creative actor" (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

9 Codeswitching to construct identity

Based on analysis of shop signs and public notices predominantly in Christiansted and Frederiksted, I propose that codeswitching is used as a conscious tool to define and negotiate identity in a public domain whose multinational history and current political status exist in the context of continuous and ongoing linguistic conflict. If, as Valls suggests, a diglossic situation exists in which Standard English is the language of the intellect and Creole is the language of the heart, then texts at community and street-level fittingly reflect their emotive low status. Signs for a garage *de pit stop*, club *de playground* and café *me dundos place* all arguably contextualize their language in a Crucian matrix through the initial words and then alter to VISE – perhaps in order to establish local ownership but not to exclude potential customers. This spirited negotiation of linguistic loyalty reflects patterns that also emerged in studies within the South African urban context where codeswitching was often used to accommodate rather than to alienate. "Meeting the addressee halfway with language encompasses an awareness of your own linguistic identity but at the same time offering other languages to indicate a spirit of willingness to accommodate and to respect." (Finlayson & Slabbert, 1997).

Other examples suggest a more exclusive or aggressive appropriation of language in the public space, for example, a sign announcing a new business *soon come* to the community – using an entirely Crucian syntax to encourage local support. A government issued traffic sign from which the letter "t" was removed: *STOP except when turning lef* now adheres to Crucian phonotactics in which "words ending in consonant sounds, like 't' or 've' – the final consonant sound is often dropped" (Sterns, 2008). A public police announcement about drugs is appended with the direct

address *smokers this what you're smoking* and an announcement for a club event called *Beach Fyah* directly invokes rebellious sentiment related to the *Fyahbuun* [Fireburn] of 1878. St Croix's status as a territory of the US Virgin Islands directly impacts the use of codeswitching in a public domain that imposes USSE as the matrix language and therefore forces Crucian into a subordinate position as the marked choice. The re-appropriation of public signs and notices using Crucian as the unmarked choice is in some sense a *dis-identification* with what is expected (Myers-Scotton, 1993) thus – an ideal platform to negotiate national identity at community level which is non-confrontational and can provide safety through anonymity.

Computer mediated communication also provides a platform through which contributors engage in identity negotiation through language use. The social networking site *Facebook* contains various threads of conversation which feature prominent codeswitching between Standard English and Crucian, frequently concerning island food, drink and daily life. A common factor in these online discussion was the nature of participating 'speakers' who were often native to the island yet currently living on the US mainland, as one contributor asserts in referring to St. Croix *it was deh I Bawn*. Two speakers express similar homesick sentiments in a conversational thread referring to St. Croix photography: *doesnt it just make u want to go home, its pity I live in boston, and man, yuh makin' me wanting to pay a visit NOW mi son! Pity I live in NYC*. It is perhaps interesting to note that despite the Crucian pride that the latter contributor expresses through her/his comments and linguistic variation, s/he still only wishes to *'pay a visit'* – thus perhaps revealing subconscious loyalty to the United States.

Similar to Hinrichs' 2006 conclusions relating to computer mediated codeswitching between Standard English and Jamaican Creole, this study shows that online 'chat' is significantly different from oral discourse in that it provides a forum for individuals to express linguistic affiliation with a home language on an international platform. Among the factors that motivate chat of this nature is a need to establish identity in a 'minority' oral language that has been adapted to new media and the written code in order to dispel feelings of isolation. In this context "variety is used intentionally, it is meant to emphasize the speaker's bilingual identity" (Mahootian, 2005).

Attitudes towards "expat outcast communities" are highlighted in the study entitled *Multilingualism in St. Croix*; where Di Pietro (1968) observes that: "it was felt that outsiders and even natives who had been 'off-island' for some time could not or should not speak the proper island language". The ownership of language is perhaps more notable in examples of codeswitching in online social networking that includes residents of St. Croix. One conversational thread concerning current affairs and hosted

on a prominent Crucian leader's *Facebook* page involved four participants. One contributor consistently used VISE: *It's stupid to blame a freshmen senator*, thus marking himself as the linguistic "outsider". Two contributors, including the host, used codeswitching throughout:

PMG: *de beat up a senator last night... ayo watch out* [all of you]

MCM: *they shoulda wait til next term to buss he a lick* [attack him]

One contributor used Crucian code as the unmarked code:

Senator Sanes is ah boss he tear up the man you mean not he geh beat up
[...is the boss, he beat up the man you are talking about, he didn't get beaten up]

This example is representative of a larger corpus indicating that codeswitching is largely an individual choice in computer mediated conversation where personal identity is anonymous unless a contributor chooses to share it. Participants select a code that they feel most appropriately represents themselves and thus negotiate an identity which may be accepted by other participants or rejected leading to termination of the dialogue. Contrary to language use in other written media; codeswitching in online social networking appeared to be a more fluid process driven by a continued negotiation of identity with others rather than pre-determined by context or purpose.

10 Code choice as linguistic rebellion

Losey's study into written codeswitching concludes that language variation provides an unsurpassed opportunity for bilingual individuals to fully express themselves (2009). This expressive element can be traced throughout all written mediums, and is exemplified in *Crucians in Focus*, an online political forum whose aim is to monitor the activities of the Virgin Islands government and encourage its readers to post comments with the tag line "Oppression can only survive through silence." All articles are posted in VISE (ranging in formality) yet the discussion forums that follow each article often include codeswitching as contributors become more passionate about the issue. The following example opens in a code that is easily comprehensible to a monolingual VISE speaker yet contains increased frequency of lexical and syntactic distancing from standard forms as the views become more impassioned.

De cruzian miseducator have a new supporter, wah deh ass does go
[The Crucian 'miseducator' has a new supporter, what on earth is going wrong weh these people, it really have some real foolie people yah]

[on with all these people, there really are a lot of idiotic people]

Contributors often begin comments in the matrix VISE to affirm their intellectual capacity in the same high status language of the article, and then switch to a Crucian code that allows them to personalize and take control of the conversation on local issues.

That was well said and you handled yourself professionally. But lawd, Mrs B really throw some blows on you today. I ain't think you was prepared

[Mrs. B really beat you down today. I didn't think you were prepared]

Comments in VISE, whilst often being heavily critical, frequently lack the expressive power and overtones of direct action that accompany Crucian comments. Compare, for example:

VISE: *We will come together to vote out dejongh!*

Crucian: *me and dem man in deh bush rounding up the mangy wolf pack*

[me and the wildmen are rounding up the mangy wolfpack]

The literary overtones of the Crucian threat, using imagery and a reference to the local wildmen *in deh bush* convey an eloquent vision of community rebellion against political power which the standardized call to *come together* significantly lacks. This is perhaps explained by the expectations of standardized code in a high status field to be objective and literal, without literary embellishments or aggressive overtones. Like the examples above, the majority of comments posted on this political forum showed conscious variation in written code choice for purposes of expression, empowerment, and to encourage local action in a political context.

The last medium of written communication I will consider in this study is the only outlawed form - graffiti and public vandalism. It is my intention to consider a wide range of writing in the public domain that makes conscious use of codeswitching, and this particular form, albeit illegal, is entirely within the scope of the investigation in that it functions as a means of public expression and communicates identity and group affiliation in conflict with authority and a dominant language matrix. The significant difference between graffiti and other forms of written expression in this study is that graffiti predominantly makes use of Crucian as an unmarked code. Writing often functions to proclaim identity as a territory marker or to announce group affiliation:

Gyals 4 life, [girls for life]

Sweets Bin Ya [Sweets has been here]

Santo Gyal [Dominican Girl] *Chris bin bout* [Chris has been about]

Other examples comment on ‘the way things are’ and can be categorized as abbreviated social comment in a similar vein as Schrader’s oral histories:

Leyroy tief cookie [Leyroy stole a cookie]
Haaz watch me like I’m da shinning star
[Haaz watches me like I’m the shining star]
Lexus run tins [Lexus runs things]

The unmarked Crucian code in vandalism is explained in part by Moodley’s findings (2007) that although codeswitching is recognized as a valuable language tool for pedagogy it is largely prohibited in the classroom. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that from early contact with written language; Crucians categorize Creole as an outlawed code and Standard English as an acceptable or expected form. Language attitudes nurtured in the classroom in a context of tension between standardization efforts and the need for self-expression reflect national language policy and linguistic conflict in St. Croix as a whole. In both situations, VISE is accepted as the unmarked or matrix language in all written mediums, endorsed by the US government in opposition to the English lexifier Creole (considered inappropriate slang) that predates the American presence on the island. Thus, the educational environment in St. Croix provides a microcosm of how individuals use code choice as a conscious act of linguistic rebellion against local administration. Graffiti seen in the Educational Complex in the Kingshill area of St. Croix perpetuated this context of conflict and aggression, with the examples:

Laugh in ayo face gyals [‘Laugh in all your faces’ girls]
Trish bin ya 4 U2NV 4 lifa [Trish has been here for you to envy for life]

Although the confrontational message may not be aimed at educational administrators directly – the method of communication and code choice marks a rebellion against school policy and language expectations in the school environment.

Code choice in graffiti functioning as linguistic resistance against administration is perhaps more explicit in examples found in the Christiansted public library. References to the 1878 Fireburn rebellion of Frederiksted, as previously noted in The St. Croix Avis and a club advertisement, appeared in graffiti on the book stacks:

Fyah [Fire] *Fyah bin ya* [Fire has been here]

The second example notably using the same syntax of a previous identity marker *Sweets bin ya* and therefore possibly reflecting the same level of personal involvement with the historical rebellion as contributors associate with contemporary struggles to assert individuality. If Crucian as an unmarked code is deemed an inappropriate and dysfunctional mode of written communication, it is perhaps appropriate therefore that ‘dysfunctional’ members of society choose to express themselves in the language of their ancestors in one of the few media open to the use of Crucian as an unmarked code: graffiti - a public medium that is outlawed and condemned by both community leaders and government legislation.

11 Conclusion

This paper addresses the largely neglected subject of codeswitching in non-fiction written discourse between Standard English and Crucian (the English lexifier Creole spoken in St. Croix) and refers to a wide ranging corpus collected in the public domain in May 2010. Using Myers-Scotton’s (1993) markedness model as a framework, findings indicate that United States or Virgin Islands Standard English is the unmarked code in the majority of high status print media considered. Newspapers target a localized readership with codeswitching to Crucian in articles of local interest and to celebrate local events or achievements, but otherwise maintain an expected standardized matrix language to elevate status, stress informational content and appeal to an international readership. Such situational features of each text commonly determine the matrix language, yet there is also evidence to suggest that the lack of standardized orthography automatically renders Crucian a marked choice in written communication.

This paper evaluates codeswitching as skilled performance, as exemplified by Schrader’s oral histories of the island, which aim to authenticate the voice of the ‘speaker’ in each tale. Schrader’s narrative non-fiction and *The Island Melee* (a satirical newssheet) also use codeswitching from Virgin Islands Standard English to Crucian as a discourse marker to characterize stereotypical voices in the text. Editors of the satirical newssheet and the author of the traditional tales showed metalinguistic awareness throughout and often switched codes based on content and register. *The Island Melee* uses language as a comedic tool, reporting with a formalized matrix code to amplify the ridiculous content of an article, or an unexpected Crucian code to discuss current affairs – a strategy that plays on Myers-Scotton’s theory of rights and obligation.

Low status texts made more frequent use of codeswitching as a means to negotiate identity and group affiliation in the public domain. On an international platform, chat groups allow native islanders to connect with others using a shared minority language, and online forums enable political commentators to ‘illustrate’ their opinions with a

more emotive language than the unmarked standard forms permit. At street level, shop signs use codeswitching to establish local ownership yet also to address the public in a spirit of acceptance and respect. Conversely, public notices and graffiti often appear confrontational, using Crucian as the unmarked choice in a conscious effort to reclaim public space and declare identity. School graffiti illustrates this type of linguistic rebellion in the educational context of St. Croix, reflecting a history of administrative control and popular resistance on the island.

Notes

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THE SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF LINGUISTIC FIELDWORK IN THE NORTHEASTERN CARIBBEAN: THE CASE OF ST. CROIX

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The Northeastern Caribbean is a region that according to Michael Aceto (2004): “...has been virtually left untapped as a source of fieldwork data in creole studies and English dialectology” (p. 481). This is not to say that no work has been done in these areas, because Caribbean born and based scholars such as Gilbert Sprauve (*Towards a reconstruction of Virgin Islands Creole phonology*, 1974), Arnold Highfield (*Historicity and variation in Creole studies*, 1981), Alma Simounet (*The analysis of speech events in contexts of work situation on the island of St. Croix*, 1987), Peter Roberts (*West Indians and their language*, 1988), Mervyn Alleyne (‘A linguistic perspective on the Caribbean’, 1992), Vincent Cooper (‘St. Kitts: The launching pad for Leeward Islands Creoles’, 1998-1999) and Michael Aceto (‘Eastern Caribbean English-derived language varieties: Phonology’, 2004) among others, have all contributed greatly with their research and findings based on fieldwork done in this region. This list is certainly not inclusive of all of their writings, but even so, the need for further exploration and study of the languages and literatures of the Northeastern Caribbean has become a pressing issue.

Over the past decade, the U.S. Virgin Islands, especially the island of St. Croix, has become an area of research interest of the Doctoral Program of the English Department in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Puerto Rico, resulting in the creation of a fieldwork course on St. Croix. This course was actually the brainchild of the late Dr. Joan Fayer, Dr. Lowell Fiet, and Dr. Alma Simounet. Fayer and Fiet saw the need for a fieldwork course and Simounet wished that this fieldwork course be based on the island of St. Croix where she and her husband, Wilfredo Geigel, had had a residence for many years, and where she had done research, but still felt that this island was underserved in that aspect. A fieldwork course had been initially taught on the campus at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras by Dr. Fayer, but in 2004, a new fieldwork course in St. Croix was proposed taught by Dr. Nicholas Faraclas, with the enormous help and generosity of both Dr. Simounet and her husband, who

actually let the first group of students use their house as both classroom and dormitory (Simounet Interview: October 13, 2009).

I was a participant in the sixth annual session of this fieldwork course last semester from May 17-29, 2009. There were seven students accompanied by three professors: Dr. Nicholas Faraclas (who was teaching the linguistics students), Dr. Dannabang Kuwabong (who was teaching the literature students), and their colleague Dr. Susana DeJesús, who was researching different aspects of community life on St. Croix. As part of the course, we were expected to visit many places during the day (some on our own, and others that had been previously arranged by our professors), set up appointments for interviews and actually go through with them, visit libraries archives, and other research sites, read assigned articles about doing fieldwork and produce written and oral comments based on those readings, attend evening class sessions with our professors, and as a final project, produce an acceptable conference abstract based on our fieldwork.

We already had to have a topic in mind before we arrived in St. Croix in order to be able to launch ourselves immediately into a whirlwind schedule of activities. It is also important to state that we had had to pass a web-based training course entitled 'Protecting Human Research Participants' in order to be certified by the NIH (National Institutes of Health) Office of Extramural Research and thus be allowed to begin our fieldwork.

I initially had an idea based on the language used in music on the island and how it affected the Puerto Crucians' (Crucians of Puerto Rican ancestry) preservation of language and identity as related to their ancestral island, Puerto Rico. I prepared a questionnaire and enthusiastically began searching for informants with the support of Mrs. Maria Friday, an employee at the University of the Virgin Islands' Student Housing Department and a Crucian of Puerto Rican ancestry herself. I wished to find out more about the Puerto Crucian community and so made appointments to meet with people from that group who were of different ages and from many different walks of life. My interviews were eye-opening experiences, to say the least, and actually made me rethink my whole purpose for being in St. Croix. The focus of my research on the island changed in a very dramatic fashion because I realized that I was in the midst of an ethical conundrum.

The day that everything changed for me was the day I interviewed a person of Puerto Rican ancestry who holds a very influential and important political position not only in St. Croix, but in the whole U.S. Virgin Islands government arena. This woman, whom I will identify only as Informant A, very willingly complied with my request

for an interview and even graciously consented to visit me at the U.V.I. dorm where I was staying. Our interview began in a friendly enough way, but quickly degenerated into a passionate denunciation of my group's purpose and work on the island. Why was this woman so hostile? I asked myself. She was indignant about the fact that after having visited St. Croix for the past six years, the previous participants of our fieldwork course had yet to inform the Crucian communities about the results of their research. She felt that they were being used as "guinea pigs" and were being looked down upon by Puerto Ricans from the main island. Needless to say, I was dumbfounded! The interview actually concluded on a more cordial note, but the stage was set for further inquiry (Informant A Interview May 23, 2009). I realized that this was a serious issue that I needed to speak about with my professors and the rest of the group because I could understand how valid her point was concerning the need to inform people about any and all results from previous fieldwork done in their communities.

After this interview, many questions swirled through my mind: Would I feel the same way if I were the subject of research? And not only that, but how would I feel if I were never informed of the findings of that research? What social responsibilities do we have as fieldworkers? Should our work come first, no matter how people feel about both the process and subsequent outcome? Ethical considerations are extremely important although according to Newman and Ratliff, many times linguists do not give them the importance they deserve. They also surprisingly state that the LSA (the Linguistic Society of America) does not "contribute to the *Professional Ethics Report*" (p. 9) which also seems to be a major statement about the lack of interest in discussing or even promoting the topic among linguists. Furthermore, Newman and Ratliff pose another question that I was asking myself: "What recompense if any do [...] fieldworker[s] owe the community as a whole for allowing [them] to be ... uninvited guest[s]?" (p. 9).

Once I had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the group from UPR, all were very concerned. Dozens of tapes of speech collected during previous fieldwork courses and a few of the published results from past visits had actually been lodged in the University of the Virgin Islands St. Croix campus, the Public Library in Christiansted, and in the Whim Archive near Frederiksted. Dr. Faraclas acknowledged that there had been some other papers written, presented, and published since 2007 although not before, which had not yet been copied and sent to St. Croix, and that it was only then, in 2009, when the first dissertations based on previous work in the fieldwork course were being defended. Nevertheless, he suggested that I change the focus of my fieldwork on the island and instead concentrate on working on a compilation of all of the work that had been created as a direct result from our

fieldwork course and that once that was completed, I should present it to the people of St. Croix and other interested parties such as linguists and historians specializing in the Caribbean. And that is why I have written this article.

The social responsibilities of linguistic fieldwork should not be taken lightly; humans can never be treated without respect or courtesy. Once we have been welcomed into a community, the least we can do is reciprocate our findings. This can never be a one-sided enterprise; all participants should benefit from it. We should also always leave the door open for further research either by ourselves or future fieldworkers, and we can only do this if we establish from the very beginning, a friendly, respectful, and courteous rapport with the target community. Our Linguistic Fieldwork Course has a lot to give back to the people of St. Croix. This is only the beginning of what I believe will be a long and fruitful symbiotic relationship and one that I hope will inspire other researchers to focus on this region of the world.

I will now proceed with the compilation of works directly created as the result of our Linguistics Fieldwork Course. This compilation will be presented in the following order and will include a brief description when possible: Dissertations, M.A. Theses, Ideas for Dissertations and Other Works, Published and Unpublished Papers (including presentations at conferences), Conferences or Symposiums, Websites and Other.

PhD Dissertations

Mitchell, Edward S. (2009). *St. Lucian Kwéyòl in St. Croix: A study of language choice and attitudes*. Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus.

This socio- and ethnolinguistic research project examines language choice, language attitudes, ethnolinguistic identity, and bilingualism among diaspora speakers of Saint Lucian French-lexifier Creole (Kwéyòl) on the Caribbean island of Saint Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Torres Santiago, Geissa R. (2009). *Attitudes of Crucian students and educators toward Crucian Creole as a language of learning*. Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus.

This study examines attitudes toward Crucian Creole among students and educators at the University of the Virgin Islands in St. Croix.

Villanueva Feliciano, Orville O. (2009). *A contrastive analysis of English influences on the lexicon of Puerto Rican Spanish in Puerto Rico and St. Croix*. Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus.

Although Puerto Rico and St. Croix are U.S. territories and are only a few miles apart from each other, English plays a different role in each one. In Puerto Rico, Spanish is used as the official and majority language, with English as a second language. In contrast, English is used as the official and majority language in St. Croix and Spanish is a second language. Nonetheless, both Spanish varieties have been tremendously influenced by English, especially in the lexicon, and aspects of the borrowing and use of English-derived words within the Spanish spoken on both islands deserve further study.

Dissertation with some indirect input from the Fieldwork Course

Plata Monllor, Miriam R. (2008). *Phonological features of Crucian Creole*. Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus.

According to different studies, Rickford (1993), Sabino (1993), and Plag (2003) among others, the study of Creole phonology has been neglected. The main target of this study is Crucian Creole phonology. It also aims at studying the phonological changes that Crucian Creole has undergone in the last 35 years, after Sprauve's (1974) study of this language. It examines the question as to whether Crucian is being decreolized or not.

PhD Dissertations in Process

Ursulin, Diana. *The Language Attitudes of European descended speakers of Afro-Caribbean Creoles in St. Croix and Martinique*.

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González-Cotto, Lourdes. Untitled.

González's work involves research on the topic of maroons and marronage, specifically looking

into the manner in which they have been traditionally defined in science, linguistics, and literature, and how these definitions and concepts clash with reality. Her work focuses on various

Maroon communities, in particular St. Croix.

Vergne, Aida. *A comparative study of the West African languages and the grammatical structures of Crucian Creole*.

A comparison of grammatical features commonly found in the Benue-Kwa languages of West Africa and those found in Crucian English lexifier Creole.

M.A. Theses in Process

Hernández Durán, Melissa. *The Puerto Rican Diaspora in St. Croix*

Published and Unpublished Papers (including Conference Presentations)

DeJesús, Susana (2008). Students from the Dominican Republic in the public schools of St. Croix: Preliminary observations. Paper presented at *11th Eastern Caribbean Island Cultures Conference: The Islands in Between*, Willemstad, Curaçao. Published in the proceedings of said conference: Nicholas Faraclas, Ronald Severing, Christa Weijer & Liesbeth Ehteld (Eds.) (2009), *Re-centering the 'Islands in Between': Re-thinking the langages, literatures and cultures of the Eastern Caribbean and the African diaspora*. Curaçao: Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma/University of the Netherlands Antilles.

DeJesús, Susana (2009). St. Croix: A pluri-lingual, pluri-cultural island. Paper presented at *12th Eastern Caribbean Island Cultures Conference: The Islands in Between*, 6 Nov. 2009. Roseau, Dominica.

Domínguez-Rosado, Brenda L. The scientific significance and social responsibilities of linguistic fieldwork in the Northeastern Caribbean: The case of St. Croix. Paper presented at *12th Eastern Caribbean Island Cultures Conference: The Islands in Between*, 6 Nov. 2009. Roseau, Dominica.

This paper explores the importance of fieldwork in the advancement of our knowledge about the languages of the Northeastern Caribbean and also the issue of responsibility of linguistic fieldworkers to describe and explain the results of the studies that they undertake to the communities in which they do their work.

Faraclas, Nicholas (2009). Suprasegmentals and the myth of the simplicity continuum from 'pidgin,' to 'creole,' to 'natural languages.' In Nicholas Faraclas & Thomas B. Klein (Eds.), *Simplicity and complexity in Creoles and Pidgins*. London: Battlebridge Publications.

Faraclas, Nicholas & Jesús Ramírez Morales (2006). Intonation in Crucian Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creole. *La Torre*, 9, (41-42), 477-496.

Faraclas, Nicholas & Pier Angeli Le Compte, Lourdes González, Diana Ursulin, Micah Corum, Aida Vergne, Cándida González, Susana DeJesús, Brenda Domínguez, Kofi Yakpo (2009). African Agency in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles: Evidence from Benue-Kwa. Paper presented at *The Society for Pidgin and Creole Languages Conference*, 11-15 Aug. 2009, Cologne, Germany.

In this paper, the researchers use the most recent consensus among Africanists as to the classification of the languages spoken along the West African coast as well as evidence from the grammars of a broad sample of the Benue-Kwa languages that comprise the majority of Atlantic Creole substrates to demonstrate how these

assumptions often lead creolists to underestimate or deny agency on the part of African descended peoples in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles.

González, Mirerza & Nadjah Ríos Villarini (2009). Oral histories of bilingual education teachers from the Puerto Rican diaspora in St. Croix: exploring ideological tensions inside and outside the classroom. Paper presented at *PRSA*, San Juan, Puerto Rico and accepted for publication.

This paper provides preliminary insights to twelve oral histories of teachers from Puerto Rico or from Puerto Rican descent who live in St. Croix, USVI and who teach or have taught English as a Second Language. The paper argues that these teachers are part of the Puerto Rican Diaspora in St. Croix and that their narratives can be used to explore how issues of identity are framed through the interplay of ethnic, race, and language discourses that mediate their everyday experiences, inside and outside their classrooms. Finally, the paper explores this intertextuality and the dialectical tensions that these accounts provide as a teacher's cultural capital becomes a teaching tool in their bilingual education classrooms.

Kuwabong, Dannabang (2009). Poetics of intimate voices: Exploring identity politics in US Virgin Islands poetry. Paper presented at *12th Annual Eastern Island Cultures Conference: Islands in Between*, 6 Nov. 2009. Roseau, Dominica.

In this paper, there is an exploration of how the politics of identity are presented in works by various poets from the US Virgin Islands that have appeared in *Seasoning for the Mortar: Virgin Islanders Writing in The Caribbean Writer*, Volumes 1-15.

Le Compte, Pier Angeli (2009). Other Englishes: Sociolinguistic standpoint of Porto Crucians in St. Croix. Paper presented at *Southern PR TESOL Convention*, September 2009, Catholic University, Ponce, Puerto Rico

This paper is a description and evaluation of the sociolinguistic situation of Porto Crucians in St. Croix, USVI.

Miranda, Katherine (2009). Pan-Caribbean crossing: Edgar Lake's *The Devil's Bridge*. Paper presented at *12th Annual Eastern Island Cultures Conference: Islands in Between*, 6 Nov. 2009. Roseau, Dominica.

This paper explores how Lake's universal thematic of existential interrogation is contextualized within a matrix of pan-Caribbean creolization through metaphoric crossings of cultural, historic, geographic, and stylistic boundaries.

Mitchell, Edward, Cándida González López & Jean Ourdy Pierre. French-lexifier Creoles in St. Croix: Language choice and attitudes toward St. Lucian Creole, Dominican Creole and Haitian Creole. Paper initially presented at *The 16th Biennial*

Meeting of the Society of Caribbean Linguistics, 2-6 August 2006, Dominica. Published: (2007) *La Torre*, 12, (46).

Mitchell, Edward & Diana Ursulin (2009). Saint Lucian Kwéyòl in Saint Croix: A study of language choice and attitudes. Paper presented at *Prescriptivism and Patriotism: Language Norms and Identities from Nationalism to Globalization*. 17-19 August 2009, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.

In this paper the researchers report on the findings from a study in which they interviewed speakers of St. Lucian Kwéyòl in St. Croix, USVI, on their use of and attitudes towards both Kwéyòl and English.

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Conferences and Symposia

All of the following Conferences and Symposia were organized by Drs. Nadjah Ríos Villarini and Mirerza González:

“Seminario para Maestros: Las migraciones de puertorriqueños a la isla de Sta. Cruz, Islas Vírgenes Americanas.” 18 Oct. 2008. College of Education, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras.

Conversatorio: “De la imagen a la palabra: La fotografía como documento histórico.” 10 March 2009. Sala del Decanato, College of General Studies, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras.

Exposición: “The Papa Them: Puertorriqueños en Islas Vírgenes: Fotografías de Diego Conde.” 11 March 2009. Galería Francisco Oller, College of Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras.

Website

A website, www.thediasporaproject.org, was created by Drs. Mirerza González and Nadjah Ríos Villarini with the sponsorship of Hunter College of CUNY in New York City.

This website is dedicated to creating awareness about the Puerto Rican diaspora that lives on the island of St. Croix, USVI. It also focuses on a special research project concerning what Drs. González and Ríos call “Funds of Knowledge.” This project is aimed at studying the interplay of schooling, communication competence, and language socialization in teachers of bilingual education in St. Croix, USVI, who are Puerto Rican or of Puerto Rican descent.

Other

Vergne, Aida. *Independent Study Course INGL 8045: Creole Languages in Legal Settings*. Approved on November 14, 2007 by English Dept. of College of Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras.

Corum, Micah. *Corpus of Crucian English*. (Research in process). A corpus is a “collection of texts which have been selected and brought together so that language can be studied on the computer” (Wynne, 2005).

This compilation is only the start of a whole new wave of scholarly interest in the islands of the Northeastern region of the Caribbean. We not only need to acknowledge previous researchers who were able to see the diamond in the rough that this region represents, but we also need to encourage more investigation, fieldwork, and interest in discovering the hidden treasures of this area that are still waiting to be presented to the world at large. The scientific significance of this is enormous because the once under-appreciated cultures, languages, and literatures of this region are now being allowed to come to the forefront and proudly take their place on the world stage.

Linguistic and other types of fieldwork are the first step in this process, but they need to be done in a socially responsible way, a way that will bring satisfaction not only to the researchers, but most importantly, to the people and communities being focused on.

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PLURI-LINGUALISM, LANGUAGE CONTACT AND EDUCATION

NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD GUYANESE CREOLE

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1 The use of Creoles and Standard English

In this study, the attitudes of nursery school teachers toward Guyanese Creole are described and analyzed in light of the role that the language presently plays in their classrooms as well as the role that the language could potentially play in the education of Guyanese children. In countries like Guyana where Creole is the dominant language, with another language (in this case Standard English) as the major official language, educators often debate whether or not Creole should be used for communicating in the classroom. Those against Creole usage suggest that it deprives children of the instruction they need to get the economic benefits enjoyed by speakers of standard varieties, and some even go as far as to assert that this condemns them to permanent underclass status.

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Disappointingly but not unsurprisingly, the positive effects of the use of Creoles seem not to be acknowledged by many individuals in Creole speaking environments since, up to the present time, there are those who say individuals should strive for Standard English competence and should give up speaking non-standard English and Creoles. Referring to the use of Creoles in the West Indies, Roberts (1988) observes that because language remains inextricably tied to the thought process – the constant verbal activity of the brain – and more so, because Creole is a part of the repertoire of even the most formally educated speakers, earlier attempts to eradicate it have failed. In addition, those who have claimed that Creoles adversely affect students' acquisition of Standard English, have had their views challenged through the work of a number of linguists and specialists in language education, such as Siegel (1999).

Being the language of instruction, but paradoxically being a language that most children do not speak fluently when they start school, teachers have a tendency to gently encourage children to use Standard English by one, cautioning children to

¹ The findings in this paper are part of a larger and more comprehensive study on the use of Creoles in the nursery schools and teachers' attitudes towards this language conducted by Michelle McBean-Semple with the assistance of the present author.

‘speak properly’ or two, echoing the correct response - a method commonly used in the Nursery setting. This method, however, is grossly uncoordinated, contradictory and inappropriate, as it has the effect of eradicating children’s home language. Referring to this method as ‘translating’, Baker (2000) states that in situations such as this pupils will stop listening in the weaker language, since the same information is eventually given in the preferred language; resulting in less efficiency, less language maintenance and less likely achievement in the curriculum. The most negative effect of such methods though, is that since nursery children, in particular, look upon their teacher as a parent substitute, constant rejection of their language may, in turn, influence the children to reject the teacher and school in general (Edwards, 1979).

2 A History of Guyanese Creole

After the Amerindians, the Dutch were the first to establish settlements in Guyana thus, as the Dutch and Amerindians communicated, there emerged a language which we refer to here as Pidgin Dutch since it was developed solely for the purposes of trading, and was not the first language of any of its speakers (see Romaine, 1988; Callender, 1995; Dalphinis, 1985; Todd, 1990, for a discussion of pidgin languages). This language could be considered to be a makeshift language which enabled its speakers to make sense with a minimum of grammatical apparatus. As this language was elaborated upon and expanded by its speakers, and became the first language of subsequent generations, it could be said to have become a form of Dutch Creole. Robertson (1974), writing on the language situation in Guyana, confirms this process and notes that Creole-Dutch formed the best and most convenient form of communication between the native population when the British came into possession of the territory.

In addition to the Amerindians, Dutch and British, by the middle 1650’s, Africans in Guyana were also speaking Creole-Dutch. The reason is that by this time the Europeans had shifted their interests from trading to sugar cultivation resulting in large inflows of labour in the form of African slaves, ‘who were deliberately separated on arrival [if they spoke the same language] enabling their masters to exert maximum control’ (Roberts, 1988: 113).

In an effort to find a means of communication, the Africans began to borrow some of the lexicon of their enslavers and the indigenous people, and to combine it with a grammatical structure based on their own African languages. It is important to note however, that most of the new slaves who came directly under British control had accelerated the transition from a Dutch based *lingua franca* to an English based one, as they communicated with their British masters (Rickford, 1987). Therefore, one of the by-products of slavery was a ‘pidginized’ language which combined elements of English, Dutch, the indigenous languages of the African slaves as well as the

languages of the Amerindians. This pidginized language eventually became more structured, and became known as Guyanese Creole because as it developed over time it began to fulfill all the linguistic and communication needs of its speakers.

Then came an event of great historical and linguistic significance to Guyana – the introduction of over 200,000 (South Asian) Indian indentured immigrants after the abolition of slavery in 1838. The Creole language adopted and spoken by Indians showed evidence of linguistic transfer or interference from South Asian languages, thus adding a new dimension to Guyanese Creoles. While the use of a substantial amount of vocabulary of South Asian origin (especially religious, culinary, farming and kinship terms) is restricted mainly to Indo-Guyanese speakers, a number of such words are also used by Guyanese Creole speakers of all ethnic origins (Holbrook & Holbrook, 2001; Roberts, 1988). Rickford (1987: 65) gives the following example:

Indians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries showed evidence of linguistic transfer ..., 'cunuh munuh' which means 'a little boy' in Bhojpuri, is used by generally all creole speakers in Guyana to describe a man who is tolerant or ignorant of his wife's extra marital affairs.

Reflecting on the history of Guyanese language, one might be inclined to ask why Creole was not used in schools when the Education Ordinance Act was passed after slavery. One answer to this question is succinctly provided by Craven and Jackson (1985: 17):

When people from a literate culture assume a position over people from an oral tradition, language becomes an instrument of social control. The outsiders' language is imposed, usually through school, on the entire society.

Another reason why Guyanese Creole was not used in schools after the era of slavery is because it was associated with people who had been enslaved, it was seen as an imperfectly learned language whose use was considered to be evidence of mental inferiority (Todd, 1990; Romaine, 1988). Thus, despite the fact that Creole is a systematic, rule-governed language, which is capable of fulfilling all the linguistic needs of its speakers, it is popularly believed to be an inferior and clumsy means of oral expression which is unworthy or unfit for all but the most frivolous forms of written communication (Craven & Jackson, 1985; Romaine, 1988). Recent research reveals that Creole is not a language valued by most Guyanese (Holbrook & Holbrook, 2001), which becomes evident when we consider some of the names popularly used to describe it, such as: 'colie language', 'country man speech' and 'black man talk'. Such contempt towards Creole stems, in part, from the feeling that it is a corruption of 'higher' (usually European) language (Holm, 2000). Based on such arguments, Callender (1997) comments that:

Black language varieties have been, and are still, subject to negative evaluation. Such views have been perpetuated not only by teachers but by members of the Black community. (p. 43)

Irrespective of such negative perceptions, Guyanese Creole remains alive and different varieties of the language are spoken throughout Guyana. This is confirmed by the fact that there are, at least, seven published studies on Guyanese Creole (Allsopp, 1962; Robertson, 1974; Edwards, 1978; Gibson, 1986; Devonish, 1987; Bickerton, 1975; Rickford, 1987; Holbrook & Holbrook, 2001). Since the last three provide empirical evidence on attitudes towards Guyanese Creole, my attention will be focused more heavily on those three studies.

Holbrook & Holbrook (2001) report that Guyanese Creole is spoken by 70% of the population of Guyana and the 2000 population Census Report provides similar statistics. A substantially smaller percentage of Standard English speakers represent those who have succeeded in the education system, or residents of urban areas, such as Georgetown (the capital city) Linden and New Amsterdam. Even in the most formal urban settings however, there is evidence of the significant use of Creole, with Holbrook & Holbrook (2001:18) noting:

We have sat in several offices and heard supervisors giving commands or instructions to their employees in creoles and then turn to us and speak in English.

The art of code-switching is a skill mastered by many as they alternate between the two languages. Sometimes speakers switch codes between distinct discourse chunks addressed to distinct audiences, as reported above. At other times, switching occurs within the same discourse at the boundary between two sentences or within the same sentence (Sebba, 1993). Guyanese people therefore, generally recognize that 'two distinct codes' exist within their language system (ibid.:33). Those who have proficiency in both Creole and Standard English, can be classified as bilinguals (Abudarham, 1987).

Like adults, Guyanese children also recognize these two languages as separate codes. Attempting to speak Standard English therefore results in most nursery school children producing two varieties of Creole – one with their friends and another with their teachers. In most cases, some Standard English structures and vocabulary are used when speaking to their teachers; but when speaking with their friends Holbrook & Holbrook (ibid.) note that Guyanese children speak Creole almost exclusively. By way of illustration consider the following forms, which are commonly used by Guyanese nursery school children.

Table 1 Guyanese Children's use of Creole with Teachers and Pupils

Friend	<i>Meh waan fo caaca</i>
Teacher	<i>I want fo caaca</i>
Standard English equivalent	<i>I would like to defacate</i>

3 Language use in the Nursery Classroom

The present study set out, amongst other things, to clarify teachers' views and attitudes on the use of Creole in the nursery school classrooms on the East Coast of Demerara and an aspect of this was the examination of their understanding of what language varieties were spoken by the children that they taught and their responses to the use of these different varieties. In order to gauge teachers' attitudes, two sets of responses were elicited to the same list of interview questions, one from a group of 20 teachers at XX (UG), and another from a group of 16 student teachers at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE). Preliminary results indicate that:

- Creole is the predominant language spoken by nursery school aged children on the East Coast of Demerara
- Almost all teachers participating in the study understand children's creole language whether or not they were born or reside in the same area as the children
- Creole is the medium of instruction through which children attending nursery school on the East Coast of Demerara understand concepts better.

Whilst these findings indicate that teachers are cognizant of the salience of Creole in the nursery classroom this is not always reflected in their attitudes towards its use, nor their appreciation of how the children's home language can be used to enhance learning (see for example, Holbrook & Holbrook, 2001; Rickford, 1983). These concerns will be the focus of discussion in this section, where teachers' comments are considered along with various issues that they raised during the course of the study.

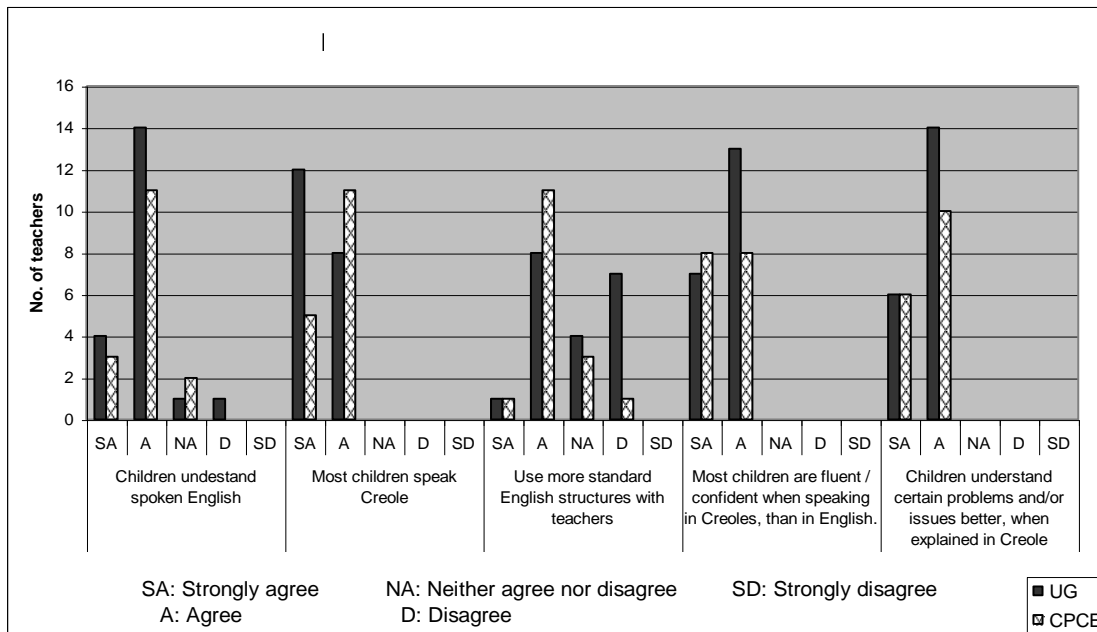


Figure 1 Children’s Language Varieties²

As can be seen from the chart, the vast majority of teachers participating in the study report that Creole is the dominant language in the classroom. Furthermore, they confirm that nursery children on the East Coast of Demerara are fluent users of the language and that it has positive outcomes for learning. One teacher for example, reported that:

Creole language is more prevalent in the classroom. Children express themselves better when using Creoles.

Contrast this however, with the equally high response rate to questions relating both to the importance of Standard English and to the children’s understanding of and dexterity with Standard English:

Standard English must be introduced to the learners on the first day of school. They need to be taught what is right/correct.

These two response patterns highlight the contradictory and conflicting nature of language use, not only in nursery schools on the East Coast of Demerara but in Guyana more generally. In fact, if one were to take these responses at face value then one might assume that Guyanese children eventually become equally fluent in both languages at some point in their education. In terms of learning, some teachers in the

² Note: column 3 should read: “Children use more Standard English structures with teachers” and column 4 should read: “Most children are more fluent/confident when speaking in Creole than when speaking English”

study commented that *both* Creole and Standard English were expedient means of transferring knowledge:

I think that if Standard English is used more often in the classroom, then after a time the children will be able to speak in Standard English

The same teacher then goes on to report that:

...children are accustom[ed] to Creole so it allows you to get over your concept faster.

This response is illustrative of the tensions that pervade the classroom theory and practice of many Guyanese teachers. On the one hand they recognize the importance of Creole in the child's learning process, on the other, they are of the opinion that 'real learning' takes place in Standard English. In the experience of many nursery school teachers, learning is more effective when Creole is used:

When using Creole to children just entering school, they understand you better than when using Standard English.

Another teacher reports that:

Most children respond to questions asked in Creole more readily than Standard English.

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Lastly, a more experienced teacher observes that:

Children express themselves better and speak fluently in Creole.

All of the quotes above illustrate the fact that teachers recognize that there is a clear link between the children's use of Creole and their ability to engage in and access the formal nursery school curriculum.

The question remains however, as to how these observations can be translated into a workable pedagogy for nursery teachers. We should not forget that there was 100% agreement amongst teachers participating in the study that 'Creole is the language most children speak'. In fact, the majority of the teachers who were exposed to specific language awareness training and who are qualified at university level recognized the relationship between language and identity and commented on how Creoles might be used alongside Standard English in the classroom. In the main, their responses were motivated by four concerns:

- the importance of the use of Creole in the non-formal contexts that make up the greater part of our daily experience (the language of the home, etc.)

- the importance of links between Creole and culture (e.g. ethnic identity, folk history, poetry and literature)
- the importance of the use of Standard English in formal contexts (e.g. classroom based work, public speaking etc)
- the importance of mastery of Standard English in relation to students' career goals and aspirations.

The connection between the language of the home and school is neatly summarized by a university trained teacher who advocates the use of Creole *and* Standard English:

Both should be used in the classroom because in the society people express themselves by using creole language mostly rather than Standard English.

Others in this group however, reported specific curricular use(s) of Creole:

Creoles can be used in singing, folk songs and in reciting rhymes and poetry... also in drama. Standard English must be encouraged in speaking.

In fact, only two teachers commented specifically on their role in the promotion, teaching and modeling of Standard English.

The children come to the classroom using Creole because it is their native language however, I feel that simple Standard English should be encouraged in the classroom, and the teachers should at all times speak Standard English to the children who will usually model their behaviour.

As can be seen from these quotes, for some teachers, Creole use was not directly linked to formal learning or instruction. Rather, there was a clear formal/informal dichotomy where Standard English was used in most classroom contexts whilst Creole use was restricted to the playground. However, some teachers trained at Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) placed responsibility for nurturing Creole and/or Standard English squarely on the shoulders of parents. For example, one teacher states:

I think they should be trained at home by their parents with Standard English first so that when using Standard English in the classroom the children will be more familiar with it.

Another teacher holds a more pragmatic view:

I feel that children should not use too much of Creoles in and out of the classroom because teachers are being encouraged to use Standard English at all times and if children are exposed to the use of Standard English at all times, teacher's job will be much easier".

Overall, the teachers in the study report that children who are capable of producing some Standard English structures resort to Creole before the completion of a sentence or discussion. This is illustrated by an observation from a teacher at the teacher training college:

Most children try speaking Standard English and end up into the Creole style.

It does appear that somehow nursery school children gain a certain level of comprehension of some Standard English forms but that they are not as fluent in the production of these same forms. In fact, almost all of the teachers agreed that children understand spoken Standard English when it is used. Only 8% (n=3) were either unsure or disagreed that this was the case.

While the study did not set out to ascertain teachers' competence/confidence in Standard English, this nonetheless emerged as a key factor. Underlying all of the teachers' comments was the belief that they themselves were users of Standard English, however, in an interview with a teacher educator, the view emerged that almost all of the teachers in his courses that he teaches speak Creole 'without realizing they are doing so'. Furthermore, the written responses on many of the questionnaires indicate that the teachers do, in fact, use Creole forms, even in writing. This raised the possibility that whilst some teachers may believe that they speak to children using Standard English they might, in fact, be doing so in Creole. This might also go some way towards explaining why the children have difficulty both understanding and articulating standard forms themselves. In this context Standard English was to be acquired as the language of learning and as the medium of teaching. This led to a situation where teachers reported that:

Children understand concepts taught in Standard English; even though at first it might seem strange, they eventually overcome it.

It would seem that despite recognizing the importance of Creole in the learning process, some nursery school teachers on the East Coast of Demerara eradicate creole forms even though they know that Standard English might at first seem strange to students and that it takes an unspecified amount of time for them to eventually overcome that strangeness.

Several teachers were unaware of the circumstances in which children used Standard English as opposed to creole forms. Furthermore, they were not sure whether the children used more Standard English with teachers than with peers. Overwhelmingly, however, the views shared suggest that many nursery school aged children code switch depending on whether they are speaking with teachers or peers (see also Rickford, 1987). It is also worth noting here that teachers trained at CPCE were actively encouraged through their course content to promote the development of Standard English.

4 Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations

This preliminary study was designed to shed some light on the important relationship between teachers' attitudes to children's Creole usage and classroom practice. In Guyana, the lack of recognition of the importance of childrens' home language in early childhood education on the part of educational planners, curriculum developers, and teacher educators becomes readily apparent when one considers the virtually complete absence of any allowance for the use of Creole in the stated objectives and recommended activities in the official curriculum guide or teacher training courses. As a result, the nationally prescribed classroom activities and teaching approaches do not effectively meet the needs of Guyanese nursery school children, as they constantly reinforce the notion that their home language lacks usefulness, structure and validity. Even though about one third of the teachers surveyed in this study agreed that children achieve Standard English competency through the implementation of what amounts to a subtractive Standard English teaching program, this perceived benefit is in most cases gained at the expense of devastatingly negative overall effects on children's social, psychological and educational development. The responses of the interviewees indicate that most nursery school teachers recognize this fact at some level, and as a result they have, sometimes through insightful reflection, and at other times through sheer necessity, incorporated the use of Creole into their daily routine, generally with positive results.

Based on these and other findings, some preliminary recommendations can be suggested. Building on nursery school teachers' and students' informal attempts to incorporate the use of Creole into classroom practice, new curricular and pedagogical strategies should be adopted that could incorporate features from Roberts' (1994) integrative approach, such as the use of Creole verses and narratives. This approach helps prevent teachers from rejecting children's Creole language by supporting them in the development of appropriate activities that utilize Guyanese children's first language as a respected and valued educational resource. Priority should also be given to the area public awareness, so that a very broad-spectrum of Guyanese society might begin to question and transform their negative beliefs about their Creole language. For this recommendation to materialize, Guyana could borrow ideas from neighbouring Caribbean countries such as St. Lucia and Dominica by introducing media programmes, advertisement strategies, and national events and campaigns to promote and celebrate Guyanese Creole language and culture (see Nwenmely, 1996).

Finally, in the crucial area of pedagogy, it is recommended that all teacher training programmes include a familiarization with basic sociolinguistic theory and practice, with a particular focus on non standard varieties, especially Creole languages (Pollard, 1983; Siegel, 1999). Of more immediate utility, however, would be intensive exposure

for teachers to more educationally sound methods of teaching that make children's mastery of interpersonal and academic registers of Guyanese Creole in their formal schooling an indispensable and solid foundation upon which all other formal learning (including the mastery of Standard English) can take place. In this way, Guyanese students will finally be given the opportunity to face their academic tasks from a position of strength and confidence in their home language and culture, rather than from the position of weakness and linguistic and cultural alienation that is currently being promoted by early childhood education programs in Guyana and other creolophone societies.

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THE ABCS OF TEACHER LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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1 Abstract

This research is based on data from fourteen questionnaires and four interviews with teachers of seven islands across the Eastern Caribbean. I sought to find out whether these teachers saw themselves as native speakers of English; how they rated their proficiency in that language, as well as how they rated the language proficiency of their colleagues. What I found was that while most saw themselves as native speakers of English, they did not rate themselves as highly as one would expect of a native speaker. Additionally, as many as saw their colleagues lacking in proficiency saw these colleagues as highly proficient in the language. These findings led me to conclude that there existed many contradictions in terms of what teachers said they believed and what they articulated. I also concluded that these contradictions (grounded in negative language attitudes) created major barriers to improved proficiency in the second language (English) on the part of both students and teachers. In this study I start from the premise that if teachers' attitudes can impede student learning, it certainly can impede their own learning also. I argue that teachers encounter the same kinds of language learning barriers that their students do and that teachers aid in promoting a set of prevailing contradictions concerning language. I believe that the scenario plays out this way: Teachers' language **attitudes** are shaped by misguided social attitudes, which serve to erect psychological **barriers**, specifically of the motivational kind; hence, negatively affecting the language learning outcome for the teacher and the student. Teachers then excuse/ignore the outcome by establishing their own (opposing) language standard, which gives rise to certain language **contradictions**, especially in societies like those in the Caribbean where a standard variety of a European language is taught in schools, while highly stigmatized and often creolized varieties which are at least lexically related to standard European languages are spoken by most of the population in their daily activities.

I will begin this study by looking at my reasons for investigating the issue of teacher language proficiency. I will then explain the methodology I used to collect and interpret the data which led me to the conclusions I drew. Finally, I will begin to

explore some of the solutions and implications I see emerging from the problems and offer some recommendations.

2 Rationale

Linguistic challenges within the educational system are not limited to students. Schleppegrell (2004) contends that researchers and teacher educators need a more complete understanding of the linguistic challenges of schooling. I am sure she had in mind the challenges presented by students' diverse language use, but, through this study I wish to show that Eastern Caribbean teachers too have their own linguistic challenges, that is, they have difficulty in using English proficiently. I use the term proficiency to mean the consistent, effective and correct use of a language based on a sound knowledge of the written and spoken norms, rules and principles guiding the use of that language within a cultural context. There are therefore degrees of proficiency; nevertheless, my argument is that teachers of English must be amongst those who are most proficient in their use of the language because others are learning from them.

The other reason I chose to do this research is related to the method of enquiry I selected. Carpenter & Minnici (2006) affirm that analysing teachers' statements about stigmatised varieties is a more effective way of finding out what they really believe than quantitative surveys on language attitudes. In this research I have tried to move away from the more traditional quantitative analysis of attitudes to a qualitative look at what I believe to be a 'qualitative' issue. By this I mean that researchers need to move beyond the stage of measuring attitudes to dissecting, critiquing, analysing, challenging, and even rejecting them. It is important for teachers/researchers to have a broader understanding of language attitudes, so that they are aware of, and firm about, where they stand on very sensitive language issues that influence their teaching/research before they can start to look for solutions to very complex educational issues.

3 Methodology

This is a follow-up pilot from another pilot project I carried out on teacher proficiency. After discovering that many of the teachers in the proficiency project had serious writing deficiencies, I set about, not trying to fix the problem, but trying to understand it. I started from the premise that some teachers' attitudes, including their skewed beliefs about language, created a barrier to reaching a higher level of proficiency in the standard language. I am also working from the premise that if teachers' attitudes can impede student learning, they can impede their own learning as well, so I constructed the instruments with the following questions in mind.

4 Research questions

1. Do Eastern Caribbean teachers think that they are native speakers of Standard English (SE)?
2. Do these teachers believe that they are proficient in SE?
3. Do these teachers believe that their colleagues are proficient in SE?

5 Procedure and Instruments

Eighteen questionnaires (Appendix 1) were administered to teachers from eight different territories across the Eastern Caribbean, either face-to-face or via email. Fourteen of these questionnaires were returned, representing seven of these territories. After the questionnaires were returned, interviews were set up with five persons, based on certain comments they made or clarifications I required. Only four of these interviews were held for reasons beyond my control. The interview was semi-structured, in that it related to specific questionnaire responses, which might have been different for each interviewee. It also involved relevant issues outside the scope of the questionnaire items, which I asked of all interviewees (Appendix 1.1). Each interview was carried out individually, recorded, transcribed and analysed.

6 Subjects

This was a purposive sample. Participants were teachers I had taught; teachers who had participated in the proficiency project earlier mentioned; or teachers with whom I was acquainted. The main object was to sample teachers from different territories across the Eastern Caribbean. I wanted to ensure that those I surveyed taught English and had at least five years teaching experience, so that they could speak to the teaching of English with some authority. It was important to select participants who had either taken a course in Linguistics or pursued a degree in the area, since I wished to determine whether this knowledge might be influencing their answers. I might not have accomplished this with a totally random sample. All the participants were female and all had between six to thirty five years of teaching experience. They all taught English either at primary or secondary school, except for one who currently teaches English at the tertiary level, but had taught in the school system prior to this.

7 Analysis

The responses to the questionnaire items which are related to those of the interview questions are presented together. The questionnaire responses and interview answers are not to be taken as separate responses to the same issue, for the latter simply provide further enlightenment on the issue. This is the reason I used the same subjects in the interviews as I did for the questionnaires, so that they act as explainers rather than additional voices on the same issue. The majority of the responses are analysed

qualitatively, as I tried to search for reasons for the answers given. These reasons, I believed, would aid in furnishing the solutions.

8 Limitations

There were no male participants in this project because I did not know any male teachers with a Linguistics background who also taught English. It might have been worthwhile to get a male perspective on the issue, and perhaps even do a gender comparison. Certainly this is a limitation for a purposive sample such as this. Also, in retrospect, there are certain problems with the questionnaire which emerged during this pilot. I now believe that there was a need to find out about teachers' level of training and the content of the teacher education training programmes in which they had enrolled. This would have allowed the findings to speak more directly to certain issues.

9 Findings and Discussion

I will start by looking at the answers to research questions one and two more closely. Table 1 (Appendix 2) is a list of the territories as well as an identifier for each teacher and how teachers saw themselves in relation to the dominant languages in their home territories. The chart shows that the overwhelming majority see themselves as native speakers (NS) of English; yet, do not rate their proficiency as highly as one would expect a native speaker should. In the category of proficiency, certain qualifying labels are used, like 'reasonably', 'functionally', 'almost', or simple modest terms like 'comfortable'. Two persons actually admit to not being proficient, despite classifying themselves as native speakers.

These findings raise a fundamental question as to whether or not native speaker is, or should be, a subjective term. The fact that teachers think that their native language (NL) is Standard English (SE) does not surprise me. Nero (1997: 7), some ten years ago confirms "the majority of anglophone Caribbean people actually speak either the basilect ...or... (the mesolect) but continue to label their language as English..." However, the fact that teachers, who have taken Linguistics courses, and in some cases have pursued degrees in Linguistics, believe their NL to be SE is shocking. It suggests that this linguistic knowledge has remained part of the Linguistics course, and as such, this revelation speaks to the ineffectiveness of the programme in helping teachers transfer linguistic knowledge to the classroom. Ball & Lardner (1997) speak on this issue regarding the results of the Ann Arbor In-service programme. They reveal that a lot of information was made available regarding topics like the history and structure of African American English and the effect of teacher attitudes on student learning, but not much attention was paid to the process of applying this knowledge. Howard et al. (1980: 59) in responding to a like claim, contend that giving the teacher information about the vernacular "assumes that teacher knowledge will

result in success in language arts for vernacular speakers”. Teachers need to know how linguistic knowledge benefits them and their students. They also need to know how to translate that knowledge into classroom practice while taking into consideration their specific contexts. I believe that it is the combination of ‘knowing that’ and ‘knowing how’ with regard to language that help to build teachers’ linguistic proficiency.

Certain attitudes are manifested in the answer ‘NS of English’. Many teachers know, even if only through contact with Linguistics courses, that their NL is not SE. Still, the fact that teachers are considered to be educated, while the non-standard is usually associated with the uneducated, might cause teachers to want to identify with SE. There could also be a sense in which their attitudes are grounded in racial shame. Black is associated with slavery and for some, with a lack of education (Lippi-Green, 1997). In other words, people can see that I am black, that fact I cannot hide, but I need not give them the impression that I am also uneducated by broadcasting that I speak a non-standard variety of English. People do not like to be associated with certain negative stereotypes, especially when they have reached a certain level of education (Lippi-Green, 1997; Scott & Smitherman, 1985). Cameron (1995: 14) expresses this powerfully:

‘mastering a complex and difficult craft gives you an inbuilt incentive to defend its practices. If I have invested time and effort learning how to write according to a particular set of prescriptions, I will take some convincing that those prescriptions are not necessary and desirable; to admit that the rules are both arbitrary and pointless is to devalue my own accomplishment in mastering them’.

Certainly, teachers are not being asked to deny their **labour** in learning SE. I am however asking that they give back to the vernacular; I am asking them to acknowledge that our creoles gave us speech, English gave us writing. Both languages give us something. Furthermore, our vernaculars continue to give us something that ‘is missing in the world which is held up as superior and better’ (Lippi-Green, 1997: 201). As Caribbean people, who among us would deny the richness of our vernaculars? There are just some things that cannot be said with the same passion and effect in English, so even English has its limitations. Such denial of our NLs could imply that they serve little or no purpose to educate us in any sense. Perhaps it is easy to think this way having inherited the language, and not having **labored** to learn it. There is a sense of accomplishment in mastering English because we expended effort to do so, whereas our NL seems to come naturally, without effort; hence, there might be a feeling that in acknowledging the non-standard we are denying the standard and ultimately our efforts and accomplishments (what it has allowed us to achieve socially and educationally).

There were three persons who cited something other than SE as their NL. This could reflect an attempt to apply their knowledge of Linguistics or this could reflect a true sense of pride in their vernacular, or both. I am inclined to believe it is the latter in at least one case, because one of these three is St. Lucian. Currently in St. Lucia, the Creole spoken there has been actively promoted to make citizens aware and proud of its contribution. There is a designated Creole Day celebrated throughout the island, and even the Governor General delivers her Throne Speech in Creole as well as English; thus, ‘decentring’ SE, rather than ‘devaluing’ it (Godley et al., 2006: 32). She thereby accords both languages honour, and shows how they are equally effective in conveying the same information. This instils pride in a people when they see a person of such calibre use the non-standard publicly. People begin to rethink the status of the language, and this helps to break down psychological barriers that act as hindrances to identifying oneself with the more stigmatized code.

10 Implications

The implication here is that teachers will never see the need to improve their language proficiency in English if they see themselves as native speakers. After all, why would one need to learn a language that one already supposedly knows? This is perhaps the most critical reason, I believe, as to why these teachers are not as highly proficient as they should be in the language. The reality is, in not tending to the problem at the source there can be no improvement. This is likely the case with some of these teachers. If they continue to deny association with (their non-standard) NL, they create ambivalent feelings towards this language. It is this ambivalence that creates other negative feelings and raises affective filters (Krashen, 1982) which can impede the learning process. High affective filters (negative emotional responses, e.g. anxiety, boredom) can cause language learners to speak about a language being ‘hard’ to learn, as they close their minds to taking in knowledge about the language. When teachers are in a situation where they are targeted for use of poor grammar, they may become stressed. They might try to manage the stress by making excuses or rationalising their failure as the fault of someone else. The result is that the problem of poor proficiency in the target language is never addressed and so there is no improvement.

Some teachers see the non-standard as anything but a language, because this is what they have been taught in school or through societal attitudes (Godley & al., 2006). Teachers are after all social beings and will be affected by the attitudes around them; they will undeniably absorb some of them, for they are first of all human beings, influenced by very human ways of seeing things. Perhaps also, teachers try too hard to separate the personal self (non-standard variety speaker) from the professional self (SE speaker) in the classroom. The methodologies advocated for language teaching success today are such that one cannot hope to achieve professional competence by separating out the personal self. Current approaches to language education call instead

for a great deal of empathy to understand the struggles, frustrations, joys and accomplishments of finding one's voice in a language. We tend to find that empathy in the personal self. In attempting to completely turn off that personal self in the classroom teachers seem to succeed in turning off the learner and the learning process. If our students are not learning then teachers are not learning either, for if teachers continue to hold to the same attitudes that disengage students from the learning process then they themselves have not **learned** to curb these attitudes for the benefit of the language learning/teaching process.

I would summarise the answers to the research questions in these ways. Most teachers saw themselves as native speakers of English, perhaps because of certain ideologies they hold linking SE and education and the non-standard and lack of education. Additionally, the majority, though describing themselves as native speakers, did not rate their proficiency as highly as expected. I will now discuss their views regarding their colleagues' level of proficiency.

11 Colleagues' Proficiency

Most respondents had witnessed a colleague using poor English grammar in the classroom (see Appendix 3, Table 2), and were cautious about how they handled the matter. They did not perceive their colleagues' difficulties with SE to be due to mere mistakes, based on the terms they used to describe this incorrect usage, such as 'errors' and 'problems'. Some of those whom I interviewed went on to elaborate:

'...there are times when you might go into a classroom, the teacher who was before you, you see **errors** there (on the board), you might be next door, you might you hear **errors** and so on' (SV2).

'there are some teachers who are strong in one subject and not in the other, so somebody would come over and they would say (calls her own name) what should you use here, should you use 'their' (spells out the word) or 'there' (spells out the word) because they're mixed up ever so often so they would come over to make certain because they want to make sure that they're telling the children the right thing' (BD2).

Those who saw and heard errors approached the situation very cautiously. Some were even too apprehensive to deal with the matter. For example, one interviewee says:

'it's always a technical situation because you know you don't want to go up to somebody and point these things' (SV3), while another adds:

I (Interviewer:) Have you done anything about it?

SL2: Not always...It depends on the relationship. If it is some...somebody that I speak to well...'

This is a very sensitive issue about which people are not always open to discussion. Cruz-Janzen (2000) explains: ‘We all know we have a problem but no one ever talks about it or talks about what to do. We are all just afraid and hope that somehow it all goes away’ (p. 96). Perhaps this is how some teachers in this study felt. SV1 and BD2 tried to shed some light on why teachers may react in certain ways if they feel that their language proficiency is being called into question.

‘I don’t think people readily say that they have a weakness **because you’re teaching English** and you wouldn’t want to know that you are teaching the wrong thing’ (SV1).

‘you’ve been hired to do a job. You are expected to be able to more or less to do it efficiently so that certain things are required so it is a given by most persons that you do possess these skills so **it is hard for teachers to admit that they do not possess these skills**’ (BD2).

Also, in another interview, SV3 repeated her colleagues’ own admission of linguistic weakness when she said dramatically: “Oh I don’t know how you could be teaching English, I can’t even talk it, let alone teach it”. Despite their admission, she felt that they were not always open to correction. SV1 was more specific, saying that teachers made errors in subject verb agreement in their speech in the classroom.

Generally, these participants seem to be saying that their colleagues are not always willing to admit to areas of weakness in which they are expected to have strengths. It is embarrassing. It is a disappointment, and so teachers prefer to save face rather than face public humiliation, let alone get help. Teachers know that language use labels people in the society and that this is even more the case for teachers of English, so that they, as teachers, see themselves as having more to lose publicly. **This is easy to understand.** We try to live up to other people’s expectations, particularly as professionals. It is difficult to deal with the consequences of admitting that one does not meet the standards.

For the most part, teachers do want to help their colleagues. Teachers, who saw or heard errors, moved quickly, even if hesitantly at first, to resolve the matter. Here are excerpts of what they had to say:

‘talk to them after and suggest what could have been done instead (GR1)

‘indicated that I wished to speak with the individual, then proceeded to highlight the error in a calm manner (SV1)

‘Discuss the problem with the colleague after the class (SK)

‘Point out the error after the class (SV2)

‘I very nicely pointed out the mistake and they checked to see who was correct (BD2)

‘correct them sometimes depending on what is being done in the lesson (BD1)

‘draw it to their attention after class’ (SV4)

‘spoke to the teacher at a distance so that the children could not hear the conversation (BD3).

‘I went to them, pointed out the error and gave them support material to read about the topic or subject (DM)
‘draw it to their attention (SL1)

The need to be compassionate is the recurring theme. Colleagues were concerned about bruising egos or seemingly calling others’ capabilities and intelligence into question, and so, the time and manner in which it was done, ‘after class’, and ‘very nicely’ took this into account. Interestingly, while many pointed out the error, only two offered their colleagues actual suggestions for improvement. On the whole though, these examples demonstrate and substantiate how peers can be involved when intervention is attempted.

12 Implications

I reiterate that answers can emerge from a clear statement and analysis of problems. If teachers are afraid of public ridicule then this could be lessened by making help available from within their own ranks. BD2 for example, speaks of camaraderie which seems to displace fear. In her environment, teachers readily approach their colleagues, whom they feel to be stronger in a specific area of the language, for help. She says:

‘Sometimes in a comprehension passage one answer is given and then you’re looking at it and you’re like no this doesn’t seem right somehow so you go and you check with a colleague and you want to find out exactly why that one is wrong and the other one is right, so you do a lot of...trading like that more or less, helping each other’.... ‘Sometimes they write a letter or they write something they come and they bring it over and they say examine this for me, so more or less we correct each other so nothing really goes out that we haven’t consulted together on’.

Lieberman (1995) promotes this kind of ‘in-house’ help, explaining that ‘teachers share their knowledge, learn from one another, and -by extension- take responsibility far[sic] the growth and development of all children in the school’ . It is true that this requires a level of comfort which must be institutionally supported. This means that teachers must learn ‘new ways of working together and tackling the complexities of teaching’ which will take ‘sustained time, focus and resources’ (Clair & Adger, 1999: 4). It also entails seeing teachers’ knowledge as a valuable resource (Lieberman, 1995) to be tapped into, rather than as a light to reflect, or highlight, other teachers’ linguistic weaknesses.

I must acknowledge that peer involvement can also work against the best intentions. For example, BD2 speaks of teachers in the Infants department who ‘are a bit fearful if you have to point out a few things [about their language]’. They tell her she is being ‘unfair’. This is why she admits that the team-work, of which she earlier spoke, was limited to the junior level. She says that ‘you have to find a way around the pride first’. This atmosphere of fear, accusations and prideful behaviour will not make for

good collegial relations. In a setting of this kind, help from within will prove almost impossible, as some might think that they are being belittled. The state of relations must therefore be considered when trying to deal with such sensitive issues as teacher proficiency.

I am left with several questions based on what teachers have said about their colleagues' levels of language proficiency. How long have others been observing and ignoring this problem? What support systems are in place to help these teachers? Do teachers know about them? Do they want help? If not, why not? Is there a way of knowing what teachers know about language? Is this recorded anywhere? (GAO, 2003; USGAO, 2007). I will now make several recommendations.

13 Recommendations

Training programmes

Educational researchers and teacher educators must make it a priority to prepare teachers to develop more appropriate responses to dialect diversity. It is true that there is a heavy burden placed on teacher education programmes to realistically meet the needs of all teachers. Still, programmes must be designed to show how teacher knowledge should translate into practice (Godley et al., 2006; Irvine, 2003). No longer should subject knowledge be so far removed from teaching knowledge (Kennedy, 1991), that teachers cannot make the connection. Because teachers are being asked to be the most innovative professionals in their communities, it is absolutely necessary that teacher education programmes offered at universities, training colleges or within schools must be the most innovative programmes in those same communities (Garcia, 1992).

Language teachers need courses in Linguistics (Garcia, 1992), linguistic diversity (Godley et al., 2006), and Contrastive Analysis, and these courses need to be delivered in such a way that they make sense for the teacher in her/his world. This is the challenge to teacher educators. They need to help teachers see how the course content can be applied to their specific contexts. This means that there must be continuous in-service training once teachers have moved from pre-service training into schools. It also means that teacher trainers have to educate themselves about how teachers learn, in order for that information to feed into training programmes that best suit teachers' needs. Lieberman (1995) argues that '[w]hat everyone appears to want for students – a wide array of learning opportunities that engage students in experiencing, creating and solving real problems...is for some reason denied to teachers when they are the learners' (p. 2). Teachers should no longer be in a position to feel that they are 'free...to ignore modern linguistic scholarship, free to invent their own programs as they go along...free to ignore evidence or theory, free to rely on their own insight, free, that is, to ignore facts' (Harkin, 1991: 130). Though targeting negative attitudes

towards non-standard languages is one of the most difficult tasks for the teacher educator to undertake, it must become one of the primary objectives built into training programmes for Eastern Caribbean teachers.

Targeting attitudes

Any programme geared towards attitudinal change must aim to help teachers become self-aware about the issues. This is to say that Eastern Caribbean teachers of English must be prepared (through self-analysis) to bring a more positive attitude to linguistic variation into the classroom. To achieve this, Godley et al. (2006) propose that teachers study their own linguistic variation. Krauthamer [1999], in Godley et al. (2006), explains that this helps teachers to see that even when they identify themselves as SE speakers that there are really many varied patterns in their language use. The objective is to help teachers to develop empathy for their learners or as Godley et al. (2006: 32) maintain, 'to demonstrate the naturalness of language variation and the flaws in standard language ideologies'. Teachers then begin to recognise that children in the Eastern Caribbean, for the most part, come to school speaking a home language that is different from the school language and respect this as acceptable.

Professional face-lift

The real issue about teacher attitudes might be tied to how others see and treat teaching as a profession. There is a lack of respect accorded the teaching profession in the Eastern Caribbean in comparison to other professions. Ingersoll (1999) speaking to this issue of disrespect in relation to teaching in the USA, states that:

...elementary and secondary school teaching is largely treated as lower-status work and teachers as semi-skilled workers" (p. 33) Ultimately...the way to upgrade the quality of teaching and teachers is to upgrade the quality of the job...If we treated teaching as a highly valued profession, one requiring expertise and skill, there would be no problem attracting and retaining more than enough excellent teachers, and there would be little problem ensuring that all classrooms were staffed with qualified teachers (pp. 34-35).

I therefore recommend a 'face-lift' for the profession. Members of other professions are recognised by first being trained and then measured against some national or international standard. The same needs to apply in this context; teachers need first to be trained and then evaluated, so that the very best teachers are deployed to the primary schools to build a strong foundation in literacy first in the non-standard native language, which learners can build upon to eventually acquire literacy skills in the standard second language. This path allows teachers and learners to make a clear distinction between the standard and non-standard. Furthermore, knowledgeable, skilled teachers will translate into confident professionals whose faith in their own

abilities will not easily be shaken by those continuously assessing them (Jeffrey & Woods, 1998).

14 Conclusion

It is comparatively easy to hypothesize about teachers' ways of reasoning and to recommend practical ways of overcoming negative language attitudes. I can deduce from data and observation that some Caribbean teachers lack proficiency in English because they falsely believe that they have already acquired the language, or because they have a poor attitude toward being told about their language competence and proficiency. I could further deduce that this poor attitude hinders their progress in the language.

It is however not easy to change teachers' negative language attitudes; so that after all my theorizing and politicising, I can only recommend patience to allow time and space for change. While being patient however, I would challenge teachers to recognise that these attitudes only act as barriers to their own progress. I would urge them to overcome these barriers and work at replacing contradictions with linguistic facts. But I would also attempt to craft, alongside these teachers, the tools for change. Change is not impossible, but neither is it easy. It can create tension, but tension is necessary to achieve goals (Garcia, 1992). Many of these teachers are influenced by a society that promotes one language and denigrates another and by an educational system that indulges this attitude. Although it may involve a difficult (Wragg et al., 2000) and emotionally delicate (Greenbaum, 1985) process, any improvement in teachers' attitudes will be worth the wait, because teachers are professionally entrusted with the task of making an entire society literate and proficient in the use of language.

When I conducted my previous pilot study on teacher proficiency, I became alarmed and started to offer suggestions to help teachers improve their English. I recognise now that I was offering solutions to teachers who were either unaware that a problem existed or who had chosen to ignore the problem. Either way, I was offering help where it was neither welcomed nor acknowledged. I therefore went back to the proverbial drawing board and rather than tell teachers that they needed help in improving their English language proficiency, I asked them if they did, and if their colleagues did. This approach certainly heightened teachers' awareness and acknowledgment of the problem of poor English language proficiency among some Eastern Caribbean teachers of English. I took the next step, not assuming that I had the answers, but trying to find out the source(s) of the problem. My aim in the present pilot study was to support teachers in the process of identifying and analyzing their own problems, so that they could begin to formulate their own solutions before I began to advance my own.

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Appendix 1 (Questionnaire)

As regards the project on teacher proficiency, which we previously discussed, I am now formally asking for your involvement by requesting that you fill in the questionnaire as truthfully as possible. Your identity will remain anonymous. I thank you in advance for your participation in this project.

1. Tick one of the following. Age: under 25 26-35 36-45 45 + (over 45)
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. Country of birth.....
4. Country in which you grew up.....
5. Country where you teach.....
6. Do you teach English? If yes, at what level? (E.g. primary)
.....
7. What is your native language?
8. If your native language is not English, which language do you use most often?
.....
9. What language do you primarily use in the classroom?
10. Why this language?
.....
.....
.....
11. Complete this sentence.

I am.....in my use of the English language.
12. What grade did you receive in the regional examination in English language at secondary school (e.g. CXC, GCSE)
13. List at least 5 difficulties you find in teaching the English language (only to be answered if you teach English). List the most difficult first.
14. In your experience what are the most common errors students make when attempting to write the English language (list at least three even if you do not teach English)
 - a. c.
 - b. d.

15. Have you ever seen colleagues use incorrect English grammar in the classroom?.....

If yes, what did you do?

.....
.....

16. If no, what do you think you would have done had you been confronted with this situation?

.....
.....
.....

17. Make some comments on your colleagues' (those who teach with you) proficiency in the English language.

18. What strategies would you put in place to deal with the falling standards of the English language in schools?

Thank you. Any additional comments can be written at the back. Please ensure that you make clear which question you are answering.

Appendix 1.1 (Interview schedule)

1. Do you ever use (non-standard) dialect in the classroom? Why, or why not?
2. How proficient are you in English? Why do you say this?
3. Do you see your colleagues as proficient in the English language? Why have you answered this way?
4. Have you ever seen or heard colleagues make errors in English in the classroom? What have you done about it if this is so?
5. How can teachers be helped to become more proficient, if they aren't already?

Appendix 2

Teacher ID Code	Country	Age Range	Years teaching	Level	Native language	Classroom Language	Proficiency Rating	Grade
AG	Antigua	26-35	12	P	SE	SE	Reasonably proficient	CXC I
BD1	Barbados	36-45	15	P	BD	SE	Proficient	CXC I
BD2	Barbados	36-45	16	P	BD	SE	Functionally proficient	CXC I
BD3	Barbados	Over 45	30	P	SE	SE	Comfortable	Intermediate B
DM	Dominica	26-35	16	P	SE	SE	Fluent	GCE B
GR1	Grenada	Under 25	6	S	SE	SE & CE	Comfortable	CXC I
GR2	Grenada	Over 45	30+	T	SE	SE	Fluent & proficient	CXC I
SK	St. Kitts	36-45	19	S	SE	SE	Very competent	CXC I
SL1	St. Lucia	26-35	10	P	CE	CE	Competent	CXC II
SL2	St. Lucia	26-35	9	P	SLSE	SLSE	Competent	CXC I
SV1	St. Vincent	26-35	9	P	SE	SE	Not proficient	GCE C
SV2	St. Vincent	Over 45	24	S	SE	SE	Proficient	CXC I
SV3	St. Vincent	36-45	23	S	SE	SE	Not proficient	CXC II
SV4	St. Vincent	36-45	20	S	SE	SE	Almost proficient	CXC I

Table 1 Profile of Teachers in Sample. Abbreviations used: BD= Barbadian dialect (non-standard variety of English spoken in Barbados), CE= Creole English (English lexifier Creole), CXC = Caribbean Examinations Council; GCE = General certificate of Education; I, II, III = Grades 1, 2, and 3; P = primary; S = secondary; SE = Standard English; SLSE= St. Lucian Standard English; T = tertiary

Appendix 3

Teacher ID Code	Comments
AG (P)	Many ...not as proficient as they should be /2. Some don't seem to be aware of errors they make/3. Some are poor writers (make grammatical errors)
BD1 (P)	Most are competent
BD2 (P)	Some are very careful with their language and ready to...correct your use of language/ 2. Some vehement about use of dialect on...school premises...very articulate in their speech
BD3 (P)	Most teachers have low proficiency and seem not to recognise or care
DM (P)	...most...have the qualification required but do utilise the proper techniques or strategies for teaching English language
GR1 (S)	They are capable/ 2. willing to improve
GR2 (T)	They all possess an excellent facility with the language/ 2. I have no issues
SK (S)	No answer
SL 1 (P)	No answer
SL 2 (P)	Many...believe they are competent in SE, but their teaching says otherwise/ 2. Most of them use CE in the classroom and this is the language that is reinforced
SV1(P)	Some teachers make mistakes in Subject verb agreement when speaking/2. Often the correct usage of the English grammar is not implemented in the classroom
SV2 (S)	For the most part colleagues communicate in dialect but are able to code switch when in classroom/2. If they are uncertain, they seek assistance/ 3. teachers of English tend to be more careful at all times
SV3 (S)	Many...are not very proficient...but are not always open to correction
SV4 (S)	They have a fairly good command

Table 2 Comments concerning colleagues' proficiency

TOWARDS REAL CULTURAL DIALOGUE IN CARIBBEAN EDUCATION

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Language, culture and identity, often explored in the context of education, are recurrent themes in the works of many writers from the Caribbean. In these works, writers expose the challenges Caribbean children face in order to succeed in an education system where imported cultural references are often presented as one of the main barriers to academic attainment. Martinican writer Chamoiseau, in his semi-autobiographical novel, *Chemin d'école* (1994: 159), describes school as a place to break 'bad mores' which, he said, were considered inherent in 'negroes' and in the creole language, and replace them with European values and customs.

The generalisation and criticism of what is considered 'negro culture', combined with the negative status given to the creole language are rooted in the values attached to dominant western culture and its hierarchical structure. In most societies, education is presented as key to personal independence and social advancement. However, it is rarely promoted as the vehicle for communication of ideologies that may become inscribed in cultural beliefs and practices. In the case of the Caribbean, these ideologies are a direct legacy of colonisation, deeply rooted in middle class western cultural practices, beliefs and values. This paper will examine this educational legacy in the Caribbean and illustrate the role played by history with reference to the work of writers from the region; with particular focus on Abdul Malik (Trinidad), James Berry (Jamaica) and Daniel Boukman (Martinique). More specifically, it will raise the issue of dialogue as a way to encourage a more participative society.

Education in the Caribbean, particularly that carried out by missionaries, has been the primary vehicle for the propagation of European cultural values and ideologies in the region. Education in the European languages was one of the key aspects of the "civilising mission" of the colonising powers. The following statement made by Edmond Besnard of the *Mission Laïque Française* in 1909, helps to encapsulate the colonisers' view of educating the colonised:

“Puisque notre présence dans la colonie est légitimée par la supériorité de notre culture, de notre civilisation, notre premier devoir est d’agir en hommes civilisés, supérieurs moralement au peuple que nous avons mis en tutelle. Nous sommes allés dans les colonies non seulement en conquérants, mais en éducateurs. Et n’est-ce pas l’occasion de rappeler qu’un éducateur doit avant tout songer à l’intérêt de ses élèves?” (Besnard, 1978: 67)

[Since our colonial enterprise is justified by the superiority of our culture and civilization, our first duty is to behave like civilized men, the moral superiors of those for whom we have become the mentors. We come to the colonies not just as conquerors, but also as educators. And it is fitting in this context to remind ourselves that a good educator should strive above all to consider the needs of his students] (translation by the editors)

The above quotation dating more than 60 years after the abolition of slavery in the French colonies highlights the impact of ideologies cultivating the notion of the superiority of the coloniser’s culture. Schools, as already mentioned, had a primary role in transmitting that message; indeed, not only did they exacerbate the diglossic linguistic situation in the Caribbean, but promoted it along with western cultural legacies.

In an interview by the present author (1985), Trinidadian poet Abdul Malik explains how at school he was made aware of a clear division between ‘good English’ spoken in class and by those in authority, and ‘bad or broken English’ spoken with his friends in the playground. Like many of his contemporaries, he was educated to believe that English was **the** language of literature and poetry. He had not been exposed to writers who wrote in Creole, nor was he aware of those who wrote about his kind of experience. Martinican playwright and poet, Daniel Boukman, like many other writers from the French-speaking Caribbean, shares a similar experience. Writer Raphael Confiant, in an introduction to Boukman’s collection of poems *Anba fey* (1987), introduces the writer as follows:

“ Né avant 1946, il fait partie de cette génération qui a été élevé dans le culte sans partage de la langue française et de ses écrivains, et qui à refoulé presque sans effort notre vieille langue bâtarde, notre «patois créole» comme on le qualifiait à l’époque ” (Boukman, 1987: 5).

[Born before 1946, he is a member of that generation which was brought up with unswerving devotion to French language and literature, and which almost automatically rejected our old bastardised language, our “creole jargon” as it was referred to at the time.] (translation by the editors)

The school curriculum across the Caribbean was largely modelled on that of the mother country. In order to ensure academic success, students had to be taught elements relevant to examinations which were formulated abroad and highly

eurocentric. Such practices created a situation of cultural limbo for those writers with whom we are concerned in this paper as their own cultural legacies acquired in their home environment (their nurture) as well as their inherent qualities (nature) were rejected or undervalued in the school environment. An example of this is the negative attributes associated with the word Negro, a word that has been used to describe the majority of the population on many Caribbean islands.

In his trilogy, *Chants pour hater la mort du temps des Orphée*, Boukman provides examples of negative portrayals of the Negro through a range of western media and books:

Et pour parfaire la destruction,
Europe,
Dans tes livres d'images pour enfants
Dans tes revues et magazines
Sur tes écrans et scènes de casinos
Tu fabriques le Nègre
Mangeur
De feu, de chair humaine.
Le Bon Nègre
danseur éternel
plumes aux fesses
blanche dentures
rouleurs de dés
et d'yeux enflammés d'alcool
et de lubricité. (Boukman, 1993: 81)

The image of the Negro, found in the media and books, is not one with which Caribbean islanders could identify; it did not correspond to the image they had of themselves. Its negative interpretation was associated with African 'savages' while Caribbean islanders considered themselves as being more civilised because they had adopted more 'positive' European values. The author further underlines the negative connotation associated with the word 'Negro' by listing a series of expressions using the word *nègre* in a negative or subservient context, such as: '*Monsieur Dupont est le nègre de Monsieur Durand*' '*Aujourd'hui j'ai bossé comme un nègre*', '*Mais mon enfant, votre composition c'est du p'tit nègre*', '*Si tu n'es pas sage, j'appelle le nègre*', '*Rentrez chez vous sale nègre*'. White on the other hand is presented as positive; as illustrated in the introduction of Sartre's *Orphée noir*:

L'homme blanc, blanc parce qu'il était homme, blanc comme le jour, blanc comme la vérité, blanc comme la vertu, éclairait la création comme une torche, dévoilait l'essence secrète et blanche des êtres. (Sartre, 1985: ix)

[The white man, because he was a real man, white like daylight, white like the truth, white like goodness, shed light on all creation like a torch and revealed the secret white essence of life.] (translation by the editors)

These values, propagated through institutions such as schools, became ingrained in the psyche of many Caribbean people who use stereotypical expressions and thus reinforce the damage inflicted by them without being aware of their racist connotations:

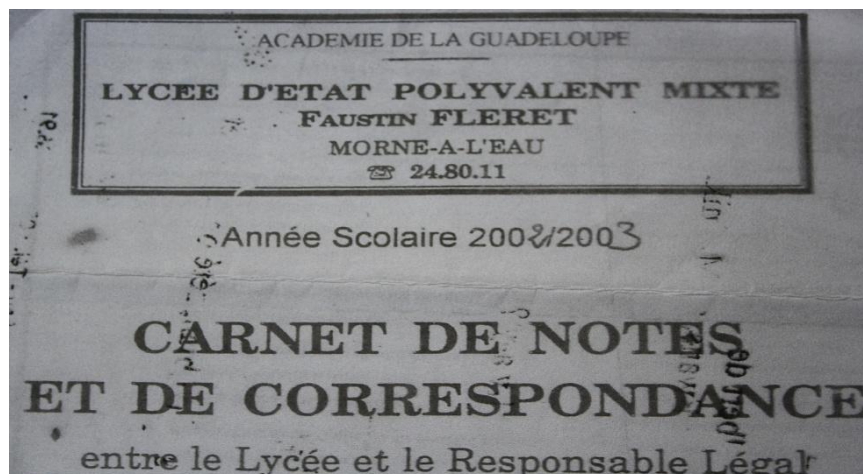
Le nègre apprendra à dire “blanc comme neige” pour signifier l’innocence, à parler de la noirceur d’un regard, d’une âme, d’un forfait. Dès qu’il ouvre sa bouche il s’accuse, à moins qu’il ne s’acharne à renverser la hiérarchie. (Sartre, 1985: xxi)

[The Negro will learn to say ‘white like snow’ to refer to innocence, and also learn to speak of the blackness or darkness of a look, of a soul, or of a defeat. As soon as he opens his mouth he puts himself down, unless he has dared to take it upon himself to completely overturn the dominant hierarchies.] (translation by the editors)

The term cultural capital first appeared in Bourdieu & Passeron’s *Cultural Reproduction, Social Reproduction* (1973), in order to explain differences in educational attainment in France during the 1960s and to show how the French educational system reproduces the cultural divisions in society. What is most salient in this analysis is the inadequacy of the school system in promoting equal opportunity. The notion of cultural capital is pertinent to the Caribbean, where success is measured according to criteria based on the assumption that European languages, the European’s skin colour and European culture in general are models to which all must aspire. Added to the negative connotation associated with his ethnicity, the African descended Caribbean child experiences a gap (in some cases a conflict) between the devalued cultural capital that he brings from home to school and the overvalued eurocentric cultural capital that is repackaged and sold by the formal education system as ‘universal’ culture, values, and civilisation. In his play *Delivrans!* Bookman highlights the alienation and inner conflict of some Caribbean people who adopt an external persona which is incompatible with their personal nature. The main character, M. Cupidon is trapped in a series of cultural contradictions, whereby on the one hand the lifestyle that he is emulating is increasingly at odds with the realities that confront him outside of his home; while on the other hand his Caribbean identity is continuously struggling to resurface, creating an internal conflict, reminiscent of the situation described in Damas’ poem ‘Hoquet’, 1939.

Furthermore, because schools in the Caribbean are structured around eurocentric middle class values and practices, these may put students from other backgrounds, who have not learnt to navigate these dominant values and practices, at a disadvantage. Sociologists such as Bourdieu use the term ‘accident of birth’ to highlight the uneven playing field faced by some individuals as a result of circumstances beyond their control, such as their ethnicity or class. Coard (1971) makes a similar case by exposing the cultural bias inherent in IQ tests that are used to stream children onto different career paths in the school system. He denounces the negative judgments passed on the levels of motivation and English language proficiency of children from lower class or non-European descended backgrounds by an educational system that often condemns them to failure.

This paper argues that this cultural bias is replicated in Caribbean schools where eurocentric middle class values remain prevalent. Even in today’s Caribbean, school regulations continue to promote restrictive norms that are in conflict with the nature and environment of the Caribbean islander. A perfect example is found in the ‘*Carnet de notes et de correspondance*’ (student’s planner, see below) of a school in Morne-A-L’Eau (Guadeloupe) for the academic year 2002/2003 in which the school stipulates: ‘Within the limits of decency and good manners, students can wear whatever they like’ and then goes on listing a series of forbidden styles including ‘men’s sleeveless tee-shirts, piercings, dreadlocks, skirts or shirts that are too short, uncombed or hirsute hair’ (translation by the author).



It is difficult to comprehend how dreadlocks, which have been an African hair style for centuries and used by a number of religious groups can be considered as indecent or in bad taste.

3. La sécurité

3.1 La tenue des élèves

Dans la limite de la décence et du savoir-vivre, chaque lycéen s'habille selon ses goûts. Aucun élève ne peut se présenter au lycée avec une tenue ou avec une coiffure indécente, excentrique. Les cours d'EPS font obligation d'une tenue adaptée exigée par la nature de l'enseignement.

En ce sens, il est bon de rappeler que les coiffes (casquette, bonnet, chapeau), le débardeur masculin, les piercings, les locks, les jupes et corsages trop courts, les cheveux non peignés ou hirsutes sont interdits.

De même, les tenues autorisées en EPS ne sont pas admises en cours normal. La blouse blanche est obligatoire en Travaux Pratiques.

Being forced into such a mould results in a gap between what is natural and internal (what I describe as inherent traits, family values and cultures) on the one hand and what is cultured and external (in other words cultivated traits such as those received through the cultures and values promoted in schools) on the other hand. This gap between nature and culture is explained by Glissant as being the result of a situation of '*non-histoire*', which is characterised by the impossibility for the Caribbean people to express their collective memory because:

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...the lived circumstances of this daily reality do not form part of a continuum, which means that its relation with its surroundings (what we would call its nature) is in a discontinuous relation to its accumulation of experiences (what we would call its culture). (Glissant, 1992)

Glissant's interpretation of the relationship between nature and culture is seen in terms of duality and places the importance on the power of culture.

The theme of '*non histoire*' is further developed in Glissant's *Poétique de la relation* (1997). For Glissant, one cannot speak of a linear history of the Caribbean in the same way as history in Europe or Africa because of the discontinuity of experiences resulting from the slave trade. He defines the distinction in terms of atavistic society and composite society. For him an atavistic culture is defined by its ability to create the idea of genesis. Glissant sees atavistic societies as having the following two effects on their members: in the first instance a man from an atavistic community believes that his words are guided by those of his God, who created the world; and secondly such a man believes that he has legitimacy over the world and as such can justify colonialism. The composite culture which is born out of colonisation does not have a claim to a genesis and this by extension means no legitimate God given claim to the land (in this context, the Caribbean).

The lack of promotion of positive Caribbean role models together with biased accounts of history taught in schools, have deprived Caribbean peoples not only of a sense of history but also of black heroes who could help to reinforce a sense of belonging, pride and aspiration. Indeed, Europe has taught Caribbean peoples to see themselves as peoples with no history who must be satisfied with fragments or echoes of European history. Where aspects of Caribbean history have been taught, teachers have relied on books which underline the colonial legacy of the region and promote a negative, subaltern, and inferior image of the Black population. This void in education in the Caribbean has left many with a sense of deprivation the enormity of which they find difficult to comprehend and which many writers address in their works for the benefit of generations to come. Berry's lack of knowledge of his people's history prevented him from understanding the attitudes of people on his island and more specifically that of his father whose behaviour he qualified, in many of his writings, as sheepish.

As a young boy in Jamaica, Berry failed to understand his father's attitude and behaviour towards the white family for whom he was working. His questions, in an attempt to understand his father's "sheepish" behaviour, were left unanswered. His family house, which he describes as an extension of the old slave estate on which his father worked, was run, in his view, single-handedly by his mother. As a child, he did not see his father's behaviour as stemming from the legacy of slavery, as in those days the experience of slavery was not part of his consciousness. However as a grown-up, many years later in England, he was able to reflect on this gap in his education:

I realized there was something radically wrong with me and my family and I suspected it was because we were black. I knew there was something the matter in the world with black people but I didn't know what it was, we were told very little about the history of slavery.

(interview by the present author, 1990)

Unlike Berry, Malik was born a year after the official introduction of Caribbean History (albeit from a European perspective) in his country's school syllabus (1939), however, in Trinidad the systematic teaching of the history of his non-European forefathers remained excluded from the curriculum and like Berry, he could not understand the fear and anxiety he could see in Black people around him:

My mother was very anxious of things in general, how they affected Black people. So, very early I was put under that heavy strain that made me question the whole approach to things. I kept wondering what the hell are they so afraid of?

Berry experienced this fear himself as a dread of becoming like his father; it led him to seek ways of distancing himself from this negative role model. Malik however was

fortunate to have an alternative form of education based on oral tradition, gained from his home and his community. The knowledge acquired from his grandmother about the political involvement of Black people across the Caribbean and their past led Malik to question the education system and encourage him to develop his own knowledge of the situation through reading or speaking to people in the community. Malik's grandmother's involvement in the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) of Trinidad¹ raised the author's awareness of the shared experiences of Negro people which extended beyond the boundary of his island. Malik's poem 'The Whirlwind' inspired by Marcus Garvey, founder of the UNIA, reflects his vision of the common plight of the people of the African Diaspora.

Rupture and brutal uprooting are colonial experiences that Caribbean people share with African American people but not with those living in Africa or India. Caribbean history cannot be rewritten along the same lines as that of African or Indian societies; although colonised under the pretence of a civilising mission, both can claim legitimacy on their land and also continuity of language, culture and history. This, of course, raises the question of the indigenous Caribbean peoples who were dispossessed of their lands by European invasion and written out of history. This issue will not be specifically addressed here.

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Furthermore, the telling of history in the Caribbean is often argued as being problematic. Attempts to introduce a more inclusive history curriculum have faltered because of debates over legitimacy. According to Naipaul: 'The history of the islands can never be satisfactorily told. Brutality is not the only difficulty. History is built around achievement and creation: and nothing was created in the West Indies' (Naipaul 1981: 28-29). Naipaul is not concerned with legitimacy of ownership of land here but rather with technological and scientific advancement.

For Walcott on the other hand, history is irrelevant:

In the Caribbean history is irrelevant, not because it is not being created, or because it was sordid; but because it has never mattered. What has mattered is the loss of history, the amnesia of the races, what has become necessary is imagination, imagination as necessity, as invention. (Walcott, 1993: 53)

Instead of the practice of linear factually based history, Walcott advocates a view of history as a potential source of creativity. This is a view shared by Glissant and an approach embraced by many writers and poets in the Caribbean, including Bookman and Malik. More than just source of creativity Boukman uses history to highlight what Glissant calls a prophetic view of the past. For Boukman knowledge of the past is

¹ Marcus Garvey's organisation had millions of supporters in many satellites throughout the world.

important to understand present history; nevertheless historical information in his poems is not based on empirical data but reflects the writer's desire to offer a counterbalanced interpretation of historical events. While Boukman uses fiction to contextualise some realities, Malik's poems are based on his own experience or his knowledge of events which he wants to highlight as part of his contribution to oral history. Malik does not set out to write about history, this is not his primary occupation; however, his use of these stories helps to contribute to the creation of a regional identity by presenting legendary figures of black history as heroes.

Malik draws on his knowledge of the past, acquired through oral tradition and through literature, to understand the society in which he lives and the relevance of these stories to his own experience. Malik, as do other writers mentioned in this paper, deplores the absence of Caribbean history in his own schooling.

The History of the Caribbean remains a subject barely touched upon and the stories of indigenous people of the islands, before the advent of colonisation, have not yet found their ways into the school curriculum. Associated with the image of slavery that is taught in the schools, is a dichotomisation of the negatively viewed values and cultures of Africans and positively viewed values and cultures of Europeans. In addition to the lack of knowledge of Caribbean history and heroes with whom to identify, this dichotomous view has led Caribbean peoples in most cases to embrace their European legacies and reject their African legacies. This means taking pride in anything closely related to the European models and rejecting those from Africa. This is further reinforced in schools through which we, in the Caribbean, have learned to see the world through lenses tinted by European 'middle class' values.

Boukman, in his play *Délivrants!*, depicts some of the characters as alienated because of their obsession with the French language, values and culture which lead to a denigration of Caribbean culture and values. Language, and more specifically creole language, is an intrinsic part of the Caribbean experience. It is used in many cases by Caribbean writers in a confrontational relationship to French (or English) to mirror the ambivalent relationship of the Caribbean islander with languages in his diglossic environment. Boukman uses the Cupidon family to exemplify the alienating impact of adopting an imposed foreign culture. Mr. Cupidon lives in a big house and refuses to allow anyone to speak Creole or 'incorrect' French. He rejects the presence of anything considered Creole in his house.

The school environment is a microcosm of the way society operates. The child is judged on his or her ability to thrive in that environment. In other words, how high the individual reaches on this intangible barometer gives an indication of how included or excluded he is in relation to the dominant culture. For those whose cultural capital is at odds with the culture of the school and who experience a bigger challenge in

overcoming the gap, there is a tendency to focus on what is missing in them that makes them unsuccessful. By doing so, we promote a deficit model, where the problem lies with certain children, social or cultural groups and not with the system or institution in which they find themselves.

In the wider society, the same barometer of acceptability that is used to measure inclusion or exclusion in the system operates at a subconscious level amongst most citizens.

In the Caribbean, we need to learn to valorise and engage our diverse communities and to unlearn racist and classist values absorbed through our schooling and wider environment. The following statement by Glissant in 1981, still has resonance with the situation of the Caribbean today.

The past, to which we were subjected, which has not yet emerged as history for us, is, however, obsessively present. The duty of the writer is to explore this obsession, to show its relevance in a continuous fashion to the immediate present. (Glissant, 1992)

Today the situation regarding the education system in the French speaking Caribbean islands differs to that of the independent English speaking islands. In the Anglophone Caribbean, despite resistance from some members of the local population, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examination was established in 1972, and replaced GCE O' Level examination in 1977. 1998 saw the introduction of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) which offers the equivalent to the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) A' level examination. These examination boards are not only regionally based, but also provide the flexibility for a more culturally relevant curriculum.

In the French speaking islands alternatives including a more culturally specific baccalaureate, not only in terms of content but also in terms of when and where examinations take place, have been put forward by many intellectuals but rejected by a significant number of teachers, parents and students alike for fear of them being branded "Bac cocotier!" These misgivings stem from attaching an inferior value to a baccalaureate evaluated in the overseas departments of France (DOM), than to a baccalaureate evaluated in metropolitan France. In 2000, Daniel Blancel, the French Director of secondary education, circulated a ministerial memo recommending the adaptation of the History and Geography programme in the French Caribbean in order to help students better understand the environment in which they lived². He also specified that these changes essentially added information specific to each of the DOM without drastically modifying the programme in place.

² www.education.gouv.fr/bo/2000/8/ensel.htm

Schools across the globe reproduce dominant cultural values. The mastery of the dominant language in the diglossic linguistic situation of the Caribbean remains the main passport to social advancement. Although the curriculum is changing towards a more inclusive multiethnic and multicultural interpretation of culture, the post colonial Caribbean continues to promote European culture as superior through its various official institutions. The works of some of the writers mentioned above are used in schools at the discretion of individual teachers, however they are not mandatory in the education programme because of the authors' choice of language. The gap or conflict between the child's cultural capital and his experiences in the education system remains the major barrier to academic attainment in the Caribbean. However, this gap or conflict can be reduced with better understanding and management of such barriers to attainment. There are a number of examples of good practice through initiatives aimed at raising aspirations and educational attainment of Caribbean children such as: greater inclusion of the child's experiences; heritage and history in the curriculum; use of positive role models as mentors or tutors; as well as setting up appropriate support networks to equip the child with the ability to navigate the education system specifically when such knowledge is not available in the home environment. However, these practices tend to be isolated and left to the commitment and determination of a few individuals.

There are many issues that polarise us and further fragment our region and communities but none is more pervasive than the legacy of the slave trade with its class, ethnic and geographical divisions. A growing recognition and even celebration of diversity, while welcome, too often provides cover for some communities to avoid harder questions of race, class and locality.

Since our conflicts are so complex, rooted in history and in individual perceptions of identity or culture, it is our responsibility not to be paralyzed, by anger, fear or guilt due to the injustices of history. Rather we must acknowledge those injustices and understand them. And most important of all, we must use those memories and understandings as a tool to dismantle their tragic legacy today. It is time for an honest dialogue that will enable our 'submarine unity' (Glissant, 1981: 134) to emerge. Schools have a key role to play in the unlearning of negative values attached to class, ethnicity and geographical location that fragment our community. There is ample opportunity within the formal school setting for honest dialogue to take place when teaching history, citizenship, literature, (for example, when studying Caribbean writers such as those mentioned in this paper) and other subjects.

Honest dialogue creates a space for talking about tension-filled topics where participants listen to one another and share experiences and understanding, moving

beyond a passive state of receiving to an active role of participating. Honest dialogue takes us through a process of self-reflection in terms of the validity of values we attach to people or life in general; and the judgments that we pass as a result of these values. Such dialogue is long overdue, but it is indispensable to the establishment of more inclusive and participative Caribbean societies.

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In a Sea of Heteroglossia
Pluri-Lingualism, Pluri-Culturalism, and Pluri-Identification in the Caribbean

In a Sea of Heteroglossia

Pluri-Lingualism, Pluri-Culturalism, and Pluri-Identification in the Caribbean

Proceedings of the ECICC-conference
Dominica 2009

Volume 2

Edited by

Nicholas Faraclas
Ronald Severing
Christa Weijer
Elisabeth Echteld
Marsha Hinds-Layne
Elena Lawton de Torruella



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This annual conference provides an excellent opportunity to Caribbean researchers to share their knowledge and the results of their work. Despite the high degree of diversity and pluralism that typifies the Caribbean, there are striking similarities as well in the ways that the languages, cultures and literatures of the region have been transformed in the process of dynamic contact and dialogic/dialectic interchange. This book forms part of a two volume set, with one volume focusing on the ABC-islands (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) and this volume focusing on the other parts of the Caribbean. These volumes are designed to promote a common understanding of the challenges faced by specialists in the languages, literatures, and cultures of the Caribbean as well as of the innovative ways that they have found to face those challenges.

The conference was co-organized and co-sponsored by the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras (UPR), the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill (UWI), and the University of the West Indies Open Campus, Dominica together with the local Organizing Committee, which was expertly chaired by Dr. Francis Severin, with the able assistance of Mr. Felix A. Wilson. This publication received generous support from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba.

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The Editors

I

PLURI-LINGUALISM: MULTIPLE LITERACIES

PLURI-LINGUALISM, LANGUAGE CONTACT AND LINGUISTICS

THE SEARCH FOR INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO HELP NATIVE SPEAKERS OF GUYANESE CREOLE MASTER STANDARD ENGLISH

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Background to the problem

The most widely spoken language in Guyana, as in so many other English speaking Caribbean countries, is an English-lexifier Creole. Monica Taylor (2001: 109) posits that although English has been in the Caribbean for more than three hundred years, many still balk at the notion of the Caribbean as a legitimate centre of English. The co-existence of an English-lexifier Creole alongside English in territories such as Guyana and Jamaica has made it very difficult for many persons to argue lucidly about the status of English in the Caribbean. Taylor further argues that ignorance and social conditions typically collapse the language continuum toward its middle, leading to the perception that something called ‘broken English’ is what remains of English in this part of the world. Some proponents of this review reject in principle the notion that there could be any centre of correctness other than Britain itself.

For many years English has been taught in Guyana’s public schools, through traditional approaches such as immersion and coercion. However, in the last two decades, numerous researchers have demonstrated conclusively that these approaches have not been very successful. Although students have always spoken Creole, in the past some of them were able to master written Standard English through reading and formal instruction. Today, with the advent of the television and the Internet, there has been a decline in Standard English (SE) literacy among students and there is now a stronger influence of the Creole in the written language.

Meanwhile researchers such as Velma Pollard, Dennis Craig, Beverley Bryan, Monica Taylor and Hubert Devonish have shown through their studies in other Caribbean countries such as Jamaica and Haiti that using students’ vernacular language to teach a Standard European language has proven much more successful.

Moreover, English language teachers also play a very important role in how and how much grammar is taught in schools. The traditional methods used by English Language educators do not take into consideration the vernacular language of the students. These methods are structured to ‘get rid of’ the vernacular language while

gaining proficiency and competence in the target language. According to Taylor (2001), English Language educators throughout the Caribbean, like their counterparts elsewhere, face the challenge of re-examining the assumptions underlying the existing notions of correctness and legitimacy. They must come to terms with fundamental questions relating to the ownership of English and the focus and legitimacy of the criteria which define Standard English in any given time and place.

In recent years, continuous complaints about errors in writing not only among Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) students but also 1st year University students in Guyana have been voiced by researchers and some English Language educators. There seems to be a strong influence of Creole on Standard English and students seem unable to make the distinction between the two. According to Carrington (2001), we need to note that the status of the Creoles has been measured by the degree to which they have penetrated the domains of the official language. In particular, the measure has included the extent of the use of Creole in writing.

Dennis Craig (2001) asserts that there is need to recover ground that has been lost in language education since the University of the West Indies/USAID Primary Education Project ended more than a decade ago. The existence of this need is substantiated by the complaints about low English language proficiency which come annually from the CXC, which is the one regional institution, apart from the University of the West Indies itself, which has grown steadily over the period, as illustrated in Figure 1:

		1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
English A	1	67	1.34	233	4.55	137	2.56	174	3.3	355	6.5	300	5.4	484	8.7
	2	515	10.30	767	14.97	576	10.77	234	4.4	347	6.3	385	6.9	454	8.2
	3	1274	25.49	1874	36.57	1466	27.42	773	14.6	715	13.1	750	13.5	1068	19.2
	4	2747	54.95	2102	41.02	2712	50.73	1680	31.7	1711	31.2	1712	30.9	1558	28.0
	5	396	7.92	148	2.89	455	8.51	2185	41.2	1938	35.4	1992	35.9	1653	29.7
	6							260	4.9	412	7.5	407	7.3	344	6.2
Total		4999	100	5124	100	5346	100	5306	100	5478	100	5546	100	5561	100

Figure 1 Growth in the numbers of Guyanese students taking the CXC English A examinations 1995-2001

In their June 2005 report, officials of the Secondary Education Certificate Examination (CXC) voiced their concerns about candidates' poor writing skills and their performance on the CXC English exams, which are designed above all to measure competence in and control of the English Language, including writing conventions such as the use of punctuation marks, which are not common in the kind of writing that has become popular in e-mail messages and in advertisements, much of which is not acceptable in this examination. (See Ministry of Education, 2002).

The problem

Based on the observation of University of Guyana first year students over a two year period, it is argued in this paper that in recent years the traditional approach to

English Language Teaching (ELT) has not only failed to yield satisfactory results for a majority of students, but that it has also poisoned students' attitudes toward their vernacular language. More importantly, it is strongly recommended here that the teaching of Standard English to native speakers has to be done through other approaches and methodologies, including those used in English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) programs, because these innovative approaches and methodologies will improve both the quality of written Standard English as well as the cultural and psychological grounding of learners.

Traditional Approaches to teaching English

In the United States, English language educators typically utilize eradication approaches which teach Standard English as a replacement variety in an attempt to systematically negate and eliminate the grammatical, phonological, and other of the variety learned in non-Standard speaking homes.

The immersion, correction and coercion approaches that predominate in Guyanese classrooms are similar to and share many of the same assumptions and goals with the eradication approach which predominates in the United States. The immersion approach aims to saturate the students' learning environment spoken and written Standard English without any reference to their vernacular language. In the correction approach, teachers identify vernacular utterances as speech errors and recommend a Standard English equivalent.

Lee & VanPatten (1995: 90) state that it appears that corrective models of instruction adhere to several tenets rooted in *behaviorism* (the belief in "reinforcing good habits") and *historical inertia* ("That's the way it's been done for years and years"). Textbooks designed according to corrective models often follow a particular grammatical sequence and provide exercises which first involve purely mechanical practice before moving on to meaningful practice and communicative practice.

Mechanical practice utilizes drills which do not require the student to attend to meaning and for which there is only one correct response. Meaningful practices utilizes drills in which the learner must attend to the meaning of both the stimulus and her own response. But in meaningful drills there is still only one right answer, and the answer is already known to the participants. Communicative practice uses drills which require attention to meaning, and the information contained in the learner's response is new and unknown to the person asking the question. Thus the answer cannot automatically be deemed right or wrong

Lee & VanPatten argue that although learners are always speaking or writing when engaged in traditional grammar practice, a great deal of grammar instruction is neither meaningful nor communicative. Traditional grammar practice is largely mechanical, lacking significant focus on message or input.

According to Professor Walter Edwards (2006) many Guyanese, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, do not write well in Standard English and most English teachers/lecturers recognize that the problem is related to the vernacular that Guyanese speak. Most teachers try to solve this problem by drilling Standard English patterns into their students, but this strategy often fails. Edwards argues that immersion and correction approaches have been used for years with Creole speakers with little or no success. This is due to the fact that these approaches do not take into account the differences between Creole and Standard English. He further contends that teachers who are not aware of the linguistic differences between the two are ill-equipped to teach Standard English to speakers of non-standard dialects. Simmons-McDonald (2004) summarizes this situation when she states that: “Native speakers of creoles found themselves in ‘immersion’ situations in which the goal was monolingualism in English but that often lacked much of the scaffolding that immersion contexts usually provide. A result of this was that many learners completed primary schooling without having achieved required levels of proficiency in the official, standard language; many were not functionally literate, and as a consequence, they were denied access to secondary (high) school in territories where access to higher education was determined on the basis of performance in an examination.”

Examples of traditional approaches to language teaching in Guyana

The Common Entrance Examinations are utilized in Guyana to determine whether students will continue on to secondary school or not. Despite the fact that Guyanese students undergo rigorous formal education in English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science in order to pass these examinations, an alarmingly high number of students fail and thus are forced to curtail their academic careers before ever having access to secondary academic content.

The books used to prepare students for the English section of these examinations require students to memorize irregular verb forms and in many schools around the country these verb forms (such as ‘begin, began, begun’) have to be repeated aloud until students are able to remember them. Similarly, the preparation of students studying for Caribbean Examinations Council sittings is typically restricted to the requirements to pass that examination with very little focus on grammar. Students are required to know how to write an essay/composition and answer questions about a comprehension passage and a poem.

According to Dennis Craig (2001), the Creole and nonstandard English-speaking children who constitute the vast majority of the West Indian school population are still being expected to learn to read English sentences which they would understand only partially, if at all, if they heard those sentences spoken. The Standard English orientation of the texts currently used with such children is similar to those used

during the colonial era, but with a more direct focus on the types of questions students may expect in the secondary school examinations.

First year students at the University of Guyana take a compulsory course entitled *English 115 The Use of English* which has one of the highest failure rates in the entire institution, as shown in Figure 2 below.

<i>English 115 Course Marks</i> <i>Academic Year 2004</i>		<i>English 115 Course Marks</i> <i>Academic Year 2005</i>	
Mean	52.42	Mean	53.15
Standard Error	1.15	Standard Error	1.18
Median	55	Median	54.50
Standard Deviation	17.36	Standard Deviation	16.66
Count	229	Count	198

Average of Course Marks	
Academic Year	
2004\2005	52.42
2005\2006	53.15
Both Years	52.76

Figure 2 Average marks awarded to students in English 115 *The Use of English* at the University of Guyana during academic years 2004 and 2005.

Students' inability to pass or be more successful in this course is at least partially attributed by lecturers and others to the general but erroneous assumption that students coming out of secondary school are proficient in the two most important academic language skills - reading and writing - and to the use of inappropriate teaching materials and methodologies at all levels of formal education.

It has therefore become increasingly apparent that traditional approaches to formal language education in Guyana have not worked, and that different, more linguistically sound approaches are needed. In this study, we suggest the adoption in Guyanese schools of two common ESL and EFL approaches, namely approaches advocated the present study include *Contrastive Analysis* and *Task Based Learning (teaching grammar in context)*.

Contrastive Analysis

“Contrastive Analysis is a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive, not comparative) two-valued typologies (a Contrastive Analysis is always concerned with a pair of languages), and founded on the assumption that languages can be compared.” (James, 1980: 3)

Contrastive Analysis describes the structural differences and similarities of two or more languages. The contrastive analysis hypothesis claims that difficulties in language learning derive from the differences between the new language and the learner's first language, that errors in these areas of difference derive from first language interference and that these errors can be predicted and remedied by the use of contrastive analysis (Wikipedia, accessed 6th March 2006).

John Rickford (1999: 13), states that the basic rationale for contrastive analysis as a means of teaching SE is that students who speak vernacular varieties of English – and their teachers- are typically not aware of the systematic differences between them. Rickford argues that this method allows for increased efficiency in the classroom, as teachers can concentrate on the systematic areas of contrast with SE that cause difficulties for vernacular speakers rather than taking on the more daunting task of teaching all of English grammar. The most important rationale for using contrastive analysis to improve the teaching of SE is that where it has been systematically compared with other more conventional methods, it has shown itself superior.

For example, students in the DeKalb Bidialectal Communication Program in the US (Kelli Harris-Wright, 1999: 58) participate in performance-based assessments throughout the school year conducted by their teachers and their cooperative group members. Students learn to listen to themselves and each other, to self monitor, and to provide and use feedback to shape their communication. Most assessment activities contrast home speech and school speech, and many involve role-plays. Students comment on the appropriateness of the language for the particular setting. Students are also videotaped at the beginning and the end of the year reading a paragraph and telling a story. Teachers use the tapes to note the students' relative use of vernacular and standard dialect features. Teachers and students watch the tapes together and establish individual goals for language development. Taping at the end of the year allows them to see how close they came to meeting their goals. Teachers report that over time and without prompting from their teachers or peers, students begin to switch appropriately from home speech to school speech or the converse. Test scores of students who have participated in the bidialectal program are impressive.

Andrews (2001) observes that it is fairly common for schools to use so-called Standard English – the English usage found in textbooks and used in the media – as the school standard. The general assumption is that this is the English needed in order to be successful either in school or on the job market. Standard English is often viewed as more logical, more precise, and sometimes even more elegant than other varieties. Non-standard varieties are often seen as corrupted or debased forms of English and bear a heavy stigma.

Andrews further argues that it has been conventional wisdom that allowing the use of these non-standard dialects in the classroom will interfere with learners' ability to

acquire Standard English forms. To the surprise (or chagrin) of many, research does not support this view. To the contrary, available research findings indicate that incorporating students' vernaculars in the classroom is often a helpful bridge to the learning of the standards forms.

In a critique of the status quo with respect to English Language instruction, Adger notes that: "Programs to strengthen the standard English skills that schools require do not consistently point out predictable contrasts between standard and vernacular dialect features. Pointing out such contrasts so that students can identify and negotiate the differences between the vernacular and the standard is precisely the goal of contrastive analysis programs, which have been advocated for dialect speakers for more than 30 years." (quoted in Rickford, 1999:13)

Classroom observation of preliminary attempts to use Contrastive Analysis at the University of Guyana

Students' difficulty of understanding and applying the grammar rules taught in the above mentioned course (*English 115 The Use of English*) for first year students at the University of Guyana has been acknowledged for a long time. For the past two years, experimental attempts have been made to begin to apply a contrastive analysis approach to grammar teaching in this course. Preliminary data indicate that students' comprehension of the material presented to them improved when their vernacular language was used to help them to understand what was being taught in Standard English. Students were encouraged to use their own vernacular language to express themselves in the classroom and then translate what they said into Standard English. Similarly, sentences were presented in Standard English by the lecturer and then students were asked how they would have said these same sentences in their vernacular language. This method was also used to help the students to understand how to make the switch from vernacular language to Standard English.

Task Based learning (Teaching grammar in context)

Constance Weaver in her book *Teaching Grammar in Context* (1996: 103) explains that many students find the formal study of grammar boring; therefore, they do not really learn it. They may go through the motions of completing grammar exercises and tests in such a way that they appear to have learned the concepts, but appearance is different from reality. Many exercises in grammar texts can be completed with only minimal understanding of the concepts. Indeed, many teachers themselves do not have a solid understanding of the grammatical concepts that they try to teach, nor is this always considered necessary by those who prepare the textbooks.

In addition, the grammar, even when learned, is often applied inappropriately or not applied at all when students are called upon to use it in their writing. There are many reasons for this: some students never actually learn grammar or forget the aspects of

grammar that they may have learned, some do not even think of their grammatical knowledge as something they should draw upon in revising or editing, or some do not take time to edit their work, or to edit it carefully and thoroughly, while some students are rarely asked to write anything more than a sentence, or an occasional paragraph.

The three main assessment instruments for course work in *English 115 The Use of English* at the University of Guyana include: 1) a comprehension passage with multiple choice questions; 2) an error correction passage with ten errors to identify, correct and explain; and 3) an essay. Most (65 %) students perform very poorly on the latter two assessment exercises. When the errors have to be explained most students do not remember the grammatical concepts that they were taught. In relation to the essays, students are unable to apply grammatical concepts taught to writing especially in such areas as subject-verb agreement, sentence construction, and verb tenses.

Teaching grammar in context would mean using comprehension passages from students' lived experience from the inception to teach grammatical concepts, instead of the current practice whereby grammatical concepts are first taught in isolation and then a decontextualized comprehension passage is given to students to practice what was taught. A Task Based Learning approach would also involve students in writing short passages from their lived experience where they practice these same concepts. . Teaching grammar in isolation does not seem to have much effect on the writing of more than a few students. Research suggests that teaching selected aspects of grammar in the context of writing is more productive. There should be more focus on those aspects of grammar that are particularly helpful in creating, rearranging, and revising sentences for greater stylistic effectiveness. Similarly, while a few basic grammatical concepts should be taught in separate language lessons, such concepts should generally be taught and reinforced as students are revising and editing their writing. Finally, methods should be used that are highly motivating in order to encourage students to develop and apply relevant concepts, and students should not be tested on their command of grammar but rather be helped in applying and learning to apply the most useful concepts.

Researchers have proven that Task Based Learning approaches yield increased success rates and are also culturally and psychologically more appropriate and less alienating for learners than the more traditional methods used at present in Guyanese classrooms. Preliminary results of the implementation of the Task Based Learning approach in the researcher's tutorial classes have been encouraging.

Conclusion

New approaches from the fields of ESL and EFL, such as Contrastive Analysis and Task Based Learning can be effectively used to improve students' performance in Guyana at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. As teachers, we need to reconsider our traditional obsession with ferreting out the alleged errors in students'

writing, because by focusing too soon or too much upon errors, we discourage students and we inhibit their growth as writers. We also need to remember that no matter what we do in teaching grammar, not all of our students will immediately, or even eventually, become versatile writers in Standard English. Learning to use a greater range of syntactic structures more effectively and to edit according to accepted conventions takes years, not days or weeks. We need to be patient with ourselves and our students, and to recognize and help others understand that new methods do not have to accomplish miracles in order to be better than old methods.

Most importantly, explicit policies must be formulated and implemented with respect to teaching Standard English, preferably at the school-system level. However, because language variation is linked to ethnicity and social class, opening up questions of how and when to teach Standard English and how to integrate Guyanese Creole into classroom practice may be politically difficult. Therefore, all stakeholders should be involved, including administrators, teachers, principals, parents, students and potential employers. Although such discussions may be difficult, they can form the basis of new more coordinated, vibrant and engaging programs of instruction. In any event, those who establish policy and set curriculum goals should never lose sight of the fact that the cognitive, affective, and psycho-social success of the great majority of Guyanese students depends crucially on the positive valorization and effective utilization of Guyanese Creole in the formal education system.

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A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION: AN EASTERN CARIBBEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES CENTER

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El Caribe mismo es una idea que evoluciona constantemente, a partir de aquellas que soñaron primero los Taínos y luego las naciones Kalinago subiendo las cuencas del Amazonas y el Orinoco hasta llegar al programa imperial de Europa y a las resultantes luchas de resistencia, libertad, independencia e igualdad que aún persisten. La idea se ha expandido a otros lugares, alterándose por nuevos contactos, y a la vez cambiando de forma dentro de su misma región de nacimiento. Rawle Gibbons (2005)

The Eastern Caribbean is not exempt from the contradictions of globalization that need to be addressed by systematic research into the political, historical, economic and social problems that its peoples have faced in the past and are facing at present. To carry out research at this scale, which can successfully be translated into local, regional, and international policy initiatives, there is a pressing need for a postgraduate studies center in the Eastern Caribbean. Such a center should not be seen as an attempt to compete with the excellent postgraduate programs that already exist in the Caribbean, nor should it be seen as an attempt to isolate the Eastern Caribbean from the rest of the Greater Caribbean. Instead it should be seen as a way to coordinate the efforts of existing postgraduate institutions in the historically English, Spanish, French, and Dutch Eastern Caribbean territories in order to overcome the colonial legacy of ‘enclave development’ that has divided one set of Eastern Caribbean territories from the others and which has divided the Eastern Caribbean from the rest of the Greater Caribbean.

Therefore, an Eastern Caribbean postgraduate studies center should be built upon the foundation of the existing postgraduate programs of universities such as the following:

- 1 Historically English Eastern Caribbean:
 - a. University of the West Indies
 - i. Cave Hill, Barbados
 - ii. St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago
 - b. University of the Virgin Islands

- c. University of Guyana
- 2 Historically Spanish Eastern Caribbean:
 - a. Universidad de Puerto Rico
- 3 Historically French Eastern Caribbean:
 - a. Université des Antilles et de la Guyane
- 4 Historically Dutch Eastern Caribbean
 - a. University of St. Martin
 - b. Universiteit van de Nederlandse Antillen
 - c. Universidad di Aruba
 - d. Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname

Of course there are numerous other universities and institutions in the Eastern Caribbean as well as research institutes and teachers' colleges which should also be involved. Networking should also extend to the rest of the Greater Caribbean, to include universities and research institutes in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Belize, and the Caribbean coast of Mexico, Central America, and South America. Some institutions that would be well placed for such cooperation include The Higher Institute of International Relations "Raul Roa Garcia" (ISRI) in Cuba, The University of the West Indies (including its open campuses), and in Venezuela, the University of Los Andes, Merida, and The University "Francisco de Miranda" in Coro....The work of Eduardo Falcón is also relevant here.

Research and teaching at an Eastern Caribbean postgraduate studies center would need to focus on areas that have traditionally received limited or no serious academic study outside of the region. Such an initiative would breathe new life into a pluri-cultural and pluri-linguistic region of infinite diversity that has been and continues to be the gateway to the Americas and the Caribbean. A concerted effort would need to be made to offer cutting edge courses of study and programmes of research that will equip students from the region with the knowledge and skills that they will need to pursue their careers without having to leave the region for the metropolises to complete their studies. This would contribute in a major way to stemming the 'brain drain' that is currently robbing the region of some of its greatest minds and talents. Too many of our students leave for the US or Europe to do their graduate studies, never to return. (Diago Pinillos, 2007)

It is of utmost importance that such a postgraduate center focus as well on the economic activities that are the lifeblood of the region, such as the tourism, energy/petrochemical, agricultural, and fishing sectors, and the particular challenges faced by these sectors in the Eastern Caribbean. Some of these challenges are natural such as hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, etc., but others are not, such as the

menace posed by corporate globalization to the region under the auspices of such agencies as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the North American Free Trade Agreement, all of which pose an imminent and grave threat to the political and economic sovereignty and well being of the peoples of the Eastern Caribbean. (González Maicas, Diago Pinillos, Molina, Cowie, Gibbons, Aiyejina, 2005)

The principal objective of an Eastern Caribbean postgraduate center would therefore be to improve and systematize research efforts in the Eastern Caribbean in order to contribute to our knowledge base about the region, to ensure the effective dissemination of such scholarly work throughout the region and throughout the world, and to actively promote greater cooperation and collaboration among the existing institutions in the region with postgraduate programs. Other more specific (but not less important) objectives include:

- 1 Promoting postgraduate research on the Eastern Caribbean and disseminating the results of this research
- 2 Guaranteeing high quality postgraduate professional education and training in the Humanities (with an emphasis on Afro-Caribbean Arts, Religions and Carnival Studies) Education, Political Science, History, Agriculture, Economics, and Social Sciences related to the Eastern Caribbean
- 3 Providing comprehensive education in the many languages spoken in the Eastern Caribbean, including creole languages.
- 4 Setting up a regional network for virtual communication and distance education, which would open up the possibility for the conferment of degrees through distance learning modules.
- 5 Establishing and developing networks with similar centers worldwide to promote collaborative research and international exchanges
- 6 Facilitating the publication of research resulting from the initiatives of the center
- 7 Organizing professional conferences and other meetings where scholars from the different institutions in the region can regularly meet to share their work and to evaluate the progress of the postgraduate studies center

The principal lines of research pursued by an Eastern Caribbean postgraduate studies center would include the following:

- 1 The Economy of the region
- 2 Sustainable Tourism in the region
- 3 International Relations and Security in the region
- 4 Linguistics and the Languages and Literatures of the region (e.g. Linguistic Rights in the Caribbean)
- 5 The Arts and Popular Culture of the region (e.g. Carnival Studies in the Caribbean)

- 6 The Cultural Diversity of the region (e.g. Studies African Oral Traditions, Cultural Integration in the Caribbean and the Americas)
- 7 The diverse Spiritualities and Religions of the region. (e.g. Ifa Religion as part of our World Patrimonial Heritage)
- 8 Governance in the region
- 9 Decolonization in the region
- 10 General History of the region
- 11 Migration within, into, and out of the region
- 12 Health concerns in the region
- 13 Gender Studies in the region
- 14 Natural Disasters in the region
- 15 Agriculture and Fisheries in the region

The eventual success of an Eastern Caribbean postgraduate studies center will depend on the following:

- 1 the availability of sufficient facilities for the teaching of classroom based and distance-based courses
- 2 the availability of equipment and library resources for research activities
- 3 the availability of an electronic communications network that effectively links all of the institutions that provide postgraduate education in the region
- 4 the availability of qualified personnel to develop the various aspects of the center's programme

Initially, the center would embark on a few specific lines of research to establish itself and to determine how best to expand its programme to best meet the needs of the Eastern Caribbean. In the final analysis, the success of an Eastern Caribbean postgraduate studies center will depend on the extent to which its activities contribute in a tangible way to the achievement of well being and social justice for all of the peoples of the region.

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II

PLURI-CULTURALISM: MULTIPLE HISTORICITIES

PLURI-CULTURALISM AND HISTORY

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CARIBBEAN COAST: THE HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE GARIFUNA AND OTHER AFRICAN AND AFRO-INDIGENOUS DESCENDED PEOPLES

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Early Garifuna History

The Eastern Caribbean island of Saint Vincent in the 17th century was the site for the emergence of the Garifuna people and their culture from the encounter and intermarriage of Indigenous Caribbean and African descended people. The St. Vincent era of Garifuna history is marked by three important events:

- 1) the arrival of Arawakan language speakers, perhaps the first inhabitants of the island, around 160 AD
- 2) the influx of Cariban language speakers from 1220 AD (Cayetano & Cayetano, 1997: 9-10)
- 3) the influx of African descended peoples from 1635 AD.

The first cultural encounter took place from 1220 AD between the Arawakan and Cariban language speakers, two Amerindian macro-ethnic groups both originally from the coastal regions of Venezuela. The second cultural encounter dates from 1635 between the Arawakan speaking offspring of these Arawaks and Caribs (sometimes called the 'Island Caribs') and African descended shipwreck survivors and escaped slaves.

Centuries before Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, the Island Caribs defined themselves culturally as *Callinagu*, which comes from the word Karina or Carinagu (Cayetano & Cayetano, 1997). Karina is also the root of the term Karifouna, with is used by the Island Caribs of Dominica to refer to themselves, as well as the word Garifuna used by the Garinagu (plural form of Garifuna) in Central America to identify themselves.

Successful Struggle against Colonization

In the early sixteenth century, the Spaniards attacked the Lesser Antilles with the purpose of subduing and enslaving their populations. However, unlike the Taínos of the Greater Antilles, the Arawakan speaking Island Caribs of the Lesser Antilles

fought back to defend their territory and their people. According to Rogozinski, the Spaniards not only gave up on the attempt to take control of Saint Vincent and the other Lesser Antilles and subdue the inhabitants, but they also decided to distance themselves from the islands: “In the Lesser Antilles the Carib of the Island resisted the Spaniards, who avoided their islands” (1999: 32).

For the two centuries following their victory over the Spaniards, the Island Carib had to fight against two new enemies: the French and English. Almost a decade after the arrival of both of these European colonial powers to the region (1625), a Spanish ship loaded with West African people brought to be enslaved in the Americas was wrecked off the coast of Saint Vincent (1635). Many survived the shipwreck, thanks to the assistance of the natives of the island, who welcomed them to their community to join the indigenous struggle against the French and the English colonialist forces. Salvador Suazo suggests that at least two Spaniard ships were wrecked off the coast of the island of Saint Vincent in the first half of the 17th century: “...the island of St. Vincent then contained all Indians and some Negroes from the loss of two Spanish ships in 1635” (Suazo, 1997:19). The West African group not only strengthened the Caribs’ resistance against the English and the French, but it also contributed the African elements of what became Garifuna culture.

Cayetano & Cayetano state that Garifuna resistance against the military forces of the Spanish, French and English conquerors lasted for almost three hundred years from 1500 to 1796 (1997:13). After many unsuccessful attempts to break the resistance of the Island Caribs on St. Vincent, the French adopted a new strategy of mutual respect and cessation of attacks, and they agreed to sign the Treaty of 1660 (p. 14). The English, in contrast, intensified their attempts to control Saint Vincent. The 18th century was characterized by incessant attacks and reprisals between the English and the Garinagu of St. Vincent.

First Attempt of Garifuna Exile and the Golden Decade of the Garinagu

The conflict reached a high point in April 1772, when King Charles III of England sent a formal order to the military forces authorizing them to humiliate and reduce the Garifuna to servitude, and even to remove them, if necessary, in order to stabilize the colony.

“In April 1772, orders were issued from England to send two regiments from North America to join such troops as could be spared from the neighbouring islands, to reduce the Caribs to a due submission, or if that became impracticable through their obstinacy, they were to transport them to such a place, as should be deemed by the Governor and Council, most convenient for their reception, and best calculated to secure the tranquility of the Colony.” (Shephard, 1997: 29)

According to this reference, the British military forces received official authorization to exile the Garifuna from the island more than two decades before they actually were able to accomplish it. Nonetheless, such a mission was to be very costly in terms of human lives both to the Garifuna people as well as to the British military forces. The North American regiments, numbering 688 men, arrived at St. Vincent in September 1772, under the order of the General Dalrymple. However, by January 1773, only four months later, the war had resulted in absolute humiliation for the British Armed Forces. Based on Shephard's reports that "the British forces were decimated: one hundred and fifty [British troops] were wounded and killed..., one hundred and ten died of disease, and four hundred and twenty eight were in the hospital" (1997: 35).

In February, 1773, the British Crown sent a new official document ordering the immediate suspension of any kind of hostilities against the Garinagu and asked for negotiations on reasonable terms with them. The important Treaty of Peace of 24 articles was signed between the representatives of Charles III and the Garifuna Chiefs, led by Joseph Chatoyer, on February 27, 1773. It is important to note that the Garifuna struggle against the British to maintain their independence and freedom took place at the same time that United States was also in a war for independence from England. Therefore, Garifuna resistance and rebelliousness was not isolated and was not caused by their 'warlike nature', as the European authors would later attempt to demonstrate. The Garinagu were fighting because of their great respect for their own human dignity and their unbreakable spirit of freedom.

The ten-year period following the 1773 Peace Treaty was the only decade when the Garifuna people in St. Vincent did not have to worry much about the security of their territory and their people. Thus, they could dedicate most of their time, energy, and resources to productive and economic activities. These years of peace witnessed enormous social and economic successes for the Garifuna community. Most of the men were fluent in French and English, in addition to their highly respected native language. They were also excellent in nautical activities, and they mounted many long distance trading expeditions. Based on the account of Sir Young during his visit to St. Vincent, he was impressed by the elegant dress and the luxurious life style of the Garifuna women, particularly the women of the chiefs. He said that the Garifuna were living in great comfort during the time of his fieldwork among them (de Andrade-Coelho, 1995: 42). Therefore, there is strong historical evidence to define the almost twelve years from 1773 and 1784 as the '*Golden Decade*' of the Garifuna people in St. Vincent.

The Golden Decade was followed by the most difficult moment in the Garifuna history. This new stage started in 1779, after the Garifuna responded favorably to the request of the French settlers to overthrow the British (Shephard, 1997: 39). However, in 1784, a year after the Peace of Versailles, the French evacuated the island. With the

departure of the French, the Garifuna lost an important ally against the British, but they did not surrender.

The Death of Chatoyer and Exile

On March 10, 1795, the Garifuna Paramount and Chief, Joseph Chatoyer, proclaimed his adhesion to the French revolutionary principals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. With this he began the final and definitive war to free the land of his Fathers from the presence of British forces. Four days later, on March 14, 1795, Chatoyer and several other Garinagu, as well as some French, died in battle (Lawrence-Franzone, 1994: 71). By November 1795, the fighting was significantly reduced, and on December 15 some Garifuna chiefs proposed reconciliation with the British on the condition that they retain their rightful lands (pp. 73-81). The first group of Garinagu surrendered on June 10, 1796, after Chatoyer's son made his people aware of the difficulty of the situation and the lack of human and material resources to continue the resistance. Although he ordered the first group of surrenders, he did not join them. Instead, he continued the resistance with about 300 men (Shephard, 1997: 163-165). Finally, starvation and the disease forced the remaining Garifuna to surrender to the British (Lawrence-Franzone, 1994: 82).

The surrender was based on terms and conditions established by the Garifuna resistance, that children, women, and elders were to be transported safely by the British to the small island of Balliceaux. Once that was guaranteed, men were to be transported in two different groups and in a secure manner to Balliceaux. After those demands were fulfilled, the final group of Garifuna would give up their arms and ammunition, and put an end to their centuries of armed resistance. Nevertheless, not everyone in the last stronghold surrendered to the British, many preferring to abandon Saint Vincent and escape to the neighboring islands during the last four months of resistance, especially after the women, children, and elderly had been removed to Balliceaux.

In that regard, on July 20, 1796, a group of 280 Garinagu men were transported to the island of Balliceaux. But it was not until October 26 that Chief Marin Pedre and other chiefs, including Duvalle and the son of Chatoyer, surrendered. By that time, the number of those who had surrendered, including women and children totaled 5,080 Garinagu (Shephard, 1997: 171-172). According to Shephard, Balliceaux was supposed to be just a temporary station of exile. The stay lasted from five months, for the last exiled group from Saint Vincent, to eight months, for the first group to be exiled. From what was supposed to be a temporary station, Balliceaux became a concentration camp for the Garifuna people, not only because of the length of the stay, but also because the desert-like landscape transformed the cay into a maximum security prison of torture, where there were no rivers, trees, or food, much less a roof to shelter from the sun and the rain.

Therefore, by the time the British removed the Garinagu from Balliceaux to Roatan in Honduras, almost 3000 of them had died. They died from fever (Cayetano & Cayetano, 1997: 14), which was aggravated by starvation, dehydration, powerlessness, anger, and sadness, because they had finally given away their motherland after more than two centuries of strong, intelligent, brave, and successful resistance. Now they were in the middle of the sea left to their own devices, while their enemies were settling and enjoying the fruits of the sacred land of the Garifuna forefathers, where thousands of Garinagu of that generation had given their lives in defense of their holy territory, their freedom, and their dignity.

On February 25, 1797, Captain Barret arrived in Balliceaux with ships to transport the Garifuna to Roatan (Shephard, 1997: 172). On March 3, the remaining 2,248 were loaded onto eight ships and transported to Roatan. After a short stop in Jamaica, they arrived in Roatan on April 11, 1797. During the journey to Roatan several hundred died; therefore, only about 2,080 reached the final destination. At the time they arrived at the island of Roatan, Honduras was a colony of Spain. Upon landing in Roatan they found a small Spanish fort and garrison, but the Garifuna offered no resistance (Gonzalez, 1988: 39), even though they were supplied with ammunition and firearms (Cayetano & Cayetano, 1997: 17).

Mr. Rossi-Rubi was commissioned by the colonial administrators to evaluate the situation in Roatan after the arrival of the Garinagu. After talking to some of the leaders of the group, and realizing that they had neither political nor military plans against Spanish colonial interests, he allowed them to stay in Roatan under the agreement that they would return the island (of Roatan) to the administrative authorities of the colony. The encounter was peaceful to the extent that almost 200 Garinagu wanted to join him on his trip back to the mainland. He could not take them, but he promised to send a larger boat, so that they could move to the mainland (Suazo, 1997: 156-157).

Shortly after arriving in Trujillo on the Honduras mainland, the Garifuna established new villages and cassava fields, and they built their canoes. Now, 200 years after their arrival in Honduras where they have thrived and now number in their hundreds of thousands, large groups of Garinagu have also migrated to Guatemala, Nicaragua, Belize, and the U.S.A.

African and Afro-Indigenous Descended Peoples in Honduras

The Garifuna, Bay Islanders, and the Miskito

The Atlantic Coast of Honduras has a geographic extension of 600 kilometers, geopolitically divided into four departments: Cortes, Atlantida, Colon, and Gracias a Dios. These four and the department of Islas de la Bahia are the five departments where most of the African descended populations in Honduras are located. The

Garifuna are the only African descended group with a major presence in all five departments, while the African descended Bay Islanders are predominantly located in the Islas de la Bahia, with a small number in Atlantida. The Afro-Indigenous Miskito people, on the other hand, are mainly concentrated in the eastern department of Gracias a Dios, a region that is also known as La Mosquitia. Significant numbers of the African descended and Afro-Indigenous people have migrated to San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, the industrial and the political capitals of Honduras, respectively.

The department of Islas de la Bahia (Bay Islands) is composed of the world-famous archipelago of the Bay Islands, located around 20 miles north of the Honduran mainland. The Bay Islands have a total extension of approximately 260.5 kilometers, comprised by five major islands: Roatan, Guanaja, Utila, Santa Elena, and Barbareta, and about seventy cays and small islands. These lands are home to the English-speaking Bay Islanders and some Garifuna communities.

The available national data on the indigenous and African descended populations in Honduras are not reliable (Herranz, 2000: 462), since they are mainly estimates. These include official estimates provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), including those of the 2001 national census. The uncertainty of the official national statistics on the indigenous and African descended populations is due by a variety of factors, in particular the long tradition of excluding, making invisible, and erasing the languages, cultures and even the very existence of the indigenous and African descended peoples from Honduran national life. This xenophobic attitude of the Honduran ladino/mestizo dominant culture does not preclude diversity per se, but it is aimed at indigenous and African descended cultures and people. The dominant sectors in Honduras welcome the languages and cultures of their post-colonizer European countries (such as the English language and US culture), and act toward them with great deference and even with a spirit of subjugation and defeat. These types of behavior are defined by Crawford (2001) as a preemptive war against indigenous and African descended peoples.

Afro-Indigenous Garinagu in Honduras

The Organization for Ethnic and Community Development (ODECO for its acronym in Spanish), one of the most important Garifuna Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Honduras, published in 2002 the book *La Comunidad Garifuna y sus Desafíos en el Siglo XXI* [Garifuna Communities and their Challenges in the XXI Century], which states that the estimate of the Garifuna population is 300,000 people, even though they mention in the following paragraph that 98,000 is also a well accepted population estimate (ODECO, 2002: 14).

The government's Ministry of Planning estimated the national Garifuna population at 300,000 people in 1993. Herranz (2000: 461) notes that Valencia offered an estimate of 90,000 people in 1986, but the National Statistic on Population and Housing

provided official data that estimated the Garifuna speech community at 22,020 in 1988. Lara (2002: 16) states that Rivas in 1993 suggested an estimate of 98,000 people, but he included the Garifuna population worldwide, including Guatemala, Belize, Nicaragua, and the United States, while Roger Isaula provided an estimate of 250,000 Garifuna people in Honduras in 1995, not counting those in Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, the Caribbean, and the United States. Nancie Gonzalez (1988: 180) estimated the number of Garifuna people in the United States alone at almost 100,000 people in 1988. Gonzalez' (1988) estimates were based on official data from the U.S. National Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1984. Salvador Suazo (2001: 9) offered an estimate of 110,000 Garifuna people in Honduras. In the 2001 national census, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) included the question: What population group do you belong to? According to this official source, only 7.2 percent of the 6.6 million people in Honduras identified themselves with one of the indigenous or African descended populations, of which fewer than 50,000 identified themselves as members of the Garifuna community.

Unfortunately, the official statistic is the most unreliable among the recent estimates of the Garifuna population of Honduras. On one side, these 'official statistics' present serious contradictions, in the sense that there is an enormous difference between 22,000 and 300,000 people. In 1986 the government estimated the Garifuna population in Honduras at 22,020 people. Seven years later (1993), the Ministry of Planning estimated the Garifuna population at 300,000 (Ministerio de Planificación, 1993), and in 2001 the INE estimated the Garifuna population in Honduras at 46,000 people (INE, 2001).

Even though, these data are inconsistent and even contradictory, the Honduran government has been using them as the official statistics for purposes such as national urban planning and the design and implementation of national public policies. In that regard, the national statistics become an official instrument for the exclusion and deletion of the Garifuna people from the official and national discourse. This is a clear human rights violation, in the sense that there is no way to address the particular needs and to guarantee the inclusion of the Garifuna people in the national agenda, much less to promote the development and implementation of comprehensive public policies to benefit Garifuna communities. It is imperative that the Garifuna people develop effective strategies in order to conduct, in coordination with the government, a new census that can provide consistent and dependable data on the Garifuna national population.

African Descended Bay Islanders

The Caribbean English speaking African descended population of Honduras, including those in Bay Islands and elsewhere, is estimated to total 28,387 people (Lara, 2002: 17-19). The National Institute of Statistics (2001) estimates the English-

speaking African descended population of the Bay Islands at 13,303 people. Even though these data are slightly more coherent than those on the Garifuna people, there is still an obvious problem of inconsistency between the figures. The English-speaking people of the Bay Islands are ethnoculturally and linguistically diverse. They originally came mainly from Great Cayman and Jamaica in the 18th century. Most of the population is concentrated in the Bay Islands, but they now are also settled in Atlantida, Colon, Cortes, and the USA, especially in New York and New Orleans. The movement to the USA started in the early 20th century, initially to work for the banana companies.

Afro-Indigenous Miskito

Mosquitia is situated in the northeastern department of Gracias a Dios and has an area of approximately 16,630 square kilometers. In 1996, the population was estimated to total 46,762 people by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the Human Development Annual Report. Besides the Miskito, Mosquitia is also home to other ethnic groups including the Tawahka, Garifuna, and more recently the Ladinos. The great biosphere of Rio Platano is situated in this region.

Linguistically, Miskito belongs to the Misumalpa language family (Salamanca, 2000: 11). Miskitos also have an important presence on the other side of the border along the Nicaraguan Atlantic coast. The Miskito language is very much preserved in Honduras, even though there is a growing migration of Ladinos to the area. Belen and Brus Laguna are the two northwestern Miskito villages which border with the Garifuna community of Blagriba (Plaplaya in Spanish), inhabited by around 800 people. Due to the high level of ethnic intermarriage, Blagriba is one of the few trilingual Garifuna communities, where people, including children, speak Garifuna, Miskito, and Spanish.

Garinagu in Belize

Belize has an area of 22,960 square kilometers, and it shares borders with Guatemala and Mexico. Although Belize is considered a Central American country, culturally and commercially it is more tied to the Caribbean region, in particular to the English-speaking Caribbean. It has only been in the last decade that Belize has begun to establish real commercial relationships with the Central American countries. It is estimated that Belize had a population of 249,180 in 2000 (up from 224,663 in 1997) people divided into six ethnic groups: Mestizos 44.1 percent, Creole 31percent, Maya 9.2 percent, Garifuna 6.2 percent, and others 9.5 percent (zhenghe.tripod.com 2000, postcolonialweb.org).

The first report of Garifuna presence in Belize dates from 1802, even though the most well documented arrival there of Garifuna people occurred in Dangriga-Belize on November 19, 1832. Then a group of 28 adults and 12 children that left Roatan-Honduras with two doreys heading to Belize under the leadership of Mr. Alejo Beni

was escaping atrocities and persecution by the Honduran Ladinos, because of the support given by the Garinagu to the Royalist forces during the 1821 fight for independence (Cayetano & Cayetano, 1997: 22).

The most representative organization of the Garifuna people in Belize is the National Garifuna Council of Belize (NGC), originally founded in 1981 with the fundamental objective to coordinate the social, cultural, and economic well being of the Garifuna people in the different areas of the country. The NGC was officially registered in 1988 (Cayetano & Cayetano, 1997: 74-75). Among the most important achievements of the NGC, we can mention the Proclamation of Garifuna Language, Dance, and Music as 'Masterpieces of the Oral Intangible Heritage of Humanity' in May 2001 by UNESCO (www.unesco.org) as well as the large number of globally recognized Garifuna poets, artists, woodworkers, musicians, writers, and even entrepreneurs. Most Garifuna artists and musicians in Belize are well known nationally and internationally.

Conclusion

The Garinagu on the Central American Caribbean coast are the only remaining speakers of what was the Island Carib language which was once spoken throughout the Lesser Antilles in the Eastern Caribbean. There are many aspects of Indigenous Eastern Caribbean culture that have been better preserved by the Garinagu in Central America than by anyone in the Eastern Caribbean itself or anywhere else. The historical, cultural, linguistic, and demographic connections between the Eastern Caribbean and the Caribbean coast of Central America are numerous and significant. A full understanding of either one of these regions is absolutely impossible without a full understanding of the other.

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QUEENS OF THE VIRGINS: ANCESTRAL VISIONS IN CONTEMPORARY VIRGIN ISLANDS FOLKLORE AND DRAMA

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This article explores the fusion of language, culture, traditional folklore and heritage in the sacred and secular literary traditions of Virgin Islands' (VI) history specific to VI women freedom fighters from 1733 to 1892. The particular aim of this work is to shed light on the cultural diversity, language, dramatic traditions and living folklore that portray the life and work of Queen Breffu, leader of St. Jan's (St. John's) 1733 'Slave Revolt'; Queen Mary, leader of St. Croix's 1878 Fiyahbun (Fireburn); and Queen Coziah, leader of St. Thomas' 1892 Coal Workers Strike. Excerpts from the 2006 Per Ankh Institute production performed in St. John, St. Thomas and St. Croix entitled 'Queens of the Virgins: A Living Chautauqua' will be utilized to illustrate how ancestral voices, a rich dramatic cultural heritage and multi-dimensional extensions of the themes of strength, power, freedom, Afrakan spirituality and self-determination are integrated in contemporary VI drama, folklore, poetry, literature and oral tradition.



Historically documented narratives are intertwined within extended dramatic prose here to reveal the perspectives of the multi-faceted cultural heritage and folklore of pre- and post-enslavement experiences of people of Afrakan ancestry in the VI and its' neighboring islands of the Eastern Caribbean. Culturally diverse linguistic and dramatic folklore are shared through the presentation of narratives and contemporary cultural performances synthesized from select Danish, French, Spanish, Dutch, British, Caribbean and Afrakan archival documents on the actions for social change initiated by the freedom fighter 'Queens' of the VI.

From ancestral times, Afrakan culture and the nations of long-standing strength, have been matrilineal and in some instances matriarchal. So, it is common for women to be recognized as 'queens'. It is customary and part of the cultural traditions of people of

Afrakan ancestry within the Virgin Islands and other Afrakan-populated Caribbean regions, to honor women as ‘queens’ based on their leadership, service to the people of their respective communities, spiritual & healing gifts, and for their enduring strength as the mothers, nurturers, warriors, healers and caretakers of our people. Historically, great Queens of Afraka, like Nefertari, Hatshepsut, Makeda, the Candaces, Nzingha, Al-Kahina, Yaa Asantewa and many others set examples, forged paths and offered shoulders of strength as matriarchs of both patrilineal and matrilineal societies for generations to come for women and men of the Virgin Islands and beyond.

Folkloric cultural arts have the capacity to honor the contributions, progressive actions, historically accurate roles and long-term impact of men and women of societies of the remote and not so remote past. The Queens of the Virgins is a dramatic and theatrical work that juxtaposes the counter-productive and anti-emancipation based actions of the planter class with the diligence, revolutionary consciousness and life-centered steadfastness of these three female leaders.

Chautauquas are historical narratives presented as personal testimonies of individuals that have impacted the social, political, cultural & spiritual traditions and/or general transformations of a specific community. “A Chautauqua is a first person historical characterization or monologue based on biographies and historical information. It includes questions and answers during the performance” (VIHC: 2006). Chautauquas are designed to provide the general community with a historically correct and culturally accurate presentation of the characteristics, actions and words of a specific individual and provide the community / audience with an opportunity to interact with them as if they were amongst us today. In contemporary settings, a Chautauqua is a community presentation that is designed to highlight the collaboration and integration of art, culture, language, tradition, spirituality and education with a professionally creative synergy that enhances understanding and humanitarian camaraderie amongst all members of a community.



Most published research on and documentation of 18th century VI history and culture was composed primarily by patriarchs of the European planter class, with only a few narratives recorded by common people, much less persons of Afrakan ancestry. Although contemporary historians and scholars identify many women as historical ‘Queens of the VI’, they haven’t even begun to account for the number of women who achieved the

title of ‘Queen’ in pre- and post-colonial Virgin Islands’ society. “In St. Croix, ... Estate slaves elected Kings and Queens, Princes and Princesses, Maids of Honor and Pages; a somewhat more formalized structure than anything reported in St. Thomas.” (Hall, 1992: 118)

Freedom fighter Queen Breffu was a pioneer revolutionary leader within the St. John Insurrection by enslaved Afrakans of 1733-1734. Queen Breffu was an enslaved Afrakan from the continental motherland of Afraka. She was originally identified as belonging to the Akan ethnic group of the Gold Coast region of West Afraka (Ghana) in an area near the El Mina Castle and Fort - (hence people from that region are commonly misnamed as the 'Amina'). Research in Togo, Benin and Zaire has since yielded documentation of Queen Breffu's origins being more complex. It has been argued in work from the Cheik Anta Diop Institute and elsewhere that she was captured from the interior of the Afrakan continent (perhaps somewhere in Central Afraka) by Afrakan intermediary enslavers and subsequently sold off to European enslavers on the Gold Coast with her ultimate destination being the then Danish West Indies. Queen Breffu's contributions to the revolution and temporary popular government of St. John by enslaved Afrakans in 1733 exemplified her loyalty to family, freedom, liberation, harsh warrior-ship and emancipation. Queen Breffu's leadership in maintaining the stability of the slaves' Estate Fortsberg stronghold following their actual attacks against the landed plantocracy of St. John exemplify a Candace and Amazonian type training that was common amongst the royal warrior class of the Gold Coast.

The impact of enslavement upon the psyche of enslaved Afrakans, especially the women, was shaped by the economic ascension of the planter class on the one hand and the social promotion of revolutionary women leaders as queens within Afrakan communities on the other. Consequently, as was common amongst enslaved Afrakans, the possibility of *marronage* was considered by Queen Breffu virtually immediately after her forced arrival to St. John in the 1730's.

"Slavery had created the pernicious tradition that manual labor was the badge of the slave and the sphere of influence of the Negro. The first thought of the Negro slave after emancipation was to desert the plantation, where he could, and set up for himself where land was available. White plantation workers could hardly have existed in a society side by side with Negro peasants...Negro slavery therefore was only a solution, in certain historical circumstances, of the Caribbean labor problem. Sugar meant labor - at times that labor has been slave, at other times nominally free; at times black, at other times white or brown or yellow. Slavery in no way implied, in any scientific sense, the inferiority of the Negro. Without it the great development of the Caribbean sugar plantations, between 1650 and 1850, would have been impossible."
(Williams: 1944: 29)

Excerpts from the 2006 VI Chautauqua presentation and forthcoming film production entitled the 'Queens of the Virgins' shared by the dramatic and living embodiment of 'Queen Breffu' include the following:

*"I am Queen Breffu
I am a Warrior Queen
I am one of the women who lead our war for the liberation
Of Our people stolen from our home along the*

Gold Coast of West Afraka
We are not slaves to do the bidding of cruel enslavers
Our experience as enslaved ones here on St. John
Is for those that are part of the slave class
I come from one of the most powerful nations of the Gold Coast
I am of the Akan nation amongst
A people who speak the Twi language
From the El Mina region who has no fear to use force
No matter how cruel to free
We deserving ones from these colonialists
Who are beneath us
Many in the west have created a term for us
“Amina” people or “Amina Negroes”
Forcing an incorrect name upon us is
A violation of our self-determination
We know to govern ourselves
Within the Akan nation,
Even the Ashanti and Fante have developed confederacies
That remain powerful throughout the 17th and 18th century
Our neighbors of the Akwamu nation
Are the forerunners of the source of slaves for the slavers—
They are the fierce ones who captured and
Sold Afrakans of many nations into slavery...
Our neighbors who had aided us with
Experiences with trading with the
Portuguese and others are of the Ga nation
Our enslavers and colonialists view
Us as a warring and cruel nation
This warrior spirit increases when
We are stripped, raped, tortured and
We say “A family is like the forest,
If you are outside it is dense,
If you are inside you see that each tree has its’ own position”
...We gathered the morn’ of November 23rd by the Coral Bay Fort
We carry wood supplies to the fort just like any other day
This day, we hid cutlasses and weapons inside our wood bundles
...By May 24th, 1734 scouts shared reports
24 rebellious maroons found dead at Mary’s Point (Ram’s Head)
Our people choosing freedom in death before bondage in life
Many claim I was one of those found dead
In this unbroken circle of broken muskets, blood and corpses
We Afrakans wage war against our enemies without remorse
Like many of our ancestresses who are queens of empires...”
 (Kahina: in VIHC, 2006)

Freedom fighter Queen Mary was a laborer, leader and woman of revolutionary change who led enslaved Afrakans in the St. Croix Fireburn of October 1st, 1878. Queen Mary worked on sugar plantations and records of her life affirm that she had a free-spirited mind of her own. After VI Emancipation in 1848, persistent imbalances

of power and inequities in the treatment of former slaves had brought tensions to the boiling point across the island. 21st century novelists in the VI have expressed the historical accounts of the quest for self-determination, human rights and liberation of the women of the VI as follows:

“Now I was part of the Fireburn rebellion of 1878. It had its roots in the passing of the Proclamation of 1847 that stated that as of July 1847 new born babies of slaves would be free and all other Black slaves would be free twelve years later. You see, slaves were being freed in other part of the world and the desire for freedom was burning in the bellies of the Virgin Islanders. The Danish gov’ment thought that this proclamation would satisfy the slaves, but no suh! The people did not like the idea that they would be slaves and their children free so they secretly started planning a revolt. Meetings among slaves were forbidden but a skilled craftsman, Moses Gottlieb, known as Buddhoe was the man who secretly organized and led the revolt for freedom in 1848. He quietly organized the people and on July 2nd the ringing of the church bells and the blowing of the conch shell around midnight was the signal for the beginning of the rebellion. On July 3rd, thousands of people from the country gathered at the Frederiksted Fort shouting for freedom. They told the soldiers at the Fort that if a single shot was fired they would burn all of West End. Finally, the people sent word to Governor General Peter von Scholten to come to Frederiksted by 4’oclock Monday afternoon or they would burn down the town. The Governor arrived just before 4’oclock and declared, ‘All unfree in the Danish West Indies are from today free!’” (Joseph, 2009: 85)

But the official end of slavery did not bring with it the qualitative political and economic transformation of society that was promised when Emancipation was declared. The observance of Contract Day (October 1st) in 1878 created a volatile and hostile atmosphere amongst natives, immigrants and others on St. Croix. The role of Queen Mary became central in this period as a voice of freedom and as a leader amongst other queens and men who supported a vision for liberty, freedom and real emancipation. Excerpts from the 2006 VI Chautauqua presentation and forthcoming film production entitled the ‘Queens of the Virgins’ shared by the dramatic and living embodiment of ‘Queen Mary’ include the following:

*“I am a Freedom Queen
I am a Freedom Fighter Queen
I am Queen Mary
My birth name is Mary Thomas
I live here and tis’ a Cruzan I be by de sweat of me brow
I was born n’ raised in Antigua of the British West Indies
I larn’ dat my people come from Afraka so
I come from a long bloodline of matriarchs
From a long line of queens who lead de people which part dey deh
I livin’ on de westend plantation in Estate La Grange
N’ have worked in Estates Sprat Hall & Williams Punch
I am one of the Queens of the Great Fiyahbun of 1878
I iz a canefield worker*

*Who iz tiyahd of de oppression
 Being imposed upon us
 By our exploitative slave massas dem
 The kettle start to burn up long before October 1st, 1878
 On October 1st, 1878 fiyah break loose
 After de gendarme dem murder one ah we
 Even if he was a drunken man...
 He was still a man and one ah we
 N' de buckra say we jus went wil'
 Starting all sorts of chaos through town
 De people rush to the dead body and
 Den' dey just start to yell out
 "Our Side or Iron Side!"
 We rush de fort and the guards couldn't stop we...
 It was burned down
 I ask de people dem to bun' up all the rum barrels and
 De store house dem and the stores of the massa dem
 'Cuz we see dem tings mean more to dem slave massas than we do!
 Dis' situation don' gone far from wha' we deservin' in this life
 We plan and prepare to bun up from Frederiksted to Christiansted*

*...My queenship is shared by many other women of St. Croix
 All' ah we ain' even bawn yah'
 We come from Antigua, St. Christopher, Puerto Rico,
 St. Dominguez, the French West Indies
 –Martinque, Guadeloupe, the Dutch West Indies,
 the British West Indies and other isles
 I share my queen title wid Queen Agnes, Queen Bottom Belly,
 Queen Mathilde & othas
 I am regarded as a brave Afrakan woman of St. Croix and de Caribbean
 Remember you able to walk tall, strong and long upon we shoulders
 Remember how we sacrifice for we freedom and humanity
 Nurture dis child of freedom
 So mi' work and dat of othas don't die in vain
 Remember Ourside or Ironside!
 I am Queen Mary" (Kahina in VIHC, 2006)*

Queen Mary is considered to be a powerful heroine in the folkloric cultural expressions, stories, oral tradition collections, caiso, calypso and other traditional songs, plays, literary works of the Virgin Islands. Despite the fact that she was a freedom fighter who led the Great Fireburn of 1878 and that she was jailed for many years in Copenhagen along with other queens, the Danish government eventually minted a coin with an illustration of her emblazoned on it. Contemporary writers have included her in works that share the history, tradition, culture, heritage and loyalty of the women leaders of St. Croix and the Virgin Islands, as illustrated in the following passage by a VI-based historian, political activist and novelist:

“Every year we were promised that the Labor Act would be repealed, but after t’irty years and still no changes, we had had enough. On October 1, 1878 the laborers came to Frederiksted as they usually did on Contract Day. The laborers were gathered at the front of Fort Frederik seeking passes, passports, or requesting changes of jobs They had serious complaints and hoped the Labour Act would be repealed. When they realize that there would be no changes the crowd grew angry and the soldiers tried to make the people go home by waving their sabers. Instead of going home my son, - what a sight -the people started throwing stones, conch shells, bricks, any t’ing deh could get dere hands on. The soldiers ran inside the Fort and started firing dere guns. This only further enraged we. Some tore off the outer gate and t’rew it into the sea. Den dey tried to break da inner gate and the soldiers started shooting again. The crowd broke up and started setting fire to shops, houses, even the Customs house.”

(Joseph, 2009: 86)

Keepers of ancient and sacred dance movements and rhythms in the Kongo-Zaire, Cameroons, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, St. Thomas, St. Croix and other regions of the world preserve Bamboula as a traditional art form indicative of the expressions amongst leaders and ‘Queens’ in most Indigenous Afrakan communities. In most VI historical and literary documents, from the 1730’s to the 1900’s and beyond women recognized as ‘Queens of the Virgin Islands’ in St. John, St. Croix and St. Thomas respectively and respectfully used the Bamboula cultural heritage traditions via dance and musical rhythms that represent methods for communication for uprisings, celebrations, sensual expressions and protest actions amongst enslaved Afrakans throughout the Caribbean and Americas.

Queen Coziah was a leader of one of the first non-violent labor and protest actions in the Caribbean, which took place in St. Thomas on September 12, 1892. Excerpts from the 2006 VI Chautauqua presentation include the following:

*“I am a Worker Queen
I am a Bamboula Queen
I am Queen Coziah
Ah’ queen two times ovuh’
Our Black people from times of Afraka
The thrones of we homeland in Afraka iz in our genes
We women folk are determined, proud and strong
We come from a long line of matriarchs and queen mothers of
Strength and stability
I tell de other Queens
Yeah, dey iz more dan me pushing
All this wild fiyah to the steamship owners and dem
And these otha queens come from
St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix and all ovah
We alla one people with different birth place based on which part
We mothers slave, work and make free for they self
We know we hav’ tuh’ get our money*

*An' we gon' get wha' we earn
 With no bloodshed...we jus' ain' gon' work and
 Dem boat dem can't move without we!
 We queens and the other women with
 De men playing the kettle drum
 We are the foundation for nonviolence
 As a movement in the late 1890's
 We have fair wages for we work cuz'
 We work hard for it...
 Tek time an' yoh'll fine ants guts
 Remember wha' me and othas do
 For we fair labor and freedom from money injustices
 Respect de sacrifices we make for you and you and you
 I am a Bamboula queen and leader of our workers
 For I am Queen Coziah"*

(Kahina in VIHC, 2006)

The folkloric accounts of the life and times of the three 'Queens of the Virgin Islands' shared herein represent and embody not only the principles of leadership, compassion, aggressive force, firm nurturing, and spiritual transformation, but also the myopia of political indifference, tribalism and ethnic prejudice. These qualities and shortcomings are uniquely integrated into the personality, character traits and actions for change exemplified in each of these women. It is important to note that these Queens represented and reflected the loyalty to human struggle and liberation shared by their people of Afrakan heritage and ethnicity. These Queens endured tremendous hardships that were imposed upon them (and in some instances imposed by them) in violation of the human principles of liberty, self-determination, justice and freedom. Despite the many considerable obstacles placed on their paths by societal institutions that were inhumane, our VI, national and international communities have immortalized and in some instances negatively romanticized these Queens of the Virgin Islands into the 21st century.

It is important to note that the openly biased and negative portrayals of these women's lives from the dominant perspective of the planter class have been cautiously integrated into the performance to insure that a well rounded sense of the historical reality of these women's humanity, with all of its qualities and flaws, may be maintained while more intensive research is being carried out to present a more truthful and balanced portrayal of the Queens of the Virgin Islands. An example of such less than flattering accounts is the following quote from the testimony of Frederik von Scholten in a Danish court case that followed the Fireburn:

"Among the black population, women play a role of great importance. They do the same work that the men do and their physical build and size render them formidable adversaries in the rough and tumble of a fight. Throughout the disturbances they were more aggressive, vengeful and altogether more violent in their passion than the

men...Women displayed a rage no less primordial than the men's. Slavery had after all made no distinction as to gender, and their sex laid them open to the additional disadvantage of harassment, not to mention the perversion of normal maternal relations." (Hall, 1992: 143)

Queen Breffu, Queen Mary and Queen Coziah represent the ancestral, traditional, customary and contemporary essence that lies dormant amongst many women in our society and is often rejected and shunned in those of our women who dare to carry on these great women's pioneering and championship of causes for LIFE (i.e., life, inspiration, freedom and education). Conclusively, our Queens of these Beloved Virgin Islands represent women of strength, anger, displaced rage, ethnic imbalance, leadership, arrogance, aggression, compassion, intolerance, non-violence, endurance, humility and a plethora of other human qualities, principles and characteristics. At least for some, these women who are honored and acknowledged as queens reflect and exemplify a spirited force for emancipation that has permeated a liberating vibration that has existed since ancient times, through pre-colonial America, throughout the transition from feudalism to mercantilism to industrialism and capitalism, throughout the enslavement experience and into the 21st century. May we reflect on the origins of the ancient saying 'long live the Queen' and apply it in an inclusive way to the contributions, tribulations and sacrifices of women of Afrakan ancestry who have been ostracized, feared, celebrated, immortalized and commemorated in the Virgin Islands as the 'Queens of the Virgins'.

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AFRICAN RELIGIOUS SURVIVALS IN DEATH RITUALS

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In Guyana, the practice of holding a wake, an all night vigil for someone who has died, is very old and while aspects of it may be traced to African origins, other aspects of it may be considered to be universal, because every social group must find ways of coming to terms with death. The practice therefore emerges as trans-cultural. The traditional practice in Guyana, especially in rural villages, is to hold a wake every night until the burial of the deceased, but sometimes this varies. The data collected by the present researcher reveal that while wakes are still often held in Suriname and rural Guyana, in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica the practice is in danger of disappearance, and where the practice is still alive, the evidence shows that it is waning and often becoming superficial. Scarcely is any attention given to the African religious aspect of the wake since such traditions continue to be disparaged. As a result of the loss of such culturally significant practices, communities are much poorer since these rituals function as coping strategies and are powerful mechanisms that validate ancestral wisdom. Death rituals - wakes, wake plays, soirées, folk songs and speech making - serve as mediation processes. They are compensatory rites that function as systems of social control for communities. This paper examines the immeasurable importance of what may be irretrievably lost.

This paper which is part of a larger research project entitled “Wake rituals in fiction and culture” presents findings that are specifically related to cultural anthropology. Information was gathered during 2008-2009 from participant observations and interviews. Where necessary, findings are corroborated with information gleaned from books and journals. To obtain a wider perspective, information on wake practices within the last sixty years was collected from Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica.

Participant observation of a wake held at Hope Town in Guyana in 2008 reveals that the following features are characteristic of modern day wakes there. There was the singing of ‘sangkeys’ or hymns, the pulsating beating of African drums, the consolatory reading of specific passages from the Bible, a short exhortation by a preacher, and the sharing of sweets, coffee, tea, bread, biscuits, and drinks. After the preacher left, the wake progressed to another phase involving drinking rum and

playing cards and dominoes, all interspersed with laughter and jokes about the life of the deceased. This vigil continued until the next ‘fore-day-morning’.

Similar wake ceremonies are held in Suriname, and some areas of Trinidad, Tobago, and Jamaica. However in the towns, a more ‘modern day’ ceremony is the norm. The visit from a preacher is optional and so is the singing of ‘old-time’ hymns or sankeys. Instead, Gospel music blares from an electronic speaker as relatives and friends arrive, spend some time with the bereaved and then leave, but the playing of cards and dominoes along with the drinking of liquor remains an important part of the meeting. While in the countryside there may be a nine-night wake and a fortieth night wake corresponding to the stages of ‘sending-off’ the dead person’s spirit, in urban areas, it is more common to have a less solemn one-night wake on the eve of the burial. These rural-urban differences may be attributed to a desire for upward social mobility which requires that persons distance themselves from the practices of the ‘country people’. But Rawle Titus of Tobago, in his work entitled *Wake People Wake* (2008: 17) acknowledges that, “[our ancestors’] belief in spirits, ghosts or jumbies . . . was a belief that did not exist in a vacuum. In fact, their beliefs were normal and sacred and provided them with a means of dealing with the death condition and transition from this world to the next.”

What remains alive and where? While in Suriname a certain degree of respect is accorded the ‘Winty Religion’ in the other territories under study here, the traditional wake ritual seems to be dying out, since persons below the age of thirty-five, both in the country and in town, could not provide me with any information about traditional wakes. In Barbados, the tradition is practically non-existent. No wakes are held for the dead but information gleaned from a poster in the Barbados Museum acknowledges that death rituals were once practiced there. As in the other territories included in the present study, a common option in Barbados is just to have a party after the burial.

Nine-night or forty-night wakes, though becoming rare phenomena, are still held in some communities to ‘send off’ the spirit of the dead, thus preventing it from roaming among the living. As one of my Jamaican informants told me: “The nine-night is to send the spirit off – sometimes the spirit of the dead is responsible for things happening in the community, so the spirit is roaming and they have to send it off”. Audiovisual material obtained from the Jamaican Memory Bank (2009) provides further information on this theme:

On the fortieth night you cook one pot and set food fuh de spirit first . . . no salt. Yuh set food on table . . . go an talk and beg them to satisfy wid wha dem can manage. The family ha fe talk . . . seh yuh give yuh best . . . if dem no accept it . . . get up an bless dem . . . ask dem to have good behavior. If it don’t suit yuh . . . get up and go on yuh way. Den we throw the rum.

In 2008, similar practices were described to me by a woman who cleanses corpses in preparation for burial in Suriname, who notes that:

For seven days, inside the house, we set meals for the spirits. No other person is allowed to eat what is set. The remains of the meals are buried. On the ninth night, the wake is kept outdoors, in the yard. Relatives, neighbours and friends visit and some stay throughout the night until the break of day. There is eating, drinking, dancing.

Such rituals are practiced by most black people in Suriname whether in the town or the countryside and with an informal invitation any individual may visit these ceremonies. In Jamaica and Guyana such rituals are practiced by a sub-group within the general black community, namely, those who follow African based religions.

Our research strongly suggests that there is little transmission of African derived cultural practices to the younger generations. One informant from Guyana reports that: “Dem young people in church, especially the Pentecostal church against these things like ‘Queh Queh’ and traditional wake. The church give against African culture”. This kind of intolerance and censorship on the part of churches is directly responsible for much of the non-participation by young people in wake ceremonies in particular, as well as for much of the non-transmission of African culture and spirituality in general. For this reason, African religious practices have all but disappeared today in Christianized communities and urban areas. As Rawle Titus notes, “The European influence sought to establish itself as the only accepted, civilized way of life” (2008: 16). All cultures find ways of dealing with death and many practice some form of spirit worship, spirit possession or communication with the dead. From her point-of-view, of an ordinary person, one of my Guyanese informants observed that: “Deh believe that the dead person spirit does roam on earth for forty days and forty nights and then yuh go wherever yuh got to go... whether to heaven, to hell or elsewhere.”

What this informant says is clarified for us by John Mbiti, who is Kenyan by birth and a professor of Religious Studies. In his text entitled *African Religions and Philosophy* he says that; “Belief in the continuation of life after death is found in all African societies ... But this belief does not constitute a hope for a future and better life. There... is neither paradise to be hoped for nor hell to be feared in the hereafter.” (1989: 4)

Wakes at times function as venues for spiritual communication to ‘determine’ the cause of the death at hand. Several of my informants revealed that often wakes are meetings of a profoundly spiritual nature involving divination. A Jamaican informant said that “Sometimes they ask the Obeah man to find out why the person died . . . if it was not natural causes.” To some extent this still happens especially if relatives are members of the spiritualist church. During participant observation at Paradise village

in Guyana, relatives of a sick woman 'found out' that her husband's mistress was responsible for the wife's illness. Subsequently she died and on the first night of the wake, relatives were speaking of their efforts to 'find out' whether the husband had a hand in the death of his wife. After the 'finding out', the husband was determined not entirely guilty. Nevertheless, he was turned out of his home by his children. (This information was only divulged in the presence of the researcher because she is a relative of the dead woman).

Divination practiced in Africa to determine the cause of an illness or death was described to me in 2008 by a Nigerian informant, who said:

[W]hen someone gets ill, relatives may consult oracles. They may consult with those who practice the art of divination - what some may call the fortune teller - or they may consult with the herbalist; most of these are male. They use cowries, shells, seven of them, to do the divination. Sometimes they use the kola nut which has four compartments. The nut is broken and a reading is done based on how the pieces fall.

When I asked him if this is a common practice, he said that: "Christianity is widely practiced in Nigeria but African Traditional Religion, called Juju, practiced by the Yoruba people, is equated Christianity. It is equally recognized." This position is corroborated in the writings of John Mbiti (1989: 146) who tells us that among the Ndebele:

When a person falls seriously ill, relatives keep watch by his bedside. These relatives must include at least one brother and the eldest son of the sick man because the two are the ones who investigate the cause of the illness, which is generally magic and witchcraft and take preventative measures against it.

Mbiti also tells us that among the Abaluyia: "The living-dead are present at the death of their human relative and may be asked . . . to hasten the death of the sick in order to terminate pain or suffering."

In studying the African heritage in the Caribbean, determining the difference between religious survivals as different from non-religious survivals is a difficult task since religion cannot be separated from the day-to-day life of those who practice African derived religions. Mbiti (1989) explains that:

Every dance, every song, every action is but a particle of the whole, each gesture a prayer for the survival of the entire community. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it . . . There is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life" (pp. 1-2).

Brackette Williams (1984) in her work entitled *Ef me naa bin come me naa been know: Informal social control and the Afro-Guyanese wake, 1900-1948* finds that fifty to sixty years ago, in the rural villages of Guyana a wake served as an informal court where problems were vented and solved. Justice was meted out through a system of punishments, including shaming and beating. Complaints could be lodged by playing the game called “Who Say”. Those found guilty could show ‘shame face’, ‘bold face’/ ‘brass face’, or ‘two face’ – depending on their guilt – to help restore the solidarity of the community. The guilty could be punished by playing another game called the “Ring Game” described by several of my informants, as well as by the Ithaca Folk Group of Guyana, in the following passage.

And then yuh does get ‘Ring’, ‘Missy Loss he Gold Ring’. . . Fine am, Fine am, Fine am leh me see. . . Leh we seh, yuh go an pick Cynthy hand, but sometimes nah dah person got de ring . . . so dem beat yuh. Singing “Done baby don’t cry, no room fuh you tonight. . . . Dem a beat yuh so till you find it.”

Such wake related games are of both material and spiritual value to the community. In closely knit communities, communal informal courts often function more effectively than formal legal institutions. To strengthen the solidarity of the group, ‘judicial’ bodies punish those who break the codes of society, and sanctions are applied. Beating during wakes also functions as a spiritual catharsis. If evil spiritual forces are determined as being responsible for transgressions, then the wake becomes an act of spiritual warfare; restless spirits are appeased or exorcised, since the living and vulnerable need to be protected.

Our data strongly suggest that while certain aspects of West African derived culture are dead, others are under severe threat, and this downward spiral has accelerated over the last fifty years. During the process of interviewing the informants for this study, I was surprised by the fact that several persons were reluctant to admit the extensive knowledge that they had of the spiritual aspects of wake rituals. In a few cases, persons refused to discuss such aspects at all. Ironically, one informant began his response to my questions with the disclaimer: “A never really like wakes but . . .” and then went on to provide one of the most informative and substantive accounts of African derived spiritual practices associated with traditional wakes in our entire sample.

This kind of reluctance to value and share traditional knowledge is widespread and almost automatic, to the extent that it has played a major role in the non-transmission of African cultural traditions in the Caribbean. Al Creighton (2001) in his article entitled *Heritage in Guyana* makes the point that, “[M]any blacks came to regard their own culture as inferior and degrading; as something to be ashamed of. As a result, they themselves suppressed it, severely reducing its passage down to succeeding

generations.” Creighton however goes on to note that not one factor, but several are responsible for this decline. He says that “successive combinations of legislation, criminalization, political suppression, natural processes of language change, language death and acculturation” have caused, several traditions to disappear. This supports the point made by members of the Ithaca Folk Group that Christianity has had a profound influence on the breakdown in the intergenerational transmission of African religious practices, which are often shunned because they are regarded as the working of *Obeah*.

Commenting on the effects of non-transmission, cultural anthropologist Joseph Campbell (1988: 8-9) asserts that the loss of traditional community rituals can have a devastating impact on the individual and society, when he says that:

These bits of information from ancient times. . . [which] built civilizations, and informed religions over the millennia, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage, and if you don't know what are the guide-signs along the way, you have to work it out yourself.

Campbell further argues that young people commit violent and destructive acts because “Society has provided them no rituals by which they become members of a tribe, of the community.” (1988: 2)

However, all is not lost. Some African descended writers have attempted to capture and re-articulate African influenced cultural practices, assuming some responsibility for the task of dissemination and transmission of our threatened heritage. Toni Morrison, black writer and Nobel Prize winner, fosters this kind of transmission in her novels and arguing that since we no longer have the places and spaces where young people can hear the stories and myths that informed previous generations, this information must be made available and the novel is one medium to accomplish this. In the Caribbean some of our novelists produce literature that validates our African influenced religious culture. To name only a few of the novels that perform this function, we have Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*; Wilson Harris' *The Whole Armour*; Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*; and Erna Brodber's *Myal* and *Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home*. Wake ceremonies in fiction allow for a dispassionate, objective analysis of how these rituals function as coping mechanisms and mediation processes that have fostered healing and restore solidarity in communities across the Caribbean for centuries.

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THE SPIRITUAL BAPTIST FAITH: SYNCRETIC RELIGION AND CULTURAL TRADITION IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN REGION

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Much of the historical, sociological and anthropological writing over the last three hundred years in the Caribbean has been dominated by the issue of slavery. The significant populations of Africans in the Caribbean during the period after the abolition of slavery has been an important area of academic enquiry, particularly so during the era of political decolonisation after the end of the Second World War. An important aspect of this heritage – the question of African cultural retention – has been an important topic for social scientists, both within and outside the region.

It has been generally recognised that the modern history of Trinidad began in 1783, after the promulgation of the Cedula of Population. Williams (1962: 41), in his *A History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, wrote: “ On November 20th 1783, the Kings of Spain issued the famous Cedula of Population, opening Trinidad’s doors under certain conditions to foreign immigrants.”

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Under the terms of this Cedula, foreigners could settle and invest in the development of Trinidad, as long as they were Roman Catholic and prepared to swear allegiance to the King of Spain. Land grants were given free of charge to immigrant families, the extent of each land grant being determined by the race, the size of the family and the number of slaves possessed by each settler. Immigrants were offered certain tax concessions and incentives as well.

The importation of Africans and other peoples was part of a policy designed to further the Spanish Government’s attempts not only to establish, but to perpetuate a plantation system of agricultural production on Trinidad. After the island was captured by Britain in 1797, the British continued the Spanish policy and larger shiploads of enslaved Africans of different ethnic groups and regions arrived. There were Mandingo from Senegal and Gambia, Ashanti and Fante from the Gold Coast, Yoruba from the West and Igbo from the East of Nigeria, and speakers of Bantu languages from Cameroon, the Congo, and Angola.

After 1783, the French, and to a lesser extent the Spanish, had begun to supply slaves to Trinidad from their respective slave trading posts in Africa. Slaves were also supplied from the same British slave trading posts that supplied Barbados and Grenada. Over the previous century Barbados, unlike Trinidad, had become a full-fledged plantation society with a preponderant slave majority. Trinidad, on the other hand, was just establishing its sugar industry, and therefore had an insatiable demand for slaves. During this period, Jamaica and Barbados became transshipment points for slaves bound for Trinidad.

The outbreak of French Revolution in 1789 and ensuing revolts among the slave populations of Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, St Vincent and Grenada brought a fresh wave of French immigrants seeking a safe haven in Trinidad. These refugees often brought their slaves with them.

The most critical implication of the British capture of Trinidad in 1797 was the expansion of the sugar industry on the island. Slaves were now in even greater demand and were imported from British-held slave trading posts in Africa, often via other British-held colonies in the West Indies. African enslavement left a horrendous legacy amongst Africans in the colonies. After full emancipation in 1838, freed slaves were poor and unable to purchase land. Employment was difficult to find or was offered at starvation wages. They squatted on government lands, or lived as virtually bound tenants on the land of their former masters. They were insecure, but maintained a positive sense of themselves, a degree of self respect and above all a spirit of resistance.

Freed Africans refused to submit themselves to the Apprentices System and requested repatriation to Africa. This was opposed by the planters, as along with any laws which would be of benefit to their workers. This resulted in open aggression. The power of brutality in the form of lynchings, hangings, mutilations and imprisonment was insufficient to keep the Africans subservient. The use of psychological warfare had to be used in tandem with sheer brute force. The systematic breaking up of family relations, kinship ties, and ethno-linguistic groups was a key element of control. Yet the slave masters were dealing with human beings, and despite these attempts to completely negate the humanity of their workers, these human beings found ways of secretly organising themselves to reinforce their dignity and define themselves as spiritual beings with a rich heritage of spirituality.

Under such conditions, what inevitably emerged after emancipation in 1838 were Afro-centric forms of culture which were adapted over a period of time to how Afro-Trinidadians lived, worked, and how they were able to organise themselves. The material conditions of their existence determined and were in turn determined by the forms of culture they inherited, generated and created. In the same way these material

conditions determined and were in turn determined by how Afro-Trinidadians worshipped and by the theology that informed their religious and ritualistic practices. The religion which the slaves practiced throughout the Caribbean manifested elements that indisputably were of African origin (Stewart, 1992).

Warner-Lewis (1991) observed that “once legally free of direct involvement in this distorted social system, the slaves deserted the plantations.... and set up villages. There they reverted to patterns of life to which they were traditionally accustomed” (p. 51) Religion was one of their traditional patterns of life as Mbiti (1975) explains.

“Religion dominates everything which adds up to the creation of the African personality.... African religion gives its followers a sense of security in life, and through their religious way of life, they know who they are, how to act in different situations and how to solve their problems. The freed slaves used religion as a mechanism to adapt to their changed social environment.” (p. 13)

According to Brereton (1979), religious dances and the indigenous way of worship offered slaves “emotional relief from economic hardships, political impotence and social humiliations.....religion provided a haven from rejection by the dominant classes and an index of status and authority within the black lower class” (p. 159).

The Spiritual Baptist Faith emerged from these political circumstances, and what ensued was a dynamic collision of African and Caribbean culture. One of the main characteristics of the movement that established the Spiritual Baptist Faith is that it acted as an agent for mobilising the dispossessed into accepting the positive aspects of their African origin. In the early days, the theologies and rituals of the Spiritual Baptists were improvised. Over time the practitioners adopted some of their masters’ religious practices, thus creating a Creole religion. The Spiritual Baptists in the Caribbean then, not only struggled to carry out their religious rituals and traditional forms of worship without being discovered by their masters, but also had to come to terms with the inevitable intrusion of the masters’ religion into their belief.

After Abolition, Africans continued to arrive as laborers in Trinidad. On the one hand, Senator J.J. Thomas notes the large numbers of Bantu speaking newcomers when he states in Froudacity that: “the Congoes were the most numerous and important ethnic grouping, that practised their own religious cults very privately in an areaknown as Kanga Wood in South Trinidad” (p. 142). On the other hand, Trotman (1976) emphasises the important influx of Yoruba speakers when he observes that: “with large scale immigration and favourable economic and geographical conditions for group isolation, it was infinitely easier for the Yorubas to retain their group identity and practice their indigenous culture.” (p. 6)

By 1859, Trinidad was home to a growing population of Orisha worshipers and Shouter Baptists who had kept various African religious traditions alive within the harsh confines of the plantations, who were now joined by a smaller group directly from Africa. The common experience shared by these groupings was the unspeakable hostility towards their practice of indigenous African religions, their bold defiance of the barbarism of slavery and their unswerving determination to affirm their African identity.

In South Trinidad there is a strong influence of Grenadians aligned with the Spiritual Baptist Faith who were involved with the rebellion of the British Empire Workers and the Home Rule Party. Their leader, Tubah Uriah Butler; who was born in Grenada and migrated to work in the oil fields of South Trinidad, was a Spiritual Baptist who championed their cause and commanded massive support. In North Trinidad there is a deep Orisha tradition associated with the Spiritual Baptist Faith, primarily because the largest group of those who came to Trinidad after the Termination of Apprenticeship were Yoruba. Oral reports establish that Yoruba formed the largest diasporic group of Africans in Trinidad (Elder, 1988).

The evolution of the Spiritual Baptist movement parallels the emergence of a number of other African influenced cultural forms, many of which represent resistance to the suppression of religious and cultural practices originating in Africa. Among these cultural forms are Canboulay, Stick-Fighting, Tamboo-bamboo, Kaiso (Calypso); Orisha feasts, etc. Those Africans who arrived in the Caribbean after Emancipation brought with them a cultural vitality that energised the African influenced cultural and religious practices that had survived slavery.

Afro-Caribbean resistance to racialised slavery spawned a unique culture, a creolised culture that encompasses an enormous range of forms, including language, music, song, dance, food, and religion. The appearances and development of the Spiritual Baptist Faith so soon after the passage of the Emancipation Act seems to suggest that African religious traditions were brought with the enslaved Africans into the Caribbean region and continued to develop them in various forms, some of which appear to be Europeanised African forms, others of which appear to be Africanised European forms, and some of which defy all such simplistic binary classifications. Pearse (1958) states that:

“The Shouters or Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad have modified the practices and beliefs of the Protestant sects, especially the Baptists, and added their rites from the African cults, their leaders often having served these cults....their movements are similar to the manifestations of the African cults.” (p. 4)

Thus the gap between the African indigenous religions as practiced in Africa and what the Spiritual Baptists constructed within the specific conditions in which they were placed is undeniable. It may be viewed as an uneven continuum, one which has relied on ancestral memory and which is somewhat disjointed, or wounded in comparison to its original wholeness. Those who practice the Spiritual Baptist Faith seek to heal these wounds by shaping their Faith around the struggle for dignity in the hostile environment faced by freed Africans in the diaspora.

By 1859, Trinidad was home to a growing population of Orisha worshipping ‘Shango Baptists’ and ‘Shouter Baptists,’ derogatory names given to Spiritual Baptists. Cultural expressions which did not meet the approval of the establishment in Colonial Trinidad were suppressed by law. Fervour for African religious traditions prevailed however, and the ‘Obeah Man’ flourished during this period of discontent. According to Brereton: “Obeah was legally defined in the Ordinance of 1868 as the assumption of supernatural powers for the purpose of making money. But as the word was used in the late nineteenth century, it included any religious or magical practices which were considered to be ‘African’, including healing, and conjuring of all types-securing success in love and family affairs, of favourable results in litigation, or injuring enemies.” (1979: 159)

In 1883 the government introduced the ‘Music Bill’, which prohibited the playing of drums, tom-toms, chac-chacs and other musical instruments in places adjoining a public highway after 10pm. The Bill was withdrawn in the face of a public outcry. However, according to Brereton the Legislative Council: “tried to put down ‘immoral’ drum dancers by making every owner responsible for ‘Rogues and Vagabonds’ assembling in their yards or premises, and singing or dancing to the drum, chac-chac or any other instruments” (Brereton, 1979: 138). This resulted in a pronounced curtailment of public Orisha worship. The Spiritual Baptists however, in their determination to keep their Faith alive were not deterred by legislation, and clandestine worship continued unabated. According to Ella Andell, an Orisha practitioner in Trinidad, Spiritual Baptists and Orisha worshippers in the Eastern Caribbean are one. She says: “Well, you know I have to be all of it, because all is one of it. If you deal with the history of the Orisha religion in the Caribbean as far as I know, for it to be kept, it was kept by the Spiritual Baptists. What I know is that we have to thank the Spiritual Baptist Faith for keeping this culture alive for us.” (interview, 1999)

During this period the organised European churches were busily engaged preaching a message of ‘redemption’, impressing upon the Africans that their religious practices

were hedonistic. The colonial governments during the period immediately after emancipation passed a series of ordinances which prohibited the practice of any religious activity which did not have the approval of the establishment, and which did not have a predominantly European appearance. In Trinidad and in St Vincent Spiritual Baptists were legally prohibited from practising their religion. In St Vincent, the 1912 Shakerism Prohibition Ordinance served as the model for the 1917 Shouter Prohibition Ordinance which was passed in that year by the Trinidad Legislative Council and was repealed on 26th April 1951. In St Vincent the Shakers Right to Worship was restored in 1965.

Immediately after the repeal of the Prohibition Law in 1951 a public split occurred. There were those who simply called themselves Spiritual Baptists and claimed unequivocally to be Christians. Then there were the Shouter Baptists, known as Shango Baptists or African Baptists who combined African traditional beliefs and practices with Christianity. The most interesting development from this schism, however, is the strong emergence of Orisha worship as a cultural form from Spiritual Baptist Movement.

There is therefore no doubt that a crisis of identity exists amongst Spiritual Baptists and divisiveness remains an issue to be dealt with. However, the Faith that developed in the Caribbean Islands of Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada, St Vincent and Barbados is by no means monolithic, what exist in most places is double worship and a split in the rank and file. Orisha worship amongst Spiritual Baptists is clandestine, but there are leaders who close their church doors during feast time and open their palais to ‘the Orishas’ (Saints and Deities), accommodating adherents who are ‘Christians’ and those of a more African tradition.

The Spiritual Baptist Faith could be seen as a cultural form that cannot be separated from the Afrocentric forms of culture that evolved within the diasporic crucible amongst African-Caribbean people. These forms are an adaptation of the cultural forms and practices which they had learned in Africa or which have been revealed to them by the spirits of their ancestors within the diaspora itself. This underscores the point that culture is dynamic and gains expression through the animated externalisation of people’s creativity, their spirituality and their capacity to interpret their social world through whatever medium. Visual art, verse, prose, percussion, chants, geometric shapes, the crafting of tools and other implements for day to day living, cuisine, traditional medicines, rituals and beliefs, all form part of the rich tapestry of culture that people in every age and in all societies have woven in the long march of human evolution. Any attempt to minimize the importance of the Spiritual Baptist Faith in terms of its relevance to religious beliefs and practices or to its

contribution to Caribbean civilisation must be challenged. The body of research which this topic has generated is living testimony not only to the power of the human spirit to overcome difficulties, but to the power of the spiritual to claim its space in human lives.

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A VOYAGE IN THE WEST INDIES: JOHN AUGUSTINE WALLER'S "FAMILIAR VIEW OF THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS"

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Introduction

One of the greatest challenges in early Caribbean research continues to be the accessibility of early primary West Indian texts for scholarly research. While bibliographies abound with citations and references to the vast array of historical and popular descriptions of the West Indies, access to the original texts continues to be limited. Instead, research about the pre-Emancipation or discovery and settlement periods in the Caribbean region tends to center on excerpts and highly editorialized interpretations of the primary texts. Consequently, scholarship related to the early West Indies reflects the contentious and fragmented ideologies of island histories and politics.

In an effort to increase access to primary texts and examine how West Indian residents viewed themselves in relation to the various colonial

empires, my research centers on *digital scholarship*: how access through digital representations of literary artifacts enhances scholarship in and about early Caribbean peoples. In particular, as a member of the advisory board of the Digital Library of the Caribbean (Dloc), our common goal is to provide a technological framework in which the rhetoric of popular literature, such as the newspaper and personal accounts, may be examined. Published in 1820, ten years after his return, John Augustine Waller's account of travels in the West Indies from 1807 -1810 operates as both a case study for this type of scholarship within the context of the Dloc and as the subject of



Figure 1 Title page and map from Journal

scholarship about the West Indies during a period where the islands were struggling with conflicting views of their role within the British empire.

Interestingly, Waller writes in his preface that he did not write for publication or the historical record, but rather he wrote to entertain his friends with observations of living topics.” Therefore, his account should be studied as a personal narrative reflecting the precision of a surgeon combined with the curiosity of a keen observer of people and events. The result is a first-hand glimpse of a typical voyage to Barbados with subsequent excursions to other islands adjacent to Barbados. In contrast to many other travelogues of the time, Waller’s journal displays a blend of detachment and intimacy that parallels the syncretism of West Indian life in the period leading up to the Abolition of slavery. In order to deal with the multiple tensions between competing powers, travelers to the Caribbean were often torn between conflicting loyalties and the seduction of tropical beauty. Uncovering these tensions makes for interesting reading and holds promise for new scholarship related to popular literature. These popular writings are not usually included in anthologies, so that without the digital facsimiles stored in databases such as the Dloc, this interesting journal would have remained inaccessible to most Caribbean scholars. Consequently, Waller’s role in Barbados and West Indian history would most likely have remained unstudied and unappreciated. However, in order to grasp the importance of digital facsimiles in the evolving field of digital humanities and scholarship it is useful to define how digital technologies engage traditional archival research and expand the possibilities for making new connections. Without the possibility for making new connections between popular, historical and literary writings, scholarship becomes a moot issue and research stagnates and becomes repetitive.

Caribbean Scholarship in the Digital Age

What is digital scholarship and what makes this type of research different? The short answer is that digital scholarship is simply a form of archival research that utilizes digital facsimiles and incorporates multiple modalities within a virtual space or environment. This “virtuality” enables the researcher to view texts, art, music, and other artifacts through a cultural prism and examine the many cultural relics comprising a specific historical experience. The artifacts being researched are not necessarily “new” or “born digital”, however, they can be represented digitally and located within a common unified or “virtual” space. Study then takes place in such a manner that the researcher benefits from viewing texts or artifacts in multiple dimensions from multiple perspectives; the rhetorical implications of each are then examined as relative to the whole. This allows for a more performative experience and analysis of events that is typically associated with drama. For instance, in previous writings, I have noted an interesting parallel between the obviously fragmented nature of Caribbean geography and the not so obviously fragmented representations of its

historiography in writings about the discovery and settlement periods. While some of this may be attributed to the entanglement of cultures, ethnicities, and powers permeating Caribbean history, much of what I will call “The Great Caribbean Conundrum of Identity” seems to have been unwittingly perpetuated by linear two-dimensional formats of traditional scholarship that repeat a stereotyped view of early Creoles as either master or slave. Unfortunately, because the first was the primary writer of the histories and popular literature, while the latter was the object/subject of debate, writing from the “other” peoples is conspicuously absent. Consequently, we have little scholarship about the pre-1800 period of Caribbean history that examines the many “other” peoples who provided the genetic seed for modern Caribbean peoples. Their writings, music, art and other cultural artifacts, have for the most part remained either lost and forgotten, or subsumed into mainstream genres. In order to rectify this, my research combines traditional archival methods within a digital framework. The following table is an attempt to demonstrate how this digital framework for this type of archival study utilizes the socio-historical context in order to determine the rhetorical agendas at work. Only by building a digital framework and engaging in a more archeological approach to historical artifacts can we hope to uncover any trace of these unappropriated¹ people.

Archival Research	Socio-Historical Context	Rhetorical Analysis
Physical access to texts/artifacts	Chronology of events = Time	Genres – print literatures/ art/ music
Digital representations	People/events = Action	Multiple modalities
Research methods = horizontal vs. vertical	Geography of author/archive/researcher = Place	Virtual spaces = electronic delivery

Figure 2 Rhetorical Framework for digital scholarship

The unique nature of digital scholarship stems from its geography within a virtual common space that allows us to re-examine and re-center the focus by comparing the multiple modes of communication used by early Creoles and their English cohorts. Ironically, this orality and multimodality of the early Caribbean has traditionally been explicated by the two-dimensional technologies of print-based formats or art that collapse the oral, the visual, the performative, the spiritual . . . into the “flat” confines of print text and graphics that are then delivered out of context as discrete parts of a

¹ Jerome Handler first coined this phrase in his book *An Unappropriated People: the Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* to identify freed blacks in Barbados. The term is taken from its legal meaning of “not appropriated or included” in the legal system, e.g. not having full or equal civil rights. Here I appropriate the term to mean not having full or equal historical coverage.

particular Caribbean history. This individual focus on discrete artifacts conforms nicely to our rational western European notions of centeredness and canons of literary scholarship, but does little to convey the “other” components of Caribbean identities, the irrational, the spiritual, e.g. the African, Asian, Indigenous, Celtic and East European, to mention only a few. Thus, while traditional scholarship is valuable in preserving the human record and has led to some interesting and valuable academic work, it has not been successful in improving access or understanding to a vast body of Caribbean heritage harvested from colonial outposts or early settlements and later shipped to locked archives in metropolitan centers. Hence, it is reasonable to speculate that much of our early Caribbean patrimony is still held hostage – far from the very people who could most benefit from the relics of their ancestors in order to untangle the web of a culturally tangled past.² This begs the question of “How do we untangle this web and begin to re-center history in a more appropriate context for the contemporary audience?”

A decentralizing or academic discussion of digital scholarship should focus on how digital technologies have opened new possibilities for the preservation of and virtual access to documents, images, music, dance and art, as well as how they have offered new ways to combine the multiple modes of our human record for a broader evaluation of events. However, this process can be problematic since it introduces a rhetorical aspect to utilizing digital and visual media which in turns posits several challenges for scholars – who, when, where, and how do we use technology? Who will manage the archive? How and when should technology be used for scholarship? Where will the digital representations be stored and how will virtual access be managed? Will the digital repeat the problems of the physical real-time archives, and will the virtual become as exploited as the physical? What is the teleological shape of digital archives? Will the new rhetoric of the virtual world repeat the hegemony of the physical world? Or, will the digital serve as a leveling force and break down the canonical hierarchies sometimes perpetuated by plantation legacies. Hence, my research attempts to address those issues as part of the rhetorical aspect of digital technologies and humanities scholarship. The subsequent “journey” into uncharted scholarship provides new perspectives on old notions of subject and agency in the field of literary historiography.

When first embarking on the digital journey, the project is always threatened with derailment by the repeating question of “What, other than the multiple modalities involved, makes digital scholarship different from ‘traditional’ scholarship?” Although mentioning the use of technology states the obvious, it is not just the use of digital technologies that changes humanities scholarship. The human element is also at

² This concept was part of an earlier paper, “Digital Scholarship – New Options for Globalizing Caribbean Resources”, presented at the Eastern Caribbean Conference in Antigua, 2003.

play in how events are recorded. In order to understand how this engages the digital, it is helpful to accept that all scholarship relies to a certain extent on memory and representations of an original event or artifact, regardless of the mode used in examination. Thus the outcome may be somewhat altered by the rhetorical agenda of the observer. In Waller's case, his account was published ten years after his return from the West Indies and one could argue that his descriptions may have been altered by time and frequent retellings. After all, memory is subject, object, not agent; and its subjects may become [mis-]representations shaped by rhetorical agendas. To counter this, the rhetorical framework created by technology offers an interesting virtual space from which we may examine, manipulate, and challenge those agendas safely, without compromising the original. For instance, more traditional approaches to archival research are necessarily limited by physical access to texts and artifacts. This results in what I will term a "vertical" research of discrete items housed in a particular archive or archives. Each artifact is examined in depth, separately; each is annotated, evaluated, and then examined independently outside of its physical context. On the other hand, digital representations allow for what I call a "horizontal" approach

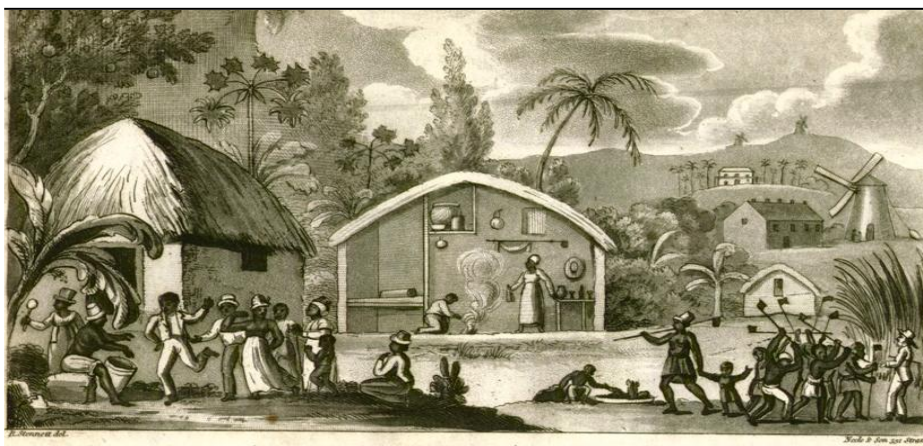


Figure 3 Plate depicting slave life in Barbados

providing access to multiple archives, databases, and artifacts from within one virtual space. This horizontal approach to scholarship allows for the laying out of a historical continuum with individual representations of artifacts located in nodes and related to the whole before individual examination. Thus, while the vertical approach provides an in-depth study of one or several artifacts or events, the horizontal approach links the artifacts and events in multiple dimensions of time, geography, context and modes of communication; thus increasing the possibility of making new and perhaps unlikely connections. Ultimately both approaches are necessary to preserve the cultural record, fully grasp the nuances of events and more closely represent the artifact and understand its context within a historiography of the Caribbean that us usually viewed from the outside with what Mary Louis Pratt has so appropriately termed "imperial eyes."

Waller's *Familiar Voyage* . . .

In previous research, I have attempted to layout this horizontal continuum of people in Barbados and adjacent islands in order to engage in a literary archeology of writing in Barbados during the eighteenth-century. This approach has uncovered representations of power in Barbados that are not usually mentioned in canonical literature. As a result, the digital facsimiles of popular literature in pre-emancipation Barbados serve as prototypes in order to test my theory of texts as artifacts and the people as both subject and Subjects. As subject, Waller and his journal provide a rich variety of descriptions about the various islands and their inhabitants. As Subject, Waller the surgeon offers a unique study in perspective that is both objective and subjective simultaneously – somewhat akin to the syncretism of Creoles and their societies, both English and “different” at the same time. This “sameness” and “difference” was the inevitable result of shifting powers, complex politics and competing ideological agendas.

The world was a complicated place in 1808. By the time Waller was assigned to a hospital in Barbados, the slave trade had been abolished, but slavery continued and the emancipation debates were raging hot and heavy on both sides of the Atlantic as everyone weighed in on the fate of the enslaved population. On one side of the Atlantic, West Indian planters filled periodicals, letters, and histories with arguments that enslaved peoples were happy, childlike peoples incapable of living without the righteous authority of their owners. On the other side, metropolitan interests had grown tired of subsidizing plantations and a sugar economy debilitated by slave rebellions, hurricanes, corruption, and a collapsing sugar market. While Parliament, clergy and West Indian planters debated endlessly on the subject of emancipation and appropriate compensation for lost property, France licked the wounds of the Haitian revolution by trying to conquer every major European power; and Spain was preoccupied with its economic woes and struggled to maintain a semblance of its former power in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean.

In the midst of this confusion, the American plantation colonies quietly tried to repatriate freed slaves to Liberia³ and absolve guilt over the fact that their economies flourished and depended on slave labor. In London, Englishmen had become increasingly occupied with the evolving Industrial Revolution and its effects on domestic life – often relegating West Indian issues to philosophical discussions over tea imported by the East India Company and sweetened with sugar from the West Indies. This was the scene as Waller sailed through the Caribbean islands and,

³ The American Colonization Society was created in 1816 to address the issue of freed slaves. This group actively campaigned to force manumitted slaves to repatriate to Liberia where they were ‘seasoned’ for six months and then, if they survived, given land and fifty dollars. Unfortunately, many died and most were terribly homesick.

logically, could be the reason he so pointedly states that his intention is not to publish, but to entertain his friends with living topics. In a complicated world, lively descriptions of tropical places offered a refreshing change from the heavy debates at home.

Only at the end of his journal does the reader glimpse his conflicting emotions. At this point, one obvious question is: how does Waller’s account specifically engage digital scholarship, since his journal appears to be one more travelogue in a long series of travelogues about the West Indies? The answer lies in two facts: first, Waller’s artifact is not part of the mainstream British or Caribbean “canon” and has limited availability through the William L. Bryant Foundation *West Indies Collection* in Florida. Second, and in contrast, the digital facsimile is publicly available online through the Digital Library of the Caribbean. The first limits any first hand research to a very few who visit the collection. The second provides free and easy access to anyone with an Internet connection. This points out one important lesson for researchers – without digital representations, access trumps research.



Figure 4 “Indian Implements”

Since access often hinges on economic resources necessary for travel, lodging, food, etc., one might also argue that digital representations are a leveling factor that provide a more democratic approach to scholarship and thus remove elitist academic constraints frequently associated with scholarly research and the availability of travel funds. The far ranging effect of this is that through inclusion of a broader base of researchers and genres, prevalent literary canons might possibly be challenged and re-ordered according to multiple and more democratic perspectives. For instance, while Waller’s journal is fortunately catalogued as part of the *West Indies Collection*, many other artifacts about the West Indies are buried in colonial libraries and archives where they might never be “discovered” or connected to their original historical contexts.

On another level, Waller’s *Familiar View* is also interesting in how it interweaves descriptions and artistic plates from the era to both condone and contest stereotypes of

the West Indian islands as either exotic or degenerate. Interspersed with these descriptions are meticulous drawings of indigenous artifacts and artistic renderings of everyday life in each island. These descriptions offer a refreshing view of the people in each island that rediscovers and focuses on the human geography as integral to the physical geography of each island. For instance, Waller contrasts the muddied streets surrounding the harbor in Barbados with the broad streets of Surinam “planted with double rows of orange and lemon trees on each side, thickly covered with fruit, and forming an agreeable shade over the walks beneath them” (p. 61). He then continues with a description of the “suburbs of the town” and the Indians, “both men and women, entirely naked, except a narrow piece of coarse cloth which was attached behind to a string tied round the waist, and passing between the legs” (p. 61). This image of a lush landscape and naked Indians contrasts sharply with entries such as the one on Guadeloupe and Dominica where he briefly mentions a battle between two French men-of-war and a British sloop. Earlier in the voyage, his description of Martinique writes a landscape that is “very high and picturesque, but the country appears rather barren” (p. 3). The reader is left wondering if it is the landscape that is barren, or if the effects of war have left the island barren of people. An interesting conundrum Waller never explains.

The journal ends with a diary of the rough voyage back to England in 1810. His sober account of this voyage is unlike the eager descriptions of his trip from England to Barbados as he relates the sad tale of a sick sailor whose mates refuse to care for him, robbing him of his clothes, refusing to share food, until Waller orders them to provide a blanket and care for the sick man. Unfortunately, after several days Waller is awakened in the middle of the night by the splash of water as the poor soul, still alive, is tossed overboard by his reluctant caretakers. Thus both the journal and the voyages convey conflicting views of Waller’s experiences and the ambivalence of his roles as traveler and surgeon in an area of the world where being English in Barbados and the West Indies was much different from being English in London. As audience, we the casual readers can only speculate and simulate our roles as Waller’s friends and be entertained. As scholars we can bring together the fragments of Waller’s journal as history and hope to inform.

Conclusion: The Virtual Possibilities for Waller’s Journal

While Waller’s journal is well preserved and provides detailed plates and drawings, the digital facsimile provides a more efficient research technology (see Fig. 2). From the archival perspective, once a researcher establishes his search criteria and efficiently finds all references in the text, the next step is to determine which areas merit further investigation. For example, digital archival research provides the means to search various databases for related events, artifacts, or commentaries that can be

used to contextualize Waller's journal and make the connection to other works of the period or verify his descriptions. From a rhetorical perspective, the fact that Waller was transported from the relatively homogeneous high context culture of England to the diverse low context cultures⁴ of the West Indies raises some interesting cultural questions. Consequently, digital scholarship might bring various artifacts from the period into the unified virtual space to examine how his choice to entertain and not inform would serve both his own agenda as the surgeon/traveler and his later agenda as writer/entertainer. What were the contemporary issues and debates between 1808 and 1810? Were his descriptions and "familiar view" written in order to avoid addressing these debates that centered on slavery, war, and imperial politics, or was he simply doing as he stated in his "Advertisement", avoiding the repetition of scientific details and natural histories previously published and writing to entertain his friends? Regardless of the answers, the ability to place digital facsimiles, hyperlinks, commentaries, and other modalities within one unified virtual space is promising in its interesting twist on the Neo-classical interpretations of Aristotle's unities of time, place and action. A twenty-first century view of the digital performance is less confining and views the unities not in terms of the actors and the stage, but in terms of context and audience. Both entertain, both inform; however, unlike the rigid Neo-classical notions of performance that continue to infiltrate colonial and postcolonial representations of the Caribbean, and often chain West Indian peoples to a binary tragi-comedy of black-white relations, the virtual performance has no boundaries and thus offers the possibility to unchain Caribbean identity from the tragedy of its past and celebrate the hybridity and syncretism of today's West Indian peoples.

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WATER GUT AS AN INDUSTRIAL PARK OF CHRISTIANSTED, FORMER DANISH WEST INDIES 1756-1813

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In a plantation society, larger estates could afford their own craftsmen: coopers to craft the wooden barrels for muscavado and rum export; blacksmiths to repair wagon axels, window hinges, field equipment, cutlasses, hoes, and bills and to make shoes for horses and mules; and carpenters to build and renovate structures. Smaller estates, on the other hand, pooled their repair work in order to share these craftsmen between two or more properties within a district. Some estates bordering the towns, however, utilized the shops of tradesmen in the towns. Repairs of existing and damaged pieces and the replication of iron parts was their main business. The focus of these shops was on repair of manufactured goods, which had been originally crafted in the metropolis. In Christiansted on Saint Croix in the Danish West Indies, such an area of industrial activity became known as Water Gut. The area was downwind of the town, thus keeping furnace soot and smoke away from the main streets.

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Water Gut sits on the coast to the northwest of Christiansted. This is an area reclaimed from the water from Recovery Hill in the southern range of hills which ran in a natural gut to the sea.¹ A small grouping of buildings grew up along the coast, and the settlement was known by this same name (West: 194, 223). Unlike Free Gut, to the south of town, there was no ordinance establishing the Water Gut area. Perhaps the first establishment created in Water Gut was the King's Lumberyard, or the King's Yard, at 1A Water Gut Street.² At this location, auctions were conducted of property (including goods and enslaved Africans) seized because of their owners' non-payment of taxes or being in financial arrears. Situating a governmental entity, such as this lumberyard, on the shoreline provided an administrative presence in an area where illegal inbound and outbound smuggling of goods might have taken place. Thus,

¹ Otherwise in the records known as "Water Gottet" or "Vand Gottet"

² *Dansk Regierings Avis*, 1801.

Water Gut started as an industrial area as shown by the 1758 matricules, the first set of tax lists after the initial 25 year tax incentive period ended.³

This paper will trace the transformation of Water Gut businesses from 1758 to 1813, during which time the originally Danish-owned properties were purchased by Scots. Scots emigrated in large numbers during this period to the newly formed colonies of North America and to the Virgin Islands, seeking work and professions which were closed to them in Britain either because there were no vacancies or because of the primogenitor inheritance system. The primogenitor system left many second sons with neither money nor a family-generated occupation in the British Isles. Sheridan notes that for Jamaica, “No sooner was one Scotsman established in the island than he began to send for his relatives, friends and former neighbors” (Sheridan: 96). By migrating to the West Indies, these artisans had the opportunity first to work with an individual already established and then, if they had accumulated some money, they could expand to their own trade shops, manned with enslaved labor. The Scotsmen were known for their diligence and industriousness. Long, a historian of Jamaica quoted by Sheridan, notes the Scots “thrived better than the European English because of their sounder constitutional and an ethic patronage system that provided employment and friendly protection” (Sheridan: 99).

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The assessment made in this paper of these trades and businesses is based on records of the sale of both real and enslaved property found in the liens and mortgages in one set of records called *panteprotokoller*.⁴ The paper will show that the dynamics of artisan business in the towns was different from that of the plantations, allowing the enslaved who worked in these tradesmen’s shops greater social and economic freedom. The social agency of some of the workers of such businesses will be traced.

18 Strand Street

The property at 18 Strand Street has a long history of being a tradesmen’s shop. Starting in 1756, Captain William Glass⁵, a Scottish captain and owner of a schooner which carried both cargo and passengers to and from Boston, established a blacksmith shop at that address. By 1783 Glass was in a partnership with Andrew Monro & Co. Monro was a Scottish blacksmith, who in 1778 had taken over the smithing business

³ The 1758 matricules were the first (tax) records as the settlers were allowed a 25 year exemption (1733-1758) from paying property tax.

⁴ The African Roots project, a large data base of Danish records pertaining to the enslaved population of St. Croix from 1733-1917, was created in 2009 by the Virgin Islands Social History Associates under the direction of George Tyson and Svend Holsoe. Among the records that are included, the creators have translated and recorded the transactions of mortgages, sales, and liens recorded in the Paneprotokoller between the years 1747-1806. In this paper, the records from the database will be denoted as Virgin Islands Social History Associates (VISHA).

⁵ The 1759 matricules show that he lived at 18 King Street with 8 enslaved males.

at 18b Strand Street, originally owned by John Watson.⁶ Monro and Glass continued the blacksmithing trade at this property. Looking at a map of Christiansted, the lot at 18 Strand Street actually physically fronts itself on West Street, which leads directly to the waterfront for easy on loading and off loading of goods. In 1789, Andrew Munro purchased Kingsdale, a Negro blacksmith for 400 pieces of eight.⁷ Munro had sold two other slaves, Cecile and her daughter Sally, presumably to pay a portion of the price for the adult blacksmith which he then acquired. Adam Zacharias Kingsdale was manumitted by purchasing his freedom from a P. de Nully in 1810, when he was 51 years old. In 1831, at age 71, he was retired from the mandatory free corps which provided the nightly town watch and gathered in units to capture runaway slaves.⁸ The record of sale for Sally and her mother notes that Andrew Monro was the father of Sally. No Sally Monro, if she used his surname, was found in succeeding records.⁹

A year later in 1790, William Glass purchased five African descended blacksmiths¹⁰ (Caesar, Goodluck, Branford, David, and Peter) from Andrew Monro and Co.¹¹ These same enslaved blacksmiths became a part of a partnership formed by Grant and Glass, where Grant's share was fully paid but where Glass's share was financed by a mortgage. William Glass may have had to mortgage his property in order to raise money for his merchant shipping business. He had to raise the capital to buy cargo to sell to agents in distant ports. On his return, he may have employed, as other ship's captains did, a number of enslaved women as market women to sell goods brought back from his travels. In fact, between 1795-1797, Glass had sold several sets of mothers with their children, and these women may have served him in this capacity. Some of these enslaved women he sold outright; while others purchased their freedom from him.¹² One example of his giving freedom to an individual was the case of Nancy Glass, born in Africa in 1770. She was originally owned by George Gordon and freed by William Glass in 1816 when she was 40 years old.¹³ After her

⁶ A head tax record for the enslaved Jacob, a blacksmith at John Watson's was recorded by William Glass in 1778.

⁷ VISHA Panteprotokoller 1789. St. Croix Landmarks Society (SCLS) Kingsdale was also enumerated in *The Reorganization of the Free Colored Class 1831-32*. This census is commonly referred to as the 1831 Free Colored Census.

⁸ SCLS. Free Colored Census of Christiansted 1831-32. An ordinance for Free Coloreds to search for runaway enslaved Africans was mandated by the Ordinance of 1760. See Hall: 154.

⁹ Sally may not have used the surname "Munroe" or "Munroo" as she is not found in the *Liste over Christiansteds Jurisdictiones Frie Neger, Shambotier, Mulatter, Musticer and Casticer. Paa Aaret, 1791*, commonly known as the Free Colored Census of 1791.

¹⁰ Head Tax records 1796. The enslaved were: Caesar, Jacob, Goodluck, Branford, David, Peter, Chaley, William, John, and Johannes.

¹¹ VISHA. Panteprotokoller, 1790.

¹² VISHA .Panteprotokoller, 1795. Chemmina and three children 875 rdl; Judith and her daughter Anne Elizabeth purchased themselves for 500 p/s; and in 1800 Penteny and her two children by John Simon, purchased their freedom.

¹³ SCLS. *Mandtal over friefarvede som opholdt sig udi Christiansteds Jurisdiction paa St. Croix, Aaret 1816*. (microfilm). Commonly referred to as the Free Colored Census of 1816.

manumission, she moved from the Water Gut area to 42 King Street and supported herself there as a seamstress until the age of 65 after which her daughter supported her.¹⁴ Later she also received money from the poor fund.¹⁵

In 1796, William Glass sold the five above-named enslaved African blacksmiths to Thomas Grant & Co. with Glass holding the mortgage. Grant had come to St. Croix in 1793 and ended up managing Peter Heyliger's property at 1 West Street and working as a coppersmith.¹⁶ Heyliger was a planter from the Dutch island of St. Eustatius. Thomas Grant also became a joint owner of 18 Strand Street.¹⁷ In 1797 Glass and Grant sold Moses, an African descended adult, for 300 pieces of eight.¹⁸ In 1799, Glass may have been divesting some of his assets in order to establish a new partnership with John Henderson and Andrew Monro.¹⁹

What this constant buying and selling of enslaved Africans shows, is that the sugar plantation economy business situation of the time was very volatile. Glass was busy raising money in order to continue carrying both cargo and passengers while at the same time holding down a business partnership. Manumission of his slaves helped Glass to satisfy his constant need of cash. Meanwhile Grant, as recorded in the 1796 list of slaves, acquired three young male slaves: Charly, William and John.²⁰

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The youngest of this group was John Grant, a mulatto, who was born in 1788 and is listed as a wheelwright in the 1796 head tax records along with nine other tradesmen owned by Thomas Grant. John Grant went on to purchase his freedom in 1803 at the age of 15 and was a member of the Presbyterian Church.²¹ At the age of 24, he himself purchased two enslaved men, William and Jim, at an auction with the assistance of a curator.²² He married Elizabeth Moller, another free person of color, and they resided at 22 King Cross Street outside of the Water Gut area with their daughter Sarah Jane.

The Presbyterian Church is regarded by some as the "Scotch Presbyterian Church" (Larsen: 96) and by others as the English Presbyterian Church (West: 35).²³

¹⁴ VISHA. 1835 Census.

¹⁵ VISHA. Poor Fund 1829. Her pension was from the Anglican Church.

¹⁶ SCLS. 1793 matricules.

¹⁷ VISHA. Panteprotokoller, 1796.

¹⁸ VISHA. Panteprotokoller, 1797.

¹⁹ Rigsarkivet. Vest Indien Lokalkiver (hereafter cited as RA.VL.). Panteprotokoller Vol. N, 1799.

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²¹ SCLS. Free Colored Census 1831-32.

²² RA. VI. CB. Auktionprotokoller 1811-12. 38.37.34. William cost 375 p/8 and Jim 350.

²³ Listed as the "Scotch" by Jens Larsen. *Virgin Islands Story*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1950. 96. Listed as the "English" Presbyterian Church by Hans West, 35. The church was located in this area because of the number of Scot artisans residing in the Water Gut.

Established in Christiansted in 1772 by Dr. Hugh Knox, who had come to St. Croix from Saba, this religious institution was housed in a dwelling on 1 North Street. By 1819 its congregation had dwindled in size and when the church was disbanding, members contributed to the poor funds of both their church and that of the Anglican Church (Sheridan: 99, 100).

African Peter, a coppersmith owned under the Grant/Glass partnership, apparently did not have as fortunate a life as John Grant. He is also listed in the 1796 records and was still enslaved in 1806, when he ran away. Thomas Grant had to place an ad in the newspaper stating that 4 dollars would be paid for the apprehension of Peter: “He is a middle-sized Negro, stutters in speech and is well known in town and country.”²⁴ Peter was listed in 1803 as worth 80 rdl.²⁵

Some of slaves manumitted by the Scots were able to fare well on their own. Patterson as reported by Sheridan states that: “White artisans were assisted and not infrequently supplanted by their mulatto and black apprentices. . . . (Sheridan: 95)” and that: “the free colored and many of the Creole slaves who consciously sought to assimilate the culture of the whites tended to imbibe Scottish customs. . . . (Sheridan: 100).”

With this Glass/Grant example, we can begin to discern a pattern which can be found repeatedly in the lives of the inhabitants of the Water Gut industrial area. A Scottish tradesman who found it difficult to prosper in Britain is forced to seek wealth elsewhere, in St. Croix. Depending on his industriousness, the migrant Scot works for a while with another artisan. Later, as he raises funds, he either purchases a lot and establishes a business with his own enslaved Africans or buys an existing operation which is failing, along with its workers and slaves. Several years later, the new owner then falls into debt and has to mortgage his slaves to a wealthier business man. When he becomes further indebted he raises cash by selling his enslaved women and children or allows them to purchase their own freedom at prices established by the government.

As a result of all of this buying, selling and mortgaging, enslaved Africans suffer the hardship of being shuffled from one owner to another. Those enslaved tradesmen whose circumstances allow them to secure odd jobs in their free time and thus to accumulate savings equal to the price of their listed worth are able to purchase their own freedom. As seen in the case of the mulatto John Grant, some of these manumitted persons quickly accumulated more money in sufficient quantity to buy their own slaves and start their own businesses.

²⁴ SCLS. *Dansk Vestindisk Regerings Avis*, June 16, 1806, microfilm.

²⁵ FWPL. Head Tax Records, 1803.

Even though this set of records allows us to trace the financial dealings of Europeans and those enslaved Africans who were able to purchase their freedom, little information is afforded by the records regarding the fortunes of those who remained enslaved. While this particular set of records does document the buying, selling and mortgaging of real and enslaved property, these records do provide much information about the quality of life of these tradesmen and their families.

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PLURI-CULTURALISM, LITERATURE, MUSIC AND EXPRESSION

THE POETIC LEGACY OF DANIEL THALY

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Daniel Thaly was born in Dominica in 1879. His mother was from the Bellot family in Dominica and his father came from Martinique, where the family settled. Daniel Thaly grew up in Saint Pierre, the city annihilated by the catastrophic eruption of Mount Pelée in 1902. After attending high school in Saint-Pierre, he studied medicine in Toulouse, and returned to Dominica in 1905. He is remembered there first as a poet, and also as a physician, ornithologist and museum curator. Between 1900 and 1932, he published eight major volumes of poetry. He died in Dominica in 1950.

In his lifetime, Daniel Thaly (1879-1950) saw his literary fortunes undergo a remarkable reversal, on a scale and with a suddenness that few writers experience. His poetry, cast in the neo-Parnassian mould, soared in popularity in France and the West Indies during the first two decades of the twentieth century, but met with growing resistance and outright repudiation from the 1930s onward. Even before the Negritude movement had fully gained momentum, demand was rising for an unfettered Caribbean literary identity, free of the literary canons and enshrined conventions of traditional French verse. A new generation of students in the French Antilles identified closely with the revolutionary aesthetics of the Surrealist movement as being more attuned to their own struggle for political and artistic autonomy. They were determined to reject the influence of Orientalist and imperialist discourse in the neo-classical poetics of the French regionalist school, and the production of nostalgic, exotic imagery figuring a compliant, languorous Caribbean other, packaged for a French reading public. Their anger found a convenient target in the person of Daniel Thaly, who, as a member of the mulatto bourgeoisie, was seen not only as a poet whose work exemplified regionalism, but as a member of a class that looked to the colonizer for its inspiration, turning its back on its own history and identity as part of an oppressed and marginalized island population.

The present study addresses the question of Daniel Thaly's poetic legacy, and attempts to take a course out of favor with a majority of critics and scholars of modern Francophone poetry, that of presenting a reassessment of Thaly's place in French and Francophone letters through a retelling of his literary destiny, and to account for his rise and fall from literary and cultural prominence. In this endeavor, I have been

preceded by a Martinican author and editor of note, Auguste Joyau. A contemporary and friend of Thaly, he was prevailed upon by Thaly's family to write the preface to a largely forgotten anthology of Thaly's poetry in 1975, *Poèmes choisis*, in which he outlines some of the issues surrounding the critical reception of Thaly's works. At the time, Joyau's remarks fell on deaf ears, and Thaly's name has continued to languish in disrepute until the present day. Twenty-five years after the death of the poet, this small volume of his verse was published by Casterman press. This was not the grand edition of the 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade' which since 1931 has consecrated the achievements of dozens of great French writers, publishing their complete works: Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, or Saint-John Perse, Thaly's contemporary, to name but a few. Nor was his work published by Gallimard, Grasset or Seuil, the three most prestigious French publishing houses. Thaly's poetry was published outside France by a Belgian press specializing in comic books and children's literature. At the time, Casterman, which disappeared as an independent printing house before the end of the twentieth century, was reaching out to a more mature audience in order to expand its base. The volume itself was prepared not by scholars of Thaly's work, but by his nephew Michel, who identifies himself as being neither a poet nor a writer. He was assisted in this task by his cousin René Legros, a former director of the bank, Crédit Martiniquais. René was responsible for the selection of representative poems, and chose them from seven of the eight volumes of poetry, published between 1900 and 1932, that make up Thaly's corpus. The volume entitled *L'Île et le voyage, petite odyssée d'un poète lointain*, published in 1923, is not represented. These details do not of necessity diminish the worth of the volume, but do reflect the extent to which Thaly's poetry had ceased to elicit lively interest from any quarter other than the close circle of his family and former friends. Today he is thought of, when he is thought of at all, as a deservedly forgotten Caribbean poet of the neo-Parnassian school. What makes the 1975 volume, *Poèmes choisis*, centrally important to the study of Daniel Thaly is that it constitutes the entirety of Thaly's legacy for practical purposes. His works are out of print and are difficult to obtain from sources other than the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The *Poèmes choisis* is of particular scholarly interest because Michel invited Auguste Joyau, a contemporary and friend of Thaly, to write the preface to the volume, a preface which recounts the fate of Thaly's reputation for the reader. Joyau presents a sympathetic but generally impartial depiction of Thaly's fate. He does, however, begin by vigorously condemning the intellectually dishonest practice of diminishing the reputation of an author without having read his work fully, or even at all, and indicates that such is the case for many of Thaly's detractors, a practice that still continues today. It may be assumed that extraordinary circumstances are required to lead to an author being treated as a scapegoat for an entire literary movement, to the point where respected and responsible critics do not even consider wasting their time in reading his

work before debasing his literary currency. A number of articles dealing with the *Négritude*, *Antillanité* and *Créolité* movements engage in a perfunctory and sometimes intemperate dismissal of regionalist poetry, before turning to the aesthetics and ideology of later literary movements, and this calls for an understanding of the social, ideological, and cultural dynamics that brought about indignation and impatience with Daniel Thaly's poetry.

The roller-coaster of the poet's swift rise to the heights of popular adulation and sudden plunge to the depths of literary ignominy, is a tale not only of evolving aesthetic tastes and the transience of fame, but of class struggle, racial emancipation, and the abrupt decline in influence of colonial ideology in the social and intellectual ferment of the 'Entre-deux-guerres'. Thaly's rise from obscurity is generally ascribed to the enthusiastic reception of his third volume of poetry in 1911: *Le Jardin des Tropiques*, published by the Éditions de Beffroi. This regional press and subsequently that of the Paris-based review 'La Phalange' welcomed his neo-Parnassian poetry with exotic overtones, and he found there a welcome from a group of poets inspired by the then dominant literary models. His poetry, cast in the mould of that of Leconte de Lisle and his disciple Hérédia, to whom Thaly is more frequently compared, both because of the similarities between their work, and also their West Indian origins, quickly found favor in Paris as well as in the Caribbean.

One poem in particular had great appeal for both audiences, and was instrumental in making Daniel Thaly a household name. Dedicated to the celebrated tragedian Caroline Eugénie Segond-Weber (1867-1945), who recited it at the Comédie-Française in Paris, 'L'Île lointaine' became a staple in the primary school curriculum in Martinique, and is still remembered by generations of schoolchildren who learned by rote this paean of praise to their island origins well into the 1960s, reciting the opening line: "Je suis née dans une île amoureuse du vent" (Thaly, 1911: 103-105). Although the island in question is, in point of fact, Dominica, the poem lends itself to appropriation by any of the Windward Islands, and particular, the neighboring island of Martinique. As Lennox Honychurch remarks in his website entry on Daniel Thaly in 'A to Z of Dominica Heritage, Thaly's poetry went unremarked in Dominica itself: "because all of his works remain in French and since he studied and worked in Martinique, and we do not care, that French department has claimed him as their own" (Honychurch, forthcoming: Thaly, Daniel).

Appropriated and then discarded by Martinique and metropolitan France, Thaly's poetry underwent a precipitate decline in popularity after 1932, the year in which Thaly's last volume of poetry appeared, *Héliotrope ou Les amants inconnus*, published by a conservative press, Le Divan. The work was judged a failure on two fronts, in both subject matter and style, although it may safely be assumed that there exists a strong relationship between the dismissal of the former's social and political relevance and the perceived quality of the poetic inspiration at work in the volume. In

June of the same year a new French West Indian literary-political review appeared, published in Paris. It was only to be published on one occasion, and was quickly suppressed as too politically radical for its day. Its name, 'Légitime Défense' (the legal term in French for Self-Defense), has come to represent a fundamental change in Caribbean attitudes toward life and letters.

The journal was penned by Martinican students, including Etienne Léro, René Ménénil, and Jules Monnerot fils, and adopted Marxist theory, Freudian analysis, and Surrealist principles in its attempt to revolutionize Caribbean writing, infusing it with issues of class and race. A scathing critique of the mulatto bourgeoisie in Étienne Léro's article: 'Misère d'une poésie' targeted Daniel Thaly among others, accusing him of servile imitation on the one hand: "Une indigestion d'esprit français et d'humanités classiques nous a valu ces bavards et l'eau sédative de leur poésie" (Léro, 1979: 11) and a neglect of the sufferings of the black population on the other:

"Un des pontifes de cette poésie de classe, M. Daniel Thaly, a célébré la mort des Caraïbes (ce qui nous est indifférent, puisque ceux-ci ont été exterminés jusqu'au dernier), mais il a tué la révolte de l'esclave arraché à son sol et à sa famille.

Pauvres sujets, mais non moins pauvres moyens politiques." (Léro, 1979: 10)

The passing remark about the Carib Indians reveals the ruthlessly uncompromising polemics of Léro's argument. Thaly's prominence and in particular the institutionalized success marked by the integration of his most celebrated poem into the primary school curriculum in Martinique offered compelling reason for his selection as a convenient target. In the eyes of the younger generation of student artists, intellectual activists, and future political leaders, the poem represented a saccharine vision of the island incompatible with the harsh realities of oppression that they urgently wished to address, and dislodging the poet from his seat of eminence was the tactic required to dispel the image of the Caribbean island as an earthly paradise: "Où l'air a des senteurs de sucre et de vanille."

By the dawn of World War II, the Negritude movement was well established. The term was coined by Aimé Césaire, in a poem published in *L'étudiant noir*, a Parisian journal he co-founded in 1935, and was artistically embodied in his 1939 work: *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. In 1937 Césaire had married Suzanne Roussi, who would later take up cudgels on his behalf in a Martinican journal she co-founded with him, with Astride Maugée, and with one of the originators of *Légitime Défense*, René Ménénil, whose communist and surrealist sympathies, now more in keeping with the intellectual temper of the times, no longer branded him a dangerous revolutionary. The journal, *Tropiques*, (1941-45) became an outlet for Suzanne Césaire's literary creations and a platform for her political pronouncements. Described by one literary journalist as "at once poetic and jarring, visceral and inspirational" (Westmoreland Bouchard, 2009), Suzanne Césaire's essays unhesitatingly targeted the regionalist

poets. The most searing attacks on their legacy will come in her 1942 article for the journal: 'Misère d'une poésie. John-Antoine Nau,' in which she takes aim at the work of John-Antoine Nau, born in San Francisco with the name Eugène Léon Édouard Torquet, a symbolist poet and a visitor to Martinique, where he spent a year with his wife around 1890 in the course of a peripatetic existence, punctuated by literary creations, primarily in the form of poetry and novels. Suzanne Césaire describes Nau's work in terms of the "doudou", the stereotypical image of the languidly alluring mulatto woman perennially clothed in the traditional garb of the madras, whose femininity was served up as an exotic testimonial to the smiling face of sun-drenched slavery:

"Des pâmoisons, des nuances, du style, des mots, de l'âme, du bleu, des ors, du rose. C'est gentil, C'est léché. De la littérature? Oui. Littérature de hamac. Littérature de sucre et de vanille. Tourisme littéraire. Guide bleu et C.G.T. Poésie, non pas. [...] nous décrétons la mort de la littérature doudou. Et zut à l'hibiscus, à la frangipane, aux bougainvilliers. La poésie martiniquaise sera cannibale ou ne sera pas. " (Césaire, 1942: 50)

Thaly's work does not even gain mention in Suzanne Césaire's caustic assessment of regionalist poetry, yet her appropriation of the title of Léro's article, coupled with her use of the terms "sugar and vanilla" and "hammock" to describe this literature, targets Thaly and his celebrated poem in ways instantly recognizable to her audience:

Je suis né dans une île amoureuse du vent
Où l'air a des senteurs de sucre et de vanille
Et que berce au soleil du Tropicque mouvant
Le flot tiède et bleu de la mer des Antilles

Henceforth, Thaly's poetry will be tagged as doudouist for posterity, and he himself depicted, in a cruel irony, as a white Creole French elitist. Had he been white and thus able to marry the woman he loved, his personal life would have taken a far happier turn. By this time, it was more expedient to label Thaly as white, uninterested in the fate of the Caribbean people, and rooted in the Olympian frame of nineteenth-century metrical convention. While he did remain attached to the classical verse form of the twelve syllable classical Alexandrine, despite having experimented briefly with blank verse, the subject of his poems included not just the death of the last Caribs, a subject rejected by Léro, but also a denunciation of the slave trade through a depiction of victims of that trade, and of the abject living conditions aboard ship. His poems similarly offer poignant descriptions of the aftermath of the Mount Pelée eruption on May 8, 1902, and the carnage in the city of Saint Pierre, where he had attended school, and spent his childhood as an orphan, in a suburb named, by an ill-fated coincidence, 'Le Parnasse'. Thaly writes from a Caribbean perspective, in step with the rhythms of life in the tropics, yet the face of John-Antoine Nau was to become the cannibalistic decal applied to Thaly's visage, assimilating him literally to the image of the "bon

décalque d'homme pâle” in Léro’s by now legendary denunciation of the complicit mulatto poet in *Légitime Défense*. Léro’s damning words were to resonate with the poets of the Negritude movement down the decades. As late as 1973, Léon-Gontran Damas, in an interview with Valentin Mudimbe, was to praise Léro, restating the same sentiment: “Prenez la poésie, c’est grâce à des hommes comme Léro que la poésie de décalcomanie va prendre fin” (Mudimbe, 1973).

Thaly’s popularity had abruptly plummeted after Léro’s attacks in 1932. The effect of his abrupt fall from literary grace apparently had a devastating effect upon him personally, and the politics of personal destruction may well have been a major factor in his nervous breakdown in 1937. He is depicted in later life as a shadow of his former self, compellingly embodied in the mournful presence of the poet Chrysostomé that haunts the pages of Phyllis Shand Allfrey’s tale in her eponymous collection of short stories: *It Falls into Place*. The most telling image is revealed in the story by Lady Chanterel. It is that of a solitary figure who habitually arrived at her house at dinner time, not to eat, but to gaze silently out of the window at the now empty hammock of the narrator’s Aunt Caroline. For the narrator, this is the moment when the scales fall from her eyes and things fall into place, as she recalls the enticingly flirtatious presence of her free-spirited aunt, and the refrain of her demand to the authors who surrounded her that she be put into a story or poem: “At last I understood the long strain of Chrysostomé’s nostalgia for France and his friends, and his dramatic attempts to civilize nature.” (Allfrey, 2004: 125)

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Denied the intimate space of shared affection, Thaly also saw his reputation consumed by the fickle fires of popularity. But a yet worse posthumous fate lay in store for him, as falling out of favor was just the prelude to being publicly paraded as a failed poet. The scene is rehearsed in the fictional work of one of the chief exponents of the Creolité movement, Raphaël Confiant. In his first French-language novel *Le Nègre et l’Amiral*, published by Grasset in 1988, Confiant offers a satirical portrait of André Breton and Aimé Césaire, and takes up cudgels on Thaly’s behalf, claiming that the accusation against him does not hold water: “On reproche à Osman Duquesnay ou à Daniel Thaly d’être de médiocres épigones des symbolistes ou des Parnassiens mais, mon bon ami, nous n’avons fait qu’imiter dans ce pays” (Confiant, 1988: 100). The word ‘médiocre’ gives away Confiant’s perfidious game. In the next breath the speaker, a fictional Martinican, will compare Thaly to Césaire, this time in damning terms. “La seule chose qui différencie Césaire de Thaly, c’est que le premier s’est montré littérairement supérieur au maître blanc, tandis que le second lui a été inférieur.” (Confiant, 1988: 100)

The stinging critique of inferiority is a two-edged sword and its potential for visiting poetic justice on the wielder should not be overlooked. In an article entitled ‘Patrick Chamoiseau and the Limits of the Aesthetics of Resistance’, Stella Vincenot asserts that Patrick Chamoiseau, a collaborator with Confiant and Jean Bernabé on the

manifesto of the Créolité movement, *Éloge de la Créolité*, has undertaken a failed attempt to free the Martinican imagination from French influence, and has succeeded only in achieving the opposite goal: “Ultimately, instead of asserting a national identity and inserting Martinique more fully within the Caribbean Region, the literary strategies of Chamoiseau reinforce ties with France” (Vincenot-Dash, 2009: 73). She further maintains that there exists a striking parallel between his failure and that of French Regionalism in the early twentieth century, in that both achieved a measure of literary diversity without securing the right to political self-determination.

Keeping score is a trivial pursuit at best, and, as Joyau remarked in his preface, there is nothing inherently unusual in the repudiation of literary predecessors in order to herald the dawn of a new age. The human cost is more daunting and difficult to tally, and if we were to accept Vincenot’s argument and conclude that Thaly merely fell victim to a cycle of violence perpetuated by literary innovation, unaccompanied by any measure of progress in the French Antilles, then his story would indeed be a bleak one. But perhaps Allfrey had it right, poetry is not cricket, and at the end of the day, poetry is what remains to be cherished:

“But what did I care. Long after the cricket score was forgotten, Chrysostomé’s beautiful melancholic poems would be read, somewhere in the world, and the mystery of his sorrow would be talked of at sunset with friends. I muttered loud enough for the sportsmen to hear: ‘Never mind whether he was a Frenchman or a Britisher, a coloured man or a white man – he was a great poet, who died unloved, and he will always be one of us’.” (Allfrey, 2004: 126)

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Daniel Thaly’s poetic legacy has long foundered on the shoals of ideologically motivated repudiation, but in the final analysis his poetry will speak for itself, to those who would listen attentively and care deeply enough to differentiate between the impassive veneer of classical form, and a passionate involvement in the life of the emotions, the fortunes of others, and the rhythms of the natural world. Unloved though Daniel Thaly was in his lifetime, his poetic legacy and place in posterity may yet prove as secure as Allfrey predicts it will be.

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RECONCILING DIFFERENCES: MICHAEL ANTHONY'S *GREEN DAYS BY THE RIVER*

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I felt very close to him and fond of him. I knew that if he said the engagement would go well it would go well. Thinking of the way he had treated us with my father's funeral, doing everything, and being so efficient and good, and spending his own money so freely, I felt nearly as close to him as I had felt to my father. (Anthony, 2000: 197)

The quotation above reflects the dilemma that Shelly, the young protagonist in Michael Anthony's third novel *Green Days by the River*, faces as he is forced to confront a world without his biological father. This quote also highlights the growing bond between the boy and the older Indian gentleman Mr. Gidharee, who will become his future father-in-law and moreover, his adopted father. Furthermore, the novel highlights the autobiographical aspect which reveals Michael Anthony's own search for the absent father in his life (Three of his *Buildungsromane* contain fatherless boys). Jamaica Kincaid critic Leigh Gilmore views this revisiting of childhood days as a way of dealing with childhood trauma and refers to the act as "serial autobiography". In addition, according to literary critic Frederic Jameson, writers in the third world always produce novels that are "national allegories in which the growth and self realization of the narrative reproduce those of the nation" (Harney, 1996: 31). Thus, the novel can be read as an allegory for post independence Trinidad, a country struggling to maintain national unity (despite its highly complex ethnic makeup), while trying to define a national identity which is inclusive of all its population. This article seeks to unveil Michael Anthony's call for an inclusion of Indo-Trinidadian cultural elements into the post-colonial/post-independence Trinidadian national identity (up until now the predominantly Afro-Trinidadian 'Creole' Identity), thereby allowing for a more multicultural identity. This is expressed through allegory in the familial relationship between Shelly, a young Afro-Trinidadian boy, Mr. Gidharee, an older Indo-Trinidadian man, and his daughter Rosalie, a dougla (person of mixed Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian descent).

The creole identity, which has relied heavily on Afro-Trinidadian cultural elements (and to a lesser extent on Euro-Trinidadian elements) had been the acceptable identity used to help maintain national unity during the colonial period. Due to the high ethnic

diversity in this society where there is always some sort of struggle for power between the various ethnic groups, the creole identity needed to be expanded for the sake of national unity during the post-independence period to include elements from other constituencies, especially the Indo-Trinidadian group which has been growing rapidly both numerically and in terms of political influence.

Before Anthony, other Trinidadian writers such as Samuel Selvon, had also worked on finding a common ground for ethnic compromise in an effort to help maintain national unity through their literary work. For example, at a time where national unity was required as the country struggled for independence from England, Selvon presented Tiger, the Indo-Trinidadian protagonist in *A Brighter Sun*, who viewed himself as Creole, at a time where creole identity was defined primarily by Afro-Trinidadian cultural features. This has been attempted by other groups in similar circumstances, but perhaps with slightly different motives. For example O. Nigel Bolland states that: “The intellectuals of Sierra Leone attempted to create a sense of Creole identity and unity, and claimed that it had existed for over a century, in order to maintain their hegemony as the country prepared for independence” (Bolland, 2002: 17). In *Green Days by the River*, Michael Anthony an Afro-Trinidadian, revisits his childhood days in order to redefine the term Creole in Trinidad in the post-independence era by including Indo-Trinidadian cultural elements into the mix.

Green Days by the River presents Shelly, an Afro-Trinidadian fifteen-year-old boy who is experiencing the gradual loss of his father at a time when the presence of his father is very important for him. The father has fallen ill and as a consequence this creates a sense of loss in many ways for the boy, who begins to feel the absence of a strong and masculine male role model that he needs to emulate. Shelly makes this evident in his own words: “From the time we came to Pierre Hill, Pa had worked for a week, and then he fell sick. Somehow I wished he was as big and strong as Mr. Gidharee instead of being always ill in bed” (Anthony, 2000: 2). Right from the beginning, it is obvious that Shelly has strong emotional feelings about the weakening health of his father. His father’s disease influences how the boy views his father’s masculinity and the conflicts that his illness creates for the family:

From as far back as I could remember he had been ill-not throughout, but from time to time- and it was as though he was an invalid. And yet sometimes he would recover from the asthma and would be like any other man, and my mother would say he was as strong as a bull. (Anthony, 2000: 6)

The father has also taken an interest in his son and has had a close relationship with him, which makes his demise even more significant. Shelly constantly has intimate conversations with his father about issues related to growing up Afro-Trinidadian. He is aware that his relationship with his father is unique and very different from the relationship other boys have with their fathers:

Sometimes Pa understood me better than I knew. When it came to talking about girls I was very distant from my mother. Perhaps this was the usual sort of thing, for boys. But I knew that the friendship between my father and myself wasn't common. Because I'd heard boys talk on these things. Some boys were terrified to let their fathers know they had girls. But my father used to tell me about girls from the time I was about eleven. (Anthony, 2000: 101-102)

Such a father-son relationship was not part of Anthony's experience, since his father passed away before such bonding could materialize, so the account in the novel cannot be said to be entirely autobiographical. But it demonstrates how painful the experience of the absence of a father must have been for him. Shelly begins to display an observable transfer of affection from his biological father to his adopted father that cements into a father-son relationship. As the novel moves along he ponders: "I was beginning to feel warm and friendly towards him. At first he was just a stranger who had asked me to come to Cedar Grove with him, but now he was a little more than that." (Anthony, 2000: 20)

Leigh Gilmore's statement referring to Kincaid's strategy for resolving childhood trauma by revisiting her childhood years, can be applied to Anthony's process in *Green Days by the River* by substituting the place names and the gender of the pronouns and the parent in question: "... because she (he) has left a body there which requires further attention. Whether it is her (his) own, her mother's (his father's), Antigua (Trinidad), the body of childhood..." (Gilmore, 2001: 97). Not only does Anthony need to return to his own body of childhood and deal with the absence of a father, he must also return to his homeland Trinidad, which is essential in helping shape his identity (or identities) in order to help him understand it within the context of this multi-cultural society. Here is where allegory is relevant, the child loses his Afro-Trinidadian father and the Indo-Trinidadian father takes over. Trinidad does not only have an African and an European past but must also integrate a South Asian heritage into the mix..

To confront identity is always a complex matter for any human being, since identity is always changing and has multiple dimensions, such as gender, nationality or religion, etc. In a country such as Trinidad where many groups with strong cultural ties come together to share in forging a national identity, this process becomes even more complex.

In the novel, at the allegorical level, the Trinidadian nation incorporates an important aspect into its formulation of the national identity in the acceptance of its multi-cultural background. This is accomplished through the main character, Shelly, who achieves this by the end of the novel, in his union with Rosalie, his acceptance of her father as a surrogate father and moreover, in his embracing their culture as his own by engaging in an Indian wedding ceremony as can be witnessed here:

‘Mr. Gid.’
 ‘Yes?’
 ‘Something I have to tell you.’
 ‘Aha.’ He looked at me.’
 ‘You know that thing - this ceremony business – I feeling a little scared.’
 ‘Well, you don’t look a little scared – you look scared like hell.’ We both burst out laughing.
 I said: ‘Serious now, I mean I don’t know about all this kind of thing. I mean the things to do, and so on. I don’t know if I’ll do it right.’
 ‘You don’t have to worry about that. We’ll show you everything. A Hindu engagement ain’t nothing, boy.’
 ‘Hope so.’
 I felt very close to him and fond of him. I knew that he said the engagement would go well, it would go well. (Anthony, 2000: 197)

Samuel Selvon had encouraged Indians in his first novel, *A Brighter Sun*, to accept Afro-Trinidadians as friends by living among them, sharing with them and by conforming to the largely Afro-Trinidadian creole identity if they wanted to take part in creating the new Trinidadian nation. Now, Michael Anthony, while dealing with painful issues about his absent father, encourages Afro-Trinidadians to incorporate Indo-Trinidadian culture into their Creole identity. He also moves beyond Selvon’s focus on friendship to focus on a more intimate and sustained level of sharing, intermarriage between Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians..

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One of the major characters in the novel, Rosalie is a “dougla”, which is the product of the union between an Afro- and an Indo-Trinidadian. Shelly has two female interests in the novel Joan, an Afro-Trinidadian and Rosalie the dougla girl. He marries the dougla girl which is significant because of what this ethnic group represents for Trinidad. Percy C. Hintzen states: “As products of Afro-Indian unions, ‘Douglas’ have become integral to the construction of Creole identity in Guyana and Trinidad....‘Douglarization,’ therefore, is the process of transformation of Asian Indians into racial Creoles through miscegenation” (Hintzen, 2002: 99). The dougla is thus representative of the new Trinidadian nation and identity. Recent studies have shown that the fastest growing groups in Trinidad in the past decades are these mixed groups. For example, Andre-Vincent Henry and Kenneth A. Tracey suggest in their article entitled, “Salad, Calaloo or Pelau: Understanding Multi-ethnicity in Trinidad and Tobago” that:

The third largest racially classified population group was the “Mixed” at 18.4%. It is to be noted that this mixed group, the product of miscegenation, is the fastest growing population group, having increased from 16.2% of the population in 1980 to its present position in 1990. (Henry & Tracey, 1997: 402)

From the census table given in the article one can see that from 1980 to 1990 the Indian population decreased 1%, the African population decreased 2.9% while the

mixed groups increased 12%. Fred Constant sees the growth of the dougla population as something positive because it is an indication that Africans and Indians are engaging in contact. He states “The existence, however, of a growing “dougla” population indicated that there are increasing physical contacts between the Indo and Afro communities” (394). Henry and Tracy conclude that: “there is a distinct, emerging Trinidad and Tobago culture that consists of two discreet units, namely, the Indo-Creole and the Afro-Creole” (409).

Michael Anthony’s novel depicts the process of negotiation between these two major groups in Trinidad immediately after independence. Before Independence, Samuel Selvon viewed this negotiation process as one leading to the assimilation of other ethnic groups into the predominant Afro-Trinidadian creole identity. . Assimilationism would lose favor by the 1980s as multiculturalism has gradually become the preferred model for nation building. In his article entitled “Citizen, Ethnicity and Nation-Building: The Case of Trinidad and Guyana” Fred Constant contends that:

In this context, it has become more and more common in intellectual circles and in the programs of some political parties to evoke alternatives to the classical form of national integration (i.e. assimilation). Today assimilation no longer appears to be the best policy of national integration in plural societies. Multiculturalism is more and more frequently held to be much better option for plural societies. (Constant, 1993: 389)

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As early as the 1960s, Michael Anthony can be seen to be advocating this shift from assimilation to multiculturalism in his novel *Green Days by the River*. Anthony’s stance is more inclusive of non-Afro-Trinidadian ethnic groups in the formulation of a Trinidadian national identity than many of his contemporaries. He also depicts interracial marriages and the dougla product of such unions in a positive light. It would therefore not be an exaggeration to conclude that Michael Anthony was ahead of his times in supporting multiculturalism and predicting douglarization.

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RHYTHMIC IMPORTATION, LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION AND INTEGRATION IN ARUBAN MUSIC: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PLACE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CALYPSO AND SOCA IN ARUBAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

This paper describes the state of the Calypso and Soca musical art forms on the Dutch Caribbean Island of Aruba. A deeper look is taken at the integration, place and development of Calypso and Soca in the Aruban cultural synthesis *anno* 2010. Calypso and Soca, originally as Afro-Trinidadian musical genres, were introduced to Aruba by British Caribbean migrant laborers in the 1940's and 50's who were employed by the American owned Lago (Exxon) Oil Refinery. After a steady transformation and adaptation process, these musical genres, especially the Soca known to Arubans as Road March, have become extremely popular within the general Aruban community. However, as soon as the celebration phase concludes prior to the Lenten season, the enthusiasm for the music diminishes significantly and it struggles for airplay and artistic and cultural recognition. The Calypso and Soca that are performed in Aruba are predisposed to other musical influences because of Aruba's geographic setting and its dynamics of cultural fusion. Many rhythmic and linguistic elements pertaining to Aruba, Latin America, the Netherlands, the French Caribbean and the United States can be found in Aruban compositions; much to the delight of some and to the dismay of others.

Calypso Childhood Memories

The rays of the morning sun are already beginning to show in the eastern tip of the island now dubbed as the sunrise city, but in those days we called it chocolate city. Many lyrical professors, to the sounds of "*tiki-tungkutung, tiki-tungkutung*" have graced the stage, tackling issues ranging from the inability of the government to manage the budget to social issues such as teenage pregnancy and gossip *talk* like who is sleeping with whom in the community. After many hours of waiting in the morning dew, the MC announces the name of the reigning calypso king; "Mighty Talent". The weary crowd instantly transforms into jubilee. Comparable to Mohammed Ali in his

heyday, a dark, curly kitted fellow as arrogant as can be, in San Nicolas Creole English says: “*A win already, ohyu go home*” without even uttering one lyric. The crowd even goes wilder but then slowly calms down to the point you could hear a pin drop in a crowd of more than 8000. What happens next, is 5 minutes of love, lyrical precision, improvisation, humor, political commentary and rhythmic expression the island hears and feels only once a year.

After reading the above fragment of a 10 year old Aruban boy’s remembrance of his first Calypso and Road March contest at 6 am in the Lago Sport Park, one might suppose that Calypso and Soca music would be Aruba’s greatest national past time equivalent to Baseball and Apple Pie in America, Merengue and Bachata in the Dominican Republic and Steelpan in Trinidad and Tobago. But this is not exactly the state of affairs. Aruba’s mere 50 year affiliation with the Calypso and Soca art forms has in fact been relatively successful but not without its share of controversy. This relationship can best be portrayed as multifaceted and even paradoxical at times (Razak-Cole, 1998: 33).

It has been often alleged that the Dutch Caribbean, in particular Aruba, does not produce a vast amount of literature by its “own” people (Rutgers, 2000). In Western academic discourse about the Caribbean, the usual Derek Walcotts and the VS Naipauls are portrayed as the lone guardians of the literary arts (Benítez-Rojo, 1993). On the musical scene, the Jamaican-American Calypsonian and actor Harry Belafonte’s name constantly surfaces by means of his American styled Calypsos such as “Day-Ooh” and “Mathilda”. At times, the Mighty Sparrow, Lord Kitchener and the Mighty Chalkdust may perhaps get an honorable mention (Horne & Dunn, 2006). Let there be no doubt that these gentleman have served the Caribbean arts tremendously and deserve immense respect, nonetheless let us not forget that for every one of these illustrious persons there are thousands of men and women who toil in obscurity under the *Kwihi* and the mango tree, on the fishing boat, at the market place and in the rum shop, composing Shakespearian style poetry and Montesquieuan type philosophy while challenging the establishment and permitting us to laugh at the same time (Guadeloupe, 2009). The Red Plastic Bags, the Ajamus, the King Bobos, the Pretenders, the Mighty Talents, the Black Diamonds, the Rasta Lindas, the Lady K’s, the Singing J’s and the Lord Boxoes have been producing oral literature through the Calypso and Soca art forms for decades but little is known about them outside of their country and region.

We wish not to delve too profoundly into the origin of Calypso and Soca, nor write about the musicological aspects of these art forms à la University of the West Indies Professor Gordon Rohlehr. Nor do we desire to go into detail about the legends of the

art form during the “Rum and Coca Cola” wonder years à la Keith Warner¹. Instead, we strive to shed some light on the expansion of these musical genres outside of Trinidad, specifically in Aruba. As Aruban insiders we feel that much of the Trinidadian and British Caribbean know little about the development of Calypso and Soca music in the Dutch Caribbean. Perhaps it is because of the small island big island bias that has plagued Caribbean unity ever since the days of colonialism, *Status Aparte*, the Federation, and Carifta or maybe it is because of the language barrier we supposedly have with the rest of the Caribbean (Lamming, 1991; Allahar, 2005). In Aruba interesting developments have been taking place on the musical and cultural scene during the last 50 years. Aruba’s multilingualism and geographical location near Latin America while still in the Caribbean makes for an interesting brand of Calypso and Soca (Razak-Cole, 1998: 35). It is extremely important that the reader understands the space and environment into which these musical genres have been thrust in Aruba, and under what conditions they are being performed there.

Subculture to mainstream

The demographic constellation of Aruba is similar to that of Trinidad, Cuba, Puerto Rico, or Brazil in the sense that there isn’t a predominant homogenous ethnic group living on the island. Aruban multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity and musical fusion are products of vast migratory processes, especially during the 20th century that cannot easily be described. It could be considered a Diaspora community that was extracted from another Diaspora community with capitalism as the common motivator (Guadeloupe, 2009). Aruba did not have an immense plantation economy involving African slaves. It should be mentioned, though, that the Afro Caribbean Aruban populations that are presently residing on the island are mostly descendants of migrant laborers from the British Caribbean. The Afro Caribbean immigrants originated from numerous islands in the Caribbean such as Trinidad, St Vincent, St Kitts, Montserrat, Nevis, British Virgin Islands, St Martin, St Lucia, Dominica, Granada and Barbados amongst others (Alofs & Merckies, 2001).

Although most of the inhabitants of Aruba are in some way, shape or form ethnically and racially diverse, these English-speaking immigrants have constituted a distinctive community. They have resided in the constituency of San Nicolas, predominantly in the makeshift town known as “The Village”. As a consequence of interlinguistic communication, a distinct dialect of Afro Caribbean English lexifier Creole emerged by way of fusion out of a *lingua franca* known to Arubans as Village English or San Nicolas English (Holm, 2000). The American-owned Lago Oil Refinery held English-speaking tradesman in high regard to a certain extent thus giving the English language a superior social status on the island. San Nicolas urbanized rather distinctively and

¹ Referring to concepts presented in a lecture entitled The Implications of Authorship in Calypso. It was presented in the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago in 2005 by Dr Keith Q. Warner.

for decades marched to the beat of its own drum until the era of automation which eventually resulted in the closing of the refinery in 1985 (Alofs & Merckies, 2001).

Culture, religion, language, food and music are the binding elements of any Diaspora community and represent the bond with their childhood and their place of origin whether it is actual or imagined. When a foreign musical culture transcends locality to become what is considered to be “native culture”, it is often met with resistance. Musical change is difficult for people to comprehend because it puts traditional and conservative values, which they express through their music, in an unfamiliar space where it suddenly has to compete for survival. This is often countered with nationalistic cries expressed in public warnings about the demise of authentic Aruban culture. It wasn't until the final years of the past century that Calypso was formally acknowledged by government officials as Aruban culture.

In the initial years Calypso and Soca musical genres were principally listened to by San Nicolas residents and a small number of immigrant communities on the island who could relate to the music (Razak-Cole, 1998). Third generation Arubans of English Caribbean extraction frequently recall stories of their childhood filled with music. Here is such a story:

“When I was small, and it was my father's birthday, we had friends over. They would sit in the yard eating and drinking old time Caribbean food such as Johnny Cake and Saltfish and drinks such as, Ginger Beer, Mauby and Sorrel and they danced all night long to the music of Sparrow's “ Jean and Dinah” and also Lord Kitchener's “Suga Bum Bum”. Even my grandparents were on the dance floor together with the young children as myself. So we knew how to dance and “wine we waste” as they say. We learned to 'wuk up' and other dance moves by mode of trial and error.”

The above memory fragment indicates the considerable degree to which Calypso and Soca rhythms and environment have molded each generation. Milieu plays a profound role in the process of cultural synergetic progression, regardless of skin shade. The Calypso and Soca music that was previously listened to by a minority in Aruba, acquired increased reverence in the mid 1980's. The musical integration process can in part be ascribed to 2nd and 3rd generation Aruban calypsonians of British Caribbean descent who spoke and sang songs in English as well as in Papiamentu. This meant that Papiamentu speakers could also partake in the musical tradition. The Calypso and Road March contest has grown rapidly over the past 50 years so that at present it has become the most popular musical event on the island (Razak-Cole, 1998).

Calypso and Soca Linguistics

The Aruban Central Bureau for Statistics reported in 2002 that approximately 69% of the Aruban population reports that Papiamentu is the language that they speak at home. Approximately 13% of the population considers Spanish to be their home

language, while 8.2% of the population speaks English at home and 6.2% speaks Dutch. The remaining residents speak other languages such as Haitian Creole, Hindi and Togalog (CBS, 2002: 90).

The 2008 Unesco Heritage Report on Aruba indicated a considerable decline in the use of the English language at home even though the island is heavily impacted by popular culture and tourism from the US. The Unesco report also indicated that a high percentage of the inhabitants command all four of the major languages but consider Papiamentu to be the main language of communication. Even though the island is a constituent of the Dutch Kingdom, Dutch culture is only practiced intermittently during cultural celebrations, such as the festivities surrounding the Queen's birthday or the *Sinterklaas* celebrations (Alofs, 2008).

Socio-linguists have discovered that Arubans use different languages at different moments depending on the situation. This conscious situational language alternation skill is known as "code switching". Code switching is not uncommon in Caribbean bilingual or multilingual societies (Holm, 2000). Arubans code switch frequently depending on circumstance and intent of the conversation. Linguists have also noted that because Arubans converse recurrently in diverse languages, the absolute command of all languages spoken is arguable. When Arubans travel to America, the English Caribbean, Latin America or the Netherlands they quickly comprehend that the Aruban routinely substitutes items from other languages when he or she cannot locate definite terms in a specified idiom (Croes, 1995).

Such observations have led us to hypothesize that the pluri-lingual fluidity that typifies the Aruban language situation has become one of the distinguishing features of Calypso and Soca music in Aruba. Pioneering Aruban Calypsonians such as Paul Conner, Young Quick Silver, Ray Anthony Thomas, Rasta Linda, Lord Cobashi, Mighty Reds and Mighty Cliffy predominantly sang songs in San Nicolas English up until the mid 1980's. Lord Boxoe was the first Calypsonian of that generation to start singing in Papiamentu; *Basha Awa Bai* is one such song that became a generational transcending hit. The first Calypsonians and Soca singers catered typically to a San Nicolas English minority. As interest grew along with the crowds, Calypsonians increased their usage of the Papiamentu, Spanish and Dutch in their presentations (Razak-Cole, 1998). Claudius Phillips also known as the Mighty Talent could be considered the principal trendsetter for code switching in Calypso and Soca music. With productions like; *Dedye den Carnaval*, *Lenga Afo* and *Party (Simon Says)* he has become a megastar and celebrity in the Aruban music business similar to Machel Montano and Destra Garcia in Trinidad. He is debatably the first big calypso artist to crossover to the mainstream, paving the way for various Black Calypsonians from the San Nicolas constituency. This approach to Calypso and Soca has been emulated by quite a few artists and has for the most part become the norm for the manner in which Calypso and Soca are performed in Aruba.

We have concluded that there are several reasons why Calypsonians code switch:

1. They gain favor with the predominantly Papiamentu speaking crowd by speaking a language that more Arubans can understand. It is a strategy of inclusion, through which the crowd becomes a stockholder in the cultural product.
2. They illustrate their linguistic versatility and virtuosity to the panel of judges. A fluent command of dissimilar languages is often highly regarded.
3. More fans equal greater commercial success. The market for their music is greatly expanded in Aruba and in the Dutch Caribbean.
4. When they are lost for words in San Nicolas English, they utilize vocabulary in other languages as a “bail out.”

Mighty Talent in his 1992 Calypso *Equal Rights* sings²:

“If you ever realize, people look you in your eyes and just to criticize, if is anything they hear on the road somewhere, they bad talk you and that’s not fair. They judging you, by the friends you got if you using dope or not, and so what if your friend *polso*, that don’t mean that you is a *mariko*.”

At this juncture he is Code Switching on his punch lines. *Polso* factually means broken wrist, but it is commonly used in Aruba as reference to a homosexual in a derogatory manner. The word *mariko* also means gay in Papiamentu.

Mighty Talent sang the following lyrics in his song “*If I was Prime Minister*”.³
Rapport Zaandam ik gooi hem der uit, for accusing me that my buraco ta fluit!

Rapport Zaandam is Dutch for a research report that was written by a former police officer by the name of Zaandam. *Ik gooi hem der uit*, means in Dutch that he is getting rid of this document. He switches to English and then goes back to Papiamentu where he says *buraco ta fluit* which roughly means “my hole is whistling” in Papiamentu but its *double entendre* meaning is, “a homosexual taking it from behind.”

Not all Calypsonians and supporters approve of this approach. Calypsonian Antoni Gario also known as Black Diamond is a fierce opponent of the unwarranted use of diverse languages. In a 2010 panel discussion at the University of Aruba he asserted that a certain linguistic authenticity has to remain at the nucleus of the art form. He alleged that “the body of a car can be changed in many different ways but the car cannot drive if it has square wheels. It can then not be considered a car anymore.” In his song *Kaiso Killers*⁴ he expresses his opposition to the excessive use of other languages. He sings:

² Claudius & Ore present 10 years of Glory with “Mighty Talent” CD

³ Claudius & Ore present 10 years of Glory with “Mighty Talent” CD

⁴ The 2003 winning Calypso “ If home self we discriminated”

“When they can’t rhyme they use Papiamentu, such a old trick in di book di judges don’t know, it’s a frantic situation for di mind, now we leave thief di drum and di baseline.”

His straightforward approach has gotten him much critical acclaim but less commercial success than *The Mighty Talent*. In addition, he frequently claims that other Aruban folkloric musical genres such as the *Tumba* and the *Dande* cannot be performed in San Nicolas English. It would be disrespectful to these musical genres if that were to be the case. Only in Calypso and Soca he says do “we” accept this type of disrespect.

San Nicolas English is sometimes complicated to understand for non native speakers. It is spoken at a very high pace and the grammatical structure greatly differs from the standard dialect of English. Language comprehension by their supporters was one of the major obstacles for Calypsonians such as Lord Kitchener and Lord Melody. Even though in the 1950’s they garnered much success in England and America, a great many of their supporters could not comprehend them completely. They mostly understood fragments of the song and this of course limited their enjoyment of it. Caribbean American entertainer Harry Belafonte was born in America and commanded the accent fluently so therefore had greater success. Many Caribbean critics felt that he was not authentic enough and distorted or even stole the culture for his personal benefit. He was a grandmaster at “shifting identity” or “shape shifting”⁵ because he acted Caribbean amongst West Indian folk and like an American in front of American audiences (Horne & Dunn, 2006).

Soca becomes Roadmarch

Every country that celebrates carnival has its distinct music that it dances to. In Brazil they dance to the sounds of Samba and in Curaçao it is the *Tumba*. In Aruba it was also the *Tumba* before the 1980s until Arubans began shifting to Soca as their Road March (Razak-Cole, 1998). In this process Arubans of making it their own, of course, Aruban Soca evolved into a distinct, multilingual variety of Soca which integrates various styles and rhythms.

Temple University Professor Louis Gordon⁶ claims that the use of certain vocabulary in music can be related to the manner in which we learn language in the Caribbean. He asserts that because there is not a reading tradition in the “Western” sense, much of what is learnt is transferred via oral tradition. University at Buffalo Anthropologist Victoria Razak pointed out in her lecture on musical traditions at the University of Aruba in 2010, that nursery rhymes and other folk songs often get misinterpreted in the transition process.

⁵ The 2003 winning Calypso “ If home self we discriminated”

⁶ In a discussion on language acquisition in 2009, Aruba

Arubans use brand names instead of generic names to refer to certain products or appliances because the brand name is the form which they have most often heard in their daily lives. For example, the term *pampers* is used to indicate all types of diapers and *frigider* is used to name all refrigerators. *Keds* really means sneakers and *cornflakes* signifies all types of cereal. We could assume that this may also be the reason why Soca music is called Road March in Aruba. When an Aruban says Soca, they normally are referring to a slower and more harmonious form of Road March with a different type of lyrical content, such as that found in songs by Le Groove, 2 Sweet, Mighty Sparrow and Krossfya. Soca is a more traditional sound in the Aruban perspective. In the Aruban context, 'Real' Aruban Road March is music produced by artists like Mighty Campo or Claudius Phillips. Matters of linguistics, ascribed meanings and communicative context are at the heart of comprehending the Calypso and Soca musical genres in Aruba. Musical meaning and understanding develops in a close relationship with society, history, understanding and experience. In a sense, that is what is most splendid and fascinating about language; each society gives its own interpretation to their words and their music. Of course there are some 'musical purists' who may disagree with this approach for fear of the demise of their culture.

Musical Intelligence

Arubans adapt quite effortlessly to other cultures and know a great deal about foreign ways of thinking as well. Where this concerns knowledge of diverse musical genres, Arubans score very high. During one of my lectures on Regionalism and Regional Integration in the Caribbean at the University of Aruba, I performed a musical test with the students. The students were asked to listen to 10 Caribbean songs, all of different genres and in a variety of languages, including English, Spanish, French Creole and English Creole. They were required to state the name of the artist, the genre and their place of origin. Not surprisingly, they knew almost all of the songs, ranging from the French Creole rhythms of Kassav and Carimi, to Marc Anthony's New Yorican Salsa, to the *Ritmo Combina*⁷ of Curacao, to Venezuelan derived *Gaita* music. Even though French Creole is not understood by the majority on the island, the rhythms, tones, melodies and sensual bodily expressions are what Arubans identify with and can relate to.

Aruban Soca Subgenres

We have identified the following Soca subgenres existing in Aruba.

Aruban Road March: Aruban Road March is sung by bands like Oreo, Search and Robert y Su Solo Banda Show. It is a combination of classic Soca with the occasional use of Papiamentu, and is supported by a strong trumpet section, especially at the

⁷ Curacaoan music called rhythmic combination. Popular amongst youngsters and sung in Papiamentu.

climactic stage of songs such as *Break Away*. The performers often ask their audience to perform certain hand and body movements in commando style.

Groovy Soca: Groovy Soca is a highly melodious type of Soca that is played by bands like 2 Sweet, Climax and Le Groove. It is based on traditional Lord Kitchener type Soca but more modern in its presentation. It is also supported by enhanced computerized sounds with a heavy Rhythm and Blues type bass. The way the music is danced to, is by way of the *chip* and *wine* forward motion. Movements below the waste are held in high regard.

Uptempo Groovy Soca: Uptempo Groovy Soca is played by bands like Youth X-Treme. It is a groovy melodious Soca *à la* Le Groove, but it is danced in an accelerated tempo. This subgenre is more geared towards the younger generation. The *chipping* and *wining* motion is done at a faster pace.

Jamback Soca: Jamback Soca was imported from the Northeastern Caribbean islands like St Croix and St Martin. It is a highly computerized sound with an extremely accelerated tempo. The songs are meant mostly for jumping and waving or doing certain dances. NBO, Impak Band and BMW are the bands that play this type of music. Many young people also like this type of Soca.

Socahouse: In 2009 Dushi Band of Aruba introduced the island to a new style of Soca called Socahouse. As the name indicates it fuses electronic House rhythms la DJ Tiesto with Jamback Soca. The *chipping* and *wining* motion is not needed for this dance. In order to dance this style of Soca you must make quick repetitive hand gestures and stiff body movements while jumping continuously. It can be considered to be Rave type music.

Ragasoca, Powersoca, Chutneysoca and Buyon, although played, are not that popular amongst the Aruban music enthusiasts.

The Future of Calypso and Soca in Aruba

The Calypso and Soca musical genres have been transformed according to the environment in which they have developed. We could surely observe in what manner the language, the geographic location and ethnic constellation have influenced the manner in which Aruban Calypso and Soca are presented.

The strength of the Aruban Calypso and Soca can be found in their uniqueness of style and language. The general populations of very few countries in the western hemisphere are able to speak four different languages. Aruban Calypso and Soca artists can effortlessly code switch at will and have the ability to entertain diverse audiences simultaneously.

Versatility in this case can be a weakness as well, depending how one looks at it. Audiences that are not familiar with music that is sung in more than a single language, perhaps may find it difficult to comprehend. Also, because of the highly localized

topics, the punch lines in the Calypsos and the commands in the Socas may not be understood by non-Arubans. It is already complicated for a Standard English speaker to understand San Nicolas English, and adding several languages and instruments additionally to the mix, can cause immense bewilderment. The major Calypso and Soca market can be found in the British Caribbean as well as the British West Indian Diaspora communities around the world. Many who live in Canada, the US and England would find it difficult to buy this type of pluri-lingual music from Aruba that challenges their ability to comprehend the lyrics.

Despite the high level of cognitive and linguistic intelligence of Aruban Calypso and Soca artists, their music remains relatively isolated with little crossover appeal. These extremely rich and complex musical genres never attain much success outside of the Netherlands and Dutch Caribbean shores. This will remain so, unless the music is marketed in a different manner. Either they take the path of Curaçaoan Jazz artist Izaline Calister, who has achieved international success in her native Papiamentu, or they start composing songs for both the local and international market.

The following poem was written by Gregory Richardson expressing the way he interprets the Calypso art form.

I am Calypso

I criticize the government, the fights in parliament,
corruption and I speak about accountability

I am Calypso

I defend the humble, the neglected,
the disenfranchised and the discriminated

I am Calypso

Me talk bout mi neighba,
di shame and di scandal in the family

I am Calypso

I talk about private parts in an obvious
and yet clandestine manner

I am Calypso

Me make yu laugh till yuh belly buss

I am Calypso

I speak about love, culture, unity
and national identity

I am Calypso

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ASSESSING THE LINKS BETWEEN IDENTITY AND SOCA MUSIC IN THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO MUSIC INDUSTRY

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Introduction

This paper seeks to investigate the nature and scope of identity as it pertains to soca music in Trinidad and Tobago's music industry. Identity will be explained in terms of its general instrumentalities and manifestations initially and then more specifically in terms of the links between ethnic identity and the many genres of soca music and their attendant following by particular ethnic populations. In Trinidad and Tobago, there are mainly three types of soca music, namely, 'regular' soca, chutney soca and ragga soca. These three will be explored in some detail as we attempt to assess which groups in Trinbagonian society identify with these types of music. Trinidad and Tobago is a multi-ethnic society and therefore different genres of music cater and appeal to various constituencies within the population.

This is a preliminary piece of work which is qualitative in the main, employing phenomenology as its principal method of social investigation. The interviewees are soca, chutney soca and ragga soca artistes in Trinidad and Tobago as well as a smaller contingent of patrons of the arts who through snowball sampling have been revealed to be individuals who are part of the soca music industry in a formal or an informal way. This paper represents an initial attempt to present a sociological analysis of popular cultural trends in soca music instead of relying on the more conventional cultural studies perspective usually reserved for the study of music.

The concern with who owns cultural forms has come to define many of the key debates in modern sociology and politics in this global age of physical displacement, diasporic identity, cultural uprooting and the search for home and 'what is mine'. We are concerned here about both of the fundamental dimensions of identity and belonging: 1) the psychological or the individual dimension and 2) the sociological or group dimension.

In the Caribbean, an understanding of the role of belonging can be said to come from a central place within oneself with which identification with a nation, a race or an ethnicity resonates. How do I define myself? How do I see the group to which I feel the closest affiliation? Am I Puerto Rican, American, Trinbagonian? Am I black, Hispanic or East Indian? What expresses best my deepest ethnic affiliation? Is it music, religion or sport? If it is music, for the purposes of this paper, which sort of music do I identify with? I am part of a cultural space and there is music there. Which type(s) of music am I drawn to and why? The central focus of this paper is to shed some preliminary light on links between ethnic identity and preferences for certain musical genres over others.

Styles of domination may have differed between one or the other imperial powers, but from 1492 onwards, race and later ethnicity have consistently played a central role throughout the Caribbean in defining power relations and in separating the 'in' group and that which is accepted from the 'out' group and that which is not. However, in today's world of globalisation and neo-colonialism, the political departure of the old colonisers has been accompanied by the economic arrival of the neo-colonisers and as a result some of the old questions of identity and belonging and acceptance have been transformed to a certain extent.

Understanding nation, identity, and ethnicity

This paper follows on the work of Allahar & Jackson (2005), Geertz (1975), Chirot (1977) and Giddens (1984) which when summarised speak to an understanding of the concept of the nation as having two possible manifestations: 1) an established **nation**, complete with economic, political, legal, military, economic and civic autonomy in a clearly demarcated territory or 2) a space where sentiment, a yearning or movement for independence and autonomy on the part of peoples who, although they share a "a corporate sentiment of oneness" and "a consciousness of kind", do not yet inhabit a clearly defined territorial space. To bring this concept home, we need look no farther than post colonial formations in regions such as the Caribbean, where multi-ethnic states like Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana house nations in search of homes, to understand the role of the collective conscious agreement by a group (such as Afro-Trinidadians or Indo-Guyanese) to adhere to nuances and peculiarities which give them a sense of belonging to and ownership over particular aspects of their social environment, for example, food, language varieties, and cultural forms such as music.

The notion of an ethnic community or an *ethnie*, is bound to identity because it refers to a named human population possessing a myth of common descent, common historical memories elements of shared culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity (Smith, 1998). Ethnic groups or ethnicities are

bound not only by an inclusive sense of one-ness but also by an exclusive sense of ‘we-ness’ (vs. ‘Other-ness’). Ethnic nationalism then, is to be found in situations where a discrete ethnic group lays claim to a national identity and patrimony and seeks to separate itself from other groups either ethnic or non-ethnic.

Trinidad and Tobago – ethnic conundrum

Trinidad and Tobago are the southernmost islands of the Caribbean archipelago and constitute a twin island economy. It is a multi-ethnic space whose population includes significant numbers of African-descended, South Asian-descended and “mixed” peoples. The Central Statistical Office’s, Population and Household Census (2000) puts the numbers of African descended peoples at 39.6 percent, Indians or South Asian descended peoples at 40.3 percent and members of the ‘mixed’ category at 18.5 percent (Central Statistical Office, 2000). Since the onset of colonialism, there has been no ethnic group that could claim a clear majority in Trinidad and Tobago. This reality has made for a nation-building project which has been fraught with complexity and conflict. The emergence of a significant new diaspora in recent decades due to outward migration and the influx of new peoples to the island, have only further complicated the questions of race, power, and representation already so central to national and political discourse.

This ethnic conundrum in Trinidad and Tobago was best described by Cyril L.R. James, noted Trinidadian historian and West Indian intellectual in the following manner:

“Trinidad and Tobago has always been part of the international ...albeit, *global* frame of reference because of the history of its population and the ways in which the island has been peopled. This history of the receipt of transplanted peoples from neighbouring islands in the Caribbean and mainland territories within the region prevented the development of ideologies of a specific bounded culture since cultural norms and values were inextricably linked to many other nationalisms the world over.” (1993: 11)

Soca music in Trinidad and Tobago

In Trinidad and Tobago, soca music, said to be the indigenous music of the twin-island Republic, has been diversified into music genres which are representative of the ethnic groups in the island. The soca music genres under review in this paper are: ‘regular’ soca, chutney soca and ragga soca.

‘**Regular**’ soca music is the ‘soul calypso’ offspring of calypso proper and the dominant carnival music of the past two decades or so, and is widely acknowledged to be a melding of calypso and East Indian forms. Most agree that the birth of soca took place during the oil boom period and can be traced to the calypsonian Lord Shorty.

Lord Shorty hailed from South Trinidad which has traditionally been known to have a larger East Indian descended than African descended population. His African ancestry together with his East Indian points of reference are said to be the central ingredients of his innovative musical style that added Indian rhythms to a sped-up mix of calypso music (Regis, 1999). Major artistes associated with this kind of music are Machel Montano (especially his early work), Shurwayne Winchester and Destra Garcia.

Since the Indian cultural revival of the 1990s, regular soca has been joined by the much more self-consciously Indian genre of ‘**chutney soca**’ which exploded onto the Carnival Scene in 1996. The development of chutney soca came hot on the heels of the emergence of pitchakaree in 1990, which in turn was associated with the important springtime phagwa festival. Chutney soca has been termed a sort of Indian calypso. The advent of chutney soca came not long after the establishment of Radio Masala, the first all-Indian national radio station in 1994. Prior to this all Indian music traditionally sung in Hindi only was often relegated to the occasional time slot for ‘ethnic music’ on non-Indian radio stations. Initially, chutney soca was sung in Hindi only. However, as its popularity grew and it became more and more of a participatory type of music, English phrases were mixed in and today it is a hybrid of both languages forms in one musical genre. Popular artistes who perform within this genre are Triveni, Rikki Jai, Hunter and Dil E Nadan.

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Ragga soca music is yet another aspect of the soca music scene which seeks to represent yet another ethnic group within the Trinidad and Tobago landscape. Strictly speaking, ragga soca mixes Jamaican type chanting rhythms with the rhythms of regular soca music to form a hybrid sound. The spectacular rise in the popularity of ragga soca began approximately ten years ago with the advent of dub-calypso sampling and was maintained by collaborative work by artistes such as Machel Montano recording together with Jamaican artistes like Shaggy, Red Rat and Beenie Man. These early mixed music recordings have given way today to further hybrids where artistes like Bunji Garlin and other members of his Asylum Band are the main proponents as along with Benjai, Treason and Scarface.

Music and ethnic identity. Whose affiliation?

The popular myths surrounding the birth of calypso, soca and steelband music in the streets Port-of-Spain all more or less trace the origin of these musical genres to “purely” Afro-Trinidadian roots. This reinforces the dominant regional discourses which tend towards an African focus in mapping the emergence of music as culture in Trinidad and Tobago (Stuempfle, 1995).

The globalisation of music and its attendant sell-ability in local, regional and international markets has generated much acrimonious debate. Traditionally, regular soca music's ability to cross-over and reach the diaspora beyond the shores of Trinidad and Tobago has been limited and not as powerful as Jamaican popular genres like dub and dancehall. However, crossover mixes such as chutney soca and ragga soca have had the effect of extending the reach of soca music. Currently traditional soca artistes like Machel Montano, Destra Garcia and Shurwayne Winchester, while remaining regular soca artistes, have opted to include songs on their albums which integrate ragga soca rhythms, chutney elements and even Latin elements like reggaeton, which has opened new markets to their music.

Aside from significant economic and artistic considerations, we can observe that what we term 'Trinidadian music' is becoming more and more creolised in form. As fluid expressions from the street, Trinidadian musical traditions increasingly reflect the constant and ever-increasing mixing of populations of differing ethnic background and identity. The commercial viability of integrated forms, alongside the actual segregation of people at home and in the diaspora helps to create an interesting paradox. For even as the respective musics of African descended and East Indian descended Trinidadians become more and more indistinguishable, the dichotomous ethnic militancy of life means that people of both African and East Indian descent base their vociferous claims to authentic and singular cultural identities on these same musical forms of ever lessening differentiation.

This process of musical hybridisation is reflective a greater Caribbean reality, that of creolisation.

Some Preliminary Findings

At this early stage, it is only possible to provide the following brief but interesting excerpts from the interviews that we conducted to evoke the lived experience of being in the soca, chutney soca and ragga soca music industries. The data listed below shows how artistes and their patrons from each of the three different soca genres under study in this paper characterize the significance of their respective genre in relation to their sense of belonging, ownership, and identity:

'Regular' Soca

- Yes I love soca music. It is my life! It has given me to the opportunity to be a catalyst for change and to put my country's music on the map.
- Part of my ancestry
- Calypso taken to whole new level
- We ting.
- Everybody like it. It is essentially Trinidadian

- Black, White, Indian, Chinese like it. Music is infectious and reached everybody
- Money-making industry. Millions to be made internationally.

Chutney Soca

- Indian music
- Indian soca vibes. We-ting finally
- Indian and Soca mix. I feel most at home when I listen to this as opposed to hardcore Hindi music. I do not speak Hindi even though I am a Hindu and so this music reflects my two ancestries
- Gives me a sense of identity
- I can relate to it. Not too Trini, not too Indian.
- Overseas markets appreciating it more and more

Ragga Soca

- Love de Jamaican vibes
- Nice mix of music. Dancehall elements and Soca mix. Sweetttt.
- Music for younger people. Too fast for me.
- Too much chanting. I prefer singing in Soca. I love to sing along with the tunes.
- We ting. Trini people ting
- Have far to go internationally. Real cross-over music

Conclusion

It appears that two contradictory processes are taking place at the same. While we Trinidadians are holding firm to our increasingly cross-ethnic identities and music, we are simultaneously using these same musical genres to fortify our separate Afro-Trinidadian versus Indo-Trinidadian ethnic identities. This is happening within a context where globalisation, circular migration, instantaneous communication, and ever-increasing interaction and social equity among contending ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago have all facilitated the development of new and different cross-influenced creolised forms of our cultures. Yet the central paradox around current processes of creolisation is that throughout the Trinidad home and diaspora spaces the respective cultural representations of both Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian-ness have become increasingly visible and distinct.

Within the music genre of soca, the concepts of nation, ethnicity and identity have come to take on a global significance while at the same time adhering to the mystique of the local. In short, Caribbean multi-ethnic societies such as that found in Trinidad

and Tobago, must be seen as dynamic expressions of both centrifugal, pluralistic, and culturally heterogeneous tendencies as well as centripetal, hybridizing, and homogenizing tendencies. In this way, Trinidadian society, both at home and in the diaspora has mobilized its soca music genres to accomplish two apparently opposing objectives: (1) to be inclusive when it is culturally and economically viable and expedient to do so and (2) to be exclusive when assaults on what is traditionally 'ours' or 'we ting' is either under threat or needs to be re-asserted vis-à-vis a homogenizing dominant national or international globalized culture.

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THE RESTORATION OF *BAMBOULA*: A ST. CROIX EXPERIENCE

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Introduction

This article explores aspects of the multi-faceted cultural heritage and folklore within the *Bamboula* tradition as a form of verbal, literary and eclectic communication amongst the people of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands in concert with neighboring Caribbean island nations. An overview of the historic and official banning of *Bamboula* during colonialism's reign in St. Croix and the Virgin Islands as well as critical analysis, folkloric traditions, literature (transcribed oral narratives) and illustrated depictions will be shared explicating *Bamboula* as a form of non-verbal gesture, language and communication amongst enslaved and indentured workers of Afrakan¹ ancestry. Finally, the unique interwoven fabric of *Bamboula* as sacred and secular communicative interaction will be presented in comparison with similar linguistic, artistic and literary forms.

As an international and Caribbean crossroad of commerce, culture, history, folkloric tradition, communicative artistic expression and survival, the U.S. Virgin Island of St. Croix, historically known as 'Ay Ay', has a



unique flavor that has influenced a multiplicity of visual, musical, artistic and spiritual expressions that have endured centuries of misrepresentation and neglect by researchers. This article represents *Bamboula* as a traditional folkloric practice of Afrakan ancestry that has experienced tremendous trans-cultural shifting, modification, revision and adaptation with the cultural heritage and traditional arts practiced in St. Croix. Through *Bamboula* and other genres, St. Croix's culture is being restored, revived and resurrected through the eclectic expressions of a multiplicity of positive



¹ For the purposes of the Per Ankh Institute presentation upon which this article is based, the term "Afraka" and all derivatives thereof (i.e. Afrakan, Afrakans) are spelled as "Afraka" throughout this publication. Asante Sana!

ancestral traditions linking language, dance, traditional healing, spiritual cultural ceremonies and related indigenous knowledges within the context of Afrakan, Indigenous and American history.

Bamboula as presented, ritualized and performed is reflective of the international and Caribbean crossroads of communication, cultural heritage, healing sciences, traditional



folklore and linguistic shifts that form the basis of Crucian culture. *Bamboula* as a sacred art and traditional form of communication amongst Afrakan and Indigenous peoples has remained misunderstood for centuries. It has been associated with dance and musical rhythms used by free and enslaved Afrakans in St. Croix and abroad for communications for uprisings, initiations, celebrations

and secret society gatherings. In the Virgin Islands (VI) and elsewhere, the term used to describe a sacred meeting place for spiritual activities among freedom fighters has been referred to as a *Bamboula*. *Bamboula* is more commonly regarded as a culturally engaging dance step style with vibrant percussion accompaniment that interweaves culture, heritage, language, and sacred spiritual and artistic rites. As a traditional West Afrakan rooted cultural experience that incited the enslaved to become ‘riotous’ or ‘disobedient’, legal ordinances banned *Bamboula* in most European colonies for its ‘sexual innuendo’, and the ‘ungodly’ or ‘vulgar’ movements suggested by *Bamboula* Queens, their male partners and other participants in these dance-drum-song ritual ceremonies.

Bamboula is firmly based in a unique communicative art and science that has influenced a multiplicity of visual, musical, and spiritual expressions that have endured centuries of misrepresentation, negation, and banning from the cultural history, linguistic practices and rich traditions of St. Croix and the VI. *Bamboula* is an interactive folkloric tradition that was historically used to restore strength, order and respect to the interconnection and powerful validity of our Afrakan ancestry, rituals, ceremonies and living sciences in the face of the ravages of colonial enslavement in 18th to 20th century Danish West Indies society. “She pu’ she han’ pon’ she kimbo’ foh we gon do wha’ we gon’ do foh’ we freedom!” (Williams & Christopher, 2003)

In St. Croix, *Bamboula* gatherings commence with the men blowing the conch shells and playing ‘Ka’ drums with ‘Katta’ sticks to call the community to gather in the form of a circle with men dancing and drumming and women dancing and singing as onlookers engage and enhance the spiritual revival-type atmosphere created by the exchange of call and response rhythms and traditional folkloric interactions. This initiates the gathering of material and spiritual resources from within the community. Essentially, the *Bamboula* is a dance of sacred communication that on its’ higher side is designed to assist the participants

to participate in the more positive and uplifting spiritual and social development of the community. Historical and archival records document *Bamboula* dance and musical rhythms as being utilized for ceremonial openings of uprisings, secret meetings, protests and other actions aimed at improving the lives of enslaved Afrakans throughout the Diaspora.

***Bamboula*: Spiritual and Traditional Ceremonial Roots**

Also known as Bambou, Tamboula, Bomba, Boule, Las Damas etc., *Bamboula* has been



integrated into Crucian cultural experiences as ritual and liturgical dances for the performance of birthing, purification, initiation, healing and other ceremonial rites by people realigning with their indigenous, ancestral and/or Afrakan ancestry, heritage and traditions. The interconnectedness and ancestral traditional roots of Masquerade and Mokojumbie with the Caiso and Quelbe dance and music traditions has remained consistent despite the banishment of this art form from Crucian public life by the Danish colonialists, supported by the Christian clergy and strengthened by the force of time.

The impact of community engagement, support and acceptance of misinformation related to the historic heritage and traditional cultural value of *Bamboula* has been reflected in the literary and culturally sensitive publications and presentations of many Virgin Islanders. Eulalie C. Rivera, a Crucian cultural bearer and centenarian, expressed that “I remember standing by the fence looking out when one of the ‘devil men’ came to the fence. I tried to run away but my foot caught on a picket and he lashed at me with his whip. Before Sister Nanca’s time, we were not allowed to look at the masquerade through the picket fence. Not long after she came, she had it torn down and replaced with a wall” (Rivera, 1987). The socio-spiritual significance of masquerading, mokojumbie dancing and *Bamboula* traditions was largely lost to the general community in St. Croix mainly because of a tendency among people of Afrakan descent on the island to gain some measure of acceptance from the colonizers and planter class at different times during the history of St. Croix. This has translated into a contemporary neglect and disrespect of *Bamboula*.

The lack of archival documentation on the *Bamboula* is due in no small part to public rejection of cultural and folkloric traditions that have been regarded as excessively Afrakan in origin and expression. The fact that, especially in St. Croix and other Caribbean islands, religious, educational and most other social institutions have systematically disregarded, disrespected and degraded most contributions to civilization that have come through Afraka and its’ ascendants, is one of the main causes for the neglect, ignorance and marginalization of research and documentation on *Bamboula* and related Afrakan-

rooted folkloric arts traditions and sciences. “It is unfortunate that Afraka (and Caribbean Diasporic Afraka: CDK) must seek foreign approval for anything that its own sons and daughters attempt. Afraka (and her ascendants in CDK) suffers today because she does not want to acknowledge, her own cultural ‘cloth’ (i.e. system, languages, experiential knowledge, and concepts) as *n’kingu mianzingila* meaning ‘principles of life’.” (Fu-Kiau, 1991).

***Bamboula*: Sacred Dance and Ethnomusicology**

Bamboula as a traditional, folkloric and cultural heritage performing art is the sacred precursor to and an Afrakan centered foundation of a ritualistic ‘self-determination’ that permeates Crucian and Virgin Islands’ masquerading and mokojumbie dance step styles,



cultural performances and ethnomusicology. The importance of *Bamboula* as a sacred dance form grounded within ancestral and ancient traditions of communication and rhythmic movement with purpose, are juxtaposed against the old notions that are commonly expressed from the perspectives of non-Afrakan enslavers

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and literary colonizers fixated on presenting this dance style as sexually explicit and demonic in nature, practice and context. Within its use and expression in St. Croix, *Bamboula* reveals the ethno-spiritual connection that dance has had historically throughout humanity’s journey into the 21st century.

In ethnocentric, cosmological and spiritual contexts, sacred dances like the *Bamboula* are used as cultural education forms of preserving the history, traditions and folklore of a community or society. Sacred dance represents initiation gestures and rites in concert with visual movement reflective of the interconnectedness of our body, mind, spirit and consciousness. *Bamboula* in its rudimentary and pre-Caribbean traditional practices has been used as a ritualistic dance for the performance of rites by Fulas, Bambaras, Yoloofs, Mandingos and many other Afrakan and Indigenous communities and ethnic families, including a with a special relationship to the contemporary yet ancestral dance and ethnomusicology of Central Afrakan regions like Congo/Zaire. Dance is defined within the perspectives and cultured vision of the beholder and seeker. *Bamboula*, like most traditional Afrakan dance and methods of communication, continues to be linked with the negative meanings ascribed to Voodoo, Obeah and witchcraft and thus it is shunned or banned within many contemporary communities. The term ‘vudu’ or ‘voodoun’ when viewed in a positive manner simply means ‘spirit’ throughout west and central Afrakan linguistic and socio-cultural communities. Due to a multiplicity of institutional

misinterpretations and overtly Eurocentric paradigms customarily used for intellectual research and analysis, contemporary art and dance interpretation theories are limited in their ability to appropriately study Afrakan-centered artistic expressions like the *Bamboula* progressively, accurately, non-judgmentally and respectfully.

Bamboula represents more than a dance step style for performance and public entertainment. It represents a socio-cultural, socio-political and psycho-spiritual engagement that fuses body, mind, spirit and consciousness with sacred traditions, inspirational vision and freedom from physical, mental and spiritual bondage over a multiplicity of dimensions. The dawn of the 21st century has finally witnessed an increased level of interest by researchers and the development of more eclectic perspectives on *Bamboula*.

“A remarkable feature in the history of writing on dance in the circum-Caribbean is how authors focus on eroticism obsessively, while reducing it to a single sensational image: frenzied black dancers revolving their loins and bumping together. This image appears to have formed fairly early...The historical reasons for such reductionism seems straightforward enough. White colonials created an image of black identity that embodied both their own forbidden desires and their fears.

...*Bamboula* was also reported in Trinidad in the 1700s...and in St. Lucia in 1844...in Guadeloupe *Bamboula* is considered the predecessor of today's gwoka. *Bamboula* existed within living memory in St. Croix, and on St. Thomas is either recently extinct or recently reconstructed...The name is also found in Haiti for a dance performed "on the occasion of building a new house"; in the Samaná region of the Dominican Republic (bambulá), where it is considered to be derived from Haiti... and as one variation (bambulé) of the sicá style of Puerto Rican bomba...The issue of religion is important because those who have attempted to counter the stereotype of hyper-sexuality in black dance have frequently insisted on the art's spiritual, ritualistic quality...ways in which dance served white hegemony as a key trope of black identity, a way in which blackness could be delimited and to a certain extent controlled, although an important aspect of the trope is that black eroticism cannot be entirely controlled...Slaves from the Congo-Angola region or... of Benin brought to the New World dances of successive couples within circles, sometimes using pelvic isolation and contact, as well as challenge/display solo dancing. Both of these types were accompanied by transverse drumming with sticks on the side, or by upright barrel drums played with the hands. The slaves adapted these practices into early transculturated forms known variously as kalenda, *Bamboula*, djouba and chica.” (Gerstin, 2004)

The *gombay* drum is an Indigenous Caribbean derivative of the traditional west Afrakan *djembe* drum that is used in *Bamboula* and other folkloric dances, music, song and ritual. Significant circles of the keepers of ancient and sacred dance movements, ethnocentric music and ancestral Afrakan rhythms, in Kongo-Zaire, Cameroon, Senegal, Martinique, Guinea-Conakry, Burkina Faso, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, St. Thomas, St. Croix and other regions of the world are revisiting *Bamboula* as a hidden, sacred and secular dance and music tradition that has had a significant role in shaping the folklore, cultural heritage and fine arts expressions of Afrakan, American and Caribbean people.

***Bamboula*: Forbidden and Disenfranchised through Colonialization and Cultural Restrictions**

From the 17th to 20th centuries, laws were in effect banning *Bamboula* or any drumming outside of military trap drumming in St. Croix and the Virgin Islands. This prohibition was



common throughout the Caribbean during the colonial period. For example, the Danish Royal Council passed a law in 1733, which was proclaimed and inhumanely implemented by Danish West Indies' Governor Phillip Gardelin. The 'Gardelin Code of 1733' consisted of "seminal codes...almost half of the proclamation's nineteen clauses dealt explicitly with the subject of *marronage*, and expressed quantitatively the qualitative nature of the white

community's major concern...all dances, feasts, and plays, are forbidden unless permission be obtained from the master or overseer...All dancing, merrymaking or funeral rites, which involved the use of 'Negro instruments,' were expressly forbidden on pain of corporal punishment since they had been the occasion of 'serious disturbances' in the past..." (Hall, 1992) Corporal punishments for an enslaved Afrakan participating in *Bamboula* or related "Negro" activity included torture with hot pinchers; removal of ears, arms, legs or hands; 150 lashes; or public execution.

As *Bamboula* was a group dynamic tool for coded communication, socio-religious introspection, and a sacred gathering space for enslaved people, indentured servants, freedom fighters, maroons and others connected to revolution, insurrection, and riots, it was systematically and institutionally subjected to frequent bans under threat of severe punishment, torture and death by the government of the former Danish West Indies. Aimé Césaire explains

"the fundamental thesis, biased and unacceptable, that there has never been a great tropical civilization...and that if the tropical countries are not under the biological curse of the racists, there at least hangs over them, with the same consequences, a no less effective geographical curse...From the historians or novelists of civilization...their false

objectivity, their chauvinism their sly racism, their depraved passion for refusing to acknowledge any merit in the non-white races, especially the black-skinned races, their obsession with monopolizing all glory for their own race...from the psychologists, sociologists et.al., their views on ‘primitivism’, their rigged investigations, their self-serving generalizations, their tendentious speculations, their insistence on the marginal, ‘separate’ character of the non-whites and –although each of these gentlemen, in order to impugn on higher authority the weakness of primitive thought, claims that his own is based on the firmest rationalism—their barbaric repudiation...we must study how colonialization works to de-civilize the colonizer, to brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred and moral relativism...at the end of all these treaties that have been violated, all these lies that have been propagated...at the end of all the racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been instilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds towards savagery.” (Cesaire, 1972: 2-3)

Bamboula as a sacred and ceremonial tradition served as a precursor of the St. Croix *Tea Meeting* as a method of communication, sharing of village news, rites of passage celebrations of birth, funerary rites, marriages, christenings, plans for escape and insurrection, etc. The negative impacts of legal policies, colonial laws, racist educational programs and religious dogma grounded in ignorance and institutionalized discourses created in the 17th century to justify racialized slavery have persisted into the present. J. Antonio Jarvis in *Folk Dancing in the Virgin Islands* explains that: “Drum dancing was forbidden in St. Thomas and St. Croix from the earliest times, and the Negroes were compelled to hide when they wanted to engage in either ritualistic or free dancing.” (Jarvis: 1938)

Despite the official apologies for the demonization of Afrakan culture during the colonial period issued by many of their more progressive leadership bodies, in practice, most contemporary western religious institutions continue to propagate the belief construct that condemns “free dancing” like the *Bamboula* as “ungodly” in spite of the passages within biblical scripture praising those who engage in “worship” or liturgical dance with the Creator for their liberation and freedom from bondage and oppression. This ‘tradition’ of rejecting dances like *Bamboula* continues in the 21st century especially among those who consider themselves to be ‘Christians’, with only the more ‘acceptable’ dance styles like quadrille or Afrakanized ballroom-type couple dancing being considered spiritually and socially appropriate for public presentation in the Caribbean. It is therefore imperative that a rehabilitative and restorative process take place to preserve the positive, regal and ancestral benefits of *Bamboula* as a socio-political and socio-cultural art form deserving of dignity and respect within Crucian cultural life and educational experience.

Bamboula as expressed by Afrakans in St. Croix and throughout the Americas, has been consistently misunderstood, degraded and aligned with paganism in an institutionally racist context.

“It was a frightful triumph of body over mind, even in those early days when the slave was still a genuine pagan; but as his moral education gave him some hint of its enormity, and it became a forbidden fruit monopolized by those of reprobate will, it grew everywhere more and more gross. No wonder the people stopped it in Congo Square. Only the music deserved to survive, and does survive - coin snatched out of the mire...It is odd that such fantastical comicality of words should have been mated to such fierce and frantic dancing, but so it was...The *Bamboula* still roars and rattles, twangs, contorts, and tumbles in terrible earnest, while we stand and talk...The rhythm stretches out heathenish and ragged. The quick contagion is caught by a few in the crowd, who take it up with spirited smiting of the bare sole upon the ground, and of open hands upon the things...and in a moment others have joined in refrain, male voices in rolling, bellowing resonance, female responding in high, piercing unison. Partners are stepping into the ring.” (Cable, 1886: 33)

In St. Croix, *Bamboula* gatherings served as meeting places to distribute news throughout the community - often times some “gossip tun’ trut’ does mek de pe’ple dem run’way mi son!” (Christopher, 2005) Even traditional Crucian songs like *Clear de’ Road* have continued to be linked to lyrical folkloric accounts of plans for insurrection and ‘freedom runs’ shared during the *Bamboula* gatherings which influenced the format, rhythm and components within the traditional community *Tea Meetings* that preceded the near-riotous uprisings that led to VI Emancipation on July 3rd, 1848. This was an historic time when the enslaved Afrakans of St. Croix and the Virgin Islands, predominantly populated with people from all over the Caribbean of Indigenous and Afrakan ancestry, demanded their freedom and the abolishment of institutionalized slavery throughout the Danish West Indies.

Closing

While in the 18th and 19th centuries *Bamboula* was more prevalently practiced in St. Croix, in the 20th century it was celebrated with more frequency in St. Thomas. In the 21st century, however, there has been a new resurgence of respect, acceptance and effective proactive education of the importance of *Bamboula* to the cultural heritage of St. Croix, the Virgin Islands and the entire Caribbean region, and as a result *Bamboula* has been revisited, restored and revived in St. Croix. This excerpt from *The Dance of Souls* represents a contemporary poem that expresses insights into the sacred ancestral intentions of *Bamboula* that seek to elevate the entire community through its embrace of this Afrakan Indigenous Caribbean tradition.

“*Bamboula* reminds me as I reflect...
I know and embrace the dance of the soul
Of hearing our ancestral voices
Wailing for our dancing and liberated souls
To breed life and truth with immunity,
Beyond the physical and mental punishments and impunity,
As we plea
For our survival
For our protection
Of our children, elders and earth community.
I feel your presence like nature
Gyrating and stimulating bodies
As dynamic stellar-bound
Split leaps and prances,
I hear the *Bamboula*, merengue, bomba,
Kalenda and samba rhythms
Coming from afar
From within the womb of our rainforests
That creatively and sacredly womanifest
As quick footed movements
To avoid the sting of acacia...
With vibrant dances...” (Kahina, 2004)

The history, development and use of *Bamboula* has remained hidden hence is open to many interpretations-both positive and negative. It is the hope of the writer that this article will help to promote more research, more frequent performance engagements and further exploration to ensure that the valuable history, socio-cultural experiences and ancestral heritage associated with this sacred art form are preserved, conserved, resurrected and restored for present and future generations as an integral component of Crucian and Virgin Islands culture. *Bamboula* serves as mode of communication that can serve to strengthen ties within the St. Croix and Virgin Islands community. As Eulalie Rivera contends: “...in our cultural heritage, traditions stretching back nearly two centuries, and in our spirit of mutual helpfulness, we were exceedingly rich. ‘Community’ was more than a word. It was a way of life...Much of that has been lost, but it may be that if enough of us care, a little of it may be preserved for the future.” (Rivera, 1987)

Traditional folkloric songs, dances and music like *Roll Isabella Roll*-linked to *Bamboula* Queens of St. Thomas, *Queen Mary*-linked to the Fireburn Labor Revolt of October 1878 on St. Croix and *Clear de Road*-linked to the events of 1848 in St. Croix that led to VI Emancipation, along with other ethno-musicological expressions related to the *Bamboula* tradition are being restored, revived and reinstated in all sectors of our community with the help of our ancestors and elders who have ‘cleared the road’ as well as for the benefit of our present and future generations.

St. Croix and the Virgin Islands celebrate Quelbe music as the national music; Caiso as the principal song tradition; Quadrille as the principal dance tradition; Mokojumbie dance as a “folk” dance tradition; even Masquerade dance is part of Crucian and VI festival and carnival traditions along with a kallaloo of other colloquial traditions. *Bamboula* serves as a conduit for the thoughts, actions, speech and sacred intentions of a community to be expressed implicitly and explicitly. As shared through Mali Griot Mamadou Kouyate and quoted in *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* by D.T. Niane, “We are vessels of speech, we are repositories which harbor secrets many centuries old...without us the names of kings would vanish from oblivion, we are the memory of mankind: by the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations...I teach the kings of their ancestors so that the lives of the ancients might serve them as an example, for the world is old but the future springs from the past” (Niane, 1965). It is time for Crucians and other indigenous Afrakan culture bearers of the Caribbean to embrace and integrate *Bamboula* as a legitimate artistic, literary, cultural heritage tradition particularly in St. Croix and the VI as it is being reinstated within select neighboring Caribbean isle communities like the Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Martinique and beyond. The Restoration of *Bamboula* is being made a reality by the Joseph Gomez Macislin *Bamboula* Dancers since 1981 in St. Thomas under the direction of Mary Ann Christopher and Isbourne Fredericks and by Per Ankh Neteru Ankhsamble since 1987 in St. Croix under the direction of ChenziRa Davis Kahina and NebKaRa Christopher, who continue to perform, strengthen, institute, teach and preserve these cultural tradition practices. Both ensembles have intergenerational and ancestral links to *Bamboula* queens, drummers, dancers and folkloric VI, Caribbean and Afrakan cultural tradition bearers. The re-initiation into *Bamboula* as a viable art form and sacred cultural heritage expression amongst people of St. Croix and the Virgin Islands, the Caribbean and Afraka along with all of humanity is happening in an ever more ancestrally inner-attaining, liberating, interactive, institutional, positive, traditional, educational and artistic way.

Afterword

This literary contribution restores the ancient principle of Maat - truth, justice, order, reciprocity, balance and sacred harmony by the author’s extension of respect that is due to native and ancestral Virgin Islanders that have contributed to the preservation of *Bamboula* as a respectable, viable, positive and sacred folkloric cultural tradition of St. Croix and the Virgin Islands: Richard Frett, Miss Clara, Miss “Tini” Frett, Jean Essanason, Leona Brady Watson, Mary Ann Christopher, Wendy V. Coram, ND, Dimitri “Pikey” Copemann and Carl “KaRa” Christopher to name several and the author honors the very real but unstated presence of many more on this list who have remained anonymous by life, death, choice or other circumstances.

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PURPOSE BEFORE MONEY: PLANNING LANGUAGE FESTIVALS IN THE CARIBBEAN

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Much of the rest of the world considers the Caribbean to be a developing (some still use the term 'Third World') tourist destination. This designation might not have had such a heavy impact if the Caribbean had invested more energy in firmly defining what it is to the rest of the world. Regrettably because of the insecurity in matters of culture and identity inherited by the region, the Caribbean is still in the process defining and affirming what it is.

With regard to the manifestation and celebration of culture, two dynamics constantly interact when planning festivals in the region: the Caribbean as a region pleading for tourist dollars and the Caribbean defining and celebrating its identity. The former dynamic connotes a region which must comply with the needs of the tourist; whether those needs are real or perceived. The latter is often ignored as unimportant. Where there is still significant development needed in health care, education and agriculture, expending funds for 'play' and community celebrations seems wasteful to some.

The irony is that a major element of tourism has always been and continues to be heritage travel. People travel to various regions just to experience what is different and exotic to them. So that money spent by the Caribbean to develop and preserve its culture for its inhabitants also has the further benefit of preserving its viability as a tourist destination. The Caribbean continues to have an edge in tourist markets because the Caribbean has made a culture of exquisitely creating something from nothing and the resulting language, architecture and lifestyle captures the imagination (Beckles & Shepherd, 2004: 9). This paper examines the interplay between tourism and the planning of festivals in the Caribbean for the purpose of affirming Caribbean identity. It proposes that Hymes' ethnography can be usefully employed in festival planning in the region, depending on the particular objectives of each festival. The essay particularly focuses on the *Kwéyòl* festival of Dominica, which is one of several festivals that take place during the month of October to celebrate the creole heritage of the Caribbean. The festival is one of the unique offerings of the Caribbean because it

is an authentic non-tourist driven celebration and because it is the only festival in the Caribbean which was created explicitly to celebrate the existence of a language variety.

Rex Nettleford, in *Inward Stretch, Outward Reach*, observes that the Caribbean is a modern day example of Biblical Mesopotamia;

“Speaking of tongues, the Caribbean... seems a Tower of Babel. It is just so, being the crossroads of languages which are the languages of former colonizers and conquerors providing *linguae francae* for the thirty or more millions of souls who now congregate in that crossroads and are seeking to give common expression to the history and existential reality which we share.” (Nettleford, 1995: 2)

Two truths are highlighted by Nettleford. Firstly, the Caribbean, because of its history, has been the destination for several very different cultures and ethnic groupings. Being a crossroads provides a rich environment for sociolinguistic inquiry. Secondly, the Caribbean continues to seek means and opportunities to showcase its history and reality and to have them respected and validated. This search for means to express and display the history and reality of the Caribbean also adds to the list of topics that sociolinguists can theorize about. There are several festivals across the crossroads of the Caribbean which have been developed just for the purpose of showcasing Caribbean history and culture. Some may wonder how the development of such festivals could provide material for sociolinguistic investigation. The collaboration between the various disciplines of academia in the Caribbean is scarce almost to the point of being non-existent. However, academic theories are only relevant as far as they can be applied to practical situations. This paper therefore offers a sociolinguistic precept from which to analyze a Caribbean problem.

Not every festival that takes place in the Caribbean is suitable for sociolinguistic investigation. Several of the yearly carnivals across the region, because of their focus and objectives do not lend themselves to sociolinguistic inquiry. However, others such the World Creole Festival (WCF) (of which the World Creole Music Festival or WCMF is the featured presentation) and the Crop Over festival contain elements which can be investigated using sociolinguistic theory¹. In the case of the World Creole Music Festival a sociolinguistic theory as a framework for planning the festival is fitting as the event is actually a part of a larger event which includes the celebration of the French lexifier creole language of Dominica, *Kwéyòl*. The sociolinguistic issue which arises when we begin to consider the World Creole Festival is the way that language is treated within the organization of the festival. Often, as Heller points out,

¹ In this essay, I examine the case of the WCF.

when countries begin to market their culture, authenticity and market forces do not cohabit well (Heller, 2003: 475). Preference is given to pleasing consumers and generating financial benefit at the expense of aspects of culture which are perceived to be less marketable. In the Caribbean case, the integration of authentic expression and activity for financial gain translates into activities designed to attract tourists. ‘Tourists’ are usually perceived as of European descent, and that notion encourages Caribbean people to change and refine elements of Caribbean culture before they are placed on the market.

The World Creole Music Festival in its current state is an example of the detrimental shift from cultural celebration to money generation. In order to understand this shift, one has to consider the geographic position of Dominica, the genesis of the Festival and its current structure. Dominica sits between the two French dependencies of Martinique and Guadeloupe. At points in its own colonial history, Dominica was ruled by the French. Its location as well as the colonial rule of the French has left a significant element of French influence on the Dominican cultural landscape.² This influence is seen in many areas of Dominican culture including architecture, dance and social norms. There has also been African influence in Dominican society resulting in the emergence of what has come to be known as a creole culture.

A significant part of that culture is *Kwéyòl*, which has been preserved not only by the location of Dominica between its two French and French lexifier Creole speaking neighbours, but also by orchestrated attempts to conserve the language. The efforts to revive *Kwéyòl* in Dominica began in the 1970s with a group called *Comité pou Etyoud Kwéyòl*, chaired by Felix Henderson. This development is understandable in the context of an independent nation seeking to define and establish its marks identity and sovereignty. These efforts to preserve the language developed in what is sometimes referred to as the pre-independence era in the Caribbean. The sentiment in the Caribbean and the world around that period supported movements such as *Mouvman Kwéyòl* and *Comité pou Etyoud Kwéyòl*. The Caribbean was emerging as a set of newly independent countries looking for ways to assert their unique identity and nationalistic boundaries. One of the initiatives of *Comité pou Etyoud Kwéyòl* was the celebration of one day in October as Creole Day. Creole Day has been celebrated in Dominica from the 1970s onward, with communities and schools hosting dramatic presentations, dances, singing songs and reciting poems all in the native *Kwéyòl* tongue. The group also collected words for the creation of a dictionary (now known as the Fontaine dictionary) and co-ordinated various other community-based activities which have allowed Dominicans to interact with and celebrate their culture.

² There are several books on the History of Dominica including Baker, 1994.

At the same time that Dominica was exploring and re-affirming its language and other cultural forms, a similar movement had started in St. Lucia, a neighbouring Caribbean territory with *Kwéyòl* as a part of its French-influenced history as well. In 1982³, there was a Linguistics conference organized in St. Lucia which brought the work being done on Creole development in Dominica, St. Lucia and other places in the world into focus. Mr. Henderson, however, was not pleased with some of the academic representations that he heard there concerning *Kwéyòl* and he was therefore invited to another conference in Lafayette, Louisiana the following year. That conference was significant as it was where Mr. Henderson tabled and successfully passed a motion which saw Creole Day, as it was conceptualized and started in Dominica, move to become a World event where all places with a creole culture celebrated one day in the last week of October as a festival devoted to their language and culture.

After the Louisiana conference the expansion of creole celebrations as an organized event continued in St. Lucia. In the 1980s, the decision was made to expand the grouping to all countries where *Kwéyòl* is spoken across the Caribbean. *Mouvman Kwéyòl* expanded to become a worldwide grouping under the name *Bandsil Kwéyòl* to include places such as New Orleans and La Réunion. Two of the major tasks of the grouping were to develop an orthography for *Kwéyòl* and to encourage community and festival activities for the development and preservation of *Kwéyòl* and creole culture⁴. One result of the type of cultural agitation done by *Bandsil Kwéyòl* in Dominica is the World Creole Festival. This festival showcases the island of Dominica and the cultures of the Dominican people (indigenous and others), their languages, food, music, etc. The World Creole Music Festival is one of the calendar events within the WCF; a direct result of the work of the *Mouvman Kwéyòl* and the *Bandsil Kwéyòl* groupings.

The foregoing paragraphs are important in showing that the type of movement which generated what finally came to be known as World Creole Music Festival are rooted in language development efforts. Initially, the WCF provided more than 'the best in creole music from across the globe' but also a stage for the cuisine of Dominica; traditional dance and cultural presentations by Dominican community groups as well as activities focused on *Kwéyòl*, including drama, poetry and other language performances. However, as the musical aspect of the festival has flourished because of its money-generating ability, other parts of the festival have not grown proportionally. The language aspect of the festival has been an element that has suffered. This provides an example from the Caribbean which mirrors Heller's observations concerning the case of French in Canada, that:

³ Information provided in an interview with Felix Henderson. More verification will have to be done in order to substantiate dates.

⁴ Information provided in a panel Discussion at the Folk Research Centre of St. Lucia, March 3, 2006.

“...we are seeing authenticity also becoming commodified (as opposed to being used as a marker for political struggle), sometimes in the form of cultural products (music, crafts, dance, for example), and often with no link to language.” (Heller, 2003: 474)

In 1997, when the government of Dominica was looking for an activity to add to the tourist calendar of the country, they chose to refine and develop some of the activities which *Comité pou Etyoud Kwéyòl* had initiated. 1997 can therefore be seen as the year that the creole music culture of Dominica became commodified. Some see the development of WCMF as the birth of an event in itself. However, the work which was done by the nationalist *Comité pou Etyoud Kwéyòl* was integral in providing the foundation for the WCMF, by removing the feelings of ambiguity and negativity inherited from the colonial system that cause many Caribbean people to ignore elements of their creole cultures and languages. Dominican music and culture only became marketable after their local, regional, and international prestige and acceptance grew as a result of the language preservation activities of *Comité pou Etyoud Kwéyòl*.

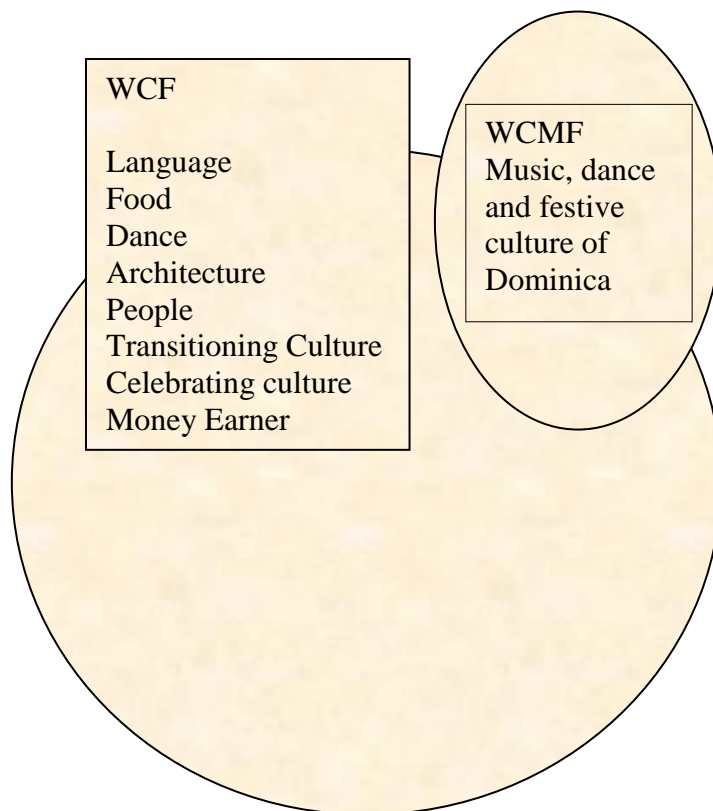


Figure 1 Pictorial representation of the origin and place of WCMF within WCF

The activities that led to the creation of WCF did not only generate festivals. A *dictionary of Dominican Kwéyòl* by Marcel Fontaine is one of the examples of a positive byproduct of the *Kwéyòl* language movement. The first edition was completed in 1991 under the title *Definitive Dominica Kwéyòl/Anglé English/Creole Dictionary*. The dictionary was rebranded, given its current name Diksyonné and re-published in 2003. The work is a bilingual dictionary which converts lexicon from *Kwéyòl* to English and from English to *Kwéyòl*. Another benefit to Dominica is that the development of a festival around the creole culture aids in the continued validating and documentation and popularization of the culture. However, documentation and popularization can also form the basis for further commodification of the culture in Heller's sense. The culture and its components become more available and valuable for sale.

The written documentation of largely orally transmitted elements of culture is especially important in the Caribbean. Even in the case of WCMF, the paper trail which details the inception and planning of the annual event over the last 40 years is very sketchy and in some cases nonexistent.

I am not at all against a strategy which allows the Caribbean to have a single festival with more than one objective. In other words, the Caribbean can integrate activities which bring tourists to its shores on the one hand with activities that preserve and celebrate culture on the other. Such festivals can generate a new product set of items to be sold on the global market. However, that integration will depend on a shift within the Caribbean in the way that planning and preparation for such activities is done. Since the Caribbean is operating within a climate which demands that it comply with new world standards to remain viable, planning must be a more important activity than it has been in the past. As mentioned, the WCF was initially created out of language planning activities that incorporated elements of music, dance, language and food within a national festival. The activities happened on a relatively small scale and were co-ordinated at the community level rather than by the government, which is more structured and institution driven. The WCMF was one aspect of the WCF that has since become the headline event because of its money-making capacity. Although WCMF has been taken over by the government, the extent to which it has become institutionalized is open to argument. The festival struggles to make a profit every year and still depends heavily on government subventions for its viability.

As a part of a reanalysis and overhaul of WCMF, ways must be found to return to the original holistic vision of the WCF, rather than focus specifically on music. Planning be done in such a way that multiple objectives can be satisfied simultaneously and lucratively. The Caribbean must preserve its identity as well as make money from that identity. Comprehensive planning which is systematic and integrated will result in

sustainable development for the Caribbean that is balanced with social development. In order to create events which generate income for the region as well as preserve and showcase its culture, there must be purposeful blueprints of objectives and intentions must be drawn up for festivals to allow for record keeping and reflective planning.

Examining WCF festival planning in the Caribbean using the theoretical perspective of linguist, anthropologist and folklorist Dell Hymes⁵ can help revive the non-musical language and cultural aspects of the festival. It can also easily serve as a general template for the planning of other festivals in the Caribbean to ensure that language elements within cultural presentations are not overlooked. Figueroa (1994) analyzed the metatheory governing the work of Hymes. An examination of her writing demonstrates why Hymes' comprehensive approach to language and culture is a feasible framework for planning the WCF in Dominica. Figueroa explains that:

“for Hymes there is a direct consequence of this broad scope for sociolinguistics: the need for a multidisciplinary approach. He maintains that ‘the recognition of this mode of organization (language as a part of a bigger structure) leads one to recognize that the study of language is a multidisciplinary field, a field to which ordinary linguistics is indispensable, but to which other disciplines, such as sociology, social anthropology, education, folklore, and poetics are indispensable as well’” (Figueroa, 1994: 33)

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This multidisciplinary approach is also needed for the successful planning and execution of WCF and other cultural festivals. There must be room around the planning table for all of the disciplines Hymes mentions. In the Caribbean the disciplines of economics and tourism planning would also have to be integrated. The WCF has a hybrid set of objectives including the goals bequeathed to it by its nationalist origin in a movement to preserve language and more commercial goals related to generating income for Dominica as a tourist attraction. To ensure that the product reflects the broad objectives of language and cultural preservation it will be necessary, as Hymes advocates, to have a series of disciplines involved in the initial planning and shaping of the event.

Every island in the Caribbean, including Dominica, may not have available expertise in the various areas necessary to build successful multi-objective festivals. One possible solution would be the creation of a unit within the CARICOM Community framework which would be responsible for providing services to those countries who request their help in the planning of cultural events across the region. This unit could be easily established under the broad objective of the CARICOM Community which

⁵ At the time the paper was written Dell Hymes was still alive. In reverence to his effect on my work I left the verb in present tense as he will continue to live in my work.

aims “... at the eventual integration of its members and economies, and the creation of a common market.” From its inception, CARICOM has concentrated on the promotion of the integration of the economies of its member states, however there has been less emphasis on “...*Functional Cooperation, especially in relation to various areas of social and human endeavour*” (my emphasis). Providing resources at the level of CARICOM for the advancement of successful planning is as good a social endeavour as any (from CSME Official website).

The second feature of Hymes’ theorizing which makes it a good framework for planning the language aspect of WCF is his notion of socially constituted linguistics. Figueroa quotes Hymes 1974, p. 196 as stating that:

“the phrase socially constituted is intended to express the view that social function gives form to the ways in which linguistic features are encountered in actual life. This being so, an adequate approach must begin by identifying social functions, and discover the ways in which linguistic features are selected and grouped together to serve them.”

Hymes’ definition makes clear how a festival can be used to revive and preserve language. As long as the functions of a language are extended, the language undergoes expansion to service those functions. By creating a celebration that fully embraces language, more writers will utilize *Kwéyòl* in their poetry, drama, novels, etc., and this will help to preserve and shape the language. The planning committee in Dominica seems to be pulling the various elements of the festival apart and moving away from the link between the festival and language. The main focus currently is on music. However, Hymes’ notion of socially constituted linguistics advocates that language is used by a society to serve all of its purposes, whether they be political, commercial, or musical. In the case of WCF, *Kwéyòl* should be an integral part of the nucleus of a festival which celebrates the unique cultural results of the complex historical development of Dominica. One of the objectives of the festival should be to ensure that *Kwéyòl* remains a growing, living language amongst the population of Dominica. *Kwéyòl* should be incorporated with other aspects of culture such as music, dance and food to create a holistic end product.

At last year’s WCMF, there was no use of *Kwéyòl* to introduce artists on stage. Additionally, the artists chosen did not all utilize *Kwéyòl* in their music. The featured artist for WCMF 2008 was Sean Paul of Jamaica and his near 2-hour performance did not feature any use of *Kwéyòl*. If the focus of WCF is to promote and preserve *Kwéyòl*, it would be reasonable to ask why Paul was chosen as featured artist. It would seem that instead of utilizing *Kwéyòl* as a focal point and generating activities based on the particular social function the language is to perform, the focus of WCF is shifting from *Kwéyòl* as nucleus to income generation and easy promotion as nucleus. This growing commercial orientation notwithstanding, there is no evidence that this

approach is more financially expedient as the festival struggles financially from year to year. Worse, this trend is also detrimental to *Kwéyòl* and all aspects of Dominican culture in a globalized world where the cultural forms of small states often find themselves facing extinction in the face of the onslaught of the commercialized cultures of the US and the other neo-colonial metropolises. The planners of WCF must understand the role of *Kwéyòl* as the genesis of the festival and ensure that each event embeds elements of *Kwéyòl* serving particular social functions according to the objectives of the planned events of the festival.

The third reason why the linguistic theory of Hymes can be incorporated into the planning of WCF is that Hymes challenges some of the traditional received notions of linguistics. Figueroa writes; “A socially constituted linguistics questions received linguistic premises because these premises are based on the exclusion of social meaning” (p. 33) and “The goal of Hymes’ sociolinguistics therefore goes far beyond questions solely concerning linguistics” (p. 36). Hymes laments that in trying to create tidy linguistics, the dominant schools of linguistics have ignored several important truths about language. He sees language as “...complexly linked to history, societal, and cultural evolution and the particularities of the individual actually speaking...” (p. 41). This kind of approach to language lends validation to an event such as a festival to celebrate *Kwéyòl* and the creole heritage. It offers a practical example of Hymes’ notion that language is bound to historical, societal and cultural evolution. The origin of *Kwéyòl* and creole heritage is the particular set of historical events that are characteristic of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Dominica. Utilizing Hymes’ theory as an integral part of WCF planning keeps the focus of the festival as more than a money making and tourist venture.

Additionally, by extending the idea of received notions in linguistics Hymes supports the removal some of the negative status given to Creoles and Creole development. Even if this status was not intentionally created by the dominant approaches to linguistics, it was given legitimacy by them because of their desire as Hymes notes to minimize variation and embrace homogeneity. Because Hymes’ theory is rooted in relativism it allows for creole languages to be recognized as natural languages. Figueroa in expanding on the notion of relativity and how it contrasts with received notions in linguistics writes, “...linguistic relativity is based on the principle of diversity rather than homogeneity or invariance.” (p. 42).

Pauline Christie (1996: 61) in the introduction to the work *Caribbean Language Issues: Old and New* contends that:

“One important justification for focusing on analysis of the structure of creole languages is the assumption that recognition of its complexities would lead to

increased appreciation of the speakers, by themselves as much as by others. It is well known that the self-esteem of Creole speakers often suffers from the lack of prestige accorded to their language.”

The WCF is marketed as an international event, but because it involves the culture and language of a particular country, there should also be a simultaneous focus on local consumption. Hymes’ assertions about the importance of variation to the study of linguistics, allows the planning committee to incorporate strategies designed to change perceptions regarding *Kwéyòl* into the festival.

The fourth reason Hymes’ theory fits the planning of WCF addresses another issue which emanates from the colonial history of the Caribbean. Many territories of the Caribbean were accustomed through the colonial years to looking to the mother country for guidance and academic direction. Although independence has changed the metropolitan orientation of the Caribbean to an extent, there remains a preference for external theorists and problem solvers. The use of external talent is also institutionalized to the extent that aid money to the Caribbean often comes with a set of consultant names attached. Hymes theorizing although it does not reject the importation of human expertise does make it a point that the knowledge about culture and way of life does not lie with the expert. It lies with the people to whom the culture belongs and in order for it to be found the investigator must be subsumed in the culture. Figueroa (ibid.) summarizes:

“Traditionally the most common procedure used in the ethnography of communication, has been participant observation. This is a practice whereby the investigator involves herself in the community, or with the subjects she is studying, in such a way as to have access to a means of arriving at a common-sense understanding of what is taking place around her. This understanding, or at least the means of arriving at such an understanding, is supposed to be reflective of the understanding of the ordinary person in the everyday world...The importance of this type of methodological procedure is that it is particularistic (each investigation is considered as a concrete case rather than an abstract universal). In theory it requires that the investigator pay attention to the actualities of the situation irrespective of prior theorizing.” (p. 37)

This feature also lends validity to my claim that there needs to be a body of regional experts available to assist in the planning of events like WCF. Should Hymes’ approach be used to plan WCF, it would steer the planning committee toward choosing expertise first among those most familiar with the festival, its objectives, and their implementation and then looking for other options should local consultants not be available. I have visited Dominica for every WCF since 2006. I have also visited at Carnival time (in 2007 and 2009) so as to ascertain the differences between WCF and carnival celebrations. I have never attempted to write about the festival before my just

concluded third visit. I have always carefully listened to the analysis of Dominicans after each year of the festival. The planning committee is also reminded that an approach which works for the planning of Carnival or another festival event in the Caribbean, should not be mechanically applied to the WCF and expected to fit without adjustment. The particular nature of WCF and its objectives should govern the planning of each event within the Festival.

Using Hymes' framework for planning also has the potential to generate other events to be included on the WCF calendar. Figueroa states that "as applied to the ethnography of communication, the principle of holism would require that linguistic issues not be divorced from human experience and behaviour generally" (p. 37). Guided museum tours can be conducted as a scheduled event within WCF using Hymes' Ethnography as a planning guide. There is also the opportunity for the Kalinago of Dominica to be allowed to conduct guided tours of their reserve. These concepts are feasible under Hymes' theory because the *Kwéyòl* of Dominica is linked to the cultural development of the island and includes all these elements of the island's reality. The incorporation of other cultural events creates a festival matching Hymes' intention as explained by Figueroa to "lead one from an outside to an inside view of cultural phenomena" (p. 37).

Hymes has just as carefully distanced his theory of sociolinguistics from homogeneity and people absent study, as other theorists have been careful to force their theories to fit into such moulds. I believe that any perceived imperfections of Hymes' theory surface from his desire to theorize imperfect subjects; humans and their language. These imperfections do nothing to subtract from the relevance of Hymes' theory as a framework for the planning of WCF. Hymes' theory is usually put into practice by utilizing the SPEAKING (Setting/scene, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms of interaction and interpretation, Genre) framework, which is usually related to a particular utterance and the context surrounding that utterance (p.60). In order to use Hymes' theory as a framework for planning WCF, there would be a necessary modification that would relate the SPEAKING framework not just to a single utterance but all of what encompasses WCF as a communicative event. The WCMF would be restored as one of the events of WCF and even if it is kept as the headline event, it would be more definitively linked to language and culture. Each event, including the WCMF would then be developed from the language outward.

The use of the language as the nucleus from which other cultural expressions develop follows a natural progression of language use in society. Music with *Kwéyòl* lyrics is not possible without *Kwéyòl* words. As dishes were developed which were a mixture of African and French culture, *Kwéyòl* was used to name them. These dishes were

sometimes extensions of *Kwéyòl* words already in use. An example is *lambi* (*lanbi*), which is the name for conch that is extended to a delicacy made of cleaned, seasoned conch meat. Wardhaugh explains "...*ethnography* of a communicative event is a description of all the factors that are relevant in understanding how that particular communicative event achieves its objectives" (p. 246). If the entire WCF is seen as a communicative event, it would be possible to adapt Hymes SPEAKING framework to create and regulate festival activities. The following is an example of how this might be done:

Setting and Scene

These two elements refer to the particular time and place of the event as well as the psychological coordinate (Wardhaugh: 246). The setting of WCF is October in Dominica. It must be made clear in the marketing of the festival that the WCMF is only one element of the bigger WCF. This is significant to the planning of the festival because it draws a clear distinction between Carnival and WCF and it also links the WCF to the particular culture and reality of Dominica. Currently, the focus on the musical aspect of the festival creates a scene much like Carnival. This may eventually become counterproductive since tourists now can opt to go to just one of the two festivals for a similar experience, as opposed to attending both for different experiences. The scene must be linked to *Kwéyòl* and the other cultural elements involving *Kwéyòl*, and be linked to the marketing of Dominica as a unique destination on the world market. Wardhaugh explains that "a particular bit of speech may actually serve to define a scene..." (p. 246). This means that the habit of using *Kwéyòl* in the media on *Jounen Kwéyòl* is a positive initiative and there is scope to extend it throughout the duration of the festival. It also means that masters of ceremony at the WCMF should introduce artists using *Kwéyòl* in order to define and maintain the setting and the scene for participants as linked to *Kwéyòl* even if translations into English are then done. Psychologically, the people of Dominica must own the festival. It must be their celebration of their culture.

Participants

The participants are all of the people who participate in WCF. This includes visitors to Dominica but also Dominicans themselves. Figueroa contends that, "certain speech events require a particular number of participants or particular types of participants" (p. 60). Within this framework, planners of the festival will be required to find other events which can complement the WCMF within the WCF so that all participants find something of value in the festival. Additional activities can include lectures about *Kwéyòl* and its development as well as dramatic and other presentations (cultural and dramatic presentations are already a feature of the Creole in the Park activity, and would only need to be extended and elaborated). The youth of Dominica is a

participant group in WCF which needs carefully planned and targeted activities. Young Dominicans are central to the preservation and perpetuation of *Kwéyòl* as a living language because they will be the ones to either embrace the creole culture or reject it in favor of more American or European norms.

Ends

Wardhaugh categorizes ends as "...the conventionally recognized and expected outcomes of an exchange as well as to the personal goals that participants seek..." (p. 247). The objectives of the festival must be outlined and they must capture the notion of the WCF as a communicative speech event. This is harmonious with the WCF's *Mouvman Kwéyòl* and *Bandsil Kwéyòl* heritage. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for planners to consider what the festival should offer to its various participants. The *Kwéyòl* march through Roseau on Friday October 31st, 2008, saw several school children marching through the streets clapping hands and singing *Kwéyòl* jingles in their traditional Madras wear. Their participation in that march was not only for the enjoyment of tourists. The children were engaged in an educational activity that teaches them about the history of their island and its culture. Tourists also lined the streets for fulfillment of their objective, which was to experience the *Kwéyòl* culture. This demonstrates to planners various participants can reach different ends from events within the festival without the event being altered in any way or in ways that are perceived to make it more tourist friendly.

Act Sequence

This refers to the form of the communicative event. For the purpose of planning WCF, an essential part of the act sequence is already known. The activities of WCF are a part of a festival. This means that just as a party governs the interaction of the guests and a lecture governs the interaction between lecturer and audience, so too what is chosen to be incorporated into WCF must be able to mesh with the atmosphere of the festival. If Hymes' theory is to be used to plan WCF, the headline artist would have to utilize *Kwéyòl* in their genre of music to support the nucleus of the festival. Choosing an artist who does not use *Kwéyòl* would be to depart from the objectives of the festival.

Key

This notion considers the tone, manner, spirit and other non-verbal markings in the communicative event (Wardhaugh: 247). The tone, manner and spirit of the WCF are all set and established. Using Hymes' theories and framework will not affect these, it will only add validity to what is already there. The tone, mood and spirit are festive and celebratory. There are several outdoor events and opportunities for friends and family to interact. These features show how aspects of the festival which are not

designed specifically for tourists are interesting to tourists in their unaltered form. There is no rule governing how Dominicans enjoy WCF, but the way in which they do it is interesting to visitors.

Instrumentalities

Like key, the instrumentalities are already determined for the WCF. Instrumentalities are concerned with the choice of channel. Most of the events take place in an outdoor, oral setting. This meshes well with the oral nature of *Kwéyòl* and its culture.⁶ Considering instrumentalities also allows the planners of the festival to create a framework for integrating more media into the festival. For example, BET and TEMPO television stations all create documentaries about musical events across the Caribbean. While it would be a positive development to have WCF covered by these entities, the planners might also want to consider attracting the coverage of other stations like National Geographic or the Food Channel, so that the nature of WCF as a communicative event encompassing more than music is also showcased. Other channels such as poetry and drama can be fully integrated into the activities of WCF and WCMF. The extension of these features which are already present on a small scale, will allow for added opportunities to display the diversity of *Kwéyòl*.

Norms of Interaction and Interpretation

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Wardhaugh explains this as “the specific behaviours and properties that attach to speaking and also to how these may be viewed by someone who does not share them” (p. 247). These behaviours are already predetermined by Dominica’s cultural norms. There is no need to create a set solely for WCF. It is however necessary to analyze the set of norms and choose those which the planning committee and by extension the people of Dominica wish to showcase in WCF activities. Dominica is known as a country which has a hearty tradition of party and merriment. This is an example of a behaviour or property which was not created by the WCF planning committee but which can be used by them to enhance the marketing of the festival. Further, French colonial history and of the existence of a Carib community in Dominica can serve to attract larger and more varied types of tourists to the festival (researchers; students etc).

Genre

Figuroa categorizes various communicative events and states that each one has a language associated with it. There is the language of poetry, advertisement, riddles, fairy tales and proverbs (p. 61). For the purpose of planning WCF, this field can be used to generate a list of all the possible ways in which *Kwéyòl* can be presented for consumption. Since the theory notes that each use will govern or make different

⁶ See Roberts (1997: 2) for a discussion of the Oral nature of Caribbean Creoles including *Kwéyòl*.

demands on the language, presenting *Kwéyòl* in these various ways allows the planning committee to provide the widest range of interaction with *Kwéyòl* for the widest range of audiences.

I by no means wish to use this article to proclaim the direction WCF should take. Instead my intention is to offer a theoretical approach that could be utilized by the planning committee and an example of the application of the theory. Within a globalized World Caribbean Countries must not assume that visitors will continue to travel to the Caribbean without the lure of attractive planned events. It also is not enough for us as a people to continue placing our culture on well-garnished platters to be consumed by metropolitan tour companies and their clients; while those to which the feast belongs wait the tables and sweep the floors. In using the theory of Dell Hymes and in creating a multidimensional approach to planning festivals we can continue to derive income from tourism as well as preserve and celebrate our cultural rights as Caribbean people; and if we do it right, we can manage to 'kill two birds with one stone'.

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III

PLURI-IDENTIFICATION: MULTIPLE SOLIDARITIES

PLURI-IDENTIFICATION, WOMEN, SPIRITUALITY, AND LITERATURE

SCREAMING SILENCE: TESTIMONY AND TRAUMA IN SHANI MOOTOO'S *CEREUS BLOOMS AT NIGHT*

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In 1996, Shani Mootoo wrote her highly acclaimed first novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night*. The novel has received intensive critical interest for its complex portrayal of the colonial oppression which breeds and hides a tragic story of incest and dehumanizing marginalization in the life of Mala Ramchandin, an Indo-Caribbean woman from Lantanacamara. The fictional island reflects many elements of Trinidad, where Mootoo spent much of her youth (May, 2004: 97). *Cereus* is a hybrid novel that aptly blends a variety of dissonant discourses: hyper-realistic detail, lyrical description, subjective imagination, and fantasy (Pirbhai, 2008: 249). Although the testimonial elements of the novel have been referred to in a general way, there has been to date no effort to consider Mootoo's work with relation to the testimonial genre that communicated much of the personal and collective trauma that occurred during the 80's and 90's in Latin America. Defined by Ariel Dorfman, testimony is a first-person account of an urgent crisis experienced by a marginalized community that carries the intent to change public perception as well as "the flow of public events" (cited in Beverley, 2004: 20). Guided in part by critical comments on the blending of esthetic and documentary techniques in the testimonial novel (Beverley, Craft) and Kimberly A. Nance's observations on deliberative testimony, this paper will attempt to illuminate how Mootoo succeeds in reinventing and reconfiguring elements of classic testimonies like *I Rigoberta Menchu*. Ultimately, with particular interest in the juxtaposition of past, present and future, this study intends to demonstrate unexplored structures of meaning in the novel as well as the generalized viability and flexibility of the genre.

With her study, *Can Literature Promote Justice?: Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio*, Kimberly Nance explains, "While not all *testimonios* have been collaborative, the tripartite combination of a first-person narrative of injustice, an insistence that the subject's experience is representative of a larger class, and an **intent to work toward a more just future**" (Nance, 2006: 2) have defined testimony since its emergence on the literary scene in the early seventies. As testimony reaches forty, however, "articles lauding the genre's radical newness

have given way to suggestions that its moment has passed,” tending to speak “of the testimonial moment in past tense” (p. 5). Recognizing the need to “develop a socially responsible practice of testimonial criticism” (p. 12), Nance lays out a rhetorical analysis of the intent that is both literary and political in testimony. Toward that end, she summarizes the differing purposes and strategies of Aristotle’s categories of forensic, epideictic, and deliberative speech:

“*Forensic* speech asks decision-makers to categorize past actions as just or unjust; its means are accusation and defense. *Epideictic* speech is addressed to spectators, whom it asks to categorize present actions as noble or shameful; its means are praise and blame. *Deliberative* speech asks decision makers to determine whether or not to undertake a future action; its means are persuasion and dissuasion.” (Nance: 23, referring to Murphy).

According to Nance, the third category of deliberative speech has been generally overlooked by critics, divesting the genre of its power to transform society (p. 33).

Framing the novel in a forensic process, Mootoo introduces the story in the context of a court case against Mala Ramchandin, accused of the murder of her father, Chandin, whose decayed body was found on her premises. Mala, who is in the present tense is elderly and deemed insane by the local authorities and the general population, arrives at the Paradise Alms House in a state of total collapse, drugged unconscious and strapped to a stretcher. Feeling an immediate affinity with the woman based on what he perceives to be their shared alienation from the community, Tyler, a trans-sexual male nurse, begins a private crusade to heal her and to reconstruct the true story behind the public condemnation. As is often the case with testimony, the narrative resists or revises the “official version” of history, in this case Mala’s assumed guilt and depravity, the implicit pretext that structures the narrative event (Prada Oropeza, 1986:11). As he patiently nurtures Mala’s devastated psyche, Tyler demonstrates a singular model of human kindness that contrasts starkly with the dehumanizing neglect and cruelty of the Indo-Caribbean community. In a reciprocal manner, the process imbues this marginalized homosexual male with the confidence and courage to express his true nature and to exercise his profession openly and joyfully.

Creating what Mariam Pirbhai describes as a “productive tension between time frames” (Pirbhai, 2008: 248), the story loops backward and forward to demonstrate the complex system of colonial injustice that is the source of vast personal and collective damage. With notebook in hand, Tyler is the first-person mediator of Mala’s story, similar in function to Elizabeth Burgos in Rigoberta Menchu’s testimony, which brought the hidden genocide in Guatemala to public attention in the early eighties. Like Burgos, Tyler builds trust through the act of sharing food and building a personal relationship. Reflecting the intrinsic morality of the genre, Tyler struggles to transcribe Mala’s communication, which has been reduced to guttural noises and the perfect imitation of animals and insects. Like Burgos and all

testimonial editors, Tyler comments on the difficulty of remaining extraneous and neutral to Mala's story: "Might I add that my own intention, as relater of this story, is not to bring notice to myself or my own plight. However, I cannot escape myself, and being a narrator who also existed on the periphery of the events, I am bound to be present" (Mootoo: preface). The shocking story that emerges, although structurally more complex than traditional testimony, relates the characteristic marginalization of the victim, the collective nature of the problem, and an urgent call to action (Jara, 1986: 1).

Completing the difficult task of sorting out forensic information, Tyler depends upon a variety of witnesses. Much of what he reconstructs from the past serves not as an indictment of Mala, but of her social context, shaped by racist, sexist, and ethnic injustice. She emerges as the victim, not the perpetrator, as is publicly alleged. A core structure of inter-generational alliances juxtaposes time frames and serves as a conduit to lost information. Similar to his immediate and profound attachment with his elderly patient, Tyler's relationship with his "Cigarette Smoking Nana," obviously also a non-conforming individual, was central during his childhood and gave him first-hand information about the first principal figure, Chandin Ramanchandin.

In spite of the raw violence at the center of the slowly emerging story, moments of great possibility must be present in order to actively engage the reader. Nance predicts that the text must initially demonstrate that "destruction is potentially avoidable" juxtaposing happiness against sorrow (Nance: 74). Similarly, Mala's story reveals a pervasive pattern in which the rich human potential of admirable individuals is destroyed because of the cyclical imposition of colonial hierarchies. Mala's Indo-Caribbean father, Chandin drew the attention of Ernest Thoroughly, the respected Christian missionary from the "Shivering Northern Wetlands," specifically because of his talent as a student. Attempting to create a model of colonialist success, the reverend adopts Chandin and educates him in the local seminary. The "good fortune" of privilege, however, eventually turns sour as Chandin's special status isolates him from both communities. His dark skin is an insurmountable obstacle to complete assimilation among the British while his dress, speech, and Christian beliefs estrange him from his biological family and their West Indian community. He becomes a man with no functional cultural context.

This insider/outsider status becomes the source of acute self-loathing when Chandin is rejected as an appropriate suitor for his half-sister, Thoroughly's daughter Lavinia. Obsessed for years with his forbidden love for her, Chandin marries Lavinia's childhood friend Sarah and the couple has two daughters, Mala and Asha. Frustration turns to rage when Lavinia returns to the island, becomes Sarah's lesbian lover, and then plots their successful escape. Again, the situation begins on a note of promise. Mala and Asha have been carefully prepared to depart with the two women. All are painfully near to breaking away when Mala suddenly runs back to the house to

recover the cereus cuttings that she had left behind. Suspecting the betrayal, Chandin had returned home in time to view the two women riding off to freedom in a buggy. The story then turns on the two daughters whom Sarah and Lavinia inadvertently leave behind to suffer the consequences of their father's catastrophic collapse. Having met failure within all the dominant ideologies of his milieu - Indo-Caribbean, Euro Christian, and patriarchal - Chandin falls into a moral vacuum of unbridled barbarism. As Pirbhai comments, Mootoo portrays Chandin as a victim of a colonial education that serves as a "catalyst for familial dysfunction and the subsequent patterns of individual and collective dis-integration" (Pirbhai: 251).

Relying then upon the tormented monologue that Mala quietly murmurs years later, Tyler recreates a horrific narration of Chandin's decline into drunkenness and incest. Framing the testimony with passages of great lyrical power depicting the abundant natural world where Mala finds comfort, he slowly and deliberately leads the reader toward a climactic account of unmitigated violence. Fearing further loss, Chandin rules oppressively over the girls by day and sexually abuses them at night. Throughout the years of their youth, Mala's capacity for resistance is heroic. She protects Asha from Chandin, drawing his attentions to herself. She creates an alter ego of herself as Popo, the innocent child whom she nurtures and protects as no one else had. She attempts to interact positively with other children in the town and even finds moments of joy with her companion Boyie, or Ambrose. Again catastrophe follows the moment when happiness seems most accessible. Just when the adult Mala discovers liberation in her love for Ambrose, Chandin's discovery of their secret relationship triggers a brutal scene of repeated rape and beating. Equally disturbing are Mala's subsequent attempts to erase the traumatic memory with the self-inflicted pain of ingesting caustic pepper sludge: "She didn't swallow, keeping the fire on her tongue, by then so blistered that parts of the top layer had already disintegrated, and other areas curled back like rose petals dipped in acid" (Mootoo: 131). These core episodes, related in hyper realistic detail like Rigoberta's vivid descriptions of the torture and mutilation of her family, constitute the silent scream of testimony that goes unheard by an ignorant or apathetic community. The narrative process coaxes the uninformed reader into the spectacle of suffering - to hear the victim's cry; to bear witness to the victim's pain; and to affirm the victim's humanity through dehumanizing violence.

The other face of an unjust past held up for condemnation is the collective failure of the community to intercede. As Vivian May observes, "It is clear throughout the novel that the whole community knows Mala's (and Asha's) situation and does nothing to stop it." (May: 112). Throughout Mala's revelations, Chandin's moral degeneracy is projected onto the entire community that visits the colonial hierarchies they had endured upon innocent victims. In spite of supposed Christian underpinnings, the community not only refuses to intervene, but exacerbates the victim's suffering. Town gossip had contributed initially to the departure of Lavinia and Sarah. Reflecting the

views of their parents, the town's children disdainfully expel the girls from their play and abuse them physically and verbally. Years later, the postmaster hides Asha's letters from Canada offering Mala both money and a plan of escape. Even Mala's trusted ally Ambrose runs away in fear after witnessing evidence of Chandin's incestuous abuse. Rejecting the opportunity to support the woman he loves, Ambrose abandons her to the defensive act of murder and subsequent isolation that is branded by the community as insanity. Near the end of the novel, the town authorities invade Mala's space and destroy the meager refuge she has created in her garden before placing her in custody. The weight of the indictment of Mala's story is the revelation that much of her misery has been induced, perpetuated, and exacerbated by crimes of commission and omission on the part of the entire community.

Although the testimonial process begins as the witness is able to identify with the victim, it also requires that the reader move from empathy to the extopy, defined by Bahktin as an ethical response to suffering (Nance: 62). Contesting the forensic accusation of past wrongs comes the epideictic present in the novel that praises as noble and admirable the efforts of a dyad of homosexual men who, from the interstices of society, are able to see clearly what those invested in the culture cannot. Nance observes that, as is often the case, the knowledge that comes from outside hegemony is spontaneous, is an antithesis to the authority of culture, and offers the possibility of an inclusive community based on disinterested love (Nance: 17). Understanding the penalties imposed on those who are deemed sexually deviant, Tyler and Otoh offer an intergenerational path of redemption for individuals as well as the collective, a prophetic and persuasive message revealing a possible path of future action that can repair the damage and achieve a more just social order.

The tender interaction between Tyler and Mala begins and frames the story in the epideictic present. Tyler imitates the Biblical laying of hands that establishes an empathetic connection and has healing powers. The sensation of touching Mala's head is as transformative to him as it is to her. He quickly overcomes his intrinsic reticence, expressing a sense of "outrage" at her condition. He defies the rules of the institution and his superiors by releasing her restraints and cradling her head in his arms through the night in an inverted Pieta. As Mala gains strength and lucidity under Tyler's gentle care, he gains the confidence to creatively express his profession and his conflicted nature. Their union establishes the testimonial transformation of I to the "we" of all who are marginalized and dehumanized as "Other" by difference.

According to Nance, "The project of alliance beyond normal junctures" is necessary to sustain the continuing capacity for commitment in spite of overwhelming odds (Nance: 144). Another unconventional and transformational partnership is observed in Tyler and Otoh. Otoh, born as the daughter of Ambrose Mohanty, has successfully turned himself into the man he desires to be. He shares with Tyler his piece of the story and, unified in their efforts to heal Mala, the two find the freedom to love one

another openly, unlike Lavinia and Sarah. Otoh is the link between the past, present, and future that lays out the moral imperative of active involvement. Following the instructions of his father, Otoh has brought food to Mala. He has also questioned his father's failure to act more assertively on her behalf and actively seeks an encounter with her, which inadvertently leads to the discovery of Chandin's corpse. Unlike his father, who sleeps away his life in guilt, Otoh intervenes boldly, burning down Mala's house before the authorities can discover the incriminating evidence. He then instigates his father's visits to the asylum, an act that permits Ambrose's redemption in the pleasure and relationship that he finally brings to Mala. Here the son has positively influenced the father, pulling him out of his static present to a place where future change is possible.

The juxtaposition of past, present, and future as a redemptive structure is highlighted in the structural motif of the cereus blossoms. The cutting first appears in the distant past, introduced into Sarah's garden by her lover Lavinia. It is the forgotten cutting that condemns Mala to a life of misery. After Mala murders Chandin, she dwells in the garden dominated by the periodic blooms of the exotic cactus, which help to hide the odor of his decaying body. Otoh reintroduces the flower when Mala is in the asylum. The plant's flourishing there hails the healing that introduces a new era of spontaneous alliances based on unconditional love rather than social convention.

In the case of *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Shani Mootoo demonstrates the possibility for profound change found in simple acts of kindness and humanity. These every day heroic actions are undertaken by those who have escaped colonial hierarchies *vis à vis* their unconventional natures. As the story ends with four lovers in happy communion, Mala with Ambrose and Tyler with Otoh, Nance's expectation of the good news is modeled: **“that under the right circumstances, textual descriptions of injustice can motivate action”** (Nance: 16). Drawing attention to the need for all members of the human community to take responsibility for the untold stories and unheard cries of the innocent and the vulnerable, testimony here implicates the reader in an active commitment to relieving rather than reliving colonial trauma.

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JAMAICA KINCAID; IMAGE, MANIPULATION AND PERCEPTION

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Conducting an internet search on Jamaica Kincaid brings up interesting biographical details; she is no longer a visiting professor at Harvard but is a professor at Claremont



McKenna College in California. Her official job title there is Josephine Olp Weeks Chair and Professor of Literature. She has received many honorary degrees, most recently, an honorary doctorate last summer from one of the ‘little Ivys’. She is called a novelist, storywriter, author and professor with varying degrees of emphasis depending on the situation. On October 9th, 2009, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in the category of literature, and according to Leslie Berlowitz, Chief Executive Officer of the academy that was founded in 1780, Kincaid’s

recognition as a newly elected member fulfills the academy’s mission “intellectual leadership and constructive action in America and the world.” The honor of her work being considered a force for change lends itself to considering Kincaid’s positions and how these are understood.

Kincaid’s image is often in dynamic evolution. She is seen as an African American, Caribbean, and empowering women’s writer. Some read her as self-absorbed, self-indulgent, and angry. She is frequently adopted by people who see her as fitting a particular cause, perhaps because she struggles against dominance and addresses power indulgences. She herself asserts that she does not necessarily fit into any category but she often claims that she does not mind if people place her within their particular box. Her fluidity of placement is aided by various photographic images and physical descriptions available in print and on-line. Kincaid is portrayed as an artistic rebellious bohemian type; a serious displaced/exiled urban writer type; a family home-centered domestic type; and now a mentor, teacher, minority rights type. These rough classifications and shifts from one image to another can be seen by sifting through published photographs, interview comments, and texts written by defenders who claim

her for their cause. Probably, the manipulation of Kincaid's image is not always intentional; it is possible that the perceptions of readers and critics of her work alter the meanings found in her biography.

Focusing on the photographic or descriptive imagery of Jamaica Kincaid provides clues as to how she is understood within various reading audiences. She was portrayed with braided hair in a field of sunflowers which is similar to the final scene in the movie, *The Color Purple*. She has described herself as walking through the streets of New York wearing pajamas, while others have described her as wearing vintage recycled clothing and dyeing her dark hair blond (Salon interview). She reminisces about wearing nothing but bananas to a party when she was a young writer starting out in New York. She is photographed and outfitted for garden work and an encounter with nature. Also, she is portrayed in the traditional black pants and white blouse for her urban writer image. These images fade, disappear, and reemerge. Early on a photograph of her in a partial head wrap was seen on a couple of book jackets, and now another more polished version of this Caribbean image has surfaced in publicity photographs (Cook photograph, 2009).

For a long time, Kincaid did not embrace American nationality as her identity, which for her was somewhere in the Caribbean (not always specifically mentioning Antigua). In *My Garden (Book)* she writes about her identification with the Caribbean, "...the garden that I was making and am still making and will always be making has resembled a map of the Caribbean and the sea that surrounds it..." (Kincaid, 1999: 7-8). Yet, in the same book, she allows the American identification for her children, "For my children are American" (p. 35). Later in the chapter, she describes Americans from an outsider's perspective. For example, when she and her husband, Allen Shawn, decide to move to a larger Vermont house, she writes,

"...I had adjusted to the American habit of taking up at least twenty times as much of the available resources as each person needs. This is a trait that is beyond greed. A greedy person is often cross, unpleasant. Americans, at least the ones I am personally familiar with, are not at all cross. They are quite happy and reasonable, as they take up at least twenty times as much of everything as they need" (pp. 37-38).

While working as a visiting professor at Harvard with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., her resistance to American identity seemed to be set aside, as she was referred to as an African-American writer. In the recent *Among the Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* (2005), when Kincaid needs to claim Canadian nationality in order to hide from hostile Maoists, she writes, "Until then, I would never have dreamt of calling myself anything other than American" (Kincaid, 2005: 73). Currently, as she seems to claim the American aspect of her identity, she is photographed wearing clothing that makes a gesture toward her Caribbean roots. The latest photographic image (2009) frequently

duplicated on the internet is one that accompanies a biographical description of Kincaid in her new position at Claremont McKimney College in California. In the photograph, she is wearing a sleek fabric combined with a traditional head-wrap, which creates a polished educated and ethnic look. Whereas at Harvard, she appeared in photographs wearing white blouse and black slacks, which recreated her urban writer image. In 1996, Kincaid described her lack of a located identity during a telephone interview with Paul Grondahl, "I guess I'm in the tradition of the restless European. I have a sense of place, of centeredness, but it's more than one."

Frequently, Kincaid attributes her self-contradictions and the ambiguity of her writing and oral statements to a Caribbean quality. Kincaid also seems to encourage connection between her writing, both in fiction and non-fiction, to her own life. When reading her work, it is clear that her biography so closely matches those of her fictional characters found in *Annie John* and *Lucy*, that it is natural for readers to assume a direct correlation between the two. For example, in the Kay Bonetti interview, notice how Kincaid's comments encourage this connection: "I write about myself for the most part, and about things that have happened to me. Everything I say is true, and everything I say is not true. You couldn't admit any of it to a court of law. It would not be good evidence." Notice how Kincaid oscillates between meanings, and then rests in ambiguity, muddying up understanding by both affirming and contradicting herself. It is this same ambiguity that allows others to draw on her image as much as she reinvents her own self-conception and presentation.

J. Brooks Bouson's book, *Jamaica Kincaid; Writing Memory, Writing Back to the Mother*, can be used to illustrate how the understandings of Kincaid the person and Kincaid the writer lend themselves to differing perceptions. Bouson writes assertive statements about Jamaica Kincaid's identity and intention, while conflicting information is either downplayed or not noticed. Kincaid and her writing are placed neatly within the parameters of a psychological study done within the United States. Kincaid's motivation is attributed to an experience of shame and trauma experienced primarily within the mother-daughter relationship. Though this book appears to address the psychological aspects of Kincaid's life, the significant differences between the cultures of the United States and the Caribbean are conflated. Kincaid is ironically viewed as a member of a minority group within the United States. This understanding includes the idea of being raised in poverty by a parent who lacks the information and/or inclination to properly care for her child, and feeds into the rags-to-riches American success story.

Bouson's dismissal of cultural difference between the Caribbean and the United States is most apparent in the simplification of the mother, Annie Drew, who is characterized as a dominating shame inducing mother. Kincaid's own ambivalent portrayals of herself are glossed over, and her Antiguan family are not addressed except in the

psychological context of someone who has internalized shame or who is striving for a type of American independence: a serious flaw in Bouson's analysis, glossing over of cultural difference and simplification of facts. Bouson repeatedly writes that Kincaid had a cruel and humiliating mother, without considering Annie Drew's place within Antiguan society. What stresses might she have been under to behave in so harsh a manner towards her daughter? In at least two books (*My Brother; Lucy*) and various interviews, Kincaid writes that her mother should not have had children and Bouson takes her at her word; but does Kincaid actually and 'permanently' mean this statement? Is she actually saying that her life was never positively impacted by her mother? By inquiring further into Kincaid's comments, it soon becomes clear that she also praises her mother. For example, she attributes her reading skill to her mother and her writer's voice is directly connected to her mother's own power. In a 2003 interview by Robert Birnbaum, Kincaid says,

"My mother taught me to read. And she taught me to read as a way of making me independent of her. She was always reading and I was always interrupting her reading to make her pay attention to me. And she thought that if I knew how to read, I would like books as much as she did, and I would leave her alone and would be independent of her. So it's possible -and I have to say I'm telling you something that I have only just this minute understood - this particular insight. It seemed to me that I must attach to this reading and writing a great power of self-possession. Because it led me to not really need her, to survive without her in ways that she couldn't have imagined. When I was sent away from home I started to write, and this was how I became a person that really was a mystery to her." (Birnbaum, 2005: 172-173)

Bouson's understanding of Kincaid demands overlooking glaring contradictions; such as the fact that Kincaid named her own daughter Annie, after her mother, which is hardly a gesture of contempt but rather an honor to her mother's legacy. Kincaid's complicated relationship with her mother is revealed by a lifetime of contradictory statements, which have been published over the years. Kincaid said in an interview that she stopped criticizing her mother because her mother did not have the public access to respond in a fair way. Kincaid has been able to write personally and provide her own perceptions, whereas those within her family cannot publicly respond. Kincaid reveals in this interview that she is carrying on an argument, like a public street fight, but she realizes the other side cannot be heard. Kincaid knows that her mother, Anne Drew, is verbally gifted. Kincaid writes about her mother's verbal talent in her collection of essays *A Small Place*, and it is finally a sense of fair play that later constrains Kincaid, knowing that her mother's gift for public rebuttal is clearly unavailable.

Another important and perplexing contradiction has to do with Kincaid's representation by social groups and literary critics. Kincaid has been appropriated by

various groups that sometimes use her work to argue for their particular stance. Two groups with their attendant causes immediately come to mind, African Americans and feminists. Placing her within either group can lead to misunderstanding because, as mentioned earlier she resists easy classification. It's not a perfect fit to claim that she is African American because she is from an island that is predominately comprised of African descended peoples where it was more unusual to be light-skinned than dark. Consequently, she did not grow up with the minority status feeling that occurs when the group you identify with is outnumbered. Notwithstanding, she frequently speaks at various colleges and universities during African-American awareness month. Yet another uneasy fit is with feminists groups. Though Jamaica Kincaid addresses the imbalance of power between men and women, it is never quite clear how she might like this gender imbalance readdressed. Her short story 'Girl' continues to be anthologized, and is understood by a great many to be an argument against the scripted role of females, and mothers who extend and enforce the arm of patriarchy. However, anyone who has read Kincaid extensively has found that she embraces domesticity and sometimes borrows the feminine gender script while describing her life.

An example of a competent woman falling into what could be construed as non-feminist discourse is found in *My Garden (Book)*. Kincaid writes that she has overspent on seed catalogue orders and most of the mail is from creditors who are "first gently pleading that I pay them and then in the next paragraph proffering a threat of some kind." (Kincaid, 1999: 61) Still, she is not disturbed and goes on to order more, as she writes "...when I saw that along with the bills there were some catalogues all caution and sense of financial responsibility went away." (p. 62). As her trip to China is ending, Kincaid writes in another chapter that "I slipped back into my life of mom, sweetie, and the garden." (p. 215) She continues in the same paragraph with what could be an ironic tone when she writes, "I was given much help by buying a fashion magazine that had on its cover a picture of that all-powerful and keenly discerning literary critic Oprah Winfrey. "Feminist scholars who want to claim Kincaid as their spokesperson or as a role model, must be disconcerted when she adopts the domestic role, especially when she claims that she cannot handle money. Clearly, Kincaid's "love of all things domestic" (Charlie Rose interview) also rankles. However, the concept of domestic space has a complex meaning in African American and Caribbean life; whereas, in traditional Western feminist's conceptions, it is viewed as a limited and confining female space. In African American discourse, domestic space carries with it a kind of validation related to both the luxury and the respect that is located in the privilege of a woman's domestic life. Nevertheless, Kincaid addresses the issues and anger that many feminists feel. In her description of botanical gardens in *My Garden (Book)*, she writes,

“Accounts of botanical gardens begin with men who have sworn to forsake the company of women and have attached themselves to other things, the pursuit of only thinking, contemplating the world as it is or ought to be and, as a relief from this or complementary to this, the capture, isolation, and imprisoning of plants. This is my interpretation, this is the view I favor”. (Kincaid, 1999: 151).

It takes just a little inference to realize that the men are substituting plants for the imprisonment of people, and specifically, the control of women. The theme of families and their dysfunction is also found in feminists discourse, and Kincaid brings in this theme throughout her writing. In another chapter, she writes,

“Families are a malevolent lot, no matter the permutations they make, no matter the shape they take, no matter how beautiful they look, no matter the nice things they say.” (p. 178)

Two core issues connected to the feminist movement, i.e., the imbalance of power through unequal treatment of the genders (specifically the preference of sons over daughters), and the double-standard regarding sexual freedom, fit in with most definitions of a feminist and can be found in Kincaid’s writing. Kincaid’s reason for resisting labels is well documented but isn’t her objection to these labels the constraint on her writing that they represent? There is tension between an author’s freedom to create and producing work that is marketable. Kincaid’s resistance to the feminist identification, while calling attention to well known feminist’s concerns, seems to be her way of negotiating a creative space for her individuality, yet gesturing toward the concerns of a particular identifiable group.

With so many contradictions and ambiguous meanings, can the reader set aside everything beyond the text, including the author’s biography and personality, and just look at the written words alone outside of the context of the author’s life? Would this approach be a fair reading of Jamaica Kincaid? Margaret Atwood suggests such an approach in order to deal with inconsistencies and issues of truth in writing. In *Negotiating with the Dead: a Writer on Writing*, she writes that since the author’s life factors are always changing and flexible, the only reliable understanding of the work is found within the work itself, i.e. the only truth to be found is within the text. She writes,

“The writer communicates with the page. The reader also communicates with the page. The writer and the reader communicate only through the page. This is one of the syllogisms of writing as such. Pay no attention to the facsimiles of the writer that appear on talk shows, in newspaper interviews, and the like—they ought not to have anything to do with what goes on between you, the reader, and the page you are reading, where an invisible hand has previously left some marks for you to decipher...” (Atwood, 2002: 125-126)

Atwood's disconnected approach cannot be applied to Kincaid's writing because Kincaid repeatedly references the author and her own biography. Sometimes she uses accurate names, or changes them slightly. She also elaborates on intertextual events, yet shifting the emotional tone or casting the events in a different light. Additionally, when Kincaid writes, there is a Caribbean audience whose presence hovers within the text even while she seems to address a Western (or American) audience. This presence makes it difficult to isolate the work outside of multiple contexts. The reader of Kincaid becomes obsessed with the author's biography, and asks: what is a factually true statement and what is an emotionally true one? Then, what is indeed a lie? Kincaid placates her reader by relentlessly pointing to her biography.

This question of understanding points to another oversight related to Kincaid's style (and perhaps her intentions) as a writer who seems self-aware and yet continually contradictory. Is there a reason for her inconsistencies? Individuals change over time; and too, their opinions may change based on situational reasons, more information, or even whim. Anyone who has written privately in a journal knows that the explorations found there are frequently transitory insights that are revised or re-understood at a later time, especially when subjects are revisited over many years. In his book, *The Memoir and the Memorist*, Thomas Larson writes about this changing aspect of writing memoir,

“By now I hope it's clear that the memoirist is she who sticks with the form long enough to undergo changes in how she sees the past. The act of memoir writing and its river of recollections has made her different from the person she would have been had she not traversed the rapids. The act has also changed and deepened herself and others, no doubt, for years. ...Honest reevaluation guarantees revising what was.” (p. 113)

Kincaid's work has to be viewed within a cultural framework that also accounts for her individuality. Kincaid writes public journals that play with the tropes of memoir and autobiography, but always feel as if they might be revised again. The flexibility of her image may lead to misunderstandings and overly quick judgment; a reader of Kincaid must also reflect on her own subjective perceptions and see that they too influence her understanding of Kincaid's texts.

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OBEAH AND CULTURAL PARADOX IN ANNIE JOHN

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Annie John, by Jamaica Kincaid, is a coming-of-age story about a young girl from Antigua. As a child, Annie is passionately attached to her mother. The story depicts the struggle that Annie and her mother encounter during Annie's puberty and the changes that the relationship undergoes. Through Annie's experience, Kincaid highlights the struggle faced by many Caribbean women who must try to integrate the complex and often times discrepant value systems: one which has strong ties to African heritage and the other which has strong ties to the European colonial culture. These value systems are given expression both within the home in the family unit; and outside the home in the context of mainstream society. The intrinsic paradox of living within conflicting cultural dynamics, in addition to pressure built-up from the changing relationship with her mother, eventually leads Annie to have a mental breakdown from which she is healed through Obeah, an Afro-Caribbean spiritual-medicinal system. For the purposes of this discussion, I will examine Obeah as it relates to the lives and empowerment of the three main characters: Ma Chess (Annie's grandmother); Annie John's mother and Annie John. These characters symbolize three important themes found in Caribbean literature: the living spirit of Africa; the Caribbean framework of cultural paradox; and resistance and rebellion as a tool for survival.

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1 The Grandmother- The Living Spirit of Africa

Ma Chess is Annie's grandmother. She personifies the African Spirit that is still alive within the people of the Caribbean and the struggle to give that spirit expression. She is an Obeah woman from Dominica and comes to Antigua when Annie John has her breakdown. Kincaid ascribes magical qualities to Ma Chess, which go beyond the European standards of human capabilities such as, appearing from and disappearing into thin air; and living in a hole in the ground, which is a reference to *soucouyant*, a female witch or vampire Jumbie (spirit) that lives in holes, crevices, or cracks. Ma Chess lives outside the European standard, which places the domain of human beings rigidly in the physical world, whereas in African and Indigenous cultures, humans have the ability to change form and exist in dimensions other than just the physical. For Ma Chess, the world does not only exist in the physical realm.

Physical space is not the only place Ma Chess has broken with accepted modes of behavior, she has also broken the norms of social boundaries. She split from her husband, emotionally and spiritually although they still physically reside together. This occurred after her son Johnnie "... died of something the doctor knew nothing about, of something the Obeah woman knew everything about." (Kincaid: 69)

Pa Chess refused to let his son be treated with Obeah medicine and Ma Chess subjugated her wishes to him. It was the one and only time where Ma Chess went against her own instincts and after doubting them and losing her son, she never doubted herself again. From that point forward, she turned herself over to the African spirit, becoming an Obeah woman herself. In other words, she took her life into her own hands. For her, the answer was to operate solely from that within her which was African.

Although Kincaid largely places the male figures on the periphery of the plot, they are still important. The men represent oppression in the story. On one hand, they represent the oppression of women by men. In a wider context, Kincaid's male characters represent oppressive colonial rule and all it stands for. Ma Chess in becoming an Obeah woman overthrows the repressive rule of Pa Chess and she will never again submit to it. Metaphorically, she has freed the African spirit within her and an integration of the conflicting cultural forces has taken place. Through Ma Chess' character, Kincaid highlights one of the many ways women in the Caribbean empower themselves and survive. The fact that it is Ma Chess with her knowledge of Obeah who saves Annie during her breakdown means that the African spirit will not die and must be embraced.

2 The Mother- The Paradox

The mother in *Annie John* represents a different kind of struggle for independence than that of Ma Chess. It was likely that during Ma Chess' time, education remained largely unavailable to women. However, Annie John's mother could see that education would be pivotal for Annie John's social advancement. Through the character of the mother, Kincaid points out that a shift has taken place regarding the key to women's survival. The mother's process of cultural integration was one which prioritized the search for economic freedom, rather than spiritual freedom. She left home at 16 in order to make her own way in the world, an act which liberated her from repression as symbolized by Pa Chess. Annie John's mother is unlike Ma Chess, who would continue to live physically with Pa Chess.

Annie John's mother however, has chosen to prioritize the British values of formal education and sexual repression. In raising Annie, she upholds strict standards of dress, grooming, and sexual behavior in order to give her daughter the tools needed to attain economic freedom and social advancement, rather than spiritual freedom. In this

way, Kincaid transforms the character of the mother into a paradox: the mother left home to flee oppression, only to later become the metaphorical colonizer herself and Annie, the colonized. Through the mother, the reader is confronted with a struggle quite relevant to the lives of Caribbean women and therefore quite typical of Caribbean literature. Kincaid, by presenting Ma Chess and Mother as characters who embrace such drastically different values, manifests the complexities inherent in Caribbean societies. It might appear that, through the mother, Kincaid implies that a binary choice between one value system or another must be made. However this is not wholly the case. Annie John's mother has not fully rejected her African Spirit; rather, navigation of the cultural boundaries of the paradox was different for Annie John's mother than for Ma Chess and different choices were made. Annie John's mother still holds on culturally to Obeah. When Annie John got sick with something the doctor could not find a reason for, she turns to Obeah. However, the fact she regards it as a safety net, doing it "just to be sure," shows that her attitude toward Obeah reflects that of the British colonizers, i.e. that Obeah is superstition instead of the insight that Ma Chess has gained through her life's struggles, i.e. that Obeah is the path to self-actualization.

Obeah knowledge conferment and transmission were often determined and decided upon matrilineally. Ma Chess wanted her daughter to learn Obeah and was disappointed that she wouldn't because it gave women of her time, who had few economic opportunities, a spiritual freedom. She regretted that her daughter would never know this type of freedom. Kincaid implies that perhaps this freedom is just as important to the Caribbean woman as economic freedom.

Annie's father, like Pa Chess, also looms largely in the background of the story. Even though he does not like Obeah, he is not as inflexible as Pa Chess. Annie's father is more open to African traditions, however still not as open as her mother. Therefore, Annie John's mother and father have managed to find a middle ground for the extremes first presented to the reader in the relationship between Ma and Pa Chess.

Finally, it should be noted that the reader never learns Mother's real name. This choice on Kincaid's part implies that the mother is unclear of exactly who she is, so long as she does not turn herself over to the African spirit.

3 Annie John-The Rebel

Annie John is caught in the middle between her grandmother and mother - the spiritual and the material worlds. She has a mental breakdown which signifies the turning point of the novel and symbolizes her personal process of integration. Her grandmother comes to her to cure her with Obeah and thereby shows Annie how to embrace that which is African inside her, and to give it its rightful place, its rightful expression. She had not learned how to acknowledge and integrate that aspect of herself through her mother. Through her mother she had only been taught to

acknowledge and operate from a European set of values. Through her mother she had learned how to resist and rebel. Resistance and rebellion are extremely important tools for survival in the Caribbean. In this light, her mother had not, by any means, shirked her responsibilities to Annie. To illustrate this struggle, Kincaid juxtaposes Obeah with Christianity. Annie's rebellion against her mother is a rebellion against the European ideals set forth by Christianity.

Kincaid has Annie and her mother acting as mirrors for each other. Not having had her grandmother around, Annie had only seen herself reflected to herself in the mirror of her mother. But in the end, she was not able to live only within the context of one culture - the colonial culture. She needed to have access to and integration of her African heritage so that these images could become clear.

Annie John's independent spirit and individualism cause the rift between her and her mother. Her mother tries hard to tame that which is wild and promiscuous, because she sees herself in Annie. Like Annie, her mother herself left home in an act of rebellion against her father, Pa Chess. Kincaid reveals to the reader that if one fails to acknowledge and integrate into oneself that which is uniquely African and feminine, the result will be complete debilitation. Kincaid uses Pa Chess as a symbol of what happens if you completely repress the African spirit within you:

“Pa Chess was having a bit of trouble with his limbs; he was not able to go about as he pleased; often he had to depend on someone else to do one thing or another for him...After she read the part about Pa Chess's stiff limbs, she turned to my father and laughed as she said, ‘So the great man can no longer just get up and go.’”(Kincaid: 78)

Annie John later writes, “So the great man can no longer just get up and go” under a picture of Columbus in a text book at school. The picture depicts him seated in the bottom of the ship in chains. Annie, in this act of rebellion, gets in trouble but is rebelling not only internally in the context of her home with her mother, but also externally in a colonial institution - the school. On all levels, Annie is rebelling against European culture. Kincaid makes a strong point: having only physical ties to Africa (race) without access to the underlying, nourishing cultural and spiritual ties is debilitating for a person of African descent.

Moreover, Kincaid's women are not only rebelling against society but also empowering themselves in a male-dominated world. Obeah provides them with a source of empowerment and a framework through which their struggles can be more easily managed. This stems largely from the matrilineal aspects of Obeah.

Kincaid makes a distinction between female empowerment gotten from Spirit and the power achieved through rebellion. The power of Obeah resides in the collective and the matrilineal line. The power of resistance resides in Annie herself. She cannot make it through her rebellion without Obeah. Likewise, she cannot retrieve her African spirit without having fully rebelled against her mother. She needed to use both of the

tools bequeathed to her through her matrilineal line: the grandmother's spiritual tools and the mother's physical tools. In this way, the reader sees the fragmented pieces of Annie come together.

“...Ma Chess would come into my bed with me and stay until I was myself - whatever that had come to be by then... I would lie on my side, curled up like a little comma, and Ma Chess would lie next to me, curled up like a bigger comma into which I fit” (Kincaid: 126).

She found that within the arms of the African spirit she fits. From that point on, Annie begins to make sense of herself and to herself. She begins to understand her mother. She can begin to understand her physical world, something that she would have been unable to do without access to spiritual understanding first. Obeah empowers women living in a male-dominated society by way of the network it offers. Obeah provides the means for women to strengthen their bond with other women and strengthen their trust in themselves.

4 Conclusion

A theoretical debate which is engaged by this text is the debate around the concept of the 'Other'. In *Annie John*, Jamaica Kincaid, explores the 'other', a concept which is pervasive in Caribbean writing, both academic and literary. The 'other' describes fragmentation along racial, ethnic, political and spiritual lines. In *Annie John*, the "other" is a living African spirit and a living paradox. These separate parts are integrated through resistance and rebellion. However, as Iain Chambers points out, this notion of "the other," as put forth by the colonial powers, who Chambers calls the "center", only serves to ground the dominating powers in their false assumption that they continue to be the center. The voices of those living in what he dubs "the periphery" are now being heard in "the center" - the large metropolises of the current/former colonial powers. He calls for a new framework, one which replaces this archaic standard. Its creation is dependent on an understanding that incompleteness and fragmentation will always exist (Chambers: 69-74). Kincaid shows that individual and collective unification as a path to social, political and spiritual freedom is a very difficult one to achieve for most Caribbean people, because they continue to accept and uphold dominant colonial and neocolonial standards. Obeah is the vehicle which allows Annie John to reclaim and embrace those parts of her which had become so fragmented that she could no longer function. Obeah is Annie's path to understanding the concept of the 'other'. Kincaid questions through *Annie John* if unification of the "other" is possible, and she shows that it is not. Through resistance in the material world Annie John is able to open herself up to the spiritual world and thus achieves, not unification, but rather a balance between that which is African and that which is European. Through the exploration of Annie's matrilineal line, Kincaid also shows

that there is more than one path to achieve this balance, that it is a highly individualistic process. Kincaid through her characters lets the reader in to see the life of one young girl who lives (for many readers) in different culture. These complex themes Kincaid writes about, however specific to the Caribbean, certainly reflect the importance of keeping the spirit of one's heritage alive and integrated. These are, after all, human experiences, which most people can relate to, whether living in the Caribbean or beyond, whether female or male.

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THERE'S ALWAYS THE OTHER SIDE: AGENCY AND AUTHORITY IN CREOLE INITIATION NARRATIVE

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West African societies may be described as conservative and traditional, but - as with Sanford Budick's description of a Western sublime that brings its transmitters outside cultural tradition in order to revitalize and inherit it - they challenge notions of what conservatism and tradition might mean. A fundament of West African societies has been initiatory sequestering in wilderness, where the traveler faces tests, undoing and redoing the psyche in bush-schools of rebirth. Malidoma Some's Dagara elders' advice - "Go and let yourself be swallowed.... be swallowed into the wilderness" (Budick, 2000: 308-9) - resonates across the Atlantic with the grandfather of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: "[L]et 'em swoller you till they vomit" (Ellison: 14). A strategic agency and authority may well arise from entry into dreaded gulfs, allowing oneself to be consumed by the other to access the other's viscera or secrets.

Throughout the black Atlantic the orphan journey into wilderness prepares the undone/remade seeker for birth into new modes of kinship and congregation. While the orphan tale crossed the Atlantic to assist in initiatory reassembly of ritual family throughout the plantation Americas, let's turn to a Senegambian (Wolof) model, collected in Kesteloot & M'bodj's *Contes et mythes Wolof* (pp. 24-31), for precedent. In this tale of initiatory travel, a stepmother sends her dead cowife's daughter (Kumba) on an infanticidal task: the washing of a calabash spoon in the Atlantic - a dangerous journey during the slave trade. Orphan Kumba brings certain means into the bush: what Bahamians would call the "brought-upsy" instilled by her dead mother, which gives orphan Kumba a fear-overcoming sense of composure and ritual respect - allowing her to navigate frightening wonders in her path, offer respectful greetings in the face of the dread unknown, and receive wild gifts of the spirit. She ably handles a number of unusual tests and tasks, and the devouring wilderness transforms into a sacred grove of initiation where Kumba encounters a disfigured crone (one eyed, one-armed, one-legged) known throughout West Africa as the initiatory herbalist (think of the Yoruba Osain via the descriptions of Robert Farris Thompson or Lydia Cabrera). Keeping composure upon meeting the godmothering crone disfigured by frequentation of sublime encounter, orphan Kumba receives three magic eggs, which when burst

properly on the path home, provide the riches that crown the orphan's newfound status. Of course, the stepmother soon sends her own spoiled daughter into the bush, and this initiation goes awry as the inflexible bad egg can't "give and take" in the spiritual realm, can't abandon preconceptions of normalcy, and ridicules all she sees. Vultures consume the eviscerated failed initiate whose calabash won't wash clean and who misuses her eggs.

So what to make then of the task of washing our calabashes in the Atlantic? Yoruba Ifa priest Kolawole Ositola speaks of initiating or "reborning" folk who have found their lives "shattered... like a broken calabash" (Drewal, 1992: 72). As fruit and container, the calabash is a symbol of women's birthing powers, and such containers guard ritual fundamentals from the gaze of the uninitiated. It is generally women too - or men who have become woman in initiation (since possession priests are often 'brides' of the spirits) who serve as vessels of a spirit: becoming mount or "horse of the god" (Drewal: 183). The story of Kumba sent to wash her calabash in the Atlantic serves not simply to pressure "girls to conform to the model of the exemplary, submissive woman" as Christiane Owusu-Sarpong remarks of a Ghanaian variant of the tale (p. 347). These tales serve as a generic tale of all initiation, modeling open-eyed (Wolof *hippikat*) responses to the wildest material and spiritual realities. We are all invited to become Kumba, and then to foster others. If the calabash is a womb-sign, it also holds our heads' rites of passage. And if the word *orisha* literally means "head-calabash" as Judith Gleason insists (p. 4), then the washing of our heads in *orisha* or spirit initiation - the washing of the calabash - is a baptismal rebirthing and reaffiliation. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, "all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings" (pp. 276, 277).

It can hardly be surprising to see the orphan tale repeatedly narrated in a New World plantation system that was a veritable wilderness on the other side of an abyssal Atlantic: a world in which humanity was orphaned, kinship in need of rerouting, internal authority - and even the language to speak it - a dangerous invention. In meeting her stunningly disfigured spiritual parent in Louisiana, orphan Kumba accepts the one promise demanded of her: "you must promise me not to laugh at anything which you will see" (Fortier, 1895: 117). No matter the strange wonders she encounters, the traveler responds with greeting and open-eyed respect. No questions. No slack-jawed wonder. No spilling of secrets. Kumba offers a model of flexibility and cosmopolitanism as stranger in a strange land, and receives food and fostering in return. In this tale's reassembly of an orphaned authority in the face of systems that deny Afro-creole authority, what we see is a cosmopolitanism from below, really a basilectal cosmopolitanism in a tale I have tracked from Senegal, Gambia, Ghana, and Nigeria to Louisiana, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Florida, the Bahamas, St. Kitts, and South Carolina.

As even a cursory online search of the Slave Registries of Former British Colonial Dependencies reveals, Kumba traveled the Atlantic. With approximately 160 different enslaved women registered under the name Cumba in Jamaica, 30 in Antigua, 46 in St. Vincent, 40 in Grenada & Carriacou (along with a slaveholder in Grenada named Cumba Moore), 9 in Trinidad, 30 in Tobago, 22 in Berbice (Guyana), and 30 in Barbados [with over two hundred Coomba(h)s listed there as a surnames], Kumba really traveled. In an Emancipation Day address Merle Collins reminded Grenadians of a newspaper listing from 1823 in which Cumba, her two daughters, son, and two granddaughters were advertised “merely for want of money.”

Kumba’s initiation tale navigates challenges she and her enslaved daughters faced in their efforts to sustain agency in plantation societies. On St. Kitts, ‘The Good Child and the Bad’ restores Kumba’s narrative of brought-upsy in telling of Cinderella’s night journey to the Johnson River to wash a drop of mouse blood from her mistress’s punch bowl (Parsons, *Folklore of the Antilles*, Vol. 2, 367-69). At every mile along the journey Cinderella encounters a ‘zion’, until finally she meets a ten-head zion and is granted passage. Although collector Elsie Clews Parsons interprets ‘zion’ as a creole pronunciation of ‘giant’, let us insist on the Zion-encounter here: the notion that in her discerning openness an African Cinderella has allowed herself to be swallowed up by the Zion experience and by the name of the orphan of European folklore. Cinderella shows herself to be a daughter of Kumba’s brought-upsy when she makes it past the ten-head zion, meets the initiating crone, greets her respectfully as “Granny”, scrubs her back (which cuts Cinderella’s fingers “like a nutmeg grater”), cooks the single grain of rice and the bit of hambone, is kind to the woman’s cat, and takes the proper eggs given to her. The eggs, of course, busted correctly, give Cinderella riches, a lovely house and garden (with no Prince Charming as initiatory sign or object here). When the hard-hearted stepmother finally passes by the new Zion & crone-won abode, Cinderella enjoys her recognition scene: “You don’ know me, Cinderella, what you done dat wicked evil to?” (Parsons: 368). A transformed Cinderella has survived the plantation’s infanticidal tasks and set up a protected Zion-house in contact with Kumba’s bush crone. But when the stepmother gets her own daughter to kill a mouse, daub the mistress’s punch bowl with blood, and go on the zion-encounter, she gets devoured by the ten-head zion. The tale insists “all dat was God work”, offers judgement on the stepmother, and questions a world of punch-bowl owners who would send a girl to her death to wash a daub of (menstrual) blood.

Clearly it was not just the ‘bad-egg’ who was swallowed up by the slave trade. Kumba’s initiate brought-upsy helped her survive encounter with murderous wilderness forces, helped foster reaffiliations within plantation societies. Kumba’s tale traveled particularly well through Franco-creole narrative vessels, navigating countercultures of modernity. Lodged within these tales are the mechanisms whereby the enslaved evaded reduction to consumable chattel and insisted on remaining

consuming subjects within a social order they had constructed. Leonora Sansay's travel novel of Haiti, *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo* (1808), offers key counterpoint in a Euro-creole tale of superabundance gone awry, witnessing initiations into capitalism's cannibal culture:

“One lady, who had a beautiful negro girl continually about her person, thought she saw some symptoms of *tendresse* in the eyes of her husband, and all the furies of jealousy seized her soul.

She ordered one of her slaves to cut off the head of the unfortunate victim, which was instantly done. At dinner her husband said he felt no disposition to eat, to which his wife, with the air of a demon, replied, perhaps I can give you something that will excite your appetite; it has at least had that effect before. She rose and drew from a closet the head of Coomba. The husband, shocked beyond expression, left the house and sailed immediately for France, in order never again to behold such a monster.” (Sansay: 70)

In an Atlantic world wherein consumer desires must remain stimulated in competition, the planter-patriarch has lost appetite and the Euro-creole wife is consumed by a demonic jealousy over the girl who had been her beauty accessory. The plantation world views “tenderness” as a going soft, since only the hardest of players can keep the Cinderella mansion. And Coomba, isolated here from ritual community, exists only in a tale of the masters' transformations, as a dish to be consumed in their gumbo. In Sansay's repetition of Euro-creole urban folklore there is no one to foster Coomba. Since there is no sacred grove within this tale's imaginary, she can aspire only to becoming a copy of Cinderella, a sexually-hyped, accessoried princess of color in the masters' world of punch bowls.

I would like to close with a look at how two orphan novels engage this initiatory terrain. In Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco* the stakes are high for the squatter community of Texaco on the outskirts of Fort-de-France. An urban planner has been sent along a road named Pénérante West “to renovate Texaco,” but “that really meant: to raze it” (Chamoiseau: 21). The razing of local memory and community constructions would reduce Texaco residents to inhabiting the projects of Fort-de-France, itself a subsidized French “project.” Texaco first gives this urban planner the treatment Jean Rhys's Tia gave Antoinette: a third eye opened on the forehead by a stone. His wound is treated by a shamanic urban maroon who inhabits a remnant green space “covered with impenetrable vegetation” (Chamoiseau: 23) beneath an old Texaco oil reservoir, and he is then taken to the community's founding mother, Marie Sophie Laborieux, who wages “the decisive battle for Texaco's survival” (Chamoiseau: 27), using narrative to penetrate and initiate the urban planner (and the reader) capable of being swallowed up by Texaco's creole cosmopolitanism from below.

In *Texaco* “the city is danger.” (p. 346). It rises “monstrously, multinational, transnational, supranational, cosmopolitan - a real Creole nutcase in a way, and becomes the sole dehumanized structure of the human species” (p. 356). Chamoiseau draws on Afro-Atlantic cultures of resistance to narrate “a counter city in the city” (p. 361), a “Creole city [that] speaks a new language in secret and no longer fears Babel” (p. 220). Beneath the old gas reservoirs of *Texaco* lies a remnant sacred grove that offers its own fossil fuels: “a magical clump of trees that the *Texaco* béké had left untouched, probably because of stories about the she-devils around there” (p. 265). This grove of remnant impenetrability, inhabited by an old Afro-creole “Mentoh” is an energy source beneath the reservoirs of global corporate energy. We meet Marie Sophie fighting for “our very own *Texaco*, a company in the business of survival” (p. 24). And from contact with the fossil energy of this grove, “in the green soul of our *Texaco*” (p. 291), laboring “to better fill myself with the gasoline smell” (p. 295), Marie-Sophie finds “my life’s gasoline” (p. 312). She turns to a Mentoh who offers initiate crowning: “Find yourself a secret name and fight with it.” (p. 294). The secret name, “TEXACO,” braces her with a “Faith [that] is wonderful because it brings a momentum from inside when everything else is petrified” (p. 370).

The primary struggle of *Texaco* is two-fold: to move things in such a way that City “admitted our existence” (p. 381) and in fact “gobbled us,” but also to plumb language, memory, and nature itself “to conquer ourselves in the Creole unsaid which we had to name - in ourselves and for ourselves - until we came into our own” (p. 390). *Texaco* is deeply invested in the initiatory possibility of authorizing creole forms. It reminds us that no matter how we may have been trained to read or take up our disciplines in school, there is always another side of perspective. With the urban planner, slowed by a rock-wound to the forehead (as readers are often slowed by the text’s narrative opacity and errantry), we encounter a fostering authority here, “the Old Woman who gave me new eyes” (p. 165). The urban planner’s new eyes depend upon a becoming-woman of the creole novel...as we see in one of the novel’s fabulous tales of wounding vision:

“Each time her monthly dew gave her a wash to do, the dreamer went down to the ravine where no one ever went. There she listened to the song only women imagine. This is not a wound that bleeds, the mermaid would sing, but the divine window that women still have on life...” (Chamoiseau: 145)

Texaco would keep the divine window open, the washing of a calabash or blood-daubed punch bowl, the receiving of eggs from a mentor-crone of the bush, the initiations into Afro-Atlantic praise housings and spirit housings that proved crucial to sustaining authority and reassembling genuinely cosmopolitan traditions and agency in the Americas

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys scripts a Euro-creole initiation tale. Antoinette is orphaned well before her mother's official death since her mother is socially and psychically dead, a zombie. The Martinican Christophine, the woman most capable of fostering the orphan, teaches Antoinette a song of initiatory challenge: "The little ones grow old, the children leave us, will they come back?" (Rhys: 11), its high note at "Adieu" quavering and breaking into creole broughtupside's meeting with the sublime: "Not adieu as we said it, but *a dieu*, which made more sense after all." (p. 11). In the much-debated pool scene with Tia - facing a sacred window they might share on life - Antoinette glimpses a dream of communion in the meal of boiled plantains eaten out of a common calabash with Tia. Antoinette, of course, soon reveals her incapacity for affiliation with Tia. She cannot imagine the other side of perspective when that other side is Afro-creole even as she would cling to her Euro-creole opacity in the arrogant face of the English Mr. Mason - "'None of you understand about us,' I thought" (Rhys: 18). The novel points to the other side of abyssal gulfs, the seemingly frivolous behaviors and fabulousities that the English cannot believe, all converging on Christophine, who - from the novel's first sentences - authorizes creole parallax perspective. Knowledge of this other side is largely projected by Antoinette (and Rhys) upon the body and behavior of Christophine, as in a scene of a cock sacrificed on an altar in Christophine's room: "Drop by drop the blood was falling into a red basin and I imagined I could hear it. No one had ever spoken to me about obeah - but I knew what I would find if I dared to look" (p. 18). There is a power in the blood here...a divine window on life imagined and never really known, shared, or dared. Antoinette says, "I wish I could tell him that out here is not at all like English people think it is" (p. 20). The knowledge from "out there" that Antoinette gains, "blood on my face, tears on hers [Tia's]" (p. 27) opens a wound Antoinette is incapable of turning into a third eye of the sublime, except as isolate madwoman in an English attic.

Antoinette moves in the princessy realm of Cinderella with her marriage to an unnamed Prince Charming, the Rochester of *Jane Eyre* referenced hereafter simply as the Man. There is still a chance for this sort of glass-slippered fairy tale initiation to work - marriage as initiation - if the Man can open to her world, be transculturated in Dominica's sublime grove of "extreme green" (p. 41). He experiences fever in exposure to other realities: "I am not myself yet" (p. 40). Of course, he seeks to recover the normative British male self of agency resistant to sublime marriage. Successful marriage, initiation, becoming, in this novel would depend upon healthy respect for the tutelage of Christophine: "Taste my bull's blood, master ...Not horse piss like the English madams drink" (p. 50). How make a man of him here, someone who could taste a woman's bull's blood - her open window on life - and be schooled by the one-armed, one-legged initiatrice of the bush? As we see him by the nutmeg pool with its "alien, disturbing, secret loveliness" that does not disclose: "it kept its

secret... What I see is nothing - I want what it hides" (p. 52), the Man seeks to possess the secret of Granbois without the initiatory sacrifice - the massacre of ego and its judgmental normativity.

The Man senses some of the limits of his knowing in Dominica - in the secreting of truth all around him, secrets teased, sung, signified. He cannot get a yes or no answer, only "a lot of nancy stories" (p. 59). Antoinette is unprepared to navigate either the nancy stories or Prince Charming. In response to Christophine's shrewd questioning of belief in English self-representation and authority, Antoinette dismisses the perspective of "this ignorant, obstinate old negro woman, who is not certain if there is such a place as England" (p. 67) but seeks Christophine's spirit-work. "So you believe in that tim-tim story about obeah, you hear when you so high?" (p. 67) Christophine asks. The text insists on the guarding of secrets from the disrespect of the naïve or uninitiated, guarding one's jewels, "Don't show it to him. Hide it away. Promise Me" (p. 69), not letting the Man clip your bird, not being "a leaky calabash" - one who "talk to everybody about what he hear" (p. 70). But Antoinette never develops or receives her secret, her jewels, bird, or calabash. She never becomes woman and loses her every name. Whatever chance Antoinette has for initiation is gone when she throws payment for erotic-work upon Christophine's bed, a payment of master-servant command. We get the cock-crow of betrayal, the knowledge that Antoinette is moving in a realm of "foolishness" for which she does not have proper respect (p. 70). Her disrespect for Christophine has been continual, revealing a damning broughtupsy: "shut up devil, damned black devil from Hell" (p. 81), as she says dismissively - and with a pent up, highly racialized rage - to her potential godmother of initiation.

Antoinette insists, "There is always the other side, always" (p. 77). It is this other-sidedness - and its gulfs - that Rhys's novel registers. Antoinette lacks broughtupsy to handle gulf-knowledge (known in Vodou as *konesans*), and those who could guide traversal of racialized gulfs are put in their racial place at critical moments. Not just Christophine and Tia, but also cousin Sandi, who offers the one (unrealized) possibility of male-affiliation in this novel. We should not, however, mistake the characters' failures (or even the author's) with a textual failure. Here is the cautionary tale of failed initiation and an opening into the gulf written in fire to light its readers' dark passage. *Wide Sargasso Sea* fosters vision of the need for other marriages and schoolings. And though the final summoning of Tia's and Christophine's spirits (as domestic help for the locked-in heroine who never quite escapes the hailings of her prefabricated ego) rings false, the gesture of finding life in rapport with death is an initiatory step. Real openings to the other side of every creole relation find scripting in the gaps of the novel, the silences, laughter, betrayals, unscripted possibilities. These scriptings open from wounds that bleed, from divine windows of the sublime - in an orphan writing - swallowed in an extreme green.

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DOES A THREAD OF MAGICAL REALISM PERVADE RODERICK WALCOTT'S *MALFINIS*?

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Leader: I heard it all before
A murder most foul
The pan with two hands and a human heart
A knotted mahaut rope (drum)
The cap found near the house (drum)
The small coffin in a hammock
Carried by four men
To Castries from Gros Islet (drum)
Its not news to me.

(Leader turns to leave)

(p. 324)¹

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Opening Statement

Robert Scholes proffers the term 'metafiction', to refer to a range of novels which seem to violate "standard novelistic expectations by drastic and sometimes highly effective experiments with subject matter, form, style, temporal sequence and fusions of the everyday, the fantastic, the mythical and the nightmarish, in renderings that blur traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic" (quoted in Ruch & Sellman, 2003). Magical realism, subsumed under this broader heading, is said to incorporate magical devices and/or magic in general within a believable (realist) story, without any disruption of the logic of the story. In general, magical realism has been associated with the prose fiction of writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Marquez, Gunter Grass and John Fowles. To dare to propose the little known St. Lucian play 'Malfinis' by deceased playwright Roderick Walcott (twin brother of Dr. Derek Walcott) may therefore seem preposterous. Members of the jury, I beg to defer. An analysis of 'Malfinis' begs the question: Does a thread of magical realism pervade Roderick Walcott's 'Malfinis'?

¹ All quotations are taken from the Caribbean Rhythms version of the play; the reference for that publication was not readily available.

Motion in limine

Magical realism has been described as a ‘postcolonial hangover’ in an apparent desire by ‘White’ to marginalize the fiction of “Other”. Some see magical realism as a *passé* literary trend while others have deemed the term too limiting to be considered a serious genre in itself. The polemics of these opposing views have led some to equate magical realism with fantasy, where a new universe is introduced to the reader, with its laws (natural as well as artificial), its regularities, its objects, its people and its forces. This fantastic world is described as a world which is completely different from ours, or which has enough differences so that the reader cannot understand it fully if it is not explained to him/her.

The evidence

Magic realism, although sometimes confused with or labeled as fantastic literature, is a genre which is characterized by “the mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic, bizarre and skillful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, arcane erudition, the elements of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable”.² Foreman writes that “magical realism, unlike the fantastic or the surreal, presumes that the individual requires a bond with the traditions and the faith of the community, that s/he is historically constructed and connected” (P. Gabrielle Foreman, quoted in Ríos, 1999). Leal continues in this vein, arguing that magical realism “confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts... [it] does not try to copy the surrounding reality... but to seize the mystery that breathes behind things” (Luis Leal, quoted in Ríos, 1999).

Leal’s arguments are supported by a number of other researchers of the genre who postulate that “the goal of magical realism is to combine the realistic with the fanciful in order to yield a singularly... unexpected richness of reality” which to proponents of this genre is “no less real than traditional realism”. Magic realism is said to be profuse with “images and narratives from religions, spirituality and metaphysical traditions; myth, folk tale, magic tales and traditions abound... [while] characters of the story consider magic as some usual possibility of their world. Its occurrences might be rare or even almost forgotten, but magic is nonetheless as serious a topic in these fictions as chemistry or quantum physics in our world” (quoted in Ríos, 1999). Simpkins encapsulates these arguments succinctly when he posits that Garcia Marquez seems to hold the view that “the magic text is, paradoxically, more realistic than the realist text” (Scott Simpkins, quoted in Ríos, 1999). Bearing Marquez’s summation in mind, but digressing from the traditionally held view that magic realism is a Latin American phenomenon, can ‘Malfinis’ be considered a true example of this genre?

² See “A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory”.

‘Malfinis’ (creole term for chicken hawk) or ‘The Heart of the Child’ reenacts the trial (in purgatory) of four men brought to justice for the hideous murder of a young boy, Rupert Mapp, which was said to have taken place in the village of Monchy, St. Lucia between 1902 and 1904. The action unfolds simultaneously in different settings. On the one hand, the Chorus recounts for us the trial in purgatory of the macabre event that took place previously on earth:

Chorus

Just near the junction of two roads
You’ll find Monchy; (guitar)
In the old days, a sugar mill
Like Roseau, Cul de Sac; (pause)
Here, in a clearing, near an old thatched hut
Beneath a samaan tree
Lay the poor body of Rupert Mapp
For one whole week-already decomposed,
It had not heart, its hands cut off,
The amputation by some skillful hand;
Not a bone was scraped or injured at the breast:
While there, inside the hut,
The heart and hands
Lay covered in a cooking pan! (p. 325)

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Here, there is no place for innocence until proven guilty; the audience becomes the jury, and pronounces an inevitable verdict on a horrible deed even before it hears the accused.

On the other hand, a flashback transposes the audience to earth, and we hear and see the perpetrators in real time as they plan and carry out the murder. The Chorus fills us in on the impetus of the act:

Chorus

First man: The house you see there covered with mud and branches belongs to him, St. Luce Leon. He is the owner of small property, a sugar mill at Monchy. He cannot read nor write. For many years he has not been in the best of health. He has sacrificed his body and the best years of his life in hard work, but life has not rewarded him, and business is not good. In his trouble and affliction he sends for a friend of his childhood, a man called Montoute Edmond, (guitar), a butcher at Monchy. This Montoute is a gardeur, a man who dabbles in herbs and potions, one who can see very far (p. 325-326).

For Caribbean peoples of African descent, the consultation with a ‘gardeur’³ or obeah man/woman, is a known and accepted occurrence even among the highly religious, as it is believed that he/she has the ability to transform the lives of those who seek his/her help. Ismond states that:

“According to the general belief, individuals who practice obeah engage in various evil and mysterious activities by virtue of certain powers they receive from the Devil. They use these powers mainly to work harm against their enemies, or for purposes of worldly gain. To secure these powers, they have made a pact with the Devil - which means, effectively, that their souls are contracted to him. In a play entitled *Malfinis* (1966), Roderick Walcott deals with the authentic case of three malefactors who set out to fulfill such a pact by tearing out the heart of a child live.” (Ismond, 1987: 32)

Montoute boasts his superior (supernatural) powers when he tells St. Luce:

I know many things, my friend. What I cannot understand is why men must suffer poverty in this world, when all they need to gain riches is gain a little knowledge, and learn to exercise the power of their will. I have all this in my book, St. Luce. It is there for all who want to see, to leave this suffering and this misery (p. 328).

Montoute goes on to remind St. Luce:

Remember when we was small, St. Luce? How before every crop there was talk of making sure the harvest was good and some would dance while others would pray (328).

St. Luce, now reminiscing, responds:

Yes, they said the mill must have the body of a boy before crop, to make the harvest good (drum). They say it up to now... (p. 328)

To which Montoute retorts:

Not the body, St. Luce... (p. 328)

At which point the Chorus chimes in:

But the heart of a child! (cymbals) (p. 328)

St. Luce’s ignorance in these matters relative to the learned Montoute is revealed when he asks incredulously:

Is that so? (p. 328)

³ In Creole, the word is spelt “gadè”.

And is informed by Montoute:

No, not the body. The body is to cut. The heart and hands is what you use. The head you must bury under the mill (p. 328).

Montoute, sympathizing with St. Luce's plight, states:

It is a thing that worry me all my life, St. Luce, and the book give me the answer-it is this-for your sugar mill to prosper, you must find the sacrifice (p. 329).

St. Luce, faced with the reality of the abrahamic sacrifice to be performed for the sake of his prosperity and clearly shaken, asks Montoute:

Do you mean – a boy, Montoute? (p. 329)

To which the learned 'gardeur' responds with finality:

It is the only way (guitar). (p. 329)

And outlines his plan:

I have thought of this night for a long time. There is first the question of securing the boy...it will be useless to look for one ...in any part of this island for that matter. There would be too much talk of a missing child. Now, I already write to a man I know in Barbados, and he tell me such a boy is available, with no one to take care of him, about 12 to 13 years of age... (p.329).

Prior to imparting this information however, Montoute admonishes St. Luce:

Very well my friend. Now what I am going to say to you, I never tell anyone in my whole life before- so you must guard this secret with your life. There have powers stronger than us outside this world who will bear witness to our testimony, and we will be indebted to them as long as we live. Swear to me that this will be between us only you hear? (p. 329)

It is a warning that epitomizes the intertwining of time and space such that "time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality" (Angel Flores, quoted in Ríos, 1999). The repercussions of not heeding this ominous warning are felt later when it becomes necessary to invite others to be part of the dastardly deed, to the end that the secret is no longer held between Montoute and St. Luce only and the Devil draws his bloody ransom.

Closing argument

Ladies and gentlemen of the Jury, I thank you for your patience in sifting through the evidence presented in this literary trial. The question still remains: is there perhaps a thread of magical realism in Roderick Walcott's 'Malfinis'? The media in St. Lucia reported the crime as a true case, as with Gabriel García Márquez's 'Chronicle of a Death Foretold'. The perpetrators were tried and hung for their horrible deed. Yet, the trial on earth left many questions unanswered, as each man told a different tale against the other. In purgatory, the 'Leader' who prosecutes the case, reports to the transient court that the "men had their separate trials, were executed on a common scaffold, [and] their bodies buried in the same grave behind cold prison walls" (p. 357). He reveals that the "malefactors had been summoned from their place of expiation, to stand before the mirror of their minds "to ease the burden of their troubled souls". The purgatorial trial finds justification in the fact that "there were more bones to be dug":

The Purpose for the Deed
The lies of Mutilators
The action of the Crime
And the Testimony of One (p. 354).

Purgatory reveals the Testimony of the blind man who did not testify on earth for fear of his life, having lost his eyes at the hands of the 'malefactors' who he came upon carrying out the hideous crime and who he claimed dug out his eyes on recognizing that there was a witness. The Leader questions the veracity of the old man's testimony in purgatory and seemingly enraged by his damning revelations, curses him:

May you be damned forever for giving testimony before this court! (p. 357)

He then speaks to the seeming uselessness of the proceedings of the kangaroo court:

Oh no my friends, this case should never have been called, these bones should never have been dug. Let us return them to their place of burial, and let the malefactors linger here, in their original place (p. 357).

On being questioned about his own identity, he unmask himself as the ghost of Montoute Edmond, and in a macabre twist to a trial he saw as a caricature of justice, presents the "heart of a child" which had never been found on earth, to a cacophony of cymbals, the gasping of the Chorus and the screams of the old man.

Members of the Jury, does the trial in purgatory reflect our real world? Does the trial set out to "confront reality in an effort to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts..."? Might Roderick Walcott's 'Malfinis' now exhumed, be considered for a comprehensive autopsy? Can it be said that a thread of magical realism pervades the play? The prosecution rests its case.

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BOLOM SYMBOLISM IN DEREK WALCOTT, DIONNE BRAND, AND ROBERT ANTONI

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In Caribbean folklore, a bolom is the spirit of an aborted fetus which returns to exact revenge on the living for terminating its life cycle. With their large heads, red eyes, and bodies composed of only skin and bones, boloms lurk in the dark and lure victims to their deaths with the plaintive cries of infants. West Indian writers engage boloms consciously as emblems of an abused or aborted national identity. However, this forlorn fetal spirit also resonates with unconscious echoes of an abused and aborted African Caribbean spirituality, violently submerged by the rational/scientific worldview of the European colonizer. I have argued elsewhere that despite this submersion of African Caribbean spirituality in West Indian literature, West Indian writers have selectively raised spirituality from its submerged state to the surface text in order to serve their social realist goals (*African Caribbean Spirituality in West Indian Novels*). Whether they vilified it as superstition or exploited it as anti-colonial symbolism, social realist West Indian writers have in effect arrested the growth of African-derived spirituality in literature much like Caribbean subjects obstruct the bolom's life cycle in folklore. I have called this arrested growth of African Caribbean spirituality a distortion of spirit. And much like the bolom, who survives its own death and haunts the living, African Caribbean spirituality, has often defied its submerged confinement in the subtext to haunt and disrupt the social realistic surface text. Not until the advent of magical realism in West Indian literature was African Caribbean spirituality released from the submerged subtext and allowed to transit freely as an ontological reality on the surface text. When African Caribbean spirituality finally claimed its place as a quotidian reality in the West Indian magical realist text, the bolom debuted as the symbol of social realism's distortion of this spirituality. In this paper, I trace bolom imagery as it evolves from a tortured, unfulfilled African Caribbean spirituality to a symbol of Caribbean spiritual and creative redemption in the works of Derek Walcott, Dionne Brand, and Robert Antoni.

Traditional African worldviews recognize a spiritual dimension which actively interacts with the material realm of reality. Consequently, members of these

traditional communities consciously strive for psychic wholeness by accessing the spiritual dimension for an ultimate truth, knowledge which is not attainable through rational and empirical structures of thought. This mindset meets the objectives of achieving balance and harmony in a cosmology that assumes what Marimba Ani in *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* describes as “the interrelatedness of all being”(Ani, 2007: 99) in the universe. In contrast, the European worldview is characterized by the banishment of spirit and the predominance of rational-scientific knowledge. The European worldview conceptualizes spirituality in polar opposition to logic and empiricism, an antagonism in which spirit is perceived as an irrational threat to scientific rationalism.

The European banishment of the sacred and the spiritual from existence resulted in a worldview in disharmony and a human self in disequilibrium. Ani calls this distortion of the spirit by the rational order a “sublimated form of violence” (Ani, 2007: 562) that produces a “deformed” ego (p. 559); a European ego in disequilibrium, which longs for spiritual harmony and fulfillment. Because the authentic spiritualities of the colonized communities constituted a threat to the Europeans’ rationalist legitimating claims to conquer, the colonists proceeded to devalue the spirit in their colonies. This devaluation of spirit became a powerful tool for the imposition of European cultural hegemony (p. 569).

Given that spirituality was inextricable from African ways of knowing and living, every aspect of African culture had to be repressed in order to impose the European worldview. The devaluation of spirit was effected through colonial institutions, especially on those colonial subjects who strove for middle-class mimicry of the colonizer. Consequently, middle-class West Indian novelists suffered the same incompleteness and the longing for the spirituality that colonizers had repressed in themselves. This suppressed longing for spiritual fulfillment and equilibrium nonetheless managed sporadically to disrupt the surface of social realist texts with its unruly magic before the apparatus of realism could contain it and, as Rhonda Cobham indicates in *Of Boloms, Mirrors, and Monkeymen*, harness it to social realistic goals. Although West Indian writers reclaimed the African culture in order to create a distinct identity in opposition to that of the colonizer, they continued to suppress the transcendental or magical aspects of African Caribbean spirituality. They had internalized the European rationalist embarrassment about spirituality in general and endured the additional embarrassment of having African Caribbean spirituality specifically labeled as barbaric superstition.

Despite this embarrassment, West Indian novelists could not ignore spirituality if they were striving for local color, and therefore took an anthropological approach to African Caribbean religions and spiritual beliefs, which separated the ‘real’ from the spiritual. As local color, African Caribbean spirituality was vilified and exoticized in the works of early writers, such as Herbert de Lisser, Cyril L. R. James, and Edgar

Mittelholzer. Later nationalist writers, such as George Lamming and Earl Lovelace, recognized the historical role of African Caribbean spirituality for its resistance to oppression and therefore engaged it as anti-colonial symbolism. However, once the transcendental or magical events served the social realist purpose of recuperating the lost African identity and its resistance to colonialism, African Caribbean spirituality was again subsumed to the lower depths of the text. The bolom embodies this distortion of African Caribbean spirituality in West Indian narrative.

The bolom makes an early literary appearance in West Indian magical realism, in which transcendental events are finally released from the subtext and allowed to surface as ontological realities rather than mere political symbols. Derek Walcott introduces Bolom, the spirit of an aborted fetus, in *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*. Neither alive nor dead (Walcott, 1970: 98), Bolom desperately longs for incarnation: "Ask [the Devil] for my life!/O God, I want all this/To happen to me!" (p. 163). In contrast, the living characters in the play try to convince Bolom that "it is luckiest/ Never to be born/ To the horrors of this [colonial] life" (p. 96). Bolom's abortion has left it vulnerable to The White Devil/Planter. Much like Prospero with Ariel, The White Devil has made Bolom his servant and forces it to collude in his colonial project; a collusion which for Bolom constitutes a betrayal to itself and its own people. This betrayal suggests the distortion of spirit by the West Indian social realist writers who engaged spirituality as political symbolism. Bolom's yearning to be born into the colonial world suggests that, like the nationalist West Indian writers, it longs for both spiritual fulfillment and the material fulfillment of participation in the nationalist struggle. Bolom embodies the longed-for African Caribbean spirituality submerged, but allowed to surface in order to subvert (neo)colonialism in later nationalist narratives. Once African Caribbean spirituality is 'born' to the social realist surface of novels such as *Season of Adventure* and *The Wine of Astonishment* in order to fulfill its political role, it is then restrained and forced, like Bolom, into its limbo state, neither dead nor alive, and waiting to be fully incarnated in magical realism.

Walcott's bolom resembles the one in Dionne Brand's *At the Full and Change of the Moon* in the sense that it is also a tragic fetal spirit. However, in this novel, Bola, the first protagonist, has to abort her bolom because it shares the opinion of Walcott's characters that it is better never to be born. Successively killing the embryos next in line to be born, it follows in the footsteps of its grandmother, Marie Ursule, whose despair has compelled her to plan and execute a mass suicide among the enslaved population. Her daughter, Bola, whose expansive, life-embracing sensitivity Marie Ursule recognizes, and which prevents her from including Bola in the mass suicide, must abort this obstacle to her destiny as the matriarch of an African-Trinidadian diaspora.

Bola's bolom emblemizes Wilson Harris's concept of the voidings of spirit as they are explained by Paget Henry in *Caliban's Reason: Introducing African Caribbean*

Philosophy. Henry conceptualizes these voidings in terms of traditional African existentialism and the role of spirit in human ego formation and ego collapse. Initially ignorant of its spiritual dimension, the ego constitutes itself within the structures of rationalism and those of the everyday rational world. Spirit generously lets itself be ignored by the ego up to a certain point in order to allow it time and space to generate itself. Believing in its own agency and self-sufficiency, the ego closes itself to spirit, but at a certain point before complete closure, spirit intervenes to educate the ego of its spiritual dimension. The ego resists, which provokes a crisis. Spirit paralyzes the ego in what many may interpret as a psychological crisis or breakdown. The only way out of this impasse is for the ego to take a leap of faith, to accept spirit's challenge, and surrender to it. Once this happens, spirit opens up possibilities for creative genesis and fulfillment. However, the ego has to remain conscious of its spiritual constitution and open to eruptions of spirit if it is not to experience further voidings. Harris proposes that Caribbean subjects treat the traumas of slavery and colonialism as if they were voidings of spirit, challenges which, when faced and overcome, open up possibilities in the arts of the imagination, which can heal colonial wounds.

In *At the Full and Change of the Moon*, Bola's bolom represents West Indian creativity locked in a spiritual void by the embryonic European rationalist worldview. As the embodiment of the world-affirming, spiritually participatory African worldview, Bola overcomes the void and continues her creative destiny. Although her progeny will continue to be blocked by the rationalist closure to spirit and will espouse the European rationalist worldview, spirit eventually returns in Bola's great-great-granddaughter, Bola II, who inherits the traditional African worldview. Bola II once again espouses the open, spiritually participatory traditional African worldview. She rejects modern materialism in order to gain access to the spiritual dimension.

Boloms also play important roles as symbols of colonial traumas, which Harris proposes that we treat as voidings of spirit on the collective level, in Antoni's two novels, *Divina Trace* and *Blessed is the Fruit*. In *Divina Trace*, the frogchild/bolom, which withstands an inordinate amount of violence, represents colonial history. The bolom/frogchild not only embodies historical trauma and Harrisian voidings of spirit; he also functions as a reenactment of the Amerindian Yurokon myth and the Carib bone flute. Harris ascribes great symbolic significance to Yurokon and the cannibalism associated with the bone flute.

Harris begins to note his intuitive grasp of the Carib bone-flute in his 1985 'Note on the Genesis of *The Guyana Quartet*.' In his 1998 'New Preface to *Palace of the Peacock*', he further elaborates. The bone-flute originated in the Carib ritual of consuming a morsel of the flesh from the limb of a vanquished enemy. As the Carib warrior consumed this flesh, he also imbibed knowledge of the enemies' next plans for a counterattack. Furthermore, for Harris, consuming enemy flesh produced multiple communions: between conquistadores and conquered, and between the

conquistadors—both European and Carib. This entails a sharing of psychic space in which the Europeans realized their guilt toward Amerindians and Africans, and Caribs in turn became aware of their guilt in the conquest of Arawaks. The enemy's limb was then fashioned into a bone-flute, which Harris associates with the Carib god, Yurokon, conceived by Harris as the child of the doomed Guianese Caribs. For Harris, Yurokon thus was born of this "bitter self-knowledge" (Harris, 1999: 54) as the Caribs in consuming enemy flesh, suddenly realized the horror of their own twin lust for conquest.

The crew members in *Palace of the Peacock* enact a similar self-revelation when Wishrop's body is eaten by perai: "Wishrop's flesh had been picked clean by perai like a cocerite seed in everyone's mouth. They shuddered and spat their own - and his - blood and death wish. It had been forcibly and rudely ejected. And this taste and forfeiture of self-annihilation bore them into the future on the wheels of life" (Harris, 1960: 102). As the crew members taste the flesh of their own collusion with Wishrop's conquistatorial lust, they reject it and spit it out. This constitutes an initial stage in the rejection of their cruelty to the folk; a cruelty which destroys them as well as their victims. The realization points them to their spiritual redemption. Through his conceptualization of the Yurokon/bone flute myth, Harris concretizes his belief in the need to share guilt in the colonial project. This redistribution of guilt, in which the victims of conquest as well as the conquistadors admit their collusion in the colonial project, is for Harris the only way to overcome the reactionary treadmill and the victim/victor stasis in which (post)colonial societies are subsumed.

The mythic cannibalism of the bone flute, with its allusions to the Catholics' cannibalism of the body of Christ in the Eucharist, is reenacted in *Divina Trace* when Granny Myna drops the frogchild into a callaloo which is eaten by the entire village. This act of cannibalism reverberates with echoes of the shared guilt in Harris's bone flute, especially since, as Cobham reminds us, we have glimpsed reflections of our own distorted bolom/frog/monkey faces in the center mirror page (Cobham, 2002: 39). In addition, the mirror page, with its distortions, suggests to the Caribbean readers that we are the result of a deforming series of narratives and ideologies. Recognizing this not only allows us to lay our own self-loathing to rest, but also allows for a new creative possibility for the frogchild/bolom. This spiritual creative possibility is articulated by Johnny Domingo, the narrator: "in that frogchild I had suddenly seen my self, my other self Not the imagined I but the I of my imagination: the imagining I" (Antoni, 1992: 170). Despite its elusiveness as it swims away from the narrator, the bolom/frogchild represents the Caribbean creative capacity despite its horrific origins; the ability to create a hybrid society and culture from trauma. Like Harris, Antoni, a white West Indian, urges us not to blame the colonizer only, but to recognize that we share the responsibility for our problems; a proposal which is very difficult for black West Indians to accept.

Thus the frogchild, like Walcott's and Brand's Boloms, represents the historical traumas which produce Harris's voidings of spirit on the collective level. If we (and West Indian literature), like Johnny, confront these voidings and overcome our initial resistance by letting in the spirit, creative possibilities for fulfillment are opened. As the boloms or miscarriages of colonial history, Caribbean subjects and narrative have the ability to open up to spirit by cannibalistically consuming our own biases, much like the Caribs with their bone flute and the Corpus Christi consumption of the "callalooed" frogchild/bolom. Elaborating on the eating metaphor, consuming the bolom/frogchild also represents Harris's concept of digesting historical traumas, which Henry describes as "the exploring and understanding of the significance of a particular void for the growth, transformation, and fulfillment of the ego" (Henry, 2000: 101-102).

The tenuous affirmation of the bolom/frogchild's potential to generate creative and spiritual fulfillment in *Divina Trace* is resolutely asserted in Antoni's next novel, *Blessed is the Fruit*. If the frogchild in *Divina Trace* is the national embodiment of the colonial rape of Divina Magdalena, the Bolom in *Blessed is the Fruit* is the embryonic promise of national redemption born to "twin" sisters, one black and the other white. Vel's pregnant body is the "five-hundred-year-old busted-up body" of the Caribbean under the colonial order (Antoni, 1998: 398). Bolom is the unborn child "who would not *be* thrown. Who refused, utterly to go away. To die: *you* Bolom. Willing to defy your own fate. *Our* collective fate. History. Faith" (p. 28). Thus Bolom, the "blessed fruit" of Vel's womb, constitutes the redemptive force of the Caribbean.

In conclusion, the bolom as a symbol of Caribbean spiritual and political trauma began as the embodiment of social realism's suppression and distortion of African Caribbean spirituality, which longs for fulfillment in *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*. As a tragic fetal spirit in *At the Full and Change of the Moon*, the lethal bolom marks the spiritual impasse into which the European rationalist worldview locked Caribbean creativity. In Antoni's works, the bolom merges with Christian symbolism as it points to Caribbean creativity and the potential for social and racial harmony. Thus boloms evolve from colonial traumas and Harrisian voidings of spirit to emblems of redemption, projections of the hope for a future Caribbean in racial peace and spiritual fulfillment.

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**PLURI-IDENTIFICATION, LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, AND
EXPRESSION**

POETICS OF INTIMATE VOICES: EXPLORING IDENTITY POLITICS IN US VIRGIN ISLANDS' POETRY

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“... Caribbean literature cannot free itself totally from the multiethnic society upon which it floats, and it tells us of its fragmentation and instability”.
(Benítez- Rojo, 1996: p. 27)

My interest in US Virgin Islands' poetry as a rhetorical medium for the remolding of identities does not lean on any terminal perspective. Rather, I take cue from Antonio Benítez-Rojo's generalized proposition cited above to launch a provisional excursion into the poetic landscape of the United States Virgins Islands (USVI) toward understanding some of the rhetorical flourishes underpinning the politics of identity in these islands. The texts used for this paper include *Seasoning for the Mortar: Virgin Islanders Writing in The Caribbean Writer* Volumes 1-15 (2004), *Collage III: Poets of St. Croix* (1993), *Collage IV, Poetry from St. Croix* (1996), and *Archaeology of Names* (1993). My selection of these particular texts is based on the fact that it is possible to get a partial glimpse into the nuanced complexities of the rhetorical paraphernalia engaged through poetry to mask or to fully enunciate the performance of USVI identities in view of Benítez-Rojo's claim that the literatures of the Caribbean “tells us of [the] fragmentation and instability” (p. 27). In the case of the USVI this fragmentation and instability is more problematic because of their location at the interstices of all the cultures of the wider Caribbean and the continental USA. This frustrates any attempts at a reasonable formulation of identity theory. In view of this, I contend that USVI poetry is one of the best ways to seek to understand the cultural politics of identity in these islands.

Poetry provides a sturdy epistemology of necessity toward cultural resistance and recuperation of self in the struggle against former and current epistemologies of control and exclusion. In other words, USVI poetic language enacts re-significations of the multiple-ethnic identities that populate the islands. USVI poetry encapsulates and floats the epistemological fluidity of the people and reflects and refracts USVI heterogeneous identities. These epistemological multiplicities of modes generate uncontainable potentials, which Benítez-Rojo has labeled a Caribbean proclivity for

“fragmentation and instability” (p. 27). Epistemological multiplicities are evidenced in USV Islanders’ argument that their linguistic modes cannot be learned in the classroom but instead must be learned in the field of interaction over a long period of stay on these islands: “unlike a standard language that can be learned, the prevailing sentiment is that Virgin Islands Creole cannot be learned, but only acquired through having spent one’s formative years in the Virgin Islands. Attempts by Virgin Islands non-native residents to speak the dialect, even out of respect, are often met with disapproval” (Wikipedia). This argument however is challenged in Robin Sterns’ (2008: 5) assertion that “Most people who live [in St. Croix] speak Crucian (insert USVI English lexifier Creole) effortlessly”, but one wonders how long the foreigner really feels comfortable negotiating through the maze of USVI creoles. Hence I would agree with Marlene Nourbese Philip’s statement (1992: 9) that trying to write Creole from any particular position “. . . is [often] a hazardous and difficult one, if only because [Caribbean Creole’s] fluidity does a disservice to the fixedness implicit in the word position”.

Similar then to poets from other Caribbean islands, engaging Creole as the language of creativity in the USVI is a daring epistemology of new cartography that inscribes new symbolic and syllabic meanings on and over old externally scripted texts to chart new and/or restore old paths to shared histories, struggles, and aspirations. Thus, poetry in the USVI, to echo Patricia Joan Saunders (2007), must be approached from an understanding of the “extent to which [USV Islanders] construct their identities through acts of the imagination” (p. 1). To do so entails a curtailing of the temptation to universalize and eliminate specificities created through “acts of the imagination” that “extend beyond the unconscious, to reshape the relational perspective of historical subjects to their surrounding” (p. 2) and which then calls for the development of a “critical perspective that acknowledges the countless ruptures of history, time, culture, identity, and being” (p. 3).

Countless ruptures, writes Derek Walcott, are the “shattered histories, shards of vocabulary” of the Archipelago that need re-mending. To Walcott, writing Caribbean identity is an “effort, the labour of Antillean imagination, [is the] rebuilding [of their] gods from bamboo, frames, phrase by phrase” (1998: 69). Subsequently, this task of rebuilding the broken vases of identities, especially in the USVI, involves both individual and collective sacrificial and constant undertaking. Walcott’s metaphor of the shattered vase to reflect on the passionate need for the art of re-member(ing) the pieces of the broken vase is “the love that reassembles the fragments”, in this case, the re-assembling involves re-visioning of roles of the broken shards, how they fit into the puzzles, regardless of which continent, culture, race, or history the piece may have originated.

In 'Islands, Borders and Vectors: The Fractal World of the Caribbean', Ottmar Ette (2007) furthers the argument and concludes that understanding Caribbean identities in relation to the Americas and the world is possible within a conceptual frame in which the fragmentariness of the Caribbean is perceived and interpreted as a model for contemporary literary theory that is always an unfinished genesis. This position echoes Gilles Deleuze's & Félix Guattari's "rhizome" theory developed in *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004) to oppose traditional dualism, binarism, linearity, and hierarchy to create alternate conceptual frames that allow the engagement of multiple, non-hierarchical positions of representation and interpretation of ideas. Rhizome theory works on the idea of *mutualism* what I call symbiosis, and implies conceptual and perceptual multi-directionality and multi-dimensionality. Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari, Édouard Glissant in *Poetics of Relations* (1997) then develops a Caribbean poetic theory of interpretation and representation that stresses a lateral pan-Caribbean worldview that recognizes particularities of individual islands without isolating and over focusing on them. Thus, this notion of lateral interdependency is crucial to any formulation of concepts about USVI identities as any theoretical positioning is transitory, mobile, heteroglossic.

Paula Bandia (2007) has argued the same position in "Postcolonialism, Literary Heteroglossia and Translation", contending however that notions of mutualism do not abrogate uniquely circumscribed historical antecedents and occurrences on individual islands. It is from this position that I share Arjun Appandurai's (1996: 18) vision of what he calls the complicated web of shifting identities in temporary and fixed geophysical, geopolitical, and trans-and cross-cultural locations over the centuries. Consequently, to adopt a rhizoid trope of reading, identity formation in the USVI does not exclude the presence of intersecting roots, for example different creole languages, that project some cultural specificities pertaining to individual islands and/or particular communities.

Creole language rises up for first mention in any discussion of a pan-Antillean sign that offers provisional scaffolding from which to conceptualize USVI identities. Certainly, differences do exist among the dialects of Creole spoken in the USVI and other Caribbean islands, but each one is part of the piece that defines their linguistic affinities with other Caribbean islands. To recognize and accept this fact is to challenge the polemic of English lexical creole language differentiations that bedevil each of these islands. The Creole spoken in the USVI is heteroglossic and comprises of elements from several islands, the United States, and remnants of USVI's traditional Creoles. Thus to borrow from Glissant (1997), USVI identities, no matter what the purists postulate, embrace the (in)tangible, visual and invisible emplacements of others, and we are thus compelled to recognize USVI identities as a horizontal and

continuously evolving entity born of the mutual heterogeneity of contact experiences among the various ethnicities of the past and the present: Taino, Dane, Dutch, French, Irish, English, Scots, Afong, Akan, Akkran, Akkim, Amina, Atze, Bandi, Fula, Igbo, Kanga, Kalabari, Kasanti, Loango, Dagao, Mandinga, Mangre, Mokko, Papaa, Sokko, Tambi, Uwango, Watje, Wolof, Yoruba, Indian, Lebanese, Chinese, Jew, among others as displayed at the Whim Museum in St. Croix. There is hence a need for a new ideology of reading based on the appropriation of all these inputs toward re-signification, re-creation, and re-assignment of working definitions of USVI identities.

I recognize the contemporary debates among Creolists in the search for an unproblematic traditional source of USVI Creole, especially in recognition of the multiplicities of contributory roots that inform USVI Creole. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into that debate, I believe that the living/dying oral traditions such as *quelbe/fungi* performed still in USVI folk festivals and dating back from slavery times through to the present, as Kenneth M. Bilby (2006) in his review of Andrea E. Leland's *Jamesie, King of Scratch* (DVD, 2006) rightly points out, are "an important repository of local history". This traditional mode of cultural representation and articulation in Creole influences some USVI poets of today, as they struggle to maintain aspects of this ancestral heritage, and translate it into a literary tradition.

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Consequently, in *Seasoning for the Mortar*, USVI Creole is engaged as a poetic tool of social criticism. In these poems, the transitory nature of male/female relationships, especially the irresponsibility of men in relation to paternal responsibilities as positioned against female greed is stressed. Men complain that women demand too much attention, and perennially exact assurances of commitment from them. Thus, the poet, Alice V. Henry (2004: 23-24) engages Creole to interrogate these disruptive social behaviors in dramatized form. In the process she reflects on some of the – negative - social habits that threaten social harmony in USVI. In "Two Sides ah de Same Coin", generalized social relations issues between men and women are publically discussed: women say men are unreliable. "He won' pull his weight" and scatters children everywhere without responsibility: "Pickney here and on the Rock / 'bout marriage, he won't talk" (p. 23). The men respond by questioning the women's - uncomplicated sexual liaisons: "she don't feel enough / ain' real enough / she don' do enough" and is incompetent as a lover. Her "feelin' ain new enough / . . . / an' talk too much 'bout "we" / won't give you no space" and consistently wants to know what the man up to (p. 24). Though these accusations may appear to be facile and exaggerated for humorous effect, they nevertheless demonstrate the type of gender wars in the USVI that define male/female identities through gender/sex roles expectations and performances, and which are/were the traditional themes performed in *quelbe* music.

The cultural debates on the performance of gendered identities are further expounded by Barbara M. Callwood, (2004). She was born in Tortola, grew up in St. Thomas, and now works in St. Thomas as a high school teacher. In “Dey Music Gwan” we are treated to a dirge against male betrayal in love. The traitorous lover deserts but takes nothing, so she thinks at first: “Da way he had / O’ saying meh name sometime / Da change it to ah bluesy jazz note” (p. 25). There is the false dream that the man will keep memories of her deep inside him and this will bring him back. The lament progressively describes the relationship as built solely on sexual gratification for the man. Once sated, he absconds, taking nothing material or physical but her heart, and hence her illusion of happiness and dream of fulfillment as a woman: “He jus’ take dey sweet passion / He take all dey music / An’ gwan” (p. 26). It is often said that the language of a lament is the language that best defines a person’s identity. The seriousness of interpersonal and inter-gender relations treated in Creole undermines the uninformed positions that Creole cannot be used to represent serious issues, yet here it is used to convey what touches USVI people most deeply, their gendered and sexualized cultural politics. These poems articulate the gender disjoint that is so deep that only a mother tongue can best express it. Creole is a major tool of sharing these innermost energies of pain with others.

Extending this public discourse on sex/gender identities is Carmen Rogers-Green’s “Sarah Seh” (2004a: 84-85). Carmen joins the chorus of lamentations that stress that USVI males are untrustworthy as marriage partners and as fathers. The persona laments that while she is busy trying to earn enough to keep bread on the family table, her “husban busy romancin bout” (2004a: 84). George is not the only husband who is unfaithful, for as Sara says, “Cause husban wid rovin eye / Dem plentiful like san pan dis lil islan” (p. 85). Sara offers to help her friend through obeah, a practice involving magic, spirituality, herbal medicines, and rituals mostly claimed to originate in African beliefs, tracing the etymology of the word to Egypt or Ghana or Nigeria, but most recently also suspected of originating from a Taino word for spirit “opia” and the Taino practices of spirit appeasement through magic etc. Sara collects a thousand dollars to procure the cure for George’s infidelity from an obeah man. She testifies to the efficacy of this obeah man in relation to her own husband’s domestication, and that of Paula’s husband too. The medicine works too well, but the consequences contravene the expectations. George becomes the apotheosis of the domestic sex slave sought in the ritual. He becomes unrecognizable: the mangy dog of the poem that consumes the food meant for George and becomes George; George’s transgressed and transformed sex drive now targets, in its rapaciously uncontrollable newness, only the wife who had lamented George’s neglect. Though this is a cautionary tale to women to be careful about using obeah to control their men’s sexuality, or to get what they

want, the poem nonetheless reveals obeah practices as an aspect of the folk spirituality and beliefs that constitute USVI identity. Obeah practice is not limited to USVI. It is pan-Caribbean and pan-African. Belief systems are often the most tenacious vestiges of people's identity, and the fact that in pan-Antillean drama, poetry, novels, and song, this belief in the efficacy of obeah still persists declares to us that it still is an identity marker that traces its origins to slavery days and then back to African and Taino/Carib traditions inherited by USV Islanders.

Creole is not just a social tool for satiric innuendoes of sexual indiscretions between men and women, Creole is also a strident instrument for cutting criticism of the political culture of the USVI. In "Election Time-Again," Carmen Rogers-Green (2004b) engages Creole to expose the culture of false campaign promises made by politicians in the islands. Whereas, in the sexual laments there is no particular position taken, in the political poems, we see a new type of political identity being advocated: all must recognize that, "Is time dem stop mamaguy we" and "An is time we tek a stan" (p. 88) to end political brigandage because "Too much serious tings at stake / Fi'llow pol'tician ruin we lan'" (p. 88). In these poems, individual responsibility differs from collective responsibility. Sexual relations are individuated while politics is publicized. These issues are further exemplified in the creole poems of Althea Romeo-Mark (2004). She was born in Antigua to a mother from St. Croix and a father from the Dominican Republic, but grew up in St. Thomas. She worked in Liberia and England also. In the poems "Each One Must Walk This Way" (pp. 90-91), and "Carnival Stray" (pp. 91-93), Althea Romeo-Mark utilizes Creole to reflect on the inevitability of aging, and on male treachery.

Creole as an identity marker is engaged as an educational tool to impart, through poetic narrative, lessons about the disappearing culture that ensured the survival of USV Islanders over the centuries: fishing and the traditional economy within which human relations thrived, and were more important than the exchange of goods for money. Marvin E. Williams' "Downwind Tale" (2004b: 39-41) about the loss of traditional fishing culture, and subsequently, a loss of part of the historical and cultural identity of USVI is important in understanding this cultural phenomenon that has traditionally defined the identity of USV Islanders. Creole here functions perfectly as both the medium and the message. Through its esoteric nature, it becomes the most original tool through which the "old-timer" initiates the youth into the cultural secrets of the land; ritualized secrets that only they can share, because they originate in ancestral lore and are performed in an ancestral tongue. The language recalls the drama of old time fishing. The vividness of imagery, the music in the rendering, and the panegyric in honor of the boy's father instills a cultural pride in him and prepares him for the tasks ahead. "Bwoy, the oldtimer said, / donkey years ago / . . . / we does

be throwing in” (p. 39) every Saturday when the fishermen arrived at the beach with their catch, there was carnival of laughter created by the antics of the fish mongers: “mistress and daughter / used to flock /down by Flashbush, waiting” as the story goes for the boy’s father Mack. The old timer unveils the various cultural and ritualized behavior used by different female age groups to sweet-talk Mack for extra fish. - The old timer laments the loss of the civilized days when USV Islanders knew how to be human and also be environmentally conscious. “Bwoy”, (p. 41) the old timer laments, “Them days we / Used to be nice / In a buncha ways” to the ocean that provided their daily sustenance (p. 41). He ends by counseling the boy through the language of metaphor and symbol about the problems he will face in choosing a female life partner in today’s USVI because every relationship is now defined by a cash-nexus callousness: “you caan complain, / you caan pick quarrel / with them,. . . ” (p. 41) because they bound “to be doan careish, / to be vex . . . (p. 41). Creole here is not just an oracle of lamentation but it is also a conduit of creative consolation.

Nonetheless, Marvin Williams in another poem “The Tree Trunk in Neltijberg Bay”, (1996: 66-67) is unapologetic for the political embrace of Standard English to the detriment of USVI Creole. His argument is rooted in the notion that the rejection of Creole in the educational field for economic and political expediency in the USVI does not necessarily signal the death knell of USVI culture or historical consciousness. “. . . You’re / so entrenched in the earth / that decapitation creates not death” (p. 66), instead it signals “but a renaissance us slaves / who pursue our aboriginal tongue / can envy for you teach us” though the ability to perfect the use of the settler’s tongue testifies to a nervous condition which is “neither survival nor experience / but responsibility, another burden” (p. 66). To Williams and others the accepted imposition of standard English, or better still, AEIOU (American English I owe You) is a smart economic and political gamble, a yes master technique to ensure ‘massa no go vex wit dem.’ He argues that the downgrading of USVI Creole and upgrading of American English must be accepted as something “that enobles without seeking / a narrow nobility, without seeking / the headless backward stare” (p. 66) toward “. . . an entrenched but fading home” (p. 66). Thus, we have the two sides of the argument, in which - the official position of Standard English is being publically proselytized while in - everyday discourse Creole rules.

Such a position gives encouragement to recent immigrant poets of non-African-Caribbean descent in the USVI to claim timidity in their relationship to Creole usage in their poetry. They seem afraid of being accused of appropriation of a language forged by people of African descent out of the crucibles of their enslavement and exposure to discrimination. Moreover, the recent migratory experience as voluntary exiles on the islands, testify to some different historical, linguistic, and cultural

classifications that seem to frustrate total immersion into USVI cultural praxes. Nonetheless, I want to insist that a lot of these published poets, who mostly are European-Americans, and majority of whom sojourn on these islands for different spans of time, contribute to and nurture the literary culture of the USVI, and in the process bring new insights into the meaning of what identity means to USV Islanders.

A corollary to the use of Creole as a tool of identity marking is the invocation of ancestral presences that goes beyond historical recordings and enters into the world of the spiritual cartographies that define USVI identities. The first ancestral invocation is of the Ciboney or cave dweller in Taino language, with whom the Taino intermingled from about 5000 BC until the 15th century when they were conquered by the Caribs. Even at this period, a form of indigenous Creole developed between the Arawakan/Carib varieties spoken in the Antilles. Thus, cultural and linguistic creolization began on these islands before the advent of Europeans, Africans and Asians. David Gershator's poem: "Terra Incognita / Taino Incognito" (2004: 50-51) is a good starting point as it coincides with new research on Ciboney/Taino/Carib presences in the Caribbean.

The work of William F. Keegan and Lisabeth A. Carlson *Talking Taino: Caribbean Natural History from a Native Perspective* (2008) and Maximilian C. Forte's (2006) *Indigenous Resurgence in the Contemporary Caribbean: Amerindian Survival and Revival*, among others testify to this new broadening of identity politics in the Caribbean. For as the children of Africa in these islands insist on their ancestral rights to the land, arguing rightly that the blood and sweat of their forebears have fertilized the soils, created the wealth, and continue to cry out for reparations, the spirits of the Ciboney/Taino/Carib roam and wail from the soil, the coastlines, the winds, the rocks, the caves, for a hearing and a place in the discussion circle about USVI identities. The initial days of European conquistador brutality that guaranteed the sacrifice of the Ciboney/Taino/Carib on their Christian altars of greed, also saw the cruel dispossession of Ciboney/Taino/Carib lands through a spurious legality invented in Europe and backed by warped spirituality through a labeling of these lands as Tierras Incognitas. Therefore, if the lands had no people according to these invaders then the Ciboney/Taino/Carib could not be recognized as people worthy of honor. European immigrants could legally then imprint their vision of the world onto these lands and their peoples. But a people cannot be totally obliterated from the surface of the earth. There are often cell-memories left somewhere that rise up some day to challenge the lie of their disappearance. The Ciboney/Taino/Carib resurgence in Caribbean discourse at present testifies to this.

Consequently, though David Gershator was born in Mt. Carmel, Israel sometime between the two world wars, and educated in New York, his relocation to St. Thomas over a long period, he and his wife Philiss have made huge contributions to the cultural retention and memory of USVI. His work expands the debate of USVI cultural historiography with questions such as: “what was the primal name . . . / the first name given” (2004: 50) by the first inhabitants of these islands? For as he shows earlier, the moment Europeans, and now Americans envision these islands as paradise, the touristic labels tagged on to them become tags of cultural doom. They become islands with no Ciboney/Taino/Carib name for them, merely “an island blessed, damned, and cursed / like any place called paradise / in earnest or in jest” (p. 50). The allusion to Genesis is important. It problematizes the powerful allure these islands had on pirates, brigands, and other nations, and still have as tourists’ paradise. Hence the urgency to initiate a cultural and historical project that would resist this new invasion and cultural erasure. Ancestral Ciboney/Taino/Carib presences must be invoked against current attempts to re-fossilize the archaeology of their memory through the concretization of USVI landscape and the commercialization of USVI identity through consumerist ideologies that promote big plantation malls and new forms of slavery, especially the slavery of dependency. To not rise up and oppose this, David laments, goes beyond benign neglect or sheer ignorance to an arrogance of ineptitude that forestalls attempts at recovering, reclaiming, and reconstructing USVI identities that include Ciboney/Taino/Carib presences. The neglect of appropriating Ciboney/Taino/Carib presences creates a perceptual myopia that subsequently encourages USV Islanders to look to other shores as the only legitimate sources of their imagined identities. This look of behind to either only Africa, or Asia, or Europe or North America, or even to other Caribbean islands, to authenticate their own identities is constructed on an illusion, a mythical, imagined or real connection to these places: “to rescue a past beyond their kith and kin / for some, Africa’s the yearn” but “for others,” like the Ciboney/Taino/Carib “oblivion” (p. 50). But this, Gershator argues, is not enough to resist the new essentialized and unilocalized edifices of false glory in the big consumer malls such as K-Mart that was erected over hallowed ancestral grounds.

In spite of this seemingly hopeless situation, the poet recalls the various ways in which the Ciboney/Taino/Carib named their islands. He iterates the various names, gods, heroes, compass points, etc. through which we can reconstruct a Ciboney/Taino/Carib past to help us remodel an identity that is both ancient and present, through the names Borinquen, Malliouhana, Ay-Ay, which still resonate a Ciboney/Taino/Carib presence: “some sounds, some meanings insinuate themselves / into conch shells, clay shards, midden mounds, zemis / Attabeira, Yucahu, Yaya, Yayael” and “Guabances of the hurricanes” (pp. 50-51). The current usage of these names moreover tells us that “some shadowy heroes and gods remain / hovering in the

air” (pp. 50-51), and hence necessitate a resurgence of effort to restore them in the debate for identity reconstruction. I feel a bit disappointed that David on the one hand after this revelatory promise in the above, lapses into despondency and despair about the possibility of USVI reclaiming this rich heritage: “but this island has lost its name / and there’s no lost and found to reclaim it / . . . / its past, its sound, its echo, its name” (p. 51). But, on the other hand, if David is seeking to generate an awakening of cultural and historical consciousness, then there is the possibility of some revolutionary response. The rhetorical listing of names, objects, history, mythologies, among others may yet persuade USV Islanders to recognize and appropriate this rich past to re-conceive their collective identities. Thus, David’s prescription is that USVI identity must begin with an intimate embrace of Ciboney/Taino/Carib remnants to enable them root those identities more deeply in the rocky soils of USVI.

Just as some works advocate a Ciboney/Taino/Carib resurgence, Gene K. Emanuel’s “Awa / Ahwe” (2004: 81-82), Arnold Highfield’s “The Guieneaman” (1993: 81-83) and “Epiphany Mas” (pp. 8-9), Jeanne O’Day’s “Sahara Dust” (2004: 63) and David Gershator’s “Dancepoem for an Island Princess” (1996: 18-19) all celebrate USV Islanders’ identities through a link to the African gods and ancestral spirits that reside on these islands and ensure the survival of Africans brought as slaves and their free descendants. In “Awa / Ahwe” Emanuel appropriates selected historical struggles that happened in Africa and likens these to the struggles of African descendants in the USVI. Emanuel is not interested in locating the original nations of these heroes/heroines and gods. He mixes up his sources deliberately to show that in the new world ethnic authenticity does not matter, for the middle passage erased or fused any differential markers. He does not set out to deliberately engage the theory of the rhizome, but the philosophy behind his move endorses the idea of cultural heterogeneity in the contact communities that shaped the USVI. In this mutualism of historical existence what matters now is that the ancient sacrifices of rebirth and continuity have guaranteed African survival. “The wet blood of the white cock / Sperming the dry earth” (p. 82) becomes the answered prayer “To ancestors / in the dust to dust / To life” (p. 82). Thus, the natural “The waterfalls cascading / . . . / The ageless movement of the / Elemental core. . . . (p. 82) together with, “The sky crimson / With the blood of childbirth / Flowing from pools” (p. 82) testify to the continuous presence of Africa.

Emanuel’s position here is buttressed by O’Day’s “Saharan Dust” (p. 63). The environmental connection between West Africa and the USVI that is annually remembered in the dust haze from the Sahara desert is memorialized and transfigured into a spiritual connectivity. O’Day perceives this continuous connection between West Africa and the USVI as a pre-Columbian natural contact between the Ciboney,

Taino and Carib and their West African counterparts. The ancient flow of dust from West Africa to the USVI is hence a prophetic and propitiatory link that would usher in finally, albeit involuntarily, the arrival of Africans on the back of the same dust. To O'Day the dust is undoubtedly the work of African ancestors bringing fertile soil and rain annually to the rocky barrenness of these islands, as a way of preparing and ensuring the survival of African descendants when they arrive. Thus, O'Day advocates a transcendent reading of the days of the dust, to see them as days of environmental invigoration. The dust becomes "powdered bones of ancestors, an infusion / of the desert's lifeless breath. A riddling fog / of red powder obscures vistas as fertile" (p. 63) sands "traverse the sea on tradewinds, / seeding the seeded, casting cloud cover / where there are no clouds" (p. 63) in preparation for the resting of the ancestors. In celebrating the Saharan dust as ancestral blessing, O'Day basically endorses an Africa centered identity that not only recognizes the historical, cultural, spiritual, and racial connection with Africa, but also geophysical and environmental connectivity. Thus, it is impossible if not foolhardy to try to erase direct and continuous African presence in the representation and interpretation of USVI politics of identity. Africa is not merely an imagined reality, but it is a perpetually visible, responsible, and visceral reality. Distances and time are obliterated and borders cease to exist in this view of the African-Ciboney/Taino/Carib connection in the USVI.

Arnold R. Highfield's poem, "The Guineaman" (1993: 20-22), centers on a historical recall of the middle passage to highlight the terrifying moments of arrival of enslaved Africans to the shores of these islands. The branding, the chaining, the commoditization of their bodies and personhoods, yet the perpetual presence of their loa made sure that their history is never forgotten, for the land itself is saturated with that history. "These soils drink / their names; rains / and seas of cane" the poet insists "flood all recollection" (p. 20). By implication the legacies of African slaves' historical struggles, spiritual resistance, and cultural institutions and retentions are inseparable from contemporary USV Islanders' political and cultural struggles for identity. African drum language for worship is stressed through ". . . Bamboula-candomble / hammers sacred notes / opening the narrow way to God" (p. 20). Their gods hear them for "If God hears at all, / he hears the thunder in their feet" (p. 20), and the "Orishas nightly fly / as promises partly kept" (p. 20). Consequently, apart from physical poisonings of slave masters and executions of traitors, there are also the spiritual battles between the Christian religion and the African derived spirituality and religions that were brought to the islands. These struggles go beyond the struggle for the souls of the followers into a political activism toward liberation from servitude. "Church walls stand in practiced / . . . / Ancient sea walls such as these / secure the priests and dozing ferns" (p. 21). Here the Christian pastor who endorses slavery with

writes from biblical misrepresentation strolls in pious prayer “—as eyes suppose beyond the gate—, / finding by the grace of God / defence against silk cotton shades” (p. 21).

However, there is no effective spiritual defense “against the eyes, the tongue of Obayifo” the Africa slaves’ shaman’s incantations of revenge. Sacred drums communicate calls to slaves to rise up in rebellion and wrest their freedom from the European slave masters, similar to what occurred on every island with the supreme examples of the Haitian revolution and the Jamaican Maroon wars (pp. 20-21). In spite of these facts, the concerted efforts for centuries by European models of Church (p. 22) and state to downplay or outright erase the African spiritual presences in the USVI, African spirituality remains incontestably strong there. Thus, to Highfield, the cultural militancy, and the spiritual resiliency of the enslaved Africans and their emancipated descendants of today cannot be further disputed. The poem describes the “foreday” morning in July before ‘masta dey don’ in Frederiksted. While the European overlords are luxuriating in their wealth, the Africans hold a sacred mass awaiting the arrival of Baddoe, the “. . . Guineaman, / the freefall of the anchor, / the protest of the chain, / Whatever brings the Guineaman- / salt, spoken tongues and names” (p. 22), the African who led the slaves in the then Danish West Indies now the USVI to wrest their emancipation from Governor-General Peter Von Scholten on July 3rd, 1848(1848??). It is this cultural militancy and survival that Highfield celebrates in “Epiphany Mas” (1993: 8-9). Though the poem is a prayer to a carnival mas player, Highfield infuses both the performer and the performance with historical and cultural meanings that trace to West Africa, to Goree island in Senegal, Benin in Nigeria, a journey to a cultural and racial relationship from which he is excluded. “. . . I danced in dead Quaco’s shoes / but could not command his feet” (p. 8). He partakes in the dance moves dictated by the music, but he cannot enter into the inner ancestral and historical world of the performer which at this moment transcends the rocky geographies of USVI, and escapes capture by Euro-American intellectuals and cultural bibbers and appropriators. The moment of epiphany for Highfield arrives when the mas dancer thrusts a whip into his hand by a church (p. 8). This symbolic act recreates the history of the slave-master (black-white) relationship that has defined race relations in the USVI.

Similar to Highfield in “Epiphany Mas” (1993: 8-9), David Gershator in “Dancepoem for an Island Princess” (1996: 18-19) celebrates in steel pan rendition the West African origins of the physical beauty of USVI black women. In the poem, he does not trace this genetic inheritance to a particular ethnicity in West Africa, but shows off his knowledge of the multiplicity of nations that bedeck the coast of West Africa, and from where majority of the Africans were brought as slaves to the USVI. The list can be authenticated at the Whim Museum in St. Croix. Thus in this poem, what Gershator

does is to use poetry and music performance as educational tools to make USV Islanders conscious and proud of their African racial roots. Gershator gives the reader a long list of possible origins: Asinni, Axim, Elmina, Accra, Keta, Kumasi, Ashanti, Fante, Akan, (Ghana) Whydah, Abomey, Dahomey (Republic of Benin), Badgari (Badgari is what appears in the poem Badagri, Ibibio, Ibo (Nigeria), Bambara, Mandinko (Guinea-Senegal), and then Bakongo (Central Africa) (pp. 18-19). The poem is a challenge to USV Islanders to do more research into their African cultural roots: “Go on, tell me where you come from / And how far you’ve come / Tell me if the drumbeat is far from home” (p. 19). The response to these questions is given by Ira Claxton in “Nagu Shaku”. (1996: 18) In this confessional poem, Claxton sings a dirge for USV Islanders’ inability to translate the African sounds still played in these islands into real spiritual experiences that reconnect them with Africa. The use of drum names to summon warriors and dancers in Africa is widely known. However in this poem, Claxton is now severely limited in his ability to respond to the call.

Nagu Shaku!
 I do not hear the drums my forebears heard.
 Only the name.
 And even that is fainter with each cry
 Shadows seem to fall across the sound
 Nagu Shaku!
 Oh pain!
 To know the drums are in that name
 And not to hear!
 Nagu Shaku!
 The spirit tugs its mortal claims to seek release.
 . . .
 Nagu Shaku!
 Once more the name is whispered in the winds.
 The inclination of a drum is shadowed to the sound.
 And I, I am now a slow preponderous
 Heartbeat
 That is the love and memory of the past. (p. 18)

Similarly, Winston Nugent, born in Spanish Town, Jamaica, but raised in St. Croix, looks at the story of Columbus again in “Columbus Revisited” (2004: 96-97). In this poem, Nugent canvasses recognition of marginality as a historical legacy. He advocates a transformation of this position into monumental possibilities. In pursuit of this goal, and notwithstanding all the socioeconomic, historical, political, and cultural marginalization of Antilleans, in which the image of Makak the hero of Derek Walcott’s *Dream on Monkey Mountain* rises to confront him in “dreaming on monkey mountain / soaked by histories gone from / my cultural body/” (p. 90), he will see himself thus: “I the West Indian antique/the donkeycart/ the documented footnotes

behind memories/ I the son of Nanny—the maroon woman/” stands a “. . . a monument still dreaming . . . (p. 97). Ultimately, neither the trembling caused by “yampy dream” nor the fact that . . . ‘fo’day morning dew damped / my cultural backbone/leaving cassava / belly children begging for maubi roots/” with emaciated hands (pp. 96-97) can stop him from continuing his big dream. But is it enough merely to dream? But there can be no action without visions, and visions come from dreams. I therefore want to contend that when the call to activism is made and is heard it will be from the strength of marginality. My use of the term marginality is hence not from a defeatist stance, but from a step-aside theoretical positioning of seeing. Marginality or peripheral positionality or even liminality as places of seeing are not always disempowering as dualists would make us believe. For to be at the periphery is to be free to keep one’s secrecy while engaging the power of the gaze at those clamoring to be seated at the center. It is this marginality of existence that provides transitionality of perception, thus, a fluidity of self-definitions, or what sometime is known as deterritorialized re-visioning in which one observes the same object from multiple and mobile positions as in a festival grounds. Thus, Jeanne O’Day in “5th Grade Atlas”, reveals the power of accepting the position of marginality: “It’s as tho we’re all in the margins here / The Caribbean span is reminiscent / of the ocean maps at Quisset laying out” without any pretensions, “the sea’s underbelly, her hidden layers” (p. 62). He stresses how “We people her edges / We’re all in the margins here” (p. 62), and later “All towns are border towns / down here. All of us are marginal, / marginality safe, trimming the tides” (p. 62).

What I have endeavored to show in this preliminary study is how problematic it can be when we seek to understand the politics of identity in the USVI through the poetic output alone. There are a lot of other poets such as Richard Schrader who has more than six collections, Dr. ChenziRa Kahina’s *Listening to Ancestral Wisdom: Sacred Conch Shell Inspirations Poetry Collection*, Marvin Williams *Dialogue at the Hearth*, and *Yellow Cedars Blooming* a collection of USVI poets’ works which he edited. Not to mention a crop or a new school of younger poets who influenced by slam, dub, rap poetic rhythms and styles are now rising to the challenge and support of Dr. ChenziRa with new poetic vibes that extend the rhetorical flourishes of identity discourse practice in poetry among others. If we therefore gather all the cultural discourses that seek to clarify USVI identities it will become imperative that we engage theories of multiple/plural intersectionality where there are no centers or peripheries, thus no hierarchies. The multiplicities of histories, cultures, languages, phenotypic displays, must all be invoked toward creating working paradigms in the quest through art. As the poets show, in the USVI, identity is constantly a negotiated position within psycho-somatic, historical, socio-economic, gendered, spiritualized, artistic and

cultural arenas. Al a wi is wan somtaim, and poem dem go bi di beta conduits to help us emerge into that clearing of understanding.

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SURVIVAL, RESISTANCE AND RESURGENCE: RECLAIMING OUR OWN ‘UTTERANCES’

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*“We have stories as old as the great seas
breaking through the chest,
flying out the mouth,
noisy tongues that were once silenced,
all the oceans we contain coming to light.”* [Linda Hogan, *To Light*]

Native American critic, Vine Deloria, characterizes the work of native writers as presenting a “reflective statement of what it means and has meant to live in a present which is continually overwhelmed by the fantasies of others of the meanings of past events” (Deloria, 1985: i). In the trenches of the Native American literary movement in the US, the responses to what Gerald Vizenor (1994: 1-44) calls “simulations of dominance,” or the mis-tellings and the mis-representations of history, have appeared in many forms. Among other native critics, Louis Owens (1998, 2001) speaks of the diverse “strategies” of this poetic of contestation, pointing at the alternative aesthetics that native writers have formulated which offer alternative perceptions, and a rich counter-telling of the “manifest manners in literature”. Significantly, most critics seem to agree that this counter-telling not only leads to the recovery of a native people’s consciousness and cultural identity, but it rekindles, in all of us, a much needed radical questioning of our own ‘utterances’ and an awareness of the true and the very real power of the word.

For hundreds of years the Caribbean has been struggling with issues of identity. None of those struggles has been as deeply felt as those of the indigenous population. The recognition of Caribbean indigeneity has been perhaps one of the most debated themes in Atlantic World history and for centuries, the trope of the vanishing Indian has been a deeply implanted theme within all historical, literary and linguistic texts written about the region. Anthropologist Maximilian C. Forte (2005) relates this best in his paper entitled ‘Extinction: The Historical Trope of Anti-Indigeneity in the Caribbean’,

“For those of us who were taught, as a matter of routine, that indigenous peoples of the Caribbean have been extinct for the past five centuries, developments during the last three decades would have struck us as very surprising. Communities, organizations, and individuals in the contemporary

Caribbean and its diaspora are announcing their presence as indigenous peoples, as Amerindians, as Caribs, or Tainos, even while the dominant historiography has been that these populations were wiped out, save for a *few* ‘culturally diluted’ and ‘mixed race’ remnants.”

People had been living on the islands of the Caribbean for many generations before Europeans arrived. With great difficulty, their descendants have survived the five hundred years since Columbus landed and still live in the islands and surrounding mainland.

The objective of this paper is to focus on the diverse strategies of counter-telling in Native American writing and to apply and/or posture these philosophies towards indigenous identity and representation in the Caribbean, while also essaying and interjecting a Caribbean stream of consciousness into this much needed discourse. In this paper, I will explore the work of the following theorists: Edouard Glissant, Gerald Vizenor, Louis Owens and Frantz Fanon, with interjections from other Amerindian/Native American writers and scholars, in order to posture indigenous identity and representation in terms of Caribbean and Amerindian theory¹.

This section will focus on Glissant’s definition of creolization, or “the unceasing process of transformation” (Glissant, 1989: 142) and how it may pertain to an indigenous ideology. According to Glissant, creolization is the process by which “cultures mix and produce something not only new but unpredictable”). This is significant, as many historians and anthropologists tend to sublimate the indigenous into the realm of either ‘pure and pristine’ (the *savage*) or simply mongrelized, i.e. creole, mixed-blood; the non-existent marginalized and subalterned entity that has earmarked indigenous people with the following terms - *extinct* and/or *re-invented*. Two important words to focus on in Glissant’s ideal of creolization are ‘*relation*’ and ‘*antillanité*’. The concept of ‘*relation*’ refers to a cultural process in which a group and/or society is in a state of constant metamorphosis. ‘*Antillanité*’ focuses on a commitment to self-discovery. Within these terms, Glissant presents his idea of opaque perception. In this idea, opacity permits a shift in the Western ethno-colonial gaze from a concern for authentic representation of indigeneity to a concern for collective expression and transformation. This is imperative, because an obsessive concern for authenticity often diverts (Glissant’s characterizes this type of ‘diversion’ as ‘trickster discourse’) attention away from the ongoing political struggles and transformation of indigenous people (and others). His notion of identity, as constructed in relation and not in isolation, is relevant to the discussion of Caribbean creolization. In his essay ‘Cross-cultural poetics’ Edouard Glissant writes,

¹ I have included Amerindian critics and theorists as they can be utilized to introduce new ideologies into the Canon of Caribbean indigenous studies; ideologies that reflect indigenous thought, consciousness and discourse. This is an integral step in transforming a historically represented Afro-Caribbean field into a theory of representation by and for the indigenous.

“We say that a national literature emerges when a community, whose collective existence is called into question, tries to put together the reasons for its existence. ...Just as a community can constitute an independent state and nevertheless experience a profound form of cultural alienation, so an individual can proclaim that he wishes to regain his identity and yet suffer from a terminal inadequacy even in the way in which his cry is expressed.” (Glissant, 1989: 104-105)

Similarly, Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice notes that “Autonomy of community and self-within-community – as opposed to postmodern individualism – requires at least two things to sustain it: a community from which memory is spoken, and a sovereignty of mind and body, both the body politic and the physical body” (Justice, 2004: 120). In *Red on Red*, Muskogee Creek/Cherokee scholar Craig S. Womack echoes Glissant’s sentiments making the connections between our literatures and our sovereignty explicit:

“Native literature, and Native literary criticism, written by Native authors, is part of sovereignty: Indian people exercising the right to present images of themselves and to discuss those images. Tribes recognizing their own extant literature, writing new ones, and asserting the right to explicate them, constitute a move toward nationhood...A key component of nationhood is a people’s idea of themselves, their imaginings of who they are. The ongoing expression of a tribal voice, through imagination, language, and literature, contributes to keeping sovereignty alive in the citizens of a nation and gives sovereignty a meaning that is defined within the tribe rather than by external sources.” (Womack, 1999: 14).

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Also similar to Glissant’s view is that of Amerindian critic and theorist, Gerald Vizenor. In his essay ‘Postindian Warriors’ the opening section of his *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (1994), Vizenor, an Anishinaabe (Chippewa) critic, dissects the images of Native Americans usually presented in literature, history, and popular culture through the juxtaposition of cultural commentary with postmodern theory². He shows that like others subjected to European colonialism, Native peoples have commonly been represented as ‘primitives’ lacking legitimate political structures and histories. Coining the term ‘survivance’ (a word produced from the words survival and resistance), which infuses survival with a more active sense of resistance, Vizenor turns the image of the Native from romanticized victim to a figure of strength and endurance: the result is what he calls the “postindian” or the postmodern Native person who has an awareness of and manipulates conventional images of the “Indian”. Vizenor urges Native people to become “postmodern warriors of simulations” and engages in “trickster

² Vizenor mimics, as well as parodies, Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction; he also borrows Jean Baudrillard’s concept of simulation, or the belief that in postmodern life, we are so far from real things and experiences we can only simulate them, not represent them. While Baudrillard finds simulation characteristic of post-modernity, Vizenor attempts to reclaim a sense of real Native peoples and cultures.

hermeneutics”, using invention in language and the shifting and contingent nature of meaning to replace simulations with a more valid “tribal Consciousness” (Vizenor, 1994: 1-44).

Vizenor’s critical analysis and/or counter-telling is what he calls “simulations of dominance”, or the mis-tellings and the mis-representations of history. One of the main instigators of this simulation of dominance is “manifest manners.” “Manifest manners” focuses on the way in which Native Americans have been identified, and or defined, by the colonizer. This mythic and/or romantic view of the savage is what has led to Natives being called *Indians*, a misnomer constructed by the colonizer in order to define us “others” into an acceptable category of being. Vizenor feels that this constructed identity based on the mythic vision of the colonizer, should be rejected by Natives and that we should reclaim our power and demonstrate our “survivalance.”

Also pertinent to this argument is the perspective of Cherokee/Choctaw scholar, Louis Owens. In his essay ‘As if an Indian Were Really an Indian’ Louis Owens discusses the results of the “other’s” input into the field of Native storytelling and culture. He speaks of them as inventions and focuses on how the Native has to overcome these inventions through “ousts of inventions”, or the culmination of an alternative aesthetic which can lead to the rekindling of cultural identity and Native consciousness. Owens also focuses on language as a tool to take back our own “utterances”, and gives voice to the experiences that we, as colonized people, have encountered; thus further strengthening our already considerable ability to recount our own stories and histories.

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It is in this way that Vizenor and Owens intersect with the philosophies of Frantz Fanon. Vizenor’s “trickster hermeneutics”, the donning of the mask, can be seen as Fanon’s donning of the “white mask” in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Both are implements used for dealing with and/or countering the world of the colonizer. Whereas Fanon’s mask is subjugated towards the utilization of mimicry, or the desire to be at the same level as the colonizer, Vizenor’s mask is that of a trickster who feigns mimicry, by “playing” the *Indian*, in order to make his statement and/or point. Owens’ mask is that of determining cultural identity, his mixed-blood messages philosophy plays deeply into the chasm of who we, as a people, are today (the diffusion between Malcomson’s one drop of blood making one black vs. Pevar’s tribal mandates on blood quota, or the many drops of Native blood, to make an *Indian*) or, as Owens himself states:

“For Native Americans, the term ‘Indian’ is a deeply contested space, where authenticity must somehow be forged out of resistance to the ‘authentic’ representation. Vizenor astutely declares that the real *Indian* is the ‘absolute fake’... such simulations are the ‘absence of the tribal real’ since the simulated Native ‘Indian’ is a Euramerican invention. It is the hyperreal simulation that the Native must confront and contest while simultaneously recognizing that

only the simulation will be seen by most who look for Indianness. This is a dilemma made more difficult because the simulacrum, or 'absolute fake', is constructed out of the veneer of the 'tribal real'" (Owens, 2001: 13).

All this being said, I would now like to segue into a discussion on nationality and language. National and/or cultural identity and language, discussed by both Vizenor and Owens in their analogies on Native writings, is also central in the philosophies of Frantz Fanon and Edouard Glissant. Whereas Fanon discusses the use of French to convey the feelings of the colonized on Martinique and Edouard Glissant focuses on the implementation of Creole to forge cultural identity and language in the Francophone Caribbean, Vizenor and Owens focus on the use of English as their weapon/tool to penetrate the misinterpretations brought forth by the colonizers in their analysis of the *Indian*, or, as Owens so aptly writes in *Mixed-Blood Messages*:

We humans have the ability to appropriate and liberate the 'others' discourse. Rather than merely reflecting back to him the masters own voice, we learn to make bare the burden of our own experience (Owens, 1998: xiii).

All four utilize 'The Empire Writes Back' strategy of dissolving the gray areas of 'otherness' and focusing on ways to interpret and revive the face that exists beneath the mask. Like Fanon and Glissant, Vizenor and Owens also focus on mimicry; Vizenor through the counter-antics of the trickster, Owens through the re-interpretation of Native and the usage of 'utterances', those words that must be preserved in order to re-call a national/cultural consciousness and more. All of these post-colonial theories culminate in the desire for a factual representation of a specific ethnic and/or cultural phenomenon.

Both Vizenor and Owens concentrate on ways in which the Native can take back their voice and reformulate their cultural power. Through 'simulations of dominance', or the re-interpretation of what it means to be Native (the factual realities of our existence today vs. the mythos formulations of the colonizer...we are NOT *Indians*), we can begin to redefine who *we* are according to our own directives; our own understanding; our own utterances. These strategies of counter-telling are ways in which we can re-formulate our vision of identity and representation. Garnette Joseph, in his article 'Five Hundred Years of Indigenous Resistance', writes:

"As they approach the future, the Caribs must engage in some deep reflection of the past. There must be some focus on how to survive in a rapidly changing environment. The thought of 'celebrating' Columbus and his dreadful journey brings pain and sorrow to the indigenous people as they reflect on the suffering endured by their forefathers. There is a feeling of having been cheated at every turn and of needing to put the conquest in proper perspective. The indigenous people believe that it is time the history books were rewritten to give an accurate depiction of their society. And they are prepared to continue the struggle against European domination." (Joseph, 1997: 220).

In his Foreword to *Kalinago Myths: A Retelling*, Julius Green writes:

“There are those who ignore the significance of our distinct identity and encourage us to follow suit. Indeed, they would urge us to merge to the point of obliteration of ethnic identity although, at times, that unique identity does well to benefit our entire island economically; they minimize the contribution that we have made to the history and development of Dominica; and they prey on our weakness using diverse mechanisms that have never worked to our benefit. However, a recognition and espousal of the contribution that the Kalinago have made is foundational to the genuine development of the Country.” (Green: 5)

These Kalinago voices, along with those of the Caribs of St. Vincent, Trinidad, the Guianas, Belize and Honduras; the Arawak voices of the Locono of Trinidad and the resurgent Taino voices rising from Puerto Rico, The Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the United States, are good examples of how Vizenor and Owens’ Native theory can interconnect in order to enrich and define Amerindian culture in the Caribbean today. Having been colonized by the Western academy which claims theory as thoroughly Western, which has constructed all the rules by which the indigenous world has been theorized (or not theorized), indigenous voices have been silenced for far too long. Frantz Fanon’s call for the indigenous intellectual and artist to create a new literature, to work in the cause of constructing a national culture after liberation still stands as a challenge. Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which took place on it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit: an *undeniable* and *urgent* right to reclaim our own utterances.

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(RE)VISITING DOMINICA'S PAST: (AD)VENTURING INTO HER FUTURE: INTERROGATING IDENTITY FORMATION IN MARIE-ELENA JOHN'S *UNBURNABLE*

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“It was all about where he had come from and where he wanted to go - it had been all about the climb” (John, 1996: 67). Indeed, the journey between one's past and emerging future invariably contributes to one's identity and character, which can sometimes only be crystallised by creating forward and backward linkages through journeying into the past, finding that point of suppression, embracing it, negotiating with it, and moving on beyond it. This climb through time, along the way enforced by concerns of history, culture, gender, sexuality and language, forges the sense of 'self', and the reclamation and preservation of identity - an issue whose chords reverberate throughout Marie-Elena John's novel *Unburnable* - as she weaves a dichotomous tapestry of socio-cultural lore and modernity, and ancestral conservatism with new age sexuality in projecting Dominican sensibilities and survival strategies. Her protagonist, Lillian, engages in conflict resolution as she is determined to revisit her past - and, by extension, Dominica's past - as she attempts to claim that elusive peace within her soul that would allow her to delve into the future. John crafts a potpourri of identity crises in the novel - ancestral, historical, ethnic, sexual, familial, communal, cultural, and personal - leading the reader to develop a holistic sense of Dominican lore, tradition and change. The interface among the descendants of the early Caribs, the West African slaves, the African-American offspring of the transplanted Caribbean man, and the evolving diasporic community in Dominica facilitates movement from a historically plural society into a developing creole society. Underpinning the crafting of such an evolution is John's use of literary devices that merge with the island's cultural landscape as featured in its drumming, song, storytelling, carnival and masquerade. In this novel that in turn celebrates and grieves the lives of women of multiple and mixed ethnicities, three different generations and varying perspectives, the common thread of identity formation weaves its way throughout, binding them together to reflect the true Dominican woman, in spite of inherent and cultural differences. This paper interrogates these multiple identities and

their resultant impact on Dominica as a colonised territory and on the lives of her post-colonial people.

History appears in the novel in various forms and serves to be the basic ingredient in the formation of identity of the characters and the people of Dominica. The combination of the history of the region, island and personal history of characters has a major impact on one's behaviour, attitude, values, lifestyle and expectations. Like many other neighbouring islands, the novel highlights Dominica's incorporation of Carib, African and Lebanese history and, in most instances, a combination of these is juxtaposed to the Caribbean diasporic experience in the United States. The protagonist Lillian serves as testimony to this, being a mixture of Carib and African ancestry whose mother was somewhat influenced by a Lebanese lifestyle. Removed far from Dominica at an early age, Lillian is physically, mentally and emotionally cut off from her history and as such, her real identity and sense of self remain hidden and suppressed, with only glimpses of a gnawing memory being illuminated at infrequent intervals. She is instead forced to forge an identity through her own personal history which is inextricably bound with the history of Dominica. And it is this history that comes to the fore as she attempts to reclaim self in an ironic twist of fate that sees instead Teddy – former college mate turned lover and African-American scholar and activist – asserting his identity in a manner that powers his ascent, all the while mirroring Lillian's ultimate physical and psychological descent to the point where she must surrender to Dominica's clarion call for her body, spirit and soul.

In the search for her identity, woman's rights activist and academic Lillian leaves Washington and returns to Dominica – the only place where her life-long history and tight-lipped past are intertwined – a stark contrast to the unaccommodating American cocoon where she is caught between new lifeways and accepting her own. The novel often sees Black history in America as not being clearly defined and it therefore becomes evident that Lillian's "voice" cannot be found in a place where her roots are not buried, being in exile from her own culture. John crafts the dichotomy between Black West Indian sensibilities and the African-American's perpetual, antagonistic attitude toward understanding self as pivotal to the conflict that the educated West Indian diasporic community experiences. Lillian is twenty-three years haunted by memories of her past and stories circulating about her mother, Iris, the bottle-raped, insane prostitute, and her grandmother, Matilda, the murdering Obeah woman who is presented as a customary African female chief. In her burial of all Dominican ties and the conscious manipulation of shifting memories, Lillian has in fact suppressed her own identity, a phenomenon that she is forced to accept must be addressed if there is to be any hope of her embracing a future, initially for herself, and secondarily with Teddy. Replete with the thematic concerns of history and oppression, religion and

ritual, motherhood and selfhood, and identity formation and crises, John uses this novel to evoke the reader's response to the quintessential West Indian literary concerns with alienation and 'unaccommodation' depicted in V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Like Naipaul's protagonist Biswas, Lillian is forced to accept her reality of being alien in an environment that continuously reminds her that she does not belong, that there is "the need for unaccommodated man to carve a place of belonging." (Morgan, 2002: 12)

In attempting to find such a place, Lillian travels to Dominica to ease her guilt of being a curse to society, being the granddaughter of the "evil" Matilda. From a young age, she has never been able to accept her history, failing in her attempt to commit suicide, destined to spend much of her formative years in therapy. Her return to Dominica is symbolic of her intention to reclaim that 'self' that she never allowed to flourish – that development stunted by traumatic experiences of her own history. As Bader (2006) posits, "the psychological damage caused by not knowing one's personal history comes center stage" (p. 78). Psychoanalytic theory supports the idea of trauma stunting the development of an identity and suggests "it is not the experience itself that produces traumatic effect, but rather the remembrance of it... trauma links past to present through representations and imagination [which] can lead to distorted identity-formation" (Caruth, 1995: 17). John certainly saturates her story with a plethora of techniques that generate remembrance of Lillian's traumatic past through the use of voice, flashbacks and flash-forwards, stream of consciousness, as well as of Dominican cultural lore in song and music. The use of song and storytelling in the novel highlights its importance to cultural identity in Dominica. The novel itself is three tales, lives, and generations intertwined and three songs that tell of the most talked about occurrences in the island. The *chante mas* give life to the three women – three different identities that embody the cultural victimisation of Dominica. For the people Up There, the beating of the drum gives life to ancestral identities, while their battle against the policemen is transformed into a war dance.

Juxtaposed to *chante mas* are the critical and emphatic devices of masking and masquerading that depict the importance of West African origins playing an integral role in forming identity in Dominican history, as witnessed in the spectacle of the *bandes mauvais* on a dark *j'ouvert* morning. West African culture transplanted itself on the island generations ago, but has remained largely untouched and unstudied in terms of its significance and power. Though much of Dominican society has remained ignorant of their culture, the maroons and their traditions have forged an integral part of the overarching Dominican identity. The truth about the West African maroon communities, over which Matilda was chief is only unearthed at the end of the novel, finally shedding light on the distorted identity the maroons were forced to live with.

Owing to this silence of the maroons, the identity and history of the West African descendants remains stifled in silence within her, and she pays the consequences later on in life.

Dominican society sees Matilda as an Obeahwoman, which she denies, but to them, “this denial was expected, Obeah being illegal and clandestinely practiced.” (John, 2006: 11) Moreover, it takes a visiting British colonialist to explain the significance of Matilda and the people of Up There donning West African war masks, worn to channel the spirits of their ancestors. Had they known that Matilda wore the mask of the chief, they would have understood her authority and power to dance in fury around Iris’ former lover, and that it was his resulting heart attack, rather than the so-called evil associated with Matilda and her traditions, that killed him. The masks that Matilda and the people of Up There donned were merely cast aside as “ugly masks like old-time people used to do” (p. 138) not knowing that the wearers “had become transformed, that they were now possessed by spirits that represented their masks and headdresses” (p. 139). Some not worn for over twenty years, these masks are yet dancing the “same dance of fury. The same drumming, relentless...imbued with the most authority and power” (p. 143). Similarly, the idea of the ancestral identity in a person is seen when Lillian gives Teddy a mask “that had once been worn, a mask that had once been danced, that had once represented a spirit” (p. 7). As years go by she muses that as he grows older, “the resemblance gets stronger.” As such, it is possible for persons to assume a whole new identity – one that belongs to a spirit of the past – one with power and authority where history revives itself in the present and the future, thus explaining Matilda’s willingness to die and become an ancestor.

The metaphor of masking is pivotal to the clash manifested between the *bande mauvais* and “Flying Masquerade” on that fateful day when Iris’ former lover, John Baptiste, lost his life, and is perhaps the author’s most critical singular use of apposition to depict the potent force of the masked African warrior ancestor vis-à-vis the modern West Indian who pays no homage to things ancestral, spiritual or sacred. John’s wife, Cecile, looks down at her husband’s performance of the West Indian *badjohn* caricature during *j’ouvert*, heaping silent contempt upon the man who betrayed their wedding vows. It is indeed a performance for Baptiste as he wishes he were anywhere else instead of being in the stifling, heated costume that he dons in an effort to project himself as a patriarchal man ordained to be in power, control and authority over others. But his weak performance is directly proportional to the power of Matilda’s alleged Flying Masquerade that he eventually succumbs to in fear as “the band with the wooden masks” (p. 135) advances in a steady manner to clash with the Roseau *mauvais bande* of *j’ouvert* festivities.

Baptiste's death is foreshadowed as Cecile offers one word: *Clash!* which then resonates throughout as Cecile fingers her rosary, rolls "bead after bead between thumb and forefinger, and found that she was not reciting the entire prayer, that she kept repeating only the very end: *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death*" (p. 136). The sheer power of the approaching African masked band is manifested in movements that are precise, measured and declarative, juxtaposed to the ineptitude of a superficial Baptiste who, upon seeing the encroaching masqueraders and hearing their hallowed drums, simply cries and pees and froths. It is a moment of frisson when the reader becomes aware that the clash itself is beyond a merely historical or thrilling phenomenon (Bryce, 2009). Rather, "the center of this scene irrevocably affects the lives of Iris, Matilda and the unborn Lillian" (Doig, 2006) as the stage is set for Lillian to be born into a society that is now emotionally charged with the superstition that her Obeahwoman grandmother had exacted revenge on Baptiste for the sexual objectification and ultimate discard of her daughter, Iris. Inevitably, the unborn Lillian's future is cast in stone as a cloud of fear, mistrust and ostracism forms and awaits her.

For this reason, Matilda's identity and that of her people remain warped as one associated with malevolence and the supernatural. A better understanding of history of the West African maroon communities would reveal that Obeah practices were part of religious traditions; war masks invoked warrior spirits of the past, channelling them into Matilda, giving her a new identity and the authority to pass judgment on those who posed a threat to her people. Instead, Matilda is later condemned to death for mass murder and the last maroon village in Dominican history is burnt to ashes. In penning her work, John undoubtedly challenges the still prevailing view of polite Caribbean society that Obeah is wicked (David, 2009). Yet in so doing, she attempts to nullify its power via an awkward intrusion of religion and Roman Catholicism.

The reader remains critical of an almost condescending account of the transplanted white American nun, Mary-Alice, who has renounced her vows as she marries the Dominican known as Bird, and her collusion with a Colihaut Obeahman to re-enact the christening ceremony of Lillian who was never blessed with this sacrament in spite of her ardent preparation of it. Had the episode not been one of believed life or death importance, it certainly would have appeared as a comedy of errors. Notwithstanding this, at best John achieves the status of parody as she portrays a now fully pregnant Mary-Alice, complete in habit and wimple, together with her Obeahman friend attempting to perform a sacred ritual in the midst of night in Roseau's famed Catholic church.

What is of note is Mary-Alice's conscious selection of the Obeahman that "she knew to be a harmless charlatan" who seems to have "no more than a theatrical stance, unlike the authentically sinister looks of the other Obeah practitioners in the area – and he was clean, fresh-smelling, without the rankness that enveloped the others" (p. 202). John's deliberate romanticizing of the "non-Obeah" Obeahman reeks of an authorial voice that belittles the practice of Obeah in Dominican lore, as Mary-Alice then enters into complicity with him to "just recite some gibberish, and give them the usual ball of chalky mud and sticks and hair to bury outside their house for protection" (p. 203). It is meant to be a performance for the benefit of Icilma, Lillian's surrogate mother, who earnestly believes in the power of Obeah as she is part and parcel of the plan to christen Lillian that night. At no time, however, are any of the actors in this drama prepared for the unforeseen phenomenon of little Lillian actually questioning the image that she sees in the mirror which is a pertinent dimension of Obeah. And at no time does the author project any understanding for the reader as to the possibility of this occurrence if Obeah is to be regarded simply as an ancestral practice with no meaning and effect in 21st century Dominica.

John seeks to balance an obvious exploration of Dominican Obeah customs with a repertoire of biblical allusions in the novel that themselves become an integral ingredient in the formation of the identity of the Dominican people. There is the projection of the Madonna image as Icilma holds Lillian on her lap; the parody of John the Baptist who baptizes and converts by the riverside through the character of John Baptiste who converts Iris from an innocent, despoiled young lady into the whore that she becomes near the riverside; Mary-Alice's very late pregnancy which is reminiscent of Elizabeth's foretold pregnancy in her old age; reference to Up There being a place of Noir that is characteristic of Noah's Ark that rested "up there" on the mount offering solace and salvation to its insiders much the same as Up There offers to its maroon inhabitants; the blood sacrifice for salvation pertinent to the novel's storyline as was Christ's ultimate sacrifice of self in shedding his blood for the salvation of all; and Icilma's willingness to surrender her child rather than see it torn in two as in the case brought before King Solomon. In spite of John's use of these devices to dilute the prominence of Obeah and its unexplained phenomena, the episode of Lillian's failed baptism further feeds and nurtures her identity as a demonic child that must be alienated and denied at all costs.

Similarly, the remnants of the Carib tribe have an identity that is forced to remain hidden from the rest of society. Simon, Iris' father and Matilda's lover, kept his identity as a healer hidden, only to practise his arts with Matilda. The Carib history itself has remained unclear to Dominicans, much like that of the African maroon communities, to the point where "Caribs were now more mythologized than real" and

accused of being “depraved” and scorned for “eating human flesh” (p. 31). Simon is only able to keep his identity alive by roaming the Caribbean lands and seas, allowing himself to be enveloped by memories of the past while travelling to Carib ruins and reciting names of historical places in his head. In an attempt at self-fulfilment, Simon goes out in search of the last of the Caribs in South America as the only way he can keep the memory and identity of his people alive is by surrounding himself in the remnants of it.

In Iris, the Carib identity shows itself through her character and genetic traits, stemming from the ancestral days. The Caribs are known for their inner strength and ability to withstand the vagaries of fate, instilled in them after having their land and their lives taken away and their name demonized. Even though the Carib numbers have dwindled, this particular feature lives on, particularly in Iris, who, while being beaten and tortured by two women, remained silent and was duly recognized for being “a Carib...she would take her blows in silence” (p. 120). Such a physical acceptance serves as the precursor to the psychological reality of rape with a broken bottle. All aspects of Iris’ identity have been somewhat distorted. Instead of being influenced by her West African heritage, as she should have been given that she was the daughter of the great Matilda, she was instead robbed of it and forced to take up the identity thrust upon her by her own personal fate. Having been almost given away by her mother, Iris is nurtured by a Lebanese family at the upper end of the social hierarchy in Roseau, and spends most of her life yearning for a man she could never call her own, and for this she is beaten and raped with a broken Coke bottle, condemning her to spend the rest of her life as a prostitute.

It is evident therefore, that Iris’ identity is not given a chance to develop, and instead, she represents nothing more than a prostitute, whose life story and “identity” are immortalized in *chante mas* song for Dominican history. Iris has been a victim of displacement in society, and the importance of culture manifests itself in Iris’s vacuous personal identity. From birth, she was raised by the other women in Matilda’s clan, and given preferential treatment by others, largely due to the colour of her skin and her “desire to please and be liked” (p. 33). In her formative years however, she is shunned by the upper class, unacceptable for marriage to one of their own. Caught between these two divisions in society, she

“simply did not have a frame of reference to understand the meaning of her skin in a society of people who defined themselves in an ascending rank... She did not understand the meaning of her poverty ... she was still never able to determine which one of the three – color, class, poverty – was responsible for the inescapability of her destiny.” (p. 95).

As such, Iris is caught between two cultures, and this confusion consumes her and stunts the development of her identity; therefore the only one we see in her and what she will be remembered for is the label of 'prostitute,' given to her by the people of Dominica. Supplementing this, however, is her brief but enlightening role of mother to Lillian. In her dying days, Iris makes an attempt to save her daughter from her fate, in fear that Lillian too would be forced to live out the consequences of a falsified history. And it is this attempt on Iris' part that must be heralded as revealing a redeeming dimension of her identity. This is a woman who has been dealt a negative hand by fate, who causes uproar and furore among respectable Dominican families, who is seen as an outcast by all. Yet she mirrors her mother's love and attention and kindred spirit toward her daughter as she endeavours to tell Lillian the true story about her grandmother, the powerful tribal leader Matilda. Iris attempts to compensate for her denial of self to her daughter and although it is short-lived, the memory of this scenario takes root in Lillian's young mind and is drawn upon in adulthood in her quest for selfhood.

John writes with exacting clarity on the role of the mother in this novel as motherhood – both biological and surrogate – becomes a central thematic concern. Chief mother to her daughter Iris and to the entire maroon community is Matilda. Iris herself is mothered by the women of Up There, the Mother superior of the convent she is attached to briefly, her Lebanese surrogate mother, the village prostitutes that seek her welfare, and the former nun, Mary-Alice. Her daughter Lillian may not have had the initial benefit of a biological mother in Iris but her father's wife Icilma adopts her as her very own. This situation is made more complex by the presence of Mary-Alice and Aunt Margaret in her life. Lillian herself has never given birth to any offspring but her collective children are the traumatised, abused, raped and belittled women of the world as she has dedicated her life to being a feminist and champion of women's rights. The account of Mrs. Richards' role in Iris's rape may even be interpreted as the final and ultimate recompense for her daughter's wounded pride and public humiliation when her husband's lover strips her in public during the annual Carnival celebrations. In promoting this theme, John brilliantly paints the emerging identity-formation of the novel's mothers as life-altering and nurturing in a manner that promotes the ultimate welfare and fierce protection of their daughters at all costs.

An integral dimension of identity that is portrayed in the novel is that of sexuality and the male and female dynamics in society which contribute toward the accepted standards and behaviour in Dominican life. Both men and women have their own separate socio-cultural identities. From the start of the novel, we are given two varying images of women: Matilda, the strong Black woman that everyone respects and seeks the help of, and Iris, the outcast used over and over by men for their own

pleasure. Androcentrism and masculinism still glorify the stereotype of women being the weaker sex, and we are introduced to Lillian as having dedicated her life to helping that figurative woman “who had found herself in trouble when she had tried to stand up to the expectations of her culture, or the dictates of her government, or the demands of the social order under which she lived” (p13).

Dominica to a great extent is a microcosm of this global patriarchal social order, with men having power over women. The Dominican women accepted that Iris was the lover of John Baptiste, offering advice even on how to have a child with him, ensuring a continuation of his actions to maintain her lifestyle even after he marries someone else. When Matilda is approached and warned about Iris becoming a plaything for men, she is quite pleased that her fourteen year old daughter had done so well for herself. Mary-Alice cannot come to terms with this situation, in particular the fact that these women have grown to accept it as part of their culture. Mary-Alice is myopic, however, in that she fails to see Matilda’s attitude as emanating from the knowledge that whereas she, as a Maroon, had to hide from the wider society, Iris found a means to infiltrate that same society at the very level of the elite. This is the achievement that Matilda is in high praise of, not her daughters’ licentious lifestyle that Mary-Alice frowns upon. This reveals another dimension of sexual identity as Mary-Alice’s attitude toward women’s sexuality is entrenched in the patriarchal insistence on female monogamy but acceptance of male polygamy as reflected in the multiple sexual activities of John Baptiste, Winston Baptiste, Bird and Teddy.

Indeed, a significant characteristic of the Dominican women in this novel is their allowance of their own sexuality to take flight. Lillian opens the novel by telling of her plans to seduce Teddy, thinking that “the sex would be just an inevitable and, she believed, unfortunate by-product” (p. 15) of getting what she wanted from him. On the other hand, Iris, as well as Lillian, uses sexuality as an outlet for her buried emotions and grief. The physical intensity of Iris was “actually the aggression of an otherwise powerless, disappointed and very angry woman, who was, in fact, molesting them with her body” (p. 2), while in Lillian’s case, “as her disconnect intensified, so had her appetite for hard-core sex” (p. 245). Lillian’s traumatic history can therefore be linked to her sexuality – further proof that identity is formed by events of one’s past. Regardless of whether or not the men know that they are being taken advantage of via women’s sexuality, the fact is that sexuality remains a hidden, yet essential part of the identity of the women in Dominica. As such, when Iris brings eternal shame on Mrs. Richard’s family, she seeks to destroy and defile her body, knowing that doing so would cripple Iris to the greatest extent possible. And Lillian is her mother’s daughter. Her use of sexuality to achieve her own ends mirrors her mother’s as the novel’s end

highlights her increased intense sexual encounters with Teddy that mirror her growing need to uncover, discover and recover her past, for which his assistance is necessary.

On the other hand, the West African maroon communities to some extent counter this stance on women, as they allow women such as Matilda to be chief over them, just as her mother was before her. The patriarchal dynamic extends into these communities as well, however, with men being allowed to have several wives, and Matilda being beaten by Simon. Nonetheless, all power and authority reside in Matilda, providing a stark contrast to the typical identity of Dominican women. She too uses her sexuality to secure her dominance, slapping Mary-Alice with her breasts, and using her large black frame to intimidate others. The working of gender relations in the Maroon communities is therefore more complex and intricate than that among the genetically watered down Dominicans, but such is the identity of the West African woman. Despite the difference between these two types of women, the common factor is that both are in fact heavily influenced by history.

History also impacts the language and culture of the characters in this novel leading to another dimension of identity-formation. In Dominica, the language gives life to the characters, highlighting the little things that make them Dominican. Matilda slaps a nun, the nun falls in love with a man while on his back, and the man runs as though he is flying. In contrast, the scenes in the US are somewhat dull and monotonous, such as the conversations between Teddy and his ex-wife. The language of the Dominican characters is rich and complex, while that of scenes in the US is more intellectual, logical and, perhaps, predictable. The difference between the West Indian and North American speech varieties marks the distance between the two cultures. The narration that tells of Dominica and its characters provides elaborate and detailed descriptions oozing colour, sound, rhythm, and style. Ideally, it embraces the cultures of the island, giving it a stamp of identity. Furthermore, language is also indicative of the lack of understanding between the different identities represented on the island. For many years Dominicans referred to 'Up There' as Noah, assuming that it evoked the Biblical story of the Ark being atop a mountain. However, it was later discovered that what the maroon community called themselves was 'Noir,' meaning Black, which captures the essence of the people themselves. As such, this misunderstanding of their name complicates their ethnic and socio-cultural identity and value as a people.

Similarly, although Mary-Alice speaks flawless patois to Matilda, her attempts to change her mind about Iris's situation is futile, saying that Matilda does not understand her to which Bird responds "you are the one that does not understand her" (p. 191). As such, it is not only the language variety spoken, but also paralanguage and an understanding of cultural sensibilities that forge identity. Mary-Alice later

explains that Matilda gave her a “full-blown speech in which the mountain woman used a kind of Creole that one did not hear normally, the complex Creole of someone who never spoke English [...] but was nonetheless completely comprehensible” (p. 222). Consequently, the message goes beyond the words themselves; rather the tone, behaviour, and attitude of Matilda tells the story. And Matilda’s story lives on in her granddaughter, if not in cultural practice, then certainly in the message. For both Matilda and Lillian have the same message – help others, help women. And both Matilda’s and Lillian’s identities are marked by macabre and striking similarities in communicating this message: the metaphor of the mirror belongs to both from the early days of Matilda gazing into a mirror to Lillian’s youth when she looked into a mirror and saw a woman hanging; their adoption of masks to tell a story that was not their own; their interpretation of sexuality as critical – not for personal pleasure – but rather as a necessary mechanism in the scheme of life; and in the voices, drums and act of flying that come to both at different times and in different ways.

Essentially, the novel’s end, which alludes to the end of Lillian’s life, proves to have a paradoxical sense of beginning for her, for it is only at this point that she fully comprehends and truly embraces her identity after searching and researching her past in Dominica. This identity is based primarily on her own past, and that of her family, thus her acceptance of who she is comes only when she accepts her own pain-filled history. As such, much like Matilda, who anxiously awaited her identity as an ancestor in the after-life, so too does Lillian allow death to be the vehicle in which her identity lives. But her death is not sudden; rather, it is foreshadowed throughout the novel from the reader’s first encounter with her as she sees a mirror image of death in the form of a hanged woman, her digging of a six-foot grave, and the negative portrayal of her character overshadowing the good she achieves as an activist. Her impending death is reflected in the metaphoric meaning of her own words echoed throughout the text: “*I’m going home*” (p. 81); “*I came home to face it*” (p. 199); “*I’m not going back...*” (p. 211); “*Almost there!*” (p. 246); “*a sinking image*” (p. 256); “*I’m bracing the wall but my hands are burning. It’s only a matter of time before I burn*”; “*It was now beginning to get dark, the sun had not just fallen behind, but was now slipping into the sea*”; “*the absence of warmth*” (p. 289). An exploration of the cover photograph of Marie-Elena John’s published work depicts a woman running forward but looking back. If the author’s use of biblical allusions is to be extended to explain this image, then the reader recalls the story of Lot’s wife who leaves her home but cannot escape looking back, which ultimately leads to her destruction. Lillian, indeed, is *physically* destroyed at the novel’s end.

On the flip side of the coin, Lillian’s downward spiral is directly proportional to Teddy’s upward climb. In revisiting Dominica’s past, Lillian embraces her own and

succumbs to a beckoning call from her ancestors as her identity is finally claimed. It seems ironic that Teddy, who was simply meant to be a support for Lillian during their trip to Dominica, and who really had no past to revisit, was the one who emerged victorious in adventuring into Dominica's future as an emblem of the African and West Indian diaspora living in the US. As Lillian crumbles, Teddy is enlightened and permeated with a new vigour, a new soul as he climbs toward a point where he can venture into a new future. He is told the story of Dominica's past and Lillian's family history by Professor Bird and he runs toward Lillian to tell her what she already knew – that her ancestors jumped to their death in the ultimate sacrifice to preserve their identity. But it is in Teddy's running that the reader understands his rebirth. "In the distance, Teddy was growing smaller and smaller... That was how Teddy was running, flat out, like a child" (p. 288). This account depicts the eureka experienced by Teddy when he suddenly realizes and then recounts the history of Lillian's family as him "Bringing certain kinds of spectacular good news" (p. 288). This child image of Teddy counters the adult Teddy that the reader meets at the novel's start and is highly necessary as the first Teddy had never experienced a real childhood. He was destined for greatness, and his parents' decision to extract him from his own community and anchor him in an alienated environment was a strategy necessary for him to attain the greatness that he was meant to attain. His child-like appearance at the novel's end reflects a reclamation of innocence and zeal and spirit which only a child can muster, and it is only now that Teddy is in a position to venture into his own future.

Teddy's upward climb comes suddenly, much like the discovery of something long buried, quite unlike the frequent glimpses John affords the reader into Lillian's pre-mediated, conscious decision to end her life. The reader travels with Lillian along the road to her death as she ultimately answers to the voices that call on her to jump to their heaven. Herein lies John's final masterpiece of paradox. Teddy attains his own enlightenment that somehow manages to restore to him his stolen childhood and usher in a new future, but Lillian also attains her own heaven with her ancestors that comes not in *climbing*, but rather in *jumping downward* as they themselves did many years before her. In Lillian's mind, therefore, she did not use the awareness of her identity to end her life but rather to begin to live life. She dies physically but is renewed spiritually. Such an awareness allows her to claim that "In the public aftermath of her death, she would not disappoint the people of Dominica... Let them sing on her – she wanted her own song, it was her birthright. A *chante mas* to guarantee her place in history, alongside her grandmother and mother" (p. 291). This is *her* identity after all.

Lillian realizes that there is no end to her existence as her identity and her history are both unburnable. Her story comes full circle to redeem her action of not giving to

Teddy the cuff links she had made for him – the Twi design that was called *Hye won Hye* which in English is translated as “that which does not burn”. It is her history and identity, after all, that does not burn. They, like the cuff links, belong to her. Indeed, her story will achieve immortality in *chante mas*: she the *soucouyant*, her mother the “prostitute”, and her grandmother the “murdering Obeah woman” – identities that embrace the history, culture, sexuality and language of her people – identities that are etched into the very core of their souls and as such, identities that remain **unburnable**.

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LANGUAGE VARIATION AS ‘VERBAL RESOURCEFULNESS AND AESTHETIC COMPLETENESS’: THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF DEREK WALCOTT

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In an interview with Edward Hirsch, in response to a question about his linguistic heritage, Derek Walcott replied:

“I have a three language background French Creole, English Creole and English. With three languages, one oral and access to English Literature.... Well having all those things in me was a privilege. Once I knew that the richness of Creole was a whole new unchartered territory for a writer, I became excited. I also knew that it couldn’t be separated from the landscape, because the things I saw around me were being named by people in a new language, even if that language was being called Creole or vulgar or patois or a dialect or whatever.” (Bear, 1996: 58)

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This paper explores my personal response to the work of Derek Walcott. I see the influence of his pluri-lingual heritage in Walcott’s work as a powerful act of identity; he says of them and I see this struggle as passionate and instructive. As an educator sensitive to issues of language and language acquisition in the pluri-lingual / pluri-dialectal country of St. Lucia, I have found Walcott’s work a strong reference point for the vernacularization of Kwéyòl (St. Lucian French lexifier Creole) as well as for enabling respect and acceptance of the multiple varieties of the island’s linguistic heritage.

Some of the issues associated with sociolinguistics are largely those involving language diversity and the relationship between language and society. Although a very loose description of a very broad field, it includes within its scope aspects of a variety of varying social and linguistic areas, such as language planning, language policy, language variation, vernaculars and language and education. I will address some of these areas in this essay in relation to Walcott, his work and his pluri-lingual heritage.

In her discussion of the West Indian linguistic continuum as evidenced in Walcott’s work, Patricia Ismond described that phenomenon as an “inclusive linguistic flexibility” which is part of a “wider goal of verbal resourcefulness and aesthetic

completeness” (Ismond, 2001: 33). That wider goal appears to find expression in ‘Another Life’ where Walcott refers to a commitment that he shared with life long friend St. Lucian artist Dunstan St. Omer to document St. Lucian life through poetry and through art - a commitment that they have both managed to keep.

“But drunkenly or secretly we swore
Disciples of that astigmatic saint
That we would never leave the island
Until we had put down, in paint, in words
As palmists learn the network of a hand
All of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines
Every neglected, self pitying inlet
Muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves
From which old soldier crabs slipped
Surrendering to slush
Each ochre track seeking some hilltop and losing itself in an unfinished phrase
Under sand shipyards where burnt out palms
Inverted the design of sun rigged schooners
Entering forests boiling with life
Goyave, corosol, bois-cano, sapotille...”
(Walcott, 1973: 52)

1 Linguistic variation

Discussion of the continuum by linguists has for the most part made reference to the Anglophone Caribbean (DeCamp, 1971: 351; but see Robertson, 1982), yet I have always considered the notion of a continuum applicable to St. Lucia despite its history of French colonization (Isaac, 1986). The three dimensions are viewed as ranging as Walcott describes above from French lexifier Creole (Kwéyòl) but to include calqued English varieties to constitute a set of basilects, to varieties of an English Creole referred to by some writers as St. Lucian English Lexicon Vernacular (SLEV) (Simmons-Mc Donald, 2006: 121), which constitute a set of mesolects; through to varieties of the official language, English, which can be seen to be a set of acrolects. Walcott travels along this range with consummate skill, his pen like a plane churning out vocabulary, varieties, reclaiming indigenous values and distilling the essence of St. Lucian identity. In the Arkansas Testament in the poem ‘Cul de Sac’ we get a glimpse of that plane at work.

“As consonants scroll
off my shaving plane
in the fragrant Creole
of their native grain
from a trestle bench
they’d curl at my foot
C’s, R’s with a French
Or West African root

From a dialect throng-
ing its leaves unread
Yet light on the tongue
Of their native road..."
(Walcott, 1987: 9).

Walcott's movement from one variety to another is deliberate, resulting in code mixing, a common sociolinguistic feature, to which has been ascribed psychological as well as social value and significance. Myers-Scotton makes the point that:

"all linguistic codes or varieties come to have psychological and social associations in the speech communities in which they are used. Given these associations, the use of a particular code is viewed in terms of a marked versus an unmarked opposition in reference to which it 'matches' community expectations for the interaction type or genre where it is used: What community norms predict is unmarked; what is not predicted is marked."
(Myers-Scotton, 1998: 5)

Yet for Walcott the code, whether marked or unmarked is a deliberate tool of aesthetic elegance, artistic expression and communal identity.

2 Code-mixing as an act of identity

In his delineation of acts of identity LePage asserts:

"each individual is envisaged using the linguistic systems they themselves have created in order to project on to others the universe as they envisage it, including their own place in it. They each have to establish their own identity, and do this by relating themselves negatively or positively to the people or groups of people they discern around them, endowing these with linguistic characteristics." (LePage, 1998: 7)

In his essay 'The Antilles' Walcott expresses a sentiment that passionately endorses this assertion: when he states that

" there is a force of exultation, a celebration of luck when a writer finds himself a witness to the early morning of a culture that is defining itself, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, in that self-defining dawn... This is the benediction that is celebrated, a fresh language and a fresh people and this the frightening duty owed.

I stand here in their name, if not their image - but also in the name of the dialect they exchange like the leaves of trees whose names are suppler, greener, more morning-stirred than English - laurier cannelles, bois-flot, bois-canot - or the valleys the trees mention - Fond St.Jacques, Mabouya, Forestier, Roseau , Mahaut -... all songs and histories in themselves, pronounced not in French - but in patois." (Walcott, 1998: 79- 80)

That statement of moral responsibility, duty and search for authenticity, Chamberlin, in his book ‘Come Back to Me My Language’ claims, is the duty and vision of the artist in Caribbean societies. Walcott searches for that authentic expression and allows himself to be immersed in the language of his country using it to recapture history, to explore its power to evoke sentiments of passion, of empathy, of revelry. For according to Robert Bunge: “Language is not just another thing we do, as humans; it is the thing we do. It is the total environment; we live in language as a fish lives in water. It is the audible and visible manifestation of the soul of a people.” (Bunge, 1992: 376). This soul searching and this commitment to stand in the name of the people yield the powerful linguistic variety of Walcott’s work.

Often juxtaposing the official language with the vernacular, Walcott captures the distinctive features of Caribbean Creoles, underscoring the reduction of consonant clusters and the vowel qualities peculiar to St. Lucia and Dominica, such as the absence of a distinction in English between tense and lax high front vowels as in the words ‘heed’ and ‘hid’ as shown in the following quotation:

“Sah, Castries ees a coaling station and
 der twenty-seventh best harba in der worl..
 In eet the entire Breetesh navy can be heeden ” (Walcott, 1973: 30)

Contiguous placement of the two varieties, the vernacular and the official language represent the existential reality of life as he explains in his essay ‘The Antilles’:

“One rose hearing two languages one of trees, one of school children reciting in English:

I am monarch of all I survey
 My right there is none to dispute ...

while in the country, to same metre, but to organic instruments, handmade violin, chac-chac, and goatskin drum a girl named Senseenne singing:

Si mwen di ‘ous ça fait mwen la peine
 ‘Ous kai dire ça vrai
 (If I told you that caused me pain, you’ll say it’s true)
 Si mwen di ‘ous ça pentetrahit mwen
 ‘Ous peut dire ça vrai
 (If I told you, you pierced my heart, you’d say it’s true)
 Ces mamailles actuellement
 Pas ka faire l’amour z’autres pour un rien
 (Children nowadays don’t make love for nothing)” (Walcott, 1998: 80)

Walcott, it is alleged, prefers a French orthography to the one created through the regional efforts promoted by the Folk Research Centre in 1980. When a new orthography is created, it is important that writers use it in their work, as part of the

standardizing process; a necessary factor that popularizes and gives legitimacy to the writing system. It is interesting to note the influence of Walcott's preference for a French orthography. Walcott expresses that preference in the essay 'A letter to Chamoiseau':

"We have to understand that this vehement assertion of creating roots for what linguistically is a mother tongue blended with another mother tongue provides a flawed maternity.

Creole comes from French. Forced or not Africans spoke French in Slavery, and for the Creole academy this is an unhealthy reality. It demands to have its own writing and its next step in its effort to go further and further from the degradation of slavery and colonialism would be to invent the hieroglyphics of a new alphabet whose echoes cannot be changed unless every surviving aspect of French is banned. Written Kwéyòl ---Why K for a hard c for example? - claims an academic and political mandate whose decree I reject because the words are ugly and their sound cuts off the phonetic subtleties and elegance of the patois spoken in the heights of my own island; and of course it is this idea of elegance which Creole condemns as being false or self deluding French... Texaco is the combined triumph of the Creole language and of French orthography ..." (Walcott, 1998: 228)

3 Educational Challenges

I believe Walcott's often quoted expression of schizophrenia in 'Codicil' is softened by the solace he finds in the earth sodden with the vernacular expressions of time and of history. In an interview with Swedish writer Leif Sjoberg, Walcott asserts:

"I consider language to be my birthright. I happen to be born in an English and Creole place and love both languages... it is mine to do what other poets before me did Dante, Chaucer,... Burns which is to fuse the noble and the common language, the streets, the law courts, in a tone that is true to my own voice in which both accents are heard naturally." (Baer, 1996: 82)

In 'Codicil', Walcott refers to himself as:

"Schizophrenic, wrenched by two styles,
one a hack's hired prose, I earn
my exile."

That schizophrenia, I believe is the experience of many St.Lucian young people. We see it in students' writing; in the startling discoveries of instances of illiterate behaviour at secondary school; in the requests that they make for permission to use the vernacular in some formal class presentations (my personal experience) because for them it is an authentic and comfortable form of expression. Understanding that wrenching experience which many teachers have also undergone enables empathy in the approach to the pedagogy of the classroom which obviates the need for insult and denigration.

Alleyne, for example, notes that “the complete ignorance of Kwéyòl by Mico-trained Head Teachers made them reject it as an unintelligible gibberish and associated it with backwardness. English became a symbol of light and Kwéyòl – the symbol of darkness” (Alleyne, 1973: 205). A shift from this symbolic association to an ideological positioning of Kwéyòl as a mark of identity, as ‘the soul of a St. Lucian’s life’ (Simmons 1989: 107) makes it very attractive in contemporary times.

The centripetal force of the official language towards a monolingual proficiency and the centrifugal force of the indigenous language which is simultaneously everywhere (Morris, 1994: 75) is at once disarming and conflicting. However, the ability to code-switch between Kwéyòl and the official language with the consummate skill of Derek Walcott or of the Governor General of St. Lucia Dame Pearlette Louisy is the proficiency which I believe every young St. Lucian should acquire. Thus leading to a communicative competence proposed so eloquently by Hymes who asserts that:

“When you learn to use a language, you learn how to use it in order to do certain things that people do with that language...Language is not everywhere equivalent in role and value; speech may have different scope and functional load in the communicative economies of different societies.” (Hymes, 1974: 31)

Therefore it is necessary to teach grammatical correctness as well as appropriateness of use of individual varieties. Consequently, the varieties that make up the community repertoire and thus the linguistic landscape of a given country cannot be ignored in its education system, but rather should be foregrounded as an elemental factor in the education process.

However, for Walcott, it is the landscape which speaks powerfully and which undergirds the craft that gives birth to this rich linguistic repertoire.

4 Landscape and Language

...”You can’t separate your growth from your soil”...Walcott explains in his conversation with Dennis Scott (Baer, 1996: 15).

The landscape represents the vernacular, the intrinsic and essential identity. Deciphering the landscape, so to speak, becomes an intense literary act. The pristine, unbridled, virgin landscape is a vernacular whose smell emanates from the life of the people.

“The smell of our own speech
The smell of baking bread
Of drizzled asphalt” (Walcott, 1973: 75)

Like a ventriloquist, Walcott speaks for them and invigorates the landscape with a desire to scream, proclaim its name, its existence, and assert its identity. He says in that regard:

“I think the condition of colonialism, or of any first migration of people who were given another language, means the erosion of identity, which can be sometimes punished or banned.... You have to go through a whole process of becoming a name you have been given. It’s the process and technique of removing identity and altering identity so you can rule or dominate” (Baer, 1996: 192).

As if to circumvent this agenda of control, Walcott names the landscape in the authentic language of the people. The landscape and the language are interwoven incessantly, animating the trees, the rivers, and the mountains so that they are in unison with the people, a symmetry which the other tongue denies. He proclaims in ‘A Latin Primer’:

“I had nothing against which
to notch the growth of my work
But the horizon, no language
But the shallows in my long walk
Home, so I shook all the help
My young right hand could use
From the sand-crusted kelp
Of distant literature” (Walcott, 1987: 21)

His necessary use of another tongue suggests that communicative competence which all Caribbean people should acquire - proficiency in the official language and a degree of comfort with the vernacular choosing carefully the appropriateness of the use of each. The poem ‘Three Musicians’ in ‘The Arkansas Testament’ is written in English lexifier Creole or St Lucian English Lexicon Vernacular (SLEV).

“One Christmas morning
It have a breeze
Fresh As Bethlehem
in the glorious cedars
from town to Vieux Fort
it does varnish the road
through the villages” (Walcott, 1987: 28)

The meter is even, the rhythm is steady, the variety an English Creole. Patricia Ismond noted that despite Walcott’s linguistic adventurousness the innovations are contained within the given structure (Ismond, 2001: 33). The landscape becomes the molten clay from which is crafted a language-scape, so to speak, a uniquely rich juxtaposition of linguistic varieties.

Referring to linguistic variation, Dell Hymes notes “Diversity of speech presents itself as a problem in many sectors of life- education, national development, transcultural communication... (Hymes, 1974: 30). However, given the universality of linguistic

diversity and the switching among ways of speaking which is a natural outcome, the relationship between linguistic means and social meaning invites reflection. Meaning is clearly articulated by Walcott, why does he use language in that way? “... It is my heritage and I have the right to use it”, he exclaims. My society, he claims, “loves panache, melodrama, carnival dressing up and playing roles. Thank God I was born in it...” (Baer, 1996: 82).

5 Education and the valuing of self

Vernaculars and official languages are often viewed as polar extremes of a linguistic continuum or some linguistic spectrum of varieties, with attitudes privileging an unmarked variety while denigrating the marked variety (Myers-Scotton, 1998: 6). However Walcott’s work somewhat debunks this as his work suggests that linguistic diversity does not have to be problematic if goals are clear and there is a simultaneous valuing of history, of culture and of self. In that way I find his work instructive, especially for educators.

This valuing of self is an acknowledgment that comes with some struggle rendered in ‘A far cry from Africa’ “how can I turn from Africa and live” and finding quietness in ‘Codicil’ “wrenched by two styles I earn my exile” suggesting a sense of ownership and contentment.

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In ‘Omeros’ this fascinating juxtaposition of varieties finds a broad canvas, a space where the epic nature of the book portrays characters who speak the authentic language of the people. For Labov, generally referred to as the father of modern sociolinguistics, the authentic expression is the essence of the speech community. Privileging the vernacular as the core keeper of the essence of what it means to be a part of that speech community however does not denude the official language of status. Anticipating globalization and its attendant commodification of culture and language (Heller, 2003: 489), Walcott makes the observation that his community and that of any twentieth century artist is the world (Baer, 1996: 84).

About his choice to embrace colonial culture, Walcott comments to Anthony Milne that “Empires are smart enough to steal from the people they conquer. They steal the best things. And the people who have been conquered should have the good sense to steal back” (Baer, 1996: 75).

Edward Baugh observes that in ‘Omeros’: “we note his modulation of voice, tone and language, the interfusion of English and Caribbean speech, whether Anglophone or French Creole. He moves fluently from the plain and low key to the sonorous and richly metaphorical, the courage of the large utterance” (Baugh, 2007: xv).

“ Touchez-i encore, N’ai fendre choux-ous-ou, salope!
“Touch it again, and I will split our arse, you bitch!”
“moi j’a dire--ou pas preter un rien”

“I told you borrow nothing of mine.....”
Hector came out of the shade, and Achille, the
moment he saw him carrying the cutlass, un homme fou
a madman, eaten with envy replaced the tin
he had borrowed from Hector’s canoe.”
(Walcott 1990: 15-16)

6 Embracing the colonial heritage

“It is important to walk barefoot in order to have a proper sense of scale.”
(Walcott in Chamberlin, 1993: 82)

The colonial heritage is close to Walcott’s heart but that heritage is double edged and one has to create a sense of balance. Robert Bunge comments on the denuding nature of the colonial experience:

“The first thing a victorious people does to a vanquished people is to disarm them – take away their weapons and take away their lands. That is bad enough, but then there follows something far worse; the theft of the psyche of the people” (Bunge, 1992: 376).

Bunge echoes Walcott who notes that: “when they conquer you, you have to read their books”.

Chamberlin explores the power of language to name:

“Standard language tends to have some corner on power and it does generate resistance, uprisings against the government of the tongue. That ambition not to be standard, that sense of the need to decentre oneself is both a fundamentally poetic instinct and a venerable strategy for those who are determined to get out from under the shadow of imperial governments , linguistic or otherwise.”
(Chamberlin, 1993: 82).

Contemporary West Indian literature he continues: “has actively nourished a poetry of place, celebrating the sacredness of ordinary things and the authenticity and authority of vernaculars”. He quotes Walcott as saying, “it is important to walk barefoot in order to get a proper sense of scale”. I think he refers to the embrace of the cultural heritage as providing a comfortable sense of self. Therefore the use of good St. Lucian words and the understanding of people that they represent are what Walcott displays in his poem ‘Sainte Lucie’.

The apotheosis of all Walcott attempts with language reveals itself to me in ‘Sainte Lucie’; that cry from the heart that simultaneously caresses and claims the language.

“Come back to me
My language,
Come back
Cocoa
Gri gri

Solitaire
Ciseau
The scissor-bird
O so you is Walcott
You is Rody brother
Teacher Alix Son
And the small rivers
With important names

O Martinus, Lucillus
I am a wild golden apple
That will burst with love
Of you and your men,
Those I never told enough
With my young poet's eyes,
Crazy with the country
Generations going
Generations gone
Moi c'est gens Ste. Lucie
C'et la mwen sortie
Is there that I Born"
(Baugh, 2007: 103- 107)

Chamberlin explains that

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“In listing these names Walcott is conjuring with them, bringing them back to himself and back to life. When he calls come back to me my language he is calling for a return of original power, the power to bring things into being by naming them and the power to convey their presence to others.” (Chamberlin, 1993: 100).

7 Educational Implications

Walcott's work strikes me as a powerful model for language use in the pluri-lingual / pluri-dialectal space of St. Lucia. His work represents the co-existence of varieties that is the linguistic reality there and elsewhere in the Caribbean. The linguistic repertoire in every community runs across a social spectrum and the fundamental educational task has to be a recognition and valorization of the reality of the existence of these varieties, an exploration of the historical development of each variety and the development of consummate skill in the appropriate use of each variety. Communicative competence is the ultimate goal.

The linguistic skill demonstrated in the literary work of Derek Walcott should represent the hallmark of what we want to achieve in Caribbean Language Arts education, not just technically, but the power to claim and to own and to proclaim with equal strength, the heritage of the vernacular as well as of the official. Chamberlin explains that when Walcott says: “come back to me my language” he is calling for the return of the capacity of wonder, as well as the customary habits of

home, the return of a language that is strange as well as familiar and a language that confounds as well as comforts”(Chamberlin, 1993: 100). For all of these reasons, that fundamental principle of sociolinguistic investigation proposed by Labov that there are no mono-dialectal speakers, has also to be a fundamental principle of Language Arts education in the Caribbean. The language curriculum also needs to be undergirded philosophically by general principles of social and cultural understanding of the history and development of the region, thereby revealing the sources of its linguistic heritage and establishing a foundation for the effective and appropriate management of that rich cultural and linguistic heritage, claiming in it in all its varied dimensions.

Walcott’s artistic expression is rooted in St. Lucian language and landscape, providing richness of expression, appreciation of linguistic variation and a knowledge base of linguistic awareness. That knowledge base can inform and revitalize language education, providing teachers and students alike with an ethnogenetic understanding. Since language arts education cannot be effective without a concomitant valuing of culture, of history and of self, the work of Walcott provides an instructive reference point. Walcott’s “verbal resourcefulness and aesthetic completeness” (Ismond, 2001: 33) is expressed through many modalities, but it is his use of linguistic variation - the essence of his community’s linguistic repertoire - that captures attention and provides the basis for this discussion.

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THE POWER OF THE WORD – THE EVALUATIVE FUNCTIONS OF PREFABRICATED LANGUAGE

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1 Introduction

We are all aware of the existence of set expressions in every language, especially in ritualized routines such as greetings, requests, and leave-taking. However, further study has shown that native speakers make greater use of set expressions and “prefabricated language” than we had realised (Cowie, 1988: 126; Wray 2002: 101; Conklin & Schmitt, 2008: 72). We may expect prefabricated language in speech because of its performative nature, but Cowie also discovered in his study of the use of multi-word units in journalistic prose that newspaper journalists “drew very heavily on verb-noun collocations that are widely established and well-known” (Cowie, 1992: 10). He had postulated that this was due to the pressures of looming deadlines; however, he found that the editors, who did not face similar restrictions also made considerable use of prefabricated language.

These set expressions have been labeled differently by different authors: they have been called *formulaic language/sequences* by Wray; *multiword units* by Cowie; *fixed expressions* by Moon; *restricted collocations* by Aisenstadt, and *lexical phrases* by Schmitt. The term *prefabricated language* is used in this paper (sometimes abbreviated as ‘prefabs’) as an umbrella term to cover the range of set expressions from fixed collocations to idiomatic language.

2 The functions of prefabricated language

It was believed at first that prefabricated chunks of language were used as scaffolding for language learners during the interlanguage stage, but research has shown that native speakers also tend to use a significant amount of prefabricated language (Aisenstadt, 1979: 72). Cowie also acknowledges this, pointing out that native speakers seem to be “predisposed to store and reuse units as much as, if not more than, to generate them from scratch” (1988: 136). In fact, Granger reporting on a study done on prefabricated language patterns in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing found that learners used fewer prefabs than their native speaker counterparts (1998: 151). Wray proposes that the use of formulaic language is a central part of the language of a normal adult. She defines it as “the accessing of large prefabricated

chunks and not the formulation and analysis of word strings, that predominates in normal language processing” (2002: 101). As Conklin & Schmitt point out “research suggests that at least one-third to one-half of language is composed of formulaic elements although the percentage is affected by both register and mode” (2008: 72).

Conklin & Schmitt (2008) explain that prefabricated language units or as they call them *formulaic sequences* are used in a wide variety of ways. “They can be used to express a concept (*put someone out to pasture* = retire someone because they are getting old), state a commonly believed truth or advice (*a stitch in time saves nine* = it is best not to put off necessary repairs), provide phatic expressions which facilitate social interaction (*Nice weather today* is a non-intrusive way to open a conversation), signpost discourse organization (*on the other hand* signals an alternative viewpoint), and provide technical phraseology which can transact information in a precise and efficient manner (*blood pressure is 140 over 60*)” (p. 72).

Wray agrees that prefabricated language (formulaic sequences) plays various roles in discourse. She proposes that these roles can be reduced to three basic functions: reduction of the processing burden on the speaker; manipulating the hearer and his/her picture of the speaker’s identity; and management of the structure of the discourse (2002: 101). This elaborates on Moon’s earlier stand which posits that expressions such as those included in the category of restricted collocations serve evaluative functions, in that no overt evaluation is needed when they are used. Instead, “there is a retreat or sheltering behind shared values which coerces agreement and pre-empts disagreement” (Moon, 1992: 24). This may well be a valid reason why editors, journalists, and even writers in general, resort to the use of prefabricated language units. Perhaps the answer lies more in the purpose or aim of the discourse or interaction than in the constraints under which the writing or speech takes place.

Lemke posits that “one of the most basic functions of language is to create interpersonal relationships between speakers and addressees through the way in which text is worded. Speech act functions establish whether we are offering or demanding, aiding or attacking, creating solidarity or emphasizing social distance. In these and other ways we use language to take a stance towards and socially orient ourselves and our text to others. But we do not just use language to orient to addressees, real and potential; we also take a stance toward the ideational or propositional content of our own texts. Whatever we have to say about the world, we can also tell others, in the same utterance, to what extent we believe what we say is likely, desirable, important, permissible, surprising, serious, or comprehensible. In making these evaluations of propositions and proposals, we also orient our text in the larger world of available social viewpoints on our topic, and we further define our identities as meaning-makers

with particular values as well as beliefs” (Lemke, 1998: 33). Prefabricated language appears to be a valuable resource and one of the most common tools for achieving this. Evaluation is defined as “the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker’s or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about” (Thompson & Hunston, 2000: 5).

Lemke, in an earlier publication on interpersonal meaning, identified three “value orientations” of interpersonal meaning, namely goodness, certitude and expectability (Lemke, 1992: 82). In his later paper on language as a resource for conveying attitudinal meaning, Lemke identifies seven “dimensions” of “attitudinal meaning” or “evaluative semantic relations”: desirability/inclination (*wonderful, horrible*), warrantability/probability (*possible, doubtful*), normativity/appropriateness (*necessary, appropriate*), usuality/expectability (*normal, surprising*), importance/significance (*important, trivial*), comprehensibility/obviousness (*understandable, mysterious*), and humorousness/seriousness (*hilarious, ironic, serious*) (Lemke, 1998: 33-36).

In attempting to account for the complexity involved in evaluative meaning, Monika Bednarek suggests a parameter-based framework for investigating evaluation. Her framework is based on the understanding that speakers “can evaluate what they are talking about in relation to a wide range of norms: do we feel that what we are talking about is ‘good news’ or ‘bad news’, do we evaluate the information we have as reliable or unreliable, is what we are talking about presented as expected or unexpected, obvious or surprising, important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, etc?” (2008: 11). Bednarek identifies (at least) ten parameters along which speakers can evaluate aspects of the world. Each of the proposed parameters involves a different dimension along which the evaluation proceeds, and includes what she calls *sub-values*. These sub-values can refer to different points on the respective scale or to different types of parameters. She makes an important distinction between *core* and *peripheral* evaluative parameters. Core parameters “relate to evaluative qualities ascribed to entities, situations, or propositions that are evaluated, and involve evaluative scales with two poles, but also potential intermediate stages between them. Peripheral parameters do not involve scales and do not indicate the same kind of qualitative evaluation” (2008: 14). Lemke and Bednarek provide valuable tools for examining the way in which prefabricated language is used in journalistic writing in Barbados.

3 Evaluation in Newspaper Editorials

This paper will examine the possible evaluative functions of prefabricated language units in editorials published in the *Sunday Sun*, and the *Weekend Nation*, two publications from one of the two major media houses in Barbados. It will seek to

determine the kinds of evaluations expressed through the use of prefabricated language and to assess the significance of their use for making these kinds of evaluations. The *Sunday Sun* editorial titled “Strong Focus on US Events”, examines the interest of nations around the world in the 2008 Presidential Campaign in the United States of America. The editorial in the *Weekend Nation* is titled “Learn from Their Mistakes” and discusses how small economies can learn from the mistakes of larger economies, like that of the United States of America, which have led to the present economic crises. Both of them were written in October 2008.

The following are examples of the use of prefabricated language to fulfill evaluative functions in the editorials mentioned. They are presented according to the framework used by Bednarek (2008: 7-14) and, to a lesser extent Lemke (1998: 34).

Comprehensibility

Bednarek proposes that evaluations of comprehensibility have to do with the degree to which writers evaluate entities, situations, states-of-affairs or propositions as being within or outside the grasp of their understanding (2008: 15). These judgements are located along a scale (cline) from incomprehensible to comprehensible. In the following example, *only wonder at* suggests that the matter is more or less incomprehensible; full understanding can never be achieved, so it will remain a mystery.

... small economies such as ours can only wonder at [COMPREHENSIBILITY: INCOMPREHENSIBLE] the damage that tax regulation has wrought upon large and small economies alike. (Weekend Nation)

Emotivity

The parameter of emotivity is concerned with the writer’s evaluation of aspects of events as good or bad, that is, meets with the writer’s approval or disapproval (Bednarek, 2008: 12).

... because experts from some of these larger countries criticize the regime of regulation and fiscal discipline in smaller countries as if bigger and more developed countries have a monopoly on proper regulation. [EMOTIVITY: NEGATIVE] (Weekend Nation)

The expression *have a monopoly on* gives the impression that the writer disapproves of the situation and thus expresses a negative evaluation of the situation. In the following example *walked away with* conveys a negative judgement, while *learn from the mistakes (of others)* expresses a positive evaluation of the situation.

Amazingly, nonetheless, high-flying executives walked away with multi-million-dollar bonuses... [EMOTIVITY: NEGATIVE] (Sunday Sun)

Yet we have to learn from the mistakes of others. [EMOTIVITY: POSITIVE] (Weekend Nation)

They are clearly taking their toll on the Republican administration as well as on a Democrat-controlled Congress... [EMOTIVITY: NEGATIVE] (Sunday Sun)

Expectedness

This parameter expresses the writer's assessment of aspects of the world as more or less expected or unexpected (Bednarek, 2008: 15). In the following example, the expression *up to now* conveys the impression that although no significant repercussions have been experienced, they are not totally unexpected. Again expectedness falls along a scale from expected to unexpected.

Up to now, there are no significant repercussions in Barbados. [EXPECTEDNESS: EXPECTED] (Sunday Sun)

...a highly charged race to the White House...and unprecedented turmoil in the banking and insurance sectors that are having fallout on banks even in the European Union, Ireland and Russia. [EXPECTEDNESS: UNEXPECTED] (Sunday Sun)

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Humorousness

This has to do with writers' evaluations of aspects of the world as more or less humorous or serious. These judgements also fall along a continuum from humorous to more or less serious (Bednarek, 2008: 16). In the example below, Obama's bid for President is evaluated as serious.

...but also because an African-American is for the first time a serious contender for president... [HUMOROUSNESS: SERIOUS] (Sunday Sun)

Importance

Evaluations along the parameter of importance evaluate the world (and discourse about it) according to the speaker's subjective evaluation of its status in terms of importance, relevance and significance (Bednarek, 2008: 16). Notions of stardom, fame, influence, significance and importance are included within the parameter of importance.

...but also because an African-American is for the first time a serious contender for president... [IMPORTANCE: IMPORTANT] (Sunday Sun)

...public opinion polls show them having a significant impact on what voters are likely to do at the polls next month. [IMPORTANCE: IMPORTANT] (Sunday Sun)

Possibility/Necessity

Within the parameter of possibility/necessity, the writer expresses evaluations about what is possible or necessary. These can be seen as one dimension or can be perceived as separated (Bednarek, 2008: 17).

It is the only way to restore confidence among investors while dispelling ...[POSSIBILITY NECESSITY: NECESSARY] (Sunday Sun)

Reliability

“Evaluations of reliability are connected to what is generally described as epistemic modality..., that is, to matters of reliability, certainty, confidence and likelihood. The parameter of reliability goes beyond this, however, to include both the writer’s evaluation of the reliability of a proposition and his/her evaluation of the ‘genuineness’ of an entity/entities. There are five values subsumed under this parameter: fake, genuine, low, median, high. The first two (fake/genuine) refer to the evaluation of genuineness — writers evaluate states of affairs as either real or artificial. As with other parameters, this parameter can thus be regarded as having a ‘positive’ (real) and a ‘negative’ (unreal) value. The remaining sub-values (low, median, high) refer to the evaluation of the likelihood of propositions being true (Bednarek, 2008: 18). Examples from the text are given below:

...public opinion polls show them having a significant impact on what voters are likely to do. [RELIABILITY:MEDIAN] (Sunday Sun)

Indeed, ... Obama would win hands down [RELIABILITY: HIGH] if the vote for presidency were held in Barbados...[RELIABILITY: FAKE] (Sunday Sun)

In this second example, an evaluation of the likelihood of an event being true is expressed as high in a situation which is at the same time marked as unreal.

The other three parameters are seen as peripheral but can be related to evaluation in different ways. They are evidentiality, mental state and style (Bednarek, 2008: 18).

Evidentiality

Evaluations of evidentiality have to do with the writer’s evaluation of the truth of information contained in the sentence with respect to the source of that information. However, these sources imply a scale of reliability, in that, for example, general knowledge or proof are normally considered as more reliable sources than perception (Bednarek, 2008: 19).

From all accounts, the current upheaval arose from a combination of ... [EVIDENTIALITY:PROOF] (Sunday Sun)
News reports from Zimbabwe tell us that since the beginning of January of this year ... [EVIDENTIALITY:PROOF] (Weekend Nation)

Mental State

Bednarek bases this category on evaluations of mental states associated with particular verbs of knowing. These refer to states such as emotion, desire or volition, belief, expectation, knowledge, process and state-of-mind.

...and also in Europe where European Union governments are at odds [MENTAL STATE: STATE-OF-MIND] about how to restore confidence quickly. (Weekend Nation)
...but it is recognised [MENTAL STATE: KNOWLEDGE] that she has minimal intellectual muscle. (Sunday Sun)

Style

Evaluations that are concerned with the writer's scrutiny of the language used fall under the parameter of style. This category is minimal in newspaper editorials except in terms of the types of expressions used to report discursive constructs as Bednarek points out (2008: 21). These may be classified as neutral, illocutionary, declarative, discourse signaling, or paralinguistic.

News reports from Zimbabwe tell [STYLE: NEUTRAL] us that since the beginning of January of this year ... (Weekend Nation)
We may be more surprised because experts from some of these larger countries criticise the regime of regulation and fiscal discipline ... [STYLE: ILLOCUTIONARY] (Weekend Nation)

4 Conclusion

Within this very small sample, we have found examples of prefabricated language which cover practically all the dimensions identified by Lemke and Bednarek. This highlights for us the prominence of evaluation and the role of prefabricated language in communication.

Since prefabricated language units make up a large part of any discourse and since their use is especially marked among native speakers, this suggests that their use may in fact "free" the speakers to concentrate on other aspects of the discourse. Prefabricated language also serves a purpose in persuading the audience to accept the writer's view. It is believed that prefabricated language bypasses logical analysis on the part of hearers/readers and makes them more inclined to accept than to question the ideas expressed by the use of prefabricated language. This is especially significant

in terms of the study of human communication in general and in specific areas such as teaching, politics, public relations and marketing, to name a few.

This paper examined a small sector of the vast area constituted by the use which we make of prefabricated language units to meet the evaluative function of language. It appears to be impossible for us to speak, or write for that matter, without making evaluations or personal judgements. This forces us to re-examine our concept of objectivity and to consider the subtle ways in which our thinking may be influenced by what we hear or read. It also nudges us to re-examine the concept of “creativity” in language and points the way to a vast untapped area of research.

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