

# Anansi's Defiant Webs

Contact, Continuity, Convergence, and  
Complexity in the Languages, Literatures,  
and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean

Edited by  
Nicholas Faraclas  
Ronald Severing  
Christa Weijer  
Elisabeth Echteld  
Marsha Hinds-Layne



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## **Dedication**

We humbly dedicate this volume to

**Professor Mervyn Alleyne**

**Professor Peter Roberts**

**Professor Ian Robertson**

On their shoulders we stand

Their groundbreaking research has significantly broadened and deepened our  
understanding of language and culture in the Caribbean

# **Anansi's Defiant Webs**

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Proceedings of the ECICC-conference  
Guyana 2010

Volume 2

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Nicholas Faraclas  
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## Acknowledgements

The two publications: *Anansi's Defiant Webs: Contact, Continuity, Convergence, and Complexity in the Languages, Literatures, and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean*, together with *Iguana's Newfound Voices: Continuity, Divergence and Convergence in Language, Culture, and Society on the ABC-Islands* contain a collection of articles that present a critical perspective on the languages, literatures, and cultures of the Greater Caribbean and the Caribbean diaspora. The volumes incorporate invited papers as well as presentations made to the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Eastern Caribbean Islands Cultures Conference (aka the 'Islands in Between' Conference) which was held at the Turkeyen Campus of the University of Guyana from 4 to 6 November 2011. The contributing authors include a wide range of voices old and new from the Caribbean and beyond. 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. Together, these volumes provide a platform for researchers and other cultural workers whose work treats the islands, topics, and/or perspectives that traditionally receive less scholarly attention than others at professional conferences and in academic publications. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring that new voices with fresh points of view find a place in these volumes, alongside contributions by more well established scholars.

The ABC-volume is dedicated to four pioneers in the study and promotion of the languages and cultures of the ABC-Islands: Silvio Jonis, Enrique Muller, Sidney Joubert, and Hubert Lemmens (†). Much of the enormous progress that has been made in the scholarly treatment and official recognition of ABC-Island's languages and cultures can be attributed to their dedication and vision.

This volume is dedicated to three Caribbean linguists whose work has served as both a foundation and an inspiration for all of us: Professors Mervyn Alleyne, Peter Roberts, and Ian Robertson. Their groundbreaking research has significantly broadened and deepened our understanding of language and culture in the Caribbean. Peter Roberts and Ian Robertson have just retired from the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill and St. Augustine campuses, respectively) as did Mervyn Alleyne some years back (from the Mona campus). It is our sincere hope that in their very well deserved retirement, they will follow Professor Alleyne's example and continue to find time to guide us in our efforts to advance the study of the languages, literatures and cultures of the Caribbean.

The Guyana conference was co-organized and co-sponsored by the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill in Barbados, and the University of Guyana, Turkeyen campus. We wish to thank the conference organizers, especially Alim Hosein and the local organizing committee from the University of Guyana, Peter Roberts from the University of the West Indies, and Mervyn Alleyne, Reinhard Sander, and Ilia Aixa Madrazo from the University of Puerto Rico. This publication received generous support from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba and the Fundashon Bon Intenshon in Curaçao.

The Editors



**CONTACT, CONTINUITY, CONVERGENCE, AND COMPLEXITY IN  
CARIBBEAN LANGUAGES**



# A PAN-CREOLE INNOVATION?<sup>1</sup>

IAN HANCOCK

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In January 2007 an interesting exchange took place on the *WordReference.com* language forums' website regarding the words *deh pon* in the Jamaican singer Sean Paul's song "We'll be burning." Someone asked "how would you translate these lyrics of Sean Paul: *We be earnin dollars turning cau' we mind deh pon we pay?* What does 'deh pon' mean please?" The exchanges that followed were of little help:

I don't know, and the suggestions from the *Urban Dictionary* don't seem to fit. I think you are more likely to get useful replies in the English only forum. I've moved it here from the French-English forum.

I honestly have no idea. I would guess he's trying to say "we will be earning money . . ." Other than that, I have no idea.

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It seems to be Jamaican: Quote (from an online Jamaican dictionary): *Depan* (deh-pon) – On; on top of; upon. Although it still makes little sense to me in this context.

My guess is, "We are earning money selling because we're careful of the portion we pay." However, I think "deh pon" may have some meaning I am not aware of.

Basically since none of us can figure it out, it's not something really necessary to know unless you're really into Sean Paul music. Music from him won't exactly be grammatically correct either.

Even English speakers have to translate these lyrics.

---

<sup>1</sup>Thanks to Michael Aceto, Erva Bruno, Hubert Devonish, Genevieve Escure, Nicholas Faraclas, John Holm, Ron Kephart, Silvia Kouwenberg, Joe Opala, Salikoko Mufwene, John Rickford, Ian Robertson, Elizabeth Traugott, Rudy Troike, Peter Trudgill and Kofi Yakpo for their welcome input.



Oh! Well, then it would be “. . . ’cause our mind is upon our pay.” Yeah, that could make sense, but I still like it my way. The cool thing about lyrics is you can sing them as you like.

In March 2010 a similar query was sent to the *Everything Jamaican* site: “What does ‘ah wah you deh pon’ mean? I have a Jamaican friend who said this, but I’m not sure what it stands for. Thank you very much for your help!!” It was clarified in the anonymous response “it means ‘what are you up to’.

The *Dictionary of Jamaican English* includes the following from Jacobs (1942), though without discussion: “Tax man deh pan me” (“The tax collector has descended upon me, or is upon me”) and “Me deh pan!” “I’m on it!”

Some years ago, I sent a short note to *American Speech* about the term ‘poppy-show,’ which occurs in several Atlantic English-lexifier Creoles, and which has a meaning they share with each other, but not with metropolitan English. There are, not surprisingly, numbers of geographically widely distributed shared Creole lexical and semantic applications that are not matched in British English (*again, back, next, come out, &c.*, and of course many non-English ones, such as *una/unu*) – and *DE PAN* would seem to belong to the list.

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This construction consists of the existential/locative verb *DE* with *PAN* (< *upon*) before nominals meaning something like “to be involved with,” and before verbs “to be engaged in.”

It is found in West Africa in Sierra Leonean and Gambian Krio (but not elsewhere):

*Yu de pan ful* “you’re acting the fool”  
*Na ful yu dey pan so* “you’re acting the fool”  
*Di gyal de pan wok* “the girl is busy working”  
*Den de pan kongosa* “they’re busy gossiping”  
*Yu de pan ala* “you’re steady shouting”  
*Na ala yu dey pan* “you’re steady shouting”

It does not occur in contemporary Sea Islands Gullah, but is alive and well in Texas Afro-Seminole: *hunnuh dey pan fool* “you’re acting the fool,” *dem dey pan quall* “they’re engaged in quarreling.” Since the latter is an early breakaway from the former, we might assume that like the occurrence of the relativizer *wey* (Hancock 2007) it was found in Sea Islands Gullah too at an earlier time. What is particularly

interesting is that it didn't make it to Bioko (earlier Fernando Po), where an offshoot of Krio known locally as Pichi or Pichinglis is spoken. Kofi Yakpo told me

“I tested for DE PAN in Pichi with younger and older speakers alike. Everybody thought it was wrong. I have seen it in Jamaican though...”

John Holm provides (in *p.c.*) an example from Miskito Coast Creole: *ah de pan Siesar rai' now* “I'm on Cesar's case right now (nagging him to stop drinking).”

Ian Robertson has provided the following from Guyana: *he de pon stupidity* “he likes/enjoys nonsense; he is playing the fool”, *she de pon wok* “she works (singlemindedly)” *awee de pon am* “we are working at it”, *awee de pan struggle* “we are struggling” *dem bin de pan strike* “they were [being] on strike”, and John Rickford (1987: 223) has *mi wash mi mout an ting, an mi de pan wash mi mout*. Also from Guyana, Cruickshank (1916, *passim*) has “Well, old lady, how are you? – Aow! Me dey 'pon am!”, “dem deh 'pon a grabble”, “de 'tory weh 'e a dey 'pon”.

Allsopp (1996) has no discussion of it under DE<sup>3</sup> or DE<sup>4</sup>, or under PON, nor has it been located in Barbados or the Bahamas; Aceto (*p.c.*) has not found it in Dominica, St. Eustatius or Saba, nor has Kephart found it in Carriacou or Escure in Belize. Erva Bruno tells me that it occurs in Tobago, though not in Trinidad.

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Rickford (1987: 227) finds in Traugott (1972: 143) a parallel with an Elizabethan English progressive construction with *on* + verb-*ing*, and repeats her example taken from Thomas Nashe (who lived between 1567 and about 1600), *viz.* “King Henrie the eight with all his Lordes on hunting in his forrest at Windsore,” though this lacks a *BE* verb. Traugott (1972: 143-144) noted that

The *on* was often reduced to [ə], giving such forms as *a-hunting we will go*. While it seems likely that this construction reinforced the progressive *-ing* construction, many scholars feel it is doubtful whether it actually gave rise to it since the gerund construction is used frequently only rather later than the progressive with *-ing*...this still remains one of the mysteries of the history of English.

Regarding *de pan* specifically, however, she notes (in *p.c.*)

I remain uncomfortable. My sense is that ‘upon’, being ‘marked’ in the sense that it is spatially complex, is unlikely to be the source of a grammaticalized form. I would be happier if there were evidence of ‘into’ having been used as a source for something. So maybe one should

look elsewhere. It might be a preposition now, but was it originally? Prepositions often derive from verbs, so is there any conceivable source of a different kind?

The development of the *a-verbing* construction via the obsolete passival has been examined by Hundt (2004), and such prepositional phrases as *it is on fire*, *I am on time*, &c., bear consideration. Abbott (1873: 94) discusses a construction with *a-* that matches more closely DE + PAN. He writes

This *a* still exists in *alive*, *afoot*, *asleep*, &c. it is a contraction of A[nglo] S[axon] *on* or the less common form *an*. We find in Early English ‘*on live*,’ ‘*on foot*,’ ‘*on hunting*,’ ‘*on sleep*.’

However, scouring through pre-1800 texts relevant to European-African contact, and particularly those contemporary with Nashe (such as Moorhouse and Monson) and those to Sierra Leone and the Caribbean (Atkins, Bolingbroke, Bosman, Brown, Falconbridge, Jobson, Matthews, Moore, Moreton, Newton, Owen, Smith, Snelgrave, Keeling, Bonner, Thompson, Thornton), nothing closely matching this construction can be found in their English (e.g. \*“(up)on V-ing” or even \*“(a-)V-ing”).

The application of *upon* in English has varied widely over the years, and some of those have been retained in Krio: *i vɛks pan mi* “he’s angry with me,” *a luk pan am* “I looked at her,” *i tɔk pan mi* “he scolded me” (cf. *i tɔk to mi* “he spoke to me”), *i tɔk pan Krio* “he spoke in Krio,” *i ayd pan mi* “she hid from me,” *pan ol we* “although,” &c. And the DJE offers similar constructions: “look pon we,” “dem tell lie pon tarra,” “me deh pon hase” (“I’m in a hurry”). Of possible relevance here is the uncommon Jamaican construction “she come a yard pon a cryin” (“she came into the yard crying,” found in Bennett (1942: 38). Abbott (1873: 118 ff.) gives a number of examples of these constructions with *upon* from earlier English.

At its entry for UPON, the *English Dialect Dictionary* has

“prep, and adv. Var.dial. uses in Sc. Irel. And Eng. Also in forms apo’, apou Sh.I.; upo’ Sc. Cum.1; uppo s.Lan.1 [apo (n.)] . . . In phr. (2) to be upon a person, to be insistent with him.

This second (of several) *EDD* interpretations, with an example from the Shetland Islands, viz. “da lasses wis upo’ Willie ta sing dem a sang,” comes close to the *DJE* example *tax man deh pan me*. Yet in these examples, the (*de*) *pan* does not refer to an ongoing state; “the lassies were upon Willie to sing” is not the same as “\*the lassies were upon bothering Willie to sing,” or “the lassies were on Willie’s case to sing,” nor

is *tax man deh pan me fe pay* the same as *tax man deh pan bada me (fe pay)*. In Krio and Jamaican the Scottish sample would be *di titi dem bin de ambɔg Wili fɔ lɛ i sing wan sing fɔ dem*, and *di gyal dem (b)en (d)a bada Wili fi im fi sing dem a sang*. Scottish varieties of English fed substantially into the emergence of the Atlantic English lexifier creoles (Hancock, 2007).

Since *upon* is a preposition, it must therefore precede a nominal, gerund or otherwise, and most of the Creole examples indeed have nouns in this position: *ah de pan Siesar rai' now* (Moskito Coast Creole), *he de pon stupidity*, *awee de pon am* (Guyana Creolese), but some are ambiguous. Are *wok*, *kongosa ala*, *quall*, *struggle* and *strike* nouns or verbs? In *mi de pan wash mi mout* it is clearly a verb. This may be a case of innovative Creole nominalization similar to that found in front focussed constructions such as Krio *na ala yu de ala*, *na rɔn yu de rɔn*, Jamaican *a naasti lai yu a lai*, *a waak im a waak* and so on (a construction not found in Gullah or in Texas Afro-Seminole).

Aspectual constructions with *a-* have hardly disappeared from English, and it may have entered Creole independently, cf. Jamaican *mi a taak*, *mi a guo*; If copula *a* is related to this (and is historically independent of *da* with which it coexists with the same functions), as in *im a mi fren* we might see an(other?) example of the collapse of two underlying grammatical functions of *pan* – pre-nominal and pre-verbal – into one.

---

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Its non-occurrence in Bioko Pichinglis (which also has speakers in Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon) suggests that it had not become well established in Krio by 1827, when the large-scale migration from Freetown to Malabo took place, although it does provide a possible view of Krio itself at that date.

Since *pan* meaning ‘on’ does not occur anywhere else in West Africa (other than in Pichinglis), the construction *de pan* is likewise not anywhere found. However, some the semantic applications of *pan* are covered in Pidgin English by *fɔ* (< for), prompting a search for such possible constructions as *\*yu de fɔ ful*. From Nick Faraclas I received the following, for Nigerian Pidgin:

The closest construction I can think of is the *dé* (high toned copula) + *fɔr* construction which is quite productive before nouns and is used with a locative/existential meaning, *a de for haws*. “I am in/on/at/under/beside, etc. (the/a) house(s).” but can be used in more interesting and less prototypically locative senses from *moni de mi for hand* ‘I have money.’ to *dem de for wahala* ‘they are in trouble.’ From there, it’s not too hard to get to *dem de for fayt* ‘they are (involved) in the quarrel,’ and then to ‘they are in the process of fighting.’ But this

last usage would be a relatively peripheral and uncommon extension of a different central construction, rather than a central construction in itself, as *de pan* seems to be in Krio.

The fact that *DE PAN* in the sense discussed here is found in such widely-separated places (Sierra Leone, Guyana, Jamaica, Texas) can only be accounted for by either (a) coincidence, (b) diffusion of an already-existing innovated creole form (Jamaicans or Gullah speakers to Sierra Leone, Sierra Leoneans to Jamaican and Guyana) or (c) an unrecorded, extinct British dialect construction – for which there is so far no evidence, although “the possibility of some hitherto undiscovered and undescribed variety of metropolitan English” (Devonish, 2001: 193) must at least be considered. Was there an early construction in English that disappeared, but which re-emerged independently in the creoles?

Since coincidence is quite unlikely, this argues forcefully against the polygenetic hypothesis. While the syntax may be reflect a universal process (outlined in Bickerton, 1983; 1984), perhaps supported by the Nigerian Pidgin evidence, the lexical selection (*de plus pan*) points more convincingly to the diffusion of a pre-existing form, presenting the necessity of examining more closely the movement of Creole speakers from location to location within the Central Atlantic arena.

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# THE *COME FOR* CONSTRUCTION IN CRUCIAN: NEW INSIGHTS ON THE VERB/PREPOSITION INTERFACE IN AFRO-ATLANTIC LANGUAGES

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## 1 Introduction

This paper details the semantic range of a construction that contains a motion verb (MV) followed by the valency particle *for*, or the *MV + for* construction. The paper focuses on constructions containing the motion verb *come* plus the particle *for* in Crucian. We do not call *for* a preposition in this paper because we do not want to assume *a priori* a category for specific elements in the grammar of Crucian.

Crucian is an English-lexifier Afro-Caribbean language variety that is spoken in St. Croix in the North-eastern Caribbean. The grammatical, semantic, and phonological systems of Crucian have been influenced by West African languages, early varieties of British English, contemporary varieties of US English, and at least 4 different creole varieties of the Eastern Caribbean now spoken on the island, according to US Census Data from 2000. To review instances of the *come for* construction in Crucian, this paper uses the Crucian Wiretaps Corpus (CWC), which is a computerized corpus of the Afro-American Creole spoken in St. Croix today. We first discuss the semantics of the *come for* construction using US English as a point of reference. Then, we provide examples of the uses of the construction in Crucian. We claim that, at least in this construction in Crucian, *for* is a verb, or at least a verbid, and not a preposition. We argue that *for* increases the valency of the motion verb and adds an aspectual sense to the constructional meaning.

## 2 The Crucian *come for* construction

The *come for* construction derives its meaning from the conceptual structure that we have for CHANGE, a concept which we understand as a result of our embodied experience. The construction retains the [+MOVEMENT] value of the verb *come* and, by doing so, adds a [+CHANGE] value to the *come for* construction, since movement inevitably entails change. The prototypical sense of *come for* is expressed in this paper in terms of ‘A.’ Interestingly, the *come for* construction can have a change of state meaning or a change of location meaning. This makes the construction polysemous. It



is not surprising that *come for* is polysemous in its meanings of change of state and change of location, for there is a primary metaphor entrenched in English in which we understand states as locations. The fact that we comprehend sentence (1) below is proof of the existence of the metaphor in English:

1) France is in an economic depression.

We use the locative preposition *in* to metaphorically talk about France's depressed financial state. This cannot be taken literally since it is impossible to be physically located in an abstract state like depression.

In both standard and colloquial US English varieties, the *come for* construction can be expressed in additional ways. US English varieties use the *MV and V* construction, e.g. "come and get", or it employs the *MV infinitive* construction, e.g. "come to get." Unlike US English, however, which favors the *MV and V* construction or the *MV infinitive* construction to the colloquial *come for* construction, a Crucian speaker is more likely to use the *come for* construction to express a change of state/location meaning, according to the computerized corpus of Crucian (CWC) that we used for this paper. Before we look at instances of the *come for* construction in the CWC, we will analyze the semantics of the construction using US English as a point of departure.

### 3 The *come for* construction in colloquial US English (including lexemes *came* and *coming*)

The *come for* construction is not uncommon in colloquial US English. The following example illustrates the high frequency use of *come for* as a fixed expression in advertisements in the USA (more than 1.5 million hits were drawn using the *Google* search engine):

2) Come for the experience.

The first meaning that one gets from hearing (2) is, "come **in order to acquire** the experience". I do not get the feeling that "come **to collect** the experience **and leave**" is the meaning that advertisers want to convey with this expression. In terms of aspect, then, (2) focuses on *the process of acquiring*, giving it an imperfective, [+durative] sense. It is assumed that the agent will undergo some change of state by going to or experiencing the event. What happens after the event is not conveyed in the meaning of this particular sentence.

However, a different meaning can emerge from the use of the *come for* construction in colloquial US English, as the following example shows:

3) Come for your money.

The meaning of this construction is "come **in order to collect** your money **and leave**", not "come **in order to collect** your money **and stay**". The aspectual sense of this meaning is completive.

From the examples given above, we posit two aspectual meanings that can be associated with the *come for* construction in colloquial US English: an imperfective [+durative] meaning, as in (2), and a perfective [+completive] meaning, as in (3). Although the semantics of the *come for* construction are divided between a perfective sense and an imperfective sense, the construction is motivated, nonetheless, by a prototypical sense of [+CHANGE]. In the imperfective sense change is occurring or is intended to occur, whereas in the perfective sense change is assumed to have occurred. In addition to this, pragmatics plays an important role in the meaning intended by the use of the *come for* construction. The following examples will help illustrate the polysemy of the *come for* constructions, as well as the role that pragmatics plays in the final meaning intended by the speaker:

4) Freddy came for me!

The prototypical meaning of (4) is one in which Freddy Krueger, a character from a horror film who kills teenagers in their sleep, came to my location in order to hurt, haunt, terrorize, or kill me, basically any verb which would entail a change of state for the patient. We will call this [+change of state] meaning ‘A<sup>a</sup>’. In addition to this [+change of state] meaning, an additional meaning can emerge from (4). This is the [+change of location] meaning ‘A<sup>o</sup>’. The values of the two meanings are listed below:

|                        |                    |                        |                       |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A <sup>a</sup> meaning | [+change of state] | A <sup>o</sup> meaning | [+change of location] |
|                        | [+durative]        |                        | [+completive]         |

However, A<sup>o</sup> is not the meaning that a US English speaker will associate with (4) upon first hearing it. A<sup>o</sup> entails that Freddy came to me and took me away with him. Again, this is a possible interpretation of (4), for it entails [+CHANGE], which is the prototypical sense of A, but it is not the meaning we immediately think of when we hear (4). The meaning we first associate with (4) is A<sup>a</sup>. In fact, to achieve the A<sup>o</sup> meaning in (4), US English speakers are more likely to use the Standard English *MV and V* construction or the *MV infinitive* construction instead of the colloquial *come for* construction<sup>1</sup>. Thus, to get the A<sup>o</sup> meaning in which Freddy intended to take me to another location, one is more likely to use:

5) Freddy came to get (abduct) me!

In (4) above, it is my background knowledge about the movie character Freddy Krueger and the frame semantics that are evoked by his character, i.e. his intentions toward teenagers, his history as a serial killer, and the typical end result of his actions, that help me draw a conclusion concerning which A meaning is appropriate in the *come for* construction. That is, pragmatics ultimately determines the choice of A<sup>a</sup> or A<sup>o</sup> meanings.

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<sup>1</sup> The A<sup>o</sup> meaning of the *come for* construction can be used interchangeably with the *MV and V* construction and the *MV infinitive* construction. To use those alternative constructions for the A<sup>a</sup> meaning, however, sounds contrived.

Finally, we note that to avoid ambiguity meaning A° is often realized in a construction like (5), in which *come for* is replaced with an *MV and V* construction or the *MV infinitive* construction in US Englishes. This is not the case in Crucian, which has more instances of *MV + for* than the *MV + V* construction or the *MV + infinitive* construction (CWC).

In conclusion, the *come for* construction has a prototypical [+CHANGE] meaning. There are differences, however, in the intended meanings of the construction. We draw the following generalizations over the two meanings of the *come for* construction based on examples (2-5):

A<sup>a</sup> generalization: *come for* implies change of state; *for* has [+durative] meaning

A° generalization: *come for* implies change of location; *for* has [+completive] meaning

Although two meanings of A can emerge from the *come for* construction, background knowledge about the agents and patients in the construction will ultimately determine which meaning will be assigned to the construction.

#### 4 The *come for* construction in Crucian (including lexemes *came* and *coming*)

In Crucian, the *come for* construction is more frequent than the *MV and V* construction like “came and got” or the *MV infinitive* construction like “came to get” (CWC). Most of the uses of the *come for* construction in the CWC have an A° [+completive] meaning. The following example provides a Crucian sentence taken from the computerized Crucian Wiretaps Corpus along with its equivalent in US English:

6) Weh you deh, you want me come for it? (CWC, *come for*, hit 5)

Where are you? Do you want me to come and get it? (US English)

In order to increase the valency of the verb *come* in Standard US English, a speaker would need either 1) a preposition, 2) the conjunction *and*, or 3) an infinitive verb like *to get*. The translation of the Crucian example into US English above shows this. However, since Crucian is more likely to use the *for* particle after the motion verb *come*, it begs the question what role the *for* particle is serving in terms of a grammatical category in the *come for* construction in Crucian.

We stated above that the *MV and V* construction and the *MV infinitive* construction are in complimentary distribution with the A° meaning of the *come for* construction. This leads us to the conclusion that *for* in this particular construction in both Crucian and colloquial US English should be treated as a verb. If *for* is a verb in this construction, that would mean that *come for* is in both function and form similar to a serialized verb construction.

Not all uses of the *come for* construction in the BCC had an A° [+completive] meaning. An A<sup>a</sup> [+durative] meaning can be found in the following example:

7) ...that's wah they gou come for alone (CWC, *come for*, hit 30)

That alone will make them come to the house. (US English)

In this context, the speaker refers to the motivation that the police may have to come to his house. An arrest is not implicit in this construction. The speaker meant that the police will come to search for something [+durative event]. Below is an additional case of the [+durative] aspectual meaning of the *come for* construction in Crucian:

- 8) ...they eh gah no reason to come for me they striking blows (CWC, *come for*, hit 56)

...they don't have any reason to harass me; they are striking blows. (US English)

By far, the most common use of the *come for* construction in Crucian has the *retrieve* meaning. As shown in the colloquial US English example (3) above, the A° [+completive] meaning is rendered by this construction. This is seen below:

- 9) I could come for you. (CWC, *come for*, hit 2)

I could come and get you (and bring you back to the house). (US English)

Lastly, the following example is good evidence that *for* in the *come for* construction should be realized as a verb in a resultative serialized verb expression:

- 10) I wah know if they gou come for a warrant for me? (CWC, *come for*, hit 12)

I want to know if they are going to get a warrant to arrest me. (US English)

## 5 Conclusion

The analysis of *for* in English has not been looked at through the lens of serialized verb constructions. It may be because linguists are hesitant to admit that US English has serialized verb constructions, insisting instead that a phonologically reduced or even covert *and* appears between two verbs in constructions like 'go [?] get your brother'. Based on the examples found in the CWC, this paper maintains the position that *for* in the *come for* construction in Crucian adds valency to the motion verb *come* and provides an aspectual sense to the constructional meaning. Both of these functions typify serialized verbs in West African languages, where serialized verbs, auxiliaries, adpositions, adverbs, and ideophones constitute frequently overlapping categories with fuzzy and porous boundaries between them.



# PREPOSITION-STRANDING UNDER SLUICING IN PUERTO RICAN SPANISH

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## 1 Introduction

Preposition stranding (henceforth, P-stranding) is a well-known and documented phenomenon in English and the Scandinavian languages. However, this syntactic operation seems to be disallowed in many other languages, i.e., the possibility of P-stranding is subject to cross-linguistic variation. Moreover, in languages that allow P-stranding the licensing of such construction differs dramatically: while in some languages P-stranding is attested under A'-movement (1), in other it is allowed to strand a preposition in both A'- and A-environments (2) (Truswell, 2008a & b).

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(1) What are you talking about <**what**>?

(2) I saw the roommate you live with <**the roommate**> in the party last night.

Romance languages in general tend to lack P-stranding. Nevertheless, there are some dialects of French and Spanish that allow P-stranding under certain circumstances (Vinet, 1984; Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach, 2009). And even in Romance languages where this construction is normally banned, its occurrence can be documented under certain conditions, i.e., in Brazilian Portuguese P-stranding is allowed under sluicing (3), but not elsewhere (4).

- (3) a. A Maria dançou com alguém, mas eu não lembro [com quem]<sub>i</sub> ~~a Maria dançou t<sub>i</sub>~~.  
'Maria danced with someone, but I do not remember with who.'  
b. A Maria dançou com alguém, mas eu não lembro [quem]<sub>i</sub> ~~a Maria dançou com t<sub>i</sub>~~.  
'Maria danced with someone, but I do not remember who.'

- (4) a. [Com quem]<sub>i</sub> que a Maria dançou t<sub>i</sub>?  
 ‘With whom did Maria danced.’  
 b. \*[Quem]<sub>i</sub> que a Maria dançou com t<sub>i</sub>.  
 ‘Who did Maria danced with?’

(Almeida & Yoshida, 2007)

The present study is a work-in-progress report from a project investigating P-stranding in Standard Spanish. Thus, the aims of this paper are twofold: first, we analyze P-stranding under sluicing in Puerto Rican Spanish and examine if P-stranding under sluicing in this Caribbean dialect is favored only in D-linked contexts, as proposed by Vicente (2006) for Standard Spanish; and second, we explore further connections with other Spanish dialects. As far as we know, an empirical study of this kind has not been carried out until now. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: after a brief discussion in section 2 of Puerto Rican Spanish, section 3 examines P-stranding crosslinguistically, Section 4 discusses the methodology of the current study, section 5 analyzes the findings, and section 6 concludes the paper and suggests directions for future research.

The aim of this paper is to analyze P-stranding under sluicing in Puerto Rican Spanish and to examine if P-stranding under sluicing in this Caribbean dialect is favored only in D-linked contexts, as proposed by Vicente (2006) for Standard Spanish. As far as we know, an empirical study of this kind has not been carried out until now. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: after a brief discussion in section 2 of Puerto Rican Spanish, section 3 examines P-stranding crosslinguistically, Section 4 discusses some of the preliminary findings obtained from the current study, and Section 5 concludes the paper and suggests directions for future research.

## 2 Puerto Rican Spanish

Puerto Rican Spanish is spoken in Puerto Rico, an island located in the Caribbean, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, just east of the Dominican Republic. There is an estimated population of 4,000,000 (approx.) habitants on the island and there are another 4,000,000 (approx.) speakers of Puerto Rican origin in the US (mainly in New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey, etc.). Even though Spanish and English are both official languages in the island, Spanish is the native language of most of the population and the one used in daily life. English is restricted to specific contexts (e.g., the Federal Court, etc.). However, both languages are taught in school from K to 12 grades.

As a Caribbean dialect (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, some regions of Mexico, etc.), Puerto Rican Spanish has some idiosyncratic grammatical properties, (Gutiérrez-Rexach & González-Rivera, this volume; Lipski, 1996).

P-stranding has been documented in Puerto Rican Spanish, but in a less productive fashion than in some other languages. The following examples, taken from *El Nuevo Día*, an island's newspaper, documents its occurrence.

- (5) La FARC, la cual no estoy de acuerdo **con**, no nació de la nada.  
 ‘The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), a group I do not agree with, does not come from anything.’

(2008: Blog El Nuevo Día)

- (6) La ambivalencia no es saludable, en el amor o la sexualidad, por mencionar dos sentimientos de los más afectados **por**.  
 ‘Ambivalence is unhealthy, either in love or in sexuality, just to mention two feelings which are the most affected by.’

(2010: Blog El Nuevo Día)

The previous data suggest that there is some sort of linguistic influence of English in Puerto Rican Spanish. Previous studies, however, have demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case, i.e., the use of overt subject pronouns, for example, has been explained in terms of emphasis, change of topics, pragmatics, etc. (see Abreu, 2009 for PR Spanish; Flores-Ferrán, 2002 & 2004 and Otheguy & Zentella, 2007 for PR/NY Spanish; among others); and P-stranding in Puerto Rican Spanish is restricted mainly to the speakers in the US. In the following section we examine preposition-stranding crosslinguistically.

### 3 Preposition stranding

A stranded preposition is one that has been extracted from its complement, leading to the following contrast:

- (7) What are you talking about?  
 (8) About what are you talking?

In (7) the *wh*-phrase has been moved (extracted) to Spec-CP, while the preposition has been left stranded. In (8) the moved constituent, namely, the pronoun *what* has pied-piped (or dragged with it) the preposition *about*. Thus, contrary to P-stranding, pied-piping involves the fronting of a PP containing a *wh*-phrase. In other words, while in P-stranding P is left stranded by virtue of being separated from its complement, pied-piping occurs when a larger constituent moves as a consequence of the movement of something that it contains (Culicover, 1999).



These phenomena have been of interest because of cross-linguistic differences amongst world's languages; that is, P-stranding and pied-piping are allowed under certain circumstances in some languages, but not in others. P-stranding is allowed in English and some other Germanic languages, e.g., the Dutch data (9/10):

(9) Waar heb je dat boek op gelegd?  
 'Where did you put the book on?'

(10) \*Welke tafel heb je dat boek op gelegd?  
 'Which desk have you put the book on?'

(Beermann & Hellan, 2005)

Notice that in Dutch extraction from a prepositional phrase (PP) is allowed when the extracted element is a pronoun (9), and not when it is a referential determiner phrase, or DP, as in (10). In English, not all prepositions can be stranded. Consider the following contrast:

(11) [Who]<sub>i</sub> did you talk to t<sub>i</sub> on Monday at the meeting?

(12) \*[Which day]<sub>i</sub> did you talk to John on t<sub>i</sub> in the meeting?

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We can conclude from the above that a locative preposition in English cannot be stranded when it occurs before a temporal prepositional phrase. Also, as suggested by Bergh & Seppänen (2000), in English P-stranding seems more natural when the preposition is part of a complex verbal idiom (13), and pied-piping tends to be possible when the PP functions as an adjunct rather than as a complement (14):

(13) a. They face a long suspension **which** nobody is likely to put up **with**.  
 b. ?\*They face a long suspension **with which** nobody is likely to put up.

(14) a. They face a long suspension, **during which** their image will suffer considerably.  
 b. \*They face a long suspension, **which** their image will suffer considerably **during**.

(Bergh & Seppänen, 2000)

Finally, it has been suggested in Maling & Zaenen (1985) that wh-movement strands prepositions more freely than DP-movement does, as the following contrast shows:

(15) [Which questions]<sub>i</sub> did you ask John about t<sub>i</sub>?

- (16) \*[Those questions]<sub>i</sub> were not asked to John about t<sub>i</sub>.

From the English data we can conclude the following: 1) locative prepositions cannot be stranded when they occur before a temporal PP; 2) P-stranding is more natural when the prepositions involved are part of a complex verbal idiom; and 3) P-stranding occurs more freely in *wh*-movement than in DP-movement. Therefore, in English P-stranding is only permissible under certain circumstances. Similar patterns hold in other Germanic languages, such as Modern Icelandic and Danish.

Modern Icelandic (MI), as with many other Scandinavian languages, allows P-stranding under A'-movement, as the following example demonstrates.

- (17) Hann spurði hvern ég hedði talað við.  
'He asked me whom I had talked to.'

(Maling & Zaenen, 1985)

However, P-stranding under raising (18) and topicalization (19) is not allowed, i.e., P-stranding under A-movement in MI is banned.

- (18) \*Ég tel þennan samning hafa verið rætt um á fundunum.  
'I believe that agreement to have been talked about at the meeting.'

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- (19) \*Ég veit ekki hvers vegna þennan samning væri svo mikið rætt um.  
'I don't know why that agreement was so much talked about.'

(Maling & Zaenen, 1985)

Danish behaves like MI: P-stranding is possible under A'-movement, but not under A-movement

(Truswell, 2008a & b).

- (20) Hvem har Peter snakket me?  
'Who has Peter talked with?'

(Merchant, 2001)

- (21) \*Han blev grinet af.  
'He was laughed at.'

(Truswell, 2008a)

As is the case in Brazilian Portuguese (see examples above), in some languages, even though P-stranding is not allowed under regular wh-movement, it is allowed under sluicing, as shown in the following examples from Finnish (Hartman, 2005):

- (22) a. Kene-n kaa sä leiki-t?  
           ‘With whom did you play?’  
       b. \*Kene-n sä leiki-t kaa?  
           ‘Who did you play with?’
- (23) Se leiki-i jonku-n kaa, mutt-en tiiä kene-n (kaa)  
       ‘He plays with someone, but I don’t know who ~~he’s playing with.~~’

There are other languages that do not allow P-stranding under any conditions. Below we review some of these languages (cf. Merchant, 2001). Based on these crosslinguistic variations, Merchant (2001: 92) formulates the following generalization:

“A language L will allow preposition stranding under sluicing if L allows preposition stranding under regular wh-movement.”

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32 The data from Brazilian Portuguese seem to falsify this claim, as we saw earlier (see Almeida & Yoshida, 2007 for a detailed discussion). Nevertheless, Greek, German, Russian, and Finnish seem to behave according to Merchant’s claim:

*Greek*

- (24) a. I Anna milise me kapjon, alla dhe ksero \*(me) pjon.  
           ‘Anna spoke with someone but I don’t know who ~~she spoke with.~~’  
       b. \*Pjon milise me?  
           ‘Who she spoke with?’

*German*

- (25) a. Anna hat mit jemandem gesprochen, aber ich weiß nicht, \*(mit) wem.  
           ‘Anna spoke with someone but I don’t know who ~~she spoke with.~~’  
       b. \*Wem hat sie mit gesprochen?  
           ‘Who she has spoken with?’

*Russian*

- (26) a. Anja govorila s kem-to, no ne znaju \*(s) kem.  
           ‘Anna spoke with someone but I don’t know who ~~she spoke with.~~’  
       b. \*Kem ona govorila s?

‘Who she spoke with?’

Romance languages disallow P-stranding, as illustrated in the examples from French (27), Italian (28), Catalan (29), and Spanish (30) below:

(27) \*Qui as-tu voté pour ?  
‘Who did you vote for?’  
(Roberts, 1996)

(28) \*Chi ha parlato Pietro con?  
‘Who has Peter spoken with?’  
(Merchant, 2001)

(29) \*Qui va parlar l’Anna amb?  
‘Who has Anna spoken with?’  
(Merchant, 2001)

(30) \*Quién habló Susana con?  
‘Whoo did Susana speak with?’  
(Zagona, 2002)

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It has been suggested that in the case of these Romance languages P-stranding is never possible. Note that each of the English renderings in the examples constitutes a grammatical sentence. Hence, these data suggest that both parameters (31) and (32) listed below apply to English and some other Germanic languages, while only (32) applies to these Romance languages:

(31) ...<sub>[PP P [<sub>DP</sub> t]]</sub>...: P-stranding

(32) ...<sub>[VP V [<sub>PP</sub> t]]</sub>...: Pied-piping

Nevertheless, there are cases where P-stranding is possible in some Romance languages: Prince Edward Island French (PEIF) and Québec French, permit the following construction:

(33) La fille que je connais très bien le gars qui sort avec.  
‘The girl that I know very well the guy who goes out with.’  
(Vinet, 1984)

(34) Le garçon que Marie a parlé avec.

‘The boy that Maria has spoken with.’

(Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach, 2009)

For (33), Truswell (2008a & b) argues that this apparent case of P-stranding in Québec French fails to obey the Complex NP Constraint, i.e., no element contained in an S dominated by an NP with a lexical head noun may be moved out of that NP by a transformation (Ross, 1967: 70). Therefore, this sentence is more naturally accounted for if we assume a base-generated dependency between an antecedent and a null resumptive pronoun. This is the same to say that the occurrence of a preposition without its complement is not sufficient evidence to conclude P-stranding under A'-movement.

Puerto Rican Spanish is another example of a Romance language that seems to allow P-stranding, that is, in this dialect of Spanish P-stranding is possible under A'-movement in informal colloquial speech:

- (35) ¿Qué estás hablando sobre?  
‘What are you talking about?’

At first sight, it seems that the constructions IN (33) to (35) could be analyzed as cases of syntactic transfer from English to Canadian French and Puerto Rican Spanish respectively. This can be explained by the fact that English is the dominant language in Canada and the island of Puerto Rico is a territory of the US, where English is also the dominant language.

On the other hand, Standard Spanish has some constructions that resemble cases of P-stranding. Campos (1991) gives examples of these prepositions and calls them *substantive prepositions*.

- (36) De qué edificio está **cerca** la facultad?  
‘(Of) what building is the school near (to)?’
- (37) La pastelería de la cual vivo **detrás** es buenísima.  
‘The pastry shop (of) which I live behind is excellent.’
- (38) La señora de quien vivo **encima** siempre se queja cuando tocó el acordeón.  
‘The lady (of) whom I live above always complains when I play the accordion.’

Campos (1991) argues that substantive prepositions are not really prepositions, i.e., they are [+N(oun)], whereas true prepositions are [-N(oun), -V(erb)]. This follows from the fact that, substantive prepositions allow silent complements (39-41), whereas regular prepositions do not.

- (39) Speaker A: José trabaja para ese señor?  
                   ‘Does José work for that man?’  
       Speaker B: Sí, trabaja **para** Ø.  
                   ‘Yes he works for Ø.’
- (40) Speaker A: Julia vive cerca de la Universidad?  
                   ‘Does Julia live near the university?’  
       Speaker B: Sí, vive bastante **cerca** Ø.  
                   ‘Yes she lives pretty near Ø.’
- (41) Speaker A: Tu oficina está detrás del cementerio?  
                   ‘Is your office behind the cemetery?’  
       Speaker B: Sí, te juro que está **detrás** Ø.  
                   ‘Yes I swear to you that it is behind Ø.’

Thus, P-stranding in these cases can be explained by assuming that the phase nature of P<sup>0</sup> (in Abels’ (2003) terms, see the following section) is subjected to parameterization, i.e., extraction from PP is not categorically excluded).

Whereas in Standard Spanish P-stranding is not possible, the possibility of P-stranding under sluicing in some Spanish dialects is still openly debated:

- (42) ?Pepe habló con alguien pero no sé quién.  
       ‘Pepe talked to someone but I do not know who.’
- (43) Pepe habló con alguien pero no sé con quién.  
       ‘Pepe talked to someone but I do not know with whom.’
- (44) Pepe vivió en un país extranjero pero no recuerdo cuál.  
       ‘Pepe lived in an European country but I do not remember which.’
- (45) Pepe vivió en un país extranjero pero no recuerdo en cuál.  
       ‘Pepe lived in an European country but I do not remember in which.’
- (46) Pepe habló sobre un problema de sintaxis pero no recuerdo cuál.  
       ‘Pepe talked about a topic of syntax but I do not remember which.’
- (47) Pepe habló sobre un problema de sintaxis pero no recuerdo sobre cuál.  
       ‘Pepe talked about a topic of syntax but I do not remember about which.’

The main difference between (42/43) and (44/45; 46/47) is that in (44/46) the *wh*-word is discourse linked (D-linked) while in 42 it is not (Vicente, 2006). In Spanish P-stranding under sluicing seems to be possible iff the *wh* word is D-linked. A D-linked phrase implies the existence of a set of contextually determined entities from which the speaker is asking for a choice, while non D-linked phrases do not carry such an implication (Frazier & Clifton Jr., 2002). These data constitute a challenge to Merchant's generalization.

In summary, P-stranding is attested only in a small proportion of the world's languages. In the GB tradition, the distinction between non-stranding languages and stranding languages is stated as follows (Newmeyer, 2000):

- a. *Non-Stranding languages*: The lexical categories N, V, and A are proper governors. The lexical category P is not a proper governor.
- b. *Stranding languages*: All four lexical categories are proper governors.

The conclusion that follows from these definitions is the following: when P is not a proper governor, extraction of its complement is not possible since the resultant trace would be ungoverned. However, a properly governing preposition allows extraction and may occur stranded on the surface (Newmeyer, 2000).

Not all syntactic analyses within the GB tradition assume this distinction. For instance, for Hornstein and Weinberg (1981; see Kayne, 1984 for further development of these ideas) P is never a governor. Thus, to explain languages that allow P-stranding these authors assume that P has the ability to overcome this defect by undergoing *reanalysis* with an adjacent verb, creating thereby a complex verb that can properly govern the trace of movement.

This analysis runs into a number of problems (Abels, 2003), some of which we will mention here. Hornstein & Weinberg (1981) point out the following: 1) not all reanalysis can precede all movement; 2) V and P don't behave like a constituent; 3) reanalysis cannot be limited to contiguous material; and 4) reanalysis is not capable of capturing the *antilocality* of extraction from PP. There are other theories that deal with P-stranding. In what follows we will focus on Abels' (2003) proposal.

Abels' analysis relies on the notion of *phase head*. If the notion of *phase* (Chomsky, 2000) is assumed, then the node responsible for bounding properties is not a maximal projection. Relying on this conception, Abels defines phase head (PH) as a head bearing unvalued copies of every feature (Truswell, 2008a & b). Hence, a PH will be able to establish Agreement relations with any feature in its c-command domain; this in turn induces movement of a constituent bearing that feature to a specifier condition. Also, a PH will act as an intervener for the establishment of such Agreement relations by higher heads. This has repercussions for the analysis of P-stranding, namely, P will generally be a phase head, but not in P-stranding languages. Thus, phrases moving out

of a PP have to pass through an intermediate landing site in [Spec, P] in languages where P is a PH; whereas phrases can move directly to CP in other languages.

Abels' analysis addresses another issue: anti-locality. In this view, movement is construed as a last resort operation (or *Procrastination*): i.e., it is legitimate to move a constituent only if it leads directly to the establishment of new feature-checking possibilities. Therefore, if the closest relationship between two nodes holds between a head H and its complements, no additionally locally determined feature-checking possibilities would arise from movement of that complement to [Spec, H] (Truswell, 2008a & b). Therefore, such movement is not legitimate.

The difference between P-stranding languages and non P-stranding ones is thus the following, according to Abels (2003): conditions on attraction and intervention hold that anything c-commanded by a phase head H can only move over that head if and only if it agrees with H and stops in [Spec, H]. Nonetheless, this option is not available to the complement of H because it is already as close as possible to H. Movement to [Spec, H] (or further) is ruled out by a last resort consideration (Truswell, 2008a & b). If this is so, then in languages where P is a PH, the complement of P cannot move, and therefore P cannot be stranded.

We may sum up the current state of Abels' (2003) approach as follows:

- a. Non-Stranding languages: P is a Phasal Head.
- b. Stranding languages: P is a Non-Phasal Head.

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According to this approach in Spanish P is a phasal head; therefore, sentences with P-stranding must be ruled out by the grammar of the language. In the following section we examine P-stranding under sluicing in Puerto Rican Spanish.

#### **4 Preposition stranding in Puerto Rican Spanish: Preliminary results**

The present authors have conducted a study to determine the nature of preposition stranding in Puerto Rican Spanish. Using a preference task, participants were asked to judge if sentences containing P-stranding under sluicing in both D-linked and non D-linked contexts were horrible, awkward, ok or perfect. (Table 1; see appendix for the questionnaire). This method allows us to assess the speaker' reactions to sentence types that occur only rarely in spontaneous speech (Tremblay, 2005).



**Table 1** Preference task: P-stranding under sluicing

| Sentence                                            | Horrible<br>1 | Awkward<br>2 | OK<br>3 | Perfect<br>4 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| 1. Pepe salió con alguien, pero no sé quién.        |               |              |         |              |
| 9. Marcos viajó a un país de Asia, pero no sé cuál. |               |              |         |              |

The preference task was composed of 60 sentences, of which 20 have sluicing and 9 of those contain P-stranding under sluicing (4 in non D-linked and 5 in D-linked contexts; cf. (1) and (9) Table 1). The rest of the sentences were fillers to deviate the participant's attention.

The study involved 60 participants, 40 native Puerto Ricans and 20 non Puerto Rican native Spanish speakers currently living in Puerto Rico from countries such as Spain, Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, etc. The participants were not socially pre-stratified. Participants were chosen at random, with their ages ranging from 10 to 70 years old. When all of the data were collected, percentage values were calculated to represent the speakers' grammatical preferences. The percentages were divided into the following categories: The percentages of participants who found Pied-piping in D-linked vs. non D-linked contexts horrible, awkward, ok or perfect, and the percentages of participants who found P-stranding under sluicing in D-linked vs. non D-linked context horrible, awkward, ok or perfect.

The preliminary results show that p-stranding under sluicing is acceptable in Puerto Rican Spanish in 60% of the occurrences, i.e. sentences like (48) below were judged either OK (39%) or PERFECT (21%) by Puerto Rican speakers:

- (48) Pepe habló con alguien pero no sé quién.  
 'Pepe talked to someone but I do not know who.'

Non-speakers of this dialect (e.g., Colombian speakers, etc.), however, judged p-stranding under sluicing as either HORRIBLE (19%) or AKWARD (43%); (62% not acceptable). This difference may be explained by the fact that Puerto Rican Spanish has been in contact with American English from more than a century now. This contact situation between Puerto Rican Spanish and American English has intensified during the last decades not only as a consequence of the continuous flow of Puerto Ricans to and from United States, but also by the efforts of the government of the island to make Puerto Ricans bilingual (e.g., the Project to Create a Bilingual Citizen). This has created a number of varieties of Puerto Rican Spanish widely used on and off the island (Nuyorican Spanish, etc.). Tables 2 and 3 below summarize the findings:

**Table 2** P-stranding under sluicing: Puerto Rican native speakers of Spanish

| Horrible | Awkward | OK  | Perfect | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|-----|---------|-------|
| 25       | 119     | 141 | 75      | 360   |
| 7%       | 33%     | 39% | 21%     | 100%  |

**Table 3** P-stranding under sluicing: non-Puerto Rican native speakers of Spanish

| Horrible | Awkward | OK  | Perfect | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|-----|---------|-------|
| 34       | 78      | 52  | 16      | 180   |
| 19%      | 43%     | 29% | 9%      | 100%  |

When we take into consideration the type of p-stranding under sluicing, i.e., whether or not the *wh*-word is D-linked or not (Vicente, 2006), then we find that this particular factor is of no consequence in the judgements of Puerto Rican Spanish speakers, who: tend to favor preposition stranding in both contexts. For Puerto Rican speakers, 62% of the occurrences of p-stranding under sluicing in non D-linked contexts were found acceptable, while 58.5% of the occurrences in D-linked contexts were also judged acceptable (Tables 4 and 5):

**Table 4** P-stranding under sluicing in non D-linked contexts: Puerto Rican speakers

| Horrible | Awkward | OK  | Perfect | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|-----|---------|-------|
| 9        | 52      | 66  | 33      | 160   |
| 5%       | 33%     | 41% | 21%     | 100%  |

**Table 5** P-stranding under sluicing in D-linked contexts: Puerto Rican speakers

| Horrible | Awkward | OK    | Perfect | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 16       | 67      | 75    | 42      | 200   |
| 8%       | 33.5%   | 37.5% | 21%     | 100%  |

On the other hand, speakers of other dialects of Spanish tend to disfavor p-stranding under sluicing in non D-linked contexts (71%) (Tables 6 and 7). These speakers thus follow Vicente's (2006) claim: *in Spanish a preposition can only be dropped in a sluicing context if the wh-word is D-linked*.

**Table 6** P-stranding under sluicing in non D-linked contexts: non-Puerto Rican speakers

| Horrible | Awkward | OK  | Perfect | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|-----|---------|-------|
| 17       | 40      | 18  | 5       | 80    |
| 21%      | 50%     | 23% | 6%      | 100%  |

**Table 7** P-stranding under sluicing in D-linked contexts: non-Puerto Rican speakers

| Horrible | Awkward | OK  | Perfect | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|-----|---------|-------|
| 17       | 38      | 34  | 11      | 100   |
| 17%      | 38%     | 34% | 11%     | 100%  |

In sum, Puerto Rican Spanish seems to differentiate itself from other dialects of Spanish in the use of p-stranding under sluicing. This may be a consequence of the language contact situation between Puerto Rican Spanish and American English.

However, the evolution of p-stranding in Puerto Rican Spanish does not depart from what we find in the evolution of p-stranding in other languages. For instance, in Old-English p-stranding did not exist, but Middle English developed p-stranding through a series of syntactic mechanisms: in Middle English P-stranding started as a double preposition construction (i.e., a sentence containing both pied-piping and stranding in the same clause). Consider the following examples from the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (cf. Bergh & Seppänen, 2000):

- (49) yif ther be any thing **to** whiche that alle thinges tenden and hyen **to**, that thing muste ben the sovereyn good of alle goodes.

(Chaucer, 14<sup>th</sup>)

- (50) so sawe they comen down the hylle to hem chauntecler the clock and brought on a biere a deed henne **of** whom reynart had byten the heed **of**.

(Caxton, 15<sup>th</sup>)

- (51) Behinde the Lunges, towarde the Spondels, passeth Mire or Isofagus, **of** whom it is spoken **of** in the Anatomie of the necke.

(Vicary, 16<sup>th</sup>)

Allen (1980) suggests that the double preposition construction represents an intermediate stage between pied-piping and P-stranding. This pattern was frequent in the Late Middle English period and the first century of the Early Modern English (cf. Bergh & Seppänen, 2000). Later, its frequency decreases, enabling P-stranding to become a parameter available for English.

In the case of Puerto Rican Spanish, what we would like to suggest is that the contact situation may not necessarily be responsible for the increased acceptability of p-stranding under sluicing, but that there may be other mechanisms at work here. Thus, further research is needed.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper we have examined P-stranding under sluicing in Puerto Rican Spanish. It has been noticed that, even though Spanish disfavors P-stranding, some authors have suggested that it is possible to strand a preposition in Spanish under certain circumstances (Vicente, 2006). It seems that Puerto Rican speakers tend to allow P-stranding under sluicing or at least find this construction acceptable, whether the preposition is dropped in a D-linked or non D-linked context. Speakers of other Spanish dialects, on the other hand do not find P-stranding under sluicing acceptable in most of the cases and tend to behave as predicted by Vicente (2006): P-stranding under sluicing in Spanish is only possible in D-linked contexts. However, we may say that Spanish is changing and the parameter of P-stranding could be available in Spanish in the future. Further research must tackle not only the mechanisms at work for the licensing of P-stranding under sluicing but also the microparametric variation within different dialects of Spanish with respect to this construction.

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## Appendix: Cuestionario de preferencia de estructuras oracionales

### Prueba de Preferencias

**Instrucciones.** Lea las siguientes oraciones cuidadosamente. Deberá evaluarlas según la siguiente escala:

- **Perfecta (4):** cuando una oración corresponde a aspectos concernientes a la gramática, o según **usted**, es correcta o elegante en el español y la diría sin titubeos.
- **Buena (3):** cuando una oración, según lo que **usted** cree, es aceptable en la gramática del español y considera que podría decirla en algún momento.
- **Incómoda (2):** cuando una oración le desagrada al escucharla por distanciarse de aspectos de la gramática o de la forma que se considera correcta, y **usted** la ha escuchado decir o la dice con poca frecuencia.
- **Horrible (1):** cuando una oración **NO** corresponde a aspectos concernientes a la gramática, o según **usted**, **NO** es correcta o elegante en el español. Cuando **usted NO** la dice o cree **NO** haberla dicho, y le irrita escucharla. También si corrige a otros cuando la escucha.

Marque con una **X** dentro de la columna que represente su opinión. Recuerde que la casilla uno (1) implica que la oración le parece horrible y la casilla (4) implica que la oración le parece perfecta.

| Escala<br>Oraciones                                                  | Horrible<br>1 | Incómoda<br>2 | Buena<br>3 | Perfecta<br>4 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| 1. Pepe salió con alguien, pero no sé quién.                         |               |               |            |               |
| 2. A ellos les gusta es pelear.                                      |               |               |            |               |
| 3. Aminta estaba hablando con alguien, pero no tengo idea con quién. |               |               |            |               |
| 4. Las pandillas en el barrio traen enfrentamientos y robos.         |               |               |            |               |
| 5. Eso está es peligroso.                                            |               |               |            |               |

|                                                                                                     |                             |                             |                          |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6. El Director debatió sobre algo referente a la cuota, pero es incierto sobre qué.                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 7. A mí no me hace sentido lo que dices.                                                            |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 8. Está lloviendo todos los días.                                                                   |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 9. Marcos viajó a un país de Asia, pero no sé cuál.                                                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 10. Llueve todos los días.                                                                          |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 11. Carolina hace ejercicio en una pista, pero no tengo idea en cuál.                               |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 12. Yo les dije a ellos que no fueran.                                                              |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| <b>Escala</b><br><b>Oraciones</b>                                                                   | <b>Horrible</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>Incómoda</b><br><b>2</b> | <b>Buena</b><br><b>3</b> | <b>Perfecta</b><br><b>4</b> |
| 13. María habló sobre un artículo del Nuevo día, pero no se me viene a la cabeza cuál.              |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 14. A mí no me tiene sentido lo que dices.                                                          |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 15. Tú no haces sentido.                                                                            |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 16. yo le dije a ellos que no se cogieran eso.                                                      |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 17. El gobernador conspira con alguien, pero sólo Dios sabe quién.                                  |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 18. Le preguntamos sobre el misterio. Él nos lo contó.                                              |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 19. El profesor investiga con alguien, pero no sé con quién.                                        |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 20. Yo les mencioné a ellos lo de la actividad.                                                     |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 21. Eli bailó salsa en un lugar de Piñones, pero no tengo conocimiento cuál.                        |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 22. Él ya no está viajando.                                                                         |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 23. Hay que entrenar en una de las canchas de tenis, pero no tengo idea en cuál.                    |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 24. La teoría que acaba de proponer un físico austriaco no hace sentido para muchos investigadores. |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 25. Ellos comentaron sobre un problema, pero no tenemos claro sobre cuál.                           |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 26. Yo le mencioné a ellos lo que dijo el profesor                                                  |                             |                             |                          |                             |

|                                                                                   |                             |                             |                          |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 27. Hay los estudiantes que piensan que no se debe pagar la cuota                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 28. Marie está es comiendo todo el día.                                           |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 29. Ellos compartieron con alguien, pero no sé quién.                             |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 30. Ella nos lo prestó ayer. El auto.                                             |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 31. Estábamos en la casa de Juan.                                                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 32. Gabo no los narró en Cien Años de Soledad. La matanza de las Bananeras.       |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| <b>Escala</b><br><b>Oraciones</b>                                                 | <b>Horrible</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>Incómoda</b><br><b>2</b> | <b>Buena</b><br><b>3</b> | <b>Perfecta</b><br><b>4</b> |
| 33. A Pepe no le hace sentido las constantes tardanzas de su esposa.              |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 34. Tú no tienes sentido.                                                         |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 35. Pablo residió en una ciudad de Venezuela una temporada, pero no me dijo cuál. |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 36. Me estoy ejercitando los viernes.                                             |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 37. Eminen cantó en una ciudad europea, pero no me acuerdo en cuál.               |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 38. Camino dos millas cada lunes.                                                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 39. Karem se besó con alguien, pero no sé quién.                                  |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 40. Te gusta es jugar y jugar.                                                    |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 41. Yo trabajé ese tema con alguien, pero no me acuerdo con quién.                |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 42. Ella le dijo a ellos que tenían que esforzarse.                               |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 43. Mirian estaba en un edificio de apartamentos, pero no me dijo cuál.           |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 44. Lo que tú dices no tiene ningún sentido.                                      |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 45. Estábanos buscando parking en Plaza.                                          |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 46. Yo estudiaría en la biblioteca a la que fue Juan, pero él no me dijo en cuál. |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 47. Habían muchos estudiantes en la universidad durante la huelga                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 48. Para mí tiene sentido lo que dijo el profesor.                                |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 49. Él les comentó a ellos que estaban en problemas.                              |                             |                             |                          |                             |



|                                                                                                      |                             |                             |                          |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 50. La rectora comenta sobre la situación de la Universidad, pero no sabemos qué situación.          |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 51. Para mí hace sentido lo que dijo el profesor.                                                    |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 52. Estábanos en San Juan anoche.                                                                    |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 53. Habían tantos en la fila que decidí irme.                                                        |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 54. La teoría que acaba de proponer un físico austriaco no tiene sentido para muchos investigadores. |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| <b>Escala</b><br><b>Oraciones</b>                                                                    | <b>Horrible</b><br><b>1</b> | <b>Incómoda</b><br><b>2</b> | <b>Buena</b><br><b>3</b> | <b>Perfecta</b><br><b>4</b> |
| 55. Peter platicó sobre algo relacionado con culebra, pero no recuerdo sobre qué.                    |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 56. Siempre salimos es corriendo.                                                                    |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 57. Le preguntamos la tarea. Ella no las dijo.                                                       |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 58. Ella ya no trabaja los miércoles.                                                                |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 59. El idiota del decano peleó con alguien, pero no hemos averiguado con quien.                      |                             |                             |                          |                             |
| 60. Pero crees en cosas misteriosas.                                                                 |                             |                             |                          |                             |

**¡Gracias por su tiempo y colaboración, su valoración es de suma importancia!**

# NEGATION, MODIFICATION, AND THE SYNTAX OF PUERTO RICAN SPANISH

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## 1 Introduction

Whereas in a majority of Spanish dialects it is not possible to delimit or restrict an n-word with a degree modifier occurring before the negative element (*nada más*, *nada menos* vs. *\*más nada*, *\*menos nada*), post and pre-neg delimitation is possible in Puerto Rican Spanish and in Caribbean Spanish in general: Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, some regions of Mexico, etc. (Kany, 1945; García Cornejo, 2008; Rosenblat, 1954), as shown in (1). This syntactic alternation is also attested in certain areas of Spain (Andalucía, Canarias, Galicia and León), but in a less productive fashion, and its presence in the latter areas may be mainly due to the influence of Portuguese (Pato, 2011).

- (1) a. No quiero saber [post-neg nada más] de ti.  
No want.1<sup>st</sup>.PRES to know nothing more of you  
'I do not want to know anything else about you.'
- b. No quiero saber [pre-neg más nada] de ti.  
No want.1<sup>st</sup>.PRES to know more nothing of you  
'I do not want to know anything else about you.'

In principle, it would seem that both forms are completely equivalent and in freely alternating distribution. This seems to be the standard position in the descriptive and normative tradition (Real Academia Española, 2005). Nevertheless, in this paper we argue that this is not an instance of optional or free syntactic alternation and that there are several syntactic and semantic constraints regulating the use of the two forms in Puerto Rican Spanish. As will be shown, freedom of placement is limited to some n-words (commonly *nada* 'nothing', *nunca* 'never', *nadie* 'no one') and only strong or purely negative uses of the n-word allow premodification – i.e., only those n-words licensed by a neg head allow pre-neg delimitation. On the other hand, premodification and post-modification of the n-word may trigger different presuppositions. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: after a brief discussion of Puerto Rican Spanish in section 2, section 3 examines new data related to the alternation between *más nada* and *nada más* and similar pairs in Puerto Rican Spanish. Section 4 provides a

syntactic analysis of such an alternation and explores further connections with other constructions (cf. comparative/superlative clauses). Section 5 examines the semantics of these constructions, and section 6 concludes the paper and suggests directions for future research.

## 2 Puerto Rican Spanish

Puerto Rican Spanish is spoken in Puerto Rico, an island located between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, just east of the Dominican Republic. There is an estimated population of 4,000,000 (approx.) habitants on the island and there are another 4,000,000 (approx.) speakers of Puerto Rican origin in the US (mainly in New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey, etc.). Even though Spanish and English are both official languages on the island, Spanish is the native language of most of the population and the one used in daily life. English is restricted to specific contexts (e.g., the Federal Court). However, both languages are taught in school from K to 12 grades. As a Caribbean dialect (Cuba, Dominican Republic, etc.), Puerto Rican Spanish has some idiosyncratic grammatical properties, such as the use of overt subject pronouns in contexts where the more typical option in other dialects is a null subject pronoun (2); non-inversion in *wh*-questions (3), while in Standard Spanish either the subject pronoun may be dropped or it appears post-verbally; and the occurrence of overt subject pronouns with infinitives (4) (cf. Lipski, 1994; Vaquero de Ramírez, 1996):

- (2) **Yo** traje la ensalada que **tú** me pediste.  
 I bring.1<sup>ST</sup>.PAST the salad that you of me ask.2<sup>ND</sup>.PAST  
 ‘I brought the salad you asked me for.’
- (3) ¿Cómo **tú** te llamas?  
 What you you call.2<sup>ND</sup>.PRES  
 ‘What is your name?’
- (4) Al **yo** oír la noticia, tuve miedo.  
 to+the I hear.INF the news get.1<sup>ST</sup>.PAST afraid  
 ‘When I heard the news, I got scared.’

As stated above, another idiosyncratic dialectal property of Puerto Rican Spanish is the alternation between pre-modification and post-modification of a negative word by a degree modifier, as in (1) – i.e., post- and pre-neg delimitation. This alternation is not possible in a majority of the Spanish dialects but it is common in most Caribbean dialects:

- (5) Y no oí más nada.  
 and no hear.1<sup>ST</sup>.PAST more nothing  
 ‘And I did not hear anything.’  
 (Carrera *Cuentos* [Venezuela 1980])

- (6) No la volví a besar más nunca.  
no her repeat.1<sup>ST</sup>.PAST to kiss.INF more never  
'I did not kiss her ever again.'  
(Cabrera Infante *Habana* [Cuba 1986])

- (7) Y no se supo más nada.  
and no SE-CL know.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST more nothing  
'And nobody knew more [about it].'  
(El Siglo *Panamá* [Panamá 1997])

In Puerto Rican Spanish there are also phonetically reduced versions [ná máh] and [máh ná] that cannot always be used to substitute for the full forms. As the following examples demonstrate, these forms and the full forms are not necessarily in freely alternating distribution.

- (8) a. No quiero saber [máh ná] de ti.  
no want.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES know.INF more nothing of you  
'I do not want to know more/anything else about you.'  
b. \*No quiero saber [ná máh] de ti.  
no want.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES know.INF nothing more of you
- (9) a. Voy a comer eso [ná máh].  
go.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES to eat.INF that nothing more  
'I am going to eat only that.'  
b. \*Voy a comer eso [máh ná].  
go.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES to eat.INF that more nothing

Even though the alternation *más nada/nada más* and its phonetically reduced versions [máh ná] and [ná máh] is a widely spread phenomenon in this Caribbean dialect, as documented in previous studies (Álvarez Nazario, 1992; González-Rivera, 2005) and in spontaneous speech-data (10-13), there has not been any attempt to explain the syntax and semantics/pragmatics of this alternation.

- (10) "Me han dado duro, me quieren 'afalcar'. Yo no puedo más, yo no puedo. Esto es increíble, yo lo que quiero es servirle a mi pueblo. Eso es lo que yo quiero. **Yo no quiero más nada, más nada.** Esto es increíble. Yo no puedo más. Yo no puedo más. Lo que yo he hecho es 13 años con el señor alcalde trabajando duro por Caguas. Yo no soporto eso, no puedo más", indicó Varela entre sollozos.  
(Rosario *El Nuevo Día* [Puerto Rico 2010])
- (11) "**Ése es todo el inconveniente y nada más.** Aquí esto no tienen nada que ver que si la NCAA tiene que darle permiso a Pitino para dirigir en Puerto Rico o no. Eso es un disparate. Quien tiene que darle permiso a Pitino es Louisville y él ya lo tiene", aseguró Lamboy.  
(Alzaga *Primera Hora* [Puerto Rico 2011])
- (12) "Las lecciones que deja el proceso son numerosas. Pero noto una especie de vergüenza colectiva; una necesidad de que **no salga a relucir más nada** y el asunto vuelva a enterrarse rápido. Error craso, porque esto es bueno ventilarlo mucho y debatirlo más."

- (13) Pues, a pesar de no mostrar elementos que marcaran una gran diferencia con sus presentaciones anteriores, Marc Anthony irradiaba esa pasión única que **nada más** que las reconciliaciones amorosas pueden lograr. Pues, aun sin la compañía física de su esposa Dayanara Torres, parecía estar cantándole a ella su repertorio de quince temas.  
(*Corpus de referencia del español actual* [Puerto Rico 2002])

As will be shown in the following sections, there are several syntactic and semantic constraints regulating the use of *nada más* and *más nada* in Puerto Rican Spanish. The syntactic constraints are discussed in the following section.

### 3 The case of *más nada*: syntactic constraints

As pointed out in the introduction, several restrictions are at work to determine the occurrence of *más nada* and *nada más*, and the syntax of pre and post-neg delimitation in general. Freedom of placement of *más* is limited to certain pronominal n-words: *nada* ‘nothing’, *nunca* ‘never’, *nadie* ‘nobody’, *ninguno* ‘none’ and *ningún* ‘none’:

- (14) a. [Nunca más] volveré a hablar contigo.  
never more repeat.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT to talk.INF with you  
‘I will not talk to you ever again.’  
b. [Más nunca] volveré a hablar contigo.  
more never repeat.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT to talk.INF with you  
‘I will not talk to you ever again.’
- (15) a. No he visto a [nadie más].  
no have seen.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRET PERF to nobody more  
‘I have not seen anybody else.’  
b. No he visto a [más nadie].  
no have seen.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRET PERF to else nobody  
‘I have not seen anybody else.’
- (16) a. Además de Pepe, no hay [ninguno más] que  
besides of Pepe no there.is no-one more that sea  
valiente  
be.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES SUBJ brave  
‘Besides Pepe, nobody else is brave.’  
b. Además de Pepe, no hay [más ninguno] que  
besides of Pepe no there.is more no-one that sea  
valiente  
be.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES SUBJ brave  
‘Besides Pepe, nobody else is brave.’
- (17) a. No jugó [ningún niño más].  
no play.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST no kid more  
‘No other kid played.’  
b. No jugó [más ningún niño].  
no play.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST more no kid

‘No other kid played.’

Freedom of placement, however, is not allowed with other pronominal quantifiers – i.e., premodification of quantificational pronouns other than n-words (*poco* ‘few’, *tanto* ‘such/so much’, *algo* ‘some’, *mucho* ‘many’, etc.) with the degree word *más* yields ungrammatical results:

- (18) a. Hace [poco más] de un año que no te veo.  
 makes-it little more of a year that not you see  
 ‘I have not seen you in little more than a year.’
- b. \*Hace [más poco] de un año que no te veo.  
 makes-it more little of a year that not you see
- (19) a. Me gusta [tanto más] que eso.  
 me pleases as more than that  
 ‘I like it so much more than that.’
- b. \*Me gusta [más tanto] que eso.  
 me pleases more as than that
- (20) a. Leeré [tres libros más].  
 read.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT three books more  
 ‘I will read three more books.’
- b. \*Leeré [más tres libros].  
 read.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT more three books

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In addition, only ‘strong’ or purely negative uses of the n-word – in other words those licensed by a neg head (Ladusaw, 1979) – allow premodification. In the following examples, the use of *nada más* is not negative and becomes equivalent in meaning to a focal particle (*solo* ‘only’). As will be argued below, in all three cases the n-word lacks sentential scope and is not licensed by negation (cf. Sánchez López, 1999).

- (21) a. Esta persona es [nada más] y nada menos que  
 that person is nothing more and nothing less than  
 el presidente.  
 the president  
 ‘That individual is nothing more or less than the president.’
- b. \*Esta persona es [más nada] y nada menos que  
 that person is more nothing and nothing less than  
 el presidente.  
 the president
- (22) a. Voy al cine [nada más] que para verte.  
 go.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES to-the cinema nothing more than for see-you  
 ‘I am going to the movies only to see you.’
- b. \*Voy al cine [más nada] que para verte.  
 go.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES to-the cinema more nothing than for see-you
- (23) a. ¿Quieres comer algo? Eso [nada más].

- want.2<sup>ND</sup>.PRES    eat    something    that    nothing more  
 ‘Do you want something to eat? Only that.’  
 b.    \*¿Quieres    comer    algo?    Eso    [más    nada].  
       want.2<sup>ND</sup>.PRES    eat    something    that    more    nothing

Finally, when the n-word is a negative-polarity item licensed in a non-negative environment (by an affective, decreasing or non-veridical operator, cf. Giannakidou, 1998), premodification is not allowed: for example, the n-word occurs in the antecedent of a conditional clause in (24), and within the restriction of a universal quantifier in (25):

- (24) a.    Como    protestes    [nada    más],    te    suspendo.  
           if    complain.2<sup>ND</sup>.PRES    nothing more    you    fail.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES  
           ‘If you complain any more, I’ll give you a failing grade.’  
       b.    \*Como    protestes    [más    nada],    te    suspendo.  
           if    complain.2<sup>ND</sup>.PRES    more    nothing    you    fail.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES  
  
 (25) a.    Todo    el    que    diga    [nada    más]    sufrirá    las    consecuencias.  
           every    the    that    say.3<sup>RD</sup>.SUBJ    nothing more    suffer.3<sup>RD</sup>.FUT    the    consequences  
           ‘Whoever says anything more will suffer the consequences.’  
       b.    \*Todo    el    que    diga    [más    nada]    sufrirá    las    consecuencias.  
           every    the    that    say.3<sup>RD</sup>.SUBJ    more    nothing    suffer.3<sup>RD</sup>.FUT    the    consequences

In summary, pre-neg delimitation is restricted to pronominal n-words licensed by a neg-head. When this is not the case, the degree modifier cannot occur in a preposed position. When the n-word is a negative-polarity item licensed in a non-negative environment, preposing is not allowed either. Finally, premodification is not possible with other quantifiers. In the following section we lay out the syntactic analysis of the alternation *nada más/más nada*.

#### 4 Overt degree raising

Following an insight by Bosque and Brucart (1991), we assume that degree quantification in Caribbean Spanish allows for higher scope of the degree element in the overt syntax, something required by comparative/superlative elements in general at the level of Logical Form (Bosque & Brucart, 1991; Heim, 1999; Matushansky, 2008). Thus, in Caribbean Spanish the Spell-Out orders (26a) and (27a) are possible, in addition to the standard (26b, c) and (27b, c).

- (26) a.    Pepe    es    el    más    que    lee    de    todos    nosotros.  
           Pepe    is    the    more    that    read.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES    of    all    us  
           ‘Pepe is the one who reads the most of all of us.’  
       b.    Pepe    es    el    que    más    lee    de    todos    nosotros.  
           Pepe    is    the    that    more    read.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES    of    all    us  
       c.    Pepe    es    el    que    lee    más    de    todos    nosotros.  
           Pepe    is    the    that    read.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES    more    of    all    us  
  
 (27) a.    Pepe    es    el    más    rápido    que    corre    de    todos    nosotros  
           Pepe    is    the    more    fast    that    run.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES    of    all    us

- ‘Pepe is the fastest among us.’
- b. Pepe es el que más rápido corre de todos nosotros  
 Pepe is the that more fast run.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES of all us
- c. Pepe es el que corre más rápido de todos nosotros  
 Pepe is the that run.3<sup>RD</sup>.PRES more fast of all us

Parallel to superlatives, degree-modified negative expressions also involve the displacement of a degree term out of its original domain. When it occurs in a ‘premodifier’ position, the degree delimiter can be claimed to scope out of the Neg Phrase to a higher Degree Phrase (Corver, 1997; Demonte, 2008; cf. also Matushansky, 2008 for other outscoping possibilities).

(28) [DegP ... más ... [NegP nada (más)<sub>copy</sub> ]]

This higher scope option is only available when the degree element – the copy in its base position – is licensed by sentential negation. Outscoping out of the NegP is not allowed in other decreasing environments (conditionals, the restriction of universal determiners, etc.) which are not negative, as illustrated above (24, 25). Similarly, when the delimiter *más* heads a comparative phrase (Sánchez López, 1999), it cannot escape it – syntactically, there would be a violation of the locality constraint on comparative CPs (cf. Lechner, 2004):

- (29) a. No hay [nada más] terrible que sufrir en vano.  
 not there-is nothing more terrible that suffer in vain  
 ‘There is nothing more terrible than suffering in vain.’
- b. \*No hay [más nada] terrible que sufrir en vano.  
 not there-is more nothing terrible that suffer in vain
- (30) a. No hizo [nada más] que llegar y se durmió.  
 not made nothing more than arrive and REFL sleep.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST  
 ‘He just came in and fell asleep.’
- b. No hizo [más nada] que llegar y se durmió.  
 not made more nothing than arrive and REFL sleep.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST

The same restriction is attested in focus constructions. These can take a variety of forms. In the examples (21) – (23) above, *nada* behaves like a focus particle (only) and does not allow the preposing of the degree delimiter. A similar instance is found in (31), where pre-modification of *nada* is not allowed. The explanation for these facts is closely related to what we have just seen in this section. Focus structures constitute closed domains, i.e. they give rise to focus islands (Drubig, 1993; López, 2009). As such, they would prevent the extraction of the degree element and its movement to a higher Degree Phrase.

- (31) a. [Nada más] te digo que soy pobre.  
 Nothing more you say.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES that be.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES poor



- ‘I only tell you that I am poor.’
- b.      \**[Más    nada]*    te      digo                      que      soy              pobre.  
              more    nothing you    say.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES    that    be.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES poor

In sum, premodification of the n-word can be viewed as an instance of displacement to a higher degree projection and is subject to standard locality constraints. This operation is allowed in Caribbean Spanish and blocked in other dialects.

## 5 The semantics of [*más* + n-word]

In this section we claim that premodification of the n-word is not just an additional optional syntactic operation allowed in Caribbean dialects. Such an operation has semantic repercussions, so we must conclude that it is conditioned by interface requirements. There is a subtle difference in meaning between the premodified and the postmodified structures, a fact that has not been noticed in the literature so far. This difference in meaning becomes evident when the modified negative quantifier applies to a property of events. Consider the following examples:

- (32)    a.      Pepe    no      comió                      [*nada    más*].  
              Pepe    no      eat.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST    nothing more  
              ‘Pepe did not eat anything else.’
- b.      Pepe    no      comió                      [*más    nada*].  
              Pepe    no      eat. 3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST    more    nothing  
              ‘Pepe did not eat anything else.’
- c.      No      leyó                      [*más    nada*].  
              no      read. 3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST    more    nothing  
              ‘He did not read anything else.’

Sentence (32a) is interpreted as stating that Pedro stopped eating, i.e. he did not continue or resume eating again. On the other hand, (32b) states something additional, namely, that the Agent (Pepe) was satiated and was not able to continue eating. Similarly, (32c) states that the agent was unable to continue reading, maybe because he got tired, etc. Additionally, pre- and post-modification of *más* trigger different presuppositions:

- (33)    a.      No      leeré                      [*nunca    más*]    libros    de      Vargas Llosa.  
              not    read.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT    never    more    books    of      Vargas Llosa  
              ‘I will not read books by Vargas Llosa ever.’
- b.      No      leeré                      [*más    nunca*]    libros    de      Vargas Llosa.  
              not    read.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT    more    never    books    of      Vargas Llosa  
              ‘I will not read books by Vargas Llosa anymore.’

Sentence (33b) does not presuppose necessarily that I have read books by Vargas Llosa before. For example, it would be true in a situation in which I do not like the type of novel written by Vargas Llosa and I do not read them as a matter of principle. Under this interpretation, (33b) may be paraphrased as follows:

- (34) No leeré jamás libros de Vargas Llosa.  
 not read.1<sup>ST</sup>.FUT never books of Vargas Llosa  
 ‘I will never read books by Vargas Llosa.’

On the other hand, (33a) presupposes that I have read books by Vargas Llosas before and it asserts that I will stop reading them. Interestingly, those dialects banning premodification also ascribe the same event realization presupposition to *nunca más*. Sentence (33a) is unambiguous in those dialects. It can only be interpreted with the presupposition that the event has been realized prior to its utterance, i.e. I have read books by Vargas Llosa before. The interpretation in which there is no presupposition about a previous reading event requires the use of the unmodified *nunca* or *jamás*, as in (34), but not *nunca más*. Interestingly, *nunca más* cannot be used in a prospective conditional clause in Puerto Rican Spanish. The speaker states his intentions about future courses of action, which is incompatible with the prior event actualization presupposition.

- (35) a. Más nunca haría eso. (=Jamás haría eso.)  
 more never do.1<sup>ST</sup>.COND that  
 ‘I would never do that.’  
 b. \*Nunca más haría eso.  
 never more do.1<sup>ST</sup>.COND that

Additionally, the contrast in (33) is not possible in Puerto Rican Spanish when the individual involved is not the thematic Agent of the relevant eventuality —i.e., the presupposition of (33a) is not triggered when the individual responsible for the ending of the event is not the Agent (Agent-Orientation Restriction). Consider the following sentences,

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- (36) a. No puedo salir contigo [nada más].  
 not can.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES go-out with-you nothing more  
 ‘I do not want to go out with you anymore.’  
 b. \*No puedo salir contigo [más nada].  
 not can.1<sup>ST</sup>.PRES go-out with-you more nothing

Finally, non-agentive derived subjects (37) or topicalized objects (38) disfavor premodification too.

- (37) a. [Nadie más] llegó a la fiesta.  
 nobody more arrive.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST to the party  
 ‘Nobody else arrived at the party.’  
 b. ?[Más nadie] llegó a la fiesta.  
 more nobody arrive.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST to the party
- (38) a. [A nadie más] vi en la fiesta.  
 to nobody more see. 1<sup>ST</sup>.PAST in the party  
 ‘I did not see anybody else at the party.’  
 b. ?[A más nadie] vi en la fiesta.

to more nobody see. 1<sup>ST</sup>.PAST in the party

Assuming that the eventive structure of a sentence projects in syntax (Kratzer, 1997; McDonald, 2008) and is conditioned by its *qualia* structure (Pustejovsky, 1995), the Agent-orientation restriction follows from the interaction of the scopal properties of the degree delimiter and event decomposition (Doetjes, 2007) – i.e., the constituent with the Agent role/feature is in the specifier of *vP* and it is the closest element which is able to enter in an agreement relation (via the Agree operation) with DegP, as predicted by the Minimal Link Condition (Chomsky, 1995). Semantically, notice that when an Agent is involved, a scopal ambiguity arises between the order AG(CAUS(DEG)) and DEG(AG(CAUS)) of the degree and causative operators and the Agent denotation: The Agent may be the cause of the delimitation of the event to a certain degree or extent, or the delimitation may be independent of the Agent involvement (wide scope of the DEG operator). On the other hand, such an ambiguity does not emerge with an element bearing the Theme role, since a Theme does not normally have causative involvement in an event (Dowty, 1979).

Only the degree modifier *más* can occur as a pre- or post-modifying element in Puerto Rican Spanish. The modifier with opposite scalar value *menos* is not allowed as a premodifier. Additionally, the interpretation of *nada menos* is not the reverse equivalent of *nada más*. It simply behaves like an intensifier:

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- (39) a. Ha leído cincuenta libros nada menos.  
has read fifty books nothing less  
'He has read fifty books (indeed).'
- b. \*Vino nada menos.  
see.3<sup>RD</sup>.PAST nothing less  
'He came'

The impossibility of *\*menos nada* is due to the fact that *menos* reverses the associated degree scale and blocks the triggering of the associated presuppositions, delimiting the event and agent involvement. In other words, *nada menos* would require a subtraction operation to be performed on an empty set, which is not possible semantically.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper it has been argued that placement (preposition) of the degree delimiter is allowed by a Deg raising operation characteristic of Puerto Rican Spanish (and possibly Caribbean Spanish in general). This operation is restricted by general syntactic locality constraints. The generalized Deg raising operation has also been attested in superlatives, and possibly in other structures in Caribbean Spanish. This property seems to suggest potential fruitful avenues for further research: for example, to determine whether it would be possible to establish microparametric variation

within the Caribbean area with respect to this property. We have also argued that the associated differential interpretations of *más nada/nada más* can be derived from general eventive requirements and the presuppositions they may trigger.

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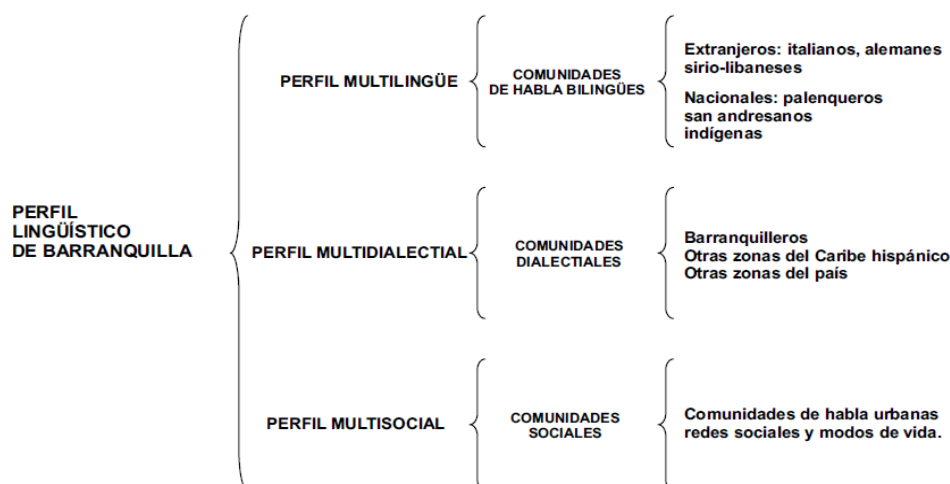
# **PATRONES SOCIOLINGÜÍSTICOS EN EL CARIBE COLOMBIANO: LAS FRICATIVAS SORDAS EN EL ESPAÑOL DE BARRANQUILLA**

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## **1 Introducción**

Este artículo realiza una revisión de los procesos sociolingüísticos que tienen lugar en las variables fricativas sordas en Barranquilla. En este sentido, se determinan las tendencias de variación -comunes y particulares- que resultaron de la relación entre variables lingüísticas (con sus respectivas variantes) y variables sociales.

Barranquilla tiene como característica ser una ciudad que posee una complejidad sociolingüística que la convierte en una comunidad de habla con procesos lingüísticos y sociales de una connotación especial. Desde su fundación, se ha caracterizado por la alta afluencia de inmigrantes, ya sean estos de la costa norte o el interior del país, o individuos extranjeros que se asentaron en la ciudad después de las migraciones causadas por la segunda guerra mundial. A lo anterior se suma el carácter industrial y comercial de la urbe. Barranquilla se erige como uno de los principales puertos fluviales del país, y como la capital más desarrollada del norte de Colombia, epicentro de negocios y de la actividad económica más importante de la zona Caribe (Arteta & Atencio, 1990). Teniendo en cuenta estos aspectos, la comunidad de habla mantiene una vasta composición sociocultural que se basa en la diversidad de sus microcomunidades, en la complejidad de sus prácticas sociales, en una fina clasificación socioeconómica y en el carácter multilingüístico y multidialectal que converge en la urbe, formando así un macrocosmos lingüístico que la define como una diatopía con procesos sociolingüísticos de gran interés investigativo (Rodríguez Cadena, 1997). Dadas estas particularidades, se propone un perfil lingüístico organizado según su carácter multilingüístico, multidialectal y multisocial:



**Esquema 1** Perfil lingüístico de Barranquilla (Rodríguez Cadena 2009)

El esquema anterior define a la comunidad de habla como epicentro de procesos variables que emanan de la interacción de distintas microcomunidades. De esta forma, se propicia una variación en todos los niveles de la lengua, y fenómenos diversos que surgen de la relación de elementos sociales y elementos lingüísticos. El contacto entre variedades del español presupone la extensión de procesos de acomodación y abandono de formas lingüísticas. Igualmente, el contacto entre lenguas admite comportamientos diglósicos, el cambio de código, la interferencia lingüística y patrones interesantes en la adquisición, por lo menos de L2. Otro ámbito interesante es el que se refiere a la evaluación subjetiva de los hablantes, sobre variedades locales y foráneas, y las actitudes y creencias de los mismos sobre la(s) lengua(s).

La variación fonética de las fricativas sordas se entrevé a partir de las once variantes que se registran en el habla (Rodríguez Cadena, 2004; Rueda & Navas, 2009). La amplia diferenciación de aspiradas: faríngea sorda, faríngea sonora, laríngea sorda y laríngea sonora, son procesos articulatorios que tienen su consecuencia en el orden segmental, sin ser éstos significativos en el plano sociolingüístico (Rodríguez Cadena, 2005 b). El abanico de realizaciones en el espectro social se distribuye de la siguiente manera:

- (1)
  - a) predorso dentoalveolar sorda (-s): [s] plena, [h] aspirada, [α] asimilada, y [Ø] elisión.
  - b) labiodental sorda (f-): [f] plena, [φ] bilabial, [h] dorsalizada (faríngea), y [Ø] elisión.
  - c) velar sorda (x-): [h] faríngea, [ɟ] palatalizada, y [Ø] elisión.

La formalización de las realizaciones de las fricativas sordas en Barranquilla muestra: 1) procesos de asociación de propiedades ancladas bajo el nodo supralaríngeo (SL) y laríngeo (L), como en el caso de [ɟ]; 2) disociaciones y reasociaciones nodales; 3) el

cambio de valencia en rasgos terminales; y 4) la acción del Principio del Contorno Obligatorio (PCO).

## 1.1 Metodología

El estudio de las fricativas sordas se realizó con una muestra de 36 entrevistas semidirigidas del corpus PRESEEA- Barranquilla- Co (Proyecto para el Estudio Sociolingüístico del Español de España y América- PRESEEA), la cual se preestratificó teniendo en cuenta tres variables sociales, como lo establece la Red internacional que impulsa este proyecto: género (1. Hombre; y 2. Mujer), edad (1. 20 – 34 años; 2. 35 – 54 años; y 3. +55 años) y nivel de instrucción (1. Primaria; 2. Secundaria y técnico; y 3. Universitario).

La muestra se encuentra estratificada en cuotas con una fijación uniforme (Moreno Fernández, 1990) y consta de hablantes originarios de Barranquilla o nacidos en otros lugares del Caribe colombiano que arribaron a la ciudad antes de los 6 años de edad. Asimismo, inmigrantes con una estancia igual o mayor a los 20 años en la ciudad.

**Tabla 1** Muestreo en cuotas con fijación uniforme

| Variables             | N. Instr. 1 |   | N. Instr. 2 |   | N. Instr. 3 |   |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|-------------|---|-------------|---|
|                       | ♂           | ♀ | ♂           | ♀ | ♂           | ♀ |
| <b>Generación I</b>   | 2           | 2 | 2           | 2 | 2           | 2 |
| <b>Generación II</b>  | 2           | 2 | 2           | 2 | 2           | 2 |
| <b>Generación III</b> | 2           | 2 | 2           | 2 | 2           | 2 |
| <b>Total</b>          | 6           | 6 | 6           | 6 | 6           | 6 |

De la misma forma, se tienen en cuenta variables de tipo postestratificadorio, las cuales se organizaron a partir de los datos etnográficos que coincidían entre los informantes de la muestra. Los factores profesión, ingresos económicos, condiciones de alojamiento (tomados del proyecto general de la Red PRESEEA), barrio de residencia y nivel de educación constituyen el constructo global clase social (Silva-Corvalán, 2001) formando una sola variable. Mientras que etnia, origen del informante, edad de llegada y tiempo de residencia se establecen como variables postestratificadorias independientes.

Las conversaciones semidirigidas tienen una duración mínima de 35 minutos, y se realizaron en contextos naturales, siguiendo un módulo temático. Las mismas fueron transliteradas según el modelo establecido por la Red PRESEEA. Se examinaron 7128 casos de las variantes de las fricativas sordas obtenidas después de los primeros diez minutos de cada entrevista: 3600 casos de (-s), 1800 casos de (x-) y 1728 casos de (f-). Éstos se procesaron en Goldvarb x para conseguir las frecuencias y Goldvarb 2001 (Robinson, 2001) para obtener las probabilidades. Se realizaron tabulaciones cruzadas



(cross tabulation) entre factores sociales para examinar covariaciones. Asimismo, se optó por la opción up & down para lograr los resultados probabilísticos.

## 2 Patrones sociolingüísticos en las fricativas sordas en Barranquilla

La variación que se suscita a partir de las variables (-s), (f-) y (x-) establece procesos sociolingüísticos que son resultado de la relación de las variantes de cada una de las variables lingüísticas, con los factores sociales preestratificatorios y postestratificatorios. Las pautas que se evidencian en las fricativas sordas van desde la favorabilidad de los hablantes por algunas realizaciones que tienen una connotación positiva en la ciudad, hasta procesos de adquisición dialectal producto de la covariación entre las distintas variables sociales.

### 2.1 Prestigio y estigmatización

En la comunidad de habla de Barranquilla, la diferenciación entre géneros y niveles de instrucción se establece por los valores cuantitativos que favorecen a variantes prestigiosas o estigmatizadas<sup>1</sup>. En este sentido, las mujeres propenden por las realizaciones prestigiosas de las variables fricativas en contraposición a los hombres, confirmando el patrón sociolingüístico de occidente, el cual le atribuye al género femenino el uso en alto índice, de formas lingüísticas conservadoras y correctas (Silva-Corvalán, 2001). Los datos frecuenciales y probabilísticos lo confirman:

**Tabla 2** Datos generales de variantes fricativas de acuerdo con el factor al género

| Variable | Factores / Variantes | Hombres |       | Mujeres |       |
|----------|----------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| /-s/     | [s]                  | 11.1%   | 0,420 | 16.3%   | 0,580 |
|          | [ <sup>h</sup> ]     | 48.9%   | --    | 49.6%   | --    |
|          | [Ø]                  | 39.4%   | 0,552 | 33.4%   | 0,448 |
| /f-/     | [f]                  | 66.5%   | 0,423 | 64.5%   | 0,563 |
|          | [φ]                  | 20.6%   | --    | 22.5%   | --    |
|          | [h]                  | 8.7%    | 0,661 | 9%      | 0,367 |
|          | [Ø]                  | 4.2%    | --    | 3.1%    | --    |
| /x-/     | [h]                  | 95%     | --    | 94%     | --    |
|          | [ɸ]                  | 0.8%    | --    | 2%      | --    |
|          | [Ø]                  | 4.2%    | --    | 4%      | --    |

La variable (-s) es determinante puesto que en los resultados frecuenciales las mujeres obtienen mayor proporción del alófono de prestigio [<sup>h</sup>] y de la realización estándar [s], a diferencia de los hombres. Los índices probabilísticos confirman esta pauta. En el género femenino la regla de la sibilante, variante estándar en la ciudad, es significativa

<sup>1</sup> Es necesario recordar que las variantes de prestigio en Barranquilla son las variantes: labiodental [f], aspirada [<sup>h</sup>] y plena faríngea [h], provenientes de /f-/ , /-s/ y /x-/ respectivamente. De la misma forma, es prestigiosa la realización sibilante de la dentoalveolar, que se establece como la más fiel a /-s/ y por lo tanto más estándar. Asimismo, se consideran estigmatizadas, las elisiones de /f-/ , /-s/ y /x-/ , así como la variante dorsal de la labiodental /f-/.

(0,580), mientras que en los hombres lo es la regla de elisión (0,552), realización estigmatizada en la comunidad de habla.

Las frecuencias de la (f-) y la (x-) les dan una ligera ventaja a los hombres sobre las mujeres. No obstante, estos datos no revelan distancias estadísticas importantes, que conlleven a establecer clasificaciones concretas entre cada género. En el caso de la labiodental, el análisis inferencial muestra un panorama mucho más claro: es evidente la favorabilidad que tiene la regla de realización plena de /f-/ en las mujeres (0,563), y la regla de la dorsal en los hombres (0,661). El sexo no fue seleccionado en el análisis inferencial de la variable (x-).

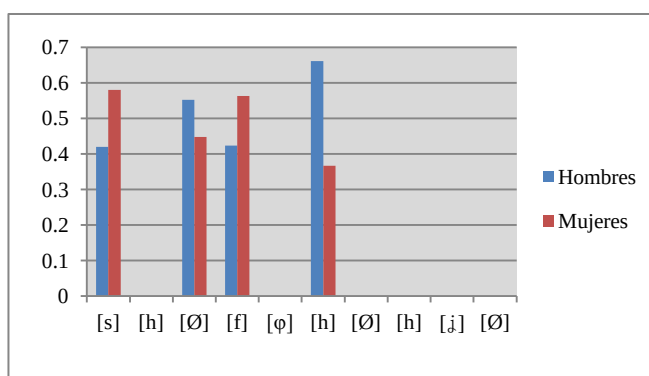


**Gráfico 1** Valores inferenciales de variantes fricativas de acuerdo al género

El gráfico 1 muestra la favorabilidad probabilística que manifiestan las mujeres por las variantes prestigiosas, que se evidencia en el ascenso que obtienen los coeficientes en [f], [h] y [s]. Mientras que en los hombres se observa la inclinación hacia las realizaciones estigmatizadas, las cuales revelan incrementos significativos.

En lo que concierne al nivel de instrucción, en las variables fricativas sordas (-s), (f-) y (x-) se evidencia un mismo patrón que favorece las variantes de prestigio a medida que aumenta el nivel de instrucción, y viceversa. Entonces, desde esa perspectiva, el uso de realizaciones prestigiosas o estigmatizadas está supeditado al factor educativo, puesto que los hablantes que poseen un nivel de instrucción más elevado, son más cuidadosos al momento de articular los segmentos, y están más conscientes de los mecanismos sociales que les conceden ventajas y ascenso en la comunidad de habla. Dicha corrección y estado de conciencia, es menor conforme disminuye el grado de escolaridad del hablante (Silva-Corvalán, 2001). Los datos de las frecuencias y los probabilísticos ratifican lo expuesto anteriormente:

**Tabla 3** Datos generales de variantes fricativas de acuerdo con el factor nivel de instrucción

| Factores / Variantes |                  | N. Instrucción 1 |       | N. Instrucción 2 |       | N. Instrucción 3 |       |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| /-s/                 | [s]              | 6.2%             | 0,289 | 13.2%            | 0,448 | 21.8%            | 0,749 |
|                      | [ <sup>h</sup> ] | 35.5%            | 0,254 | 56%              | 0,559 | 56.2%            | 0,696 |
|                      | [Ø]              | 57.2%            | 0,808 | 30.7%            | 0,494 | 21.4%            | 0,199 |
| /f-/                 | [f]              | 52.8%            | 0,286 | 66.8%            | 0,520 | 75.7%            | 0,648 |
|                      | [φ]              | 33%              | 0,669 | 17.5%            | 0,402 | 17.8%            | 0,467 |
|                      | [h]              | 8.1%             | 0,626 | 12.6%            | 0,712 | 6.2%             | 0,215 |
|                      | [Ø]              | 6.1%             | --    | 3.1%             | --    | 0.3%             | --    |
|                      | [h]              | 89.8%            | --    | 96.7%            | --    | 97%              | --    |
| /x-/                 | [x]              | 2.2%             | --    | 0.3%             | --    | 1.7%             | --    |
|                      | [Ø]              | 8%               | --    | 3%               | --    | 1.3%             | --    |

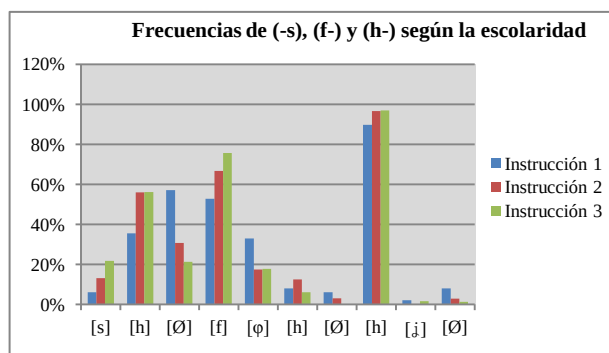


**Gráfico 2** Datos generales de variantes fricativas de acuerdo con el factor nivel de instrucción

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Los hablantes de educación superior según los resultados frecuenciales, optan por las realizaciones aspirada [<sup>h</sup>] y plena [s] provenientes de /-s/. Asimismo por los alófonos plenos [f] y [h], correspondientes a las variables /f-/ y /x-/. Los individuos con un nivel de instrucción primaria, se inclinan por las realizaciones elididas de /-s/ (57.2%), /f-/ (6.1%) y /x-/ (8%), manifestando los índices porcentuales más altos en comparación con los demás grupos educativos.

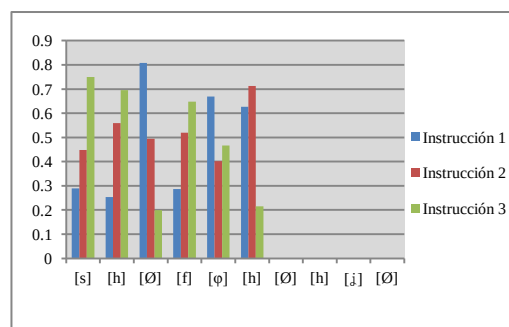


**Gráfico 3** Valores inferenciales de variantes fricativas de acuerdo al nivel de instrucción

Los datos inferenciales confirman la tendencia de incremento de variantes de prestigio a medida que aumenta el grado de escolaridad en las variables (-s) y (f-). Las variantes [<sup>h</sup>], [s] y [f], consideradas como prestigiosas o estándares (en el caso de [f] y [s]),

evidencian coeficientes ascendentes en el grado de escolaridad 3, disminuyen en el grupo educativo 2, y se desploman en el nivel 1.

### 2.2 Hipercorrección y autocorrección

La hipercorrección también es una pauta común y generalizada en las fricativas sordas, que se observa en distintos grupos sociales. En lo que concierne al factor etnia, se evidencia una tendencia en los hablantes provenientes o descendientes de San Basilio de Palenque, a optar por las variantes prestigiosas por encima de los nativos. Esta pauta se manifiesta a partir de la correlación entre los factores etnia y edad, en la cual los informantes palenqueros de 20 a 34 años superan en el uso de [ʰ], [s] y [f] a los barranquilleros. Lo anterior se debe a la acomodación que se está dando en los jóvenes de esta etnia, los cuales tienden a adecuar su conducta lingüística a la de los hablantes originarios de la comunidad de habla con los que entran en contacto (Silva-Corvalán, 2001). Las frecuencias revelan dicha corrección:

**Tabla 4** Hipercorrección en hablantes jóvenes palenqueros: variables (-s) y (f-)

| Etnia           | Vbles./Variantes | Gen 1 | Gen 2 | Gen 3 |
|-----------------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Barranquilleros | /-s/             | [s]   | 11%   | 15%   |
|                 |                  | [ʰ]   | 50%   | 53%   |
|                 |                  | [Ø]   | 39%   | 32%   |
|                 |                  | [ɑ]   | 0%    | 0%    |
|                 | /f-/             | [f]   | 68%   | 65%   |
|                 |                  | [φ]   | 21%   | 22%   |
|                 |                  | [h]   | 7%    | 12%   |
|                 |                  | [Ø]   | 5%    | 2%    |
| Palenqueros     | /-s/             | [s]   | 14%   | 4%    |
|                 |                  | [ʰ]   | 61%   | 26%   |
|                 |                  | [Ø]   | 21%   | 66%   |
|                 |                  | [ɑ]   | 4%    | 3%    |
|                 | /f-/             | [f]   | 70%   | 47%   |
|                 |                  | [φ]   | 25%   | 38%   |
|                 |                  | [h]   | 2%    | 9%    |
|                 |                  | [Ø]   | 3%    | 6%    |

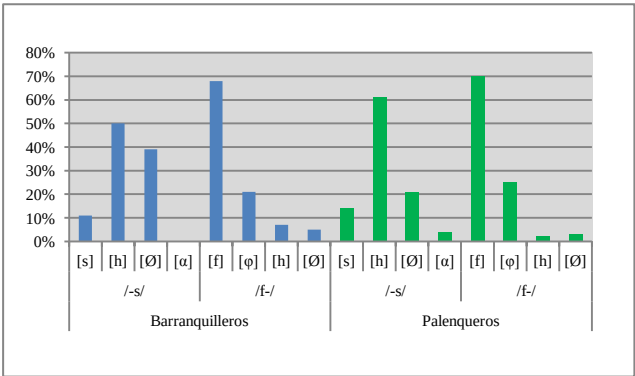


**Gráfico 4** Hipercorrección en hablantes jóvenes palenqueros: variables (-s) y (f-)

Los hablantes palenqueros jóvenes manifiestan índices porcentuales ascendentes para la aspiración [h] contrapuesto a las bajas frecuencias de los barranquilleros. De la misma manera, superan a los nativos en la producción de la plena [s] y la labiodental [f], y disminuyen el empleo de la elisión en ambas variables. Mientras que los originarios de Barranquilla se sitúan muy por debajo de los jóvenes de esta etnia en realización plena sibilante [s], y evidencian mayores ocurrencias de la supresión de /f-/. Es interesante la considerable disminución de la variante dorsal- faríngea de /f-/, un rasgo propio de la comunidad palenquera, y de la zona dialectal en la que se encuentra ubicada San Basilio de Palenque, con alto influjo de individuos de zonas rurales y niveles educativos primarios (Flores, 1983). En consecuencia, los jóvenes de la etnia afrodescendiente poseen bajos porcentajes de [h] contrario a los nativos que obtienen una frecuencia importante de esta variante estigmatizada.

El uso de las variantes prestigiosas y más cercanas a la variedad estándar, por parte de los palenqueros, es una prueba irrefutable del abandono gradual o generacional de las realizaciones que caracterizan su dialecto, producto de la identificación de estos hablantes con la comunidad de habla. Labov (1983) en su estudio realizado en Martha's Vineyard, encuentra que el grupo más joven de los descendientes portugueses, manifiestan un uso regular de la centralización, siendo ésta más elevada que la del grupo inglés. Según el autor, esto se debe a que se sienten parte de la isla y comparten sus modos de vida. Otro aspecto que puede estar involucrado se relaciona con el hecho de que estos hablantes tienen el interés de adquirir el mismo estatus de los nativos, alejándose de las formas lingüísticas estigmatizadas de sus padres (Labov, 1983).

El factor edad también presenta un patrón de autocorrección interesante, que se evidencia en las tres variables fricativas sordas. Los hablantes jóvenes o hablantes de edades intermedias (de 25 a 50 años) manifiestan una corrección mucho más marcada que la de individuos de edades avanzadas. Según Silva-Corvalán (2001) lo anterior es consecuencia de la percepción que tienen sobre las ventajas sociales que pueden alcanzar mediante el uso de variantes lingüísticas prestigiosas en la variedad. Dicha pauta es propia de sujetos inmersos en el ámbito profesional, económico y con posibilidad de ascenso en la escala social, y coincide con la que se observa en el factor etnia, en el cual las generaciones jóvenes son las abanderadas de la corrección. A continuación se muestran los resultados frecuenciales y probabilísticos que confirman lo explicitado arriba:

**Tabla 5** Datos generales de variantes fricativas de acuerdo con el factor edad

| Factores |     | Generación 1 |       | Generación 2 |       | Generación 3 |       |
|----------|-----|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| /-s/     | [s] | 11.3%        | 0,433 | 12.3%        | 0,421 | 17.5%        | 0,642 |
|          | [ʰ] | 52.2%        | 0,521 | 49.9%        | 0,505 | 45.7%        | 0,475 |
|          | [Ø] | 35.8%        | 0,530 | 37.2%        | 0,543 | 36.2%        | 0,427 |
| /f/      | [f] | 68%          | 0,591 | 62.4%        | 0,428 | 66.2%        | 0,490 |
|          | [φ] | 21.5%        | --    | 23.5%        | --    | 22.4%        | --    |
| -/       | [h] | 5.8%         | 0,339 | 11.8%        | 0,605 | 9.2%         | 0,546 |
|          | [Ø] | 4.8%         | --    | 2.3%         | --    | 2.2%         | --    |
|          | [h] | 94%          | 0,364 | 96%          | 0,669 | 93.5%        | 0,491 |
| /x/      | [x] | 1.3%         | --    | 0.2%         | --    | 2.7%         | --    |
|          | [Ø] | 4.7%         | 0,636 | 3.8%         | 0,331 | 3.8%         | 0,509 |

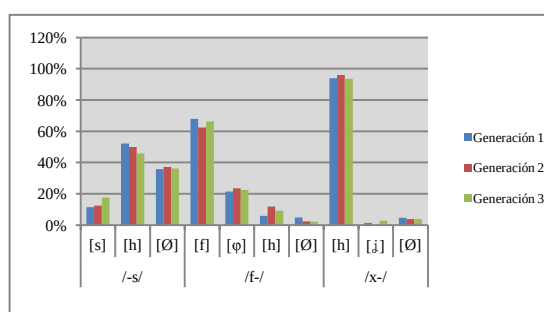


**Gráfico 5** Frecuencias de las variantes fricativas de acuerdo con el factor edad

Las frecuencias de (-s), (f-) y (x-) revelan la productividad de las variantes prestigiosas en los hablantes de edades intermedias. Es notorio el ascenso porcentual que obtiene la aspiración de /-s/ y la realización labiodental en los hablantes de la generación 1. El grupo etario 2 también evidencia significancia cuantitativa en el uso de la aspiración, superando el umbral del 0.5. Asimismo, se observa el alto índice de ocurrencia de la variante plena de /x-/ en el grupo etario 2. Seguidamente se presentan los coeficientes inferenciales para cada alófono de las variables fricativas sordas, los cuales ratifican los valores frecuenciales expuestos anteriormente:

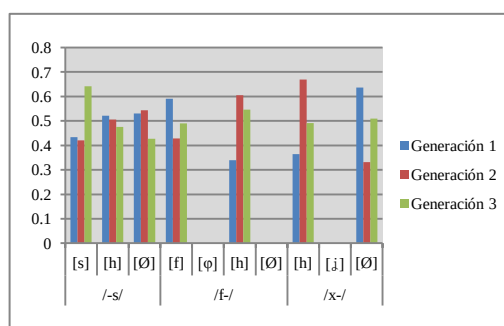


**Gráfico 6** Valores inferenciales de las variantes fricativas de acuerdo con el factor edad

Las reglas de prestigio de las variables (-s) y (f-) son significativas en el grupo etario 1, el cual corresponde a la generación más joven. Lo anterior se evidencia a través del

ascenso en la aspiración de la dentoalveolar y en la labiodental [f]. No obstante, los datos también revelan que estos hablantes también poseen coeficientes altos de elisión, lo que conlleva a plantear la existencia de una pugna entre estas dos variantes por establecerse como su realización característica. Esta pauta, según la opinión de los autores de este trabajo, puede concluir en una autocorrección<sup>2</sup> o en un proceso en el cual los individuos de la comunidad de habla se inclinan por la supresión de /-s/, que en un continuo de progresión de la variante estigmatizada según la edad, esta generación se convertiría en el punto intermedio. De la misma forma, la regla de la faríngea [h] de /x-/ es significativa en la generación 2, lo cual se observa con la contundente elevación de la barra correspondiente a esta variante.

En Barranquilla se observa una tendencia de las generaciones jóvenes hacia la autocorrección. La correlación entre las variables edad y nivel de instrucción es en gran medida la responsable de este proceso. El nivel de instrucción está directamente implicado en la corrección de los grupos jóvenes, mostrando para (f-) y (x-) porcentajes altos. En este sentido, la variante [f] es altamente productiva en los hablantes de educación primaria y universitaria. Asimismo, en el alófono [h] los individuos de educación secundaria y universitaria presentan índices favorables.

La clase social, en lo que concierne a las variables (-s) y (x-), también se evidencia un patrón de hipercorrección interesante. Según Labov (1983) este proceso tiene lugar cuando los hablantes de clase media baja se destacan por emplear con mayor proporción, las realizaciones que se consideran como correctas o adecuadas, a diferencia de los hablantes de la clase media alta. En la comunidad de habla de Barranquilla los individuos de estratificación baja y media baja, presentan un alto índice de realización de la variante de prestigio, desplazando al grupo de clase alta. Este fenómeno se puede observar en los datos probabilísticos y porcentuales correspondientes a (-s) y (x-):

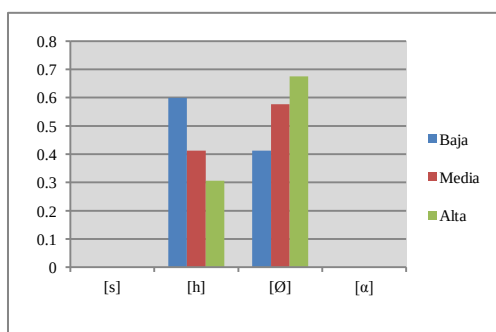


**Gráfico 7** Hipercorrección de /-s/ de acuerdo al factor clase social

<sup>2</sup> Silva Corvalán (2001) plantea la autocorrección como proceso en el cual los individuos de edades intermedias inmersos en el mundo de la competencia profesional realizan con mayor frecuencia las variantes prestigiosas o estándares que según su percepción les puede proporcionar ventajas sociales.

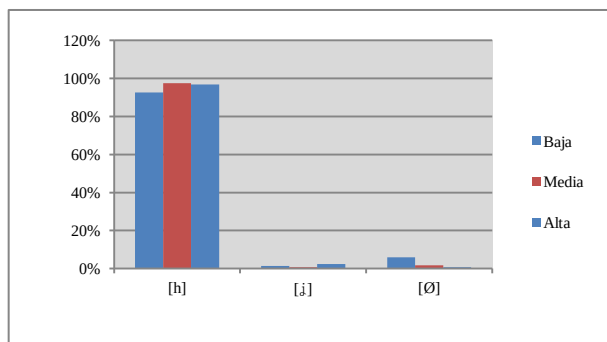


**Gráfico 8** Hipercorrección de /x-/ de acuerdo al factor clase social

El proceso de hipercorrección de (-s) se hace más notorio en el gráfico 7. En la clase social baja la regla de aspiración manifiesta índices altamente significativos, superando a la clase media y alta. La regla de elisión, variante estigmatizada en la comunidad, revela coeficientes altos en el grupo de mayor estatus, y poca importancia cuantitativa en la clase baja. Lo anterior muestra una pauta completamente contraria de lo que se espera en una estratificación por clases, donde los hablantes de mayor estatus se caracterizan por el uso de las realizaciones prestigiosas o adecuadas, y los de menor estratificación por emplear las estigmatizadas. Asimismo se evidencia en el gráfico 8 la hipercorrección de los hablantes barranquilleros respecto a /x-/ , donde la clase social media es la abanderada del proceso, obteniendo un mayor índice de frecuencias de la variante prestigiosa que el grupo social alto. Esto puede estar relacionado con la alta producción de la faríngea en la generación 2. El no ser identificado con ciertos grupos sociales estereotipados en la comunidad y mantener un registro de habla más cercano a lo estándar influyen en el abandono de formas más cercanas en el continuo de variantes a la disociación de rasgos desde la raíz.

### 2.3 Desdialectalización

La desdialectalización de los inmigrantes en Barranquilla se produce por la covariación existente entre factores sociales como: la edad de llegada, el tiempo de residencia, el nivel de instrucción, y en un menor grado, la clase social. En las tres variables fricativas se observa un patrón general que correlaciona el proceso de abandono de variantes del dialecto de origen con el nivel de instrucción del hablante foráneo. Los resultados frecuenciales evidencian que entre más alto sea el grado de escolaridad, más probabilidades existen de adoptar el dialecto local. Seguidamente se observa lo explicitado en líneas anteriores:



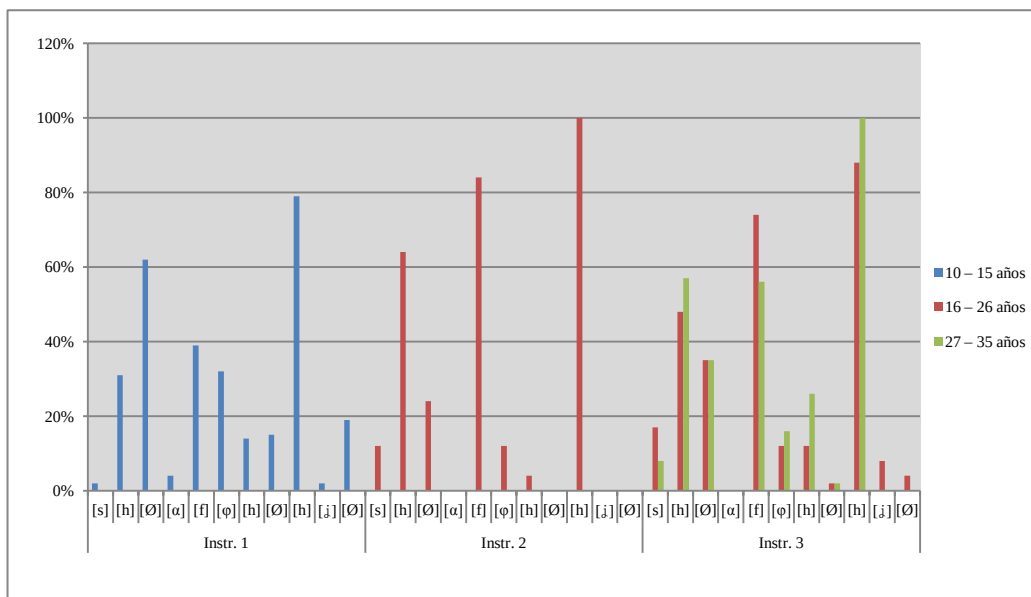


**Gráfico 9** Covariación entre edad de llegada y nivel de instrucción

El gráfico 9 muestra claramente la pauta de covariación existente entre la edad de llegada y el nivel de instrucción. En los dos grupos con edades de llegada tardía (los de 16 – 26 años y 27 – 35 años), de instrucción 2 y 3, obtienen altos índices de frecuencia de las variantes prestigiosas o estándares. Esto se debe a partir del incremento en las realizaciones [s], [h], [f] y [h]. Mientras que los inmigrantes que arribaron a la comunidad de habla a edades tempranas, de nivel educativo 1, manifiestan alta productividad de las variantes estigmatizadas [Ø] y [α] de /-s/, [h] y [Ø] de /f-/, y [Ø] de /x-/.

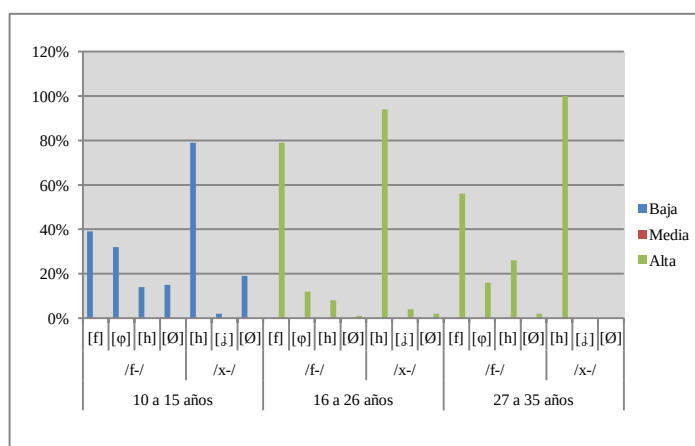


**Gráfico 10** Covariación entre edad de llegada y clase social

Así como el nivel de instrucción, la clase social es otro factor implicado en la covariación con la edad de llegada. Los resultados son concretos. En (f-) y (x-), los inmigrantes de clases sociales altas con edades de llegada tardías, obtienen mayores índices porcentuales de las variantes prestigiosas, es decir, la labiodental y la faríngea

de /x-/. Mientras que los hablantes que arribaron a la ciudad con edades tempranas, de clases bajas, manifiestan frecuencias bajas. En este sentido, el estatus social es un indicador del desplazamiento del dialecto originario del inmigrante y de la acomodación del mismo a las normas lingüísticas de la comunidad de habla. Dicho desplazamiento se dirige hacia la adquisición de las variantes por clase concernientes al diasisistema local. Es decir, que los hablantes inmigrantes de clase alta asimilan las realizaciones de este grupo en Barranquilla y inmigrantes que pertenecen a la clase baja, adoptan la estratificación sociolingüística de las variantes que poseen los hablantes del grupo social bajo.

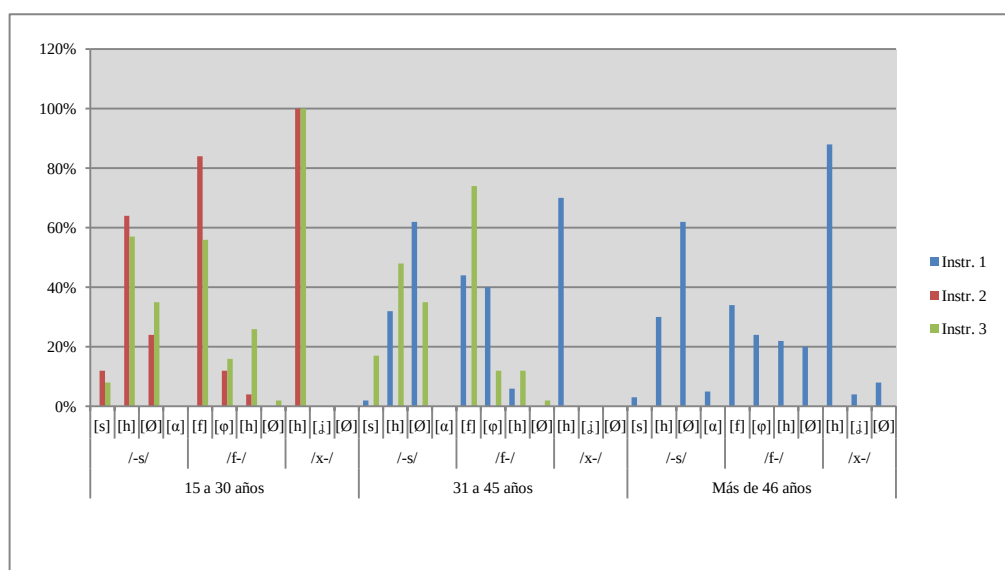


**Gráfico 11** Covariación entre tiempo de residencia y nivel de instrucción

La pauta de covariación que se evidencia en las variantes de las fricativas sordas (-s) y (f-), revela que los inmigrantes con poco tiempo de residencia en la ciudad, de instrucción 2 y 3, han desplazado su dialecto de origen y han adquirido la norma de la comunidad de Barranquilla. Los hablantes residentes en la ciudad con un período de 15 – 30 años y 31 – 45 años, obtienen altos índices de realizaciones prestigiosas o estándares lo cual se observa en el incremento de [s], [ʰ] y [f]. En contraste, los migrantes de zonas del Caribe de niveles de escolaridad primarios presentan mínimos porcentajes de las variantes normativas y mayor proporción de los alófonos estigmatizados. La faríngea [h] no muestra procesos de variación puesto que es categórica en los niveles de instrucción 2 y 3.

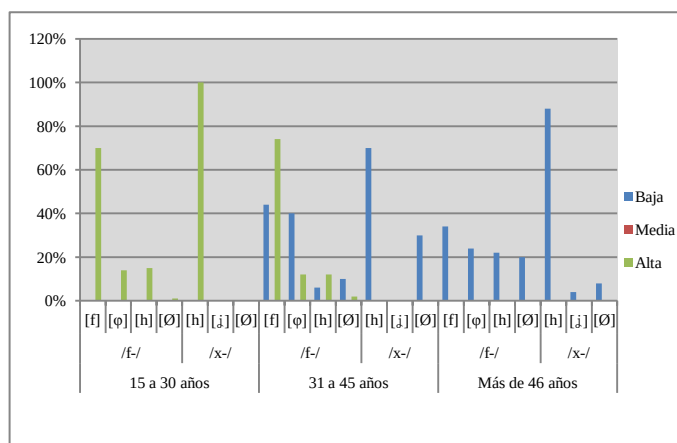


**Gráfico 12** Covariación entre tiempo de residencia y clase social

Para las variantes de (f-) y (x-) la clase social muestra correlaciones interesantes con el tiempo de residencia. Los hablantes con una estadía en la ciudad de 31 – 45 años y 15 – 30 años, de clase social alta, manifiestan un mayor índice frecuencial para la variante de prestigio o estándar [f] proveniente de la fricativa labiodental sorda /f-/. Los inmigrantes de clases bajas, presentan ocurrencias inferiores de las realizaciones normativas y superiores de las estigmatizadas. Lo anterior evidencia que los individuos de grupos de estratificación alta son los que mejor y más rápido han adquirido las variantes de prestigio del dialecto local.

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Estas motivaciones sociales se fundamentan en tres situaciones. La primera se debe al influjo del nivel educativo, la cual obtiene explicación a partir del hecho de que los hablantes de instrucción superior, adquieren una conciencia lingüística mayor gracias a la enseñanza de reglas prescriptivas y la corrección abierta de rasgos de poco prestigio por parte del sistema educativo (Silva-Corvalán, 2001). Esta pauta se refleja a través del comportamiento sociolingüístico que se entrevé en la variable nivel de escolaridad, la cual muestra que a medida que aumenta el grado de educación, incrementa el uso de variantes prestigiosas y viceversa. En el apartado *Prestigio y estigmatización*, se plantea que los hablantes con un alto nivel de escolaridad, tienden a articular los segmentos de manera adecuada, y son más consientes de las presiones sociales que los conllevan a obtener ventajas y ascensos en la comunidad de habla, o, de lo contrario, a ser estereotipados. Este patrón se evidencia en los inmigrantes de Barranquilla puesto que la adquisición del dialecto local no está supeditada a la edad de llegada del hablante, sino al nivel de instrucción.

La segunda motivación tiene que ver con la acomodación que se está dando en los inmigrantes de la ciudad. Al parecer los hablantes foráneos de instrucciones y clases sociales altas, son más conscientes del hecho de que deben adecuar su actuación lingüística a la de los nativos de Barranquilla con los cuales mantienen una

interrelación constante, ya sean éstos de su mismo estatus social o no (Silva-Corvalán, 2001). Es decir, que se acomodan a la estratificación del habla de la comunidad; esto determinado por la covariación de factores sociales como el nivel educativo y la clase social. Por su parte, Labov (1983) explica que los individuos que presentan este comportamiento sociolingüístico, tienen por objetivo alcanzar el estatus de hablantes locales, abandonando las variantes prestigiosas de sus padres, las cuales se constituyen en las realizaciones normativas de su dialecto originario.

La tercera conlleva a proponer un patrón según el cual los inmigrantes de educación superior, y en algunos casos de clases sociales altas, son más susceptibles a la desdialectalización. Las covariaciones entre las variables edad de llegada, tiempo de residencia, nivel de instrucción y clase social presentan una coordenada importante si se revisan los índices porcentuales de las fricativas sordas. En este sentido, los inmigrantes de educación y clase alta son más susceptibles al abandono de su dialecto originario. Lo anterior no implica que otros grupos sociales no lo sean, sino que existe un continuo de desdialectalización donde las variables nivel de instrucción y clase social juegan un papel importante:

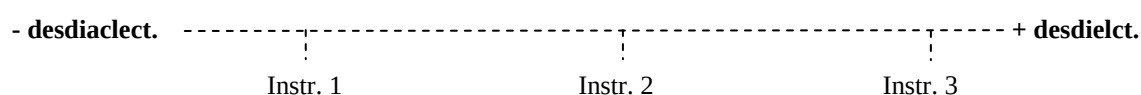


**Figura 1** Continuo de Desdialectalización

Una explicación a lo anterior se sustenta en el hecho de que existen factores sociales que operan a favor o en contra del mantenimiento de ciertas realizaciones, las cuales pueden o no estar dentro del espectro de lo estándar o lo prestigioso, con marcadas variaciones frecuenciales en su dialecto de origen. Estas en la nueva comunidad de habla a la que arriban los inmigrantes, entran en un proceso de acomodación causado por el contacto dialectal que se establece con la variedad barranquillera.

### **3 Sobre los procesos sociolingüísticos de (-s), (f-) y (x-): ¿variación o cambio lingüístico?**

La situación sociolingüística de la comunidad de habla barranquillera en general, en respuesta al interrogante presentado arriba, se demarca como variación estable. Según Labov (1983) los marcadores sociolingüísticos estables organizan la variación lingüística de forma que ésta es completamente paralela a otros índices jerarquizados de estatus sociales<sup>3</sup>. No obstante, se evidencian algunos procesos destacables de

<sup>3</sup> Silva-Corvalán (2001: 249) plantea que una variable sociolingüística estable covaría de forma regular con la clase social, propiciando la estratificación de los hablantes en grupos de clase diferenciados claramente por las frecuencias de uso. Las variables estables se ordenan de manera simultánea con la jerarquía socioeconómica. Las variantes prestigiosas se emplean con mayor proporción en la clase alta, en la variedad del género femenino

cambio lingüístico en curso en algunas microcomunidades que se esbozan en líneas siguientes.

En las fricativas sordas, por una parte, se evidencia una uniformidad en los procesos de variación, puesto que cada grupo se apropia del uso de uno u otro alófono manifestando regularidad en la distribución del material variable y las distintas variantes que confluyen en la comunidad de habla en general. Por el otro, se observan procesos de cambio lingüístico en etapas incipientes, que se reflejan en microcomunidades agrupadas en el macrocosmos lingüístico de Barranquilla.

La variación estable muestra una serie de datos regulares en los cuales las variantes de (-s), (f-) y (x-) además de presentar un comportamiento análogo, manifiestan una variación condicionada directamente a la estratificación que ofrecen los distintos factores sociales. En este sentido, se aprecia cómo las mujeres son las abanderadas de las formas prestigiosas, en contraste con los hombres, los cuales emplean en mayor proporción las estigmatizadas. El género femenino presenta altos índices de las variantes de prestigio o estándares como se evidencia en los resultados de los alófonos sibilante [s] (0,580) y aspirado (49.6%) de (-s), labiodental [f] (0,563) de (f-), y la pugna que se establece en el uso de la plena proveniente de la faríngea sorda [h] de (x-), en la cual los hombres las aventajan sólo por un punto porcentual (94%). En cuanto al género masculino, sus hablantes se destacan por emplear las realizaciones estigmatizadas como ocurre con la elisión [Ø] de las variables (-s) (0,552) y (x-) (4.2%), y la dorsalización [h] (0,661) perteneciente a (f-). Esta pauta muestra la uniformidad existente en los procesos de variación en lo que respecta al sexo, puesto que este hecho no promueve el abandono de un segmento específico de las fricativas, sino el mantenimiento de la norma según el sexo.

Este mismo patrón se extiende a la variable nivel de instrucción, la cual evidencia un incremento progresivo a medida que aumenta la escolaridad de los hablantes. Dicho factor muestra una pauta similar a la estratificación fina, en la cual se evidencia un gran número de divisiones del continuo grado de instrucción en el que se mantiene la regularidad de las realizaciones de cada variante en los distintos niveles. Los grupos educativos mantienen coeficientes estables que asignan a los individuos de escolaridad primaria el mayor uso de alófonos estigmatizados, y ocurrencias inferiores de los prestigiosos o estándares, como se evidencia a continuación:

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y en el estilo formal. Todos los hablantes las admiran y estereotipan con las que están en oposición. Lo anterior suscita el proceso de autocorrección.

|            | Nivel 1 |    | Nivel 2 |    | Nivel 3 |
|------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|
| (-s) → [ʰ] | 0,254   | >> | 0,559   | >> | 0,696   |
| (f-) → [f] | 0,286   | >> | 0,520   | >> | 0,648   |
| (x-) → [h] | 89.8%   | >> | 96.7%   | >> | 97%     |

**Figura 2** Regularidad en el factor nivel de instrucción

La clase social también es un indicador de variación estable en Barranquilla. Los procesos que tienen lugar en (f-) revelan una pauta uniforme en cada clase social, que se constituye en un patrón de estratificación fina. Según Labov (1983) este proceso consiste en varias divisiones del continuo de estratificación de clases que mantienen usos regulares de las variantes para cada clase social. En la comunidad de habla barranquillera, en lo concerniente a la fricativa labiodental /f-/, se evidencia en los resultados frecuenciales una distribución regular, en la cual los hablantes del grupo bajo obtienen ocurrencias menores de la labiodental [f] (58.4%), que se incrementan en el medio (74.6%) y tienen su índice más elevado en el alto (75.2%). En el inglés de Estados Unidos, el uso del sufijo “ing”, muestra diferencias marcadas en cada contexto, del tal modo que los niveles más altos y los más bajos de esta variable, se encuentran directamente correlacionados con las posiciones más altas o más bajas en los índices socioeconómicos (Labov, 1983).

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La hipercorrección en Barranquilla es el reflejo del proceso de cambio lingüístico en curso. Según Labov (1983) la pauta de corrección que tiene lugar en el uso de las variantes lingüísticas de los hablantes de una etnia determinada o de la clase social media, se constituye como factor de cambio. Así, los palenqueros en la comunidad de habla, manifiestan procesos de cambio y abandono de alófonos en las generaciones jóvenes. Este patrón se establece como un cambio desde arriba, en el cual los hablantes manifiestan una corrección de las formas lingüísticas emparejándolas al modelo del grupo de mayor estatus en la ciudad, es decir al modelo de prestigio de los barranquilleros (Labov, 1983). Esto se evidencia en los resultados registrados para la aspiración de la dentoalveolar, y la plena de la labiodental, las cuales muestran altas frecuencias en los palenqueros ([ʰ]: 61%; y [f]: 70%) y ocurrencias más bajas en los nativos ([ʰ]: 50%; [f]: 68%). Dicho cambio en curso se encuentra en etapas iniciales ya que las variables covarían con el factor edad. En este caso los hablantes tienen consciencia de los rasgos prestigiosos que se emplean en la comunidad de habla. Asimismo, los individuos precursores del cambio pertenecen a los grupos etarios intermedios (entre más o menos 15 y 40 años), en los cuales se suscita un proceso de acomodación al dialecto local (Silva-Corvalán, 2001).

En lo que concierne a la variable clase social, se presenta hipercorrección en la clase social baja y media porque sobrepasan las frecuencias de variantes prestigiosas cuando se comparan con la clase alta. No obstante, los datos cuantitativos reflejan regularidades frecuenciales y probabilísticas entre las demás variantes y grupos. Lo anterior conlleva a admitir que existe una tendencia fuerte a la corrección en estos grupos, que pretenden desprenderse de los estereotipos, lo cual se evidencia a partir de los altos índices de variantes de prestigio. Los resultados no muestran el relego o la supresión de una variante estigmatizada ni la inserción de otra forma lingüística triunfante, característica fundamental de los procesos de cambio lingüístico (Labov 1983, Silva-Corvalán, 2001). Estas clases en su afán por obtener ventajas en el ámbito social, optan por la realización de los alófonos adecuados o normativos de la comunidad, provocando en el caso de Barranquilla, una acomodación de la distribución de las variantes. En lo que concierne a (-s), no se relega de manera categórica el uso de la elisión en el grupo social bajo, por el contrario éste también es significativo (0,412). Lo que acontece, es que existe una alta favorabilidad de la realización prestigiosa ([<sup>h</sup>]: 0,599), evidenciando una distribución regular de los alófonos de la dentoalveolar.

La autocorrección que se manifiesta en los hablantes de edades intermedias, también se enmarca dentro del patrón de variación estable de la comunidad de habla. Silva-Corvalán (2001) plantea que la covariación que se presenta entre variables lingüísticas y la variable social edad, conlleva a proponer tres situaciones generales: 1) identidad de las variantes con un grupo etario; 2) autocorrección por parte de las generaciones más activas en la vida pública; y 3) cambio lingüístico en curso. Según la autora los abanderados de este proceso son los hablantes con edades que comprenden los 25 a 50 años. Desde esta perspectiva, en Barranquilla se presentan las dos primeras situaciones sociolingüísticas. En primer lugar, algunas variantes de las fricativas sordas se instauran como realizaciones propias de grupos etarios específicos. Tal es el caso de la sibilante [s], la cual obtiene alta productividad en los mayores de 55 años. En segundo lugar, existe una marcada autocorrección de los hablantes de edades intermedias, siendo éstos los que más se inclinan por emplear los segmentos prestigiosos o estándares. Los coeficientes de la aspirada [<sup>h</sup>] (0,521), la labiodental [f] (0,591), y la plena de la faríngea sorda [h] (0,669) corroboran esta pauta. En lo que respecta a la verdadera interpretación sociolingüística de este proceso, se puede entrever la regularidad de la variación que se explica a lo largo de este apartado, teniendo en cuenta el comportamiento de dos alófonos de /f-/. El grupo etario que propende por la autocorrección es el de los jóvenes con un 68% de la plena [f] alófono de prestigio, asimismo, muestran el mayor índice de elisión, que se instituye como la forma estigmatizada en la ciudad, con un 5.8%. El cambio lingüístico en curso no se aprecia en el factor edad.

Por su parte, la desdialectalización se presenta por la acomodación de los hablantes foráneos a la variedad de Barranquilla, proceso condicionado a factores como el nivel de instrucción y la clase social. Esta pauta en la comunidad inmigrante implica un cambio lingüístico en curso que se sitúa en una etapa inicial en la cual la variable muestra una evidente covariación con la clase social intermedia, es decir grupos con una estratificación media alta (Silva-Corvalán, 2001). De igual forma, lo anterior se debe a la acomodación de los migrantes al dialecto local, en la cual favorecen las variantes prestigiosas de la ciudad. En este sentido, los hablantes de instrucción primaria y clase baja son menos susceptibles a la desdialectalización, y por lo tanto presentan mayor uso de variantes estigmatizadas.

#### 4 Conclusiones

En Barranquilla, las fricativas sordas presentan una variación estable donde sus variantes manifiestan una distribución regular en los distintos factores sociales, asimismo presentan procesos de cambio lingüístico en etapas iniciales en diversas microcomunidades. Los procesos sociolingüísticos hallados en la comunidad, que se han ido identificando a lo largo del trabajo, confirman este patrón. En consecuencia, en la comunidad de habla en general se evidencia: a) una variación estable determinada por la regularidad que se entrevé en los procesos asociados a la pauta de prestigio, que involucra a los factores sociales sexo, nivel de instrucción y en menor grado clase social; b) un patrón de autocorrección con una clara tendencia a la variación estable; y c) procesos de hipercorrección que suscitan cambio lingüístico en curso en microcomunidades como la etnia palenquera y los inmigrantes del Caribe asentados en Barranquilla. Dichos cambios se encuentran en etapas iniciales.

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# TRACING AFRICAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN TRINIDAD AND PUERTO RICO

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## 1 Introduction

Richard Cullen Rath (2000: 104-105) objects to studies such as Robert Farris Thompson (1990) which identify the source of US baton-twirling as northern Kongolesse. “Here then is a well-documented Africanism”, Rath states, “but then the question becomes ‘So what?’”

Rath argues:

“By shifting the focus inquiry to the path between underlying structures and concrete cultural expressions, it becomes possible to discern how Africans from diverse regional backgrounds came to understand each other in ways that were broadly ‘African’ rather than ‘Coromantee, ‘Mende’ or ‘Angolan’.” (Rath, 2000: 112)

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African academics are notably among those who would contend that there has already been too much of a ‘broadly African’ focus. In 1996, at the University of Ghana, Abena Busia complained that she was fed up with people talking about “Africa this” and “Africa that”, with no reference to a specific country, not to mention to a specific ethnic group. Michael A. Gomez (1999) concurs:

“Leading authorities on slavery in North America produce with impunity tome after tome, with little regard for the fact that their subjects came out of specific social and political contexts, that they had collective identities, and that they participated in recognizable cultures.” (p. 111)

Gomez’s comment underscores the fact that we have not learned all that we can about who the Africans were who contributed to Caribbean culture and how these cultures developed, and that this is a daunting task which many do not even attempt.

## 2 The slave trade

Among those who haven't given up are David Eltis and his colleagues who have been amassing slave trade data for decades, specifically regarding the voyages which took Africans to other parts of the globe, now available in *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* online. While this study covers almost 35,000 voyages, that the data is incomplete is inevitable. Moreover, slaves were moved from points inland to the African coast, from one coastal point to another, and one debarkation point to another. Maureen Warner-Lewis (2003) also points out that slave ships sometimes hid the real source of the slaves when they were violating another European country's monopoly. In addition, the later groups of Africans who came to various colonies as indentured laborers are not represented here. Nonetheless, the voyage data offer a significant insight into who many of the Africans were who came to Trinidad and Puerto Rico. The map below identifies the relevant areas and how many languages are believed to coexist there.

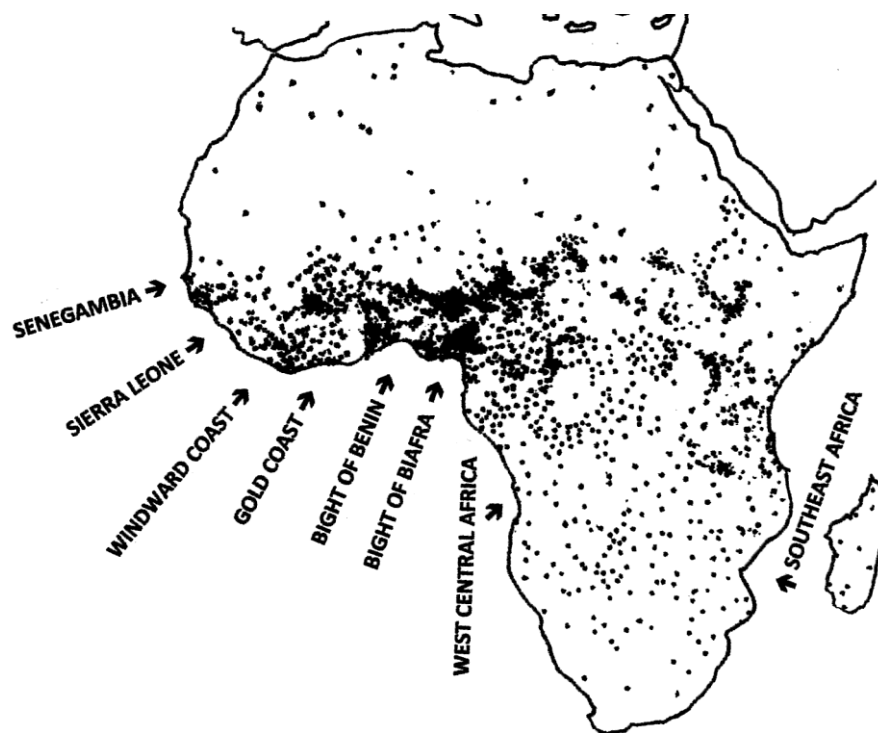


**Figure 1** Map of Africa showing areas of slave trade and approximate number of languages.<sup>1</sup>

Sources: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (<http://slavevoyages.org>) and Lewis 2009 (<http://www.ethnologue.com>).

<sup>1</sup> Each dot represents a living language. Languages exist in a continuum, which makes counting languages vs. dialects, for example, difficult. Therefore, the number of languages claimed by ethnologue are understood to be approximate.

**Table 1** Estimated number of slaves disembarked

| Year         | Puerto Rico   | Trinidad Tobago |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1501-1550    | 40            | 0               |
| 1551-1600    | 340           | 0               |
| 1601-1650    | 310           | 470             |
| 1651-1700    | 300           | 1,480           |
| 1701-1750    | 400           | 0               |
| 1751-1800    | 10,240        | 20,660          |
| 1801-1850    | 15,960        | 21,410          |
| 1851-1866    | 0             | 0               |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>27,190</b> | <b>44,020</b>   |

Source: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Note: Numbers have been conservatively rounded upward. (The Database estimates that recorded voyages probably represent 80% or less of the true total.)

**Table 2** Sources of disembarking slaves: Trinidad

|              | Senegambia & Offshore Atlantic | Sierra Leone | Windward Coast | Gold Coast   | Bight of Benin/ Bight of Biafra & Gulf of Guinea Islands | West Central Africa & St. Helena | Southeast Africa & Indian ocean Islands |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1500's       |                                |              |                |              |                                                          |                                  |                                         |
| 1600's       |                                |              |                |              |                                                          |                                  |                                         |
| 1700's       |                                |              |                | 432          | 3,443                                                    | 644                              |                                         |
| 1800's       | 615                            | 888          | 279            | 1,111        | 8,630                                                    | 2,555                            |                                         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>615</b>                     | <b>888</b>   | <b>279</b>     | <b>1,543</b> | <b>12,073</b>                                            | <b>3,199</b>                     | <b>0</b>                                |

Note: Numbers are from the 70 voyages with data indicating where slaves were purchased out of the total 102 voyages to Trinidad in the database

**Table 3** Sources of disembarking slaves: Puerto Rico

|              | Senegambia<br>& Offshore<br>Atlantic | Sierra<br>Leone | Windward<br>Coast | Gold<br>Coast | Bight of Benin/<br>Bight of Biafra<br>& Gulf of<br>Guinea Islands | West<br>Central<br>Africa &<br>St. Helena | Southeast<br>Africa &<br>Indian Ocean<br>Islands |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1500's       | 1                                    |                 |                   |               |                                                                   |                                           |                                                  |
| 1600's       |                                      |                 |                   |               |                                                                   | 438                                       |                                                  |
| 1700's       | 35                                   | 330             | 353               |               | 3,117                                                             | 2,143                                     |                                                  |
| 1800's       | 98                                   | 740             |                   |               | 981                                                               | 253                                       | 421                                              |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>134</b>                           | <b>1070</b>     | <b>353</b>        | <b>0</b>      | <b>4,098</b>                                                      | <b>2,834</b>                              | <b>421</b>                                       |

Note: Numbers are from the 35 voyages with data indicating where slaves were purchased out of the total 64 voyages to Puerto Rico in the database

Tables 2 and 3 show the largest numbers of slaves on the recorded voyages to Puerto Rico and Trinidad as coming from the two Bights (*bight* meaning *bay*) and West Central Africa. Major ethnic groups in the area of the two bights are the Fon, Ewe, Yoruba, Igbo, Ijo, Hausa and Fulani. In West Central Africa major ethnic groups on the map are the Vili (also called Loango), one of many Koongo-speaking subgroups which include the Yombe, Kakongo, Nsundi, Bembe, and Kenge, among others (Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, Warner-Lewis, 2003: 15). The Bights extend from what is now Eastern Ghana, down to Gabon. West Central Africa extends from what is now the Republic of the Congo, down to Angola.

### 3 The study

In my ongoing research, I have been examining claims regarding the language source for purported 'Africanisms' with a view toward understanding which Africans brought words and cultural practices to the Caribbean. In this paper, I've chosen to focus on a few of the dances on both islands which seem to be considered the most 'African' and whose forms have been attested through the historical record, whether in contemporary description or artwork.

One objective of this research is to find more linguistic and cultural evidence regarding the identity of the Africans who lived in various areas of the Caribbean, and to see whether the findings support the current voyage data. A second objective is to present another perspective on the issue of creolization as applied to culture by attempting to offer a more nuanced model.

#### 4 Linguistic and cultural creolization

Language family trees, common in discussions of historical linguistics<sup>2</sup>, necessarily leave out part of the history of the languages represented because speakers of every language branch have been in contact with speakers of other languages from other branches as well as from other language families. Here in the Caribbean, a similarly reductive labeling of countries as Anglophone, Hispanophone, etc., or a focus on colonial regimes or current relationships to European countries or the US, as useful as this may be, is understood by anyone who lives here as also missing a good deal of the historical picture, which a general concept of ‘creolization’ often attempts to address. ‘Creolization’, used in this broader sense, that is not just referring to the development of creole languages, has gained a controversially wide currency. There have been numerous objections to making this analogy, such as that of Rath (2000: 99), referred to earlier, who states: “Students of cultural creolization have treated it as analogous to linguistic creolization. This analogy is mistaken.”

I believe Rath’s judgement to be hasty for Salikoko Mufwene’s 2001 book *The Ecology of Language Evolution* offers a useful linguistic analogy, which by the way, just like the family tree model of languages, is an instance of linguists themselves adapting models from the natural sciences. Mufwene (2001: 4-6) attempts to graphically illustrate the selection and recombination of linguistic features which occur in language contact situations (see Figure 2 below). The input languages provide features (syntactic, phonological, and lexical elements) which he visualizes as entering a kind of arena of competition where some features win out and others do not, resulting in unique output languages. It seems to me that the many contradictory claims made about provenance both in terms of Caribbean words and the dances and music they name are precisely the result of an insufficient appreciation of the degree to which individual cultural features have been selected and recombined, à la Mufwene’s characterization.

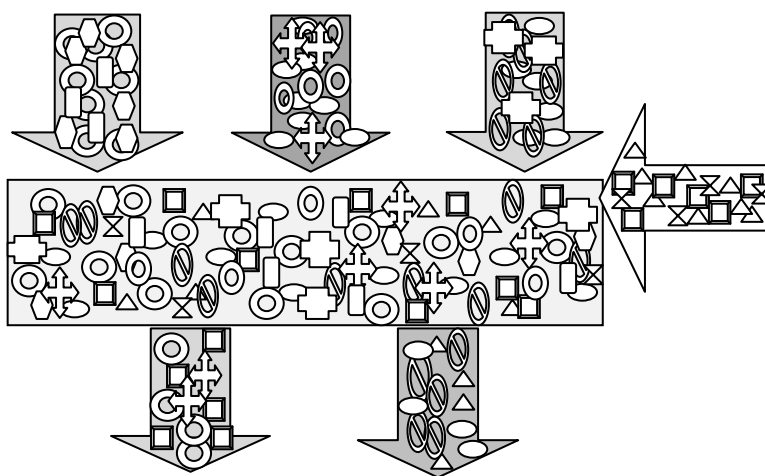


**Figure 2** Linguistic features in contact, competition and recombination (After Mufwene, 2001: 4-6)

<sup>2</sup> For example, ‘trees’ which chart the relationship of the languages of the Indo-European family.

## 5 Dances of the drum

*Bomba*, which refers to a dance in Puerto Rico, is also an umbrella term signifying a whole category of ‘dances of the drum’. Among the names of *bomba* dances collected by Manuel Álvarez-Nazario (1974) from numerous historical sources are many well-known names for dances, music, and drums also found in Trinidad and other areas of the Caribbean, such as *kalinda*, *belé*, *bamboula*, *juba*, etc. The word *bomba* can also signify the drums used in the dances, and this sense of *bomba* as drum is believed to be the original use of the word.

There has been much speculation about the provenance of both the word and the dance. Arce (1999) repeats an allegation made by Vega-Drouet in 1979 that *bomba* was brought to Puerto Rico by the Ashanti people from the Gold Coast (Ghana) as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Although Mervyn Alleyne (2006-2007) points out that the word *bomba*, like the English word *boom* could be influenced by an onomatopoeic rendering of the sound of the drum, Alleyne (2006-2007: 5) states: “If *Bomba* is a plantation phenomenon in Puerto Rico, its origins are likely to be 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century and to be rather Congo (Bantu) phenomenon than Ashanti.” Alleyne’s assertion is supported by a nineteenth-century contemporary view. Observing African-born slaves dancing in the southern Puerto Rican city of Ponce in 1836, Charles Walker is recorded as remarking: “It is the dance of their native land and they accompany the music with songs in the Congo language” (reported in Álvarez-Nazario, 1974: 304).<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Álvarez-Nazario thought he had found compelling internal linguistic evidence to support Walker’s 1836 attribution, which induced him to propose a Proto-Bantu origin. In other words, he suggests that the word is so old that it originated in the hypothesized parent language from which the widely spread Bantu languages evolved. Álvarez-Nazario posited the hypothesized parent form (or protoform) *\*ngwoma*. His suggestion is that the Puerto Rican word is the result of a sound change in which *\*ngwoma* first changed to *gomba* among certain speakers and this subsequently became *bomba*.<sup>4</sup>

The modern word *ngoma*, like the word *bomba*, is an umbrella term which refers to a range of drums, music, and/or dances, which can be found throughout the Bantu-speaking area as illustrated on the South African Music Archive Project’s website.

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<sup>3</sup> However, it is important to note as Warner-Lewis (2003) points out, there are many instances where ‘Congo’ is an omnibus term.

<sup>4</sup> Cognates may appear quite different after centuries of sound change, which is reflected in the hypothesized parent or proto-form. For example, the word *yoke* is thought to have been *\*yugo-* in Proto-Indo European which became: Old English *geoc*, German *Joch*, Old Norse *ok*, Latin *iugum*, Greek *Zugon*, Russian *igo*, Irish *cuing*, and Sanskrit *yugam* (Algeo, 1982: 91).

**Table 4** Bantu language cognates

| Bantu Languages                | Words                                        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Hypothesized Proto-Bantu form  | * <i>ngwoma</i> */ɲgwoma/, */ɲwoma/ (drum)   |
| Kikongo                        | <i>ngoma</i> (large wood drum for dancing)   |
| Orungu                         | <i>ngom</i> (drum)                           |
| Isuwu, Diwala, Bumbete, Nkundu | <i>ngomo</i> (drum)                          |
| Bangala                        | <i>ngomo</i> (drum with leather for dancing) |
| Quimavia (Mozambique)          | <i>Ingoma</i>                                |
| Quelimane (Mozambique)         | <i>goma</i>                                  |
| Makua (Mozambique)             | <i>ikoma</i>                                 |
| U-iaka (Angola)                | <i>ñoma</i>                                  |
| Kimbundu, U-mbundu             | <i>ñgoma</i> (dance)                         |
| Swahili (Tanzania)             | <i>ngoma</i> (drum, harvest festival)        |

Sources: Bantu Lexical Reconstructions (<http://www.metafro.be>), South African Music Archive Project (<http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/sampa>).

The hypothesized reconstruction of the word for drum in Proto-Bantu is /gòmò/ according to scholars of the ongoing “Bantu Lexical Reconstructions” project on line, which began with the 1969 publication of the book of the same name written by A. E. Meeussen of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Belgium. They attest to the form /gòmò/ in the Northern Bantu region signifying ‘calf’s skin’. Other regional variants are /ɲòmò, gòmù/ ‘drum’. Possibly related are the verb forms bòm̩b ‘stretch and peg hide’ and búg ‘resound, speak’. Similarly /gòm̩b/ is their reconstruction for ‘beat drum, clap hands’, with related regional variants /gòm̩bò/ ‘leader in song or dance’ or ‘drummer’. The forms found in this reconstruction support Álvarez-Nazario’s (1974) hypothesis regarding the etymology of *bomba*. In fact, in the following tables, nearly all the suggestions of provenance for types of *bomba* and other words naming drums, dances and types of music in the Caribbean point to Bantu languages.

**Table 5a** the suggested provenance of types of *bomba* dances

| Name                                    | Suggested Provenance                                                                                                                                                         | Source                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Babú                                    | shortened form <i>bambula</i> > <i>babula</i> > <i>babu</i>                                                                                                                  | Álvarez-Nazario 1974                                                     |
| Bamboula                                | * Koongo <i>bambula</i> (“to deflect, to transfer<br>In a mysterious way”) = refers to grievances<br>and gossip aired in the singing                                         | Weeks 1914<br><br>Baker 1993                                             |
| Belé                                    | *Koongo <i>velele</i> (“a dance, hip movements”)<br>French <i>bel air</i> (“charming melody”)<br>[Yoruba <i>bembem</i> <i>ibembé</i> (largest drum in<br>Orisha ceremonies)] | Possible folk etymology<br>reported in many sources<br>Warner-Lewis 1996 |
| Bembe (see also<br><i>cuembe</i> below) |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                          |



|                                      |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Candungé, Candunga                   | *? Angolan language <i>kandunga</i> (“sacred dance”)                                                                                                         | Walker 1997 reported in Warner-Lewis 2003                                      |
| Calenda, Kalinda, etc.               | *Koongo <i>lenda</i> (to oppose) = stick fighting dance                                                                                                      | Warner-Lewis 2003                                                              |
| Chica, Sica, etc.                    | *Proto-Bantu <i>tètem</i> , variant <i>títí</i> (“to shake, tremble”)<br>* Koongo <i>tiita</i> (to quiver)<br>*Kikongo <i>sika</i> (“to play an instrument”) | ProBan website<br>Warner-Lewis 2003                                            |
| Cuembe, guembe, bembe<br>Curiquinque | *Bantu <i>nkumba</i> (variant word for “drum”) Quechua <i>curiquingui</i> (“painted gold” the name of a bird in Peru & Ecuador) = Afro-Ecuadorian dance      | Bilby reported in Gerstin 2004<br>Álvarez-Nazario 1974<br>Álvarez-Nazario 1974 |
| Danois, Danuá                        | French <i>Danois</i> (“Danish”) = from the Danish Virgin Islands                                                                                             | Álvarez-Nazario 1974                                                           |
| Grasimá                              | [<French Creole]                                                                                                                                             | Álvarez-Nazario 1974                                                           |
| Holandés                             | French <i>Hollandais</i> (“Dutch”) = from the Dutch territories                                                                                              | Álvarez-Nazario 1974                                                           |
| Juba, Yuba                           | Yoruba <i>juba</i> (“homage, obeisance”)                                                                                                                     | Lawal 2004                                                                     |
| Lero, Le Rose                        | French <i>le rond</i> (“circle”)<br>French <i>le rose</i> (“the rose”)                                                                                       | Álvarez-Nazario 1974<br>Á-N: reported possible folk etymology                  |
| Mariyandá                            | *Bantu language of Fernando Po <i>maringa</i> (a type of dance)                                                                                              | Álvarez-Nazario 1974                                                           |
| Mariangola                           | *Mbundu <i>ma</i> (plural prefix) + <i>ri</i> (nominal prefix) + Angola (“Angolans”)                                                                         | Warner-Lewis 2003                                                              |
| Milonga                              | *Angolan language <i>milonga/mulonga</i> (“word/words, wordy, question”)                                                                                     | Álvarez-Nazario 1974                                                           |
| Cocbalé, Congrué, Guateque, Timbeque | No suggested provenance                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                |

**Table 5b** The suggested provenance of other types of drums/dance/music

| Name             | Suggested Provenance                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Source            |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Bongo            | *Koongo <i>muntu a mbongo</i> (“person for whom one has paid much” i.e. slave) = the people                                                                                                                             | Warner-Lewis 2003 |
| Calypso          | Hausa <i>kaico</i> or <i>kaito</i> (exclamation)<br>French <i>carousse</i> (“festivity”)<br>Spanish <i>caliso</i> (Venezuelan topical song)<br>Arawak <i>carieto</i> (“A social dance accompanied by historical songs”) | Hill 1972         |
| Conga (modern)   | *Congo language <i>nkunga</i> (“song, dance, festival”)                                                                                                                                                                 |                   |
| Kalimbe, calimbe | *Koongo <i>lumbe</i> (“to beat, to strike e.g. of a clock”)                                                                                                                                                             | Warner-Lewis 2003 |
| Kutumba          | *Mbundu <i>kutumba</i> (“to cure”), or <i>kutumbula</i> (“to call to memory”) or <i>kutumbujuka</i>                                                                                                                     | Warner-Lewis 2003 |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                       | (“to make small and frequent jumps”) =related to a dance of a wake                                                                                                                                      |                                     |
| Limbo                 | *Nsundi <i>lungo</i> - (type of dance)                                                                                                                                                                  | Warner-Lewis 2003                   |
| Tambu                 | *Proto-Bantu <i>tamb</i> (“play, dance, jump”)<br>*Koongo <i>ntambu</i> (“drum”)                                                                                                                        | ProBan website<br>Warner-Lewis 2003 |
| Ya Mapele, Ya Ngapele | *Koongo <i>yanga</i> (“leap”) or <i>yánnga</i> (“enjoy oneself”) + <i>mpelele</i> (“whiteness”) = dancing on moonlit nights or *Koongo <i>ya</i> (“belonging to, of”) + *Mbundu <i>mapalo</i> (“games”) | Warner-Lewis 2003                   |
| Yuka                  | *Vili <i>yuka</i> (“to beat, strike, hammer”)                                                                                                                                                           | Warner-Lewis 2003                   |

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## 6 Feature selection, recombination, and restructuring

The famous painting, titled “The Old Plantation”<sup>5</sup>, has been attributed to John Rose of South Carolina circa 1785-1790. What is noteworthy is that the combination of elements depicted here defy a single African cultural interpretation. Babatunde Lawal (2004), who is Yoruba, analyzed this painting in 2004 in a discussion of the African American “juba” dance. Confirming that the musical instruments are Yoruba, Lawal also identified the women’s movements as a Yoruba dance tradition – which he refers to as “dancing the cloth” (Lawal, 2004: 295).

However, other scholars, such as Susan Shames (2010) who identified the artist, have identified the “cloths” in the painting as versions of net-covered musical gourds from Sierra Leone called *shegureh*, and other elements in the picture clearly contradict a Yoruba provenance. The turban-like headgear, according to Lawal, identify some of the men as Hausa Muslims<sup>6</sup>. Lawal also notes the male who appears to be dancing with a stick, which doesn’t occur in Yoruba dancing.<sup>7</sup>

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## 7 African features of Caribbean dance

There is no doubt about the scarf dancing in the 1836 lithograph of Trinidadian life, “Negro Dance,” produced by Richard Bridgens for his book *West Indian Scenery*.<sup>8</sup> In the lithograph, although the male figures are leaping, there is one woman dancing “earthbound” (reflecting a pattern found in West Africa)<sup>9</sup> who is waving a large cloth.

Contemporary Yoruba women both wave cloths and a section of their skirt, and Ibo women wave scarves in various traditional dances as can be seen on Internet sites such

<sup>5</sup> This painting is held by the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum and can be viewed on the Colonial Williamsburg Official History Site (<http://www.history.org>) and many other places on the Internet.

<sup>6</sup> I can attest to this myself having briefly lived in Northern Nigeria among Hausa people.

<sup>7</sup> My larger study includes a discussion of stick dancing, especially in the context of Trinidad.

<sup>8</sup> The entire book, including this lithograph, can be viewed at the British Library’s Online Gallery <http://bl.uk/on-line-gallery>.

<sup>9</sup> See Aguiar (1999) on some characteristics of African dance. This is certainly my personal impression based on workshops on Ewe dancing held at the University of Ghana, Legon in 1996.



Figure 2 Female dancer in Bridgens "Negro Dance" 1836

YouTube.<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting to what extent the Internet, a research tool unimagined only a decade or so ago, not only allows ready access to 19<sup>th</sup> century books such as that of Bridgens, but also facilitates a comparison of contemporary cultural phenomena.

The female dancing in forms of Caribbean *bomba* is quite distinctive from male partners. In both Puerto Rico and Trinidad, skirt waving is an important component of female traditional dancing. In classic varieties of *bomba* both female and male dancers lead the main drummer, an important aspect of African dances of the drum.<sup>11</sup> The drummer follows the rhythm of the abrupt and agitated skirt waving of the female dancer.

Although the dancers themselves may characterize this skirt waving as African, in academic work to my knowledge, the skirt waving of the female dancers in Puerto Rican *bomba* and Trinidadian *belé*, has been attributed to the European influence of the *contradanse*. However, it should be noted that not only is *belé* sometimes called by the French *bel aire*, but the dance generally begins with the dancers in an upright posture slowly waving their skirts in a manner that might indeed owe something to European cotillion processions as has been claimed. When the dancers interact with the drummers, however, the skirt waving changes, becoming exaggerated and rapid.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, versions of skirt waving and scarf waving while dancing are found in numerous dances around the world, including other dances in Africa. For example, famously Spanish flamenco dancers wave their skirts while dancing, and I've seen men in Kumasi, Ghana, the home of the Ashanti, wave the skirt of their toga-like costume while dancing.

<sup>11</sup> My thanks to dance professor and Caribbean Studies doctoral candidate Awilda Sterling-Duprey and founder and lead singer and percussionist of the group *Viento de Agua*, Tito Matos, for both insight into the varieties of *bomba* found in Puerto Rico and an invaluable *bomba* workshop sponsored by English Department Graduate Students of the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras during the 2007 Caribbean without Borders Conference. Not all *bomba* is interactive. Not only is there recorded music, but some folkloric groups choreograph their performances, even when they have live musicians. In addition, some *bomba* features non-percussive instruments such as the small Puerto Rican guitar, the *cuatro*, and horns.

Both contemporary and modern critics have decried the dancing of Africans and their Caribbean descendents as too erotic, as discussed below. These movements include the



Figure 3 (above) Puerto Rican Bomba Dancer  
Figure 4 (right) Trinidadian Belé Dancer

technique of bumping the bottom back rapidly, a sort of shimmying, which is found in, for example, some folkloric versions of *bambula* and modern “winin”<sup>12</sup>. Male *bomba* dancers in Puerto Rico also incorporate this movement into their dance. Contemporary dancers from the Congo and Gabon feature this movement in dances such as “*ikoku*”. Another “erotic” movement is thigh striking found in the Caribbean, and featured in contemporary dance in Angola.<sup>13</sup>

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## 8 Conclusion

Historians such as Julian Gerstin (2004) have tried to make sense of, for example, the contrasting accounts of *kalinda* dancing by Père Labat in 1722 and Moreau de Saint-Méry in 1796. The former describes the striking of thighs in a dance in Martinique as “opposed to decency”, the latter a “vivacious and . . . graceful” dance in Haiti, in which “The lady holds the end of a handkerchief which she waves” (Gerstin, 2004: 7-8). Gerstin resolves this dilemma by choosing to ignore the dance names, and instead focus on types of choreography and musical instruments. Although much of his investigation is very informative, his research model causes him to miss significant connections. For example, in rejecting out of hand a suggestion by Cuban colleagues that “*juba*” might come from Yoruba (which Lawal also contends), Gerstin limits his ability to discover more about the very choreography he is analyzing.

If Caribbean dances are, in fact, a recombination of choreographic ‘features’ with different ethnic sources, the *kalinda* of Martinique, for example, might be expected to

<sup>12</sup> In Trinidad the bottom bumping of winin’ has more recently mixed with traditional Indian dancing, in a hybrid dance called called “chutney”, which can be viewed on the Internet on the YouTube website.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of both *Ikoku* and thigh striking in Angolan dance can also be seen on the Internet on YouTube.

differ from that of Haiti just as their French-lexifier creoles do, and the name of a nominally Bantu dance form could have enough elements of Yoruba dance to take its name from that language.

As my study unfolds, I am convinced a model which, against Rath's advice, borrows from linguistics, and combines classic etymological research with an adaptation of Mufwene's conception of a creole-language-like selection and recombination of features, holds more promise for tracing sources of the African heritage of Caribbean communities such as Trinidad and Puerto Rico. Moreover, reconstruction of the past has been revitalized by technological breakthroughs, as the information coming from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, not to mention YouTube, attests. Despite the passing of time and the incomplete record, we come closer to unraveling what Gerstin calls these "Tangled Roots."

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# A LEXICAL COMPARISON OF JAMAICAN ENGLISH AND CANT: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF MARGINALIZED BRITISH ENGLISHES IN THE CARIBBEAN

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## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the complexity of the language contact situation in the Caribbean and to evaluate the influence of marginalized English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish dialects on Caribbean varieties of English and English-lexifier Creoles. In the pages that follow, I will be using the term ‘British’ to refer to all of these varieties and their speakers, even though Unification did not occur until 1703 and has been hotly contested from long before then until the present day. The purpose of this work is not to negate African influence, but to develop a new understanding of how socially and economically marginalized speakers of British Englishes also influenced Caribbean speech. The lexical research focus of this paper is based on the hypothesis that contact between speakers of British cant and inhabitants of trading settlements in Jamaica in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries can be verified by evidence of cant in the lexicon of contemporary Jamaican English. Defined by Coleman (2004b), “cant is the secret language of thieves and beggars, and is used for deception and concealment” (p. 2). It is a sociolect and therefore distinct from a geographically restricted dialect, although its use was reported predominantly in and around London. Canting terms were used wherever vagrants travelled, including colonies of the British Empire. This investigation recognizes Bailey’s (1966) definition of Jamaican Creole as an autonomous language, and the decision to refer to the lexicon as Jamaican English rather than Jamaican Creole is influenced directly by the title of Cassidy and Le Page’s *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (2002).

## 2 Theoretical framework

Accompanying a general rise in post-colonial consciousness, and concurrent with the emergence of many independent Caribbean nations, there has been an exponential growth in Caribbean scholarship since the 1960s. The most influential scholars on Jamaican speech were Bailey, Cassidy, Le Page and DeCamp, who used extensive field studies to develop theories on Jamaican Creole genesis and advance



understanding of its syntax, phonology and lexicon. In 1971, DeCamp published his seminal work on the creole continuum model in which he argues that Jamaican speech is not a single code but covers a finely articulated spectrum that ranges from the Jamaican English acrolect through the mesolect to the more Afro-centric basilect. He explains how speech is not fixed at any one point of the continuum, but covers a range of the spectrum that typically corresponds to the socioeconomic status of the speaker. Although this model has sparked debate, most notably from Rickford (1987) who insisted that it does not account for many observed phenomena, most linguists now acknowledge DeCamp's continuum model and have focused their studies on extending the model (Alleyne, 1980) or for recording variation in the urban mesolect and developing theories of decreolization (Patrick, 1999). Any study of etymology in Jamaican English therefore necessitates an understanding of Creole genesis.

Monogenesis theories identify a common historical origin to explain the structural similarities amongst the Atlantic Creoles. Thompson (1961) theorized that a Portuguese lexifier pidgin served as the foundation for all Creoles, and although this theory gained support at the time it was proposed up until the late 1980s, it has also led to considerable debate. Substrate theories stress the importance of native languages in the grammar of emerging Creoles. By proposing a scenario whereby the grammar of speakers' native language(s) persist throughout the process of creolization, these theories acknowledge African agency in Creole genesis. Universal theories, on the other hand, emphasize common human psychology and patterns of language acquisition and maximize the importance of universal features and functions in the emergent Creole.

Superstratist theories are perhaps the most relevant to this study as they acknowledge the input of nonstandard European dialects in Creole genesis. Chaudenson (1992) proposed a theory that French-lexifier Creoles developed from imitation of regional dialects, but this theory of *le français approximatif* has not found favor with many linguists in the Anglophone Caribbean, largely because it perpetuates the historic erasure of African agency. Some scholars continue to investigate the relevance of dialectal variation in Creole genesis, including one notable study of Cornish English in the Caribbean (Hancock, 1994).

The conceptual framework of this study owes much to Mufwene's theory of language ecology as a result of "competition and selection dynamics" (2001: 3). He proposes a model to account for multiple input from a number of languages that contribute to a feature pool where features of syntax, phonology and lexicon compete for selection to form part of the output language(s). One significant element of this model is in the notion of multiple inheritances, Mufwene explains "features which are similar but not necessarily identical came to reinforce each other, regardless of their sources, and produced modified variants of the originals in the emergent varieties" (pp. 4-5). Mufwene's theory provides an explanation for how Creoles select features among

dialects of the same language, or genetically related languages as a result of commonality in the feature pool. However, the implication that the output languages are based entirely on reconstituted features of the input languages has aligned his work with the disputed superstratist tradition, and given rise to significant linguistic debate.

### 3 Review of cant literature

There are a considerable number of British cant and slang dictionaries that date back to Thomas Harman's *Caveat or warning for common cursetors* in 1567, and their authors have arguably based their material on observation, plagiarism and pure creative interpretation. Many of the texts were produced as a direct response to the spirit of linguistic prescriptivism in the Middle English period that gave rise to Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English language* published in 1755. Contrary to Johnson's purpose "to refine and fix the language" (Millward, 1996: 240) the authors of cant word-lists, glossaries and dictionaries aimed to titillate the public with glimpses of the London underworld and to reveal the tricks of the criminal underclass for a growing literate public who were becoming increasingly preoccupied with the swelling ranks of dispossessed poor in Britain. Thus, "the history of British cant and slang lexicography is long and frequently disreputable... the early dictionaries have received relatively little scholarly attention, the later ones even less." (Coleman, 2004a: 1).

Thomas Harman and Richard Head were the most significant authors of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, each producing a glossary of cant including 114 and 103 words respectively. However, the most influential work of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was B.E.'s *The new dictionary of the terms ancient and modern of the canting crew*. It was the first serious effort to produce a reference collection as an independent volume, including etymology, illustrative citations, cross-references and usage labels, and contained over 4,000 entries. Nathan Bailey drew heavily from this dictionary, with efforts to amend and edit what he considered to be errors in B.E. Gent's earlier work, and his *New canting dictionary* was one of the two main general dictionaries in circulation in the 1780s (the other was Johnson's). Francis Grose's *Classical dictionary of the vulgar tongue* published in 1785 aimed to present a definitive lexicon, but was intended primarily to entertain and relied heavily on entries in earlier works, as did the 1811 *Lexicon balatronicum*. As cant gained covert prestige in fashionable society of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, literature and plays included cant dialogue, and numerous non-fictional works carried canting glossaries. The most influential and authentic of these was James Hardy Vaux's 1819 bibliography that drew heavily from his own criminal experiences and subsequent transportation to Australia. Since these early works, increased global migration and interest in dialect slang have led to a wealth of resources that range from amateur to scholarly.

#### 4 Language contact history

This condensed history of early language contact in the Caribbean seeks to justify a comparative study between contemporary Jamaican speech and cant. It is not the intention of this paper to devalue the status of Jamaican English in any way, but instead to explore the complexity of the early language contact situation in a way that acknowledges multiple substrata, adstrata, and superstrata. The rationale behind a connection between these two codes is based on demographic evidence that places a significant number of British vagrants, thieves and beggars in the British Caribbean colonies between 1630 and 1700, a key formative period during which early Jamaican English and related varieties emerged and a period in which contact between European-descended settlers and African-descended slaves was more prevalent than at any subsequent time in the colony's history.

From the early 1600s Britain was experiencing an agrarian revolution that led to the massive enclosure of public land and consequent eviction of large groups of people who had previously existed on subsistence farming under the feudal open field system (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000). The resulting proliferation of poverty and vagrancy led to unprecedented criminalization of the poor through acts of parliament that outlawed begging and drove large numbers of dispossessed people to seek alternative means of provision in the criminal underworld. Rural populations seeking opportunities in cities coupled with population growth meant "Britain's urban percentage rose from 8.25% in 1600 to 17.0% in 1700, and London's share of the national population increased from 5% to 11.5%" (Turner, 1990: 106). Thus, 17<sup>th</sup> century London was characterized by overpopulation, increasing crime and urbanization. Being homeless and unemployed became, in itself, a criminal offence, and consequently "most of those in prison were not criminals" (Coleman, 2004a: 13).

Overpopulation of the jails was a significant problem for local magistrates, who sought to relieve the problem by regularly transporting prisoners to colonies overseas as indentured workers to create space for new inmates. The solution proved to be ideal for the first governor of English Jamaica, General Robert Venables, who formed the island's military from "men raised from the various regiment and from the streets and gaols of England" (Le Page, 1960: 10). Venables ejected the Spanish from the island in 1655 with the help of the English buccaneers in Hispaniola, most of whom were also former members of the criminalized British underclasses who had turned to piracy in the Caribbean. Venables depended on the buccaneers, not only to conquer Jamaica militarily, but also to settle the island and to provide it with its first large infusions of capital, chiefly from the bars and brothels of the first English Jamaican urban center of Port Royal (known as the 'wickedest town on Earth') where these buccaneers spent the spoils of their pirating expeditions against the Spanish and sought to bolster English settlements there.

Many of the former inmates sent to Barbados as indentured workers found easy passage to Jamaica. To further augment the numbers of British settlers, the “transportation of prisoners direct to Jamaica seems to have commenced at least by 1662” (Le Page, 1960: 16). Such demographic data demonstrates that there were a significant number of British people in the early English Caribbean colonies who were likely to have spoken a marginalized sociolect largely associated with urban London and the criminal underclass. Burton (1997) characterizes this early Jamaican demographic as “– mainly jailbirds and prostitutes – speaking, one imagines, some low life argot” (p. 15).

## 5 Methodology

The comparison of lexis between Jamaican English and cant upon which this paper is based was conducted using online and print dictionaries, word-lists and glossaries through a labor-intensive process of comparing head words alphabetically. Jamaican English lexicon was sourced primarily from Cassidy and Le Page’s (2002) *Dictionary of Jamaican English* and subsequently cross-referenced in Allsopp’s (2003) *Dictionary of Caribbean English usage*. Cassidy and Le Page’s authoritative dictionary – first published in 1967 with a second edition in 2002 – was selected as the principle source based on its careful attention to etymology, positive academic reviews, and the significant contributions that both editors have made to the field of Caribbean linguistics.

Due to the inaccessibility of most scholarly work on British cant and the non-academic nature of the majority of early sources, the three sources of cant were chosen for their online accessibility, content, and their date of publication. The Website *18th Century and Regency Thieves’ Cant* was used as the primary source for cant lexicon based on the author’s accreditation of sources and a cross-check for authenticity with the print edition of the 1811 *Dictionary of the vulgar tongue*. The three sources of the Website are: Nathan Bailey’s 1737 glossary *Collection of canting words* from *The new canting Dictionary*, the 1811 *Lexicon balatronicum* based on Francis Grose’s *Dictionary of the vulgar tongue*, and the glossary from the *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux*, published in 1819. The benefits of using these three sources are that they are drawn from both scholarship and personal experience in the field, and they were collated during the formative period of Jamaican English.

## 6 Presentation of data

Based on a systematic search of lexical items, and with due attention to the fact that there may be lexicon with orthographic differences that this study has failed to recognize, there are 75 words in contemporary Jamaican English that are plausibly derived from cant. Of these 75 words: 19 show little semantic change, 12 have undergone amelioration, 6 have been subject to pejoration, 15 have narrowed their

semantic denotation, 16 have expanded their semantic denotation, and 7 show evidence of multiple etymology.

| Words     | Semantic Category    |
|-----------|----------------------|
| 19        | Similar denotation   |
| 12        | Amelioration         |
| 6         | Pejoration           |
| 15        | Narrowing            |
| 16        | Expansion            |
| 7         | Multiple Etymologies |
| <b>75</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>         |

### Words with similar denotation

There are 19 words in contemporary Jamaican English that are plausibly derived from British cant, and still have the same or very similar denotation. These words are: *bill* (sword), *bit* (small coin), *buttock-broker* (pimp), *cog* (coin), *cut* (to speak), *dust* (money), *gang* (group), *huff* (bully, used as a noun and a verb), *fadge* (to do or mangle), *out-and-out* (an adverb meaning completely, and an adjective meaning indecent), *play* (to deceive), *rogues* (people who pilfer), *shabbaroon* (person of poor appearance), *shag-bag* (worthless man), *squab* (new-hatched bird), *steamer* (pipe), *toddy* (cocoa liquor), *tripe* (bowels or guts), and *wiles* (tricks). The fact that some of these words are also Standard English lexicon, for example *gang*, *rogues*, and *tripe*, may suggest that these particular elements of the cant lexicon came to Jamaica after their assimilation into standard English. However, the presence of other words that were not assimilated into standard English can be used to counter this argument, for example *bill*, *dust*, *fadge*, and *shabbaroon*.

Language change is both inevitable and constant, and although it occurs at different rates and times within the subsystems of a language, it is the one constant among all living languages (Millward, 1996). Both *toddy* (cocoa liquor) and *wiles* (tricks) are listed as “obsolete” in Cassidy and le Page’s *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, and have evidently passed out of common usage due to a natural process of language change. This may be due, in part at least, to the fact that they have not undergone any kind of semantic shift. In the Jamaican dictionary, the entry for *toddy* is accredited to a 1794 source that explains “if you expose the liquor [sc sap drawn from the coconut tree] in the sun, it will soon turn to vinegar; but, distilled in its ferment, it makes a spirit called *orroqua* or *rack*...and these trees being called in some places *toddie*, it is therefore called *toddie-rack*” (Cassidy & Le Page, 2002: 446). In the context of modern fermentation and distilling methods, it is unlikely that such a word will continue to exist unless it is subject to semantic change. As a case in point, the term

*toddie* or *toddy* is still used in varieties of modern British English, but it has undergone semantic expansion to include any liquor that is heated and served in the winter months as *hot-toddy*. Hence, semantic change is often imperative to the survival of a word in a particular language, a premise which is borne out perhaps by the ratio of 49 Jamaican English words that have altered their original meanings in cant to the 19 that bear the same or similar denotation.

### **Semantic amelioration**

Twelve words can be said to have undergone a relative improvement in the positive connotations associated with the signified. These words are: *aunt* (from the madam of a brothel to a stepmother), *blower* (from prostitute or mistress to a person who spends money freely), *bun* (from a rabbit or female genitalia to an affectionate term for a child or sweetheart), *buttock* (from a prostitute to female genitalia), *chats* (from lice to idle talk), *damber* (from rascal to vitality), *damper* (from a snack to vitality), *dandy prat* (from an insignificant person to a finely dressed person), *gypsies* (from a band of thieves to a secret language), *polt* (from an aggressive blow to a method for pounding coffee beans), *pound* (from a verb meaning to beat a person to a verb meaning to beat coffee beans), and *dock* (from a verb meaning to mete out punishment to a verb meaning to give a haircut).

Some of the words have clear links between the denotation in cant and in Jamaican English, for example, it is easy to see how the word *blower* went from meaning a prostitute or mistress to more generally one who spends money freely, and the connection between both *damber* (rascal) and *damper* (snack) in cant are easily linked with the notion of vitality in the Jamaican English word *dampa*. However, the motivating forces behind the semantic modification of some words is not easy to discern without contextual knowledge. For example, the cant word *dock* as a punishment for a prostitute who had been unfortunate enough to infect a member of the canting crew with a sexually transmitted disease is not easily associated with the Jamaican English word that means a haircut. However, when Grose (1811) describes the act of *docking* he specifies that “it consists in cutting off all their clothes, petticoats, shift and all, close to their stays, and then turning them into the street.” The description of a punishment that is closely associated with cutting helps to explain the Jamaican word *dock* as a close haircut. Similarly, the signification of the cant word *chats*, meaning lice, is not transparently connected to the verb *chat* or the noun *chatter* in Jamaican English without knowing the history of working class camaraderie, made famous in the trenches of the First World War when lice infested the damp, overcrowded trenches and soldiers would commonly sit and talk as they systematically killed the lice in their clothing. The association of one activity with the other improved the connotations of the word and after the war when the lice infestation abated, the word survived with its secondary signification.

### Semantic pejoration

Six words have undergone a process of pejoration. These words are: *bluff* (from large to clumsy), *booth* (from a house to a temporary dwelling), *cross* (from a dishonest practice to adversity), *crusty-beau* (from a person who uses cosmetics for a fine complexion to an illiterate person, or one of black complexion), *gab* (from the noun meaning mouth to the verb meaning to boast), and *wap* (from the verb meaning to copulate or beat to the verb meaning to flog). Relatively few words have been subject to semantic pejoration, and those few examples listed above have clear connections with their original signifier. The most interesting example is perhaps the cant word *crusty-beau*, which denotes a person that uses paint and cosmetics to obtain a fine complexion. The *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (Cassidy & Le Page, 2002) indicates that the head word alone is retained and this adjective *crusty* is a vague derogatory epithet meaning foolish, backward, or illiterate, and is used when “the state of the skin is taken as symptomatic of every kind of backwardness” (p. 133). Given the socioeconomic and colonial history of the island, Jamaica has experienced the systematic devaluation of “black” and glorification of “white” that is manifested in obsessive attempts by many people of African descent there to modify dark skin tones via the use of skin bleach and cosmetic powder (Alleyne, 2002: 224). This may explain how the Jamaican English word *crusty* gained its secondary meaning as “a very black, unpleasant complexion; contrasts with cool skin” (Cassidy & Le Page, 2002: 133), which is distinct from the original cant association with a fine complexion.

### Semantic narrowing

Fifteen words have been subject to semantic narrowing. These are: *barker* (from a noun meaning a salesman to the verb meaning to polish), *blind* (from a faint to an awning), *bounce* (from the verb meaning to bully to the verb meaning to beat), *crib* (from a house to a box), *dash* (from a tavern drawer to the verb meaning to throw), *ding* (from the verb meaning to throw away to tripe), *funk* (from the verb meaning to smoke or to stink through fear to a noun meaning poor tobacco), *gage* (from a quart pot to rum), *grab'd* (from the verbal past participle taken to a noun meaning a type of boathook), *Jack-sprat* (from a small person to a type of fish), *Jew* (from a financial dealer to a rich person), *Loggerhead* (from a stupid person to specific types of animal), *needle point* (from a sharper to a dragonfly), *puff guts* (from a fat man to a type of fish), and *sorrel* (from a red color to a specific plant). The most notable group in this list of findings is the relatively large number of words that have narrowed in meaning to refer to a specific type of animal or plant. This supports the hypothesis that there was contact between speakers of cant and the early settlers of the English colony

in Jamaica during the formative period when the new species of plant and animal were being assigned common names.

Many of the words that have undergone semantic narrowing from usage in cant to Jamaican English have also experienced phonological and/or orthographic change. Some of these changes are explained by function transfer, for example the cant noun *barker* who walks before the shop to invite customers – presumably polishing the merchandise and store front to invite business – to the Jamaican English verb *bark*, meaning to polish, and the past participle cant *grab'd* to the Jamaican English noun *graba*. The cant word *bounce* becomes *bongs* or *bongks* to reflect its phonological realization, and *ding* undergoes a process of reduplication which is common in Jamaican English grammar to form *ding-ding*.

### Semantic expansion

Sixteen words have been subject to semantic expansion, and these are: *badgers* (a specific type of gang to any dangerous person), *black guard* (from the dirty roguish boys of one geographical area to outrageous), *bumper* (from a full glass to a habitual drinker), *dawb* (from a bribe to the adjective meaning dirtying), *flog* (from the verb meaning to whip to the verb meaning to be beaten), *hard* (stale beer to the adjective meaning old), *hick* (from a silly person to nonsense), *nick* (from the verb meaning to win a dice to a noun referring to a throw of the dice), *pap* (from bread sauce to many foods of porridge consistency), *peck* (from victuals to eating), *prog* (from meat to the verb meaning to hunt for food), *sea crab* (from a sailor to an unidentified creature), *stoop* (from the pillory to a squatting position), *swipes* (from a ration of beer to the verb meaning to drink quickly), *three-legged mare* (from the gallows to a demon), and *yellow belly* (from an eel native to Lincolnshire to an animal with yellow coloring). The most interesting of these words is the cant description of the primitive three-post gallows as a *three-legged mare* that exists in Jamaican folklore as a demon called the *three-foot horse*. Cassidy and Le Page cite Cassidy's 1952 field work notes taken in the Parish of Hanover that describe a demon with "one front leg and two back, shape like coffin and a little man sits on it; Have fire travels with it; will kill on sight" (2002: 442). The obvious connection between the three posts/legs, the reaction of fear to the signified, and the resulting death of those who encounter it create a strong argument that speakers of cant have influenced Jamaican folklore.

Semantic expansion is influenced by multiple language contact situations, and there is evidence of influence from other languages in the origins of cant and at the interface of contact between cant and Jamaican English. The cant description of a full glass as a *bumper* owes its etymology to the French salutation to the pope *au bon père* typically made with a full glass. The phrase then undergoes further semantic expansion, and pejoration, in the Jamaican English word *bumpa* meaning a habitual rum drinker. The cant term for a sailor as a *sea-crab* is likely not the only source of the Jamaican



English *sea-anancy*, described by Cassidy and Le Page as “an unidentified creature - perhaps a sea-spider or spider crab” (p. 396) African folklore is likely to have passed to the Caribbean via speakers of West African languages.

### Multiple etymologies

Cassidy (1966) defines lexicon with multiple etymologies as “those words which seem to be derivable with equal plausibility from two or more of the languages known to have been in contact at the time of their formation” (p. 211). This classification seems suited to Jamaican English based on the significant evidence of language contact between speakers of multiple varieties of British English and different West African and Afro-Caribbean languages (Alleyne, 2002). The findings of this study show that at least seven words have plausible multiple etymologies (see the table below).

| Cant Source                                                   | Additional Source(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Jamaican English                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bumbo</i> , brandy, water, and sugar; female private parts | <i>Bumbu</i> (Zulu), female pubis; <i>A-bombo</i> (S.Leone), labia; <i>Bunda</i> (Brazilian Portuguese), bottom                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>Bumbo</i> , <i>Bombo</i> , female private parts                           |
| <i>Bung</i> , a purse, pocket or fob                          | (Twi), hole, cave, or den; <i>Bungu</i> (Hausa) nincompoop                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>Bungo</i> , an insulting term meaning very black                          |
| <i>Cunning Shaver</i> , an ingenious cheat                    | (Nicaraguan & Suriname Creoles), cunning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Cunny</i> , <i>Cunnie</i> , cunning, clever tricky                        |
| <i>Dum-found</i> , to beat soundly                            | <i>Duma</i> (Hausa), to thrash                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <i>Duma</i> , <i>Dumma</i> , to flog                                         |
| <i>Nan</i> , a servant-maid                                   | (Twi), grandparent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>Nana</i> , grandmother or any old woman, midwife, nursemaid               |
| <i>Pickaniny</i> , an infant                                  | <i>Pequeno (ninho)</i> (Portuguese), small (child)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>Pickney</i> , a very young child                                          |
| <i>Yam</i> , to eat heartily                                  | <i>Nam</i> (Wolof), to eat; <i>Nama</i> , <i>Namgo</i> (Fula), to eat; <i>na:ma</i> (Hausa), flesh, meat; <i>Unam</i> (Efik), flesh; <i>Enam</i> (Twi), flesh, meat of any animal; <i>Nyama</i> (Zulu) meat; Hausa <i>Namnam</i> , <i>Yamyam</i> (Hausa), cannibal; <i>Anyinam</i> , <i>-de</i> (Twi), species of yam | <i>Nyam</i> , both the verb to eat, and the noun for food, or specific foods |

Cassidy’s theory of multiple etymologies is supported by the findings of this study; specifically the Jamaican English word *nyam* that can be traced back to six different African languages in addition to British cant. Although adherents to monogenetic theories regarding the emergence of creole languages may argue that this and other forms are all derived from one common source, it is also likely that multiple sources existed in the formative period of Jamaican English and they contributed to a linguistic pool in which “features which are similar but not necessarily identical came

to reinforce each other, regardless of their sources, and produced modified variants of the originals in the emergent varieties” (Mufwene, 2001: 4-5). It is perhaps interesting to note that two of the cant forms listed in the table above, *bumbo* and *pickaniny*, are referred to as “negro” terms, affirming that cultural exchange between Europe and Africa was taking place in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but also perhaps questioning received notions about the direction of language transfer.

## 7 Conclusion

The findings of this investigation support the hypothesis that contact between speakers of British cant and inhabitants of trading settlements in Jamaica in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries can be verified by evidence of cant in the lexicon of modern Jamaican English. This theory of language transfer is further corroborated by socio-historic evidence concerning the escalating marginalization and criminalization of the non-propertied populations of the British Isles from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward that rendered them vulnerable to forced transportation to the Caribbean colonies. Even though it could be argued that cant lexicon may have influenced Jamaican English indirectly as a result of its assimilation into standard English, there are a number of cant terms in the Jamaican lexicon that have not been standardized, which points to direct transfer as a more plausible scenario. The direct language transfer theory is supported by the use of cant terms in the common names of Jamaican fauna and flora, which strongly suggests that speakers of cant were present in the formative period of the settlement. There is also evidence that cant speakers influenced Jamaican folklore – further reinforcing the argument for early language contact. Evidence of semantic change through amelioration, pejoration, narrowing and expansion, likewise suggests that cant lexis has been a stable part of Jamaican English lexicon for a period long enough to subject the words to natural language change. As earlier stated, this study does not aim to negate the considerable influence of African languages on modern Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole, but to explore the complexity of the language contact situation in the early plantation period in a way that acknowledges the input of marginalized varieties of British English. Using Mufwene’s model of competition and selection in the feature pool, this study also provides compelling evidence that challenges accepted notions of etymology from a single language. The findings of this investigation ultimately highlight the need to include marginalized varieties of British English in Caribbean linguistic study, and to recognize non-standard dialects and sociolects in language contact situations.

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# EXTENDING THE SOCIO-CULTURAL MATRIX OF CREOLIZATION IN THE CARIBBEAN AND THE REST OF THE AFRO-ATLANTIC TO INCLUDE THE PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH-LEXIFIER CREOLES

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## **1 Extending and expanding the Matrix of Afro-Atlantic creolization**

In the past, we have attempted to account for some of the differences between colonial era English- and French-lexifier Atlantic Creoles (and the relative absence of Spanish-lexifier Creoles) by tracking the shift from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist political economy, under the English in the mid 1600s, under the French in the late 1600s, and under the Spanish in the late 1700s (Faraclas et al., 2007). In this article, we expand the group of colonial powers considered to include not only the English, French, and Spanish, but also the Dutch and the Portuguese, thereby providing insights into the emergence of the Portuguese-lexifier Atlantic Creoles. Additionally, we expand the geographic area under consideration from the insular Caribbean to the entire Afro-Atlantic. Finally, we refine our original analysis to take into account differences within each European power's colonial enterprise, such as the tensions between the Portuguese Catholic ruling class and the Portuguese Sephardic merchant classes.

In our work, we attempt to acknowledge the fact that marginalized working peoples of African, Indigenous, and European descent and marginalized working women actively formulated, stubbornly advocated, and often successfully implemented their own political, economic, and cultural agendas throughout the history of the Afro-Atlantic and that this agency on the part of these marginalized peoples played a major role in the emergence of Afro-Atlantic Creole languages and cultures.

We also attempt to transgress the divisions of the Afro-Atlantic into the colonial enclaves of the Portuguese, the Spanish, the French, the Dutch, and the English in order to begin to identify the continua of political, economic, and ideological factors that constitute the Matrix which shaped the Creole Spaces from which all of the

languages of the Afro-Atlantic emerged. We therefore affirm that the commonly recognized continuities in the creolization of cultures across the entire region under all colonial powers must also be extended to language.

Our results help to answer such questions as:

- 1) Why do the results of creolization differ in different areas of the Afro-Atlantic?
- 2) Why are proto-West African Atlantic Creoles important but not sufficient predictors of Creole outputs, contra McWhorter (2000)?
- 3) Why can't the Creole Spaces in Réunion, Chota, Veracruz, and Chocó be meaningfully utilized to predict 'Classical' Creole outputs, contra Chaudenson (2001) and McWhorter (2000)?

## **2 Different Matrices / Creole Spaces yield different creolization outputs**

The emergence of the Atlantic Creoles has been a complex and dynamic process involving substrate, superstrate, universal, poly-genetic, and monogenetic mechanisms. The operation of these mechanisms has been further shaped by the multidimensional Matrix of political, economic, and ideological forces that resulted from the juxtaposed agendas of the largely European descended propertied classes and the largely African descended working classes of the region. As shown in Figure 1 below, the Creole Space in each colony was defined by a Matrix of political, ideological, and economic factors. These factors are the consequence of the different agendas pursued by both the European propertied classes and the largely African, Indigenous and female working classes.

### **Socio-Historical Matrix for Colonial Afro-Atlantic Creolization**

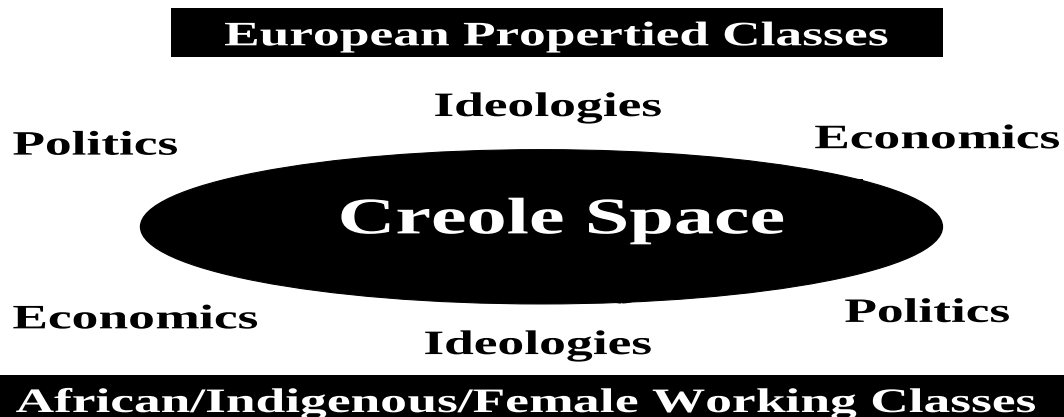


**Figure 1** The socio-historical Matrix for colonial Afro-Atlantic creolization (Faraclas et al., 2007)

There are two principal outputs from this Creole Space that typify the creolization of language and culture in the Afro-Atlantic:

- 1) a pre-racialized and pre-capitalist output, which resulted in what can be readily recognized as Africanized forms of European languages, such as Brazilian Portuguese and Caribbean Spanish
- 2) a racialized and capitalist output, which resulted in what could be considered to be Europeanized forms of African languages, such as Guené, Saramaccan, and other 'Classical Creoles'

First we consider the pre-racialized type of creolization that resulted in the Afro-Indigenization of European bloodlines, cultures, and languages. In this pre-capitalist Creole Space, propertied European descended peoples (the preponderant majority of whom were men) had only a tenuous hold on colonial enclaves, and these European men had children with African and Indigenous women. African and Indigenous descended peoples were experiencing the massive theft of their labor and land, with many becoming renegades and maroons. Non-propertied European descended peoples were experiencing indenture, with many becoming renegades and maroons with Indigenous and African descended peoples.

As represented in Figure 2 below, the pre-capitalist, pre-racialized Creole Space in each colony was defined by a political agenda of classical imperialism, an ideological agenda of Catholic universality, and an economic agenda of smallholder enterprise on the part of the mostly Iberian European propertied classes on the one hand, and a political agenda of inclusion, an ideological agenda of pluri-culturalism and pluri-lingualism, and an economic agenda of subsistence on the part of the mostly African, Indigenous, and female working classes on the other hand. The typical outputs of this pre-capitalist Creole Space were Africanized European languages such as Brazilian Portuguese and Caribbean Spanish, which resulted from broad but covert substrate influence; broad because they Africanized the entire society, but covert because African influences had to be hidden behind recognizably European structures.



## **PRE-RACIALIZED Atlantic Creolization: Broad but Covert Substrate Influence**

### **European Propertied Classes**

**Catholicism/Universalism**

**Classical Imperialism**

**Smallholder/*habitation***

**Africanized European Forms:  
Brazilian Portuguese &  
Caribbean Dialects of Spanish**

**Subsistence: Mainstream**

**Inclusion/Engagement**

**Inclusion/Pluri-Culturalism/Pluri-Identification**

**African/Indigenous/Female Working Classes**

**Figure 2** Pre-racialized, pre-capitalist Afro-Atlantic creolization

Next, we consider the racialized creolization that resulted in the Europeanization of African cultures and languages. In this capitalist Creole Space, propertied European descended peoples reacted to the largely African pre-capitalist subversion of the colonial project by imposing *apartheid* and absolute racialized labor discipline and by outlawing *co-habitation*. Non-propertied European descended peoples were co-opted by the European descended propertied classes to police racial divides, hunt escaped African slaves, and continue the theft of Indigenous land. African and Indigenous descended peoples mounted resistance to this new form of *apartheid*, and created separate Europeanized African ‘Classical Creole’ languages, cultures, and identities.

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, the capitalist, racialized Creole Space in each colony was defined by a political agenda of racialized exclusion, an ideological agenda of Calvinist elitism, and an economic agenda of agro-industrial capitalist plantation slavery on the part of the mostly Northern European propertied classes on the one hand, and a political agenda of inclusion turned inward on non-European descended communities, an ideological agenda of pluri-culturalism and pluri-lingualism in opposition to the imposition of European norms, and an economic agenda of subsistence pushed to the margins on the part of the mostly African, Indigenous, and female working classes on the other hand. The typical outputs of this capitalist Creole Space were Europeanized African languages that we commonly know as the ‘Classical Creoles’ such as Saramaccan, and Guené, which resulted from narrow but

overt substrate influence; narrow because they affected only the working classes, and overt because recognizably African structures could be deployed.



**Figure 3** Racialized, capitalist Afro-Atlantic creolization

### 3 Agendas

In the pre-racialized and pre-capitalist Creole Space, the largely African, Indigenous, and female working classes succeeded in containing and subverting the European colonial project and European cultures, languages, and bloodlines via extensive ethnic mixing, going renegade, and *marronage*. In the racialized and capitalist Creole Space, the largely African, Indigenous, and female working classes challenged colonial domination via (*grand-*, *petit-*, and *micro-*) *marronage*. In response to *apartheid*, they fostered the emergence of Afro-Atlantic identities, languages and cultures.

The agenda of the Spanish before 1800 was based on a classical / feudal ideology of empire as a centralized, urban, christianizing, civilizing mission, Catholic universalism, and smallholder enterprise. In the pre-racialized Creole Space, many working class Spanish joined Indigenous and African peoples as renegades and in *marronage* outside of colonial enclaves. Even in colonial enclaves, mixing and subversion of European culture and language predominated. The racialized Creole Space came very late to the Spanish colonies, at the end of the 1700s. This was too late for the creation of widespread and long-lasting Afro-Atlantic counter identities, cultures, and languages.

The agenda of the English before 1800 was based on Calvinist elitism and exclusion and a capitalist ideology of empire as an experiment in maximal labor extraction. This resulted in rigidly racialized slave societies, where there was no church for slaves. In the pre-racialized Creole Space, there was limited ethnic mixing, and a very rapid transition to agro-industrial capitalism. The racialized Creole Space came very early to the English colonies, at the middle of the 1600s. This early *apartheid* allowed for the creation of widespread and long-lasting Afro-Atlantic counter identities, cultures, and languages.

The agenda of the French before 1800 was the result of a contradictory colonial enterprise, that began by copying the Spanish Catholic / feudal model, but which rapidly transitioned to the Dutch / English racialized capitalist model, especially under the Huguenots, by the late 1600s. In the pre-racialized Creole Space, there was some mixing and some subversion of European culture. Many working class French joined Indigenous and African descended peoples as renegades outside colonial enclaves. In the racialized Creole Space this earlier subversion of European forms gave way to the creation of widespread and long-lasting Afro-Atlantic counter identities and languages.

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The agenda of the Dutch before 1800 and their strategic alliance with the Sephardim against the Spanish and the Portuguese transformed them into the main vectors of Calvinist elitism, the creators of the models and laws for rigidly racialized capitalist slave societies, and the main sponsors and protectors of the early English and French agro-industrial capitalist sugar colonies. In the pre-racialized Creole Space, there was very limited ethnic mixing, and a very rapid transition to agro-industrial capitalism. *Co-habitation*, going renegade, and *marronage* were brutally suppressed. The racialized Creole Space came very early to the Dutch colonies, by the middle of the 1600s. This early *apartheid* allowed for the creation of widespread and long-lasting Afro-Atlantic counter identities, cultures, and languages.

The agenda of the Portuguese before 1800 was based on a divergent colonial enterprise. In places, it was similar to the Spanish Catholic model, in others, especially under the Sephardim, it was similar to the English capitalist model, but with less racialization. In the pre-racialized Creole Space, many working class Portuguese Sephardim and Catholics joined Indigenous and African peoples as *lançados* and in *marronage*. Ethnic mixing and subversion of European culture was widespread, resulting in very large *mulatto* and *liberto* populations. In the racialized Creole Space earlier subversion of European forms gave way to the creation of widespread and long-lasting Afro-Atlantic counter identities and languages on the Upper and Lower Guinea Islands, but this process was reversed in Brazil.

#### 4 The factors that defined the Matrix which shaped the pre-1800 Creole Space

We have identified a preliminary set of 17 ideological, political, economic, social, cultural, and linguistic Matrix Factors whose increasing weight can be correlated to the transition from a pre-racialized pre-capitalist Creole Space to a racialized and capitalist Creole Space before 1800. This set of Matrix Factors is by no means definitive, and we welcome suggestions for adding, subtracting, or modifying any one of the factors included. This set of Matrix Factors differs from others proposed in the past because: 1) it does not attribute linear causality or monolithic primacy to any one factor; 2) it includes factors which encode the agency of marginalized peoples (women, renegades, maroons, peoples of African and Indigenous descent, non-propertyed peoples of European descent, etc.); and 3) it conceptualizes these factors as part of a *gestalt*, that reaches critical mass when a sufficient number of factors are weighted sufficiently to trigger a sufficient shift in the contours of the Matrix to bring about a qualitative shift in the shape of the Creole Space, which results in a qualitative shift in the outputs of the process of creolization (such as the shift from what could be considered to be Africanized European languages to what could be considered to be Europeanized African languages).

These Matrix Factors, which are listed in Figure 4 below, can provisionally each be assigned a weight (in increments of .25) from 0 (absence) to 1 (complete presence) for a particular colonial society / space (not language!) at a particular time in its history. In this article, we focus on the colonial period up to the end of the seventeenth century, not because we believe that the period after 1800 is irrelevant or even somehow unimportant with regard to the process of creolization, which we see as a

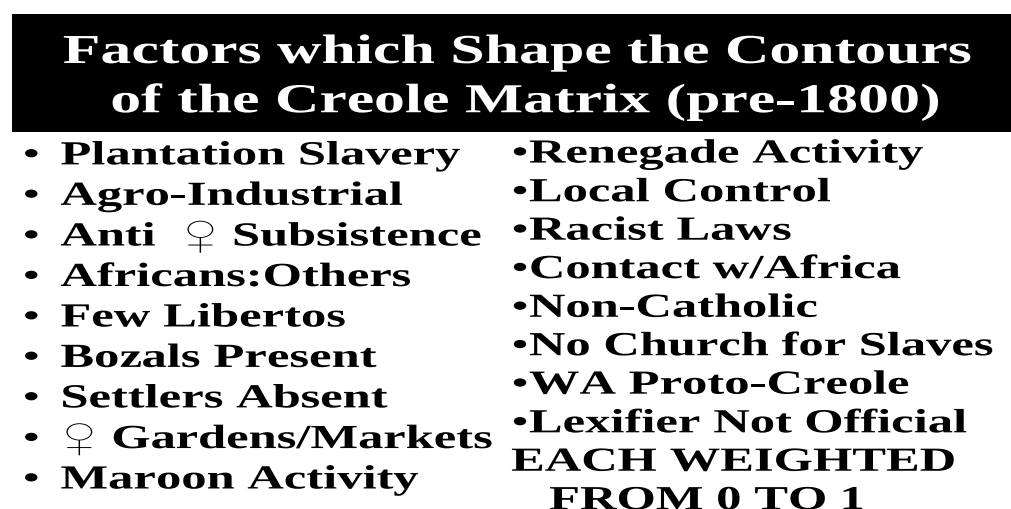
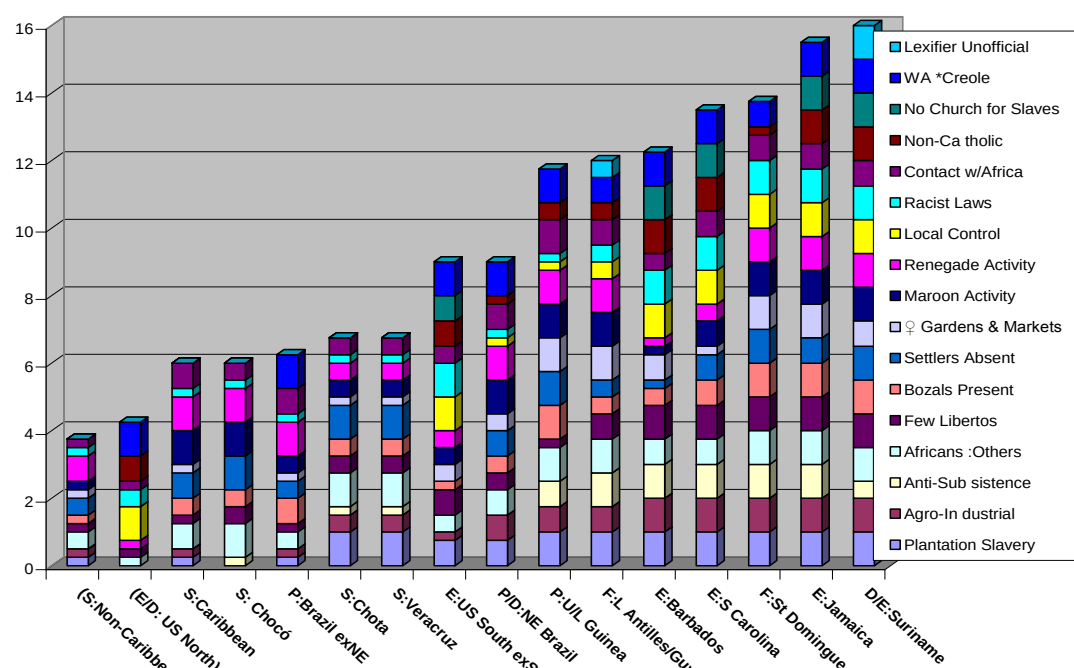


**Figure 4** Factors defining the contours of the Afro-Atlantic Matrix before 1800

process that is still very much alive in the Afro-Atlantic. We limit ourselves to the pre-1800 period, because after 1800, the fundamental changes in the dynamics of the region that are ushered in by the Haitian Revolution, the adoption by the Spanish and the Portuguese of the Northern European racialized capitalist imperial model, the abolition of slavery, and the advent of imperial discourses of the ‘white man’s burden’ (along with universal education, etc.) call for a radical re-shuffling of the deck with a host of new Matrix Factors coming into play.

## 5 Assigning Matrix Factor weights to different pre-1800 Afro-Atlantic societies

If we assign weights from zero to one for each of these Matrix Factors for sixteen different colonial societies / spaces prior to 1800, we obtain the results depicted in Figure 5 below. Note that the colonial societies where the aggregate weights for all Matrix Factors are lowest (less than a total of 4 out of a possible maximum aggregate weight of 17), are the societies where the effects of creolization were minimal (the non-Caribbean Spanish colonies, the northern North American colonies of New England, New Amsterdam, New Jersey, etc.).



<<<<<AFRICANIZED EUROPEAN LGS <<<<<>>>>>EUROPEANIZED AFRICAN LGS.>>>>>

**Figure 5** The aggregate weights of the 17 Matrix Factors for 16 different colonial societies (S=Spanish; P=Portuguese, F=French, E=English, D=Dutch)

In Figures 6a-c below, the aggregate weights for 21 different colonial societies / spaces are compared. From these results, it becomes apparent that these colonial societies cluster around three plateaux in terms of their aggregate Matrix Factor

weightings: 1) a low plateau of around 6 out of a maximum weight of 17, that typifies colonial societies that experienced pre-capitalist, pre-racialized creolization from which emerged what could be considered to be Africanized forms (or dialects) of European languages (the Spanish Caribbean, the south of Portuguese Brazil, etc.); 2) a high plateau of around 12 and above, that typifies colonial societies that experienced capitalist, racialized creolization from which emerged what could be considered to be Europeanized forms of African languages or ‘Classical Creoles’ (Dutch Surinam, English Jamaica, the Portuguese Upper and Lower Guinea Islands, etc.); and 3) an intermediary plateau of around 9, that typifies colonial societies from which emerged what could be considered to be ‘partially restructured varieties’ or ‘semi-creoles’ (the Northeast of Portuguese Brazil, the Southern English colonies in North America, the French colonies in West Africa, etc.) (Holm, 2004). It is interesting to note that under the same colonial power, all three of these outcomes are possible (e.g. under the Portuguese the South of Brazil vs. the Northeast of Brazil vs. the Upper and Lower Guinea Islands).

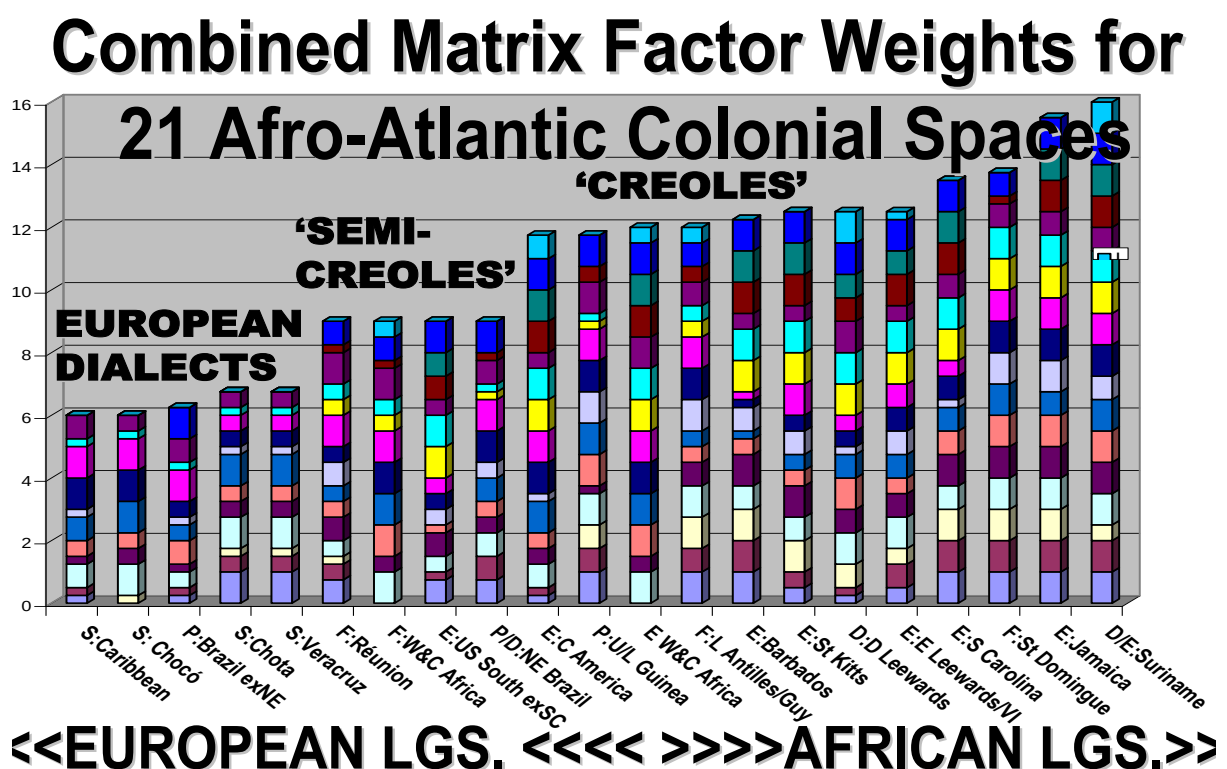


**Figure 6a** Aggregate Matrix Factor weights for 21 different colonial societies (S=Spanish; P=Portuguese, F=French, E=English, D=Dutch)

# COMBINED MATRIX WEIGHTS = SHAPE OF CREOLE SPACE = TYPE OF OUTPUT

## AFRICANIZED DIALECTS OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

|                                              |                 |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Spanish: Greater Antilles, N SA Coast</b> | <b>6</b>        |
| <b>PORTUGUESE: BRAZIL EXC. NORTHEAST</b>     | <b>6.25</b>     |
| <b>SPANISH: CHOCÓ, CHOTA, VERACRUZ</b>       | <b>6.0-6.75</b> |

## 'SEMI-CREOLES'

|                                                 |          |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>PORTUGUESE: NE BRAZIL</b>                    | <b>9</b> |
| <b>FRENCH: RÉUNION</b>                          | <b>9</b> |
| <b>French: French West &amp; Central Africa</b> | <b>9</b> |
| <b>English: US South except South Carolina</b>  | <b>9</b> |

Figure 6b Aggregate Matrix Factor weights for 21 different colonial societies (S=Spanish; P=Portuguese, F=French, E=English, D=Dutch)

## 'CREOLES' (EUROPEANIZED AFRICAN LGS.)

|                                                   |              |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>PORTUGUESE: U &amp; L GUINEA</b>               | <b>11.75</b> |
| <b>English: British West &amp; Central Africa</b> | <b>12</b>    |
| <b>French: Lesser Antilles and Guyanne</b>        | <b>12</b>    |
| <b>English: Barbados</b>                          | <b>12.25</b> |
| <b>English: St. Kitts</b>                         | <b>12.5</b>  |
| <b>Dutch: Dutch Leewards: ABC Islands</b>         | <b>12.5</b>  |
| <b>English: British Leewards &amp; Virgin Is.</b> | <b>12.5</b>  |
| <b>English: S Carolina</b>                        | <b>13.5</b>  |
| <b>French: Saint Domingue</b>                     | <b>13.75</b> |
| <b>English: Jamaica</b>                           | <b>15.5</b>  |
| <b>Dutch: Suriname</b>                            | <b>16</b>    |

Figure 6c Aggregate Matrix Factor weights for 21 different colonial societies (S=Spanish; P=Portuguese, F=French, E=English, D=Dutch)

## 6 Testing Chaudenson (2001) and McWhorter (2000) against the expanded Matrix

In recent years, very strong claims have been made by creolists such as Robert Chaudenson (2001) and John McWhorter (2000) concerning the nature and emergence of the 'Classical Creole' languages. On the assumption that the socio-historical conditions in the French Indian Ocean territory of Réunion prior to 1800 were typical of those from which the 'Classical' Atlantic Creole languages emerged, Chaudenson formulates a radically superstratist theory which holds that all of the Atlantic Creoles

should be considered to be Africanized dialects of their European lexifier languages. But in Figure 6 above, we find that the socio-historical conditions in Réunion prior to 1800 were by no means typical of those that gave rise to the ‘Classical’ Atlantic Creole languages. The aggregate Matrix Factor rating for Réunion is 9 out of a maximum of 17, which is the weight that typifies the societies from which ‘semi-creoles’ emerged, rather than the weight that typifies the societies from which the ‘Classical Creoles’ emerged (12 and above out of a maximum of 17). In fact, most descriptions of Réunionnais reveal it to be a partially restructured variety, instead of a ‘Classical Creole’ (Holm, 2004). This means that the fundamental example and socio-historical model upon which Chaudenson has constructed his theory is an inappropriate one.

McWhorter (2000) adopts a radically monogenetic position, based on his contention that the socio-historical conditions in the Spanish plantation and mine colonies of Chota (Ecuador), Veracruz (Mexico) and Chocó (Colombia) were those from which ‘Classical Creoles’ should have emerged, but didn’t. He claims that the only way to explain this anomaly (the ‘Missing Spanish Creoles’) is the absence of a proto-Spanish West African pidgin / Creole because the Spanish held no slave trading stations along the coast of West and Central Africa before the late 1700s. According to McWhorter, all of the Atlantic Creoles are therefore monogenetically descended from a proto- Afro-Portuguese pidgin / Creole that was used in the original slave factories on the coast and which was eventually relexified to English, French, and Dutch as the Portuguese monopoly over the slave trade was broken by the establishment of English, French, and Dutch slave trading stations there.

In Figure 7a-b below the Matrix Factor weights are calculated for Chota, Veracruz and Chocó, based on McWhorter’s own description of the socio-historical conditions that held in those three societies. Where information was lacking in McWhorter’s accounts, we turned to Lipski (2005). In all cases, whenever there was some doubt as to the weight to be assigned, we chose to err in support of McWhorter, that is, we selected the highest probable value for the factor in question. As shown in Figure 7, even with this built-in bias in his favor, McWhorter’s assertion that the socio-historical conditions in Chota, Veracruz and Chocó were those that typified societies from which the ‘Classical Creoles’ emerged (an aggregate Matrix Factor weight of 12 or more out of a maximum of 17) cannot be substantiated. With an aggregate Matrix Factor weight of around 6 out of a maximum of 17, the reality is that the socio-historical conditions in these three colonial spaces were those that typified societies from which could be considered to be Africanized dialects of European languages emerged (such as the Caribbean dialects of Spanish). Lipski’s (2005) descriptions of the varieties spoken in Chota, Veracruz and Chocó today confirm this: they are all



very similar to Caribbean Spanish. Just as is the case with Chaudenson, McWhorter appears to have erected an entire theoretical framework based on inappropriate examples and socio-historical models. We do not reject the possibility that a proto-Afro-Portuguese pidgin / Creole played a role in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles. In fact, we include it in the list of Matrix Factors (listed in Figure 4 as ‘WA Proto-Creole’), *but only as one factor among seventeen.*

| <b>McWhorter’s ‘Missing Spanish Creoles’</b> |                        |                           |                     |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>M = McWhorter 2000; L = Lipski 2005</b>   |                        |                           |                     |
| <b>SPACES<br/>FACTORS</b>                    | <b>Chota-<br/>6.75</b> | <b>Veracruz-<br/>6.75</b> | <b>Chocó-<br/>6</b> |
| <b>Plantation Slavery</b>                    | <b>1</b>               | <b>1 (M10)</b>            | <b>0 (mining)</b>   |
| <b>Agro-Industrial</b>                       | <b>.5 (M10)</b>        | <b>.5 (M10)</b>           | <b>0</b>            |
| <b>Anti-Subsistence</b>                      | <b>.25</b>             | <b>.25</b>                | <b>.25</b>          |
| <b>Africans:Others</b>                       | <b>1</b>               | <b>1</b>                  | <b>1</b>            |
| <b>Few Libertos</b>                          | <b>.5 (L48)</b>        | <b>.5 (L48)</b>           | <b>.5 (L48)</b>     |
| <b>Bozals Present</b>                        | <b>.5 (L48)</b>        | <b>.5 (L48)</b>           | <b>.5 (L48)</b>     |
| <b>Settlers Absent</b>                       | <b>1 (M7)</b>          | <b>1 (M7)</b>             | <b>1 (M7)</b>       |
| <b>♀ Gardens/Mkts.</b>                       | <b>.25</b>             | <b>.25</b>                | <b>0</b>            |

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**Figure 7a** Matrix Factor weights for the societies from which McWhorter (2000) claims the ‘Missing Spanish Creoles’ should have emerged

| <b>McWhorter’s ‘Missing Spanish Creoles’</b> |                        |                           |                     |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>M = McWhorter 2000; L = Lipski 2005</b>   |                        |                           |                     |
| <b>SPACES<br/>FACTORS</b>                    | <b>Chota-<br/>6.75</b> | <b>Veracruz-<br/>6.75</b> | <b>Chocó-<br/>6</b> |
| <b>Maroon Activity</b>                       | <b>.5 (L120)</b>       | <b>.5 (L120)</b>          | <b>1 (L120)</b>     |
| <b>Renegade Activity</b>                     | <b>.5 (L120)</b>       | <b>.5 (L120)</b>          | <b>1 (L120)</b>     |
| <b>Local Control</b>                         | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>       | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>          | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>    |
| <b>Racist Laws</b>                           | <b>.25 (L48)</b>       | <b>.25 (L48)</b>          | <b>.25 (L48)</b>    |
| <b>Contact w/Africa</b>                      | <b>.5</b>              | <b>.5</b>                 | <b>.5</b>           |
| <b>Non-Catholic</b>                          | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>       | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>          | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>    |
| <b>No Slave Church</b>                       | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>       | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>          | <b>0 (L48-9)</b>    |
| <b>Proto-WA Creole</b>                       | <b>0</b>               | <b>0</b>                  | <b>0</b>            |
| <b>Lexifier Unofficial</b>                   | <b>0</b>               | <b>0</b>                  | <b>0</b>            |

**Figure 7b** Matrix Factor weights for the societies from which McWhorter (2000) claims the ‘Missing Spanish Creoles’ should have emerged

## 7 Conclusion

By expanding our vision of creolization to encompass the entire Afro-Atlantic and to incorporate the agency of marginalized peoples we find that:

- 1) different creolization outcomes can be accounted for in terms of differing socio-historical Matrices and Creole Spaces
- 2) the ‘Missing Spanish Creoles’ can be explained by a cluster of socio-historical Matrix Factors including, but not exclusive to, the lack of Spanish slave factories in West Africa
- 3) Réunion, Chota, Veracruz, and Chocó cannot be used to test hypotheses concerning the ‘Classical’ Afro-Atlantic Creoles

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**CONTACT, CONTINUITY, CONVERGENCE, AND COMPLEXITY IN  
CARIBBEAN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY**



## MEDITATION ON A STUDENT'S JOURNAL PAGE

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*'Direction requires Critical thought. Movement, however, requires inspiration. Leadership requires balance. Where we were, are and are going is our own choice.'*

Yekengale,  
Jamaican Musician and Community Activist  
(Personal email correspondence)

*Nat evriting skala noo ii larn fram tiicha.*  
[Not everything the scholar knows was taught by the teacher.]  
Guyanese Proverb

Perhaps one of the greatest ironies of our various social experiments is that territorial outlines – borders, or delineating boundaries – which we cling to in order to provide definition often defeat their purpose, causing more confusion than definition and, in their quest to preserve integrity, often become barriers to human creativity. The concept of ‘a language’ is one such bounded space. In the real world, our language borders have a natural fuzziness. Being in transparent flux and fluidity, they therefore challenge our various illusions of integrity. In the social system we call ‘education’, this challenge to integrity has resulted in the necessity for such initiatives as Language Rights Charters and Language Policies. In the Caribbean context of the twenty-first century, as peoples now free from colonization, we tentatively claim but carefully guard the territories within our borders not only to protect ourselves from further colonization, but also perhaps to ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of our former colonizers.

The hierarchical nature of the educational establishment is sacrosanct. The teacher-student relationship is the most visible manifestation of that hierarchy in the sense that educational outcomes tend to be perceived by the general public as predominantly the product of this relationship. Those at the upper levels of the hierarchy are less visible to public view, although it is they who have considerable say in the nature of the relationship at the lower levels. But an interesting paradox exists, in that the ultimate value of educational hierarchies are manifest only if their dissolution is envisioned and

accomplished in the project of human development, the word ‘development’ itself being fraught with dangerous misinterpretations.

In this meditation on my student’s journal page I assume the absolute worth of the educational hierarchy as necessary to the integrity and protection of all involved – the spectrum of educational policy makers and theorizers, curriculum developers, teachers and students – all engaged in a liberating and humanizing project made possible because of our capacity for ‘language’.

As a proud signatory to the recently drafted ‘*Charter on Language Rights and Language Policy for the Creole Speaking Caribbean*’, I find my student’s journal page, eagerly submitted to me about four years ago, to be timely and fresh. We will call him K. His school is a relatively large high school located in a rural community in Jamaica, but its students come from both urban and rural areas. I was K’s Language Arts teacher in Grade 9 (Third Form). I had encouraged my students to keep journals and gave them the freedom to share them with me as often as they pleased. In this linguistic territory, the fuzzy outline between the so-called ‘English lexifier Creole’ varieties and ‘English’ is reinforced, as we all know, by fiercely guarded notions of ‘Standard’ English. K had been absent for a few days, but when he eventually showed up, he insisted that I look at his journal entry. It was on the theme of ‘environment’ that I had given them, in keeping with the curriculum themes for Grade 9. K’s journal page is carried in full below:

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- 1 My envirimment
- 2 I live in a peacefull area. But sometime the gunman them pass by and upsite the peoples.
- 3 Like shoot one or two mans sometime man disrespect the order But verryone in the
- 4 communitate rate me. <sup>mean respect</sup> But stell one day one man disrespect me after me go to the
- 5 river to beath a man dirty up the water on me so me they wate on the water Because the
- 6 water run the man they couse me sister so me answer the man gentle. and say my youth a
- 7 what wrong with you so he come up in a me face so me push him out. so he take up a
- 8 bigstone so me run off an go up a me yard if me machete But by me reach me mother try to
- 9 stop me But the temper could not stop. Me run in A me room an draw up me machete and
- 10 went me come out me mother ask me a what. me could not tell him what happen then me
- 11 run down the street and to the river me take up two big stone and two battle as <sup>me</sup> go down
- 12 they me see him an give him <sup>the</sup> battles after <sup>me</sup> give him <sup>the</sup> battles their come the bigstones
- 13 and then me cut him and he head deed they beald and he run off as fast as him could one of
- 14 the battles buss in a if head two week after the man and beag if the war if done But me did
- 15 bill a fishgun with two space if shot him after that me hear say the man a take<sub>ing</sub> cocaine.
- 16 [see appendix]

The following very brief analysis of K’s text underscores the dilemma of students in Creole-speaking environments whose spoken language is invisible to those who decide what are the legitimate ‘bounded spaces’ for the language of the classroom. A ‘traditional’ teacher is trained to ‘measure’ the student’s linguistic output in terms of English only. If, on the other hand, the teacher were to examine K’s text considering his linguistic repertoire, a very different picture of competence emerges. K is in fact

moving towards competence in two linguistic codes, rather than, as a traditional teacher might assess, showing ‘deficiencies’ in English, as the table below shows:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BRIEF ANALYSIS OF K’S LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRE AS MANIFESTED IN HIS JOURNAL PAGE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| K’S COMPETENCE IN BOTH ENGLISH AND JAMAICAN CREOLE GRAMMARS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| PRONOUNS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| The English subject pronouns, ‘I’, (which he uses once, at the beginning of his text) and ‘he’ (lines 8, 15)<br>The English object pronoun, ‘him’, (lines 11, 13, 14, 17)<br>K uses the word, ‘me’ as subject pronoun 17 times. On 17 other occasions, K uses the Jamaican pronoun, ‘mi’, but since he is being taught literacy in English only, he uses an English word that approximates to the Jamaican word he needs and spells it according to English convention. |
| SIGNALLING PLURALITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| K uses the English -s ending to signal plural forms twice: battles, bigstones<br>He also uses Creole conventions for signalling plural on all other occasions, e.g., line 1, ‘ <i>the gunman them</i> ’ using the English pronoun ‘ <i>them</i> ’ (which is the written word he knows which sounds as close as possible to the Jamaican ‘ <i>dem</i> ’)                                                                                                                 |
| SIGNALLING VERB TENSE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| The Creole zero marker indicating the simple past is used consistently. In lines 6 and 14, K writes ‘ <i>they</i> ’ which sounds as close as possible to the Jamaican ‘ <i>de</i> ’ which is used to signal the present and past continuous in Jamaican; ‘the man they couse me sister,’ ‘he head deed they beald’<br>[JC: <i>Di man de kos mi sista</i> ; E: The man is/was cursing my sister]<br>[JC: <i>Im hed did de bliid</i> ; E: His head was bleeding]          |
| PREPOSITIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| In lines 5 and 9 K uses the English pronoun ‘to’ correctly.<br>In lines 9, 16 and 17, K writes ‘ <i>if</i> ’ instead of ‘ <i>fi</i> ’. Is this a manifestation of dyslexia? Or is it that K uses the English sight word he knows that comes closest to representing the word he needs.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| K’S KNOWLEDGE OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| K uses capital B consistently throughout the text to signal the beginning of clauses: ‘Because the water run the man they couse me sister.’ ‘But the temper could not stop.’                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| K’S KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONVENTIONS OF ENGLISH SPELLING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| K’s failed attempt to write his experience in English as he is being taught to do suggests that he may be near monolingual in Jamaican Creole. However, he has spelled most of the words of this text using English spelling conventions correctly. For example, he correctly spells a word as complex as ‘disrespect’ which he is unlikely to pronounce the English way.                                                                                               |

In these few examples, K’s failure to use the correct English forms may not necessarily mean that he has not been taught the English forms, but that he is *thinking* in Jamaican in the construction of this text recounting his lived experience and *not* in English. What K has obviously NOT been taught is that in the education system there is a boundary between the two linguistic codes and that his correctly applied Creole grammar is NOT acceptable in English text.



Unlike a mono-lingual speaker of English, or bilingual speaker who is taught literacy in his home language, K's literacy development is compromised in ways that can have far-reaching negative effects on his language development. In this 'English-only' writing class in which this ostensibly 'progressive' journal assignment is included, the integrity of K's natural thought processes is violated. K does not have an avenue for the literate expression of his spoken language. At every step, he is forced to use the English forms he remembers in order to express what he is thinking and remembering. In this particular assignment, he is neither developing his own vernacular, nor learning English. This activity does not promote creativity, but confusion. Yet, journal keeping has been found to be one of the most powerful activities for cognitive development, since it employs writing to develop thought. By forcing K into a mono-literate English mode, the educational establishment is severely compromising not only his cognitive development but also his literacy development since he has no orthography for writing the language he speaks.

I had written at the bottom of K's journal page: *"This is an experience you will not forget. You are writing in Jamaican Language, so you need to learn how to spell Jamaican Language properly. Good work."* This comment was written in the confidence that I was teaching in a Caribbean territory where a Language Education Policy had been ratified in Parliament, acknowledging the bilingual reality of Jamaica. In this particular territory, not only had the colonial practice of 'English only' begun to give way to the inclusion of the popular vernacular as a legitimate school language, but the Ministry of Education and Culture had also approved an experimental bilingual education project at the primary level that was in full progress at the time that K had submitted his journal.

The vast majority of Caribbean teachers are confronted with the reality of students like K who, demonstrating literacy levels far below their grade level are sorely short-changed under the current educational arrangements. Because I am somewhat bilingual in both Jamaican and English, I was able to decode K's text, hearing his Jamaican voice. It is this voice that is not valued in the English-only classroom; it is this voice that is ultimately expected to be suppressed in the 'transition' from the vernacular to English.

In our 'English-only' classroom, K's writing is devalued as lacking in competence in English. The ingenuity, passion and skill he demonstrates in accurately recounting the event, proudly presenting it as an expression of manhood challenged and proven, is in danger of being overlooked in the teacher's quest to make him write in 'Standard' English. In our English-only classroom, the teacher is required to respond in English in the journal (as I did), thereby rendering K's experience, at best, an exotic and interesting departure from 'target' performance. If K's writing were to be 'graded' for competence in school language, K would earn a failing grade.

A few years after leaving that Jamaican school and returning to my home country, I created two texts for the purpose of presenting the virtues of the Jamaican Language Education Policy to tertiary level teachers at a School Seminar at the University of Guyana – The texts were two versions of K’s journal page, one in Jamaican, the other a translation of this into English, conferring upon myself the role of border guard *par excellence* at the boundary between the two distinct territories of Jamaican Creole and Standard English. The texts are rendered below side by side:

### **Mi enviroment**

Mi liv ina wahn piisful ierriya. Bot somtaim di gonman dem paas bai ahn opset di piipl, laik shat wan ar tuu manz. Somtaim man disriispek di aada. Bot evribadi ina di komuunitii riet mi, miin riispek.

Bot stil, wahn die, wahn man disriispek mi aafta mi go a riva go bied. Wahn man dorti op di waata an mi. So mi de wiet an di waata bikaa di waata ron. Di man de kos mi sista; so mi ansa di man gentl ahn se, “Mai yuut, a wa wrang wid yu?”

So im kom op ina mi fies. So mi push im out. So im tek op wahn big stuon. So mi ron aaf ahn go op a mi yaad fi mi mashiet.

Bot bai mi rich, mi mada chrai stap mi. Bot di tempa kud nat stap. Mi ron ina mi ruum ahn jraa mi mashiet ahn wen mi kom ou mi mada aks mi a wa. Mi kud nat tel im wa-apn til mi ron dong di schriit ahn to di riva. Mi tek op tuu bigstuon ahn tuu batl.

Az mi go dong de, mi si im ahn giv im di batl.

Aafta mi giv im di batl, den dier kom di bigstuon ahn den mi kot im, ahn im ed did de bliid, ahn im ron aaf az faas az im kud. Wan a di batl bos in a fi im ed. Tuu wiik aafta di man (kom) ahn beg fi di waar fi don. Bot mi did bil wahn fishgon wid tuu spies fi shat im. Aafta dat mi ier se di man a tek kuokien.

### **My environment**

I live in a peaceful area. But sometimes the gunmen pass by and upset the people. For example, they shoot one or two men. Sometimes men disrespect the order. But everyone in the community thinks highly of me, I mean, they respect me.

But in spite of that, one day, a man disrespected me when I went to the river to bathe. A man muddied the water. So I waited for the water since it ran. The man cursed my sister. So I answered the man gently and said, “My youth what is wrong with you?”

So he confronted me in a hostile manner. So I pushed him. So he took up a big stone. So I ran off and went home for my machete.

But when I arrived my mother tried to stop me. But the temper could not stop. I ran into my room and took up my machete, and when I came out my mother asked me what was the matter. I could not tell her until I ran down the street and to the river. I took up two big stones and two bottles.

As soon as I went down there, I saw him and flung the bottles at him.

After I flung the bottles at him then the big stones followed, and then I cut him and his head was bleeding, and he ran off as fast as he could. One of the bottles had burst in his head. Two weeks later, the man came and begged for the war to be finished. But I had built a fishgun with two spaces to shoot him. After that I heard that the man was a cocaine user.

At this seminar I explained that the Jamaican Language Education Policy makes a generous concession to the inherited colonial education system, which holds English as the ultimate ‘target’ for literacy and academic development in the Jamaican classroom. The policy is fundamentally based upon the premise that we need to address the language issue in new and different ways because the students are failing *in English*. There is no expressed concern that the Jamaican language is not consciously being developed in the school system. The Jamaican Language Education Policy executive summary begins as follows:

The unsatisfactory performance of students in language and literacy at all levels of the Jamaican educational system, and its accompanying effects on language competence and on the potential for human development in the wider society, have perpetually been matters of concern. In an attempt, once again, to provide solutions while responding appropriately to developing trends in the Caribbean region and beyond, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEY&C) has chosen to commence by formulating a national policy on language education.

In the real world outside the classroom, K’s brush with the man at the riverside would have real repercussions in his community. A classroom that legitimizes this experience and makes room for K to write about it meaningfully would develop the Language Arts in school in the service of a notion of community where the vernacular has fundamental legitimacy, and to aid in K’s increasing maturity as a member of his community. The connection between home, community and school would be an organic engagement where language boundaries are delineated through meaningful lived experience. This is the quantum leap that a full bilingual education process would enable. How wide K’s real-world borders are depends on the extent to which we give his own voice the freedom to express itself. The Jamaican Language Education Policy also includes a clause that opens the way for this to happen by prescribing that by the end of their secondary schooling, all students should have learned the script for representing their vernacular. In keeping with the Barbuda proposals (1993), one of the points of Article 8.3 of the policy document Language Goals in schools states that: schools should recognise that SJE and JC are equally valid and regard bilingualism as a positive attribute; produce secondary school graduates who can - use Standard Jamaican English for a variety of purposes; - *use and understand Jamaican Creole in oral and **written** forms*; (this writer’s emphasis in italics.)

For K to translate his experience into an English voice is a different engagement from giving written expression to his own voice. Indeed, the quality of his translation into English also depends on the access he has had to English; and his capacity to access English as a second language depends on the level of development of his Jamaican. This envisions additive bilingualism, rather than the subtractive bilingualism that is currently taking place in schools in most parts of the English lexifier Creole speaking Caribbean territories.

In my interaction with teachers in Guyana, I have often heard that some school principals believe that preventing the students from speaking Guyanese and refraining from speaking to them in Guyanese is an answer to the problem of poor literacy development. This is a recipe for subtractive bilingualism. Taken to its logical extreme it unrealistically envisions an eventual eradication of the use of the Creole in the classroom. Every teacher knows that even within the ‘English-only’ Language Arts class, it is quite impossible to prevent the use of Creole, let alone eradicate it.

This meditation on K’s journal page leads us to an inevitable question: In spite of carefully worded Language Policies, how can Language Arts teachers of monolingual or near monolingual speakers of the vernaculars in our high schools relinquish their current roles as guardians of judgmental prisons that do violence against students’ real attempts at creativity, without the necessary changes being made at the top levels of the educational hierarchy? The January Summary Charter provides a promising beginning to the formulation of a response to this challenge. Under the heading ‘Education in Schools’, the Charter states:

- *Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language communities of the territory where it is provided.*
- *Education must help to maintain and develop the languages spoken by the language communities of the territory where it is provided.*
- *Initial instruction in one’s first language is crucial as it enhances conceptual development, language acquisition and development, learning in general, and education of the child.*

In his critique of assessment, Eisner (2002) writes “Each student’s work will need to be appraised on its own terms. A common cookie cutter criterion will no longer be appropriate.” This statement has interesting correspondences with Robert Le Page’s caution about us “seeing any language simply as a closed and finite rule system” (Christie, 2001: 2) and we are challenged to re-assess how we evaluate our students’ language development and how we teach language. Our norm referenced assessments based on notions of ‘Standard English’ begin to sound like veritable dinosaurs. Furthermore, if we are to avoid making the mistakes of our former colonizers, we also need to be cautious about developing norm referenced assessments for an ideal

‘Standard’ Creole. Eisner also asks: “Can public appetite for discrete certainty in assessment be satisfied by interpretive assessment practices? What vision of education must a public hold to accept less discrete indicators? Can a rationally oriented meritocracy embrace such a vision?” (Eisner, 2002: 210)

Language education in the Creole-Speaking Caribbean stands at an interesting crossroads: There is the road leading to ‘English-only’ and the illusion of belonging to an international community with its accompanying hierarchies of privilege; and there is the other road leading to the Creole-speaking world with its challenges of definition, and its promises of genuine expression, local solidarity among communities and the possibilities of empowerment by means of access to learning through one’s own language, including the learning of other languages. We teachers at the visible end of the hierarchy stand at the crossroads awaiting the decisions of the folks at the top.

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# CARIBBEAN STANDARD ENGLISH: “HOW TO EXPLAIN IT NUH!”

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## 1 Introduction

This paper found its genesis in one written for the Caribbean without Borders conference at the University of Puerto Rico in 2010. That paper, entitled “Caribbean Standard English and CSME: is there a link?” sought to outline aspects of a language plan necessary for Caribbean integration. It also suggested the use of Caribbean Standard English (CSE) as a regional lingua franca. The current work seeks to further refine the notion of Caribbean Standard English, with the purpose of locating English within the context of the integrated speech community of the Caribbean. This kind of contextualization is important to further policy development in areas such as education and language for business. The paper also highlights the usefulness of Richard Allsopp’s Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage (DCEU) and makes a case for an update of that work. So far, the DCEU is the most comprehensive collection of Caribbean lexicon but it is already over 10 years old.

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This essay arose from one of the periods of reflection spurred by a discussion with Mervyn Alleyne. I was in the process of interviewing Prof. Alleyne about his life’s work in Caribbean linguistics for my upcoming PhD dissertation. As we were discussing the contribution of another noted Caribbean linguist, Richard Allsopp, we observed that most people had misinterpreted the purpose of his dictionary since Allsopp’s intention was not to generate a lexicon of the English-based Creole of the Caribbean but rather to compile a list of the shared lexicon of the Caribbean Standard English of the Caribbean region.

At a certain point in the discussion, Alleyne’s face took on a quizzical expression and he outwardly pondered if that task was an achievable one; he questioned whether there was such a thing as a Caribbean Standard English and if there was, he wondered how it could be described. This led me to reflect more deeply about what exactly we mean when we refer to Caribbean Standard English. The essay interrogates the notion of CSE from linguistic and socio-historical perspectives and should be useful for those

interacting with the official language and language of instruction used in the so called ‘Anglophone Caribbean’ territories.

## **2 The socio-historical context of the emergence of CSE**

In the tumultuous history of the region, some islands changed hands relatively frequently (e.g. St. Lucia and Dominica); some had only had one colonial master (e.g. Barbados and Anguilla) and others were settled by one colonial master for an extended period before being ceded to another (e.g. Jamaica, Trinidad). The development of CSE reflects all these changes within its dialects. It also shows influences from the indigenous populations of the Caribbean, maroon populations and the migratory waves across the Caribbean. Unfortunately, there are few records left about the early English spoken on the various English colonies. What is clearly obvious is that the settlers coming from Britain to the Caribbean were not a homogeneous group with a unified and standardized language.

Cassidy and Le Page (2002) have noted that there are few descriptions of English in the early periods and those that are available reveal more divergent than related data. They note that Middle English is an abstraction quite difficult to define theoretically, and that the period in which English was finding its way to the Caribbean was a period of substantial flux within the language (p. xxxviii). Roberts has documented language and Caribbean history using direct quotes from various historical documents. His latest work, *The roots of Caribbean identity: language, race and ecology*, shows that English orthography was undergoing change and was not yet fixed at the beginning of European Caribbean settlement (Roberts, 2008: 68, 73, 95). In their discussion, Cassidy and Le Page note that even where there is sufficient information about the English of the early Caribbean era, there is an absence of other relevant types of information such as the African languages used by other immigrants to the Caribbean. Information about the indigenous languages and the language of the early colonial communities in the Caribbean is also not available.

In terms of the language used by the missionaries to the region for the purpose of spreading Christianity, it is widely assumed that the language of the colonizer would have been the primary mode used. However, the essay “William Greenfield, a neglected pioneer creolist” in *Studies in Caribbean Language* reveals a different reality. In that essay, Reinecke is able to show that missionaries often learnt the language of those they were trying to convert and used it to spread their message. He cites work done as far back as the early 1800s when missionaries described Negerhollands and Sranan and translated religious texts into those Creole languages.

All of this evidence should be enough to make those who believe that the Caribbean has inherited British Standard English (BSE) rethink their position. In fact, Caribbean varieties of English have also influenced those of the metropole. Allsopp shows how Caribbean Standard English moved outward from the Caribbean to influence British varieties in his essay, entitled “The Age of English in the Caribbean” where he states:

“It was the vexed Protestantism and resolve of Henry ’s VIII’s and Anne Boleyn’s daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, backing the aggressive seamanship of her ocean-going knights Hawkins, Drake, Frobisher, and Raleigh in their anti-Spanish adventures that, within less than a century after Columbus, brought the English tongue to the Caribbean and Caribbean vocabulary into the English language...It is historically true that the English language had begun making substantial thrusts from Plymouth to the West Indies and South America long before it did so to North America...With the new King James I Authorized Version of the Bible appearing in 1611 together with all the works of Shakespeare (who died in 1616) giving final shape at the same period to the structure of Modern English, the language was all set to grow in vocabulary, and Caribbean settlement and plantation life were going to be one of its earliest major sources.” (1996: xl-xli)

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Some may have a hard time believing that the Caribbean could feature so prominently in the development of English, but let us contextualize this by noting that many wars in Europe were fought over Caribbean territories because of their economic and strategic importance to their European colonizers.

Over the last decades, Creole studies has inadvertently diverted attention away from the Standard varieties of languages (English, French, Spanish) found in the Caribbean. Many people do not see a distinction between Caribbean Creoles and Standard languages such as CSE. As Allsopp notes, however, CSE has been influenced by English lexifier Creoles, but the two are not one and the same. While the English lexifier Creoles of the Caribbean are the mother tongue languages of most school entrants in the English-speaking Caribbean countries, Caribbean Standard English is the official language and must be learnt by those students as a second language.

In general terms, Caribbean Standard English is that variety of English which developed during the colonial period in the Caribbean colonies ruled wholly or partly by the British and which became fixed after Emancipation by its utilization in everyday activities such as business, media, literature and cultural expression. Caribbean Standard English includes words and phrases which find their origins in the



English and French lexifier Creoles of the region but which have over time and common usage found their way into officially accepted varieties.

### 3 Some linguistic features of CSE

#### *Phonology*

In their *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (DJE) Cassidy and Le Page explore the relationship between the vowels found in Jamaican English and ‘Received Pronunciation’ (RP). The phonemes of CSE were largely transferred from seventeenth century English at a time when English was advancing in status from the vulgar language to the prestige variety and variation was considerable and extremely common because standardization was not complete. Le Page and Cassidy are cautious not to make overgeneralizations concerning this process of phonemic transfer in the absence of the necessary comparative data on 17<sup>th</sup> century English and English pidgin languages (Cassidy & Le Page, 2002: xxxvii-xxxviii).

An important element in understanding the emergence of the phonemes of CSE are those processes which are characteristic of language change in contact situations. Holm (1989) notes that the nature of the Caribbean contact situation led to changes typical of language contact situations generally:

“Transfer results from a speaker identifying a phoneme in the second language with one in his first language and then subjecting it to the latter’s phonetic rules. This can result in underdifferentiation (the merger of two sounds that are distinct in second language but not the first), overdifferentiation (the imposition of phonemic distinction from the first language on allophones of a single phoneme in the second), or outright substitution (using a phoneme from the first language for a similar but distinct phoneme in the second).” (Holm, 1989: 107)

Allsopp provides a list of the phonemes of CSE, and also briefly examines some vowel sounds which are present in some regional varieties of CSE and not in other regional varieties. He lists the following as the vowel inventory of CSE (Allsopp, 2003: xliv):

[i] and [I] high front; [e] and [ɛ] mid front; [ə] and [ʌ] mid central; [u] and [ʊ] high back; [ɒ], [ɔ] [o:] and [o] mid back and [a], [a:] low back.

Allsopp lists the consonants of CSE as follows:

### *Stops*

[p] as in pelau

[b] as in barbeque

[t] as in Tanty

[d] as in de

[k] as in kettle drum

[g] as in goat

### *Affricates*

[č] as in chana

[j] as in jealousy

### *Nasals*

[m] as in mooma(h)

[n] as in nutmeg

[ŋ] as in ning ning

### *Liquids*

[l] as in lash

[r] as in Road March

### *Fricatives*

[f] as in father

[v] as in vex

[θ] as in throw net

[ð] as in themself

[s] as in salt fish

[z] as in zouk

[ʃ] as in shake foot

[ʒ] as in jouvé

[h] as in hurry come-up

### *Glides*

[y] as in yuh

[w] as in whap

Allsopp notes that there are some suprasegmental features which help to define CSE, including the amount of breath force and pressure which is exerted during production. He observes that “[t]here tends to be more lung pressure and mouth pressure behind the articulation..., Caribbean English (CE) generally sounds louder than homeland British English...” (Allsopp, 2003: xliv)

### *Lexicon and Semantics*

Jeanette Allsopp (2000: 48, 55) has identified some of the lexical and semantic features that distinguish CSE from other varieties of English. One of these is appearance labeling:

“The labeling system of the Caribbean lexicon is one in which appearance criteria played a significant part. For example, we have only to look at the number of fruits which include the lexeme apple, as part of their names, fruits such as star-apple, custard-apple, monkey-apple, sugar-apple mammee-apple...These fruits were so named because they reminded the European colonizers who settled the territories of the Caribbean region of apples...in the European environment because of their size and shape. (p. 48)

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Another distinctive feature of CSE is the use of West African derived words such as ‘duppy’ and ‘jumbie’ in compounds. She states that: “[a]s the lexicon expanded, the independent morpheme duppy came to be combined with other nouns such as cap, cherry, gun, needle, parasol, umbrella...denoting items of flora which are either weeds, inedible or which appear to be something which they are not.” (p. 49)

Although much of the lexicon used in the Caribbean is identical to that used in other varieties of English, there are several lexemes which have undergone semantic extension and semantic shift. Both Richard and Jeanette Allsopp have documented several such lexemes in their work over the years. In a volume of *Kyk-Over-Al*, Richard Allsopp (1949) explores some semantic differences between BSE and CSE:

“Let us begin by looking at a few words in general use among us: stelling, bateau, beautician, jumbie, dharoo, worker, grabble. Of these none is to be found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary except the last two and then they are not “our” words ... [worker is] English with special local connotation, ‘a seamstress’ and [grabble] English but with an exclusive local meaning, ‘to seize violently’.” (p. 13)

#### 4 Conclusion

As the Caribbean strives to become a more integrated region, language is one of the tools necessary to bring about regional cohesion. A Caribbean wide standard is needed to fulfill the official functions of language, and to help address the perennial issues of low pass rates and ineffective language competence among students. The *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* is a seminal document, but it is now in need of an updated edition. This work will be both time consuming and costly, but its benefits, which will be passed on to the education, business and cultural sectors, outweigh the costs. It is now widely accepted that dictionaries must be constructed with specific geographical areas in mind. This is the surest way to ensure that nuances in culture are given the attention that they deserve. Landau (2001:15) writes, “if, in the past, British dictionaries, and to a lesser extent American dictionaries, could assume that the language they represented was simply English, without qualification, those days are gone.” Now that no dictionary can claim to represent ‘English everywhere’ the Caribbean must revise its own dictionary and ensure that it remains current.

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# LANGUAGE AND GLOBALIZATION: CYBERSPACE LANGUAGE IN STUDENTS' WRITING

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There seems to be a widespread feeling that the English language is fragile and constantly under siege. The notion that language is declining is often articulated by teachers, professors, newscasters and television critics. Parents who are concerned that their children develop exemplary language habits may also correct what they see as their children's sloppy or improper usage learned outside the home. But opinions about language usage can be very different, when based on an understanding of how language actually works. We can draw an analogy from the use vs. the knowledge of technology. One can be very adept at using word processing or other software without knowing how the computer works, and one ought not to draw conclusions about the mother board based solely on the use of a particular word-processing program.

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Concerns about the state of the English language are not at all new and are by no means unique to Guyana. According to Krashen (2003), similar laments about the decline of English have been voiced elsewhere in the past. Periodic outcries about the misuse of language are part of a long and very human tradition of insecurity about language. We should not forget that there was a time when only Latin was considered a worthwhile language by European scholars and society at large. The vernaculars spoken in various areas (which developed into languages such as English, French and Spanish) were considered to be vulgar forms of speech and certainly not fit to be written down.

Krashen argues that many people do not realize that languages are constantly changing and the evaluation of language varieties is part of the process. Research on the history of language shows clearly that language change is inevitable. The speech communities from which students come share norms for language use. In a multicultural society, a particular village, town, or settlement may actually encompass several speech communities. Students whose speech does not conform to the norms of the schools that they attend may be mistakenly judged to have learning disorders. Therefore, in the classroom all these factors need to be taken into consideration.

Guyanese teachers will encounter a wide range of linguistic and cultural differences in early childhood and primary classrooms, and they will need to be proactive in accommodating these differences, since children's background experience with language and literacy will remain a crucial variable in their educational success.

Crystal (2006) observes that some are now worried about the language that is used on the internet. He reports that these concerned individuals worry that:

“it is language in general and individual languages in particular, which are going to end up as Internet casualties .... Do the relaxed standards of e-mails augur the end of literacy and spelling as we know it? Will the internet herald a new era of techno babble? Will linguistic creativity and flexibility be lost as globalization imposes sameness?” (Crystal, 2006: 2)

Held & McGrew (2007) contend that the concept of globalization suggests a growing magnitude and intensity of global flows such that states and societies become increasingly enmeshed in worldwide systems and networks of interaction. Globalization represents a significant shift in the spatial reach of social relations and organization towards the interregional or intercontinental scale.

140 According to Castells (2010), global telecommunications are profoundly changing how information and culture function in international relations. These technological advances, at the center of globalization, are bringing the identity principle to the fore as communities can interact across distances and borders. Newly empowered individuals and groups are creating new transnational networks worldwide, bypassing states. Unlike TV and radio, telephones and the internet are two-way media through which users interact among themselves without any centralized information source – empowering individuals as international actors. Internet use worldwide has risen exponentially over the past decade with internet enabled cell phones leading this explosion of connectivity.

Castells (2010) states that the internet is an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any registered computer (or host) on one network to any host on any other. It is now the world's largest computer network, providing an increasing range of services and enabling unprecedented numbers of people to be in touch with each other through electronic mail (e-mail), discussion groups, and the provision of digital 'pages' on any topic. Some commentators have likened the internet to an amalgam of television, telephone and conventional publishing, and the term cyberspace has been coined to capture the notion of a world of information present or possible in digital form.

Scholars such as Fishman (2000), Drohan & Freeman (2000), and Berger (2000) have argued about the emergence of a global culture and that in many parts of the world English has become the language of choice for business transactions and for communication through the internet. Fishman, however, sees the potential for a more pluralistic environment, dominated by regional languages and feels that globalization has ironically led some communities to become more nationalistic. He also posits that the spread of regional languages such as Mandarin, Hausa, Igbo, Kiswahili, Hindi, and West African Pidgin will increase as a result of regional trade. People want to assert their identities despite globalization. However, while this debate is going on, English on the internet is taking on a life of its own.

Crystal (2006) explains that:

“there is a lexicon that belongs exclusively to the Internet. Terms have emerged for the population of Internet users themselves. All orthographic features have been affected. Most of the Internet is not case-sensitive, which thus motivates the random use of capitals or no capitals at all- whole sentences can be produced without capitals (or punctuation). Almost all chat language has been interfered with in some way before it reaches the receiver – written dialogue in its spontaneous, unedited, naked state.” (Crystal: 50)

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Some examples of chat language:

bbl – be back later

cu – see you

dk – don't know

gal – get a life

gr8 – great

cul – see you later

l8r – later

np – no problem

rotfl – rolling on the floor laughing

lol – laugh out loud

ruok – are you ok

tnx – thanks

ttyl – talk to you later

tvm – thank you very much

w4u – waiting for you

wu – what's up

wuwh – wish you were here



X! – typical woman  
Y! – typical man  
Yiu – yes I understand  
2bctnd – to be continued  
2l8 – too late  
4e – forever  
4yeo – for your eyes only

This new phenomenon has added to the challenges that students already face when writing Standard English. The problem is that although it is relatively easy for many students to maintain a cognitive separation between their vernacular language and Standard English, it is likely that these same students will find it much more difficult to maintain the same degree of separation between chat language and Standard English.

A recent study was done by a final year student, Esther Moore at the Turkeyen Campus of the University of Guyana to find out how students use the internet, how often they use it, for what reasons they use it and the type of language used on line. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed throughout the campus. Twenty students from each Faculty/School (ten males and ten females) were randomly chosen from the completed questionnaires to constitute a sample. 78% of the sample said that they used the internet very often and mainly for chatting. However, when asked if Standard English is used when communicating with friends and peers, 87% said that they did not use Standard English. 62% reported that they ignore proper grammar when online with friends, 85 % use shortened words, 76% said that they use a combination of letters and numbers, 77% said that they use emoticons, and 31% said that they use obscene language to communicate with their friends and peers online.

When asked how this language was acquired, the students stated that it was acquired by choice, by trying to shorten words, for convenience, from chatting on line, from friends, from doing shorthand at school or from socialization. When asked why they use chat language, the students reported the following: 85% said that they use the jargon because it allowed them to chat faster, 52% said that all their friends were using it, 66% said that everybody understands it, and only 2% said that it improves their writing and makes the internet chat sweeter.

Listed below are some examples of the chat language used by these Guyanese students:

Rotflmfao – rolling on the floor laughing my fat ass off

Seh – say

Smh – shaking my head

Sry – sorry

Ssdd- same shit different day

stuuchps – suck teeth

Stw – suck teeth

Thnk u – thank you

Tht – that

Tm’w -tomorrow

When asked about the impact of chat language on their academic writing, a number of interesting responses were elicited from the students, including the following:

Exciting but needs to be monitored by some organization.

It is good, but makes you forget what is correct and appropriate.

It tends to become part of my writing (accidentally use it in Standard English).

Some people are using the language even when they are offline.

It’s easy to learn and could affect our grammar.

Leads to poor grammar and vocabulary skills, hence poor communication skills.

Makes communicating in Standard English in daily life harder.

This language makes it hard for us to write Standard English.

Could be the new language of the future.

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Although some concerns are being voiced about this new phenomenon, language change is inevitable. Moreover, chat language is a vehicle for tremendous linguistic creativity and mastery of chat language can be considered to be a new and different form of literacy. Does chat language really constitute a threat to Standard English? IDK - YTM (I don’t know; you tell me)

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# CHALLENGES IN TEACHER PREPARATION FOR POSTCOLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF LITERATURE TEACHING

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Over the last thirty years, secondary schools in the English speaking West Indies have not maximized the acknowledged potential of English Literature in general, and West Indian Literature in particular to challenge the dominant discourses of colonialism and neocolonialism. Eric Williams, in his seminal history of the Caribbean, *From Columbus to Castro*, underscored the extent to which literary artists and philosophers from the Caribbean had contributed to the liberation of colonial minds and brought a sense of pride and new perspective to Caribbean identity.

The initial Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) syllabus and examination for English Literature (English B) offered significant opportunity for unlocking that potential. First, it provided teachers with a very broad range of texts to select from, as their options included a combination of set texts and the comparative study of two selected texts based on a thematic approach. This broad range of texts included texts from the established literary canon as well as the emerging exemplars of the West Indian Literary tradition. Secondly, the syllabus emphasized that classroom discussion and debate about the multiple interpretations of the texts were the basis upon which the study of literature was to be conducted.

On both counts, however, schools have been slow to respond to the initiatives to expand and question the content and pedagogy of the dominant approach to literature study. The popular texts selected by candidates remained largely that of the traditional canon and many of the new texts which reflected relevant West Indian experiences were actually objected to. Objections were actively followed through by Ministries of Education to issues raised against such seminal West Indian texts as Roger Mais' *Brother Man*, Earl Lovelace's *The dragon can't dance* and Ian McDonald's *The hummingbird tree*. Thankfully, on all occasions, the voice of subject associations seemed to quell the ire of the objectors. As for the opportunity to foster a culture of classroom debate and discussion as a central and integral approach to literature study, by the second cycle of the syllabus, it was clear that the dominant approach to Literature teaching in secondary schools was to prevail, with its teacher centered,

authoritative, monolithic dictum that specific themes (identified in the syllabus by one word or phrase) were to be ‘found’ in specific sections of texts. Many former students throughout the Caribbean recall the experience of ‘effective teachers of Literature’ who guided them directly to the ‘correct themes’ in the texts, and provided drill exercises for their students to reproduce these positions in response to any question on the given theme.

Over time, in the pervasive sweep of (i) the forces of the examination rat race, (ii) reduced teaching time for English B and (iii) the perception of a growing trend of aliteracy, especially among the boys, the approach became almost routine. Indeed, the 2005 Schools Report for English B sought, unsuccessfully, to uphold educationally defensible principles in advising teachers thus:

The theme questions (15-21) should prove to be easier than Section A questions, since both themes and texts are known far in advance of the examination. It is difficult to understand why candidates do not perform better on these questions. While it is not wise or educational for teachers to encourage candidates to prepare full answers and regurgitate them on examination day, there is nothing to prevent teachers from ensuring that candidates know precisely how to structure an essay on a theme question. The present examination encourages and invites teachers and candidates to explore options. Since nothing is compulsory on the examination, candidates may choose as many as three questions from Section A. With theme and text(s) known, there is hardly an excuse for inadequate preparation. While teachers cannot vouch for candidates' familiarity with texts, they can and perhaps ought to provide model answers. There are, of course, inherent dangers in such a practice, but the advantages are likely to outweigh the disadvantages. At least candidates can be guided to correlate theme and text(s), since this is so often the key to the quality of response. (p. 6)

Thankfully, however, this advice came in the last year of the old syllabus, as in 2006, the CSEC English B syllabus changed from the primarily thematic approach to a genre based approach in which Drama, Poetry and Prose as genres were emphasized. Syllabus review following the change has emphasized reader response to the encounter with the genre as the underlying principle to govern the recommended classroom approaches.

How could teachers best be prepared to meet the challenges of a school system in which the respect for literature as a viable means of understanding and appreciating our world is called into question, despite the proliferation of Literary Festivals throughout the region, the explosion of new works by young and established artists, and the recognition of its usefulness to professionals in medicine, science and technology?

At the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the Language and Literature Specialization of the B.Ed programme offers a capstone Postcolonial Literature: Global Experience

course, organized in the final semester as a seminar course in which student-teachers select and prepare presentations based on critical concepts in Postcolonial discourse including:

- Key concepts and definitions
- The concept of representation
- Language and representation
- Race culture and representation
- The idea of identity and the concept of difference
- Gender, the female body and violence
- Education in the humanities

Student-teachers are required to prepare two of the 3 hour seminars, using the course folder of instructor selected readings as well as their own self selected articles on postcolonial theory and experience. Based on the readings they have selected, they are also to attempt a postcolonial re-interpretation of the texts they have studied in other courses. Moreover, the student-teachers are required to explore their reflections on the presentations, on their own further readings and on their re-interpretations in their course journals.

One outstanding feature of the course is the enthusiasm of the student-presenters and their overwhelming anxiety to use the full three hours for their presentations. Often, participants will grudgingly offer the facilitating instructor a mere five minutes or less for feedback. Student-teachers clearly have a lot to say and seize the opportunity offered to share it. The challenge for the facilitating instructor here was to encourage participants to distinguish what makes a re-interpretation distinctively postcolonial: In what way is it different from the dominant ideological perspective? Student-teachers also brought the full range of their creativity to their presentations. Art, music, video-clips, drama, free-writing, a full range of approaches have been adopted by the students in the three cohorts who have taken the course thus far.

Indeed, a fascinating aspect of the experience of the course was the apparent ease with which students' initial re-interpretations resonated with the readings. What was intriguing, however, was that in some cases, student growth in maintaining a 'postcolonial' orientation did not follow a clear 'developmental' line. Sometimes, this seemed to stem from the complexity and depth of the analysis of the concepts and choices of articles. The many ambivalences, retreats, and plateaux alerted the facilitating instructor to the difficulty of postcolonial sensibility to provide satisfactory explanations or positions in all circumstances.

Often, the challenge was to question the implications of the theory and concept for the student-teachers' own ways of living and thinking. They found it unsettling to face the implications of the extent to which they had uncritically embraced the assumptions of

dominant, imperial, Western oriented, race based ideologies. This confrontation was not so difficult to discern when they addressed the concept in relation to others, so that it was easier for them to see how schools in the United States marginalized students from non-European immigrant communities.

This challenge is no different for teachers in schools. For example, in spite of the popularity of Olive Senior's 'Colonial Girls' School' most Literature teachers do not see its applicability to the contemporary school situation in an age of Independence. The poem is seen as an object which mirrors an age passed, and lulls the uncritical mind into the comfort zone of denial that the poem could still have any relevance for us today. A major challenge, therefore, is for our school communities, and particularly teacher-educators, the Caribbean Examinations Council, and Curriculum Departments in Ministries of Education throughout the Caribbean to find ways to sensitize teachers to the need for critical self-examination in this regard.

There is no guarantee that the three cohorts of prospective teachers who have taken the capstone course will follow through with the professional practices that they have demonstrated once they confront the challenges of the school environment. Young teachers of Literature who ardently declare that they are committed to their discipline contend that they are not prepared to go against established school streaming principles in subject selection, even when they know that some students who are denied the chance to study English B would benefit tremendously if they were permitted to do so. Our contemporary situation demands that teachers of Literature must not only employ strategies that ensure that divergent and often opposing and hence critical views are foregrounded in literature exploration. It is also imperative that Literature teachers work pro-actively and forcefully with other teachers to form a united front to challenge and replace the dangerously destructive dominant 'plantation pedagogies' of the entire examination oriented school system. An important element in these efforts to de-colonialize secondary education must include a strategy to engage increased numbers of students in the critical study of literature at CSEC (age 16+) level and beyond. There is nothing stopping us from achieving some of these outcomes in our individual schools and classrooms today, and this is where we should begin. But the superstructure to foster such conscientious teacher agency must be actively supported by all of the other stakeholders in the education process.

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# **EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CURRICULUM CHANGE: ADAPTING THE CSEC ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS TOWARDS IMPROVED ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT OF DEAF STUDENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN**

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This paper evolved out of a study conducted in 2008 entitled “Personal development and achievement: An instrumental case study of a young deaf woman’s educational experiences in Trinidad and Tobago” and the unpublished thesis “The educational experiences of deaf students in St. Lucia: A case study” (2009). Interviews were the primary method of data collection, while the Grounded Theory approach was used in the data analysis and interpretation of findings. While a deaf young adult was the primary participant in each study, interviews were also carried out with other persons involved in the education of the deaf in Trinidad and Tobago and St. Lucia. Participants were selected through purposive sampling using the snowballing method. Findings suggest that while societal attitudes to deaf persons have become more positive and some deaf persons are now employed in non-menial positions, the lack of sufficient physical and human resources, limited subject and school choices, lack of CSEC qualifications and the non-ratification of a national disabilities’ policy have negatively impacted the communicative ability, academic achievement employment prospects, and general welfare of deaf persons in both countries. Of key interest was the fact that since deaf persons are linguistically disadvantaged, their inability to attain satisfactory levels of communication in spoken and written English has played a major role in their relatively lower levels of achievement alongside their peers. A primary focus of this paper is the need for curriculum change within the CSEC English Language syllabus to allow for attainment of CSEC passes in the subject, which would enable members of the Deaf Community to advance academically and socially. The right to an education is one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of that document further states that “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality...” This paper focuses on the status of members of the Deaf Community, whose academic advancement and full development within the Caribbean region have been curtailed time and time again by the inability of, or disregard by those persons



charged with the responsibility of catering to their needs, to fulfill this mandate. Of even greater significance is the fact that to date, although many deaf persons receive an appropriate primary school education, many do not go on to pursue secondary and tertiary level studies due to factors such as insufficient numbers of trained interpreters and itinerant teachers, prescribed subject choices, and lack of relevant technology.

A major area of concern has been poor performance in the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) English A subject, in which attainment of a pass is a core prerequisite for employment and advanced studies. That recent research continues to show a positive correlation between tertiary education and wage earning capacity, points to the need for relevant authorities to provide ample opportunities for members of the Deaf Community to explore their academic potential at the secondary and tertiary levels, with the aim of eventually enabling them to become socially and financially independent. This paper posits that appropriate changes to the CSEC English A syllabus, especially in the areas of instruction and assessment strategies, would constitute an important step towards meeting the specialized needs of students who are deaf, and helping members of the Deaf Community achieve to their fullest potential.

It would be remiss at this juncture not to recognize the advances made by relevant authorities to date towards enhancing the status of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the Caribbean. An ILO Caribbean Regional Technical Meeting held from March 21 – 25, 1994 in Trinidad and Tobago on *National Disability Policy and Legislation to Promote Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Training and Employment of Disabled Persons*, called on regional governments to “stimulate national awareness and action to create training and employment opportunities for PWDs, by organising national seminars involving the social partners and organisations of PWDs in order to determine national disability policy objectives and legislative needs”. Following the Port of Spain Declaration, participants and governments initiated discussions towards the enactment of a national disability policy within their respective countries. A number of participant countries such as Guyana, Barbados, Antigua, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago have completed consultations and/or implemented recommendations towards this end. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development of Trinidad and Tobago must be lauded for its efforts towards empowering the deaf through such initiatives as the collaborative compilation of *The Dictionary of Trinidad and Tobago Signs: First Edition*, and the use of interpreters for various public announcements.

Despite the aforementioned achievements, research conducted in St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago between 2007 and 2009 revealed that while a number of deaf students sat and passed the 11+ examination which allowed them to gain entry into a secondary school, a number of factors disqualified them from pursuing academic subjects and completing Caribbean Examinations Council fifth form examinations

(Mitchell, 2009). In St. Lucia, deaf students were not allowed to sit the CXC in core subject areas. While there was general adherence to recommended pedagogical practices and a mandate to adapt the classroom to the needs of deaf students, a major systemic problem that prevented the students from progressing was the lack of itinerant teachers, interpreters and specialist deaf educators, a situation which was traced directly back to the lack of priority placed on deaf education in the government's Priority List. It was also found that policies employed by the Teaching Service Commission led to the non-recognition of deaf educators as trained teachers by the government. As a result, these teachers preferred to be involved in mainstream education where they were guaranteed a monthly salary, rather than at the St. Lucia School for the Deaf (now the 'Lady Gordon Opportunity Centre') where the remuneration was minimal.

This policy therefore negatively impacted the availability of sufficient specialized and individualized attention for deaf students in St. Lucia. Thus, although the students were exposed to a post-elementary education which prepared them for work, their lack of CXC qualifications curtailed their access to tertiary education. This lack of qualifications in turn lessened their employment marketability, as they were not able to acquire jobs which so-called 'normal' peers of equal or lesser intelligence were able to obtain. This situation is in direct contradiction to the mandate of special education. Smith (2007) writes that "the overarching purpose of special education is to make it possible for all individuals with disabilities to achieve to their fullest potential so that as adults, they can attain full community presence by holding meaningful jobs and living independently" (p. 35).

In Trinidad and Tobago, deaf students were allowed to sit CXC examinations. However, many of the subjects they wished to pursue such as Spanish and Computer Technology, had to be discontinued in the lower forms and were replaced by more non-academic subjects such as hairdressing and woodworking, as there were insufficient itinerant teachers to attend to students. An itinerant teacher at a secondary school in Trinidad lamented that having one teacher to almost fifteen students of varying types and levels of disability, all requiring specialized attention, diminished the quality of the services that each deaf student needed to receive. With respect to English Language, many deaf students in Trinidad and Tobago were unable to master various concepts sufficiently to get beyond a grade four in CXC English A.

It is necessary to acknowledge here that deaf students generally underachieve in English, and that one of the major reasons for this is that it is their second language. Researchers concur that deaf students who do not have any concomitant disabilities are quite capable of academic success alongside their non-disabled peers, although they face their greatest challenge in the area of reading. Smith (2007) highlights the fact that "...by age 20, half of such [deaf] students tested read below the mid-fourth-

grade level, leaving them unable to read most newspapers which are written at least at the fifth-grade level” (p.361). If English is an inherent weakness for deaf students relative to their non-disabled peers, it means that extensive assistance and specialized pedagogies are necessary to help them acquire higher levels of proficiency in English. To subject deaf students to the same teaching methods and forms of assessment as all other secondary school students, and to evaluate them in their final year through the norm-referenced CXC English A, is to systematically diminish their chances of attaining a passing grade or the proficiency they need to perform effectively in the working environment alongside their hearing peers.

It is important to ask at this juncture whether this situation can and should be remedied in any way in the short or long term in the Caribbean, given the fact that the very small number of deaf students sitting CXC English Language relative to the number of hearing students, and that aggressive vaccination programs have lessened the numbers of deaf students over the years. Despite medical advances, there will always be deaf students in Caribbean schools. Education is a long term investment. Some strategic assistance for deaf students at the secondary level will eventually pay off one hundredfold, by enabling them not only to avoid becoming a burden to the state later in life, but also to contribute positively to their communities as active citizens.

In order to meet the challenge of educating and assessing its deaf population in a more equitable manner, the Caribbean Examinations Council will need to change its English Language curriculum. . In a preamble to the expected outcomes of the CXC English syllabus, it is noted that the “curriculum hinges on the realization that teaching and learning are essential instruments for the development of autonomous individuals who will be able to function effectively as productive members of society” (p.iii). It is further stated that one of the main elements of the [English] Curriculum is that “it provides the foundation for further education and training and for entry level employment” (p.iii). Excluding a sector of society, however small in number, from accessing these aforementioned outcomes, is not acceptable.

This paper does not seek to condemn the present syllabus, but rather to suggest changes to the CXC English curriculum, mainly its teaching methodologies and its modes of assessment, which would augur well for the academic and social advancement of the Caribbean’s Deaf Community. One of the first changes to be made is to eradicate the myth that signed language, such as American Sign Language or Trinidadian Sign Language, is based on English or is simply gestural English. Research has found that

“ASL shares no grammatical similarities with English. It has a topic-comment structure different from English's subject-predicate

structure. Also, ASL is not all communication by hands. This language relies heavily on facial expressions and mouth movements. From this body language, a person who is deaf can pick up the connotations of a conversation much like a hearing person listening to tone of voice. ASL is capable of conveying subtle, complex, and abstract ideas as skillfully and firmly as any spoken language. One can express poetry, humor, wit, and satire just as passionately in ASL as any other spoken language.” (Wilkinson & Marthinussen, 1997).

Roberto Santiago concurs with the preceding observation, stating further that “both ASL and English have symbols to represent the concepts of time, place, conditional event and things that are entirely fictional”. Some reflection is necessary here. If ASL and other signed languages are fully developed autonomous languages, they should be the primary language of each deaf child. If one accepts this view, it becomes even more important then to teach English as a second language to deaf students, rather than subjecting them to the same methodologies as their hearing peers. A change in teaching methodologies is therefore necessary within the CXC English Language curriculum. Support for this change is advocated by Joan Fleming, Deaf Studies Coordinator at the University of Wolverhampton, who states:

“Perhaps teaching English is alien to the development of a profoundly deaf person’s cognitive processes, as it is based upon auditory and oral elements. In other words, perhaps a visual modality matches perfectly the absence of hearing and therefore English taught orally is alien and slows down the learning process.”

Further evidence of the need to change the current first language methodology for teaching English in schools to a foreign language teaching pedagogy is found in the declaration which emerged from the Stakeholders’ Position on the Teaching of English to Deaf Learners in China. The signatories to the document assumed the following positions:

1. Given that the English language is a mandatory part of the National curriculum and given the potential socio-economic significance of English language learning for the developing world, we assert that optimum methods should be employed to provide fair opportunities for Deaf learners to access the English language, and

2. That those methods be informed by sound, relevant, research in teaching practices and outcomes appropriate for Deaf learners, and/or be inferred by relevant a priori research in the absence of directly obtainable data.
3. We assert our preference for whole language, communicative, approaches that meet the linguistically distinct needs of Deaf learners as is consistent with summative theoretical research-outcome derived recommended best practices in both Deaf education and foreign language teaching pedagogy. (Sperling, 2004).

While the scope of this paper does not allow for an in-depth exploration of foreign language teaching methodologies for deaf students, it is nevertheless important to touch on some specific changes in the area of assessment. Paper II of the Caribbean Examinations Council English A examination requires all students to:

1. Write a summary
2. Read and respond to questions on two comprehension passages, generally one narrative and one descriptive
3. Write a narrative or descriptive essay (with perhaps a picture stimulus)
4. Write an argumentative or persuasive piece

One cannot deny the merit of these tasks. However, special education is geared towards outfitting students with disabilities for functioning in the work environment. Some deaf students do not find these types of exercises relevant, as they hardly ever have to apply them in the workplace. Research conducted by this presenter in St. Lucia in 2009 revealed that many deaf students stopped attending English Language classes, as they could not identify with the abstract concepts being taught. Perhaps they are correct, and it may be time to introduce alternative means of assessment especially for deaf students sitting the CXC.

One main suggestion here is that formative evaluation should be introduced in Form Four, by allowing deaf students to work on a portfolio in which they give samples of their work in the form of practical pieces like writing a letter of application, a letter of complaint, a report on a matter of concern, an autobiographical paragraph, etcetera. Paper II of the English A examination could be an oral/signed examination following the same pattern as the written Paper II, and conducted as a foreign language oral examination where, in the presence of a qualified interpreter, students could:

1. Summarize an issue in point form
2. Interpret and respond to reading comprehension questions logically
3. Tell a story using sign language based on a picture or given title
4. Argue a point while signing the supporting evidence to substantiate their stance

Of course, the prevailing environment of scarce human and physical resources may reduce any proposed changes to the CXC English syllabus to wishful thinking. These limitations notwithstanding, pertinent changes are essential to the advancement of deaf students, who, due to what is essentially a linguistic deficiency rather than a disability, find themselves unable to advance socially and economically towards greater independence. Society legitimizes marginalization of deaf persons through its prevailing, dominant medical discourse which attributes disability to individual deficiency. This together with issues of curricula irrelevance and adherence to norm referenced rather than criterion referenced forms of assessment at the primary and secondary levels, ensure that deaf students exit the school system without the necessary prerequisites which would enable them to get decent paying jobs, or advance to institutions of higher education.

While some may argue that scarce resources cannot be further stretched to provide for the specialized educational needs of the deaf, it is nevertheless important to thoroughly examine and revamp the CXC English A syllabus, which predisposes deaf students to failure. Since education is a universal right, it follows that no member of the Deaf Community should be allowed to remain marginalized as a result of society not providing the resources which would allow him/her to become more employable and by extension, self sufficient. All relevant stakeholders must initiate the appropriate changes urgently.

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# STEPPING UP TO HIGHER EDUCATION: THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE COURSES IN ENCOURAGING ‘LADDERING’ INTO MAIN-STREAM HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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## 1 Introduction

In its six decades of existence, the University of the West Indies has emerged as the flagship institution of higher learning in the English-speaking Caribbean, and the only regional university, supported by 15 Caribbean countries. From its inception in 1948, the vision of the university was to ‘unlock the potential’<sup>1</sup> of the Caribbean people by providing tertiary level education and research through campuses set up in Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados. Simultaneously, an official outreach arm was established, providing adult, continuing and public education beyond the main campuses. Through the university’s Extra Mural Department, Centres were set up in all 15 contributing countries.

Thirty years later, the University of the West Indies expanded access to its degree programmes by making available delivery away from its three campuses, using distance modalities at its Extra Mural Centres. In August 2008, and in celebration of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the University of the West Indies drew on its innovative resources by embracing the Open-University concept with the launch of a fourth campus – the UWI Open Campus. In so doing, UWI renewed its commitment to further increasing access to higher education across the Caribbean to countries and communities with limited and inadequate service and availability. This meant, for instance, that individuals who do not possess the traditional entry qualifications could more easily ‘ladder’ into higher education.

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<sup>1</sup> *UWI’s Mission Statement*

UWI’s mission is to unlock West Indian potential for economic and cultural growth by high quality teaching and research aimed at meeting critical regional needs, by providing West Indian society with an active intellectual centre and by linking the West Indian community with distinguished centres of research and teaching in the Caribbean and overseas.

UWI recognizes that as a regional university supported by the West Indian peoples, and as the sole local organ equipped to meet local requirements and to relate its own developmental programmes to them, it should give priority to regional needs.’



This paper examines the availability and relevance of ‘laddering’ or an incremental approach to accessing higher education to the Caribbean’s ‘islands in between’, and large communities within UWI’s campus countries, which lack ready access to its traditional brick and mortar campuses. The paper points as well to the key role of higher education not only for building the Caribbean’s labour force and increasing employment but also for foundational nation building and empowering of the Caribbean Region.

## **2 UWI Extra Mural Department**

Created at the same time as the University College of the West Indies 60 years ago, and therefore as old as the university itself, the Extra Mural Department was conceived to be the UWI’s official outreach arm, dedicated to offering adult, continuing and public education beyond the main campuses of the university. In the ensuing 60 years, the university expanded its campuses from the initial campus at Mona in Jamaica, to St. Augustine in Trinidad & Tobago, and to Cave Hill in Barbados. At the same time Extra Mural Centres were established in all of the UWI’s 15 contributing countries. By 1990, it was felt that ‘the lines of demarcation between intra-mural and extra-mural work (were) increasingly becoming blurred’<sup>2</sup>. Hence, the Department’s well-known moniker was officially changed to the School of Continuing Studies (SCS) to more accurately represent the vision for the future UWI.

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## **3 Need to expand access - the impact of distance education**

In spite of the UWI’s physical expansion in terms of brick and mortar campuses as well as Extra Mural / SCS Centres, student registration in UWI’s campus countries grew steadily, while that of countries and communities without campuses and ready access lagged behind. In response to this disproportionate growth, over 3 decades ago, the UWI launched a distance education experiment, UWIDITE, to increase higher education access to Caribbean people living away from its 3 campuses. The success of that experiment led to the establishment of the Distance Education Centre UWIDEC, and further expansion of access.

With the advent of distance education, the 12 SCS Centres in countries without campuses (UWI 12) became the conduit for UWIDEC delivery of UWI undergraduate programmes throughout the Caribbean, and in so doing the Centres became more structured and focused on distance education. In the case of Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, UWI’s larger countries, UWIDEC Sites were established as well for communities without ready access to brick and mortar campuses at the Mona and St. Augustine campuses. As stated in the recent history on UWI’s Extra Mural Department ‘Breaking Down the Walls’, the experiment in adult education was to

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<sup>2</sup> Memorandum to university registrar from director/professor of Extra-Mural Studies, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1989, p.1. UWI Internal document.

become ‘one of the institution’s winning achievements’ and was a positive response to the concerns of governments in the Eastern Caribbean (Fergus, Bernard & Soares, 2007).

#### **4 Disparity in UWI registration: Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago vs. UWI 12**

The above notwithstanding, there was a growing disparity in student registration across the Region. Table 1 below shows student registration in selected Caribbean countries served by UWI. The table disaggregates registration to reflect both ‘On Campus’, i.e. students registered at UWI’s 3 campuses, and ‘Distance’ i.e. students registered in UWIDEC programmes across the Caribbean. The table shows the sharp contrast between student registration in campus countries, namely Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago ranging between 4,000 and 11,000, compared with registration in UWI 12 countries ranging from less than 100 (Grenada) to just over 200 (St. Lucia). These discrepancies are most glaring when comparing UWI 12 student registration with that of Barbados, as this country’s land mass and population are of comparable size to those of the UWI 12 island states.

**Table 1** UWI Student Registration for Selected Countries 2003/4

| <i><b>COUNTRIES</b></i> | <i><b>On Campus</b></i> | <i><b>Distance</b></i> | <i><b>Total</b></i> | <i><b>Per Capita</b></i> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Barbados                | 4364                    | 332                    | 4696                | 1:58                     |
| Dominica                | 102                     | 202                    | 304                 | 1:263                    |
| Grenada                 | 94                      | 153                    | 247                 | 1:364                    |
| Jamaica                 | 10229                   | 984                    | 11213               | 1:232                    |
| St. Lucia               | 227                     | 228                    | 455                 | 1:381                    |
| T & T                   | 9938                    | 529                    | 10467               | 1:124                    |

Source: UWI Statistics 2003/4

The impact of UWI’s distance experiment and the establishment of UWIDEC are very evident in UWI 12 countries. For the period 2003/2004, student registration for selected countries shows ‘Distance’ registration equal to that of ‘On Campus’ for St. Lucia, double that of ‘On Campus’ for Dominica and almost triple that of ‘On Campus’ for Grenada. On a per capita basis, Dominica’s enrolment is the highest of the selected UWI 12 followed by that of St. Lucia and then Grenada. However, a comparison of the registration data for campus countries clearly reveals that the UWI’s efforts to solve the problem of uneven access through the medium of distance education, have not adequately addressed the disparity in the levels of access and student registration.

As Table 1 vividly illustrates, student enrolment in both ‘On-Campus’ and ‘Distance’ programmes is proportionately higher for the campus countries of Barbados, Jamaica

and Trinidad & Tobago compared with that of the UWI 12. Indeed, per capita registration in the campus countries of Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago is significantly higher than that of UWI 12. In the case of Barbados the ratio is 1:58, while the equivalent ratio for Trinidad & Tobago is approximately half that of Barbados at 1:124.

### **5 Jamaica – A peculiar case**

Jamaica stands out as a peculiar case. The sheer size of Jamaica with a population of 2.6m or 50% of the combined population of all of the UWI countries results in total enrolment equal to that of Trinidad & Tobago, a country with only half of Jamaica's population. Registration per capita however places Jamaica almost on par with the UWI 12 countries, at 1:232 similar to 1:263 in Dominica. Closer examination shows, however, that Jamaica's registration is highly skewed to its Camp Road Centre in Kingston, which accounts for 75% of Jamaica's registration. The focus of Open Campus Jamaica therefore has turned to determining appropriate strategies to increase registration to underserved communities away from the Mona Campus and Kingston.

In order for countries like Jamaica and Dominica to achieve per capita registration at levels which are similar to those of Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago, there would have to be a radical increase in enrolment. Indeed, for Jamaica and Dominica to enjoy per capita registration levels that are similar to that of Barbados, registration would have to quadruple for both countries.

Further, using 2003/2004 statistics as illustrated in Table 1, if these countries are to strive to achieve more easily attainable per capita registration levels, that is, equal to those of Trinidad & Tobago's 1:124, their enrolment levels would have to double. Based on 2003/2004 statistics, Jamaica would have to increase its enrolment to 21,000 while Dominica would have to increase its levels to 645. Even this more moderate goal would require new strategies for increasing access. Interestingly, in spite of their apparent population and geographical differences, the similarity in Dominica and Jamaica's low student registration levels may make it appropriate for these two countries to use similar strategies for improving access.

### **6 Limitations of traditional 'pathways' to higher education**

Several factors, and in most cases a combination of factors, affect access to higher education. These include physical proximity, availability of appropriate delivery modalities, pre-university educational opportunities, entry requirements, fee structures, and financial support. This paper examines one of these factors, entry requirements, which play an important role in encouraging or limiting access. Inevitably this factor cannot be viewed in isolation, and therefore some related factors are mentioned and juxtaposed as well.

Entry requirements for UWI enrolment, as for any reputable higher education institution are dependent on formal qualifications. Over time, a slate of traditional qualifications has emerged, and been validated as the standard and traditional credentials. These traditional qualifications are all based on the Cambridge O' and A' Level and Caribbean Council certificates.

**Table 2** Traditional and Non-Traditional Qualifications

| <b>Traditional</b>          | <b>Non-Traditional</b>                          |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| CXC/GCE O'Level (4 or more) | Teachers' Certificates and Diplomas             |
| A' Levels                   | Associate Degrees                               |
| UWI Certificates            | Pre-college prep                                |
| UWI Level 1                 | Professional Certificates & Diplomas            |
| CAPE (4 units or more)      | School of Cont. Studies Certificates & Diplomas |
|                             | Mature Clause                                   |
|                             | College Diplomas & Certificates                 |
|                             | Other Certificates & Diplomas                   |
|                             | Less than 4 CXC/GCE O' Levels                   |

Source: 'Pathways to Tertiary Education in the English-Speaking Caribbean'

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A study conducted by the UWI's former Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU), *'Pathways to Tertiary Education in the English-Speaking Caribbean'* indicated that over 60% of persons applying to UWI region-wide use traditional qualifications (Roberts & Brissett, 2003). Several non-traditional qualifications have also been validated, through their delivery by reputable institutions. These qualifications range from ASc. degrees and teachers certificates, through to the use of 'The Mature Clause', that is, allowing Prior Learning Assessment criteria for matriculation.

Included in the slate of non-traditional qualifications for UWI access are the UWI's own SCS certificates and diplomas. However based on the responses from the tertiary institutions used for the 'Pathways' study, only 2.3% of students used UWI SCS certificates and diplomas to gain access to the Caribbean's regional university. In spite of the low usage indicated in the 'Pathways' study, the experience of the former UWI SCS (now Open Campus) at Camp Road in Kingston, Jamaica points to the attractiveness of the certificate courses and programmes offered at that Centre in facilitating access to higher education programmes, particularly those of the UWI.

## **7 The ‘Laddering’ approach**

The use of these non-traditional qualifications speaks to the ‘laddering’ approach, that is, gaining entrance to higher education on a step-by-step or incremental basis, as against immediate access through attainment of entry qualifications from the conventional approach of one or two examination sittings for upper level qualification. The ‘laddering’ approach is used at various levels and for many age groups. For instance in a 2006 report to United States policymakers and practitioners, entitled *The College Ladder: Linking Secondary and Post Secondary Education for Success for All Students*, ‘laddering’ is recognized by the American Youth Policy Forum as a set of arrangements and strategies designed to successfully link secondary and post secondary education for target groups such as first generation, low income and low performing students in the US high school system (Brown Lerner & Brand, 2006).

As earlier mentioned, the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the feasibility of placing more emphasis on the ‘laddering’ approach, for re-engaging ‘late-bloomers’ and other groups of mature persons back into formal education - for providing persons with ‘a second chance’ - and in so doing expanding and facilitating access to the UWI’s higher education programmes. By increasing the availability and ‘currency’ of non-traditional qualifications, particularly continuing studies programmes and courses, this re-engagement has the potential of providing several additional benefits for Caribbean communities and countries including increasing the pool of qualified persons, and all of the increased possibilities and potentials that would ensue.

## **8 The Donna Hope story: a case study in the success of laddering**

Dr. Donna Hope is presently a UWI Cultural Studies lecturer. She is a Fulbright Scholar and graduate of both UWI and George Mason University. She is also a Talk Show host and author of several books. Dr. Donna Hope got ‘a second chance’ at education as a UWI School of Continuing Studies student at the Camp Road Centre in Kingston, Jamaica, and proudly tells her story.....

“Well, I’ve had a very great experience with the School of Continuing Studies, Camp Road, and now a part of the Open Campus. My association with the institution began some time ago - I won’t elaborate on that - but I started doing my A-levels, as a part of getting my education together. I was working, had responsibilities, had a son and going to other types of institutions, for example, full-time or day was not an option. And what happened was that the School of Continuing Studies at Camp Road offered people like me the opportunity to get our education together at a time that was very convenient to us so we could go to work, earn a living and then go to school. The teachers were very good; we had

really great teachers and I met a lot of people [;] some of them are still my friends now and we're talking about a while back. We have maintained the networks. I did A-Levels through the School of Continuing Studies. I also did the one-year Supervisory Management Certificate; an excellent programme. Even today where I am, I still draw on the knowledge that I gained from [that certificate] in Supervisory Management.

[Because] of the relationship between the UWI Mona and the School of Continuing Studies generally, it was a part of what was taken into consideration. So, for me, the experience was very rewarding. Of course, my association with the School of Continuing Studies was much longer than just being a student; I eventually started teaching there and I taught Business Communication. I did a first degree in Mass Communication at CARIMAC and so, I was given a chance to lecture, [at] the School of Continuing Studies. [Quite] a few students passed through my hands there and again, it was a very good experience; we had all these fantastic times.”<sup>3</sup>

## **9 UWI SCS's history of continuing studies certificate courses at SCS Centres in campus countries**

The Donna Hope story illustrates the experience of a large number of persons who have used the courses and programmes provided by SCS Centres in campus countries to re-enter the world of formal education. The programmes and courses offered at these campus country Centres have enabled thousands of persons to upgrade their skills, expand their horizons, and have given many of them the ability to matriculate to tertiary level education, particularly to the UWI.

A clear distinction developed between the UWI 12 Centres and the campus country Centres. On the one hand, and as discussed earlier, the UWI 12 Centres, located in countries without campuses became the delivery points for the UWI's distance undergraduate programmes. On the other hand, SCS Centres in the campus countries were not equipped with teleconferencing facilities, and therefore had no access to the UWIDEC programmes. The apparent 'disadvantage' of not being equipped with teleconferencing capabilities, and access to the UWIDEC programmes, may have been a critical factor in encouraging the focus of campus country Centres toward the development of a range of pre-university business and professional courses and programmes, in response to the needs and demands of their communities.

The former SCS (now Open Campus) of Trinidad & Tobago delivers literally hundreds of business, professional and vocational courses and programmes, and has

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with DONNA HOPE December 2008 Audio-visual

expanded to over 10 locations throughout the twin-island Republic. As indicated in Table 3 below, the Open Campus of Trinidad & Tobago boasts enrolment of over 12,000 continuing studies students each year. Similarly, the former SCS Centre at Camp Road in Kingston, Jamaica has a slate of over 50 business and professional courses and programmes and an enrolment of over 3,000 students each year. The programmes offered at the Camp Road, Jamaica Centre range from short, intensive 6-12 week non-credit courses through to 1 year business and professional courses offering credits and matriculation to undergraduate programmes.

**Table 3** UWI Student Registration in Selected Countries 2003/4 & 2007/8

| <b>COUNTRIES</b> | <b>2003/4</b>   | <b>2007/2008</b> | <b>2007/2008</b> | <b>2007/2008</b>  |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                  | <b>DISTANCE</b> | <b>DISTANCE</b>  | <b>ASc</b>       | <b>CONTINUING</b> |
| Barbados         | 332             | 155              | 84               | 850               |
| Dominica         | 202             | 228              | -                | 6                 |
| Grenada          | 153             | 257              | 32               | 79                |
| Jamaica          | 984             | 997              | 233              | 3,636             |
| St. Lucia        | 228             | 425              | 1                | 571               |
| T & T            | 529             | 811              | 330              | 12,349            |

Sources: UWI Statistics 2003/4; Open Campus Annual Report 2007/2008

### **Critical components for re-engagement with formal education Table 3**

A critical component of this developmental work of SCS in the campus countries has been to re-engage persons who did not capitalize on earlier education and training due to a wide range of circumstances. For the ‘late bloomers’, who were not ready nor equipped to effectively reap the benefits of secondary education during adolescence and early adulthood, the re-engagement in formal education has provided ‘a second chance’, with the potential to change their self-perception, motivation, direction and oftentimes their career goals. Another component which may be equally important is the fact that these certificate programmes and courses all use the traditional face-to-face mode of delivery, which allows for immediate assistance, feedback and collegial support. These factors are often critical in encouraging re-engagement particularly for students without a previous track record of high achievement and success.

The experience at the Camp Road Centre in Kingston, Jamaica is that students often persist in the process of re-engagement. Even a single success, the second time around, seems to act as an incentive and turning point. One short course may lead to a second or to registration in a professional programme with matriculation status for entry to UWI or another tertiary institution. Thus the opportunities made available through continuing education often provide a prospect for persons to ‘ladder’ up to realizing their full potential - stepping up to higher education.

## **10 Analysis of ASc. 2005 (Cohort 2) applicants: Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and Grenada**

In 2004, UWI introduced a slate of pre-university ASc. Degrees to its programme complement region-wide. These new degrees are available through the University's SCS Centres. The pre-university ASc. degree can be a terminal qualification for public and private sector career advancement. But it is mainly used to earn credits for access to the university's BSc. programmes. It is the final step – the last rung on the ladder into higher education.

The UWI's ASc. Degrees, using traditional face-to-face delivery, have been well accepted across the region-wide with a total enrolment of 192 in 2004/5 rising to 876 in 2007/8.<sup>4</sup> Both SCS Trinidad & Tobago and SCS Camp Road in Jamaica have offered ASc. degrees from the programme's inception in 2004/5. Entry requirements to the ASc. programmes are traditional qualifications, such as A' levels, CAPE and CXC's, as well as credits from approved programmes and courses at SCS/Open Campus or other tertiary level institutions. However, a trend has been noted at the Camp Road, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago Centres whereby graduates of their certificate programmes use these qualifications to 'ladder' into the ASc. programmes. Data for ASc. applications for 2005 was analyzed for Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and Grenada. Dominica had not yet begun to offer ASc. at its UWI Centre in 2005, therefore the UWI Grenada Centre was selected for a comparison as that Centre's profile is are similar to that of Dominica. The 2005 data for both Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago showed significant dependence on qualifications obtained from SCS for entry, as 39.8% of Jamaica applicants, and 20% of Trinidad & Tobago applicants used qualifications from SCS certificate programmes for entry to ASc. programmes.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, no applicants from Grenada were able to use SCS qualifications for entry, as there were few, if any continuing studies programmes available in Grenada with matriculation status. For UWI 12 countries, which have limited continuing education courses with matriculation status, access to higher education is almost entirely restricted to persons with traditional qualifications, thereby limiting the availability of higher education to their wider society. Intake of students at ASc. level in Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago has therefore been significantly augmented by their students' ability to use credits attained from UWI's SCS courses and programmes and from other institutions to 'ladder' into the pre-university ASc. programme, as well as into undergraduate programmes.

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<sup>4</sup> UWI SCS Annual Reports 2004/2005 and 2007/2008

<sup>5</sup> ASc Applications 2005-2006 UWI School of Continuing Studies – UWI Internal document



## **11 UWI Open Campus Dominica Centre and the relevance of ‘Laddering’**

Continuing Studies at UWI’s Dominica Centre is at a fledgling stage, and to date, the courses offered there have no credit or matriculation status. In 2008/9 UWI Dominica expanded its programme offering to include ASc. degrees. Seventeen students registered for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort, and in 2009/10, 17 more registered for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort. This was the first significant programme delivered face-to-face at UWI Dominica.

Access to higher education in Dominica through non-traditional qualifications and laddering is limited, and in the case of access through continuing studies and ASc. degrees, virtually non-existent at this time. As is evident in all UWI 12 countries, Dominica’s access to UWI programmes has been significantly increased through the availability of distance education. As Table 1 shows, by 2003/4, two-thirds of Dominica’s students were able to gain access to UWI’s undergraduate degrees through distance modalities while remaining in Dominica. Access to higher education in Dominica is therefore through traditional qualifications, which may have the effect of restricting the pool of persons eligible for entry to UWI. An additional concern is raised by way of a comparison of the statistics for the years 2003/4 and 2007/8 in Table 3 which shows growth in distance education enrolment of a mere 13% over the period, from 202 to 228 students.

With low per capita registration, coupled with slow growth in distance registration, the relevance and opportunities presented through a ‘laddering’ approach to Dominica are clear. This approach has the capability and potential to widen the net and expand higher education to more individuals and communities in Dominica. The relevance of making available even a limited selection of continuing education courses with matriculation status has the potential to expand access to include persons with less than the requisite traditional entry qualifications, while immediately meeting needs and demands of individuals, communities and the work-place.

It is clear that distance education has provided opportunities for Caribbean people without physical access to UWI’s brick and mortar campuses to successfully access higher education while living and working at home. It continues to revolutionize UWI’s programme delivery and accessibility. At the same time reliance on accessing education exclusively through distance modalities poses challenges particularly for persons re-engaging in formal education who lack a mastery of new technologies or are not highly self motivated.

In spite of the strong and positive impact of utilizing distance modalities, the need for greater access and the need for exploring more ‘pathways’ for access to tertiary education is very evident. The advantage of the laddering approach, using face to face certificate courses to build the confidence of re-engagers as they contemplate re-entry into formal education is clear. The importance of developing a comfort zone through positive associations and supportive interactions in face-to-face classroom settings cannot be over-emphasized. Without the collegial support and teaming with fellow

‘re-engagers’ through face-to-face contact, return to the world of formal education may appear daunting.

## 12 Conclusion

To quote Prof. Errol Miller, Professor Emeritus of UWI:

“The use of a global knowledge-based economy has created a basis for inequality among nations. Knowledge has been elevated in status to a factor of production, and the capacity of countries to manage knowledge will be a determinant of their degree of competitiveness. The challenge for the education system is to develop mechanisms for acquiring, generating, disseminating and utilizing knowledge- in short, to play a lead role in the transformation into a learning society.” (Miller, 2006)

The value of a strong tertiary sector gave validity to the creation of the UWI 60 years ago. The benefits in terms of an enhanced labour force, higher productivity, increased earnings, and the potential for accelerated growth and development are well documented.

But the value of transforming a country into a ‘learning society’ reaps equally abundant rewards in creating the foundation for nation building. The benefits of widening the pathways into stairways to higher education speak to the possibility of a far more holistic outcome for the Caribbean’s development and well-being. A strong tertiary sector provides the potential for scholarly enquiry into a nation’s unique history, its language, its art, its performing arts, and for countries like Dominica, the treasure of its indigenous people and their precious culture.

The existence of a strong tertiary sector enhances each nation’s, and the entire region’s ability to appreciate, to understand, to explore and to undertake its own scholarly research for developing and showcasing its national and regional culture, its identity, its pride. In so doing, a strong tertiary sector provides the region with the opportunity to take its rightful place on the world stage.

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# **UNMASKING THE MYTH OF SPANISH LANGUAGE USE IN THE UNITED STATES: THE DIASPORA FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE HISPANIC CARIBBEAN**

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The theme of the diaspora may seem to be an area of study that has been overworked precisely because it refers to the unending passage of people from one corner of the world to the other as far back as history and archaeology can take us. Yet, the more we have the opportunity to look more carefully into the movement of these peoples and the effects of their displacement into the receiving territories, the more it becomes transparent to us that the stories woven around the lives of these individuals, as they have traversed and settled down either in empty stretches of land or in the midst of populous territories, were in fact a projection of the minds of those who wrote about them, for these writings became more the story of the describers and their ideologies than that of the described. And this is how myths about the peoples of the diaspora, and their cultures and languages have been born and elaborated, and through the use of written texts, in particular, they have been reconstructed and perpetuated (Van Dijk, 1998; Roberts, 2008).

It would be ideal to think that, given the access to information around the world through the use of technology, this myth formation could be readily disproven at its origins. However, our experience tells us that such dependency on technological efficacy and accuracy may also lead us astray. Texts in the various media and in their reproduced versions via Cyberspace continue to be the product of the minds that created them and are not exempt from the distorted information that brought about such a subjective perspective. Such is the case of statistical reports concerning the growth of Spanish usage in the US, which identify this country as the fifth nation in the world as to the number of Spanish speakers (Jandt, 2007). These reports, of course, are closely related to those concerning the issue of increased immigration from Mexico, Central and South America and the Hispanic Caribbean islands into the country.

In their most recent publication with regards to the unquestionable role that intercultural competence plays in the every-day conversations of individuals in the US, Lustig & Koester (2010: 3) identify these numbers as an imperative demographic

aspect that cannot be ignored. On the basis of information obtained from the US Department of the Interior in 2000 and 2005 and from the Pew Research Center in 2008, these authors state that all the nations in the world and, specifically, the United States, are in the midst of the largest and most extensive wave of cultural mixing in their history. With a population of more than 300 million inhabitants as per the US Census of 2000, 14.8% was of Spanish-speaking origin. This percentage placed these migrants, also referred to as Hispanics or Latinos, above all of the minority groups in the US, including African-Americans. It must be made clear that these figures do not reflect the more than a million Latinos that were ignored by the census, for they were frequently left out because they “lived in a garage or on somebody’s sofa,” according to an article on the subject, published in the January 9-15, 2010 issue of *The Economist* (Power in numbers: 31). William Frey, a member of the Brookings Institution, a Washington ‘think-tank,’ stated in this article that by the year 2021 Americans of European background would become a minority among pre-school children. The results on the US Census of 2010, as published in March of 2011 by the US Department of Interior (electronic access), reported that 50% of the increase in population of the United States was the direct cause of a similar increase in the Latino population (Pew Social Trends, 2011). Moreover, the report underlined the fact that the total number of Latinos, 50 477 594 or 50.5 million, had registered an increase of 43% in ten years, that is, higher than originally projected.

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Clearly, these numbers stand as a strong support for the argument that the United States is the fifth nation in the world in terms of Spanish speakers, that the maintenance of Spanish there is not as debatable a matter as some linguists might think it is, and, that Spanish would eventually become the second language of millions more speakers, if not the language of the country, given the demographic trends. This was the impression we received in Spain from both students and professors of language, when we presented an earlier version of this paper at the University of Salamanca in September of 2008 and at the University of Alicante in March of 2009. According to Jandt (2007: 362), these projections must be viewed with a degree of caution for he considers them to be the product of an ideology of segregation. Those responsible for the construction of the implications of these numbers make reference to the borders of what he calls a ‘labeled’ population. Jandt believes that the projected figures are too simplistic, for they do not reflect the reality of a cultural group in which around 40% of its members have already married those from other ancestral roots. However, this author quotes Samuel P. Huntington, renowned American historian, who promotes this same segregationist ideology: “The continuing Latin American immigration could create a cultural clash between Hispanics and Anglos. The US would be divided into two peoples, two cultures and two languages” (Jandt: 362).

Indeed these high reported numbers of Spanish speakers, both in 2000 and 2010, together with Latinos' well-known economic, political and social success, could easily distort the reality of the language situation by creating the incorrect impression that Spanish now holds an increased position of prestige in US society. The achievements to which we allude are evidenced initially by the increased importance of this community in the mass media, the consumption of goods, appointments to prestigious governmental offices and accessibility to improved living conditions. Both Jandt (2007) and Lustig & Koester (2010), in addition to other scholars, present a detailed description of Latino incursions into the realm of radio stations, TV channels, magazines, newspapers, books, and chat room sites on the Internet. Major producers of goods in the country have made it a point to use these venues in order to reach a group of high marketing value, for Latinos display a respectable degree of power in their purchasing possibilities and a fierce loyalty towards their preferred brands. Jandt (2007: 370) explains: "Early studies of the Hispanic market, for example, revealed an important trait: intense brand loyalty – 40% more than the general population."

However, if we look closely at the same situation through the optics of sociology, anthropology, the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology, we begin to perceive a truer story behind the magic of numbers. The investigative approaches of these various fields examines the everyday realities actually lived by these speakers, a life in Spanish surrounded by a hostile environment that refuses to accept not only a non-native accent in English, but any language that is not English and its accompanying Anglo-Saxon worldview (Lippi-Green, 1997: 63-73; see also the analysis of the English language situation in the field of language planning made by Tollefson in his 1991 book *Planning Language, Planning Inequality: Language Policy in the Community*). A closer look at these patterns of bias on the part of the surrounding community of English speakers, is discussed by Urciouli (1996: 35) in the following quote:

The ordinary bilingual speech that people engage in every day is always subject to racialization. Whenever English speakers complain about the unfairness of hearing Spanish spoken in public places or in the workplace, they racialize Spanish by treating it as a matter of place... The language that works for bilinguals at home and around the neighborhood is disallowed by outsiders who take themselves the power to judge language difference in moral terms. Nearly every Spanish-speaking bilingual I know, academic colleagues and my own students as well as the people in this study, has experienced complaints about using Spanish in a public place.

In her book on language, ideology, and discrimination in the US, Lippi-Green (1997) unveils a persistent orientation in the attitudes of Americans towards language as a system of communication and the manner in which discrimination based on non-native accent works to construct, support and perpetuate inequality in the social structures and the relations of power in the country. The so-called language ideologies or sets of beliefs about language to which Lippi-Green refers (see also Van Dijk, 1998; Van Dijk, 2006; Schmidt, 2010) have in the past played a major role in linguistic studies as a result of the scholarly work by researchers in anthropology, sociology and sociolinguistics such as Gumperz and Hymes (1972), and Bauman and Sherzer (1974). Although Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity (1998: 9) believe that there is no real consensus as to the definition of the concept of ideology, they assert that the studies carried out from this perspective do reflect a definition of language that is simultaneously a definition of human beings. That is, researchers into language ideologies locate language and its speakers at the intersection of a social world in which scholars examine the definitions of language and the notions the speakers have as well as the way in which these definitions serve as a model to organize individuals, institutions and the interrelations among them (p.3). Therefore, it is these concepts of language which form the theoretical and methodological basis for the discussion presented here.

The phenomenon of the migratory waves of non-European Spanish speakers to the US is not exclusive to this group. We know that current American society is the product of a constant influx of people from diverse countries throughout the development of its history as a nation (Grosjean, 1982: 42-112). We also know that, in the case of the United States, the linguistic evolution of the migratory family could be predicted (Grosjean, 2010: 103). The first generation of migratory parents spoke their L1; their children of the second generation had a tendency to be bilingual in L1 and L2. Then, the majority of the children of these bilingual speakers, that is, the third generation, became monolingual speakers of L2 (English). It is imperative to underline at this point in the discussion that a thorough, quantitative study of the second generation of migrants from different parts of the world into the US (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) has demonstrated that this pattern of monolingualism in L2 by the third generation, has now become typical of the second generation as well. Therefore, in the case of the Spanish speakers who are the focus of our study, the shift to English seems to have been taking place a generation earlier than among previous waves of immigrants. This information brings us back to our original question: despite the appreciable demographic increase of Latinos in the US, why was the change to L2 been taking place earlier?

Sociolinguists have been especially interested in the study of the dynamics of the loss of the first language (L1) on the part of the members of a diasporic community (Grosjean, 1982; Grosjean, 2010; Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992; Romaine, 1995;

Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Baker, 2001; Myers-Scotton, 2006). In her book on bilingualism, Myers-Scotton sums up the results of the proliferation of studies in language maintenance and language shift by concluding that: “...we can predict, but we cannot promise” (p. 69) what the outcome will be for each situation of language contact, for there are too many factors directly or indirectly involved. Commenting on the same language phenomenon, Baker gives a detailed explanation of the comprehensive list of factors presented by Conklin and Lourie (1983; cited in Baker: 59-62) who attempt to classify these factors under three broad categories: the political, social and demographic factors, the cultural factors and the linguistic ones. The first category includes the number of speakers that live within the same geographic area, the proximity to the place of origin of this speech community, the capacity of the L1 speakers of social mobility and the speakers’ level of education. Under the category of cultural factors we can identify the particular ties that are present between the language of the speakers and their ethnic identity, the emphasis given to family ties and the existence of institutions such as schools and churches where the first language is spoken. The last category, the one which relates to linguistic factors, stresses the importance for L2 speakers of English to have an L1 language that is standardized and that possesses some sort of status at the international level.

Language behaviors within any community inevitably constitute a more complex situation than the one reflected in a mere list of factors. These factors cannot be considered in isolation, because they are interrelated and they interact within the community. Additionally, the power dimension of the speakers within their social context, an aspect to be discussed later, is not contemplated in this particular list of factors. Finally this approach does not necessarily focus on those factors that are the most salient and significant to the community itself.

In terms of the community we wish to describe in this paper, García and Díaz (1992) posit the following: “Most US immigrant groups have experienced a language shift to English as a consequence of assimilation into American life” (p.14). This statement in itself is indicative of some particular circumstances that should be taken into consideration if we are to make some statements about the Latino community in the US. It is thus time to look at the situation before us not simply through the lens of increased demographic numbers but through a different kind of prism that examines carefully the sociolinguistic reality of the country.

By incorporating into our analysis Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power (1991: 170; see also a discussion of the concept in Myers-Scotton, 2006: 114-115) we are able to understand better the status of English and Spanish in the US. To Bourdieu, at both the social and interpersonal levels, the languages that individuals speak are an index as to their standing in the society in which they interact. In other words, according to Bourdieu’s metaphor of a linguistic marketplace, that is, his description of the sociolinguistic locus of communication among the members of a speech community,



there is a hierarchy of status and power. In the case of US society, a privileged status and the political and economic powers of the nation are in the hands of the native English speakers of European ancestry (Lippi-Green, 1997: 63-73; Saville-Troike, 2003: 275-276; Jandt, 2007: 339) while the majority of Spanish speakers, originally from Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean come from working-class and non-European ethnic roots (Grosjean, 1982; Lustig & Koester, 2010), a fact that places them and their language in a position of disadvantage in social, economic and linguistic terms, among others.

In his work devoted to the study of problems in intercultural communication, Jandt (2007: 340-342) presents an extended discussion of the concept known as 'white privilege,' a notion that focuses on the dominant culture of the US. It holds firmly to the values of extreme individualism, competition and a pragmatic view of life, the control of emotions, the use of Standard American English as the sole language of the country, Christianity as the only basis of faith, the importance of only white male leaders to the history of the country, the European basis of migration into the US, a Protestant work ethic, an emphasis on the scientific and quantitative method, and the power derived from the ownership of property. This vision, and particularly the one that holds English as the source of symbolic power, make native speakers of English view the use of other languages more as a problem than as a right (Verhovek, 1995; Baker, 2001: 368; Ek & Sánchez, 2010). This forms the basis of the narrow linguistic posture of movements in the US known as 'English-Only,' 'English First,' 'Official English,' and 'US English'. The followers of these movements believe that the country needs new legislation at the Constitutional level that would declare English to be the official language of the United States (Grosjean, 1982; Baker, 2001; Schmidt, 2010).

In such an environment, one that is charged with hostility against the use of languages other than English, migrants are immediately forced to begin a process of acculturation. Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 113) explain that as part of this process, migrants everywhere in the world are confronted by a dilemma of great significance. On the one hand, they bring with them the languages that tie them to their sense of self-esteem and of belonging to an ethnic community. On the other hand, these individuals face an environment that forces them to abandon their languages and cultural legacy and to incorporate into their communication repertoire a new way of speaking. They face a community of speakers that demands the use of a common language as the core of national identity and excludes any proposition that would not involve linguistic assimilation.

According to Portes and Rumbaut, in the US in particular, the pressure to assimilate is even more severe due to these authors' belief that the US has very few elements on which to cement a sense of national identity, given that the country is made up of groups of individuals who originate from hundreds of other nations and that it lacks

the “unifying symbols of a millenary history” (p. 113). As a result, the use of Standard American English has come to acquire a singular importance as the unifying tie that runs throughout its territorial immensity. Such was the belief behind the words spoken by former US President Theodore Roosevelt: “We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language...” (cited in Portes & Rumbaut, p. 113). As expressed by Lieberman, Dalto and Johnston (1975: 34-61), Grosjean (1982), Lippi-Green (1997), and Chin and Wigglesworth (2007), in none of the countries that have been studied by linguists concerned with language maintenance and shift has the transition to monolingualism among migrants been as fast-tracked as in the US. The same holds for the complete disappearance of foreign languages. To add an interesting note to this discussion, many linguists, worried by the speed of the occurrence of the phenomenon of language death in the world, characterize the US as the cemetery of languages (Baker, 2001).

The present status of migrants’ languages in the US hints of a return to the xenophobic ambiance that prevailed after the conclusion World War I. Jandt (2007) affirms that every time the nation has found itself in the midst of serious economic uncertainty as at present, Congress has passed new legislation directed at limiting migration into the country. A look at some current events provides ample evidence to support this statement: the construction of a wall at the border between the United States and Mexico; the creation of a bureaucratic structure at the level of the President’s cabinet that is known as the Department of Homeland Security and Border Patrol; the repatriation of undocumented Latino workers and the enacting of laws at the state level giving police the right to ask for the proper documentation concerning citizenship from anyone deemed of interest, without a search warrant.

It is an unquestionable fact that the socio-cultural ambiance in the United States does not provide a space for the *convivencia* of languages or the possibility of the co-existence of different languages. This, of course, runs contrary to the position expressed by the government which underscores the strategic need for speakers of languages other than English, especially within the context of the version of globalization which the United States so enthusiastically champions. There seems to be a tolerance at some levels for speakers of ‘foreign’ languages as long as they use them for the purposes of teaching and translation. A fact that best exemplifies this posture is the marked increase in demand for courses in Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. It seems incongruous that, on the one hand, individuals receive discriminatory treatment for their use of languages other than English in the context of everyday social interaction, yet on the other hand there exists a very sophisticated and lucrative educational apparatus in both the public and private sectors, which is devoted to the teaching of these same languages.

We ask ourselves then how this sociolinguistic picture of intolerance translates itself into the everyday life of Spanish speakers in the United States. In her anthropological

linguistic fieldwork about language ideologies among the members of the Puerto Rican community in New York, Urciouli (1996) describes the experiences of Spanish speakers who are surrounded by individuals who let them know about the importance of knowing and using English as essential criteria for being considered as 'bona fide' members of the New York community.

Hegemonically, Spanish itself is regarded as a barrier to class mobility because it displaces English ... Accents, 'broken' English, and 'mixing' became signs of illiteracy and laziness, which people are morally obligated to control ... Bilingual neighborhoods are equated with slums, an equation familiar to people who live in them. (1996: 26)

These experiences of outright discrimination have devastating consequences for Spanish speakers. They undermine self-esteem and engender a lasting sense of alienation, which has as one of its consequences an overwhelming tendency within this population towards the loss of Spanish. One of the informants in the study by Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 130) discussed above explains that children in this situation find themselves trapped in a cloud in which confusion relevant to self-identity and disorientation at school come together to produce a growing stigma that is associated to the use of a language other than English. We can appreciate this phenomenon better from a closer reading of the literature written by an impressive number of Latinos and published in the United States. This literature, which includes the genres of poetry, essays, and narrative prose, is a reflection of the psychological pain that these individuals have undergone with regards to their loss of identity, their first language, their self-esteem and their sense of dignity and self-respect (Simounet, 1999; Simounet, 2008).

Literary and linguistic associations of the caliber of the Modern Language Association (MLA), the International Association of Pragmatics (IAP) and the Latin American Association of Discourse Studies (ALED) now include programs devoted to the presentation of research based on the experiences of such individuals; in addition, institutions of higher learning, both public and private, have created departments in Latino Studies where in-depth analysis of this situation is carried out at the graduate level. In a paper on the work of a selected number of Latino poets, Simounet (1999) showed how, through the use of English-Spanish code-switching within the text of the poems themselves, the writers channeled their ideas and emotions concerning their grief in an endless search for self-identity within the context of the hostility that surrounds them. While poets of Mexican ancestry expressed their nostalgia for their years of infancy, poets of Puerto Rican roots cried out to the gods of their Caribbean indigenous ancestors to punish those who had deprived them of their identity and ethnic pride. As Puerto Rican poet of the diaspora, Luz María Umpierre, declared in

an interview (Rivera, 2008): “Language is our only homeland.” Her poetry reflects her continuous struggle against the ideologies of otherness which marginalize those who are different from the so-called ‘mainstream’ for reasons of culture, language, color, religion and sexual orientation, among others. Umpierre states that she prefers to be marginalized than to be erased with the stroke of a pen (Simounet, 2008).

As we return to the sociolinguistic realm in terms of what is happening in the United States regarding the use of English and Spanish, we accept that bilingualism is present but we stress that it is limited in time and space. We now have confirmed that as early as the second generation, the first language of migrants is being lost by the drowning tide of monolingualism in English. Therefore, the expectations raised about this population of Spanish speakers concerning their maintenance of the language are not as positive as the demographic trends might suggest. The generational duration of bilingualism among Latinos seems to be diminishing. In fact, we believe that the Spanish that is still heard in the United States is primarily maintained due to continuous migratory waves, the return of many to their country of origin even if it is for a short time, and the fragile infrastructure that has been established to give them some support.

We are aware of the prestige of the Spanish language, which is now spoken by more than 500 million people. This language does not run the risk of extinction as many other languages do. It is a language whose literature has been honored by prestigious prizes such as the Nobel Prize, as recently as 2010. Still its situation in the context of the United States is precarious. Every single day more English language speakers are learning Spanish, but fewer are retaining it.

The quotation that follows by Schmidt (2010) summarizes the situation that we have tried to describe in this paper:

In short, pluralists argue that the assimilationist solution for language difference in the national structure denies the realities of an unequalitarian social structure in such a way that it is blind to its own racialized order of privilege. Because it works to perpetuate an institutionalized structure of inequality in which Anglophone European Americans are systematically and unjustifiably privileged in relation to peoples of color, some of whom continue to speak languages other than English, a policy of linguistic assimilation to English only cannot avoid a justifiable charge of racism. (p.156)

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# CHRISTIANITY, LITERACY, AND CREOLIZATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ANGUILLA

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The sociohistory of Anguilla's English-lexifier Creole, Anguillian, raises questions about creolists' views of the nineteenth century as a period of superficial language change. As discussed below, archival information about the establishment of schools for enslaved Africans suggests that processes of change associated with linguistic creolization may extend into the first part of the 1800s. These sources point to ways in which social norms and events at the local level interact with language change and related sociolinguistic phenomena and thereby enrich understandings of context.

Anguilla, the most northerly of the Caribbean's Leeward Islands, is a relatively small and dry landmass, with a size of approximately sixteen by four miles and a surface that consists mainly of limestone. It has no rivers or streams, and very few sources of fresh water. Higman (1995: 42) describes it as a "marginal colony" with thin soil, bare rock, and sand. This somewhat atypical geography explains why European planters' cultivation of sugar was less successful there than in other British colonies. It also situates a political-economic history distinct from that of the places more frequently studied by creolists (e.g., Barbados, Guyana, and Jamaica).

Britain's official settlement of the island in 1650 marks the beginning of the "founder period", which many linguists identify as key to understanding creole language origins. This period is usually framed to exclude the time it was inhabited by Caribs, as there appears to have been minimal contact with them after the English colonization. In recent years prominent linguists have asserted that European norms predominated from 1650 onward, but socio-historical data from Anguilla suggest a more complicated picture in which Africans' cultural practices coexisted alongside those of their owners.

The first five decades of British colonization include settlement by a small number of Europeans, the forced migration of Africans, and significant social interaction between these two main groups. Anguilla's migratory fluxes (often linked to geopolitical conflicts in Europe and elsewhere the Caribbean) proved dramatic during the 1600s, with significant numbers of migrants moving into and off the island. Early on, the European population was quite small, limited to less than a few hundred. At



least 100 enslaved Africans can be documented for the 1680s (Bonnet Benítez, 1977) and their numbers grew to 879, i.e. 57% of the total population (including its militia), by 1720. Demographic information and evidence of hierarchy (e.g., African enslavement; indentured servitude; distribution of land and resources; ideas about race, labor, property, and religion) indicate that substantial diversity characterized linguistic interaction among the inhabitants in this period.

Chaudenson (2001) holds that throughout the Caribbean during the founder period, which he calls the *société d'habitation*, quotidian patterns of living and experience led Africans and their owners to speak in a very similar, if not identical, way (Chaudenson: 12). The idea is that through locally-defined sets of conditions, persons of African ancestry, purportedly the subjects of strong linguistic assimilation, spoke like Europeans, including those who bought, owned, and sold them. But neither the “Robinsonian conditions” nor “the absence of a social gap” between slaves and their masters that are projected by Chaudenson (2001) accurately characterize Anguilla's early colonization (see Walicek, 2009: 356-366). This finding takes issue with the assertion that Africans necessarily spoke close approximations of the lexifier during the founder period. It also opens up the possibility that enslaved “founders” maintained fluid but identifiably African socio-cultural traditions that extend chronologically into subsequent periods, perhaps even into the first half of the nineteenth century.

182 While a comprehensive history of Christianity on Anguilla falls outside the scope of this essay, it should be noted that a church for the European population existed on the “glebe land in The Valley” in the late 1600s (Mitchell, 1978: 46). Legal documents from the same period show that several English property owners could not write their names. These papers include comments on illiteracy and examples of transactions in which some signed wills and depositions as “X”.

The first few decades of the nineteenth century stand out as a time of noteworthy shifts in the religious and linguistic practices of Africans. An early guide for converting African slaves to Christianity describes a situation in Anguilla that is relatively distinct from that of other Leeward Islands where churches for Africans were strong in the 1700s (e.g., Montserrat, St. Christopher, and Antigua). It specifies the absence of parishes in Anguilla and notes, “the minister has been long dumb for want of maintenance” (Ramsay, 1784: 266). This changed by 1813 when Christians formally ministered to the enslaved and promoted literacy in English among converts. The “introduction of religion” to Africans in Anguilla is sometimes erroneously equated with the official establishment of Methodism. Such was the view of the Deputy Governor of Anguilla in 1817. That year Methodist members of the British parliament inquired about missionary work and he responded:

“The unexpected introduction of religion took place in the year 1813 in which I received a letter from John Hodge, a free coloured man and native of the island importuning my sanction for the establishment of it. Deeming it essential to the reformation of the slaves who before that period, were conducting themselves in habitual violation of the whole system of morality and with a view to discipline them in their duty to God and man, I readily offered every encouragement to the petitioner.”  
(quoted in Hodge, 2003: 22)

The Deputy Governor’s statements indicate that the island’s social landscape was characterized by distinct socio-cultural norms. Like most examples of social discourse preserved in the archives, the letter characterizes the transfer and perpetuation of African religious practices and beliefs to the Caribbean as undesirable and problematic. His response suggests that religion and morality are limited to Christianity (or perhaps just Methodism) and its European practitioners. Hodge’s testimony tells a different story and his status as petitioner and free “coloured” native emphasizes the significance of networks among a diverse group of people of African ancestry.

Two factors complicate the idea that Christianity was simply introduced to Anguilla with the establishment of churches. First, in contrast with the view alluded to in the excerpt referenced above, Christianity was introduced to several parts of West Africa well before the 1800s (see Sanneh, 1983). In addition, some of the Africans (including those purchased elsewhere) may have been exposed to Christianity on other Caribbean islands. While the Deputy Governor is obviously uninterested in these convergences, both raise questions about the assertion view that Christianity was introduced as simply altogether “new” in 1813.

Within just a few years of Hodge’s 1813 request, churches and day schools were built with the support of the Wesleyan Missionary Society of England. Various groups contributed to these projects. An important shift marks European attitudes toward the conversion and education of the enslaved. Distinct from the situation in the eighteenth century, funds for them were secured locally through collections at public meetings. Some estate owners also donated money. Enslaved Africans provided physical labor for the construction of church buildings in The Valley, The Road, and West End. In addition, as Hodge’s letter indicates, free people of color played a role in creating these institutions.

The establishment of churches and expansion of mission activities for the enslaved transformed social practices on the island. Methodist missionaries began to hold religious services on the estates, often with the permission of owners. One of their first priorities was organizing Sunday school classes for the religious instruction of

children. Gradually, night classes focusing on adult education were introduced. The curriculum for both included reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Many missionaries believed education could act as a vehicle for challenging prevalent views among Whites, especially the notion that Christianity was beyond the moral and cognitive capacity of the enslaved. Literacy brought with it skills that could serve as counterevidence to owners and others who questioned the cognitive capacities of the enslaved and the value of religious education. Significantly, skills taught in Sunday school and night classes had long figured in social and economic relationships. In his study of the region, Roberts (1997: 112-114) notes that the Bible was used to control the minds and the actions of populations through religion, while the record book and written law were revered as important mechanisms in management and business.

By 1815 Anguilla's new Methodist community alone numbered 250 (Hodge, 2003: 22). Missionary records state that a larger number wanted to join; however, potential members were rejected for "unacceptable" behavior such as dancing, drumming, drinking, and having children outside unions sanctioned by the church. Some testimonies suggest that the traditional socio-cultural practices of enslaved Africans changed rather quickly. When Reverend James Whitworth visited from St. Barths the same year, he spoke with a "resident proprietor" who applauded Methodism's arrival. He told Whitworth, "Since its coming there has been an almost entire cessation of dancing, wakes, and carousing among the slaves; they enjoy good health and scarcely have any need of doctors" (quoted by Hodge, 2003: 22). Previously the resident provider opposed the establishment of churches for the enslaved, indication that views toward Africans and their proselytization may have shifted rather quickly among a segment of the population.

Local residents of European ancestry and missionaries who organized church activities generally had different interests when it came to the education of the enslaved. Most European slave owners were interested in preserving the status quo, but a small minority did allow those they owned to purchase their freedom; some, in recognition of shifting attitudes and faithful service, granted slaves freedom in their wills. In contrast, the primary concern of missionaries was winning over an ever larger number of African and Afro-Caribbean converts. Religious leaders saw widespread European ideas positing the inferior intellectual abilities of Africans as more of an obstacle to their goals than they did the institution of slavery itself. This helps explain why missionaries frequently taught converts to accept the established order and disregard practices that Europeans typically associated with inferiority and heathenism. Submission and acculturation were advanced through the rituals of baptism (usually children) and marriage (between slaves as well as between enslaved women and free men with whom they were living) (Cummins, 1828). Some missionaries even taught Africans that they were morally obligated to accept

obedience and bondage. Apparently they did so in order to strengthen their alliances with slaveholders and ensure ongoing access to the enslaved (Coke, 1811: 442).

By 1824, the same year that the British government placed the island under the control of St. Christopher, Anguilla's Methodist mission saw itself beginning to prosper. Worship services were well attended and according to missionaries, local circumstances afforded slave owners "favourable opportunities for the teaching of the Gospel" (Report, 1838: 73). In 1828 Anguilla's National School had better attendance than did Sunday schools in the Spring Division and The Valley. While the National School served slaves, most students were free. Bringing together diverse groups of speakers, its enrollment, which included 32 slaves, had recently increased to 182 (i.e., 109 boys and 73 girls) (Report, 1838: 73).

Christian missions sought to marginalize practices that represented African socio-cultural traditions at the same time that they tied formal education to good health and specific social values and norms associated with the most "presentable" among the island's European population. As already suggested, the establishment of the churches differentially impacted the island's African population. Churches and schooling for the enslaved appear to have been organized in opposition to what Alleyne (1980: 17-21) identifies as "symbolic dimensions of culture", such as religion, magic, verbal arts, and music. As he explains, these are components of social life shaped by African traditions that generally endured in the Caribbean to a greater degree than more structural aspects, such as technology and political organization. The former traditions survived across the first 150 years of the island's history, but appear to have come under fire after Black churches were founded.

Alleyne's "symbolic dimensions" of culture include communicative phenomena and ideas relevant for better understanding linguistic creolization. Anthropological research on the Central and West African origins of the Caribbean's enslaved populations indicates that African religious traditions encompass spiritual beliefs as well as ideas about language and its relationship with social reality. Maureen Warner-Lewis (2003: 139) explains:

"The metonymic and verbal metaphoric relationships sought in African supplicatory religious ritual are consonant with the world view of non-literate cultures, in that words are conceived as conveying power, and the relationship between sound and reference is closer than obtains in societies where long use of literacy forges distance and greater abstraction between the two."

Her explanation indicates that learning to read and write in English may have exposed the enslaved to ideas about language that differed from those of their ancestors. It also

nuances notions of assimilation, indirectly situating changes in ideas about language and meaning as a crucial component of the religious conversion of the enslaved.

Nevertheless, exposure to the linguistic ideologies contextualizing European notions of literacy and spirituality did not necessarily mean the total or complete displacement of Central and West African beliefs about language and its relationship to social life. In fact, African literacies can be imagined as having influenced situations of contact through the persistence of non-European norms and resistance. Goveia (1965: 303), in her description of the missions of the Leeward Islands, points out that when the enslaved “testified” about experiences of salvation, “they found a congenial outlet for their old love of dramatic eloquence in proclaiming their new consciousness of their value as souls to be saved.” When juxtaposed with observations by Hodge and Whitworth, this statement implies a contact situation shaped by a diverse set of speakers’ ideas about the relationship between language and social life, a heterogeneous set of grammatical forms, and shifting sociolinguistic norms. Within this milieu, enslaved scholars who were transformed by the experience of formal education but still led lives in which African practices were epistemologically meaningful may have been bicultural or bidialectal and can be thought of as agents of creolization.

Two final testimonies underscore the significance of contemplating language contact and change in terms of the meaning historically attributed to linguistic difference and social experience. They include metalinguistic commentary that assists in imagining the experiences of those who attended classes in the newly established churches as well as information about Africans that did not pursue affiliation with them. In the first Mr. Coleridge, a visitor to the island, recalls church activities that he observed in 1825:

“The serenity of the neighborhood was disturbed in the evening when I was there, by the worse than Poppish mummery of class meetings; the young women and children were screaming out by rote some hymns and songs with an asperity and discordance of tone which seemed to make Nature angry, and exhibiting a scene of such mechanical superstition and senseless perversion of Christian worship as might well have caused a wiser man than me to weep for the possible absurdities of mankind.”  
(Coleridge, 1826: 228)

The anecdote that Coleridge records corroborates the connections among the evolving symbolic and linguistic dimensions of Afro-Caribbean culture on the one hand, and sometimes negative attitudes about linguistic creolization that took root among powerful owner classes in British Caribbean societies, on the other. Roberts (1997: 263) contextualizes these in terms of dominant language attitudes:

“There could then be little admiration for the cultural mixture and creativity of creole languages, which were on the contrary considered as deviations from the purity of the standard European language forms and structures; there then could be little admiration for the feat of general communication among disparate peoples and the fashioning of a common culture [...].”

Coleridge suggests a complex situation in which members of the European elite tolerated the religious instruction of the enslaved at the same time that they mocked and regarded their verbal performance as abnormal and unnatural.

A second observer from the 1820s, a missionary named Fleming, reports that a few of the best students were elevated to the status of teacher or tutor. Pupils promoted in this manner earned less than other teachers and thereby saved the church money. Comparing those under the supervision of tutors and those who do not study, he writes, “some have learned our language, but others stay behind and believe it constricts their freedom of speech” (Fleming, 1826: 2). Enslaved tutors, those who learned and taught “our language” are likely to have been bidialectal, familiar with the prestigious variety of English that their contemporaries associated with standard European forms. Fleming’s reference to “others” suggests that some Africans rejected either Christianity and/or “proper English” for practical and/or ideological reasons. Members of this group appear to have associated education under the direction of the Christian church with a loss of liberty.

Even with the abolition of slavery just a couple of years away and acculturation on the horizon, access to formal education and the acquisition of skills in reading and writing did not necessarily mean greater freedom or personal autonomy for the enslaved. In an 1832 letter, Reverend Matthew Banks writes of a recent visit to the jail, the local place where slaves were bought and sold. He laments the sale of a student for \$25, referring to her as “a fine coloured young woman of good character, a member of our society, and a scholar in our Sunday School” (Weekes, 2003: 51).

In subsequent cases like this one, Banks and other ministers sought official permission to purchase slaves’ freedom with church funds. They appear to have made special efforts to prevent the transfer and possible departure of individual scholars who studied in their schools. Such actions were controversial and do not appear to have been widespread across the Leewards at the time. Hodge (2003: 22) remembers Banks, perhaps an advocate for the enslaved, as a “most original and earnest” minister, qualities which he sees as explaining why the Methodist Church had grown to include a membership of 617 by 1834, the year slavery was legally abolished and apprenticeship instituted.

Information from historical sources suggests ways in which the theorization of creole origins can give attention to variation in specific local contexts and differentiation across the Eastern Caribbean and wider region. This evidence is important for linguists because it suggests how language use, ideas about language, and social life more generally pattern in relation to the emergence of a church for persons of African ancestry on Anguilla. The archival data presented above indicate that when the enslaved learned to read and write English in schools they had to distance themselves from the socio-cultural traditions and practices of their ancestors, especially aspects of heritage that defined their community as distinct from that of the European elite; however, these same records repeatedly make reference to a group that remained outside the purview of churches and schools established for the enslaved in the 1800s. This shows that not all Africans on the island had adopted European norms prior to the establishment of these institutions. Significantly, even enslaved scholars who strived to become model church members and students were subject to ridicule, discrimination, and sale. The archival anecdotes presented above suggest that the complex array of social, historical, linguistic, and ideological phenomena characteristic of “a high contact environment” (Ansaldo & Mathews 2007: 4) and associated with creolization may extend into the nineteenth century. To borrow a phrase from Roberts (1997: 7), they assist in tracing the development of the region's varieties of English as “first and foremost, human responses to extreme and inhumane situations”, a task that history itself identifies as long overdue.

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**CONTACT, CONTINUITY, CONVERGENCE, AND  
COMPLEXITY IN CARIBBEAN LITERATURES**



# THE SPACE OF TRAUMA: WILSON HARRIS' *JONESTOWN*

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Wilson Harris' *Jonestown* gives word and voice as well to a paradoxical and typically Caribbean sense of being-in-between knowing and unknowing in the event of a traumatic disaster. Responding to the inexplicable historical fact of Jonestown, Harris' novel pressures the limit of the reader's understanding. Carried away by Harris' forceful writing, we readers are in-between, drawn just beyond the limits of knowledge to witness the event of a traumatic truth that can only be provisionally known.

On November 18, 1978 nine hundred and eighteen members of the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project in Jonestown headed by Jim Jones poisoned or shot themselves and other members in a mass implosion of 'revolutionary suicide'. Such a decisive, willful end intended to discharge a profound statement of hopelessness to the world actually concealed the profoundly fearful, death-bound desire that consumed the community. Jonestown actualizes not only the profound frustration with the possibilities of communal life, but a holocaust that was finally more murderous than suicidal.

Yet the members of this community did not seem motivated by pathological obsession. By many reliable accounts, they were quite ordinary people who joined the Peoples Temple committed to the well-intended promise of building a purified, socialist community outside the socio-cultural pressure of the US and the First World. They cared about racism, unjust warfare, economic inequality, and rampant capitalism. Like so many not just of the Americas but also of the world, they imagined a sociality that offered more value to one's life together with others. These desires were all so well intended until the basis of that imagination was interrupted and so profoundly threatened. Of course, these historical and psychological interpretations have been documented quite well in Tim Reiterman's *The Raven* and many more journalistic and scholarly accounts. In excess of the factual details compiled and the interpretations developed there remains a sense of unknowing that overshadows the known. Years of historical accounting and analytical interpretation have offered reason to understand this profound catastrophe. Yet the legacy of reason and facts themselves seem to be an insignificant response to an event that remains endlessly traumatic.

Sir Wilson Harris' *Jonestown* enters the space of this trauma not to relieve the historical and interpretive record of its uncertainty. *Jonestown* intensifies the strange reality of the uncanny and the paradoxical knowing and unknowing of catastrophic trauma. Harris' fiction acts as a medium within this space that tries to access the excess of what remains psychologically within, on the periphery, and on the outside of the framework of this record. The strange experience of the uncanny comes forth in the novel because Jonestown is the most recent emergence of an "absolute violence", another example of a historically continuous program that determines the conclusion of the utopian community (Harris: 25). Thus, 'absolute violence' is not just a situated implosion in Jonestown, Guyana, or more broadly of colonial or post-colonial South America. Absolute violence originates history. It comes forth from a doomed, poisonous urge for conquest that engenders the force of life with a lethal, death-bound energy. Jonestown is indeed an actual, historical community, but, for Harris, it is also a regional archetype signifying the enigmatic collapse and doom that fated many of the once thriving South American civilizations. Harris' narrative struggles in narrative, plot, and syntax to transfigure the structure of violence that is the basis of history named directly as "conquest" (p. 15).

Harris' narrator, Francisco Bone, is the sole survivor and, thus, the remaining witness of the imploded community. Why he survives the catastrophe is as fateful as the doom that destroys Jonestown. Like many apocalyptic dispatches, Bone's name is a pseudonym, a persona that emerges from a stricken identity sixteen years after that fateful day. His dispatch begins with a letter to an editor, a sympathetic reader of "imagination" who might understand, supervise, and finalize a manuscript that tries to encounter the actualities of a horrific reality that can only be represented in the condensed, chaotic conflict of a dream work. Like many apocalyptic dispatches, he now senses the concentration of forces and events that lead to the final days; therefore, his account of the "day of the dead" is transmitted in archetypal characters that try to reveal and gain some understanding of the "layers" of history and psychology that underlie the event of Jonestown (p. 22). At last, like many apocalyptic dispatches, the revelation of the future comes forth by disclosing an enclosed past.

In *Crowds and Power*, Elias Canetti argues that the survivor of a catastrophe is invested with a special power of singularity and relief: "Horror at the sight of death turns into satisfaction that it is someone else who is dead" (Canetti: 227). Yet the strange surge of relief and destiny that follows the survivor who distances himself from the death of the other is never internalized or engendered by Bone. He is overcome by traumatic guilt, and repeatedly he questions, "Why Me, Why Have I Survived" (Harris: 20). His only satisfaction comes forth in a sense of traumatic responsibility to give witness not just to "nothingness" but a knowing of "somethingness" (Harris: 7). From the introduction onward throughout the novel,

survival remains not just a vexing, mysterious question; it forms a motif that is at once personal and historical. Bone's testimony is a formal recognition that he will live on. And yet living on returns him to the trauma of holocaust seeking something that has been otherwise enclosed and deferred and disclosing it so that it may survive into the future. The disclosure is an opening to some alternative combination of forces, as he notes,

“To glimpse this abhorrent tribalism is to begin to question all one's premises and to look backward into the mists of time for alternative creations, alternative universes, alternative parallels - so to speak - imbued with different weddings and marriages to reality.” (Harris: 25)

The novel relentlessly seeks some alternative, some other framework, some excess, some remaining time. Of this alternative, many critics have provided insightful analysis of *Jonestown's* plot structure, particularly Harris' use of the Mayan concept of time as an alternative means of disclosure that would open the “somethingness” that Bone seeks (p. 7). Bone repeatedly uses the maxim “NAME DEATH IN YOURSELF” encapsulating the enigma of his survival, a living on in search of this paradoxical *something*. In the effort of naming, Bone is returned repeatedly to the trauma of the day of death (p. 40).

I believe an introductory understanding of trauma will open another, powerful temporal conception that gives paradoxical immediacy to the absolute violence known and yet unknown by Bone. More important, trauma gives psychological voice to the lasting pain of a wound for him as well as those others harmed by this indefinite, relentless intrusion.

Cathy Caruth provides a general, contemporary definition of trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Caruth: 11). It is noteworthy that the contemporary understanding of trauma has been transformed from the earlier etymological use, which referred to a bodily wound. Freud is particularly responsible for the more contemporary understanding of the term, when he transforms the original Greek sense of a bodily injury, inverting the locus of pain by giving priority to the psyche's vulnerability. Freud states in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that a traumatic experience is a psychic wound, a frightful “invasive” “breach” of the protective security that shields the mind's fundamental orientations. For Freud, this traumatic breach is conflicted: at once a shock, and yet more than an eventful stimulus returned to and repeated in memory and further sustained by associative cathexis. Ultimately,

the force of trauma actualizes an unknown sense of “fright” that threatens the entire stability and enclosure of consciousness (Freud: 25).

Trauma is not just a frightening shock that simply recalls a marked event of the individual’s past, it is more the experience of an overwhelming, untimely force, that was precisely not known in the first instance and yet returns later to haunt the victim. Simply and yet paradoxically, the experience of trauma is so frighteningly excessive that it interrupts the victim’s experience of time and memory. The shock of the mind’s relation to the sense of life’s termination is not an immediate experience of the threat, but a kind of sense of and yet absence of experience that cannot be fully known. And it is this haunting of a seeming direct experience that paradoxically becomes the basis of the repetition of tormented recollections and dreams.

What Freud encounters in traumatic neurosis is not just a reaction to a horrible event, but rather the peculiar and perplexing experience of surviving the event. If the dreams and the flashbacks of the traumatized engage Freud’s interest, it is because they bear witness to survival that exceeds the very claims and consciousness of the one who endures it. Thus, the return of the traumatic experience in dreams and recollections is not the symptoms of the direct experience but, rather, an attempt to overcome the strange temporal and psychological reaction to an event that was never quite immediate. Not having truly known the threat of termination, the survivor is forced to continually confront this frightful breach over and over again. For consciousness then, the act of survival, as the experience of trauma, is the repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one’s life. It is because the mind cannot confront directly the possibility of its own mortality that survival becomes an endless paradoxical testimony to the impossibility of living on. Thus, trauma is not just a shocking intrusion that repeatedly returns interrupting the psyche, but the necessity of such repetition implies a paradox that is deeply haunting and perhaps self-destructive.

Traumatic experience, therefore, is an experience that is ultimately excessive, deferred and, thus, an event that is never fully incorporated. Consequently, *Jonestown* demands from the reader an extraordinary and unavoidable response. In other words, the novel interpreted as such demands from us a response to an *experience* not quite ordered by commonplace understanding, but by the paradoxical, untimely ways that such an event simultaneously remains beyond and before our capacity to witness.

This theorizing about trauma sends me back to the responsibility that motivates Bone’s testimony. What is the upshot? In a very basic literary analysis, a critic might form a typology and symptomology for the use of word “wound,” or words synonymous with it. Wound is repeated often in the course of the novel creating a motif. What motivates or satisfies the repeated significance of the wound? What kinds of injuries are manifest and what is the effect of these offenses? More important, a critic should analyze, psychologically and philosophically, Bone’s attempt to go back

in the past to get behind it. This ongoing effort on the part of the protagonist might actually exemplify the repetition complex, an effort to control the upsurge of trauma that continually misdirects the surge of threat that prompts the search. Furthermore, to move underneath to what is most proper or to transcend to an ideal has always been the most metaphysical gesture of philosophy. Perhaps the “other side of the dream” that Bone searches is nothing more than a metaphysical comfort. Finally, a critic should look carefully at the archetypes used to break open the shackles of history. What is the differend here that opens this “somethingness” that the protagonist is trying to unlock? Returning to the problem of trauma, do these archetypes and various rhetorics of conflict return to the violence found so traumatic? And in returning, does this knowing ever approach the unknowing that prompts it? Undoubtedly, these questions forward an itinerary for a thoroughgoing analysis of the plot’s repetitions and the conclusion of *Jonestown*, a difficult challenge, but nonetheless a rewarding one.

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# OF REBELS, TRICKSTERS, AND SUPERNATURAL BEINGS: TOWARD A SEMIOTICS OF MYTH PERFORMANCE IN AFRICAN DIASPORIC DRAMA

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In this paper, I engage multiple evaluative processes to uncover and explain the plethora of recurrent tropes and cultural signs and symbols manifested in African, Caribbean and Afro-Brazilian dramas. The primary text that I use for this purpose is Michael Gilkes' *Couvade: a dream-play of Guyana*. In the process, Pepe Carril's *Shango de Irma*; Abdias do Nascimento's *Sortilege II: Zumbi Returns* serve as important points of reference. I intend to address how African diasporic dramatic recreation of West African religious ritual and myth performances draw on a repertoire of re-membered historical, cultural, and supernatural tropes and figures and present them on stage in order to construct tentative cohesions of collective consciousness. I postulate that the plays are pivotal to a program of resurrecting, renaming, rezoning, reactivating and institutionalizing ancient African religious myths in their new locations, in order to contextualize the deep rooted desires of African diasporic peoples for a sense of historical and cultural personhood and belongingness.

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In the introduction to *Totem voices: plays from the Black World repertory*, titled "Mother/word", Paul Carter Harrison declares unambiguously that "ritual [performance] is the effective technique common to most theatrical exercises of the black world" (Harrison, 1989: xii). In ritual performance, words and actions become what he then labels the spirit of "*Nommo* force" that activates the dramatic mode (context of experience) and reveals the symbolic gestures of the mask (characterization) (p. xii). Harrison further asserts that "embedded within these modes are references to common experience, myths, and significations that define the collective moral universe" of the African in Diaspora (p. xii). Performance words and actions that reference and unmask collective myths and moral universe in this sense resemble what Wole Soyinka in *Myth, literature and the African world* presents as the metalanguage engaged in myth and ritual performance to reveal "psychic substructure and temporal subsidence, the cumulative history and empirical observations of the community" (Soyinka, 1976: 35). Following this line of thinking, ritual and myth

performance border on the sacred and the religious, the ritualized language and gestures, the use of dance, music, mimesis, and drums, among other performance enhancing strategies help transform the dramatic performance into a process of the past, the present, and the future.

In accordance with the statements above, Jay Wright (1987) asserts that ritual then must be seen as an enabling tool to unpack historical communal experiences couched in the symbolic language of myth in order to attain that transcendence over quotidian existence among people of the African Diasporas. Here, quotidian existence is founded on the multiple issues of history of slavery, exile, negation, racism, among other negative effects of African descended peoples' new world experiences. Thus in myth performance through ritual action and language (both verbal/oral and non-verbal) rise beyond their informational performance and enter into the force field of transformative and transfigurative revelation. Transfigurative revelation is generated in the force-field of words, silences, rhythms, movements in dance, drumbeats and choric responses which weld together to energize the depicted image(s) or god(s) or spirit(s) and unites the actant(s) and participant audience. Subsequently, in African and African Diaspora religious rituals, actions and words are performed audibly and/or silently. Within the ritual space, the actants, priests/priestesses, ritual /sacred objects, setting, and most of all, the collective inner desires of the community generate a spirit energy that opens the portals for the descent of the god(s) or spirit(s) to fellowship with humans (Soyinka, 1989: 145). Wright concludes that sacred or secular drama that assembles the same set of paraphernalia or ritual and metalanguage of myth constructs a chain of balances that is both empowering and humbling in its ability to combat negative realities calmly.

Similarly, Victor Leo Walker Jr. posits that "black Africans in the Diaspora . . . create performative rituals . . . to reaffirm the life of the community by engaging the community in an experience that reinforces their collective worldview in which the natural rhythms and the cosmic balances of the community, despite periodic disruptions, are in harmony" (Walker Jr., 2002: 14). Performance ritual then becomes a transcendental and transfigurative maneuver that rises above pure structural religious ceremonies to encompass what Joe C. de Graft calls word, action, and silence. Word, action, and silence according to him, "enable [humans] to empathize physically, emotionally, and intellectually with the forces that threaten [their] very existence" (De Graft, 2002: 21). Through performative rituals he argues, humans are able to combat psychological disorders caused by traumas of history whether natural or human orchestrated at the "deepest levels of consciousness." (p. 21) For instance, African Diasporic populations living in the Caribbean and South America, performance ritual is a "motive force" (p. 21) that guarantees their unrelenting search for personal and

social equilibrium. Performative and performance ritual, whether sacred or secular for these communities, provides a safe psycho-somatic and political, spiritual and cultural spaces in which “participants seek . . . social solidarity, or through which they . . . reaffirm, keep alive, or commemorate . . . facts [of life and historical and cultural] relationships, and attitudes as the community considers vital to their security and continued healthy existence” (p. 23).

Consequently, in African Diaspora drama, to engage ritual performance to re-enact the community’s myths (whether of the African past or present historical experiences in which African deities, heroes/heroines, legends, and other culture heroes/heroines are invoked and evoked) the performers and audience both enter into a spiritualized space of negotiated alliances with the community’s remembered cosmogony. Thus Soyinka observes that the deities of the Yoruba pantheon “are by their attributes in addition to their manipulable histories, . . . the favorites of poets and dramatists, modern and traditional” (Soyinka, 1976: 1). Further, Soyinka adds that these deities know how to journey and this is testified by the African Diasporic “world of the Americas . . . both in its socio-religious reality and in the secular arts of literature” (p. 1). Consequently, Soyinka concludes, “symbols of Yemaya (Yemoja), Oxosi (Ososi), Exu (Esu), and Xango (Sango) [Obatala, Ogun, Oshun, and others] . . . are fused with the twentieth-century technological and revolutionary expression of the mural arts of Cuba, Brazil and much of the Caribbean” (p. 1). These deities are often “represented in dramas by the passage-rites of hero-gods”, the staged mythopoeic “projection of man’s conflict with the forces which challenge his efforts to harmonize with his environment, physical, social and psychic” (p. 1) through secularized ritual drama. Babatunde Lawal echoes this in his statement that within African drama, rituals and myths encode “ideas and ideals” and through word and image, performers are able to “mediate between the human and spirit worlds . . . .” (Lawal, 2002: 41). Hence, memory as cosmic DNA among African Caribbean and Afro-Brazilian communities must be seen as race dramas representing race memory. Thus, “Race drama” writes Alan Locke, functions as the supplier of “imaginative channel[s] of escape and spiritual release, and then by some process of emotional reinforcement to cover life with the illusion of . . . spiritual freedom.” (Locke & Gregory, 1927: iv)

Clayton Riley’s argument that *Sortilege: Zumbi Returns* by Abdias do Nascimento of Brazil expresses the “collective psychic [physiognomic and historical] energies” of Afro-Brazilians, is also applicable to *Couvade* by Michael Gilkes of Guyana, and to *Shango de Irma* by Pepe Carril of Cuba. These plays therefore can be said as well to reflect Paul Carter Harrison’s idea that African and African Diaspora myth performance in the form of ritual drama are like spiritual clearing houses “where the collected energies of Black people coalesce to define their own peculiar” humanity amidst an environment of self-imposed negrophobia (Harrison, 1972: 196). These

clearing houses enable Africans in Diaspora to deal with what Édouard Glissant sees as the trauma of truncated histories which generate chasms that frustrate connectivity or relations with their African roots. I argue that these plays engage performative rituals to recreate myths of origins and charter new paths through which links can be re-generated with Africa and with themselves as a community. The three plays engage mythologies of Yoruba deities and the ritual performances associated with those myths to reveal the role of African deities in the lives of Diaspora Africans. The remembered rituals according to Glissant, are therefore “the armature that frames the god, even the rite that surrenders it to a final pyre, the god assembled cane by cane, reed by reed, line by line” toward a “restoration of [their] shattered histories, [their] shards of vocabulary . . . .” (Glissant, 1999: 66-67).

Let me start by stating that the plays mentioned in this study range widely in their complexity and purported agendas. However, they all deal with the desires of African Diasporic peoples of Cuba, Guyana, and Brazil to rekindle their spiritual connection with an Africa denied them in the cauldron of historical experiences. They all seek to re-establish and represent on stage their concepts of origins, meanings, beliefs, customs, histories, and human relationships, and thus, they all embody in symbolic language systematized values that frame and “phrase the philosophy underlying” their “culture [and distinguishing it] from all others as a way of life” (Herskovits & Herskovits, 1968: 81-82). Through their dramas Gilkes, Do Nascimento, and Carril all engage myth and ritual to help transform peoples of the African Diasporas who live merely for what Campbell calls bodily ends so that they begin to live for cultural and spiritual ends (Boa, 1994: 38).

But what do I mean by performance ritual and ritual performance? Performance ritual to me assumes that narratives can be staged or performed according to certain laid down sets of rites or regulations. Thus, in sacred rites, we have a formulaic standardized set of actions that have been established across generations and which help to determine the authenticity of the ritual. It is the reenactments of these rites or steps in ritual that then give rise to the idea of ritual performance. In a way, the two are inseparable though one may know the necessary steps needed to perform a ritual without performing it. But one cannot perform a ritual if one does not have certain accepted procedural apparatuses, unless of course the ritual is in the process of being invented. As I have mentioned above, a ritual performance encapsulates a mythopoetic narrative that conjures up race/tribe/community memory. Race memory in relation to the three plays in this study echoes the idea of *nommo* force or what has been popularized as *asé*, *axé*, *atse*. Robert Farris Thompson sees *asé* as a spirit force of the gods that inhabit Afro-Cuban sacred art. Thus, to Henry John Drewal et al. (1989), *asé* is that life giving force that enables African Diaspora people to create

songs, praises, drama, prayers, curses, poetry, dance, sculpture, oratory, ritual, etc, in order to seek amelioration for the disruption and breakage of their organic roots in the cultural soils of Africa. Through *asé* or *nommo* force, ritual performance, whether sacred or secular, is a re-generative dramatic/theatrical system for new beginnings, new transformations. Similarly, Soyinka sees the idea of “space, music, poetry or metrical paraphernalia in the drama . . . [as a] move directly from the apparent to deeper effects with the community whose drama (that is history, morality, affirmation, supplication, thanksgiving . . . ) it also is.” (p. 145)

How not to fall into the sensational and commodified performance derived antics, the type Walcott sneers at in his critiques of exoticism as Afrocentric art? But while Césaire’s Rebel in *And the Dogs Were Silent* may declare the impotence and death of his African deities, and Walcott’s Makak in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* rejects the temptation to be a new Moses through Spiritual Baptists’ spirituality, do Nascimento’s hero stands at the crossroads of redemption through sacrifice, a presage to Gilkes’ play, *Couvade*, where the hero is given the cloak of redemption through art from inspiration received in dreamtime.

For instance Gilkes’ *Couvade*, though set principally in the home and art studio of the main character Lionel, is symbolically set in a forest clearing and opens with a shamanic ritual of invocation to the gods and spirits:

“On a totally darkened stage lights come up to reveal a small clearing in the Guyana rainforest. Filtering down the (invisible) upper storey of the tress—giant greenheart, mora, etc. the dappled moonlight picks out an Amerindian benab in which (there are no walls) a hammock is slung, its occupant asleep as in a cocoon or canoe of darkness. Background noises: sound of tree frog, cicada, the occasional cry of a goatsucker (“who you?”) fade in and hold for about 20 seconds. Music comes up as background noises gradually fade. Very faintly but growing louder as it approaches, the music is a weird mixture of gourd, flute, deep braying bamboo, horn, drum; the discordant but clear bone flute melody rising above a gentle slow, but definite rhythm . . . attractive, ethereal . . . .” (p.1)

This magical and sacred setting enables the priestly figures to perform rituals that open up the portals through which the gods and ancestral spirits anthropomorphically pass through into the human world to help reveal the paths to redemption to those attuned to their presence. The shaman figure is described as “an incredibly old man . . . frail as ash; his skin pouched and wrinkled, papery-thin like a spider’s or a lizard’s. His voice is . . . tired and authoritative, suggesting power as well as suffering” (p. 1). The ethereal figure enters into the dreamscape and real world of the figure asleep in

the hammock and speaks to the sleeper through his dreams. This entry into the subconscious of the sleeper awakens the dormant memory cells to help ignite and initiate action. This dramaturgical strophe reveals the dormant historical memories of Guyanese of every ethnic background, and demonstrates the symbiotic relationship among these groups in the formation of national Guyanese personhood. By entering into and stirring the repressed unconscious of Guyanese people, the shaman and his invocatory use of sacred ritual chant releases the buried desires of Guyanese people for cultural, spiritual, artistic, racial, and socio-political liberation from the traumatic histories that seem to tie them down to despair.

The gentle and imperceptible entry of the shaman into the unconscious world of the dreamer is achieved through the medium of storytelling strung with prayer. The constructed sacred yet secularized space for the performance of the various myths links *Couvade* to *Sortilege: Zumbi Returns* and *Shango de Irma*. The playwrights deploy performative myth in ritual dramas in which invocatory prayers, music, and narratives become tools to open up the sealed portals of ancestral African, Asian, and Amerindian ancestors. The invocation begins with an offertory prayer: "Hear, O Mankanater / Your children ask you / To receive these offering / (manioc, milk of the calabash, land, and words of the heart)" (p. 2). The prayer solicits the great Amerindian Mankanater to guide the path of the lost pilgrims, and this is justified through the muted lamentation revealed in the shaman's address to the sleeper/dreamer; that present day Guyanese should beware of the disappearance of their histories, cultures, land, language and spiritualities, as they continue to clutch the sleep caused by imperialism and racist cultural narratives.

"Sleep Couvade  
 Dream your dream  
 When you wake  
 Forest will die  
 Deer Tiger Tapir howler-monkey  
 Die.  
 Fishes will die  
 Tukú'u, Guacháro will fly away  
 Behind the cloud  
 Our people die  
 Cause of Mankanater  
 Will not sail across the sky  
 Sleep Couvade  
 Dream your dream." (pp. 2-3)

The shamanic lament originates in a prophetic vision that sees the death of the desire to live, to regenerate and reconnect with the ancestral ways in order to understand which path to take to save the future represented by the yet to be born child of the dreamer, Lionel and his wife, Pat. That path to recovery must be sought through art seething through the faces peering through Lionel's paintings. However for Pat, the faces on Lionel's canvas are just faces. She cannot see beyond the material value of art and hence, becomes a partial mouthpiece for those in Guyana who are almost lost in the dense linguistic and cultural forests of Eurocentric worldviews. To Lionel on the other hand, the shamanic pronouncements become translated into representational art of remembering and reconnecting with pasts that make up the Guyanese cosmic world.

*Pat:* What are all those faces supposed to be?

*Lionel:* Ancestral icons.

*Pat:* Ancestral who?

*Lionel:* Icons. You know, like the carved figures on aboriginal totems. These . . . these are Guyanese icons. Ancestral images that go back to pre-Columbian past. . .

*Pat:* Look at this. Couvade. You and your Amerindian myths. Who would want to spend money on that?" (pp. 6-7)

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Pat's blindness to the sacred, mystical, and mythical value of Lionel's art, and the role art plays in the process of re-membering and reconstructing one's past as a way of moving forward is caused by a cash-nexus value system inherited from her neo-colonial education. She cannot see beyond the Western capitalist commoditization of art and begin to comprehend the sacred and symbolic in Lionel's art.

Pat's myopic understanding here is symptomatically and symbolically limited by the commercial view of art and originates in the negative self-recognition manifested by her espousal of internalized auto-racism. She lambasts Lionel and his friends for their dreams of a cultural and racial awakening. Nonetheless, she is an unconscious participant in the move to a future that ensures a cultural and spiritual regeneration: through her womb. She is carrying Lionel's child who is the ultimate synthesis or symbiotic fusion of all Guyana's cultures, traditions, and ethnicities. Hence, the shaman's ritualized opening prayer becomes much more urgent as it structures a counter discourse to Pat's consumerist position. It sharpens Lionel's sensibilities and opens up his creative portals to revelatory visions. These visions must be translated unto canvas as portals to egalitarian race-remembrance and cultural recreation of the lost worlds of Amerindians, Africans, and Asians.



*“Lionel:* Pat. What do you think our son will look like, eh?  
 A Douglass mother and an even more mixed-up father...  
 Did I even tell you that my grandfather was a push-knocker?  
 Part African and part Amerindian? He did appeared somewhere  
 up the Demerara River...  
*Pat:* Yes. Yes. And your grandmother was a Portuguese from Madeira  
 and your maternal grandfather was an Indian from India...” (p. 9).

In scene 4 of the play, (pp.14-15), we are presented with a hallowed West African ancestral presence signaled by sacred music, sounds, and a traditional religious priest. Interestingly, his invocatory prayers are verbatim repetitions of Akan and other African invocatory (pp. 14-15) and ritual and ceremonial drum language. This scene raises a legitimate issue of whether Gilkes at this point does not fall into the allure of what Soyinka sees as the zeal of a cultural promoter rather than “that of a truly communicant medium in what is essentially a ‘rite of passage’ ” (p.5). Nonetheless, this section of the play reveals the mental confusions of the characters as the lust for material prosperity, an elusive ideal, complicates their community and reveal fissures in their psychological make-ups.

What is pertinent, however, is that at the play’s core is the constant shift back to the ideal of cultural retrieval. This is set in contradistinction to the schizophrenic set, that is at once comic, irreverent, and irrelevantly out of place, where a group of half-baked Christians preach the gospel of redemption through being born again according to Jesus. The message is convoluted, exclusionary, and terroristic in both language and delivery, and undermines any project of humane orderly redemption that Christianity may offer, with the illusion of security achieved through punishment (pp. 42-46).

In contrast to the Christian group, scene ten does not depict a Lionel possessed by exclusionary Indian, African, Amerindian ancestors, so he is able to embark on his project to create a painting that is inclusive of all, and which subsequently will have the power to enlighten others. Lionel is “painting feverishly-adding touches to a fantastic canvas: the figure of a composite man, something like an Aztec/Toltec totem, made up of African/Amerindian/Hindu elements, a half-human, half-animal/bird thing” (p. 46). The question here is: how does one capture the spirit force, the essence, the *nommo* in art? How can art truly reflect the dream and the message? How can art open the portal “between dream and reality? Living and dead: between past and present; and I have to open the door and walk through it!” (p. 48)

Again, Lionel’s nightmarish cry of pain transfers the scene back to the forest where magic is once more at work. The nightmare is a vehicle through which he enters into the world of the visionary where his eyes behold a convergence of all the ancestral

spirits and images from various continents. In this trance state, Lionel becomes the canvas of communication through whom the painting becomes not just the medium, but also the message. He is anointed and transformed into the messenger who must get the message of the ancestors across to the people (pp. 50-51). He paints his face with the colors of white, black, and red and is draped in a gown of protection. Thus he is now priest, prophet and warrior. He is triply empowered by the African and Amerindian ancestors (pp. 31-32). He is the mask of ancestors:

“*Shaman*: See! Couvade sleeps. Son of Makanater sleeps. WE are his dreams. All the old ones, all the young ones, all the women, all the men, all the little ones, all the great ones. Everything that lives; plants, trees. Dust of manioc, milk of the earth. He dreams us all.” (p. 32)

In this dream, he is given the garment of responsibility and service to his community even if it means self-sacrifice. “Receive, Couvade, this robe of the sun. Great Earthmaker look kindly on our people.” (p. 51) Meanwhile during all this time, there is ritual dancing and music reflecting a combination of Chinese, Indian, Amerindian, West African, and European forms.

“... a human totem made up of three dancers; the lowest (squatting) in Arawak, the middle (half stooping) in West African, and the topmost in Southern Indian ritual costume. The ‘totem’ moves its arms in a gentle, undulating rhythm - a suggestion of Shiva, the creator/destroyer – there is a new sound, a rhythm, bell-like sound, as Carib dancers . . . .” (pp. 49-51)

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Gilkes’ description here reinforces a hierarchical racist three-tier system of cultural mixing, with the Caribs at the foundational base, the Africans at the mid-section, and the South Asians at the top. There is very little creativity here except the re-inscription of a Eurocentric racist and hierarchical reading of society in Guyana. Yet when Lionel is ordained and authorized to be the conduit of ancestral recuperation, only the Amerindian Shaman and the African priest are celebrated. In his waking hours, he tries to convince his friend Arthur, the Afrocentric eccentric whose cultural myopia and racialized politics of exclusion make him reject the reality of racial and cultural mixing in Guyana and argue that “... you and your tolerance! All this talk about the ‘seeds of different cultures’. That is just a load of bullshit! Like your Amerindian myths.” (pp. 25-26) However, in the hospital Arthur seems to be beginning to comprehend Lionel’s vision as something beyond the reach of politics when he is finally ready to listen to Lionel’s dream of not working for himself but for the future generations: “I must learn the dances. Not for myself, you see. For the others. I have

to teach them the dances. Teach them what I learn. Do you understand? All things are part of one wholeness. One mandala” (p. 60). The play suddenly ends with a ritual offering of a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication by priest and shaman.

*Couvade* ends with Lionel in the hospital with his nurse who is an extra character added but without any real significance. The play at this point repeats some disappointing lackluster language and a performance ritual. One would expect that at this moment of revelation when his Afrocentric friend sees his point, when his wife is also delivering their baby, the play’s cosmological atmosphere would generate a greater spiritual intensity, a more pronounced ritualistic performance, and transfigurative symbols of the myth of *Couvade*. However, in what appears to be a dramatic cycle throughout the play, the mythical sections of the play run out of steam and languish in an assemblage of socio-political clichés, regurgitated ethnographic recordings, and even replications of racist readings of Guyanese cultures.

Nonetheless, the play’s engagement of drums and music secures what Harrison describes as “communal participation in both sacred and secular ceremonies” within the African world (Harrison, 1989: xxxiv). This is also in accord with W. E. Abraham’s observation at an Akan ceremonial performance, to the effect that “the need to adapt musical aids to the proceedings without submerging the verbal account forced the raconteur to seek musical qualities in [. . .] words” (Abraham, 1962: 91). Hence, Gilkes’ engagement of what might be termed authentic African and Amerindian language, music, dance, incantations, prayers, supplications and blessings, at various climaxes of the play, gives the play a performative verisimilitude. He captures what Nathaniel McKay defines as the “phantom limb [that] arises from [its] capacity for feeling . . . . Phantom . . . is a relativizing term which cuts both ways, occasioning a shift in perspective between real and spiritual, an exchange of attributes between the two” (McKay, 1987: 34).

The use of music to initialize the action also becomes a destabilizing maneuver of time and space in order to create and maintain the magical setting needed to begin the ritual myth performance/narrative. Without the creation of the sacred setting, the gods cannot be invoked to stage their own story for the education and edification of humans. Thus, the success of *Couvade* does not rest in its political message, but in its initiatory attempt to realize in the form of art the complicated quilt of Guyanese cultural, social, racial, and linguistic plurality. The play demonstrates the difficulty faced by artists, dramatists, poets and politicians when attempting to formulate and articulate a unified vision of Guyana from the shifting nature of Guyanese identities. Nevertheless, the fact that his Afrocentric friend finally sees his point, and is willing to join Lionel in his quest, signals a future of promise.

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## THE VODUN PARADIGM IN WILSON HARRIS'S *RESURRECTION AT SORROW HILL*

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Wilson Harris's conception of the spiritual realm, which he calls the collective unconscious, parallels the beliefs of ancient civilizations in immanent cosmic energy, which the Yoruba call *ashe*. With his Vodun paradigm, Harris strives not only to translate the language of an environment dense with spirit, but also to allow for the eruptions of spirits and ancestors onto the surface of the text. These objectives spring from both his experience with the elusive "ventriloquism of spirit" (Harris, 1993: 35) in nature and his direct encounters with spirits.

For Harris, cultures fashion their own gods and religious beliefs out of the neutral body of spirit in order to meet their particular psychological needs. Therefore, Harris recognizes, with Jung, the concept of ancient archetypes that are shared by disparate cultures around the world. However, as an artist writing within the Vodun paradigm, Harris, like each particular culture, molds his own myths and refashions archetypes out of the collective unconscious as it works its way through his individual subconscious. Thus his characters are actual eruptions of spirit, some of whom reappear throughout his novels. Like Montezuma in his *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill*, the spirits "lodge [themselves] in flesh-and-blood . . . in his book" (Harris, 1993: 92). Thus Harris would never yield to pressure to write with realistic linearity, but rather in a style that draws one into the multidimensionality of spirit.

Harris established the link between his narrative paradigm and the Vodun dancer in "The Writer and Society". The dancer occupies a "protean reality of space" (Harris, 1973b: 50) in which his or her body becomes a void occupied by the god or the ancestor. At this moment the dancer in trance becomes "an authentic spectre or structure of fiction insensible to all conventional props of habit" (p. 51). Before he or she enters into the trance,

"the dancer regards himself of herself as one in full command of two legs, a pair of arms, until, possessed by the muse of contraction, he or she dances into a posture wherein one leg is drawn up into the womb of space. He stands like a rising pole upheld by earth and sky or like a tree



which walks in its shadow. All conventional memory is erased and yet in this trance of overlapping spheres or reflection a primordial or deeper function of memory begins to exercise itself within the bloodstream of space.” (p. 51)

Like the dancer in trance, Harris’s novels occupy the void between the material and spiritual worlds. This allows for the flexibility to transform the realistic conventions through the protean shape-shifting of space and the rearrangement of linear time within the novel. When possessed, the Vodun dancer straddles both worlds, with one leg in the material and the other in the spiritual. Like Legba, the Vodun dancer stands like a tree, one of Legba’s emblems, and acts as the medium for the spirit. Likewise, the novel becomes the “gateway of the gods” (Harris, 1999b: 162) through which spirit emerges onto the surface in the guise of mythic manifestations.

As the gateway to the gods, the novels sometimes write themselves and Harris, the Legba novelist, insists that he learns new things from them both during the writing process and years later when he rereads his old novels from a new perspective (Harris, 1999e: 249, 251). In *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill*, Harris articulates this capacity for Spirit to write novels through the author: “And this was a signal of the phenomenon of creativity .... a written world that writes the writer as the writer writes .... Nature appears to sleep (when nature seems passive), the psyche appears to sleep, ... but nature suddenly acts and erupts. .... humanity coheres as crises unfold into revisionary possibility ... (Harris, 1993:147-148). In this paper, I examine the Vodun paradigm in *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill*.

In *Resurrection*, Harris traces the evolution of the creative process for the Legba-novelist. Thus Harris states that he merely edits the Dream-book written by Hope, the spirit-protagonist. Hope represents the writer who consciously seeks to reincorporate spirit in order to heal the wounds that colonialism, industrialism, materialism, and technology have inflicted on the world. Like Harris, Hope, the spirit-writer, believes in the creative imagination’s ability to change the world. However, in order to change the world, this creative imagination must first change the readers’ worldview. For Harris, the resurrection of contemporary civilization lies in the recovery of profiles of myth from ancient civilizations in which the sacred was not separate from material reality.

Harris shares with Marimba Ani the belief that the European worldview, which we the colonized have assimilated, is diseased and has led to social illnesses for both the colonizers and the colonized. As Ani argues in *Yurugu: an African-centered critique of European cultural thought and behavior*, European rationalism and science, dating from the time of Plato, evolved into a worldview which placed irrational spirit in an antagonistic polarity to rationalism/science. This fundamental dichotomy then leads to a worldview in which reality in general is perceived in terms of warring, mutually

exclusive polarities. The general European mindset, structured to perceive reality as antagonistic absolutes, coupled with the specific banishment of spirit, (a spirit effectively “conquered” by rationalism), gave rise to the European project of mastery or conquest of nature in order to study it through science. The rational/scientific worldview also justified imperialism, since Europeans saw peoples of other cultures, who still believed in spirit, as irrational and in need of “civilization.” For Ani (and Harris seems to concur) the European rationalist/scientific worldview is diseased because the European de-spiritualization of existence has resulted in a worldview in disharmony and a human self in disequilibrium.

Harris believes that a return to spirit can reverse the nihilism caused by this painful disequilibrium. He advocates the transformation of the world through a true art of conscience, a conscience that promotes cosmic harmony and love; rather than through political movements which perpetuate a world divided into opposing factions continually at war with one another. Harris embodies this antagonism in characters who represent oppression and the violent revenge which it triggers. Characters may also embody or be tempted by spiritually-deprived philosophies and political movements. These characters go through spiritual trials from which they emerge revitalized in spirit and full of the creative potential that can transform society. Just as Harris recognizes the intervention of spirit in his writing process, in *Resurrection*, several characters/artists collaborate with Hope to write his dream-book. Moreover, Hope’s narrative voice, like Harris’s, is usurped by several spirit characters. Len, Doctor Daemon, and Doctor Daemon’s grandmother/Tiresias each successively possesses Hope in order to tell the story, much like Harris’s characters speak through his spiritual subconscious in his novels.

A fundamental element of the Vodun paradigm is possession by spirits. In the Asylum for the Greats, all the patients are mad because of the moral and social schizophrenia of post-colonial societies, but more importantly, this constitutes a measure of the inmates’ attunement to spirit. In societies dominated by a rational/scientific worldview, those who commune with spirit are considered mad. However, in pre-Columbian and traditional African societies the mad are believed to possess the gift of prophecy. Much like Harris, who permits the eruption of spirit into his texts in order to transform the world, the mad ones in the asylum are possessed by great historical figures who help them create revisionary texts which promote a spiritual resurrection. This spiritual salvation of the world requires Harris’s infinite rehearsal, creative re-enactments of history that allow us to correct past mistakes, to eat our sins, or to “consume our biases” (Harris, 1999d: 107). The patients and their spiritual avatars are all sin-eaters in this sense. The contemporary characters fluidly merge with historical figures with whom they share historical guilt. These “numinous inexactitudes” (Harris, 1993: 47) or “figures of fluid and variable identity” (Harris, 1999f: 204) allow the characters to purge their guilt as they progress in their infinite rehearsal of

historical events. Each patient occupies one of seven cells, each of which Christopher D'eath, the conquistadorial figure, had previously occupied when the asylum was a colonial prison. D'eath's prior occupation of each cell symbolizes the psychological and spiritual damage caused by colonialism.

Hope's deconstruction of "parables of conquest" (Harris, 1993: 110) begins by breaking the one-sided hubris of religions around the world. Harris notes in "Profiles of Myth in the New World" that all religions are partial to and biased in favor of the societies that created them. This allows societies to conceive of gods who order military conquests. In *Resurrection*, Montezuma accuses Hernán Cortés of demolishing his empire under the flag of Jesus. However, Montezuma must also confront his own conquests and his greed for gold in the role of the Aztec emperor acting under the flag of his own sun-god. Montezuma shares this guilt with the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaton, who played a pivotal role in the emergence of one-sided religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the Middle East by authorizing only one supreme god, the sun, and forbidding the worship of multiple nature gods in ancient Egypt (Harris, 1993: 188). Thus Akhenaton introduced and imposed monotheism at the expense of polytheism.

Monotheism goes against Harris's concept of a "democracy of spirit" (p. 97) which recognizes, with Vodun, indigenous beliefs, and the religions of many lost ancient civilizations, the divine aspects of animals and the numinous quality of the natural environment. Democracy of spirit reveals itself in *Timehri* markings, "the hand of numinous Shadow painted on rocks in rapids" (p. 5), and in the "ventriloquism of spirit" (p. 35) in nature. Much as in ancient religions, nature in *Resurrection* is also personified in the figure of Judge, the great steersman of the ship of the globe. Judge represents a judging archetype; by turns God the Father, Christ, and Legba. Like Legba, the strong and handsome African god who becomes an old and crippled god in his voyage through the Middle Passage, Judge-as-Christ has become crippled and dismembered by imperialism. This crippling transformation of Christ is dramatized by Captain Diss, another patient in the asylum for the greats. Captain Diss is possessed by Judas, who betrays Christ/Judge by using Christianity to justify colonial conquest.

Harris also neutralizes the one-sided hubris of religious denominations by breaking absolute archetypes from different sources and recombining them. The model for his broken archetypes and democracy of spirit is Haitian Vodun, which successfully remembered the dismembered African tribes in a healing paradigm. Vodun healed psychic wounds by syncretizing African nature gods with Catholicism and other religions. In *Resurrection*, Harris conflates the Blessed virgin with June, the Virgin of Sorrow Hill, and by extension, all exploited peoples. June, The Virgin of Sorrow Hill, makes love to the Catholic priest, Father Robson. Their vertical erotic dance, much like that of the Vodun dancer, with "one leg drawn up into the womb of space," forms a column "in which there was neither rider nor ridden" (Harris, 1993: 244). In this

scene, which closes the novel, Harris combines the eroticism found in traditional African and African-Caribbean religions, in which sex is sacred, and the brotherly-sisterly love which Jesus preaches.

The marriage of Dr. Daemon and Ruth also exemplifies Harris's use of archetypes from different cultures to promote his democracy of spirit. In "Apprenticeship to the Furies," Harris explains that as archetypes, the furies, such as Medusa and Canaima, exact revenge for injustices that have gone unpunished. In Harris's fiction, the furies confront us with injustices with which we collude or which we overlook. Dr. Daemon represents "Daemonic Youth" (p. 220), who believe only in science and rationalism. Daemon should not be confused with *the Devil*, but rather with the devil's advocate, for he challenges Hope to convert him to spirituality. As a fury, Ruth, stabs nihilistic, scientific civilization (Daemon), with the seeds of her pregnant spirit. Doctor Daemon then wakes to the new spiritual knowledge needed "to perform the miracle of curing souls" (p.8).

The patients in the asylum also have had to confront and overcome the temptation to adopt absolute political ideologies. During his breakdown and consequent encounter with spirit at Serpent Creek, Hope splits into his younger twin, Dialectical Hope, who tempts him to dive into the maelstrom of the masses under Sorrow Hill and to adopt Marxism. Hope, however, resists Marxism because it would force him to "die to profiles of myth through which to unravel hopelessness" (p. 71). Hope decides, instead, to write a manifesto that will give voice to "the fluid nucleus of the mystery of [spiritual] truth" (p. 75). For Harris, the collective unconscious is mostly silent and elusive, although spiritually attuned people can perceive it and translate its "ventriloquism of spirit" (p. 35) in a silent nature. But, as mentioned above, despite its elusiveness, sometimes spirit erupts violently in trance, much like some possessions in Vodun.

Hope suffers a series of breakdowns and violent spiritual possessions at Serpent Creek, which constitute Harris's 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 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. When the ego resists, spirit 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 to surrender to it. Once this happens, spirit opens up possibilities for creative genesis and fulfillment.

Harris proposes that Caribbean subjects treat the traumas of slavery and colonialism as if they were voidings of spirit; challenges which, when faced, overcome, and digested, open up possibilities in the healing arts of the imagination which can heal colonial wounds. In traditional African existentialism, these voidings take the form of interventions from gods or ancestors; negative sanctions, such as illnesses, which guide the de-spiritualized person to his or her spiritual destiny to return to spirit. In *Resurrection*, Hope's breakdown is initiated by such traumas and his determination to overcome them through Marxism, at which point spirit intervenes to block his materialist ego. This is confirmed when the narrator exclaims:

“Sublime illness! Spirit can create a form of illness when it seeks to break the grip of compulsive fear. That grip is so strong at times Spirit seems to suffer in nature, and nature's responsive ordeal becomes the sublimity of strangest convalescence – relapse, partial recovery, relapse, partial recovery – in and through Spirit.” (Harris, 1993: 77)

Once Hope surrenders to spirit, he is ready to admit himself into the Asylum for the Greats and to write his spiritually regenerative book of the globe. In other words, the Legba-novelist suffers breakdowns or voidings of spirit before he or she surrenders to it and lets spirit collaborate in the writing process.

218 In conclusion, Harris sets out to heal the wounds of oppression and the exploitation of nature and humankind by shifting people's worldview from the European rationalist/scientific one to a spiritual worldview of traditional African and Amerindian peoples. He believes that this revolution in worldview can be achieved through the arts of the imagination rather than through dogmatic religions or political movements. By engaging his deeply religious Vodun paradigm, Harris dismantles the antagonistic poles that characterize the scientific/rationalist worldview and replaces it with a mindset of complementary opposites which, when combined, create a whole. In all his works, Harris achieves this unconsciously by allowing spirit to write the novels through his subconscious. In *Resurrection* this process is embodied in the mental breakdowns or voidings of spirit that turn rationalist/scientific characters into spiritual artists who share the task of writing the novel as they insert themselves into Hope's Dream-book. In societies with a non-rationalist worldview, madness points to an attunement with spirit that provides extrasensory vision. In *Resurrection*, Harris advocates this kind of re-visionary madness to redeem the world.

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# **WHITE MAN VS. BLACK MAN: EXPLORING EURO-CENTRIC SEXUALITY IN DAVID DABYDEEN'S *TURNER* AND ITS HISTORICAL IMPACT ON LOWER STRATA AFRO-CARIBBEAN MASCULINITIES**

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Imperialism was, from its commencement, a racially and sexually gendered reality and the power differential among masculinities emerged in the master/slave relationship that characterized Empire. The clear hegemonic masculinity generated by the white conquistador was the ideal, creating a resultant subordinate masculine identity that came to signify the non-White man – initially slave and, later, the free African labourer - in the New World. The subjectivication of this non-White man, this ‘Other’, proved to be fundamental to the constitution of hegemonic masculinity along racialized and sexualized frames, complementing how related ideologies functioned in a primarily economic enterprise underpinned by greed as the catalyst for the Conquistador’s actions. This hegemony created the yardstick by which the masculine construct of the ‘Other’ was measured and, in most cases, was found wanting. The notion of ‘otherness’ is therefore heralded as a critical mechanism of governance, political domination and ideology in the colonial experience.

But slavery’s blood-stained gates allowed entrance and subsequent habitat to more than simply the one-dimensional portrait of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities based on race and ethnic relations. Rather, slavery as a psycho-social system was steeped with efforts aimed at the complete emasculation of the slave’s entire gamut of identities – personal, communal, linguistic, religious, cultural and physiological – as he knew them to be. Inclusive was the conscious manipulation and formation of sexual identities that was aimed at projecting and protecting the ultra-liberating sexuality of the Conquistador figure while relegating the African slave’s own sexual identity to whatever the slave master prescribed. The resultant sexual bondage of the male African slave may very well amount to an almost metaphorical castrated sexuality in his quest to affirm his manhood the way he would have wanted to. Moreover, his female counterpart would have emerged as much of a traumatized victim in the physical torture, habitual rape and sexual violence that characterized



slavery, thereby leading to a social system that nurtured constructions of particular gendered identities, predicated on power relations and control.

This appreciation of power dynamics provides a beneficial structure for an analysis of the relationship between the sexually dominant Euro-centric hegemonic masculinities of the white Conquistador figure and the sexually restricted Afro-Caribbean subordinate masculinities of the enslaved African, as reflected in Dabydeen's *Turner* (1995). The narrativization of Empire in this poem proves enormously useful in representing the emergent sexual violence perpetrated by the Conquistador figure and its impact on the lives of the enslaved Africans, with its historical legacy of shaping the sexuality of the lower strata Afro-Caribbean man in years to come.

Depictive of slavery and the slave trade, *Turner* is emblematic of a period in West Indian history that witnessed a historically unprecedented forced migration pattern, which was sustained for centuries. Comprised of a two-part Preface and twenty-five sections, the poem revolves around what has come to be termed as the *Zong* Massacre.<sup>1</sup>

Dabydeen's *Turner* focuses on the submerged head of an African in the foreground of J. M.W. Turner's 1940 painting, 'Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying' (commonly known as 'Slave Ship' in an obvious reference to any ship that may have experienced the fate of the *Zong*). But the sea is more than a simple receptacle of the head; it is the bank that holds centuries of accounts of experiences endured by the African slaves during the Atlantic slave trade thereby interlocking history with reality, memory with drowned hope. The poem alludes to the fiscal underpinnings of the colonizer's search for gold in the elusive El Dorado and the whole enterprise of slavery as an economic undertaking of immense magnitude that fattened the coffers of Europe. It is understood that the ship-owner stands to benefit financially if he claims insurance for goods lost at sea, as opposed to the diminished returns for sick slaves he would solicit at the auction sites in the destination territories of the New World. The notion of "goods" that the enslaved are likened to points to their objectification and the non-human condition they were allocated by the powerful hegemonic white colonizer.

The presence of the head – now bleached of colour and erased of its sense of gender – spans centuries as it witnesses the passage of the slave ships to the Caribbean and all the sexual atrocities exacted upon male and female slaves. The shackled foot

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<sup>1</sup> In 1781, the British slave ship *Zong* left West Africa bound for Jamaica. Due to rampant overcrowding and poor sailing abilities which lengthened the journey, an outbreak of disease soon claimed the lives of 60 slaves and 7 crew members. The ship's Captain Like Collingwood then dumped a further 133 dying slaves overboard under the guise of lost cargo due to stormy weather. This was an economic undertaking as British insurance policies awarded damages for slaves lost at sea but not to those given to disease. Seen as chattel goods, the slaves were perceived as mere cargo and Captain Collingwood together with the business' proprietors argued for just recompense despite the loss of life and violation of persons that characterized the drowning of these slaves.

belonging to the unseen body of the submerged head seen in the painting reflects simultaneously the experience of slavery as well as the drowned human subject that was the African male. The head awakens with a desire for transfiguration and the agent of self-recognition is a stillborn child tossed overboard, that serves to remind the African head of his ethnicity as he seeks to create an idyllic representation of life. Such an aim is eventually abandoned as recognition slowly dawns on him that he is “nigger” (Dabydeen: 7), no doubt the legacy of the white hegemony positioning itself as superior to the subordinate African masculinity cultivated through the years. Indeed, ethnicity is at the core of these dual masculinities undergirded by power that lies at the heart of the brutal sexual massacre and traumatic emasculation of the African male in Dabydeen’s fictional poem that mirrors the racialized and ethnic realities associated with the trauma of slavery.<sup>2</sup> The impossibility of divorcing trauma from slavery undoubtedly impacts on the formation of masculine identities among the enslaved African that may either result in a submissive replica of the white Conquistador’s masculinity or may very well be channeled into the resistance imperative.

In his fiction, Dabydeen grants the name ‘Turner’ to three characters: The captain of the slave ship is Turner; the submerged African head that is the poem’s persona is Turner; and the stillborn child spewed forth from the belly of the ship – a direct reflection of its paternity in the figure of the generic white ship captain – is also Turner. But beyond the immediacy of identifying these three characters as Turner, there is a multiplicity of ‘Turners’ that come to represent the myriad roles played by the Conquistador figure throughout the numerous journeys of various slave ships that crossed the Atlantic.<sup>3</sup> These all lend credibility to the notion of a habitual and rampant tendency on the ship captain’s part to portray a masculine identity underpinned by a diversity of sexual atrocities and resultant trauma on his victims.

Implicit in the stillbirth of the part-black part-white child is the notion of the rape of female African slaves at the hands of the ship captain, a normative phenomenon that

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<sup>2</sup> Morgan and Youssef state “*Interdependence or disconnectedness trauma* occurs whenever there is rupture in the individual’s sense of safety, security and community – those elements which serve to impart social embeddedness, belonging and purpose in life. Uprootedness and disconnectedness traumas can be triggered by migrations, especially if they are involuntary and if they occur in relation to hostile target culture.” (authors’ emphasis, Morgan & Youssef, 130).

<sup>3</sup> Morgan enumerates these roles: “Turner is the artist and door keeper of a Western aesthetic sensibility which would sublimate his civilization’s horrific action in contemplation of an amoral sublime beauty; Turner is the gentle seducer of children who lures them to his ship with sweets and shada juice even as they innocently wonder “why are the elders in chains” (IV:14); Turner is a pedophile who fondles boys in quiet corners and “finds” them tousled on his bed at night; Turner is the ship’s captain who like Shakespeare’s Prospero imparts language, world view and ideology, along with furtive slimy interpenetrations which he ministers to boys and women alike; Turner is also the shallow offspring of the Captain’s black concubine, the part-born tossed overboard.” (Morgan: 69)

has come to define the white male Conquistador's gaze in his perception of ownership of the slave woman. Leading American historian and sociologist on the comparative study of slavery, freedom and ethnic inequalities, Orlando Patterson asserts:

“The sexual exploitation of female slaves by white men was the most disgraceful aspect of Jamaica slave society. Rape and the seduction of infant slaves; the ravishing of the common law wives of the male slaves under the threat of punishment, and outright sadism often involving the most heinous forms of sexual torture were the order of the day.”  
(Patterson: 42)

Hilary Beckles claims that “Colonial mastery, it was understood, demanded as a property right access to the sexuality of the enslaved”<sup>4</sup> (Beckles: 235). In these relationships, there is no regard for offspring as sex is solely a hard-core physiological activity for the rapist-colonizer who tended to be emotionally detached from the woman he violates, the woman who in his eyes is subhuman. This sexual act is alluded to in the lines, “It plopped into the water from a passing ship / Like a lime-seed spat from the scurvied mouth / Of a sailor, shooting out between / A gap in his teeth, a cannonball” (Dabydeen: 13). The sexual objectification of the African women is evident, as their purpose has been fulfilled, after which they are discarded, “The part-born, sometimes with its mother, / Tossed overboard” (Dabydeen: 9). There is no value to the retention of the half White/half African child as it has been polluted by black blood and therefore will not be able to occupy positions of power as would the “pure-blooded” white offspring of the white slave trader. As a refrain of this understanding, the stillborn child cries “Nigger” repeatedly to the African head reminding him (and himself) of the dichotomous polarization of races underpinned by color in defining ethnic and masculine identities.

The female African becomes a pawn in the poem as she is used sexually to propel the slave trade as the white Conquistadors “Drag girls away by ropes” (Dabydeen: 11). There is no compassion and remorse on the part of the colonizers, within Dabydeen's evocation, as he engages in such action.

The libido of the white Conquistador figure became enlivened with the very thought of laying sexual claim on the body of the African female. Seen as one of the affective dimensions of chattel slavery in which the slave became the propertied right of the male slave owner, rape of her person was commonplace and rampant. In her provocative and original exploration of racial subjugation during slavery and its aftermath, Saidiya Hartman explores the terrible spectacles of slaveholders' dominion

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<sup>4</sup> Beckles gives the account of an English traveller, during his three-month tour of Jamaica in 1832, being told by a white bookkeeper that he had twelve “negro wives” in six months, and that was expected of him by his peers. Black husbands or partners who protested would be flogged under the name of a non-descript misdemeanour. (p. 235)

over the African slaves and their ‘innocent’ amusements designed to abase and pacify them. Hartman argues that, for the white plantation owner,

“enjoyment is virtually unimaginable without recourse to the black body and the subjection of the captive, the diversions engendered by the dispossession of the enslaved, or the fantasies launched by the myriad uses of the black body.” (Hartman: 26)

Hartman effectively projects an understanding of the Conquistador figure’s objectification of the African woman as the former likens her to a garment or repository of his sexual issue by adding that his “desire to don, occupy, or possess blackness or the black body as a sentimental resource and/or locus of excess enjoyment is both founded upon and enabled by the material relations of chattel slavery” (p. 21). Yet, the white male hardly assumes responsibility for his actions thereby negating the reality of his rape of the African woman, as aspersions are cast on her role to woo, tempt and seduce him in this most horrific dimension of sexual violence. In effect, “the black woman, constructed as seductress and temptress, is blamed for seducing the white male into moral and physical impurity, aberrant sexual practices and untold perversions” (p. 175). In other words, the Conquistador fell victim to the African woman’s horn effect; his halo effect is left intact. In reality, however, the broken spirit and battered body of the enslaved African woman are precursors to a bruised and traumatic landscape that has come to define the slave experience for herself and her daughters. And perhaps the most profound, degrading and degenerating aspect of trauma associated with slavery that was exacted on the African was the brutality of rape, as this horror was central and pivotal to maintaining power relations and control. Rape within slavery is further articulated by Morgan and Youssef to reveal a despicable marriage between slavery as a psycho-social system and how related ideologies functioned then:

“In the ancestral memory (and, by extension, in the narrative legacy) of Afro-Caribbean peoples, rape and sexual violence against women were endemic to the horrific crossing of the middle passage and the dynamics of plantation society. The black woman’s body was the blank slate on which the propertied slave-owning class and their privileged descendants inscribed their racial superiority, which in turn bequeathed the right of ongoing economic superiority.” (Morgan & Youssef: 172)

But it is critical to remember, as *Turner* reveals, that rape was not exacted on the African female alone. Her African brother was also subjected to this sheer terror thereby exacerbating the horrendous nature of the Conquistador figure in terms of his locus of control. Hartman argues that

“enslaved men were no less vulnerable to the wanton abuses of their owners, although the extent of their sexual exploitation will probably never be known, and because of the elusiveness or instability of gender in relation to the slave as property and the erotics of terror in the racist machinery.” (Hartman: 81)

and adds that “...in the context of slave relations, men are also subject to forms of sexual violation and, notwithstanding, the enslaved fashion themselves as gendered subjects in accordance with their own norms of masculinity and femininity” (101). The rape and defilement of male slaves does not trivialise the experience of the female slaves; the fundamental truism remains: sex without consent for any individual is tantamount to the same impact of violation and trauma, although different victims may deal with their experiences in different manners.

*Turner* reveals that this traumatic violent sexuality also applies to the enslaved African male in equal measure: “When all things tally / He snaps the book shut, his creased mouth / Unfolding in a smile, as when, entering / His cabin, mind heavy with care, breeding / And multiplying percentages, he beholds / A boy dishevelled on his bed” (p. 23). Dabydeen’s allusion to the just-completed statistical work on the part of *Turner* as he ‘tallies’ and ‘multiplies’ and ‘calculate percentages’ of the day’s profits foreshadows his rape of the young African males, not as an arbitrary pastime but rather as a cold, premeditated, well-orchestrated plan, implemented in a ‘calculating’ manner that secures the total emasculation and denigration of the African. The vilification is complete when the picture of an eventual acceptance of the white colonizer by the black slave is graphically presented. In the process, the latter learns to speak the language of the white man but does not curse him for his act of violation. Rather, he blesses him, accepts him, forgives him; so complete is the psychological desecration and transgression of the African’s body and mind.

Dabydeen’s persona speaks of “*Turner*’s well-chronicled love of children” (p. 8) and, examined against the events in the poem, this statement about these representative figures creates an awareness of homosexuality as being a real and manifest sexual behavioural tendency of the Conquistador figure as well, through the ages. The oppressed and sodomised male and female rape victims are not specifically gendered as a result but, through his actions, the oppressor certainly becomes so. The impact of this will certainly create a sexual identity with ramifications for the constructions of masculinities hinged on related sexual desires and preferences. There is even the plausibility of an emerging feminization of the oppressed male slave regarding sexual roles and expectations that are counter to heteronormativity. Guyanese anthropologist and sociologist writing on the Caribbean male’s future, Linden Lewis, claims that “Homosexuality has been around for a long time. Indeed, speaking of the region as a

whole, B.R. Burg traces the practice of sodomy to 17<sup>th</sup> century buccaneers”<sup>5</sup> (Lewis: 21). It is a reality that emerges at the very beginning of the slave trade with the generic ship captain Turner in Dabydeen’s imaginary: “His blue eyes smile at children / As he gives us sweets and a ladle from a barrel / Of shada juice. Five of us hold his hand, / ...as he leads us to the ship. Why is my mother screaming? / Why does Turner forbid her to touch us before we board?” (p. 14). The engagement in homosexual acts may be seen as pornographic diverse sexual pleasures of the colonizer at the psychological expense of the enslaved African, and it contributes to an orientation that characterizes his sexual identity. The persona ascribes an almost halo effect to Turner in his beguiling attempts at seduction and conquest of the young African male as he writes: “From that gentle face that so often kissed us, / His favoured boys, in quiet corners. / Unseen passages, and when cold night winds / Growled outside, curled us warmly to his bed” (p. 18).

Without argument, a certain consequence of slavery would be the utterly humiliating and devastating effects on the enslaved male rendered incapable of fulfilling his traditional and patriarchal mandate to protect his woman, and himself, as was his society-endorsed responsibility in Africa prior to slavery. The psycho-social outcome was basically emasculation of the African male subsumed in a system that was quintessentially about one person, by virtue of race, exacting legalized violence to maintain power and control over another person. Patterson argues that regarding the exercise of his sexual choices, “the slave was reduced in law and civic life to a non-person... As a person in law and civil society, the slave did not exist but instead was a mere surrogate of the master” (Patterson: 27). Patterson points out, however, that such a state did not mean that the African male slave did not engage in sexual relations. Rather, the prohibition against his engaging in sexual relations as he saw fit resulted at times in polygamous sexual behaviour among male slaves. This added to their masters’ property and increased the bounty for labour. At the same time, Patterson reminds us that it would be

“patently absurd to confuse these relations with the roles of fatherhood, husbandhood, and civic membership in one’s community, all of which carried weighty obligations and rights that were utterly critical for men’s definition of their very beings as men and as persons.” (pp. 27-28)

Patterson argues that “in the absence of any other meaningful ways of expressing manhood, becoming a progenitor would have acquired special value” (pp. 42-43). The

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<sup>5</sup> B.R. Burg. *Sodomy and the Perception of Evil: English Sea Rovers in the Seventeenth Century Caribbean* (New York and London: NY University P, 1983).

natural progression of this type of reproductive behaviour among these men led to the active encouragement of young robust slaves as human studs within the psycho-social realm of slavery, effectually laying the groundwork for contemporary constructions of Afro-Caribbean masculinity in relation to sexual identity, both within a gendered reality as well as in the Caribbean imaginary.

Against the backdrop of centuries the African head remains in the water, witnessing the sexual atrocities of rape of both the African male and female slaves, an undeniable two-fold sexual identity is established as central to the sexual dimensions of the white colonizer's masculine identity. Still, to assign labels of sexual identities to the white colonizers may prove misleading as the risk is engendered that they were depictive of a particular gender identity label as most men are. In reality, these men exhibited behaviors that are not reflective, too intently, of homosexual and heterosexual orientations, as much as they are depictive of sexual perversion in every imaginable form as is inherent to the imperial encounter – that playground of libido gone wild. And the white colonizer certainly played as clearly reiterated by Martinique philosopher and revolutionary Frantz Fanon in his critical *Black Skin White Masks* (1968): "The Negro is a toy in the white man's hands" (p. 140). Morgan goes beyond Fanon's notion of the Conquistador figure as a player by transforming him into a scribe:

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"It is with his body that Turner writes on bodies. A major objective of Turner's inscription on the flesh of the enslaved, is to meet his victims at the crossroads where love encounters violence, and there, stun them into silence." (Morgan: 71)

And Turner's narrative inscription becomes complete, continues Morgan,

"when he pours into the boys along with issue of anal sex, value judgments, occlusions, erasures, the gaps which would allow them in turn, to echo Ruskin's dialogue on the nineteenth century aesthetic sensibility, "blessed, angelic, sublime" (xxiv 40)." (Morgan: 71)

What is gleaned from the critics is fundamentally that the oppressive power relations worked themselves out in perverse sexual interconnections. As Beckles states, "Both male and female among the enslaved were sexually exploited by Whites who understood their "racial" authority in terms of power over the life, body and mind of the enslaved" (Beckles: 235).

Turner reveals that sexual exploitation was inherent to the exploitation of Empire, regardless of whether the ship captain engaged in homosexual or heterosexual acts. These were ineffectual in diminishing his capacity to be a shrewd executive and efficient manager of his ship; contrariwise, they nurtured an image that came to

represent the white Conquistador figure in whom sexual exploitation was irrevocably interwoven with the Imperial impulse. Sexual performance and perversity, be it along homosexual or heterosexual lines or both, was necessary for the creation of an image of the ultimate power figure, and the freedom to exercise power, that came to define the white hegemonic regime. Above all, the enterprise of slavery was an economic quest, one that had to be indelibly inscribed on the flesh.

Dabydeen argues that slavery was essentially a sadistic psycho-social encounter aimed at bleeding the self esteem and psychological landscape of a people in every imaginable form. Undoubtedly, this mirrors the brazen and unabashed efforts at maintaining subjugation of the African people and the dominance of the Eurocentric male Conquistador figure, not only through slavery, but also as part of the legacy of colonialism and West Indian sensibility. The white man's capacity to conquer and violate the African woman, represented by the two sisters who are subject to incest, rape and physiological abuse, becomes the most profound tool in vanquishing and reducing the African male, who is now incapable of protecting his female/wife/lover/sister/mother/partner/other. There is a clear romanticizing and eroticizing of the violence perpetrated against the two sisters as they are sensationalized into pornographic emblems highlighting a sexual objectification of women. The forced silence and resultant impotence on the African male's part to respond to the sexual culture displayed by the whites ironically led to their adoption of some basic patriarchal values with white men, expressed in terms of an assertion of masculine authority and power over women, inclusive of the rape and kidnapping of enslaved black women and the unsupervised flogging of enslaved black women by black drivers (Beckles: 238).

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Dabydeen suggests that the capacity of the white hegemonic masculinity in his reductive stereotyping of the African man was highly instrumental in shaping this identity of polarized colours, in shaping the psyche of the Caribbean 'Other':

"I suppose that's all I wanted to say, that ultimately, the plantation experience has severe and traumatic changes in epistemologies and philosophies, but overwhelmingly had to do with what is the very ground of our being, which is our body." (Grant, 220)

The impact of white men's culture upon black masculinity as a dimension of slavery was cumulative, far-reaching and intense in the Caribbean. The denial of the right to family and patriarchal status during Empire by the hegemonic regime, in its quest to maintain the status quo, meant that the enslaved African man could not expect to assert domestic authority as a husband and father, or personal choice regarding his sexuality and sexual practices, as was his custom in his African homeland. Such was the reality for the majority of black men during the time period implicit to Dabydeen's



Turner. Post-Empire, masculinity for many black men was fashioned to reflect affinity for the white hegemony of the Conquistador supplemented by an entrenched contempt for all things African, indeed, for all things non-White. Too late, however, the realization dawned on *those* Afro-Saxon men that their masculine identities were a farce, a sham, a charade that was subject to erosion and demise. The net result of all this construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of Afro-Caribbean masculinities, Patterson surmises, was the complete demoralisation of the African male during the slavery era that, perhaps dormant for the Afro-Saxon who chose to deny his reality and live an artificial existence, came to the fore for the descendants of his much-distanced countrymen:

“Incapable of asserting his authority either as husband or father... the object of whatever affection he may possess, beaten, abused and often raped before his very eyes, and with his female partner often in closer link with the source of all power in the society, it is no wonder that the male slave eventually came to lose all pretensions to masculine pride and develop the irresponsible parental and sexual attitudes that are to be found even today.” (Patterson: 167-168)

What Patterson does here is assert that the post-colonial lower strata Afro-Caribbean man’s masculine identity is one that is truly underpinned by rebelliousness, licentiousness and aggression; indeed one that has been fed and watered by white Euro-centric hegemonic masculinity!

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# MOTHER DEAR, WHERE ART THOU? THE ABSENCE OF THE MOTHER FIGURE IN DAVID DABYDEEN'S WORK

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Those who have experimented with the natural order of creation and have defied it in literature have failed miserably and have had to suffer the full impact of their intrepidity. Mary Shelly's novel, *Frankenstein* (1818) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's short narrative, *Rappaccini's Daughter* (1844) exemplify thwarted experiments of the creation of a new species resembling human beings. If we are to believe Shelly's monster is an emulation of a person, then there is nothing original about this creation; Dr Frankenstein has merely imitated what was originally there. In fact, there is nothing new in the monster's body except the restoration of mobility to inert and lifeless organs. In a similar vein, the mad scientist in Hawthorne's story attempts his hand at creation by making his daughter, who is already nascent, (again the suggestion that originality is nonexistent) immune to all sicknesses, but has only managed to isolate his daughter as she is so toxic that anyone or anything which comes near her will perish. Both, Beatrice (Dr. Rappaccini's daughter) and Frankenstein are new species created from extant beings. Therefore, as unoriginal creatures, they have been condemned to a life of solitude, and as representatives of a new species, they have been ostracized by their human kind. Most significantly both characters lack the parental love and protection of a mother. The male parent/creator has replaced the maternal figure.

Claudia von Werlhof explains in her article entitled *Losing Faith in Progress: Capitalist Patriarchy as an Alchemical System* (2001) that those who believe in patriarchal systems fail to recognize that it is the source of all evil, especially to women. The author equates patriarchy to what she calls an 'Alchemical system' which is a misguided illusion that people believe in and thus give power to. She asserts that in order for *patriarchy* to exist *matriarchy* had to pre-exist. Yet matriarchy is not considered in society as a possibility despite the fact that all living things are born from a mother. She believes the concept of father is a Utopian concept because it can never attain the status of the maternal real origin. Yet, in spite of the fact that the mother is the bearer of life, society does not recognize the mother figure as the strong

one, but instead gives recognition to the father figure who is actually the usurper who has committed matricide. Patriarchal religion denies woman her place because she is seen as the source of evil. Therefore, it does not recognize that nature is maternal, that life sprouts from the female. Von Werlhof manifests that since maleness has taken over, people are no longer able to discern what nature is or much less accept women's powerful role in society as nurturers. Early writers such as Shelly and Hawthorne doom their motherless characters in their literary works. The father/creator/ usurper has failed to nurture, protect and save his creations. Both scientists have condemned their offspring to a life of alienation and have frustrated their possibilities for procreating life. Neither the monster nor Beatrice is able to be with a mate long enough to continue their lineage.

Alchemy, as Von Werlhof points out, works by destroying nature by decomposing it into its component 'pure' elements and then by combining these pure elements in order to create an artificial but 'new, improved' version of nature. The alchemist wants to see himself as a creator, so he actually destroys life in order to be able to claim that he has created 'better' life. Alchemists are nothing but frauds who wish to claim ownership, authorship and the glory of producing something they claim to be 'new' without giving due credit to the maternal figure from which they stole their *materia prima*. The mad scientist in *Frankenstein* took his *materia prima* from body parts he stole from the corpses in a graveyard and Dr. Rappaccini injected his daughter with an artificial chemical solution to make her invincible to all sicknesses.

This prelude to the gist of my paper is germane to the understanding of my topic. Twentieth century writers as well as those of the millennium such as Paul Olsen's *Sons and Mothers* (1982), D. H. Laurence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and David Dabydeen's *Turner: New and Selected Poems* (1994) have followed in Shelly's and Hawthorne's footsteps in endeavoring to give mothers their place as the natural procreating force. Multiple literary award winner, novelist and poet, David Dabydeen presents the theme of the absent mother in his poetry. Lee M. Jenkins, a writer and lecturer in English at Cork University College cites Dabydeen as saying in an interview: "I grew up without a mother, so that the absent mother is probably what moves me very deeply and creates writing" (Jenkins, 2004: 91). The author further explains in another interview conducted in 1991 by Frank Birbalsingh that as the product of divorced parents he and his siblings went to live with their father in London (Birbalsingh, 1997). The separation from his mother at age fourteen was to have a devastating lasting effect on the writer. It seems to have been a void he was unable to fulfill.

Thus, the mother figure is the dominating procreating force in his poems. However, she is either non-existent in the lives of her offspring, is pre-empted from exercising her role of motherhood or is damaged beyond repair, rendering her incapable of nurturing her child. The poem *Slavewoman's Song* exemplifies the latter. It presents the portrait of a mother's sorrow when her child is ripped from her arms to be sold like cattle. Her howl is almost animal-like, her pain is numbing, so she feels the need to harm herself. The speaker, probably a fellow slave girl asks the distraught woman questions that are simultaneously answered by the positing of another question:

Ya howl ya howl—  
 Tell me wha ya howl foh  
 Tell me noh?  
 Bite yu haan like daag-bone?  
 Pickni?  
 Dem Take pickni way? Wha dem do wid pickni?  
 Mek yu knack yu head wid stone (Dabydeen: 70)

The mother experiences throbbing pain and punishes herself for her helplessness and inability to defend and keep her baby. Smashing her head with a stone or biting her hands is not comparable to the heartache she feels at the loss of her child. The maternal figure is nonexistent because although physically present, she is not mentally and emotionally capable of rearing her children, or even worse, she has no children left to raise since they have been snatched away, depriving her of any further physical contact with them. In this sense, slave masters have distorted the natural order of things — rather than allow the child to be raised by its mother; it is stripped from her bosom to suffer an unknown fate. Like alchemists they (the slave masters) have acted against what is natural, of course with obliterating consequences for the grieving mother.

Similarly, in the maritime epic poem, *Turner in Turner New and Selected Poems* Dabydeen's persona's zealous determination to restore the drowned Africans' interrupted lives and identities to fill them with youthful memories prove futile. He realizes their lives will not come into fruition because they are mirage-like, imaginary beings, elusive and barren of ancestral history and roots. Most importantly, they are devoid of the main procreative entity, the mother. In other words, although Dabydeen manages to extract the *materia prima* from the skeletal debris in the ocean, he is nonetheless unsuccessful in restoring productive lives. Once the alchemist has reduced nature to *materia prima*, he has effectively killed nature, and it can never be restored; there is no turning back.

The first character, a still or nearly still born child is thrown off the ship as its mother watches in horror and grieves over her loss. In the first section of the poem some mothers are likewise drowned with their newborn babies or with the baby still in their wombs.

Stillborn from all the signs, First a woman sobs  
Above the creak of timbers and the cleaving  
Of the sea, sobs from the depths of true  
Hurt and grief. . .

The still born child, however, is brought back to live its second life exclusive of any maternal guidance, nurturing and care. Moreover, the “longed-for gift of motherhood” has been thwarted for the drowned females. Jenkins cites the poet as saying, “*Turner* is really about the absent mother, too. I feel like the still born child in *Turner*” (Jenkins: 91). Although the author was summoned by his father who lived in London, he seems to have begun to fend for himself as early as at the age of fourteen. The author arrives in South London, but finds himself lacking the guidance of either parent. He confesses to interviewer Wolfgang Binder in 1989 that he depended on the state’s weekly check for financial support (Binder: 162). The writer claims to have lived without parental protection during his adolescent years in South London.

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Due to the lack of the main procreative force, children are at the mercy of human predators like Turner, the sea captain. The writer’s preface to his 600 verse poem forewarns us that he does not believe Joseph Mallord William Turner’s<sup>1</sup> capturing the historical moment of the deliberate drowning of African slaves in his painting better known as *The Slave Ship* (1840) to be an expression of genuine disapproval of the atrocious act on the part of the painter, but instead the repulsive reveling of a sadist who marveled at the subject matter. Based on Dabydeen’s animus for William Turner, he distorts the artist’s self-proclaimed love for children by attributing pedophilic tendencies to his persona. The reptilian characteristics he ascribes to the sea captain suggests his treacherous nature, “Turner’s smile shrunk like a worm’s” (VIII). In section XXIV he hypocritically befriends the boys, makes promises to them: “Turner crammed our boy’s mouths too with riches, . . .” and then takes them to his private quarters. Lacking their maternal protector, the children are solely at their master’s will:

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) was an English Romantic landscape artist. He was fascinated by the power of the sea and was inspired to capture the historical moment of the tossing of sick and elderly slaves overboard. He titled his painting “*Traders Ditching the Dead and the Dying with Hurricane Approaching*” better known as “*The Slave Ship*” in 1840.

. . . we wriggled beneath him,  
Breathless with pain, wanting to remove his hook  
Implanted in our flesh. The more we struggled  
Ungratefully, the more steadfast his resolve. . .

This physical and emotional control renders the young boys incapacitated, like puppets in the hands of a puppeteer. Besides bodily rape, the children's roots, language and heritage have been likewise annihilated as Turner forces his legacy unto them. Metaphorically, he thrusts words into their mouths in the colonizers' tongue and forces them to repeat words in his language, thus leaving their own history barren and with the inability to pass their African legacies onto their own children and future generations: ". . . His voice lowered to a mysterious whisper"/ "Ripped away his jouti necklace without warning . . ."/ "Each will be barren of ancestral memory . . ." (XXI).

At a more profound level, the poet's confessions are symbolically suggestive of not being able to fully identify with his motherland and his African or indigenous roots, as well as with his adopted country, England. Like the little boys in his poem, his heritage has been uprooted and corrupted with imperial history. Dabydeen has expressed chagrin at not being able to speak the Hindi or Urdu languages. As an Indian, he manifests, he would have liked to be fluent in them. Not only has he lost his caste, but he has lost his language as well (Birbalsing: 190). Jenkins suggests an alternate interpretation for the mother in Dabydeen's poems as the mother country who has also neglected and abandoned her children, the colonies (Jenkins: 91). She notes that West Indian immigrants experienced the reality of denial by the Motherland. Historically, England has overtly reduced its Caribbean citizens to the status of inferiority in much the same way as John Ruskin,<sup>2</sup> William Turner's art critic, downgrades the subject matter of Turner's painting in his essay by including a footnote that reads, "something tossed overboard." Dabydeen speaks of the shame and humiliation that his immigrant family experienced in the mother country:

I think there was a belief that if you went to England and worked, you could become wealthy, whereas in fact, when they came, they were not welcome as they expected to be. . . . I think what they did not reckon on was the sense of humiliation in being an immigrant and a colonial. And also that they would be constantly reminded by the host society that they were in some ways unwanted and they would have to carry that burden of guilt and shame with them. (Binder: 161)

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<sup>2</sup> John Ruskin, the famous art critic who bought the painting praised its brilliance in an essay, but made light of the subject matter; the shackling and drowning of the helpless Africans by simply including a footnote that read: *Something tossed overboard*. Several years later, he found the painting repulsive and traded it for another one.



The response of the children to this rejection by the mainstream was the shunning of their own heritage. Anything that made them distinctive or set them apart, preventing them from blending in, was eschewed. The author states that children his age wished their mothers would not wear saris and would wear 'normal' dresses instead (Binder: 161).

To conclude, like the mad scientists in *Frankenstein* and *Rappaccini's Daughter* who disregarded the natural order of the conception of life, and attempted to create new life by destroying life, and depriving their creations of their sources of origin, their mothers, Dabydeen similarly concludes in *Turner* that without their mothers his characters would not be able to live their second lives. As creator he has managed to provide his characters with ancestral memories, yet he has failed to restore their lives because he is not their mother. Not only do the alchemists, who subvert the natural order of things, face the repercussions of their actions, but the consequences of the alchemists' transgressions are visited upon their motherless 'creations'.

The author's portrayal of the non-functional mother is a recurring device in his works, in part because he wishes to accentuate the gravity of growing up devoid of maternal care and love. Consequently, the maternal figures in Dabydeen's literary work are not functional; therefore they cannot be caretakers, nurses, psychologists, teachers, or entertainers to their offspring because of their absence or their disturbed state of mind. One cannot help feeling pity for the young helpless heroine in *Rappaccini's Daughter* in an age where a blooming woman needs the guidance, counsel and protection of a mother. By the same token, one feels empathy for the creature in *Frankenstein* who has been denied a mother, the main procreating and nurturing force in life. By so doing, his 'creator' damns his creature to a life of loneliness, misery and woe, just as the sea captain in *Turner* condemns generation after generation of stolen African children to slavery, sexual violation, motherlessness, and death at the bottom of the sea.

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## PRAISING AFRICANS ELSEWHERE: KAMAU BRATHWAITE'S *BARABAJAN POEMS*

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Kamau Brathwaite's poetry has consistently celebrated and lamented the link between Africa and the Caribbean, and he has dedicated much of his creative life to resolving what George Lamming has called the "fractured consciousness" and "fragmented memory" of this complex ancestral link. Provoked by both Lamming's sense of "the ambiguities among Blacks themselves about the credibility of their own spiritual history" (Lamming, 1991: xxxvii) and by Aimé Césaire's indictment of colonialism in the Caribbean as "a machine for crushing, for grinding, [and] for degrading", Brathwaite's own outrage at the "immoral & immemorial malice" of the Middle Passage and its aftermath is underscored by his insight that it was not only "Elmina, not Accra, not Keta, not Lomé", but also the need to feel "the meaning of *home*." Exploring this in *Barabajan Poems*, Brathwaite intones an extended praise song (and lament) of Africans elsewhere, one that syncopates with both the rhythms of Ghana and his native Barbados (Brathwaite, 1994: 80-83; Césaire, 1972: 60).

Determining also to give (the) Caribbean an identity and a language that sealed the bond with Africa, Brathwaite did so by inventing the "Sycorax video-style", an innovative computer-generated calligraphy in which "the very concept of the page is disturbed" by insisting on the use of "Nation Language", an English-lexifier Creole, that he has dubbed "a howl, or a shout or a machine-gun or the wind or a wave", and by learning from West African praise poetry (Savory, 2004: 187; Brathwaite, 1995: 5).

During his cultural immersion in Ghana as an official in the Ministry of Education in Accra, Brathwaite not only witnessed the country's culturally diverse traditions of dancing and drumming but also the rousing salutation poetry of Kwame Nkrumah's personal bard Okyeame Boafo Akuffo who accompanied the president on his political rounds. Of the years between 1956 and 1962, Brathwaite has written that "I came to a sense of identification of myself with these people, my living diviners. I came to connect my history with theirs, the bridge of my mind was linking Atlantic and ancestor, homeland and heartland" (1970: 38). It was Brathwaite's self-proclaimed "de/education in West Africa and re/education in the Caribbean" (Brathwaite, 1994: 96) that further contributed to his role as an African-Caribbean poet.

Isadore Okpewho has written that “the theme of praise is . . . similar to that of love for both sentiments are fundamentally based in a feeling of admiration for a person or an object” (1992: 142). This brings into perspective Brathwaite’s intention to adapt the Ghanaian model of traditionally praising supernatural forces, individuals, animate and inanimate objects, and philosophical concepts in order to give his poetry its special tone and purpose. While his is often the anguished voice of the *griot* raised in anger at the demeaning legacy of slavery, colonialism, and the imposition of Standard English in the Caribbean, it is Brathwaite’s particular fathoming of what the folklorist Judith Gleason has called “the praise-able core” (1994, xxiv) that gives his poetry its originality and depth whether he is lamenting his wife’s death in *The Zea Mexican Diary* (1993) or praising the life of the Guyanese radical politician Walter Rodney in *Elegguas* (2010). Like the praise-singer in Camara Laye’s memoir *The African Child* (1982), Brathwaite has “developed a very retentive memory stored with facts handed him by his predecessors” (1982: 24). In adapting an oral tradition, Brathwaite has helped to keep the inherited traditions of the Caribbean alive and shows in his “history-as-poetry” (Brown, 1993: 58) that it is not only his calling as a poet of the African Diaspora but also his training as a historian that adds an *imprimatur* to a new art of cross-cultural salutation poetry.

Brathwaite’s appropriation of the praise poem may be traced to his first three volumes of poetry, published collectively as *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (1973). The trilogy proceeds by flashbacks and praise song, in jazz rhythm and “Caribbean Speak” as the poet announces that his “arrivance . . . is from Africa,” that his ancestors “came out here as slavely”, and that he means to understand fully what he calls “the African set-up” (1994: 169). Dealing specifically with his symbolic *return* to Africa and his *rediscovery* of Akan and Asante culture in Ghana, Brathwaite is able in Simon Gikandi’s words “to textually realize African as a precondition for what [Gordon] Rohlehr calls the ‘wholeness and self-knowledge of Afro-Caribbean man’” (Gikandi, 2004: 15).

In *The Arrivants*, Brathwaite praises Africa and the Caribbean in the same way the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca celebrates the *duende* or spirit of place in his native Andalusia. For example, as Lorca praises the *cante jondo* or deep song of the gypsies of southern Spain, so Brathwaite celebrates such West African spiritual entities as Ananse, Damballa, Jah, Legba, Shango, Odomankoma, Oludumare, Nyame, Nyankopen, and Ogun. Together with “Selassie God”, these are the spirits “who came over” by “walking on the water of our conscience” into Rasta or Voodoo worship. As Funso Aiyejina has observed, the presence of these gods has “made reconnection with ancestry an ultimate and possible venture for the New World African” (Brathwaite, 1973: 24; 1994: 173; Aiyejina, 2004: 41).

Aware that colonial and post-independence interference have discouraged the worship of these deities in certain parts of the Caribbean, Brathwaite writes in “Shepherd” that

“The streets of my home have their own gods but we do not see them/ they walk in the dust.” Acknowledging their special presence even though “it is a long way from Guinea”, Brathwaite concludes that “the gods still have have their places/ they can walk up out of the sea/ into our houses”, that “the drum praises them”, and that “they speak to us with the voices of crickets/ with the shatter of leaves” (1973: 189-190).

Brathwaite reveres Ogun in *Islands*, the third volume of the trilogy, not only because he is a “Yoruba and Afro-Caribbean Creator God”, but because he is also a “divine craftsman” (1973: 274). In the poem “Ogun”, the poet’s uncle is an emanation of the deity. Bobby O’Neal, whom Brathwaite equates with “Shephard Mallacciai Reynolds (Kapo)” the Jamaican sculptor and “obeahman” (1994: 155), is a highly skilled carpenter for whom “There was no shock of wood, no beam/ of light mahogany his saw teeth couldn’t handle” (Brathwaite, 2001: 359), and, as one of the heroic Calibans of Brathwaite’s poetry, O’Neal is a man of two worlds, someone whose “grey memories” of an ancestral Africa keep him spiritual company in his workshop (Brathwaite, 1994: 155).

What Brathwaite praises mostly about his uncle is only hinted at in “Ogun”. Sitting in his “shattered/ Sunday shop”, the “emerging woodwork” in his hand reveals an “image of his anger” as he carves a figure whose “enduring jaw; lost pain, lost iron” silently echoes not only the idols and fetishes smuggled into Barbados by slaves, but also, in the Guyanese poet Martin Carter’s phrase, “the hurt of things” and the lasting pain of the millions forcibly taken from Africa (Carter, 2006: 33).

O’Neal fades in and out of *Barabajan Poems* as both “Ogun” and as “Bob’ob”. In these poems, Brathwaite reveals that he was impressed as a boy that his uncle kept the skills of Ghanaian woodworking alive by carving tiny images. This he did “quietly & secr(e)etly” because British colonial policy deprived Barbados of its past heritage and cultural history. George Lamming, for example, recalls in *In the Castle of My Skin* an English schoolteacher - appropriately named Slime - reproaching a woman who has been having nightmares about slavery by saying “No one [t]here was ever a slave.” Unlike Hic Tizzic in *The Arrivants* who is enslaved by “the booze/ an’ women” and “de conch shell/ bawlin’ fuh work” - despite having been briefly released from “the cramp/ of poverty” by the “*bambulula bambuli*” of Carnival -, Bob’ob is able to keep this skill alive because he is Ogun the craftsman, an African elsewhere, the natural link in the chain between the New World and the Old (1994: 155; Lamming, 1991: 57; Brathwaite, 1973: 214-215).

Brathwaite’s *Barabajan Poems* owes its origin to an invitation the poet received from the Central Bank of Barbados to deliver the Sir William Scott Memorial Lecture in 1987. He took as his ‘title’ *The Poet and his Place in Bajan Culture* and began with “some definitions” of the **poet** – “a craftsman ... who deals ... in wordsongs, wordsounds, wordwounds & meaning” -, of **culture** – the poet’s “home ... his drum ... his dream . . . the shared collective conscious (and unconscious) xperience of a

people, with submerged underdrones – ghosts, spirits, sky-juices, ancestors, immemorial memories”, and of **Bajan culture** – “half-way from Europe, half-way (“back”) to African” (1994: 21). An intensely autobiographical book, *Barabajan Poems*, is a *mettisage* or cross-breeding of writing styles and, in Brathwaite’s words, a *tidalectics* of the ebb and flow of ideas racing back and forth between the Caribbean and Africa.

Announcing himself as an “African-oriented writer – a person involved mainly with Africa ...with the African Diaspora”, Brathwaite’s poems chant a passionate litany of his life: growing up in Barbados, studies at Cambridge University, working in Ghana where he began “to glimpse ... the interior of [his] journey”, (1994: 22,75), and understanding the bond of “Sunsum” or spiritual blood between an ancestral (and present) Africa and an historical (and present) Caribbean.

The concept of “Sunsum” is explored in *The Arrivants* as the ‘crossing over’ of the stolen folk is revered in poem after poem. Those who survived the horrors of the Atlantic passage with their gods, their customs, and their languages miraculously intact are given voice and meaning in Brathwaite’s keening because he is part of the *tidalectic* legacy of the triangular trade.

In the poem “Sunsum” Brathwaite asks a series of rhetorical questions: – “Why did our gold, the sun’s/ *sunsum*, safe against the termites, crack/ under the white gun/ of plunder, bright bridge-/ head of money, quick bullet’s bribe?/ Why did the god’s/ stool you gave us . . . not save us from pride,/ foreign tribes’ bibles,/ the Christian god’s hunger/ eating the good of our tree;/ flesh of my brothers’ flesh” (1973: 149-50). It is not, however, until he records the death of his “Uncle Ogun” in *Barabajan Poems* and finds himself in the ruined shell of the old man’s workshop that Brathwaite begins to formulate an answer (1994: 159).

Announcing that he has been “‘on’ a Fulbright”, Brathwaite is shocked that “no one rescued the photographs the maps the military campaigns” from the ruins. Equating Bob’ob’s shop with the poet W.H. Auden’s description of his study as a “cave of making” (Auden, 1965: 18) where all “were free” to “come . . . & palaver”, the place, Brathwaite hints, has become - by metamorphosis – both symbolically the National Archives and Barbados, which “we allow(ed) the pox & rot & swarms of our **neglect neglect neglect** to ravage & destroy these things becau(se) we didn’t know the value of them ... because we didn’t know or care about our history & the people who have help(ed) to make it what it c(‘)d still far better be.” Not only does “Bajan ha[ve] no culture”, Brathwaite complains, but also “[. . . nothing] . . . tied us . . . to Africa.” Listing *garifuna* in Belize, *santería* in Cuba, *saramaka* in Guyana, *voodoo* in Haiti, *kumina* in Jamaica, and *shango* in Trinidad, Brathwaite grumbles: “**in Bubaydus . . . we int got nnunadatt!**” (1994: 160-163, 166-167, 350).

Two incidents, one in Belize and the other in St. Vincent, later convince Brathwaite that the role of poet is to retrieve what has been *lost* in Barbados. The first involves

witnessing a secret *garifuna* ceremony in Belize in which the *congregation* unconsciously “unsubmerged themselves”, not as the nominal Christians they were supposed to be, but as “Garifuna nation.” However, in “their place of Drums”, these would-be Africans elsewhere, Brathwaite records, “had first denied it.” In the second incident, while visiting St. Vincent, Brathwaite hears a “cockcrow of throbbing out in the hills above the CaneGarden.” Inquiring after its significance, the poet understands from a woman who works for his sister that it is of no importance, and he is met with “*me nevvva hear nothin – me na hear nuttn – mwen na rien, msieu.*” Responding to both incidents, Brathwaite lays the blame on both “deculturation” and the pervasive mood in the Caribbean that “we are ashamed to face our face admit ourselves even unto our very selves” (1994: 167-168).

Many of the prose *vignettes* in *Barabajan Poems* are reminiscent of William Wordsworth’s concept of “spots in time” in *The Prelude* in which memory is *privileged* to play a significant role in the assuaging of fear and doubt. Returning to Bob’ob’s shop which has become “a Zion meeting place” and a regular “Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting place”, Brathwaite re-remembers “the tiny carving that Ogun **car(v)ed** so many years ago.” Because he also recognized the image’s “other heart – in Africa”, his recollection takes the form of a spontaneous praise poem:

Dark Dakar markets, Gorée, Takoradi was hot, Aburi, Koforidua, Akropong,  
Peki, Akyem, Akuapim, Akuaamu & Denkyera, Asantemanso, Ahamansu &  
Kumasi, Ku Massai & beyond. Ho, Saltpond, Elmina, the Kru, the  
Kromanti, the mangrove Coromante shore. Hohoe, Kadjebi, Jasikan, Paase,  
DodoApaase, Krachi, KeteKrachi, Navrongo, Burkina Faso, Togo,  
Abomey, Wa – in highland forests/glimpses of the desert - (1994: 166, 169;  
Wordsworth, 1975: IX, l.258)

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Standing outside the “shattered Sunday shop” listening to “splinters of handclap” and watching “streams of light from the inside gaslamp through the wooden cracks”, Brathwaite experiences what he calls an “**alteration of consciousness**” in which “all the world” is “getting involved” and articulates “a great slow glowing listening of meaning” as if some momentous utterance is at hand - like the apocryphal rustling of leaves before the Pythian oracle speaks. In an epiphany of “All **altering**”, Brathwaite turns “being Bajan into *something other something else* – and nearer nearer better known than we had ever known before. **So mething** forgotten yes and far & far & further on & **father** (yes) & making new and making you” (1994).

In an attempt to “Xplain . . . the presence, *persistence*” of this Delphic moment, Brathwaite interprets the “**altering**” as coming from “‘below’ – from the ground from the underground coralwater – from ‘these people’ from ‘the poor’.” But, like the folk he has complained about who are unwilling to accept their inherited culture, Brathwaite wonders if his ‘experience’ is democratically charged enough: *does the*



word fit? – is it fit? Then it dawns on him that “the Caribbean/New World” is like “**Legba**”, the limping/crippled African god of crossroads of beginnings & opening doors.” (1994: 170-172).

The “**altering**” involves “Bob’ob” becoming “Toussaint Louverture – the Liberator or ‘Opener’ of S Domingue into Haiti” in a place transmogrified by “that other Yoruba/Dahomey god Shango of hammer & axe & electricity & blinding lightning/thunder.” In a rush of naming, Brathwaite calls up the fire of “the rebel hammerm[e]n” (and women) of the New World: Bob Marley, Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight & The Pips, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Bessie Smith, David Rudder, John Coltrane, Elvin Jones, “the worksong fieldhollers” of the canefields, Howling Wolf, and Michael Jackson. “Celebrating “the gift” of “Bob’ob Papa Legba Dogou shop” and the “*mkissi* carving” the carpenter left for him to find, Brathwaite is finally “back from Igbo” (1994: 172-173.).

Bob’ob’s workshop becomes a “‘hounfort’”, and while he retreats in time to the periphery of the Voodoo stone circle, Brathwaite hears “a certain sss. sss. ss. sssss. ss”, a “sound (womb/ song).” This is followed by “**Xplosions of breath. Xpulsions of darkness & death going hah hah haaah.**” Entering the circle, Brathwaite sees a woman “stretched out . . . elongated, sinuously moving forward & forward & wheeling & twisting” (1994: 179). Just as Federico García Lorca in his essay entitled *Play and Theory of the Duende* (1933) celebrates a flamenco dancer twirling like “a lunar paralytic” (Lorca, 1998: 59), so Brathwaite praises the eel-like woman dancing in the circle “as if she had no bones” and whose “flickering flickering out like the flicker of fire” is living proof of “the serpent she was.”

In the following “Choreography of sound,” - a “collective/ communal polyrhythmic polyvalent tidalectic jazz-voiced improvization/ engine” of drum and handclap - a “highvoice in syncopation” becomes the “woman . . . possessed” of Dove and Damballa, John the Baptist and Christ, the Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit. In yet another “**altering**”, Brathwaite now ‘hears’ that “the people in the shop are no longer singing in English or Bajan” (1994: 180-181).

Just as the Garifuna people *unsubmerged* in the ceremony Brathwaite witnessed secretly in Belize, so “the new dark wail” of the “SUBMERGED” in Bob’ob’s old workshop resonates into a “moaning song from Calabar.” The “transmigration of simple Bajan country worshippers from Christian God to African apotheosis”, Brathwaite predicts, will reverberate “into confidence & knowledge & skills of self & communal survival.” How else, the poet asks, can “we [Africans elsewhere] cope with the persistent legacies of the plantation - loneliness, disappointment, dispossession, poverty & fear?” (Brathwaite 1994: 184).

The a-chronological organization of *Barabajan Poems* and the continuing titillation of consciousness and the quasi-mystical moments that Brathwaite experiences and passes on is devoted to attracting the attention of the Caribbean as much as it is dedicated to

catching the eye or shocking the individual by any means necessary like a Coleridge, a de Sade, or a Malcolm X. Brathwaite combines the *possession* of the woman in the circle until “her voice got caught up in her throat” by introducing his own *naming* so that both woman and poet speak as if they have *emerged* in one Pythic voicing. As the English Romantic poets invariably ‘announce’ the moment in which they accept the burden of the poet, so, in the frenzy of the hounfort, a voice announces: “**K/Ka/Kam/Kama Kamau**” (Brathwaite, 1994: 189). This be will articulated later in *Barabajan Poems* in much larger calligraphy - K ... KA ... KAM ... KAMA ...U – when Brathwaite projects the notion that “yr **nam & the nam is yer name**” which the poet is committed to protect because **n & m** and in the middle of this is the **alpha** of our beginnings, protected like boulders of these two great continents” (Brathwaite, 1994: 240-241). “So Sistren & Bredren”, Brathwaite adds, “we is all gathered here/tonite to *praaaase*” (1994: 189, 240-241, 182).

In Lord Byron’s dramatic poem *Manfred* (1817), the eponymous hero gives his “pang” a “voice;” allowing the poet to “stand /Upon [his] strength” and rage: “I do – defy – deny -/ /Spurn back, and scorn ye! -”, thus freeing him to compose the unconfined satirical liberties of *Don Juan* (Byron, 1978: 138, 158). So Brathwaite’s poetry since *Barabajan Poems* is a continuing praise poem in which Barbados (and the Caribbean) - truly now an Africa elsewhere – is sung in **altered** tongues to the tune of “**LiberNation**”. By “*biggin up* Black people & Africa & the diaspora in a way that had never been *bigg-up* before in English” (Williams, 2004: 306), Brathwaite praises a Caribbean that is more culturally alert and politically vigilant than ever before, and one that is separate from but irrefragably linked to “glistening Africa” (1994: 112).

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# CARIBBEAN WOMEN IN SPOKEN WORD, POETRY AND CHOREOPOETRY: EXPLORING THE WORKS OF ESTHER PHILLIPS, OPAL PALMER ADISA AND OTHERS

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## 1 Enunciation

This article explores the fusion of culture, traditional folklore and oral tradition of poetic verse and its multiple uses in choreopoetry presentations. Comparative explications of cultural literacy as expressed in poetic selections from Opal Palmer Adisa, Esther Phillips, Joanne C. Hillhouse and ChenziRa Davis Kahina provide a creatively interwoven sampling of traditional experiences shared by Caribbean women writers. Adisa's "*The Priestess of Language*" and "*The Writer's Escape*"; Phillips' "*Just Riffing*"; Hillhouse's "*Tongue Twista*"; and Kahina's "*Yo Recuerdo*" provide a multi-dimensional cross-section of the voices of traditional folklore, contemporary reality experiences and poetic verse that are migrating into performance poetry commonly referred to as spoken word. Expressive and creative poetic verses are shared based on the heritage and historic experiences imbued in the lives of each of these Caribbean women writers.

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## 2 Preparation

The interconnectedness of the poetic and linguistic fluency shared amongst women of the English and Spanish speaking Caribbean isles is indirectly linked to the cultural affluence and revolutionary pro-activity shared amongst Caribbean women writers within the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The use of poetry for the development of choreopoetry presentations inclusive of dramatic foundations for contemporary spoken word by women literary artists of the Caribbean with American, British and Spanish influences are common in the works of Adisa, Phillips, Hillhouse and Kahina. Interrelationships amongst the common themes of personal freedom, independence, self-determination, liberation, tolerance, integration, peace and cultural heritage expressions are interwoven throughout each of the poetic verses explored herein.

The free and forceful disregard and linguistic self-determination shared by younger Caribbean women writers is unequivocally and unapologetically expressed as an oral

missile defending non-standard English conversations in Hillhouse's poem "*Tongue Twista*":

*"Teach we de queen English  
Beat we when we let  
Off wid wha com nat chal  
De pepperpot  
We concoct  
Outa de slave master  
Tongue  
An blen up wid  
De sweet African  
Song...  
...When Dem wan know  
a wha bran ah talking dat  
tell them that we are multilingual  
an hab nuff chat."* (Hillhouse, 2010: 65-67)

Writers represent the voices of the people in all sectors of a community, village and nation. Writers are engaged with the task of expressing the realities of the lives of people of the working to upper class as they are granted the luxury in many instances to share their skill, time and literary craftsmanship to present the traditions, histories and life-stories of people in a creative manner. Poets creatively use language in rhythm form to address societal themes of patriarchy; gender roles; eroticism; marginalization, oppression and alienation; subversion; revision and demystification of history; immigration and exile; deconstruction and reconstruction of identity.

### 3 Opening

An analysis of Caribbean women's literature reveals writings that share and express common yet vital insights and reflections into the culture, social realities, traditions, economics, politics and history of the insular societies from which they originate and are grounded within, inclusive of life challenges and experiences encountered when living outside of the Caribbean region. The literature presented in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries by most Caribbean women open windows of creative and bold expressive concepts, ideas and living experiences that are customarily not included in the works of contemporary Caribbean male authors. This gender transformative and engaging literature presents differing perspectives and social accounts of cultural and national identity, public and private spaces of engagement inclusive of religion, class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. The social melting pot of historical, political, linguistic, geographic and cultural realities infused within the complexities of the issues surrounding the identity dilemma amongst people and especially women of the

Caribbean is a common area granted significance within the content shared by most Caribbean women literary artists.

A creative mixture of eroticism combined with insights of perceptions of systematic oppression and alienation is presented in the following excerpt from Opal Palmer Adisa's *"The Priestess of Language"*:

*"This letter wants to sing  
Sing...  
This is the memory  
Of language caught in a slaver's web  
Its' wings sweetened with molasses  
...They sang woeful songs  
The words caught in the tail  
Of the tune  
They sang evangelism  
The words swaying  
To redemptive rhythm  
...One full moon  
She caught sight and saw herself  
He put his hands under her skirt  
Smooth as a brook  
And he remembered before then  
When the forest welcomed  
Him to hunt himself his own future..."* (Palmer Adisa: 151-152)<sup>1</sup>



Adisa's poetic verse creatively juxtaposes the realities of the remnants of the enslavement experience imposed by the sugar cane industry as implied by the reference to *"molasses"* during the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the control of the church on the former slaves living in contemporary times. The references to the music as a *"redemptive rhythm"* from the religious fellowship shared by descendants of enslaved people are further stretched into a sexual reflection, savored recollection by the woman in this poem and the erotic memories embraced by the man touching her. This reflects a link to the cultural reflections within man and woman relations within the common threads interwoven yet separated between the church and the realms of governance within the Caribbean community.

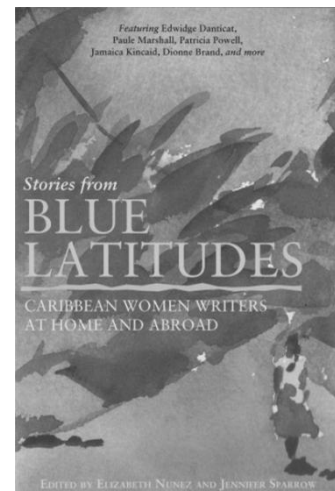
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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Palmer Adisa is the editor of *The Caribbean Writer*, a University of the Virgin Islands' publication.

#### 4 Implementation

The structure of verse and use of musical lyricism in Caribbean poetic verse are synonymous to the various dialects and traditional language paradigms found amongst people of the English and Spanish speaking Caribbean. Afrakan-centered call and response along with simplistic rhyme are commonly used for the creation and development of dramatic choreopoetry presentations that provide the foundation for contemporary spoken word developed and crafted by Caribbean women literary artists. Music is used to connect select poetic verses that are often slipped delicately into the creation of lyrics for songs as these verses are telling a story of the history, culture and real experiences of common and elite people of within the environments of the Caribbean women literary artists. Caribbean women writers, especially poets who are forced to share much information with sparse writing, integrate Indigenous Afrakan and contemporary “West Indian” history, sociology and cultural heritage in their work. Eloquent words of the familiar Caribbean lifestyle and environs are shared in this poetic declaration about Phillips’ Barbados home:

*“Look! I come from tuk-band land,  
Raga-soca land,  
Calypso country,  
I come from a place  
Where we measure morning  
By cocks crowing in backyards,  
Pick up rhythms in raindrops  
Drumming on galvanize’ roof tops  
Sense the length of a line  
In the sighing of casuarinas.  
We learn the harmony of syllables  
Singing through canefields,  
Hear women birthing  
The spirit of Blues in Mission Halls.  
...But for now, I just here meterizing  
Metaphorizing  
Just improvising...Just riffin’.” (Phillips: VII-VIII)<sup>2</sup>*



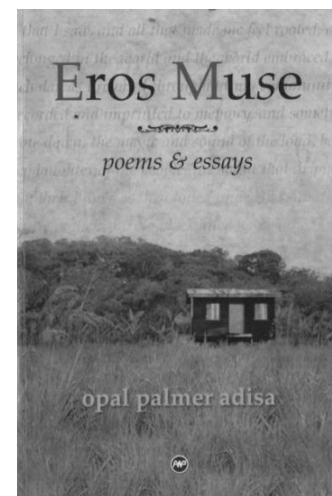
Caribbean women folklore and oral tradition keepers historically serve as the cultural breadbasket of the heritage reserves of the culture, history, traditions, languages and religious living practices of this region. During the heights of the Trans-Atlantic Enslavement Period, folktales, storytelling and oral traditions recorded and preserved

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<sup>2</sup> Esther Phillips holds an MFA degree in Creative Writing from the University of Miami and teaches at Barbados Community College.

Caribbean experiences passing from mouth to ear. This was especially true among marketwomen, midwives and women of the church. In Adisa's *"The Writer's Escape"*, the reality expressed is linked to the harsh work conditions for cane-field workers of the Caribbean and oral traditional tales that kept many women in fear of desperate and incarcerated men.

*"Escaped prisoners  
Were spotted in the cane-fields  
That hedged the main road  
Women were warned  
Not to walk alone at nights  
...No telling  
What those wicked men ...May do  
...In some private  
I would-never-dear-to-speak  
Space I wanted to know  
What they would do  
But dared not ask  
...I lingered at the edge of the cane-fields  
Hoping to hold  
One of those escapee's face  
In my small hands  
And have him tell me  
How it felt when  
The cat-o-nine-tail  
Was brought down  
On his bare behind."* (Palmer Adisa: 157)

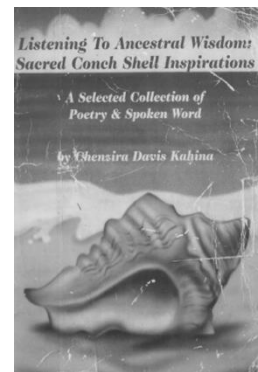


Essentially, common poetic threads within Caribbean women's literary work have shifted from extended prose and drama into an innovative embrace of poetry that has significantly transformed into lyrical creations easily crossed-over into the music industry as artistic spoken word performances.

The use of poetic verse for sharing and teaching the history and cultural heritage of select Caribbean experiences either in English, French or Spanish speaking island communities has increased especially contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century women writers. In light of the liberating and independence quests in Haiti, Kahina's *"I Am Defilee"* dramatic poem lends itself as more of a Chautauqua-like literary performance piece:



*“Queen Mother Defilee—I Am  
 Je suis Defilee...I Am Defilee  
 A spirit warrior-I Am- of course  
 A royal one-I Am- that journey ‘cross the seas from Afraka by force...  
 To slave, toil and labor on the many plantations of ‘Ayti  
 We Royal ones never fear work for we are of a united community...  
 Learning the harsh plantation work come very fast  
 Mastering the French patois became a thing of the past...  
 Many regard me as a leader on the plantation  
 Many had no idea that I come from leading a fearless nation...  
 ...Je suis Defilee...I am Defilee  
 A tradition bearer-I Am- of the roots of ‘Ayti living strong and bold  
 A priestess-I Am- of our ancient ancestral African traditions of old  
 Mastering the dances, songs and trances  
 Of our ancestors from their many dances  
 Our homelands of the east  
 Lending themselves to allow me to feast  
 Conjuring up the spirits for our liberation  
 Here in the Caribbean forever and through creation...  
 Je suis Defilee...I am Defilee...”*



ChenziRa, 2010: 10-11

Caribbean women writers continue to provide a realistic literary report of the experiences, traditions, histories and visions of the women, men, children, elders and visitors to the Caribbean region. In light of the ever changing communication mediums used to reach the minds, hearts and souls of humanity, many if not most Caribbean women writers create poetic verse that is musical in rhythm, ethnographic in sharing a correct picture of the cultural nuances of the Caribbean, and revolutionary in expression of demands for change. Women are the backbone of society and Caribbean women writers have increasingly expanded their presence in the world of literature irrespective of more poetry being performed as spoken word. Personal stories of trial and tribulations of the experiences from the Caribbean into the mainland and Europe are frequent themes of poetic verses created. Kahina’s “Yo Recuerdo...I Remember” is another example of a poem transforming into lyrical spoken word as performance art. Here is an excerpt:

*“Yo recuerdo...I remember...  
 The bacalao and jonni cakes in the mornings  
 The sweet and vibrant aroma usedta wake up all ah we*

*La ciudad beigo had its own energy*  
*Like port a prince to the west shared by our sisters*  
*We cut cane, sucked succulent limonsillos*  
*And devoured endlessly sweet mango during our pre-dawn chores*  
*Powerlines and phonelines glistened in the horizon miles away*  
*And the light from kerosene lamps were replaced with nu rays of sun...*  
*The smell of fresh coal filled our young and developing lungs...*  
*Beyond the heavy sugar plantation smokestack fragrances*  
*All ah this before the dawn's sunshine was fully visible in the yard...*  
*Abuela Maria usedta make us get up to clean and feed the animals*  
*Livin' in the Caribbean positively contributed to my inner strength*  
*As a wiser woman*  
*Seeking connectedness to Anu ancient Caribbean southern rhythms...*  
*Responsibilities...reciprocities....resolutions...*  
*...Que pasa con ella...Hay Dios Mio...*  
*At least to a point....Yo recuerdo...I remember... ”*

## 5 Closing

Caribbean women writers capture vibrant youthfulness of the diverse elements of every community and compose their work in an unapologetic fashion to serve as the voice of the people including those who remain mute on telling their story. The acceptance of performance art as spoken word amongst writers has increased in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially by most young authors. These differences and similarities create a dynamic host of themes for Caribbean women writers to compose poetic verse that teaches and shares the truth about the complex and simplex aspects of the social, political, economic and religious circles of relations amongst people of the Caribbean. Crossroads within education, commerce, trade, history and survival that have endured centuries of external influence and internal modifications continue to ensure the historic "kallaloo" or melting pot existence of our communities, nations and humanity. Caribbean women writers continue to share first-hand accounts of life experiences in poetic verse that are creative, informative, empowering, artistic, multi-faceted in engagement and multi-dimensional in presentation formats from spoken word, to choral and personal readings, to digital media, to live performance and beyond.

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# HETEROGLOSSIA: THE LANGUAGES OF POETRY, SONG AND DANCE

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Grace Nichols, a recognized Guyanese poet living in England, captures the timbres and cadences of natural Caribbean speech in her production of poetry, with a deft merging of the literate and musical imaginations. Nichols' *Sunris* (1996) is essentially a sensuous combination of poetry, song and dance and the (dis)orienting of poetry within these various "languages" draws attention to the distinctive features of Caribbean poetry, an intricate interweaving of Standard English, Creole and indigenous musical rhythms.

In "*Sunris*", Nichols' persona gives a masterful rendering of a particular rhetoric that once formed an important part of the Guyanese masquerade dance – a dance performed at Christmas and Mashramani (Guyanese carnival). During the masquerade, this speech was performed after the kettle drums and fife would have stopped for a while, at which point the "poet" would shout: "Christmas comes but once a year / And every man must have his share / Poor Willy in the jail / Drinkin' sour ginger beer, Band!" The band would then take over the performance and continue for a while with other sequences by the dancer who performed intricate dance steps while retrieving the money thrown on the ground for the dancer on stilts, the man with the bad cow, bam-bam Sally, long lady, the fife player, the drummers, and himself. At some other point in the masquerade play, the poet would make another entrance shouting: "Son-son, yuh mudda dead / look under de bed yuh gun see she head / look in the bowl yuh gun see she toe, Band!"

This mixture of poetry, song and dance, which often functioned as social commentary, is just what Nichols captures in "*Sunris*" and it is this very lively interplay of performers that Price and Price (1999) attest to in their study, entitled *Maroon Arts: Cultural Vitality in the African Diaspora*. Commenting on the nature of Maroon cultural events in Suriname, Price and Price confirm that, "Many kinds of Maroon cultural events exhibit a common diachronic structure characterized by repeated interruptions. An initial exposition is interrupted by another, which in turn may be interrupted by a third, with subsequent portions of each unfolding – often with further interruptions – throughout the performance" (p. 240). Such "interrupting and

overlaying [of] segments strung out in time” where drummers or singers enter at “staggered points of entry” and where “the pervasiveness of polyrhythms takes precedence” is evident in the performance Grace Nichols captures in her poem.

The paradigm identified by Price and Price is useful for interpreting Nichol’s *Sunris* where the basic interwoven controlling image is of speechmaking / poetry, overlaid with music and dance. This is to say that all performances may take place simultaneously or may be performed in turns and the progression is less ordinal than it is cyclical. Nichols’ poem evokes the simultaneous overlaying of performances and as such the recreated experience in writing communicates a whole new significance. This translates into rendering the spectacle on page, reducing the estrangement between “page” and “stage”.

Moving beyond the physical composition of masquerade / carnival, language becomes instructive and Nichols unleashes a complex process of masking and unmasking to illustrate the true nature of discourse. Using masks as metaphors, the speech-making profits from being acrimonious. The persona, addresses **Kanima** – the great spirit of the Amerindian people, **Papa Bois** – the guardian of the forest, **Mother Africa**, **Ogun** – god of war and father of metamorphosis, **Shango** – god of lightning and thunder, **Yemaja** – the ultimate symbol of motherhood, **Kali** – the Hindu goddess of destruction, creation and preservation, **Iris** – the Greek goddess of the rainbow and **Isis** – the Mistress of magic and speaker of spells. Giving a hearing to the contesting voices of the masked personalities, Nichols allows her persona her freedom, and upon accosting and questioning Montezuma the persona asks,

But O Montezuma,  
How could you deliver all the glory without a fight?”

The persona thus challenges Montezuma regarding his role in allowing the historical conquest and subjugation of Mesoamerican civilization. But Montezuma defends himself, saying:

Woman hush your mouth,  
Who among us would not have been beguiled?  
All the ominous omens and signs.

In this exchange, blame is assigned and accusation is followed by defense, while the protagonists challenge multiplex versions of truth. This lively interplay of the voices of various legendary figures, gives a hearing to contesting points of view and we recognize that there is “no longer an expression of the author’s truth, but an active creation of multiple truths in the consciousness of the author, the characters and the reader, in which all participate as equals” (Bakhtin, 1986: 234-237; 251-259).

Dialogic discourse determines the nature of these contested and heteroglossic truths, which are then expressed through the “plurality of consciousness.” In this way, Nichols’s interweaving of several voices in *Sunris* mirrors Bakhtin’s heteroglossic notion of a multi-voiced text.

Bakhtin, investigating how hybrid languages emerge, exposes the fallacy of one common unitary language reigning supreme. Instead, he recognizes two complementary forces responsible for the birth, growth and development of languages: centripetal forces that attempt to impose a “unitary language” and centrifugal forces that embody the heteroglossia of language. Bakhtin further argues that, “Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted process of decentralization and disunification go forward” (Rice and Waugh, 1992:199). Therefore, the perceived “unitary language” operates in the midst of “a sea of heteroglossia” and together they constitute the generative forces of linguistic life. Bakhtin’s model is premised on the natural law of motion which recognizes two corresponding movements produced by rotating cycles – the centrifugal or center-fleeing cohabitating with the centre-seeking and this model can be seen to reflect the polyrhythmic performance structure that Price and Price (1999) recognize. Bakhtin’s model removes the attention from the homogenizing principle and privileges heterogeneity.

At the level of linguistic analysis, Nichols is recognized as consciously integrating unitary language and heteroglossia, advancing the project of changing prejudiced positions concerning the privileged unitary language and the several varieties spoken by most Caribbean people most of the time. The hybridization that typifies such language practices is rendered when the persona jubilantly speaks for the collective group participating in the street dance. She says they are:

All carried by  
                     The-rise-and-fall  
                     The-rise-and-fall  
           The tranced unstoppable rhythm  
           And death mingling free  
           In his white wing-beats  
           We ain’t stopping  
 Till Ash Wednesday  
 Put a kick in we heels. (*Sunris*, 55).

A single speaker passes from one language to the other without consciously thinking though for the poet, such “code-sliding” may be intentional or unintentional. In the speaker’s consciousness, codes change automatically as the social discourse dictates.

With the writer however, new words such as “tranced” are coined and we witness the clash of the pure and hybrid. Artistic creativity takes over directing Nichols to craft a language where nouns and verbs go through unusual and remarkable inflections. The noun ‘trance’ is modified to accommodate the past tense marker ‘-ed’ allowing the new word formed to function as a participial adjective. While “Ain’t” is a Creole verb of negation, the entire expression “Put a kick in we heels” is an idiomatic saying frequently used in Caribbean speech communities. The fusion of Creole and English, the coexistence of the heteroglossia and the unitary language, illustrates how hybrid language structures unmask the true nature of language. Bakhtin advocates “[a] new mode developed for working creatively with language: the creating artist beg[ins] to look at language from the outside, with another’s eyes from the point of view of a potentially different language and style” (Bakhtin, 1981: 60).

Bakhtin, in his essay “The Dialogic Imagination” says, “What we are calling hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional mark, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two ‘languages’, two semantic and axiomatic belief systems. (Rice & Waugh, 1992: 205) There is therefore no boundary between the languages that intersect in the utterances of Nichols’ persona, who sings,

Hands Hands

Is all a matter of hands

Through the shaping and cutting

Through the stitching and the touching

Through the bright door of love

Come the splendour of hands.

*And is dih whole island*

*Awash in a deep seasound*

*Is hummingbird possession*

*Taking flight from dih ground.*

*Is blood beating*

*And spirit moving free*

*Is promiscuous wine*

*Is sanctity.*

From all appearances, this selection makes use of the official language but when read or performed, the differences of voices, the intentional or unintentional switch from one utterance to another takes place within the limits of a single clause and as in the case of the word ‘is’, the utterance frequently belongs to two “languages” that

intersect in a hybrid construction. Consequently, this word has two differing accents, two frames of reference. The ‘creating consciousness’ stands as it were astride languages. Numerous other coined terms such as “Sunris”, and “seasound” also exemplify hybrid constructions.

This concept of “heteroglossia”, as the title of this paper suggests, can be further expanded to accommodate the Caribbean woman writer’s fusion of the literate and musical imaginations. The italicized stanza in the previous excerpt, for all intents and purposes, functions as a refrain, and the contrapuntal organizing principle becomes most obvious since two or more melodies are overlaid on each other suggesting that the song may be delivered as “call and response”. The independent melodies may even be sung together with one entering the “round” at any point – moving in seemingly confused or challenging progressions or rotations and counter-rotations – but at the same time producing dynamic, different and syncopated echoes. The parts of the performance – whether linguistic, musical, or kinetic – undergo a transformation that produces something greater than the sum of its parts, something conceptually more profound than a single “melody”.

We then recognize that Nichols is aware of and negotiates positions between the language of poetry, the everyday spoken language, the language of song and the language of dance. The (dis)orienting of poetry among these various ‘languages’ produces certain distinctive features of Caribbean poetry and one recognizes that the fabric of Caribbean English is an intricate interweaving of standard English and Creole expertly combined with the musical rhythms of Calypso or Reggae. Nichols’ text may be recognized as polyphonic due to the fusion of the language of song and the language of poetry. Refusing to accept the confinement of “unitary language” the poetry of Nichols aspires to represent on the page the language that is heard, its repetitions, stutters, elisions, ellipses and its ‘sing-song’ features, all of which are features the spoken word “utterances” which are based as much on sound as it is on its song. Nichols says, “I want something different; something that sounds and looks different to the eye on the page and to the ear” (Cudjoe, 1990: 248). In Nichols’s poem the appearance of the lyrics on the page and the perceived change in rhythm again speaks of the contrapuntal changes. The persona now sings:

Pour rum  
Beat gong  
Steel drum

On fire

Rhythm sweet



Blood hot  
Don't stop

On fire

O hip roam  
Dance foam  
River comb

On fire

Jump higher  
Jump higher. (63)

In Kaiso the voice dips, deepens and almost imitates a scream as it crescendos to the words "On fire". To produce this kind of poetry, Nichols experiments with novel ways of keeping the rhythm of the song. The very appearance of the words on the page suggests rhythmic movement from side to side suggesting that music definitely has some influence on Nichols' writing. When asked about the appearance of features such as gaps, spaces and strokes in the written poem Nichols states that "When I write, I'm not conscious of what I'm going to do. Gaps and strokes might reflect something that is already in your [the writer's] head" (Milarch & Calabria 1997: 355). The creative imagination combines the reflexive art of poetry with the immediate art of music to produce lyrical ballads or rather soca-poetry, a distinctly Caribbean literary art form. This combination reaches out particularly to the people in the street who understand the everyday language and in this way literature is removed from the confines of the "noble" and returned to its common folk origins. As Chamberlin (1995: 237) observes, performance poetry speaks "to a wider community than the comparatively elite readership to which written texts are often confined". The representation of this language in the text produced by Nichols ironically causes the estranged elite readership to recognize Caribbean English.

Nichols' poem "*Sunris*" incorporates a range of discourses associated with ordinary people. The poetic performance, the song/calypso and the musical instrument that accompanies, the 'steel pan', all of which are often regarded as "products of a low class consciousness" (Nichols, 1996) are utilized and with this use, indigenously created art forms are produced and in time they overcome their restriction to marginal groups. Making reference to the irrepressible nature of the emergence of the steel-band as a musical instrument, Nichols' persona asks: "How hammer blows / Can make such sweet tones / From steel throat / Will always be / A mystery to me".

Nichols exploits the timbres and cadences of natural Caribbean speech to compose her soca-poetry. Nichols' *Sunris*, is a sensuous dance of language. The rhythm is infectious and while such performances are often denigrated as loud and raucous, while some critics may refuse to see steel-pan music as nothing but "noise", other

contemporary composers and critics have found that there really is no inherent difference between music and noise. So there is a renewed appreciation for the polyphonic, the contrapuntal where the discordant combinations are sometimes left unresolved.

This study began as a search for a model that truly interprets all that Nichols captures in *Sunris*, “the art of the folk-poet, musician, raconteur, dramatist, dancer and singer, all rolled into one” (*Sunris*, 4). Rejecting the linear and hierarchical models that privilege one at the expense of the other, we embrace more cyclical models. Even when we consider the paradigms that interpret the body movements of Caribbean dance, what we come up with is that of the “gyre” – that which speaks of gyrating, wineing, where the body instinctively makes circles to the left and circles to the right, circles in and circles out, circles spiraling up and down, like waves in a sea of heteroglossia.

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**CONTACT, CONTINUITY, CONVERGENCE, AND COMPLEXITY IN  
CARIBBEAN CULTURES**



# CREOLIZING DE CHRIST MAS: CREOLIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST KITTS CHRISTMAS SPORTS

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This paper will map the creolizing/re-creolizing of the St Kitts Christmas Sports, arguably the oldest performance festival in the Anglophone Caribbean. The Christmas Sports antedate carnival and belong to an older group of regional festivals such as *Dia de los Reyes* (Feast of the Kings) long established in the Hispanic Caribbean, which are some of the earliest examples of colonial era creolization, syncretism and transculturation in the Americas.

While carnival's roots are largely African and French Creole, the Sports are unique in their retentions from medieval English Mummers and Morality plays, featuring such lengthy dramatic pieces as St George and the Turk, David and Goliath and Giant Dispear. These were creolized along with the Big Drum musical accompaniment, with European bass and snare drum and military fife all driven by African rhythms. Similarly the Masquerade dance troupes draw on both African and European dance, ritual and costuming traditions, where European dances like the quadrille, waltz and jig are juxtaposed with artefacts of Yoruba ancestor and fertility worship.

Recently purely creole performances like The Bull and Hunter, shaped by these earlier forms and local circumstances are now undergoing regionalization and globalization, principally via the influence of Trinidadian carnival and global music culture, as part of the effort to commodify and market the festival, or elements extracted from it. In syncretic style the Sports are evolving as a locus of divergent histories, beliefs and cultures; a secular folk festival effectively creolizing the sacred Christian festival of Christmas, while elaborating upon much older New Year fertility rites.

Interest in Caribbean festival and performance arts, especially in the Anglophone sub region, has to date largely focused on Trinidad's 'Mother of all carnivals' and its French Creole heritage and associated art forms including calypso and steelpan. Trini Carnival only dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, introduced by an influx of French planters and their slaves fleeing the Antillean fallout of the French and Haitian

Revolutions. A case could be made that the most creative era of Trinidad's Carnival, often derogatively referred to as the *Jamette* Carnival, was relatively short-lived: from Emancipation in 1838, through to the suppression of African cultural expressions (the drum, masking, *Canboulay* procession) some 50 years later.

If we turn our attention north, to the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis, we find a festival with a much older history in the region and a connection to the Hispanophone Caribbean. As Kuss notes: "During slavery, Christmas through Epiphany was the time when colonial authorities would relax restrictions on traditional performances that otherwise were prohibited. In Havana, for instance, Epiphany was the holiday that viceroys and governors-general assigned for displays which, organized by *cabildos*, became emblematic representations of neighborhoods" (Cramer-Armony & Robinson, 2007: 390-391). In St Kitts, the Christmas Sports, which originated on the plantations during the era of Slavery, are both emblematic and syncretic. As Jacqueline Armony, who has devoted a long career to documenting, preserving and developing Kittitian cultural forms observes: "The traditional; masquerade performing arts of St Kitts and Nevis are a blend of African, European and Native American cultural expressions...the enslaved Africans and their descendants...used the occasion of Christmas to mimic, satirize and indeed criticize their oppressors through the media of drama, song, dance, music, mime and costume" (Armony, 2008).

So while there are emblematic European troupes like the Mummies, whose origins can be traced back to medieval English Mummers; the Clowns and Actors (thought to have been introduced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the French Governor Phillipe Loinville de Poincy), there are also the more obviously African derived troupes like the Moko Jumbies and the Masquerade . It is possible to view the processions of the various troupes from plantation to plantation and later village to village, through the filters of syncreticism and transculturation, and to see strong resonances of West African representational processions, with their multiple functions of preserving past events in collective memory, symbolically claiming farmland and invoking fertility.

Among the earliest settlers arriving in St Kitts, which was founded in 1623 as the first permanent English colony in the insular Caribbean, were people from rural East Anglia who would have been familiar with country performance and festival traditions originating in the Middle Ages. The Kittitian Mummies troupe are thought to be a creolized form of the medieval strolling English Mummers, who performed short dramas in rhyme, moving from house to house in their own village. Significantly the Mummers were associated with a pagan fertility festival, linking this European element with similar West African festival traditions. Medieval Mumming was also associated the period of Christian fasting from November 11 to January 6, which overlaps with the pre-sugar cane harvest festival season in St Kitts.

There may be even older English influences involved in the evolution of the Mummies, as some of their lengthy dramatic performances which dominated the Christmas Sports up to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have more in common with earlier Mystery plays and their liturgical content, than the much shorter Mummers folk dramas. A Mummies' performance of David and Goliath was documented in the May 1901 issue of *Wide World* magazine by the writer Dorothy Harding, who drew the parallel between this creolized performance and the Mystery play form. Another Christian inspired performance was *Giant Dispear* (Despair), based on John Bunyan's moral allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, which probably owes its provenance to 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelization activities. Secular pieces like the Shakespeare lesson with speeches from Richard III and Julius Caesar, have rhizomic parallels in the Speech bands of Tobago and Carriacou's Shakespeare Mas.

The English Mummers plays were first documented from the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century and *St George and the Turk*, well known in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, is still performed by Mummies in abbreviated form, with its characters The Captain or Fool, the dragon, and Saints George, Andrew and David. Another traditional drama, *The Bull*, is an excellent example of layered creolization and syncretism. In its current form *The Bull* play is supposedly based on events at the Belmont Estate during the 1920s. This relatively modern version may in fact have been grafted onto a much older African tradition, which also survives in the bull mas of Dominica and Antigua. The modern version recalls a ferocious stud bull belonging to the white estate owner Arthur Davis, which was stabbed whilst attempting to gore a herdsman. Only the timely intervention of a vet saves the bull's life. The names of the cast (apart from the estate owner): Dr Pick-Me-Heel, Sweetie, Oak, Sifter, Backanash the Dog and the Police Sergeant are reminiscent of Mummers characters, and Dr Pick-Me-Heel especially recalls the stock Mummers figure of the quack doctor who invariably effects a miracle cure of the hero. But if the form and characters of *The Bull* are partially European derived, the Hunter, or whip carried by the players is a cruel reminder of creolization and the plantation, as is the musical accompaniment of earlier days – tambourine, chopping reel, bar horn, triangle, shackpan and bamboo fife.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century Bull is now accompanied by the Big Drum ensemble, a quintessential example of creolization and Anansi-like syncretism evolving new forms. The colonial ban on African cultural expressions, specifically the drum, has resulted in a number of Creole innovations. In Trinidad this ban inspired the substitution of the tamboo bamboo bands and ultimately the invention of the steelpan; in Curaçao the outlawed Tambu drums, rhythms and dance resurfaced as Tumba, a form similar to calypso, while in Barbados, Antigua and St Kitts, the instruments of British military marching bands: the bass or Big Drum, the snare (rechristened the kettle in St Kitts) and the fife



have been appropriated to play accompaniment that is characterized by distinctly African rhythms.

Besides the Big Drum, the Christmas Sports are accompanied by String or Scratch bands, which emerged in the 1920s. Retaining the characteristic fife, the string band (which is found across the region in some form or other) augments its sound with guitars, cuatro, mandolin or banjo, triangle, guiro (scraper) and baha (long boom pipe). More recent troupes like the still popular Cowboys and Indians are now accompanied by string bands, although as Jackie Armony points out, in the not so distant past each troupe had its own specific accompaniment.

From a performance perspective, the defining aesthetics of the Christmas Sports are predominantly African: the costuming, dancing, singing and music. Some theorize that many elements of West African culture and performance arts were introduced by slaves who were casualties of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century wars in the Yoruba-speaking Oyo Empire. The most popular of the traditional Kittitian troupes, what is now known simply as The Masquerade, derive many elements of their costuming and dance from the Yoruban Orisha tradition. The distinctive peacock feather headdress and the mirrors sewn into their costumes are both symbolic conduits to the spirit world of the ancestors. Devotees of Shango the thunder god wear ceremonial red, and the tomahawk dating from the days when the troupe was known as Wild Indians, may well have multiple antecedents: as the real weapon of the North American Indian and the symbolic thunderaxe of Shango.

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The postmodern Masquerade is a fascinating study in the fluid process of creolization, as demonstrated by Caribbean cultural analysts and theorists from Fernando Ortiz to Edouard Glissant to Antonio Benitez-Rojo. The dance sequence performed by the Masquerade incorporates Yoruban fertility and ancestor dances along with creolized versions of European dances that have spawned an endless variety of regional popular song and dance forms, such as the quadrille, the waltz, and the jig, which probably came from the French *gigue* rather than the English jig. In many ways watching and listening and inevitably dancing to The Masquerade is to experience a kinetic kaleidoscope of belief systems, histories, time frames, dramatic conflicts, and costume traditions, all held tenuously together by the trance inducing rhythms of the Big Drum ensemble. It seems no coincidence that some of the steps and shapes produced are echoed in some of the dances of Haiti's Vodou ceremonies, where possession is a central factor.

After a fairly sedate quadrille, which has cousins from Cuba down to Curaçao, the dancers then pair off for the fine, dancing on one foot before the exuberance of the Wild Mas, which whirls dancers and audience alike out of a European mode into full African format, with call and response and dancers pushing back the audience while they form a circle, into which the audience throws coins. As the tempo is increased the

dancers grab their tomahawks and lower themselves into the limbo position to collect the coins, rise, touch headdresses as one and throw their weapons skyward. The limbo position has both African and Creole connotations, symbolizing resistance to slavery, where one is downpressed but remains on one's feet. The three remaining dances, the jig, the boillola and the waltz neatly encapsulate the Creole experience. Both the jig and boillola involve Afro-Creole movement patterns and feature virtuoso acrobatic dancing with the right foot hooked behind the left calf. Separating these two dances is the waltz, with its swaying satire of European etiquette, before the boillola climaxes with the offering of the dancers' bodies, leaning backward, hands raised to the sky.

The Masquerade along with the Mock or Moko Jumbie both reference African performance traditions, especially the trope of Moko as community protector and provide a thread of continuity which has thankfully endured the threats and pressures from nationalism, cultural engineering, competition-from Trinidad carnival forms, globalization and mass culture music. Like the traditional mas characters in Trinidad's carnival which have been exiled to the periphery of a postmodern festival whose costumes are now supplied ready made from China and which has become a multi-million dollar global business, the Christmas Sports have been under threat. With the introduction of Trinidadian calypso, which replaced the older island form of kwelbe, along with the steelpan and the establishment of the National Carnival in 1971, it has only been through the efforts of conservationists like the Zack Nisbett and the Armonys, and through initiatives like the Okolo Tregremantine Arts Theatre that the Sports have survived.

The Sports, like Trinidad's Jamette carnival, have always been performed by a dispossessed black underclass, performing mostly for free. In the 1970s an emerging black intelligentsia and bourgeoisie in typical Fanon fashion, would have preferred to be done with the Sports and the supposed shame that attached to them. Creole Roots culture is however tenacious and although much has been lost, the Sports still inform St Kitts Carnival and Christmas celebrations, effectively creolizing this Christian festival with syncretisms, which provide a possible locus for developing new cultural rhizomes and rhythms. The postmodern St Kitts Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, with mass in the cathedral but some of the congregation will exit to join a Trini style all-inclusive jouvert band, celebrating both newer and older traditions with their dancing. While electric music dominates the road, The Masquerade performs at hotels and on occasion throughout the year for cruise ship passengers. But it is the distinct energy of The Masquerade which is indelibly inscribed in the rhythms which inspire jump up bands like Nu Vybes and Small Axe, which is emblematic of St Kitts' unique contribution to world culture.

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# UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY THROUGH THE LYRICAL LENS OF THE CARNIVAL MUSICS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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## 1 Introduction

Being multi-ethnic in nature, Trinidad and Tobago produces a vast array of musical genres which each ethnic group in its diverse population attempts to reach and hold on to in an effort to identify with a specific part of their Trinbagonian-ness. Yet with the merging of the various cultures the multiplicity of sound that is produced reveals a combining of the local with the global. Calypso music together with derivatives of Soca such as Groovy Soca, Chutney Soca, Ragga Soca, and Parang Soca all utilise sound, beat and tone from musics originally external to the Trinbagonian space. Groovy Soca has borrowed from American Rhythm and Blues, Chutney Soca incorporates elements derived from East Indian music, Ragga Soca is characterized by Jamaican dancehall influences, while Parang soca resembles Spanish, Brazilian and Puerto Rican-styled music because it has roots in Trinidad's Hispanic heritage that originated over 400 years ago during Spanish rule via Venezuela.

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Trinidad and Tobago is a twin-island economy whose music displays the characteristics of aesthetic cosmopolitanism in the production of its musics. According to a number of theorists, such as Szerszynski & Urry (2002), Beck (2000); Cheah & Robbins (1998), Hannerz (1990; 2004), Vertovec & Cohen (2002), and Tomlinson (1999), aesthetic cosmopolitanism reflects a taste for art, culture and music of other nations and other groups external to one's own and for the wider shores of cultural experience. As such, Trinidadian and Tobagonian music possesses components of a global sound which contains stylistic traces and influences from both the external and local space. The incorporation of these influences thus naturalises elements of "otherness" into the current sense of national uniqueness.

This work seeks to examine some of the Carnival Musics of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), such as Calypso, Soca, Groovy Soca, and Chutney Soca in order to shed some light on aspects of T&T identity. In the process, some examples of the lyrics of these

Carnival Musics are utilized to un-pack some aspects of the global yet indigenous cultures of Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the last decade or so, some important edited collections have appeared, focused on issues of music, place and identity. Stokes (1994) examines the significance of music in the construction of identities and ethnicities and the ways in which these issues relate to those of place. Connell and Gibson (2003) explore the links of place, popular music, meaning, and identities over a range of spatial scales – local, national and global – and in a variety of musical genres and styles. Musical genres are created by, produced by, arranged by and listened to by individuals, groups and nations who are responsive to a beat, a sound, or a nuance in the music which speaks to them at a deeper than surface level and which resonates with their sense of identity.

Given the multi-ethnic nature of Trinidad and Tobago, musical hybridisation, fusion and the mixing of various musical traditions are to be expected. Theorists like Connell and Gibson (2003) assert that fusion music leads to an un-authentic sound not indigenous to the locale but representative of a sort of “world music” which renders impossible the tracing of authenticity. Refuting this view, Hudson (2006) contends that these processes create new identities that fuse local and global, traditional and modern, while at the same time de-territorializing culture through the construction and contestation of discourses of otherness and place. Soca music in Trinidad and Tobago exemplifies what Hudson is talking about here, through its Groovy, Chutney, Ragga, and Parang permutations. Part of the essence of being a Trinbagonian is a pluri-identified understanding of self. Miscegenation and inter-racial relations have allowed for the “blurring” of race distinctions and also the “blurring” of the sound and beat of the music emanating out of these islands. This fusion of sound takes on its own authenticity and identity by way of this blending of local, regional, national and global musical traditions.

## 2 Calypso

Calypso (colloquially known as *Kaiso*) music has had a long history dating back at least to the mid 1800s and as such has enjoyed critical importance of place and space to become representative of national, social and political realities within the Trinbagonian music landscape. Calypso has been historically performed and heard mostly during the Carnival Season which is the week directly before the Catholic Lenten Season commences. Most of the performances take place in Calypso tents, culminating in the final competition on the Sunday night before Carnival (known as *Dimanche Gras* or Big Sunday) which heralds the end of another successful Calypso Season with the crowning of the Merry Monarch. Traditionally, the lyrics of a

Calypso would consist of three or four verses and a chorus, all focused on the social, political and economic realities of the day.

One of the effects of the growing importance of the petroleum refining industry in Trinidad towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the influx of migrants from adjoining West Indian territories and their increasing involvement in Calypso music. The Calypso art form thus became a melding pot of local folk tunes from the islands. In addition to such a strong history of collaborative styles, Calypso went through yet another transformation as the presence of American sailors and other military personnel at the US base in Trinidad during World War II established a loyal audience for calypso music beyond the Caribbean, and also affected the speed and tenor of the songs sung for tourists, and the use of *double entendre* in the lyrics to effectively mask political and social satire.

Calypso music's rich tradition of witty lyrical content and vibrant and controversial commentary on local society has lent itself to the emergence of specific identities assumed both by Calypso artists and their audiences. The Calypsonian has always been the leading voice of a popular force for "checks and balances" whose purpose it is to keep the government, opposition and the entire society under critical scrutiny. For this reason, Calypso music has become the mirror of national social and political realities. Calypso has thus garnered a mass following of individuals who appreciate this function of checks and balances played by the lyrics of the songs, and who therefore see Calypso as an expression of their national pride and love for country. People who identify with this music are often those who are avid supporters of change and publically vocalise their views on radio talk shows, on public television programs and in the print media. Trinidadians and Tobagonians cherish their rights to freedom of speech and fully exercise these rights. Calypso music is in many ways the ultimate expression of their power as a lobbying group for popular causes and concerns.

In the following lyrics from Kurt Allen's song 'Last Badjohn of Calypso' the singer is alluding to days gone by when the personality of the Calypsonian coincided with that of the 'Badjohn' a local archetype of a bully with a sharp-tongue who can hold his own in any fist fight.

*In Kaiso so long ago ...*

*In dem days de kaiso would attract drunkards and ghetto rats*

*Ah dash of Chinese, Some middle class*

*Ah whole heap of jagga-bats,*

*In dem days de Calypsonian he carried a bad-john reputation*

*A gentleman in disguise*

*But his razor sharper than any knife*

Chorus

*We eh have no badjohns again  
Kaiso have no bad-johns again  
Since we put down de bottle of rum for champagne  
Kaiso have no bad-johns again  
Since we get caught up with political campaigns  
No badjohns again*

In this next excerpt from the song entitled 'We Fed Up', Brian London is addressing the political situation in Trinidad and Tobago in 2011. It represents an appeal to the current government by the Calypsonian, acting as the voice of the people. The Calypsonian is telling those in power to deal with the issues that matter, and to stop their shenanigans concerning peripheral issues that mean nothing to the people.

*Driver people singing de blues  
Dem ting eh making de front page news  
Is time yuh listen to the people's views  
Get up and deal with the real issues*

Chorus

*We fed up of the SIA, SIA, SIA, SIA  
While poor people suffering, suffering, suffering everyday  
We fed up hearing about the Piano, Piano, Piano, Piano  
While poor people struggling, struggling, struggling, struggling in de ghetto*

### 3 Soca

Calypso is mostly associated with politically engaged lyrics, a slow repetitive beat, and a continuous, steady tempo. During the past two decades, Calypso seems to have been losing its monopoly on Carnival music and music for the masses in favour of Soca, with its high tempo music and lighter lyrics designed to create and foster wild abandon and pure pleasure among listeners and dancers.

Soca can be considered to be a melding of Calypso and East Indian forms that emerged during the oil boom period of the 1970s and which is often 'credited' to Calypsonian Lord Shorty. But the origins of Soca cannot be attributed to a single artist, nor can this music be categorized as simply Afro-East Indian. Instead, Soca resulted from the cross-fertilisation of the multiple variants of indigenous and fusion music extant in the 1970s in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region coupled with the influences of a number of composers, arrangers and musicians such as Ed Watson, Kitchener, Leston Paul, Pelham Goddard, Joey Lewis, Byron Lee, the Dragonaires of Jamaica, Arrow of Montserrat, and Lyle Taitt, a Trinidadian who

migrated to Jamaica and who influenced and was influenced by various new and emerging beats, including mento, ska and rock steady. Regis (1999) observes that when one listens to Soca music the dominant sound that one hears is a combination of Indian rhythms and a sped-up mix of Calypso music. In this way, Soca represents a set of typically Trinidadian identities, which are simultaneously both African and Indian, neither African nor Indian, and more than African and Indian, that merge and celebrate local and global features.

In recent times, the music of artists like JW and Blaze together with Destra Garcia and Machel Montano reflect a different kind of understanding of national identity. Most of their content is reflective of 'jam and wine' lyrics coupled with directives on varying ways of 'enjoying Carnival', the national festival. This gives rise to a number of questions:

Does this content represent the new lifestyle of Trinidadians since almost all Soca songs have this theme?

Is it an understood sub-text that this is only 'advice' for the season as to how to enjoy oneself as a Trini?

Do the lyrics take into consideration the fact that a large part of the populace does not become involved in Carnival nor do they even contemplate 'wild abandon' as a way of life for any time of year? And if this is so, this seemingly 'national festival' with its attendant all encompassing appeal may only speak to the 'nation' of those who understand its rules and socially exclude those who do not subscribe to its norms and values. Does Soca Music then reveal the presence and primacy of one 'nation' or group over the other? And if so, which one?

The main themes in Soca are wine and jam, total abandon, party fuh so, endless fun, non-stop action, frenetic pace, and bacchanal, as illustrated by these lyrics from Faye-Ann Lyons' song 'Consider It Done':

*This cyah be good, nobody jumping  
No hands eh waving, de party stand still  
Ah in the mood to create something, achieving something  
Yuh done know when yuh see de waist dem moving  
When yuh see the hands dem waving, de party jumping,  
Everybody misbehaving, Ah reach, Ah reach*

Chorus

*Ay, Ay, Alright, Alright*

*What they want, They want mih to*

*Mash up, mash up, mash up anything, everything, anything*

*Consider It Done*



Destra Garcia and Machel Montano are commonly known as the Queen and King of Soca Music in Trinidad and Tobago. In the following lyrics of their song entitled 'It's Carnival', the essence of and the passion for Carnival is described.

*Yeah, baby you know how we do  
You, me  
You tell your friends  
I'll tell mine  
It's dat time again*

*Carnival in T and T  
Is so special to all ah we  
Like we need blood in we vein  
Dats how we feel about Port-of-Spain  
When de posse dem come in town  
Beating pan and ah bongo drum  
Is madness everywhere  
Carnival is ah true freedom  
Make ah noise or ah joyful sound  
And jump up in de air  
So...*

#### Chorus

*Everybody take ah jump, take ah jump, take ah jump up now  
Start to wave, start to wave, start to wave up now  
Start to wine, start to wine, start to wine up now  
Because, it's Carnival*

#### 4 Groovy Soca

Less than a decade old, Groovy Soca has proved to be an effective means of propelling Soca music forward internationally. At around 115 beats per minute, it is much slower than original Soca and allows for a wider range of topics to be addressed. Unlike the total frenzy that is usually associated with Soca, Groovy Soca is music to sway and dance slowly to. Artists like Benjai, Farmer Nappy and Kes have demonstrated that this type of music is very palatable to mainstream music markets, with hits like "Trini", "Flirt" and "Wotless".

In the excerpt from the song entitled 'Trini' below, the Benjai attempts to capture national pride in Groovy beat! A different sentiment is being championed here from

the ‘national’ one that typifies Calypso lyrics. However, the sense of national identity is high on the agenda in both Calypso and Soca music and all its derivatives

*Ah partying till it rain nah, nah, nah*  
*Ah dressing in up in mih Red, White and Black*  
*I doh care what nobody say*  
*Every Carnival ah done dey*  
*Dem say ah mad and ah bad, ah telling yuh*  
*Whey yuh from, ah from Trinidad and Tobago*  
*Ah is a Trini, Ah Trini*  
*Talk out Trini*

Chorus

*Cause they love how Trini does look, look, look*  
*They love how Trini does cook, cook, cook,*  
*They love to hear Trini talk, talk, talk*  
*And they love Trini woman wuk, wuk, wuk*  
*And we make good company, and we make good company*  
*We does represent for we Soca....*

## **5 Chutney Soca**

Original Soca has fused with the much more self-consciously Indian Chutney music to constitute Chutney Soca, which exploded onto the Carnival Scene in 1996. Sometimes called an Indian form of Calypso, Chutney Soca followed on the heels of pitchakaree, which emerged in 1990, and is associated with the important springtime Phagwa festival. Prior to the establishment of Radio Masala, the first all-Indian national radio station in 1994, Indian music was often relegated to the occasional time slot for “ethnic music” on T&T radio stations and the lyrics were in Hindi only. However, as the popularity of Indian music has grown, it has become a more participatory type of music, and English phrases have been mixed in to create a hybrid Chutney music. Sundar Popo is credited with introducing Chutney music to wider local audiences while Drupatee Ramgoonai is credited with performing the first ever Chutney Soca song in 1987. Recent popular artists who perform within this genre are Triveni, Rikki Jai, Hunter and Dil E Nadan.

Chutney refers to music that is as hot as chutney sauce, with a set of distinctive melodic structures in combination with a fast, ‘hot’ tempo inciting dancers to break away, with lyrics of wild abandon similar to those found in original Soca. This begs the question, was the eventual melding of Chutney with Soca due to the similarity between the two, or was there a deeper national or ethnic significance to their merger?

According to Mungal Patasar a prolific player of classical Indian sitar music, the arrival of Chutney and its fusion with Soca was inevitable as Trinidadians have always sought ways to improve Afro-Indian integration. To East Indians, he says what has occurred is the authentication of their group as a nation, and I add, within a nation. Alternatively other scholars have argued that East Indians have sought to use the traditional music of their ethnic group to leverage more recognition and power in the national sphere in terms of the presence of a music that meets the needs of their community.

The main themes in Chutney Soca are: alcohol abuse; the use of alcohol to boost sexual prowess; the assertion of masculinity; changes in cultural norms (such as the disappearance of the dowry) and the domination of Indian women by their husbands and fathers. The following excerpt from the 2011 Chutney Soca Monarch Rikki Jai's song entitled "White Oak and Water" is an example of the 'wine and woman' theme that has become one of the trademarks of Chutney Soca music.

*Barman, ah want something white and smooth*

*When I see de guyl, I bazodee*

*When I see she waist, I bazodee*

*When she walk my way, I tootoolbey*

*When she smile with me, right away, right away*

*Ah see she*

*Ah like she*

*Ah wanted to get married*

*She father he tell me Rikki*

*I doh have money, for the dhourie*

*White Oak and Water, White Oak and Water*

*Is all I have to offer*

*If yuh want mih daughter*

The 2010 Chutney Soca Monarch Ravi B gives voice to other themes that predominate in Chutney Soca, in the following lyrics from his song entitled 'Ah Drinka':

*Every time I liming*

*Cell phone only ringing*

*Mih pardoners laughing*

*They know is you who calling  
Saying that yuh miss me  
And to come home early  
Come leh we hug up and watch ah Indian movie  
Why yuh trying to change mih  
Gyul you too blind to see  
Yuh always know I was ah Drinka...*

*Chorus  
Yuh cyah change mih,  
No way  
Gyul yuh know I was a Drinka  
Yuh always know I was a Drinka, Yuh always know I was a Drinka  
Yuh only telling mih  
What I should do or say? What I should do or say?  
Just how yuh mudda have yuh fadda  
Girl yuh know I was ah Drinka*

## **6 Conclusion**

The songs presented in this piece reflect Globalisation and Localisation at work simultaneously, something Robertson (1995) calls glocalisation. Locally, musical themes reflect the identities of the various populations within Trinidad and Tobago. Groovy soca exemplifies both in beat and lyrics the laid back groove of a people committed to national pride in simply being 'Trini'. The East Indians and their Chutney Soca beat and lyrics reflect patterns of behaviour specific to their group and their conjugal life. While Soca's lyrics of wild abandon evoke the carnivalesque spirit of Trinbagonians which reaches its peak during the Carnival Season, Calypso still retains a significant presence during the Carnival Season as well and still attracts a more socially conscious following. Globally, sounds and beat take on international identities, with Calypso giving expression to African rhythms, Soca fusing of music from both Africa and India, Groovy Soca incorporating the R&B tradition which has its roots in American pop culture, and Chutney Soca remixing East Indian and soca rhythms.

The genesis and genius of the multiple identities of the Trinbagonian are demonstrated through the lyrics, sounds and beats of their musics. In this musically expressive culture, traditional music has been hybridised and re-hybridized with global sounds to develop an authentic, integrated, yet open set of ethno-national styles which give expression to an authentic, integrated, yet open set of national and supra-national identities.

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# THE CHANGING FACE OF LABOR AND LAND IN ST. CROIX 1908-1917<sup>1</sup>

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## 1 Introduction

In a number of ways, the years 1908-1917 were most important ones to what is today the U.S. Virgin Islands, but which was then known as the Danish West Indies. After the failure of the sale of the islands to the US in 1902, the Danish government established a commission to study the infrastructure of the islands. The goal was to make the territory self-sufficient and less dependent on the Danish metropolitan coffers. To boost the economy, a number of projects were instituted and financed with Danish capital.

At the same time, there was another type of transformation afoot, in which social relationships changed between the different classes of people: employer/employee, child/parent, and public official/ordinary citizen. Some of these relationships took a 180 degree turn from those that predominated in former times. In Denmark, such radical changes in thinking were part of the new movement headed by the labor-led Socialist Party. Danish workers on large estates were not content with their wages and working conditions, and they used the strategy of the general strike as a weapon for change. Improvements in workers' conditions and general suffrage in Denmark were written about in the metropolitan newspapers, and this news was reprinted in colonial newspapers, encouraging these ideas to be discussed by educated people in the islands through the Mutual Improvement Society. This study pieces together a view of life in the rural areas of St. Croix during these crucial years through the use of newspaper accounts corroborated by census figures. From these, changes in rural life can be traced and hypotheses can be formulated and tested about laborers' desire for and achievement of upward mobility.

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## 2 Changes in the sugar industry

Established in 1876, the St. Croix Central Factory at Estate Richmond, located just on the outskirts of Christiansted, was the first industrial complex of its kind formed on the island as a central factory for the grinding of cane from the surrounding estates in the area. It freed each estate from having its own steam- grinding machinery. Besides the estates in the vicinity, Richmond received the sugar cane juice from a pumping station in Estate Peter's Rest, which delivered the cane juice in underground pipes to the factory some 8 miles away.

In 1911, among the 27 residents on the Richmond estate, were a Danish manager, 5 field laborers, 3 factory laborers, and 1 blacksmith. The laborers and the blacksmith were born in St. Croix, and as such will be referred to as Crucians here.<sup>2</sup> Six years later, in the 1917 Census, resident on the estate grounds were an engineer and a chemist, both from Denmark. There were also 10 laborers, two of whom worked in the factory and 8 whom who worked on the company's stock farm.<sup>3</sup> As Richmond was located so close to town, most of the mid-management workers and laborers lived in Christiansted and walked to and from the factory.

The St. Croix Central Factory influenced the nature of labor on the island in two significant ways. First-class field laborers at Richmond were earning 35 cents per day, while first class laborers on private estates were earning 20 cents per day. In addition to receiving low wages, the latter were made to sign contracts instituted under the 1852 Labor Law, which required that field laborers and their families be bound to a particular estate for a full year. Laborers could only change their place of employment on Contract Day, which fell on October 1 each year. After having seen the Richmond workers reap the benefits of the new factory system with higher wages, and with no contractual residency restrictions, private workers demanded pay raises and more liberal working conditions. As a result of the massive rebellion that occurred Oct 1, 1878 the workers' achieved their demands and the contract system was abolished. This rebellion has come to be known as 'The Fireburn', given the number of estates that were burned to the ground during the unrest.

As the creation of central factories became more systematic and widespread with the underwriting of capital expenses by joint stock companies in Copenhagen, the management of the factories changed. In 1906 Danish engineer G.A.Hagemann, who had been working at the St. Croix Central Factory since 1880 and had been a successful engineer in his native Copenhagen purchased the La Grange Factory on the

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<sup>2</sup> St. Croix Landmarks Society (SCLS); Virgin Islands Social History Associates (VISHA); St. Croix Population Database. 1911 Census (a database with the 1841-1911 censuses of St. Croix).

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com 1920 US Federal census, actually taken by the Danes in 1917 before the Transfer of the islands.

outskirts of Frederiksted. Shortly after the purchase, he modernized the factory and the machinery. Additionally, he purchased the surrounding estates of Prosperity and Jolly Hill and annexed them to La Grange. On all the estates that he owned, he experimented with different breeds of sugar plantings and cotton seeds and built three ginneries. Hagemann appointed Crucians to the middle management positions of overseer, engine boiler, manager and engineer. At Jolly Hill, the administrator was a Dane. At Prosperity, both the positions of administrator and overseer were held by Danes; however, the manager was B.H. Browne, 42, and the sugar boiler was his son, Frank Heyliger Browne, 21, both Crucians.

In 1901, an interesting phenomenon occurred. The census records for that year show that G. Hagemann had rented land to a John Henry, 33, who served as shopkeeper for the estate. John Henry divided and sublet parcels of that land to five families. In the 1911 Census, John Henry is not listed as a resident at La Grange, but instead as a shopkeeper in Frederiksted town. The parcels of land, once managed by him, were now being rented out by G.A. Hagemann himself to four families. At this same time, a portion of Estate Jolly Hill, owned by Hagemann, had also been divided into parcels and four families were renting land there. The occupations of the renters at these two sites are listed as laborer, washer, mason, etc. This may indicate that they were laborers in the factory and at the same time working their own land.

John Henry's story highlights the important role of the estate shop keeper at the time. The small, country shopkeeper purchased his staple goods from urban merchants who expected the estate workers to come into town to make their purchases during their free time on Saturday afternoon. When town shops customarily closed on Thursday afternoons, the estate shops were the only place workers could get their groceries. The estate shop keeper had dealings with all of the residents on the estate, including the members of the planter's and administrator's families. He increased his business with all estate residents by allowing them to buy items on credit. By 1901 John Henry had built up a clientele for his shop on Estate La Grange. His move to town by 1917, signals the end of this close relationship with Hagemann, who took his place as landlord for the parcels, and shows that there was money to be made both as shopkeeper and landlord, servicing better paid laborers in the changing economy on the island.

In 1917, there were 88 laborers on La Grange, under the direction of the Danish- born factory director. Crucians, however, served in middle management, including the manager, the overseer and the engineer. There were three African descended Crucian engineering assistants as well. G.A. Hagemann and later his son, C.G.A. Hagemann, having been resident on the island for over twenty years, seem to have felt confident in hiring local men to mid- and upper-level managerial positions.

On the entire complex of Hagemann estates, women worked as field laborers, washer women, and domestics. Three women, however, were employed to serve as sicknurses. A look back at previous censuses probably would show they were originally affiliated with the estate as laborers. Over the course of time, these women may have displayed their skills in tending to the sick and birthing babies and began to serve officially in this capacity.

Since the founding of Danish St. Croix in 1733, Bethlehem Estate had been designated as one of the King's properties and had become an important estate because it lies on a flat plain in a locale that enjoys more precipitation than many other areas of the island. In 1904, the estate was purchased by Karl Lachmann, a Swedish sugar beet grower, along with the lands of other estates. Lachmann had operated sugar beet factories in southern Sweden and Denmark and subsequently used the same Austrian grinding equipment that he had used in Europe in his St. Croix operation. At Bethlehem, he modernized the factory and started the business as Den Dansk Vestindien Sukkerfabrik. Lachmann, new to the island and tropical agriculture, prided himself on efficiency and envisioned success for his company in the West Indies. To meet his goal, he transferred many of his upper level management employees from his Scandinavian factories to St. Croix.<sup>4</sup> The estate was incorporated as a joint stock company in which the stock holders were businessmen in Copenhagen. With the acquisition of additional estates, the entire landholding for the company was 13,000-15,000 acres.<sup>5</sup> Bethlehem processed the juice from the sugar harvested from these estates.

In 1911, Lower Bethlehem, New Works, an estate consolidated with Bethlehem Estate, had its own European supervisors. The director, the chief engineer, engineer, sugar boiler, bookkeeper, and shop keeper were from Sweden. The Technical Supervisor was from Bohemia. Working under these supervisors were the estate manager and the overseer, both from St. Croix. At this same time Bethlehem had nine mechanics and one machinist. Pictures of the interior of the factory show that there were a number of small supplementary compressors, pumps, and other fuel- driven machines. These men most likely were in charge of the operation of these machines, which assisted the sugar processing operations.

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<sup>4</sup> Oral history given by Bengt Lachmann, the grandson of Karl Lachmann, taken by Carol Wakefield of the SCLS Library. Contained in the Vertical File "Bethlehem".

<sup>5</sup> VISHA. The West Indian Sugar Company consisted of a number of surrounding estates. In King's Quarter: Fredensburg with 123 workers; Hope, 75; and Lower Bethlehem, 423. In Prince's Quarter: Jealousy, 134; and Plessen, 103.

The 1917 Census shows that the company employed 170 farm workers (a Scandinavian term for field workers/cane cutters), and 66 male factory workers. Supporting the machine operations were a handful of artisans, including blacksmiths, masons, and carpenters. Additionally, there were 86 listed residents on the factory grounds with no occupation (mostly children and the elderly).

Holding the major positions were the director, manager, factory chemist, engineer, bookkeeper, shopkeeper, and office clerk, all from Scandinavia. Working with the engineer were four assistant engineers, all born in St. Croix, one of European descent, two of African descent, and one mulatto. The 1901 Census shows that sixteen years before two of these assistants had been working at the St. Croix Central Factory in Estate Richmond.<sup>6</sup> Both were enumerated then as assistant engineers. Did they feel that they would have more opportunity to move up the career ladder in the new company? There was also one office clerk mostly likely working directly under the supervision of the Danish office clerk, and an engine driver in the factory. Both were born on St. Croix and were mulattoes. One of the sugar boilers was Crucian and the other was Surinamese. Other Crucians included an overseer, a steam service engineer, and an electrician.<sup>7</sup>

Four women are listed on the mid-management payroll: three worked as sicknurses (two African descended and one mulatto) and one (African descended) served as a shopkeeper. Her shop most likely was a small informal part of her home as the company's main shop was run by a Scandinavian. Perhaps she allowed purchases on time; while the company shop deducted purchases from wages? The factory was a self-sufficient community with workers' homes erected on the property. All of the above mentioned workers are listed in the census as living on one of the company's properties. Besides small convenience shops for the workers, leisure-time facilities which were created for after- work hours. Everyone on the island seems to have had a relative who worked at Bethlehem.

While the Danes held most of the supervisory positions, and the mulattos held many of the mid-management positions, there was room for young Crucian men of African descent to become mechanics, machinists and assistant engineers in these central factories. Young boys were apprenticed to the shops at an early age, especially the lathe shop which created parts for the machinery.<sup>8</sup> The apprentice program provided young men with a skill from which they could earn a living, as formal schooling beyond age 13 was limited.

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<sup>6</sup> VISHA. 1901 Census.

<sup>7</sup> SCLS. Ancestry.com. US Census 1920.

<sup>8</sup> Rezende & Walbom (2009: 39). Photograph of the machine shop at Bethlehem, 1913.

The three central factories at Richmond, La Grange, and Bethlehem processed almost 90 per cent of the total sugar produced in St. Croix. All three operations were joint stock ventures, which exported muscavado sugar, molasses, and rum to both New York and Copenhagen. In Europe, these products were sold in Denmark itself or re-exported to the Baltic nations. In 1912, Denmark had had its best export year. The country earned 9 million *krone* from its exports of this commodity alone, amid reports that there was no need to import sugar from other tropical areas, because the country's consumption of sugar could be satisfied by the factories on St. Croix.<sup>9</sup>

Dividends from these factories were not paid to stockholders every year because of fluctuating climatic conditions that affected the crop. In general, to ensure maximal returns on their investments, stock holders demanded that not only the supervisory employees of the factories, but also the bookkeepers and the head clerks be Danes. Crucians were restricted from handling money.

Even though more varied opportunities for workers were opening up, Crucians were migrating in ever greater numbers from the countryside to the towns, St. Thomas and New York. The need for replacement labor is seen in the importation of field workers, beginning shortly after the Emancipation of the enslaved in 1848. By 1917, approximately 15 per cent of the field laborers at Bethlehem were immigrants from St. Kitts, Barbados, and Nevis.

### 3 Changes in land distribution

Up until 1892, the majority of the land on St. Croix was owned by 25 planters. It was not until then that reforms in land distribution were initiated. Land that had been tied up in bankruptcy was taken by the government and re-distributed to experienced field laborers. This system, which became known as parceling, put individual ownership of land in the hands of the local farmers (known as parcelists). Under this scheme, parcelists were to plant sugar on five or more acre- plots in Estates Humbug, Work and Rest, and Catherine's Rest.

To be successful in this endeavor, the entire family had to work the land. Sugar cane was planted right up the front door of the house to get the most from the limited acreage.<sup>10</sup> These small holders had agreements with the nearest central factory for the grinding of their cane. Besides planting sugar as a cash crop, the family grew provisions and food for their own consumption.

For example, the Blyden family considered themselves fortunate to own some land. In order to keep their acreage, they had to have experience in growing cane and had to have an outlay of money for the construction of their home and the implements they

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<sup>9</sup> University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) library, (microfilm) *St. Croix Avis* Jan 31, 1914.

<sup>10</sup> Rezende & Walbom (2009: 114-116). Pictures of Blyden as a parcellist.

used. They had a few scrawny horses, which they hitched up to a plow in order to break the clods of earth. Their hand-made mahogany furniture, crafted by the island's joiners, made their interior of their home comfortable.

While parcelists were chosen by the government for land ownership under a lottery system, another group, the squatters, acquired land through their own initiative. The term 'squatter' in the Danish West Indies did not apply to someone who illegally lived on or farmed the land. Experienced farmers who had negotiated with the planter for use of the land, either through renting or through a share holder or share cropping type of arrangement, listed their occupation in the 1911 census as "squatter" or "renter of land". Like parcelists, squatters had to grind their cane at the nearest central factory. In 1911, there were 117 squatters throughout the island. They were not only resident in the countryside, since there were 22 Frederiksted town residents and 24 Christiansted town residents who listed their occupation as "squatter."

Both squatters and parcelists had to pay an annual tax assessed on their property, and if their obligation was not met, their land was seized and auctioned off by the government.

#### **4 Life in the countryside vs. life in town**

What were the alternatives for young men in the country areas of St. Croix? To escape from the drudgery of field labor and to earn better wages, men who resided in estates bordering urban areas walked into town everyday with the hopes of being hired as porters or other day laborers. They were often hired to carry goods from the wharf to the warehouses. In the St. Thomas harbor area, they would have been known as stevedores, and their salary was published in the newspaper as being 20 to 40 cents per hour as opposed to the 10 to 20 cents per day (plus housing and provision grounds) that field laborers were entitled to while being employed on the estates. There were, however, strict government restrictions regulating the work of porters.

The steamships from the United States and Europe arrived in the early hours of the morning at which time the ship's cargo men off-loaded the large and heavy pieces of iron machinery for Bethlehem. The porters worked under a supervisor in moving the pieces to the means of ground transportation.<sup>11</sup> These workers had varied daily tasks which put them in the center of the busyness of the wharf and the town. Other young men paid fees for passports to migrate to St. Thomas to become seamen on inter-island sloops and schooners. While many of these men were from the towns, there were others, such as Patrick Percival from Spring Gardens, north of Frederiksted, who found himself working as a cargo man on a European steamship which had called on

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<sup>11</sup> Emelie Langkjaer's Collection of the Danish West Indian Society, Copenhagen.

St. Thomas.<sup>12</sup> An editorial in the *St. Croix Avis* at the time complained about the number of Crucian mechanics who had left the island for work on the dredging of the harbor in St. Thomas.<sup>13</sup>

Starting in 1913, several merchants and clerks organized the Mutual Improvement Society, which organized debates on pertinent international issues for the young men of Christiansted. Several of these same men also organized a night school. The purpose of these organizations was to provide education to laboring men who were forced to work all day and could not take time off to further their education. One of the topics of the Improvement Society was the effects of socialism on the Danish working classes. After taking part in such discussions, D. Hamilton Jackson, a former school teacher and lawyer traveled to Denmark at the invitation of the Social Democratic party, the socialist party of the country. He was invited to speak in open-air parks to large throngs of workers. At the same time, Jackson conferred with a number of Danish officials regarding reforms in the colonies, including a free press for the Danish West Indies. He returned with permission to start a free press. Up until that time, all newspapers had been under the control of the Danish government.

Plantation laborers were still not making enough money. Socialism and workers' rights had become embedded in Danish metropolitan life, but field laborers were still earning 35 cents per day. When planters refused to grant pay raises, Jackson formed a labor union which called a strike for higher wages and better working conditions. The strike started in January 1916 just before the cane was to be harvested. The planters asked the Governor to intervene to force the laborers back to work. The Governor, knowing the strength of the labor unions in Denmark, refused. In retaliation, the planters ousted the laborers from their homes and provision grounds on the estates. Now homeless and penniless, the workers persisted with their demands for six weeks, during which time Jackson had secured shelter for many of them. In mid- February 1916, the strike ended with the workers getting a fifty-per cent raise in wages.

Higher schooling for either young men or women was to be found only in the two towns. These schools charged a fee for attendance although they received government funding. The schools were operated by a community board, and they offered students courses in mathematics, natural sciences, English language, gymnastics, art and music. The 1913 examination required students to write an essay on "The Trade and Industry of Denmark". For the younger children, the communal and country schools, which had been in operation since the ordinance of 1839 by Governor Peter von

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<sup>12</sup> SCLS. A selection of passport applications from National Archives, Record Group 55. US Citizen Identity Cards and travel Passes. USVI. 1918. There are many renewed applications among the selection.

<sup>13</sup> UVI. *St. Croix Avis*, Mar 14, 1914.

Scholten, offered education up to the age of 13. Most children in the countryside, however, were working alongside their parents or doing supplemental work to allow their parents to work in the fields. Thus, they attended school for only a half- day during the harvest season.

Neither type of school taught the Danish language, which male students could have used to become clerks in the merchant houses or in government service. With little education and low-paying jobs, young males were unable to vote, the franchise required an income of at least 1,500 francs per year. While such franchise requirements had been eliminated in Denmark in 1914,<sup>14</sup> they persisted in the Danish West Indies until the Transfer of the islands to the US in 1917. Young men in the countryside were thus prevented from exercising such civil rights as voting for district representatives in the local Colonial Council.

## 5 Conclusion

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of changes in plantation labor and land tenure were in motion on St. Croix. Re-distribution of bankrupt estates gave more individuals access to land, a resource that could contribute to their and their family's social mobility. Other informal arrangements were made between planters and individuals for the latter to have access to marginal lands. For both sets of farmers, hard work, perseverance, and good management allowed some individuals to keep their land and pass it on to future generations. For others, change came in the form of apprenticeships in the factories. They learned skills which could be immediately applicable to their job situation or transferable to other employment venues. Others migrated to the towns, or off island in order to access a different set of opportunities. To fill the vacancies created by these changes, immigrants from the British Caribbean were brought in to replace those Crucians who were no longer working as field laborers on the estates. These immigrants had their own goals for social mobility. For all of these groups, changes in labor patterns and in the use of the land were transforming their lives in unprecedented ways.

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<sup>14</sup> UVI. *St. Croix Avis*, Mar. 14, 1914.



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St. Croix Landmarks Society (SCLS), Frederiksted, St. Croix.

University of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix Campus library (microfilm) *St. Croix Avis*, 1908, 1912, 1913, 1914.

Vertical File "Bethlehem"

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## TRAJECTORIES OF CULTURAL FEEDBACK: ALAN LOMAX IN 1962 ANGUILLA

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The work done in Anguilla by the respected folklorist and anthropologist Alan Lomax serves as a reminder of the importance of documenting the island's unique culture and folklore. Lomax, a native Texan, is known mainly for audio recordings done in Haiti and prisons of the Southern US. The valuable research that he completed in the Leeward Islands, especially the smaller more remote islands, has been largely overlooked. Yet as some local residents still remember, Anguilla is one of the places that he visited in 1962.

Lomax, a self-described “song-hunter”, was an experienced fieldwork with extensive knowledge of music and a background highly relevant for research in the Caribbean, having worked in places such as Haiti and the Bahamas. He visited Anguilla and other islands of the Eastern Caribbean in order to complete a project that was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. At that time many people throughout the British West Indies were optimistic about the possibility of various Caribbean islands joining together with Jamaica to form a new democracy, the Federation of the West Indies. The Rockefeller Foundation sent him to the Caribbean with a related goal in mind. As he recalls in *Alan Lomax: Selected Writings, 1934-1997* (2005), “The enlightened presidents of Jamaica and Trinidad were working hard to bring this idea to reality. My task as a folklorist was to look for the creative cultural commonalities among the many powers in support of their great dream of unity” (p. 337).

The University of the West Indies served as a base of Lomax's operations. Philip Sherlock, a folklorist and one of the institutions founders, supported his project. Both men shared the vision that ethnographic fieldwork was necessary in order to identify the cultural forms of each island as well as those shared across the region. They believed the documentation of music could later play an important role in regional integration.

Lomax included Anguilla in a list of destinations that he called “a chain of magic places that poured out their jeweled music.” His time in Anguilla was brief; in fact, according to Szwed (2010: 344) he covered Anguilla as well as St. Kitts and St. Bartholomew in only six days. While on the island he visited East End, South Hill, the

Valley, and the secondary school. Lomax recorded approximately twenty-five songs, ring games, interviews, rhymes, and other examples of oral culture. In addition, he took sixty-seven photos, using black and white as well as color film. These images tend to feature the same people that he recorded. Most show groups of men and women dancing and working in the fields. Others document uniformed students playing children's games.

Traveling with the forty-seven year-old Lomax was his wife Toni and daughter Anna, as well as a “recording machine” and two huge loud speakers. The stereo speakers were three feet high and required high voltage. The equipment had two purposes: first and most obviously, it was used to record folk music, verbal art, and conversations with local people. Second, the equipment was used to play back singing, rhymes, conversation, and such to the villagers that were recorded. Lomax called it “cultural feedback.” Turning again to his *Selected Writings* (2005):

“Whenever we recorded, we played the music back to its makers, filling the [...] hamlets and village streets with the thunder of speakers, while whole neighborhoods danced in delight. My Caribbean colleagues told me that in two or three places musical practices that were on the point of dying out were revived by that one act of sonorous support” (p. 337).

296 Szwed (2010: 340) explains that an agreement with the University of the West Indies established guidelines for fieldwork in Anguilla and the other islands that Lomax and his family visited during the summer of 1962. It stipulated that he was to pay each singer and musician the equivalent of a day's wages for his or her participation. While Lomax frequently listened to various performers before deciding whom and what to record, everyone received payment, prospective artists as well as those who were chosen. All of the resulting recordings were to be kept at the university and, at least initially, it was to own and manage the rights. Unfortunately, in most cases copies of the recordings were not placed in local depositories (e.g., cultural institutions, libraries, schools) until decades later.

A few pages of handwritten notes about the Anguilla visit are held in the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington DC. These mention that many of the recordings were done in the “back yard of house in a little settlement.” According to the notes, “All the best of old-fashioned folks of the neighborhood gathered, mostly middle-aged women.” Some of the conversations suggest that the absence of men had to do with the longstanding pattern of migration to Santo Domingo for work. Lomax goes on to add that the ladies “wanted drink and guaranteed payment.” He describes them as “positive, forthright, and very British in their approach to us.”

The Anguillians Lomax met spoke at length of jollification and discussed its

importance in the community. Jollification is a cooperative gathering focused on a project involving physical labor (such as clearing land, planting, and other aspects of cultivation), one similar to the *combite* tradition of Haiti, the “maroon” practice of Montserrat, and the “lift system” of other Leeward Islands. As they explained, these events did not include the payment of wages. Music, the jollification song in particular, stands out as a key component of these communal work events. Some of the songs had also been used by men working on ships, but Lomax was told that shantying, the local practice of singing songs while working at sea, was already rare by the time of his visit. Among the call and response *shanties* (sometimes written *chanteys*) performed for his sessions were “Captain, Where Are We Bound?” and “Man O' War in the Harbor.” These and numerous jollification tunes feature call and response. Hearing the recordings today one is likely to be struck by the sharp and clean sounds of a line of hoes hitting the ground in unison with lyrics in a coordinated and steady rhythm.

The work of linguist Peter Roberts (1997) assists in situating Anguilla's work songs in terms of a labor market that historically denied persons of African ancestry access to formal education. Roberts identifies this type of song as the only major feature of Afro-Caribbean people that may have retained some influence from African literary sources (p. 68). He contextualizes the evolution of the work song and its use of call and response diachronically, suggesting that it emerged in an oppressive situation that “bonded the slaves into a working unit and a social group” (p. 40). According to his analysis, the early emergence of songs and music in the slave societies of the British Caribbean promoted a spirit of comradeship and empathy within a communal tradition. This assertion complicates – and exists in tension with – the idea that the creation of Creole languages and distinctive Afro-Caribbean cultures necessarily signals a break with African heritages.

Contemporary listeners are likely to be impressed and moved by the gentle humor and kindness evident in the laughter, explanations, and conversations of those who performed for Lomax. The beauty and artfulness of the recordings are by no means limited to the performance of song, as voices mix with stories, improvisation, fun, and sharing. Clearly Lomax did more than simply record talking about traditional ways of life, he contemplated and documented events in which people came together in the spirit of community. Perhaps this helps explain why he describes jollification as “warm in the hearts of the people” even when Anguilla's residents were conscious of the fact that it was taking place less frequently than it had in previous years.

The locals Lomax met gave three reasons for the decline of jollification. First, they pointed out that the young people were lazy and did not “want to work too hard.” Another factor, a reminder that widespread wage labor was a relatively new phenomenon on the island, was that people wanted payment for work. They had become less willing to labor without compensation, but describe widespread payment

of wages as a relatively new phenomenon. Finally, women reported that substantial numbers of men were going off the island to work, leaving them to carry on by themselves. It should be noted, however, that some of these same women pointed out that they were independent and highly capable of taking care of themselves. When Lomax asked how they “manage[d] to get by”, they indicated that they were capable of taking care of their families and performing hard physical work even when their husbands were away.

Lomax’s notes also mention a group that he describes as a “raffish, merry crowd of ladies”, that he recorded one morning in “the green meadow beside the school where the children play during recess.” He indicates about thirty girls, mostly teenagers, were present that day and notes a lot of teacher supervision. Another reminder that musical culture is fluid rather than static, Lomax observes that the teachers knew slightly different versions of the games that the children played. The liveliest of the songs that were recorded that day are those done for skipping rope. Later in life Lomax revisited the memory of this Anguilla morning when he referred to children’s voices as “among the richest veins” of the region’s music. He wrote, “in spite of the rapid pour of short notes and many syllables that characterized their peppery songs, every syllable was as clear as a drop of water on a palm leaf” (2002: 126).

The activities of youth were documented by Lomax on all of the islands he visited. One of the most popular games he recorded in Anguilla was “There’s a Brown Girl in the Ring.” He noted that the version children sang was distinct from that of Trinidad. This classic ring game positions one dancer in the center of a circle. The dancer “shows the motion” and then chooses another participant who briefly dances and then replaces the player in the center. Lomax saw children’s games as significant for their role in nurturing community and introducing children to social life. Games, he believed, transmitted messages about morality and fairness as well as ideas about Standard English, gender, and local identity. Years after the visit, Lomax described “Brown Girl in the Ring” and other games as experiences that prepared youth for courtship, referring to them as “theater in which children can rehearse adult behavior in a socially approved situation” (Lomax et al., 1997: 8).

Lomax and locals discuss two additional topics that are important to Anguilla’s music and folklore: the local string band and the beloved Judge Gumbs, an important community figure often remembered as a prophet and drummer. The string band members remarked that they had never tuned as much as they did the day that they recorded. Lomax refers to the music of the string band that performed for him as “a good version” and observes that people frequently danced to string band music in the 1960s. Locals said that Anguillian styles had been influenced by music from Cuba and Santo Domingo. It is clear, however, that the men fused Spanish Caribbean styles with local aesthetics and circumstances. In one of the interviews Florie Brooks explains that string band music was used for a variety of events, including maypole dances.

As mentioned above, Lomax's Smithsonian notes include details about the life of Mr. Judge Gumbs. People spoke of Gumbs' ability to accurately foresee hurricanes, murders, and other catastrophes (e.g., gales, cyclones, plane crashes, illnesses). Lomax appears to have been initially skeptical about Mr. Gumbs and the stories he heard about clairvoyance and predictions. However, once he met with Mr. Gumbs he was impressed, found him to be sincere, and believed all that had been reported.

In an eleven-minute conversation with Lomax, Gumbs speaks of “things being revealed to him” through a voice and a responsibility to “tell them.” He mentions the ability to heal through the laying on of hands, citing the Gospel of Matthew to substantiate his claims that prophecy and curing the sick were Christian actions. Lomax explains that Mr. Judge Gumbs and his wife are said to have become involved with an evangelical group in Cuba. According to Mr. Gumbs, it was there that God came to him and gave him prophetic and musical gifts that he called “privileges.” He claimed that the gift of prophecy came to him on April 3, 1926. He returned to Anguilla from Cuba the following year.

Following the interview and other interactions with Gumbs, Lomax wrote:

“We were told that Anguilla had a drummer and a prophet. They turned out to be the same man, a Mr. Gumbs [. . .]. Sometimes God speaks to him, bent over in his field. Gumbs straightens up, listens, goes to his house, takes his big bass drums, and goes from crossroad to crossroad, calling the people together. When they have assembled he warns of something that God has in store for them.”

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The music and cultural feedback that apparently accompanied it raised some eyebrows that summer. In his notes from the field, Lomax explains that one session went on late into the night and “horrified the team of missionaries that had flown in from a Puerto Rico religious radio station.” He offers a few more details about the commotion that resulted from having Anguilla's traditions front and center, stating that the missionaries, financed by “American money” wanted “to bring the Bible message to the already devout Anguillians.” Lomax writes that the missionaries believed the recordings, singing, and dancing were “somehow sabotaging their image.”

When the recordings described above are considered alongside other scholarly work on Anguilla's folklore, it is clear that they constitute one of the most substantial contributions to the documentation of Anguilla's culture to date. His work has led to more awareness about the uniqueness and value of local culture throughout the Leewards, primarily internationally but also locally. While Lomax's scholarship has gained more attention in recent years, its potential as an innovative educational resource appropriate for classrooms and cultural programming remains largely untapped. Bacchus (2006: 248) suggests that the transmission of knowledge about

cultural heritage and folklore is important given that it can help provide local populations a sense of rootedness in their society and encourage social consensus and cohesion across different groups. In a study of links between education and social change in the Caribbean's ex-British colonies (a group in which he includes Anguilla), he argues that it should form part of the official and "hidden" curricula of a given school or educational system. Bacchus points out that the latter includes indirect lessons that students learn from teacher attitudes toward given topics (including history, race, and culture), interactions between native-born groups and immigrants, and the various organizations with which student bodies and administrators formally associate.

The relationships between ideas about social change and local culture that Bacchus identifies resonate with some of Lomax's interests in the social functions of folklore and music, as well as the larger Rockefeller project. Music, Lomax believed, was a window onto larger social psychological phenomena that patterned across human societies. While both scholars comment on socioeconomic stratification, behavioral norms, and historical influences, Bacchus, writing more recently, takes a stronger position concerning the insights offered by a view of social formations as the result of consecutive sequences of human intervention. His perspective is useful because it underscores that the development of any educational materials as well as the decision not to educate certain social groups are both best understood as the product of numerous choices. Bacchus effectively challenges the assertion that it is natural or moral to avoid debate about the contemporary significance of traditional cultural forms and their treatment by state institutions. This prompts questions about the contemporary tendency to separate music and folklore from historical realities such as colonialism, African enslavement, and socioeconomic hierarchy. Considering how each of these relates to the Lomax project – and the cultural forms it documents – suggests that greater awareness about the historical past (and indirectly, questions about certain contemporary preferences for ignorance) should inform discussions of what is beneficial, just, and worthy of being inherited by future generations of Caribbean youth.

In March 2010 the Anguilla Library Services sponsored and organized "Snapshots of Anguilla's Past", an evening highlighting the music and other materials in the Lomax collection. A formal presentation focused on the cultural feedback of a generation that has been forgotten by many youth. In the question and answer session that followed, members of the audience drew attention to the importance of passing on knowledge about Anguilla's folklore to the new generations. Keenly aware of the significance of this legacy, a few individuals in attendance insisted that the Department of Education should make use of the materials at the same time that it involved students in documenting the cultural practices of the early twenty-first century. An educator who was presented pointed out that Lomax's work could be used in teacher training, calling

it “a set of living treasures” that should be taken advantage of by local teachers as well as those from abroad. Some who attended the evening's event were so inspired that they even demonstrated songs and games featured in the recordings.

The event was followed in July with a Children's Library Annual Summer Program (CLASP) organized around the theme Jollification Time (see <http://clasp2010weebly.com>). For two weeks children ages five to twelve learned about the traditions and stories at the center of Lomax's research. Teachers memorized songs from his recordings in order to teach them to CLASP participants. The children who participated in the program were divided into three groups: Johnny Cakes, Shantees, and Jollies. Each group's activities cultivated a personal relationship with the past among CLASP students, allowing them to learn songs and games documented in the 1962 collection. Participants completed arts and crafts projects (including the making of guitars), learned songs, and heard traditional stories. In the evenings some conducted informal interviews about jollification with grandparents and other community members, reporting their findings to the larger group the following day. A mural featuring a Lomax photo of men singing while using hoes to chop ground was painted on an outside wall in the front of the library. Finally, on the afternoon of the last day, the library sponsored a jollification. Hundreds of people attended, joining in a maypole dance, Brown Girl in the Ring, and other festivities. Events such as CLASP 2010 underscore ways in which people can continue to benefit from the cooperation that took place between local culture-bearers and Lomax almost five decades ago.

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# GARIFUNA: A HISTORY OF DEFIANCE AND STRUGGLE

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Languages are an integral part of human identity, transformation, and growth and can be better understood via the study of language cycles – birth, use, transmission, spread, maintenance, and death. Language goes hand-in-hand with culture, one being a reflection of the other. Therefore, language is a crucial marker in defining who we are as persons. Through the study of the language of a particular culture, we can learn how its members perceive the world. Every language encompasses a story that is constantly renewed through time and from generation to generation.

The Garifuna language has a fascinating story which allows one to see how a language is born, used, and maintained. Through the study of Garifuna, we can gain valuable insights into language shift, language revitalization, and language maintenance. We can also learn how efforts to prevent the death of a language can bring people together and increase their sense of pride and community. In this paper, I will examine the life cycle of Garifuna. I will write about its birth and the challenges it has faced through time. I will also mention some of the strategies being used to maintain it as a thriving indigenous language.

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Garifuna history begins in South America. Its genesis resulted from intermarriages between speakers of Arawakan and Cariban languages as they moved from the South American coast to the Lesser Antilles, where they became known as Kalinago or Island Caribs. On St. Vincent, some of the Kalinago began to welcome escaped slaves of African descent from other islands into their communities. In 1635, the African descended population increased when two slave ships were wrecked near its coast.

The escaped slaves integrated themselves into their host communities, and intermarriage led to the emergence of a new “ethnic group” that came to be known as the Black Caribs or Garinagu, whom the European colonialists differentiated from the Yellow/Red Caribs who inhabited other communities on the island and who had not intermarried as extensively with escaped slaves. For more than a century, the Garinagu became a force to be reckoned with in the southeastern Caribbean, mounting stiff resistance to European colonization. Spoken by the garinagu, the Garifuna language is a member of the North Arawakan branch of the Arawakan language

family. Because of its particular history, Garifuna has undergone influences from Cariban languages, African languages, and European languages.

After some 150 years of successful resistance to European encroachment on their lands, the Garinagu were defeated in battle by the British in 1797. The Garinagu were the last of the indigenous peoples of the insular Caribbean to be overcome by the Europeans (The 'Carib' Story, 1997). They were never enslaved and were known for their great combat skills. Seen as a threat and as an impediment to the imperialistic plans of the colonizers, the Garinagu were rounded up and sent to Baliceaux Island. After almost half of their number died from conditions there, they were put on ships and taken to Roatan, an island of the Bay Island group, off the Northern coast of Honduras. Five thousand Black Caribs were said to have been forced to exile, but only 2 500 made it to Roatan alive. The Black Caribs were abandoned there and left with provisions. The Garinagu were allowed by the Spanish to settle along the coast of Honduras where they were needed to fight against the British and to produce food. They cleared land so the women could plant food crops for themselves and for sale. In this way, they provided enough food for the entire European coastal population, which had been near starvation before the Garinagu arrived (The 'Carib' Story, 1997). As time went on, more and more Garinagu migrated from Roatan to the Honduran coast. The resilient and resourceful Garinagu thrived and multiplied in their new environment. Honduras became the home of Garinagu refugees. They transplanted their culture, traditions, religion, and societal patterns to their new home. Eventually, some Garinagu grew tired of the Spaniards' abuses and began to look for other places to live. A second major exodus took place as they left Honduras to work as woodcutters in the log industry controlled by British in Belize (then known as British Honduras), and many settled there. Later, they continued relocating as they searched for better opportunities, and in this way they reached Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Presently, Honduras has the biggest number of Garinagu, estimated to be somewhere between 100 000 and 200 000, living on the coastal areas in 44 communities. Belize has approximately 16 100 settled in eleven communities; Guatemala, 16 700 in four communities; and Nicaragua, 1 500 living along the coast. These numbers, however, are merely approximations because the rough terrain, lack of roads, and the distance from one community to another make it extremely difficult to carry out a trustworthy census in those areas.

Garifuna is still spoken on the Honduran coast. The isolation that the Garinagu experienced there helped prevent complete language shift. A vibrant subsistence economy, lack of formal education in Spanish, lack of access by road and little support from the government has allowed them to maintain their language, but these conditions have changed dramatically over the past few decades.

In Belize, the Garinagu are mostly settled in the south, where they founded the National Garifuna Council (NGC) in 1981 to monitor and defend Garinagu rights. The NGC has succeeded in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with the government (National Garifuna Council of Belize, 1999). The NGC ensures that the government complies with its *Manifesto*, in which it has pledged to “respect the cultures of our different peoples and seek to ensure that our political, social and economic structures and policies do not violate their cultures”, and to take “new and special approaches and measures to assist the south in catching up” (National Garifuna Council of Belize, 1999).

The Garinagu in Guatemala live primarily in the Eastern part of the country. The Organization of Black Guatemalans (ONEGUA) is a community group that provides educational and cultural support for African descended Guatemalans in Livingston. The only way to reach Livingston is with a boat which makes it difficult to have daily contact with outsiders. The Garinagu in Livingston live in isolation from other groups, something which has proven to be a positive factor in the maintenance of a language. Most of the approximately 1 500 Garinagu in Nicaragua live in the eastern part of the country. Younger Garinagu have been leaving the area for some time, however.

The discrimination experienced by the older generation of Garinagu prompted many parents to teach their children the dominant languages (Spanish or English) of their country as their first language. Parents felt that this would make their children’s transition into the school system easier. However, they never realized how this might affect their children’s self esteem and disposition to learn Garifuna.

The need to provide money for their families has often kept Garinagu fathers away from their families for long periods of time in jobs on ships or in places that are far from the Caribbean coast of Central America. In their search for cash, many Garinagu journeyed to the United States, where some 150 000 Garinagu now live, mainly in California, Illinois, Texas, New York, and Louisiana. Many Garinagu communities in Honduras are so money-starved that they are kept afloat by money sent from relatives working in the United States. Family members have been separated, perhaps never to meet again, thus placing an additional burden on the survival Garifuna language and culture.

In 1922, the Carib Development Society (CDS) was formed through the efforts of Thomas Vincent Ramos in Dangriga, Belize. He was an advocate for Garinagu self respect and the quest to keep Garifuna language and traditions alive. Vincent Ramos sought equal treatment for Garinagu and worked militantly to promote the Garifuna culture everywhere. His love for his culture and his public efforts to obtain Garinagu rights had considerable influence beyond the borders of Belize, and inspired Garinagu communities in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and the United States of America to do the same.

In 1997, Garinagu from all over Central America and the United States gathered in Honduras for the bicentennial celebration of the arrival of Garinagu there. In the gathering, the Garifuna Nation was recognized as a dispersed yet unified transnational group spread out through Central America and the USA and struggling to maintain its language, culture, and beliefs. The Garifuna Nation designed its own flag as a symbol that Garinagu all over the globe are one. The flag has officially been accepted by the Garinagu, and it is used during special festivities. The flag has become a symbol of sovereignty and uniqueness and embodies the community's desire to preserve Garinagu culture, language, music, foods, and traditions. The diasporic Garinagu are an ethnic group known for their unstoppable determination to achieve their goals. They are constantly lobbying for their rights and seeking to raise awareness of their culture as they continue to confront new obstacles.

One of their major challenges is the fact that Garifuna is not recognized as an official language in any of the territories where the Garinagu are settled. The language is not used in governmental documents, education, the political arena, or other formal domains. Garinagu have had to learn the dominant language of their surroundings for survival purposes, and as a result, many Garinagu are bilingual or trilingual (Spanish, English, and Garifuna). This in itself poses an existential problem: Why continue using Garifuna when the only way to advance in the colonial and neo-colonial systems is by using the colonizers' language?

Scholars have studied the reasons why marginalized linguistic communities abandon their language in deference to dominant languages. Maya Ravindranath (2009) defines language *shift* as "the process by which a speech community in a contact situation (i.e. consisting of bilingual speakers) gradually stops using one of its two languages in favor of the other. The eventually favored language is almost without exception that of the majority or dominant linguistic group; in most countries over the past century this has tended to mean the language of the current or former colonial power" (Ravindranath, 2009: 1-2). All of the territories where the Garinagu have established substantial communities have either Spanish or English as dominant languages. Because the Garinagu are dispersed across different territorial boundaries, language maintenance is further complicated, given the fact that each territorial government has its own laws and political agendas.

In Honduras, now ousted President Manuel Zelaya had negotiated the conservation of some lands and the protection of their culture with the Garinagu. However, "the Honduran de facto coup government under Roberto Micheletti plans to eliminate the Honduran Garifuna people and culture. Micheletti has rescinded Zelaya's authorization to teach in the Garifuna language in school and to teach the language itself. All scholarships to

Garifuna students have been eliminated” (San Francisco Bay View, News Report , Willie Thompson, Posted: Sep 04, 2009).

In Guatemala, the story is not so different. Livingston can only be accessed by boats traveling across the bay from Puerto Barrios or down the Rio Dulce from Frontera. The distance between Livingston and other communities in Guatemala has become a burden to the Garinagu. Presently, the Guatemalan Garinagu’s derive money from tourism and fishing, which are both unpredictable and unstable sources of income. As a result, a large portion of the population has migrated to the United States in search of better living conditions.

In Belize we find a similar situation. Garinagu are pushed aside, and their rights are not respected. Their lands are being taken away and Garifuna is not being transmitted from generation to generation. The National Garifuna Council of Belize has accomplished much, but there is still a long road to travel before Garinagu are treated like genuine Belizeans. In Nicaragua the Garinagu face even greater challenges, because of their small numbers, and lack of advocacy groups. The Garinagu Diaspora in the USA is dispersed throughout the continent, where English is the dominant language. The Garinagu in the United States are endeavoring to be recognized as an indigenous ethnic group. They want to be differentiated from Afro-Americans and respected as descendants of sovereign indigenous Americans.

When a decision must be made to select which language to teach the younger generations, a dilemma that has existed since the Garinagu began interacting with other cultures constantly resurfaces. What should be preserved? Stevens (2000) reflects that “Perhaps Garinagu have been able to retain their ethnic identity precisely because they have been able to change their cultural patterns as needed. They have changed willingly, quickly and yet insisting all along that the new is really Garífuna after all. In other words, their adopted customs became their very own, and thus valuable to them”. If this is true, then their ability to adapt to changes has allowed their culture to transcend time.

Will Garifuna survive? This is a question that I will explore by referring to David Crystal’s postulates in his book *Language Death*. Crystal (2000) presents six factors needed for an endangered language to survive. He postulates that an endangered language will survive if its speakers: 1) increase their prestige within the dominant community, 2) increase their wealth 3) increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community, 4) have a strong presence in the education system, 5) can write down the language, and 6) can make use of electronic technology. In the next section, I will look at how the Garinagu as a nation are meeting these conditions in their efforts to preserve their language.

According to Crystal, enhancing prestige within the dominant community is one way of maintaining a language; thus, making others notice the Garinagu and their language

will help in their language preservation efforts. Taking advantage of one's attributes and knowing how to market them are essential to building strong foundations and ties among the Garinagu and other communities. Using the domain of religion to obtain recognition by members of the dominant group is a way to reach out and allow people to see that Garifuna is a language used in all spheres of life.

Garinagu have accepted conversion to Catholicism and other Christian denominations since the earliest European attempts at colonization in Saint Vincent. In recent years, monthly ecumenical services in Garifuna have been offered in many churches in the United States where Garinagu live. The use of the Garifuna language in religious services is a means of validating the value of the language and its speakers. At the same time, it has the potential to strengthen community links and promote Garifuna culture and heritage.

Another way of being exposed to the wider community is through the media. Radio stations that feature Garifuna music and language are found in different major cities in the United States. For example, *Belizean Rhythms* is a weekly half-hour broadcast from the University of Chicago. Belizean host Randolph Coleman brings listeners the musical sounds of his homeland. The show airs at 6:00 PM Saturdays and regularly features "news, views, interviews and recipes" (Swain, 2000). The Garinagu and their language will be recognized in the homes of non-Garinagu listening to such broadcasts, and this will help in building appreciation and self esteem among young Garinagu migrants as well.

Exposure of the Garinagu through cultural activities and celebrations is another way of keeping their culture alive. For example, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.'s office proclaimed March 11<sup>th</sup> – April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010 as Garifuna Heritage Month in 2010. During this month, many cultural activities were carried out, and information was disseminated.

Considering Crystal's second factor for successful survival, the Garinagu in the United States' have increased their wealth and social status considerably over the past decades. This is evident, even when we compare Garinagu incomes to those of the dominant community. More income permits the Garinagu in the US to contribute monetarily to their Garinagu home communities in Honduras, Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua, allowing their extended families to improve their living conditions and to lobby for better education for their children. In 2008, the Garinagu community of New York sent two hundred million dollars to Honduras (Ávila & Ávila, 2008). This influx of money has helped the Garinagu communities in Central America to solve infrastructure problems such as the provision of electricity and water supplies. Once these essential necessities are dealt with, the Garinagu can dedicate more time to solidifying and preserving their language, traditions, and customs.

Tourism also provides more cash for those who benefit from the availability of jobs in this industry. Having settled in the coastal areas of the Caribbean, the Garinagu

possess some of the most picturesque landscapes and have access to the beautiful beaches of the Caribbean coast. They are able to take advantage of their beautiful scenery and beaches and to exploit their traditional foods, music and dances to attract tourists to their locales.

Crystal's third factor for successful survival stipulates an increase in the legitimate power of the Garinagu in the eyes of the dominant community. The Belizean Garifuna Council, The Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc, and the Garifuna Heritage Foundation are just a few of the many incorporated groups that fight for Garinagu rights and the protection of their culture. Through these groups, the Garinagu community is represented. Their enthusiastic and constant efforts to transmit their language, culture, and traditions to younger Garifuna generations have had an impact not only on their own communities, but on the non-Garifuna communities as well.

In 2001, the Belizean Garifuna Council petitioned UNESCO to declare the Garifuna culture of the Central America Region, especially the language, music and dance of the Garifuna, a part of the intangible heritage of humanity. Their lobbying paid off, and UNESCO has included Garifuna among a list of endangered languages that needed to be protected. Garifunas are one of the few African descended ethnic groups in the Americas to have gained this distinction. This recognition by UNESCO is a boost towards the preservation of Garifuna language because it sends a direct message to the dominant community to the effect that the language is special and should be treasured for its unique qualities. Such an acknowledgement serves as an incentive for the younger Garinagu generations to understand the importance of their ancestors' legacy and to learn their language and more about their culture.

Wilcox' (2006) examines documentary films, holiday celebrations, public monuments, and the history museum in Belize to study the ways in which members of the Garinagu community have consciously represented images and narratives with the intent of reforming and enhancing the unique character of their identity (p.1). As is evident in the actions carried out by Garinagu leaders and cultural actors in their communities, careful planning has been central to the success of disseminating Garifuna culture. National celebrations, Garinagu Settlement Day celebrations, Proclamations, the naming of streets with Garifuna names and outreach programs where the Garifuna language is taught help to develop ethnic pride and self esteem in the dispersed Garinagu population throughout Central America and the United States.

Crystal's fourth factor for successful language survival is a strong presence in the educational system. This is one area that requires extensive governmental support. Under the Zelaya government in Honduras, significant strides were being made at level of the national Department of Education to incorporate programs where Garifuna was being used as the language of instruction and initial literacy for primary school students in Garifuna communities, though the auspices of PRONEEAH and PROEIMCA. Since the Micheletti coup, however, the future of these programs is in



doubt. In Nicaragua and Belize, more modest local efforts have met with some success in teaching Garifuna at the elementary level in Garinagu communities.

In the United States, organizations such as The Garifuna Coalition in New York have designed Garifuna language courses for the community and offer these during the evenings and weekends. The University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies has created a Garifuna Language Summer Institute offered in La Ceiba, Honduras. The Garifuna Summer Institute provides a unique opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to acquire proficiency in Garifuna (UF International Center, 2009). In California, the Garifuna Institute seeks to preserve the Garifuna language and prevent its extinction via education. It offers online Garifuna language training and on-site lessons every Saturday. Therefore, we see that Garinagu leaders are moving to preserve the language by designing and offering language classes to the community. Awakening interest in the Garifuna language is essential for its survival.

The fifth factor for language survival mentioned by Crystal is that “an endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down” (pp.138-141). Many written materials are available in Garifuna, including students’ grammars and dictionaries. Series of textbooks for primary school students have also been published and disseminated. If all Garinagu wish to use a common orthography, some additional efforts will need to be made in that direction, since there are some minor discrepancies in the spelling used by different authors in different countries.

310 The last of Crystal’s factors for successful language survival involves the effective use of electronic technology” (pp. 141-144). Technology is providing new solutions to the challenges of language revitalization, maintenance, and survival and the Garinagu seem to be taking advantage of the electronic media whenever they can to promote their language and culture. But technologies have their limits as well. Although the Internet is fast, versatile, and dynamic it is not accessible to everyone. The Internet is a luxury that many cannot afford. In remote villages in Central America it may be quite difficult for people to go online to read or listen to language programs designed for learning Garifuna. There is no doubt that electronic technology is a great resource, but where there are no computers or electricity it cannot serve anyone.

Crystal (2000), Austin (2005) and others state that a language dies every two weeks and with it a unique and particular interpretation of life is lost. Losing a language means much more than the loss of a particular configuration of phonemes, words, or grammatical structures. It means losing the cultural perspective of peoples who have developed ways of living and surviving over thousands of years. It means the loss of religious beliefs, child-rearing patterns, societal hierarchies, and all that has to do with the structure of a community. A loss like this one is irreplaceable. For these reasons, linguists, anthropologists, and others are working diligently to preserve and collect data on languages that are en route to extinction.

Language shift and language loss can be reversed if the communities of the endangered language are willing to work diligently for its preservation. If there is no true commitment, language revitalization will not take place. Belizean Garifuna scholar Dr. Joseph Palacio once asked if Garifuna culture would survive migration. Clifford Palacio, a Garifuna teacher and activist offered his assessment in May 1999: “Our culture will survive, given the determination in which we hold on to our traditions and spiritual beliefs” (Swain, 2000).

In 2008, Dr. Santiago Ruiz, a Garifuna linguistic anthropologist, conducted a study in the village of Corozal, Honduras in which he analyzed the strategies developed by the Garifuna speech community to preserve its heritage language. His findings are enlightening and augur well for the maintenance and survival of the Garifuna language. His observations of the dynamics of the extended family’s social structures and the roles that the younger generations are fulfilling within these structures among the Garinagu suggest that there is hope for Garifuna language maintenance.

According to Ruiz, the disappearance of many languages generally has to do with corporate globalization’s war against diversity, and the disruption of the intergenerational transmission of the heritage language from parents to children. In his research, Ruiz observed that Garinagu parents were not teaching their children the Garifuna language because they wanted their children to be able to integrate easily into the dominant Spanish speaking community. Thus vertical language transmission was not taking place.

Nevertheless, he observed that by the age of twelve to fifteen, children started to speak Garifuna as their primary language and also became advocates for the use and preservation of their heritage language (Ruiz, 2008: 12). As he compiled data, he discovered that the passing on of the Garifuna language was being done through mechanisms different from those vertical modalities that typify the societal structure of a western-type nuclear family. In his research, it became apparent that Garifuna was being successfully passed on through mechanisms of horizontal, diagonal, and multidirectional intergenerational language transmission (p.150). This finding introduces a totally new perspective on language transmission that should lead us to question many of the assumptions currently made about language survival.

Language maintenance cannot be achieved in isolation. Language, lifeways, art , music, dance, religion, and other aspects of culture are to be seen as a conglomerate of variables that work as one to hold a community together. If the bulk of the cultural fiber of an ethnic group can be handed down to its younger generations, then their heritage language will evolve but not disappear.

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# ARGUMENTS FOR AN ADSTRATE PERSPECTIVE: A NEW FIELD GUIDE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

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“No understanding of a world is valid without representation of the member’s voices.”

Michael Agar

One must consider how power frames meaning and context as colonial languages are considered, studied, and explained. These languages, as adapted by maroons or runaway slaves, have been a rich source for inquiry and debate for hundreds of years, especially with regard to the question Creole genesis. Researchers have made many attempts to understand the effects of slavery upon language development, but there still exists a crisis of representation. For example, the Saramakas of Suriname say that they speak an African language. On the other hand, some academics say that it is an English lexifier Creole, while others call it a mixed language. Any final decision must consider the speakers’ voices. The necessity of a field guide that positions the native speech community at the hub of linguistic theory is an idea whose time has come, and to do this requires a paradigm shift.

Numerous debates about Creole genesis rage on, seemingly oblivious to the agency of the population under study. Dominant ‘scientific’ notions about race and ethnicity with their attendant classifications are more a product of hegemonic strategies for control than the product of any attempt to come to terms with the realities that scientists are supposed to describe and analyse. Perspective has been seriously clouded, shaped as it has by unconscious notions of superiority and inferiority. For example, consideration of the sociolinguistic factors impacting the genesis of Saramaccan, one of the oldest maroon languages, has largely occurred through a lens restricted by racialized preoccupations (DeGraff, 2001; Muysken & Law, 2001).

Few of those who rightly speak of “Creole exceptionalism” have considered that in most cases ancestors of present day Saramaka ran away within hours or days of their arrival in the Guyanas. Neither have they considered that these same runaway slaves maintained constant contact with the slaves on the plantations. Moreover, few Creolists seem to appreciate the significance of the fact that these people managed to

negotiate agreements with various overseers and sign peace treaties and maintain their right to self-determination. This is exceptional indeed. Rather than being indicative of a break in transmission or an inherent incapacity to rapidly master an additional language, their agency suggests a very sophisticated degree of pluri-lingualism and pluri-cultural awareness, both truly exceptional among the ruling colonial elites in that era (Alleyne, 1971).

Contact, renewal, and strengthening of African identity as active resistance on the part of runaway slaves after their arrival in the Americas can be accounted for by adopting an adstratist perspective. Only polyglots could have managed to formulate complex strategies for escape immediately after the Middle Passage and survive in strange surroundings, while maintaining contact with other captured slaves. Moravian narratives describe the slaves' capacity to learn Dutch well as anyone else (Bonaparte, 1884). Following DeGraff's (2009) suggestion to utilize the uniformitarian principle, and assuming that the pluri-lingualism found in West Africa today is a continuation of centuries old tradition there, let us consider then the possibility that the pluri-linguistic tradition brought by West Africans to the Americas uniquely positioned them to value all languages as tools for communication with a special place being reserved for their ancestral languages, thereby ensuring cultural longevity and continuity.

Many years ago, Mervyn Alleyne described the linguistic syncretism that occurred between West African and European languages, stating that such syncretism was based on specific cultural variables. Later he also suggested that the comparative method was problematic in relation to this process. I argue that the deeper implications of his work have yet to be integrated into the thinking of many Creolists (Alleyne, 1971).

When discussing colonial languages, it is imperative to evaluate the contact situation in light of complex processes involving as a fusion or convergence of different lects and languages, with significant input from African languages being a key variable with regard to survival in extremely unfavorable situations such as the constant renovation of the slave population. These factors shaped the genesis of Saramaccan and provided the language with some of its striking features, including an apparently split lexicon (Good, 2004). Ethno-historical and sociocultural factors suggest that in this particular case, at least, rather than a superstrate or substrate perspective, an adstrate perspective lends itself more readily to explaining how Saramaccan emerged and continues to emerge.

One of six surviving African cultures including Ndyuka, Matawi, Paramaka, Aluku and Kwinti, directly descended from slaves, the Saramaka are one of the oldest maroon societies, dating back to the 1690s, the date of the first significant wave of escape from the plantations. In contrast to the appalling mortality figures for slaves on plantations during this period, the escaped slaves managed to survive and thrive. (Dew, 1978; Stedman, 1796).

Despite attempts to discredit him, we have no reason to question Stedman's accounts of the cruelty of the slave owners as well as the resistance and revolts carried out by escaped slaves in his *Narrative of an expedition against the revolted negroes of Suriname* (1796). As the maroon community grew in number, escaped slaves served as an example to others. In addition, due largely to their adaptability and versatility, they were able to threaten and punish plantation owners when they determined that their cruelty had exceeded imaginable bounds.

Evidence for agency on the part of African descended people in the Americas is available from the earliest period to the present day (Price, 2002). This agency played a role in forcing the Dutch to negotiate with several communities, as well as in the collapse of the Amsterdam stock exchange, the resulting bankruptcy of many plantation owners, in particular Jewish owners, and in the end the significant decline of the plantation economy. Between 1791 and 1860, the number of plantations in Suriname was reduced from 452 to 252. Challenged first by warfare with the indigenous people in the 1670s and later by slave riots until the 1770s, like the *roots of abrasa* (the vine that strangles a tree as it gains what it needs for its own survival), these "rainforest warriors" managed to maintain their autonomy and thereby their self-respect (Dew, 1978; Price, 2009).

Alleyne (2005: 9) points out: "Whereas culture is transmitted and ascribed, ethnicity is engendered through recognition of sameness and of common interests which, particularly in situations of competitiveness for scarce resources, leads to common actions to further interests." This paradigm works two ways. Whereas the Saramaka have maintained their culture by not identifying with the dominant cultures in Suriname, the society and cultures in which they reside have largely excluded them as well. This "double insulation", as I refer to it, has contributed to ensuring and preserving their cultural identity, both inside and outside, but for different reasons and with different results.

The sheer numbers illuminate the complexity of the situation in the past as well as the present. In 1788, when plantations had reached their peak, the total slave population was approximately 45 000 of a total of about 49 000 people. It is no wonder that of the 1200 troops sent at one time to quell a slave uprising, only 100 returned home. Stedman (1796) points out that the maroons or Bush Negroes were never actually defeated in the true sense of the word.

Removed from a culture and a continent where the institution of slavery existed but in a radically different form, uprooted West Africans were accustomed to rapidly acquiring new languages and quickly developing an understanding of colonial cultures. In light of this, it is easy to understand how escaped slaves managed to keep in touch on a regular basis with *les nègres sédentaires*, those still confined to slavery, waging battles in their favor when this was deemed necessary. Both the need of the slave owners to negotiate peace treaties with the tribal leaders of the escaped slaves



and the payments they made in guns to circumvent bloodshed, revealed the extent of the Maroon's powers of resistance (Bonaparte, 1884).

The slaves had to rapidly learn the various languages and dialects of their owners and overseers to carry out their orders. No doubt speaking a number of languages, often including a West African precursor to Saramaccan, as a result of interactions on the African continent, the slaves arrived prepared to deal with new languages. Changes in diet and surroundings undoubtedly required adjustments as well, but the need to understand and use the language of the oppressor to lessen the anger of an overseer was most likely a top priority. Patterns of L2 usage by bilinguals is evidence of the significant role played not only by knowledge of the language to be learned, but also by knowledge of the L1 (Siegel, 2008).

Despite the atrocities that befell thousands of West Africans who were ripped from their motherland and transplanted to the islands and beyond, their process of second language acquisition (SLA) *may not* have been significantly different from the normal processes of SLA under colonialism. In light of the numbers of slaves who were sold and murdered, or who escaped on a continual basis in the Americas, and the history of incorporating conquered peoples into one's own community in West Africa, it seems plausible that enslaved and marooned Africans always operated with an *adstrate perspective*. In both West African communities as well as in maroon communities such as that of the Saramaka, the constant inclusion of neighboring peoples and their languages has resulted in a process whereby new linguistic and cultural codes have been routinely added to the community's linguistic repertoire on a relatively continual basis. Language acquisition under these circumstances could be said to be viewed from a practical and pragmatic standpoint. No one language would have been seen as better, but rather simply more convenient under the circumstances, hence the dominant superstrate versus substrate model routinely used by Creolists may not be adequate when there is no qualitative difference in the valorization of different languages in contact. Thus an adstrate model seems more appropriate. It is more than likely that the motely crew of overseers in Suriname spoke non-standard varieties of English. The Dutch did not view Suriname as a New World home, but simply as a financial opportunity, and there was no emphasis at the time on the learning of standard Dutch or any other form of Dutch. Nonstandard varieties of English, therefore, had space to flourish. For the great majority of the inhabitants of Suriname there was little or no interaction with standard varieties of any language due to the fact that there was a diglossic situation between Dutch as the High Language and no available schooling in English (Stedman, 1796; Price, 2002).

Given the key position that language plays in the formation of identity, it is very likely that in these circumstances African languages rather than European languages would have played this role. The case for input of African languages into group identity among the various maroon groups is all the more compelling given the high mortality

rates and the constant influx of native-born Africans that characterized the slave populations of Suriname. The culturally integrated Maroon identity reflects considerable conscious agency on the part of runaway slaves. Assimilation and acculturation were not sought during the colonial period, and to a large degree they are not sought now. Price states, “Saramaka collective identity is predicated on a single opposition: freedom versus slavery. The central role of First-Time in Saramaka life is ideological; preservation of its knowledge is their way of saying, never again” (Price, 2002: 11).

At the present time, the descendants of the original African runaway slaves continue to demonstrate a sense of purpose in maintaining their identity through their cultural, linguistic, religious, and subsistence practices. In 1996, Wanze Eduards, a tribal captain, and Hugo Jabini, a law student at the time, initiated a court case in response to an incident involving logging rights. This internationally significant legal acknowledgment of the existence of the Saramaka and the resulting protection of their rights demonstrates that from the 17th to the 21st centuries, the Saramaka people have constantly fought for and won their sovereignty.

In a judgment rendered on November 28, 2007, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights declared that the Saramaka, a tribal people, had the same rights as other indigenous peoples. Hugo Jabini states: “Our ancestors fought for and won their freedom from slavery and established autonomous communities. We fought for and won our right for legal recognition, controlling and managing our territory” (Goldman Prize for Excellence in Protecting the Environment, 2010).

Although economic factors continue to create pressure for Saramaka men and women to leave the bush to seek work in the city and the coastal area, both their discourse and identity continue to reflect African roots. Popular culture has not been a sufficiently motivating factor for learning Dutch, and the current and historical distrust of outsiders has served the needs of the Saramaka people quite well. The pressure of global English, however, is another matter. Be that as it may, their attitudes toward life and their cultural values enable them to maintain a relatively separate social structure after hundreds of years.

Success in linguistic fieldwork depends upon developing an increased understanding of another culture and, hence, another language. Exploratory study for the sake of discovery is an essential part of this process. Given the nature of the politics of representation, primary sources are important for developing a deeper understanding or a new perspective. Questioning with what degree of certainty and in what context some facts are held dear, helps to ascertain the depth of knowledge or speculation in a given area within a discipline. Thinking critically about both theory and methods while conducting fieldwork and approaching the various aspects of linguistics from an interdisciplinary perspective are the only way to achieve a meaningful expansion of our knowledge base. Via fieldwork, techniques and strategies are viewed within the

context of a culture and its perception by the society at large (Newman & Ratliff, 2001).

Fieldwork, as a form of inquiry involving first hand observation made in the real world, involves a fair amount of experimentation and discovery. Immersing oneself in the day-to-day life of a group for the purpose of gaining clarity on particular issues generally requires the critical questioning of dominant paradigms. Acknowledging the difference between fieldwork and data gathering along with the attendant practical and pedagogical concerns confronting a researcher in a new environment is often daunting. However, publication of the results of fieldwork to encourage others to reflect upon their practices related to description, interpretation, analysis and theory benefits all (Newman and Ratliff, 2001). This approach is particularly valuable when studying groups which have historically been marginalized. Responsible researchers need to question the very nature of epistemology itself. In so doing, insidious assumptions that underlie hypotheses, research questions, observations and analyses may be unmasked and unpacked. Within such a context, an interdisciplinary approach would no doubt prove to be of immense value.

The persistence of identity boundaries has powerful implications for the study of language and culture, be it in the field of linguistics, sociology, anthropology, or psychology, etc. The processes involved in image formation and representation must be acknowledged for a particular culture to be better understood. The Saramaka have amply demonstrated their agency in the creation of their own self-image and self-awareness. Their personal and social identity has to this point been as Africans.

Linguists differ with respect to their goals and insights; all are shaped by the prevailing winds of the dominant discourses of their time. Current knowledge of Saramaccan, which remains for most an unwritten language, has been largely based on what has been written by various non-Saramaka researchers using word lists from the past or native speakers who have been acculturated into the larger societies of either Suriname or the Netherlands. This less than trustworthy knowledge base confounds an already complex picture. "Saramaccan Studies Without Tears" must come to an end. It is time to go to the actual Creole-speaking communities and carry out the necessary fieldwork (Alleyne, 1971; Muysken & Law, 2001).

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# PROMISED LAND: QUILOMBISMO, THE “QUILOMBO CLAUSE”, AND THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION IN CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL

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## 1 Introduction: quilombo as philosophy, quilombo as policy

“I believe that the Black and mulatto – the Brazilian of color – must have a racial counter-ideology and a counter position in socioeconomic terms. The Brazilian of color must strive simultaneously for a double change: socioeconomic change in the country, and change in race and color relations.” In 1968, through these words, Afro-Brazilian scholar, artist, and politician Abdias Nascimento called attention to the potentially divergent but essentially related nature of the two main objectives of Afro-Brazilian activism: first, to effect concrete change in the distribution of social and economic power in Brazil, and second, to promote a profound shift in cultural attitudes towards Afro-Brazilians, both among the Brazilian population as a whole and the Afro-Brazilian community in particular. As the above statement makes clear, political, cultural, social, economic, and spiritual empowerment were (and are) overlapping dimensions of comprehensive, necessary transformation in Brazilian race relations.

Among many other contributions to the Afro-Brazilian movement of the late twentieth century, Abdias Nascimento is well remembered for his conceptualization of Quilombismo, a political philosophy rooted in African political, social, economic, and cultural forms, and inspired by the quilombos of seventeenth century Brazil. Though defined differently by different people, quilombos can be best thought of as places where Afro-Brazilians lived, worked, and re-imagined their social relations, removed from the oppressive structures of Brazil’s plantation system. For Nascimento, the quilombos were genuine points of physical and cultural resistance. First articulated in 1980, his philosophy explores the possibility of developing similarly empowering relationships, within or outside the confines of the contemporary Brazilian state.

When Brazil’s new republican Constitution was enacted 1988, it contained a passage (Article 68) that read “Survivors of quilombo communities occupying their lands are recognized as definitive owners, and the State shall issue them relevant title deeds.” Starting several years after, existing rural black communities began to be identified as

surviving quilombo communities and were issued land titles that, presumably, gave them greater control over their land as well as improved access to government resources. However, the implementation of the “quilombo clause” (written from now on without quotation marks) has not been without controversy. Even after the initial decade or so, when authorities were reluctant to issue land titles, debate has raged over the multiple ways in which the clause has been interpreted.

The most conservative interpretations place heavy emphasis on the need for Afro-Brazilians to corroborate claims to quilombo status with tangible historical evidence that their ancestors were refugees, and that the community in question was indeed a resistance community with its own governance structures that were, politically and culturally, distinct from those in colonial Brazil. Yet there are others, on the opposite end of the spectrum, who define “quilombo” the same way that Nascimento did: as a space of independent social relations which was a historical reality and continues to be an important symbol in Afro-Brazilian politics today. “Quilombo,” in other words, does not only describe remote refugee communities, but also the broader Afro-Brazilian struggle for recognition and reparation.

The purpose of this paper is to examine land disputes of recent decades – related to the 1988 quilombo clause – from the perspective of Quilombismo. In other words, it will evaluate the effectiveness of the quilombo clause by interpreting it through the lens of a political ideology which took quilombos as a central component of its vision, both for its importance as a historical phenomenon and for its use as a viable symbol in the contemporary movement. It will also look at the ways in which various dimensions of recognition – historical, cultural, physical, social – feature in debates over land rights, and identify the challenges that these interactions reveal that the philosophy of Quilombismo may not.

The first section briefly explores the importance of quilombos as an Afro-Brazilian political and cultural symbol before 1988, focusing on the legacies of Quilombo dos Palmares. The second section provides an overview of Nascimento’s Quilombismo, highlighting its most salient features. The third section discusses the events of 1988 – particularly the drafting of the Constitution and, more significantly, the Afro-Brazilian mobilization that coincided with the centennial of the abolition of slavery. It also briefly describes the quilombo clause and the extent to which it has been implemented. The fourth section describes the guidelines established by Article 68 (the quilombo clause) for the conferring of land titles. It examines some of the interpretations of the clause, and identifies some of the major debates that have been provoked as a result of these conflicting interpretations. It also discusses a few of the ways in which the quilombo clause is reshaping rural Brazilians’ conceptions of themselves and their communities. Finally, the concluding section reflects upon the role of the quilombo in the politics of recognition in Brazil more broadly. Drawing from the case of quilombos in particular, it offers observations on the complex

relationship between the symbolic and the tangible, the obstacles to historical reparation when the discussion can be framed in multiple ways, and the challenges and contradictions that emerge when struggling for recognition in a nation where other groups – namely, indigenous communities – are trying to do the same thing.

## **2 Immortal influence: Ganga Zumba and Quilombo dos Palmares**

The influence of the quilombo on political and cultural life in Brazil is by no means restricted to Nascimento's Quilombismo. Quilombos hold tremendous weight, symbolically at least, as models of resistance and enlightened social organization. Quilombo dos Palmares is the most widely remembered quilombo, and its leader continues to be an important source of inspiration for Afro-Brazilian activists. Quilombo dos Palmares was a community of escaped slaves and others in colonial Brazil that was located in the present-day state of Alagoas and existed for most of the seventeenth century (1605-1694) as a politically, socially, economically, and culturally autonomous republic. Research by the Palmares Archaeological Project has shown that Palmares was home not only to people of African descent (who comprised the majority of the community), but also to Indians, mestiços, renegade whites, Jews, Muslims, and "heretics". The Palmarinos spoke a syncretic language that fused Portuguese with African and indigenous Brazilian languages, and their religion combined both Christian and African influences (Stam, 1997: 43). They conducted trade with other settlements, and engaged in diplomacy. For instance, in 1678, Ganga Zumba (Palmares' best remembered leader) went to Recife with an entourage to sign a peace treaty with the Portuguese and was received "with great solemnity" by the Portuguese governor (Stam: 43).

Nascimento describes Palmares as a "Black Troy", which, from 1630 to 1697, resisted twenty-seven attacks launched by the Portuguese and the Dutch, who for some time ruled over much of the state of Pernambuco (Nascimento, 1978: 394). It is remembered by many Afro-Brazilian activists as the "first New World prototype of what might be called a utopian republic", and it has been the "subject of at least two major feature-fiction films, *Ganga Zumba* (1963), and *Quilombo* (1984); of many documentaries, notably Linduarte Noronha's *Aruada* (1960), Vladimir Carvalho's *Quilombo* (1975), and Samin Cherques and Moisés Weltman's *Zumbi dos Palmares* (1963); and most recently of a TV miniseries, *Zumbi, O Rei dos Palmares*" (Stam: 41).

Zumbi (Ganga Zumba), in particular, has received a great deal of attention. More than a secular hero, Zumbi is viewed by some as a divine and immortal spirit, worthy of respect from those who consider themselves to be his descendants. Popular discourse treats Zumbi not only as "the premier Afro-Brazilian hero but also as the exemplar of antiracist and anti-colonial dogma and praxis... [and the] strongest resistance to the slave-based colonial regime and, consequently, the struggle for economic and political



justice” (Anderson, 1996: 545). On November 20, 1995, Brazilians celebrated the 300th anniversary of Zumbi’s death, described as a day of black consciousness, and of Zumbi’s immortality, and that same year, Zumbi was chosen as the theme for Salvador do Bahia’s carnival (Anderson: 545). Thus, Quilombo dos Palmares has been a notable presence in Brazilian cultural and political discourses, but even here, the representations of the community and its significance vary, and tensions between cultural appeal and political legitimacy are apparent.

### **3 Quilombismo: an Afro-Brazilian political alternative**

In 1980, Abdias Nascimento published an article in the *Journal of Black Studies* entitled “Quilombismo: An Afro-Brazilian Political Alternative.” The ideas it outlined were predicated on the understanding that, first, Brazilians of African descent constitute the body and soul of Brazil, and that, second, Afro-Brazilians must “win back their memory, which has been systematically assaulted by Brazilian Western-inspired structures of domination for almost 500 years” (Nascimento, 1980: 141). The goal of Quilombismo, as described by Elisa Larkin Nascimento, is the “establishment of a Brazilian National Quilombist state, based on the model of the quilombos, which constitute Brazil’s most authentic tradition of liberation” (Larkin Nascimento, 1980: 214). It is a program of liberation and social organization that draws upon the strengths of African culture, rather than upon European forms of governance. Nascimento’s “Quilombismo” departs from socialist conceptualizations of progress by emphasizing the importance of culture in a way that Marxism did not. It describes quilombos as the “only Brazilian attempts to create a democratic society, free, in which all people, Blacks, Indians, and whites, achieved a great political, economic and social advance” (Nascimento, 1980: 150).

In “Quilombismo” Nascimento advocates for the “erection of a society founded on justice, equality and respect for all human beings; on freedom; a society whose intrinsic nature makes economic or racial exploitation impossible” (Nascimento, 1980: 160). He writes about nationalism, but makes clear that by nationalism he does not mean xenophobia. He writes that Quilombismo, like black nationalism more broadly, is “universalist and internationalist in itself, in that it sees the national liberation of peoples respecting their unique cultural and political integrity, as an imperative for world liberation” (Nascimento, 1980: 155).

He further asserts the deep bonds between Afro-Brazilian and indigenous Brazilian liberation movements, observing that, in both, the quilombo settlements and indigenous societies, respect for nature, the cosmos, and the ecosystem were central components of daily life. He insists that the black struggle “cannot be separated from the mutual liberation of the indigenous peoples of these lands, who are also victims of the racism and wanton destructiveness introduced and enforced by the European colonialists and their heirs” (Nascimento, 1980: 148). Nascimento’s philosophy

further establishes that every Afro-Brazilian who accepts the notion of “racial democracy” is a “traitor to himself and considers himself inferior” (p. 167). Examining “Quilombismo” in relation the quilombo clause and resulting land disputes highlights the extent to which the philosophy –particularly its cultural dimensions – reflects the situation of rural Afro-Brazilians, and the implications of Nascimento’s interpretation of the quilombos for race relations and the politics of recognition in Brazil more broadly.

Nascimento ends “Quilombismo” with a proposal for an annual Afro-Brazilian Memory Week, along with other tangible policy changes, such as voting rights for the illiterate and amnesty for black political prisoners. Afro-Brazilian Memory Week would combine celebrations, continuous research, critique, and reflection on the past and present living conditions of the masses of African origin in Brazil, and support for existing Afro-Brazilian organizations. Though such a week has yet to be established, many of its elements have figured into political conversations and have effected policy changes at various levels of Brazilian political organization. This was particularly the case in 1988 when the centennial of the abolition of slavery sparked critiques that, to a certain extent, influenced the drafting of Brazil’s new, non-authoritarian constitution that same year and led to the enactment of such pieces of legislation as the quilombo clause – with questionable results.

#### **4 1988: commemoration, criticism, and quilombos**

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May 13, 1988 marked the one hundred year anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Brazil. However, as many pointed out on the eve of that anniversary, the formal abolition of slavery hardly meant the end of racial discrimination in Brazil. The quilombo clause was the product of discussions aimed at bringing to light the continued inequalities in Brazilian society and bridging the gap between rhetorical and tangible reparation. Brazil was the last country in the Americas to end slave traffic and abolish colonial slavery (Pitanga, 1999: 32). And in the century that followed, while the formal structures of plantation slavery eroded and Brazil was shaped by multiple political regimes and new models of socioeconomic organization, racial discrimination remained, even if perpetuated through different modalities.

The Unified Black Movement Against Racism and Racial Discrimination (MNU) voiced widely-held concerns when it declared, “On [Abolition Day] was signed a law that only remained on paper, covering up a situation of domination in which to this day, Black people find themselves thrown into the favelas, cortiços, and invasões; marginalization, prostitution, beggary, prison, unemployment; still victims of inhuman police violence and repression” (Larkin Nascimento, 1980: 211). In a similar vein, historian Emilia Viottida Costa pointed out that “abolition was only the first step toward the emancipation of the Brazilian people. The arbitrariness, ignorance, violence, poverty, and prejudice that slave society created still weigh upon us. While it

is fair to commemorate the Thirteenth of May, it is nevertheless imperative not to allow the celebration to blur our vision to the point of turning the freedom it symbolizes into a myth at the service of oppression and exploitation of labor” (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 818).

As the military regime in Brazil began to cede ground to a civilian government in the 1980s, the country entered a period of democratic transition (Hoffman French, 2006: 343). José Sarney, the country’s new president, took office in 1985, and a constituent assembly began to meet regularly to draft a new, republican Constitution. During this time, the Afro-Brazilian Movement fought for legislation that would improve the political and socioeconomic status of Afro-Brazilians in tangible ways. However, compared to the lobbying and demonstrations of indigenous activists, representation of black consciousness movement activists was limited in these deliberations. The legislation that the assembly drafted, therefore, was the result of significant compromise on the part of Afro-Brazilian activists (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 822-823).

The 1988 constitution included provisions that: 1) established racism as a crime without bail or statute of limitations (Art. 5, sec. XLII); 2) mandated the demarcation of the lands of contemporary quilombo communities (Art. 68, Transitional Provisions); 3) proclaimed the pluri-cultural and multiethnic nature of the country, providing that the state would protect manifestations of Afro-Brazilian culture among others (Art. 215, par. 1); 4) preserved as national patrimony the sites of former quilombos and their documents (Art. 216, sec. 5); and 5) mandated inclusion of ‘the contributions of different cultures and ethnicities to the formation of the Brazilian people’ in history courses (Art. 242, sec. 1). Additionally, the Federal Ministry of Culture (at the instigation of the Zumbi Memorial) created an Abolition Centennial Commission out of which was born the Palmares Cultural Foundation (Da Silva Marins et al., 2004: 794-795). This foundation would later spearhead efforts to identify quilombos throughout Brazil.

In their introduction to *Black Brazil*, Larry Crook and Randal Johnson write that the events of 1988 “dramatically illustrate the emergence of a new racial dynamics based less on the apparent quiescence that has long characterized official versions of race relations in the country than by denunciations of deeply engrained racial discrimination and contested interpretations of racial identities and stereotypes” (Crook & Johnson: 2-3). The politics behind the implementation of the quilombo clause testify to the truth of this observation. Following the passage of Article 68, the Zumbi Memorial succeeded in appropriating the lands of Palmares at Sierra da Barriga, in the state of Alagoas (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 827). However, it was not until a few years later that the Brazilian government began recognizing some rural black communities as quilombos.

The year 1995 was “a watershed in terms of the evolution of race policy” (Da Silva Marins et al., 2004: 799), when some of the 1988 legislation that was enacted formally, but not in practice, received increased attention. That year, Dr. Maurice Glege Ahanhanzo of Benin, the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights, visited Brazil. His report on the condition of human rights in the country was a direct blow to Brazil’s international self-identification as a racial democracy. It concluded that the legislation defining race discrimination as a crime failed to diminish persistent racial inequalities. It also concluded that research and policy measures are necessary to close the cycle of discrimination and general denial of the racial dimensions of socioeconomic inequality (Da Silva Marins et al., 2004: 800).

In subsequent years, the Palmares Foundation, the National Institute of Colonization and Land Reform (INCRA), and state governments began to grant title deeds with increasing frequency. And in 2003, President Lula’s Special Secretariat for Policies Promoting Racial Equality published the National Policy for the Promotion of Racial Equality, which emphasized the need for affirmative action and quilombo community entitlement, among other measures (Da Silva Marins et al., 2004: 806). Stam argues that the 1988 Constitution established a precedent for more than five hundred territories inhabited by the remnants of the maroon communities. Indeed, as of 2006, between 723 and 1,296 communities have been identified in twenty-two states (Hoffman French, 2006: 341).

## **5 “Entitled to your own opinion”: the “fine print” and divergent interpretations of the Quilombo Clause**

Debates over land entitlement and quilombo status since 1988 reveal the extent to which socio-cultural attitudes and the interpretation of the law are interrelated. The uneven implementation of the quilombo clause, and the effects of the clause on the social dynamics within rural Brazilian communities, reflects not only the failure of Brazilian political administrations to acknowledge the full extent of the recognition demanded by the Afro-Brazilian movement. It also provokes discussion about the relationship between claims to recognition by the Afro-Brazilian movement (as expressed through Quilombismo) and the actual demands and socio-cultural realities of rural Afro-Brazilians.

The social groups (potentially) classified today as surviving quilombo communities formed their territories in different ways: through escape before the abolition of slavery, through land donations made when plantations were divided up after the abolition of slavery; from the breaking up of estates belonging to religious orders (so-called saints’ or holy lands); through purchase; in return for providing religious services; or in return for military services rendered to authorities in times of severe social crisis or war (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 820). However, despite the fact that

these communities were formed in different ways, judicial interpretation of the constitutional provision granting them land titles has generally restricted the right to those deemed to be descended from groups that escaped or rebelled violently against enslavement. As Do Rosário Linhares argues, this interpretation “violates the original intention of the provision and raises the issue of how to define the collective identity of Afro-Brazilian quilombo communities.” Furthermore, “bureaucratic procedures designed to ensure proof of rebellion or escape, as well as the interagency conflicts in land tenure administration, further complicate the implementation of the constitutional right” (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 817).

Requirements of proof of quilombo status have expanded and contracted over the years, and almost every quilombo has been identified by slightly different criteria. But generally, land entitlement procedures proceed as follows: 1) submission of a simple statement of their existence by communities petitioning for quilombo status; 2) mapping of the claimed territory; 3) an official investigation or (if this is deemed unnecessary) recognition; and 4) issuing of an officially recognized title deed. Technical reports by experts, researchers, and social scientists are of crucial importance to the process of official identification and recognition for the purposes of land entitlement. A survey of the community’s history and cultural, economic, and social relations is also required (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 821). The land must be used communally, the community must include elderly residents who can recount memories or talk about a slave past, physical markers of long-term occupation of the land must be present, and cultural practices that could be construed as ethnic markers must be clearly identifiable (Hoffman French, 2006: 342). In other words, to secure quilombo status, the community must provide evidence not only of the fact that they have been long-term occupants of the land in question, but that their community actively resisted the structures and relationships of slavery since its inception, and drew upon African traditions in the process of doing so. At the end of the procedure, a final report is issued and published in the federal legal compendium, and for successful applicants, this completes the process of land entitlement.

The primary and enunciated objectives of both the government and Afro-Brazilian activists in establishing these procedures was to “guarantee that impoverished rural black communities are inserted into the nation with full citizenship rights while their way of life and cultural practices are protected – a goal of the newly conceived multicultural, pluralistic Brazilian society” (Hoffman French, 2006: 343). The 1988 constitutional provision, however, was the result of significant compromise on the part of Afro-Brazilian activists. The movement’s core political objectives (expressed in large measure by Nascimento) included socioeconomic change – including land entitlement – in black communities in general. The phrase “quilombo communities” was the result of creative maneuvers on the part of Afro-Brazilian activists. Reparation for extant resistance communities was, of course, an important priority for

Nascimento and his colleagues. But the significance of those advances was dwarfed by the broader hope that all Afro-Brazilians would, eventually, acquire the socioeconomic and political independence necessary to redefine themselves and their communities, as did the residents of the seventeenth-century quilombos. For members of the Afro-Brazilian movement, the word “quilombo” designated a “process of independent work, free from submission to landowners” (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 834).

That definition, however, was not politically convenient. Many legislators believed that taking “quilombo” to mean “rural black community” would result in the extension of property rights to so many rural Afro-Brazilian communities that the process of providing the access thus entitled to them would be fiscally burdensome (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 823). Thus, in practice, the criteria for quilombo status and land titles were extremely restrictive and problematic in both a political and a socio-cultural sense.

In the majority of communities petitioning for quilombo status, land is used collectively. The rural areas in question range from forested areas to natural pastures. In most cases, regardless of the ecosystem type, strong connections exist between these natural areas and the lifestyles of the community members. Nascimento observed that the members of the seventeenth century quilombos had a deep respect for nature, and an appreciation of the interconnectedness of humans and the ecosystems surrounding and supporting them. Thus it is not surprising that this appreciation of nature is a stated element of Nascimento’s Quilombismo. However, in the process of evaluating the present-day quilombos, representatives from land reform agencies visit the communities and offer largely unnecessary recommendations for modifications to their internal spatial organization. Some of these interventions have been disastrous, and, thus, a clearer understanding of the use of natural resources by these populations is necessary (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 821). Afro-Brazilian activists emphasize the importance of better understanding the importance of these lands for these groups, as well as the importance of respecting the local culture in these territories.

Yet cultural respect and sensitivity is rarely a feature of the investigative work done prior to the granting of land titles to extant quilombo communities. The fact that material evidence is often required, and that the members of the quilombo are assessed and granted rights as an ethnic group, rather than as individuals, has resulted in the de facto establishment of cultural requirements for quilombo status that were not directly expressed in Article 68. The process of petitioning for, and acquiring, quilombo status is thus culturally insensitive and prescriptive, as communities feel the pressure to adopt cultural forms that may or may not have been a part of their daily lives.

Culture is a central element of Nascimento’s Quilombismo. Nascimento asserts the importance of culture in social and political relations, saying that socioeconomic

empowerment cannot be separated from cultural independence. He describes the seventeenth-century quilombos as models of inclusive sociopolitical arrangements, sensitive to all of the cultures represented in the community but also deeply informed by Bantu cultural practices and governance structures in particular. African culture is a central component of Nascimento's Quilombismo, and it is thus not unsurprising that there are cultural requirements for obtaining quilombo status under Article 68. In practice, though, these requirements serve less to empower the communities involved than they do to restrict the definition of "quilombo" and place upon rural Afro-Brazilians the burden of providing acceptably "colorful" evidence to prove their histories as members of resistance communities which somehow managed to remain completely distinct from colonial Brazil at large.

Drawing from her investigations of changing conceptualizations of community in Mocambo after receiving quilombo status, Jan Hoffman French observes that, with the advent of the quilombo cause, rural black communities started to link themselves to an "imagined African past" (Hoffman French, 2006: 341). But this past is by no means a new feature of political discourse and cultural life. According to anthropologist Rita Segato, traditions in Brazil "have inscribed a monumental African codex containing the accumulated ethnic experience and strategies of African descendants as part of the nation" (Hoffman French, 2006: 342). In other words, African influences in Brazilian society more broadly are widespread and take many different forms.

Furthermore, "this codex operates as a stable reservoir of meaning from which flows a capillary, informal, and fragmentary impregnation of the whole society" (Hoffman French, 2006: 342). African culture is a deeply entrenched element of Brazilian nationalist discourse. The idea that all of Brazilian society is infused with African influence is a supporting pillar of the ideology of racial democracy, and it speaks to the "transformation of black culture into a product of cultural history" (Bacelar, 1999: 100). Given the continued centrality of the assumptions of racial democracy in Brazil's conception of itself, the recognition of certain individuals as descendants of members of largely African resistance communities within Brazil presented distinct problems for the Brazilian government. It is safe to say that this paradoxical trade-off between the empowerment of different communities and Brazil's projected identity as a racially and culturally harmonious country is a persistent feature of Brazilian politics of recognition.

The only way to enact quilombo legislation without undermining the myth of racial democracy, then, is through what Hoffman French calls a "folklorization of blackness" (Hoffman French, 2006: 342). Folklorization reinforces a definition of quilombos that does not pose a threat to the existing social order, because it exists in a historical vacuum. It is a testament to a historical phenomenon with a legacy that is visible in Brazilian society more broadly. Through present-day quilombos, there is

“evidence” to prove that Brazil’s history is indeed marked by an appreciation of Afro-Brazilian culture and resistance to the exploitative practices of plantation slavery.

Furthermore, the pressure to produce material evidence of an African past has contributed to a reframing of the concept of “community,” such that some rural areas, like Macombo, are marked by increasingly polarized relationships between Afro-Brazilians, white Brazilians, and indigenous Brazilians (Hoffman French, 2006: 350). Assuming a black identity in rural Brazil does not preclude multiple identifications drawing on local, national, and international discourses (Hoffman French, 2006: 341), but the requirements for land titles have, arguably, restricted Afro-Brazilians’ potential for cultural autonomy more than they have expanded it. Additionally, post-1988 land disputes have sometimes brought Afro-Brazilians into conflict with indigenous Brazilians. The two groups are struggling for autonomy through distinct sets of legislation, and they have sometimes found each other in competition for the same land (Hoffman French, 2006: 350).

To make the situation even more complex and problematic, for many rural black communities petitioning for quilombo status, government recognition brings the “promise of modernization – electricity, running water, better roads, technical assistance for agricultural production, and health care – all of which are part of the implicit promises that come with recognition and land.” The implementation of these practices “does not necessarily comport with the expectations associated with folkloric aspects of the requirements of recognition and can create a gap that is often filled with feuding, disgruntlement, and the exacerbation of factional fighting within the quilombos” (Hoffman French, 2006: 343). Although Nascimento emphasized the importance of a “constant process of revitalization and remodernization, attending to the needs of the various historical times and geographical moments” (Nascimento, 1980: 153), the quilombo clause was, ironically, interpreted with cultural conservatism that required that quilombos be “anti-modern” in order to qualify for the sorts of access that is part and parcel of inclusion in a “modern” state.

“What are the scientifically correct parameters that can lead a social scientist or jurist to say that one rural black community should be considered by cultural or ethnic criteria, whereas another can be addressed only in the legal terms of strictly administrative land tenure procedure?” (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 822). Clearly, the criteria for eligibility to receive land titles, though articulated differently in different contexts, are largely inadequate from the perspective of broad Afro-Brazilian recognition and reparation for historical injustice. To conclude, Article 68 is usually interpreted such that entitlement is extended only to the “far away fugitive” and does not acknowledge the other ways in which black communities are formed, including the purchase of land by emancipated slaves. The clause thus only provides “partial and incidental reparation for a historic injustice” (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 832). And rather than being seen as mere beneficiaries of government services, Afro-Brazilians



should be seen in “the way their ancestors, in fact, are represented: as actors who maintain a principle of autonomy, establishing exchange relations with surrounding society... [and] unless these relations of ethnic assertion are observed as a whole, the coherence of the overall process of building identity is lost” (Do Rosário Linhares, 2004: 833).

## **6 Conclusion: reflections on the politics of Afro-Brazilian recognition**

The discussion of the role of the quilombo in Afro-Brazilian politics, from Nascimento’s political philosophy to the highly imperfect process of granting land titles to rural Afro-Brazilian communities under the guidelines established by the 1988 Constitution’s quilombo clause, provokes reflection on the challenges faced by Afro-Brazilian movements in their struggle for recognition and change in the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres. First, the case of the quilombo reveals the deep interconnectedness of the symbolic and tangible dimensions of discussions surrounding the continued legacy of historical events, and the policies that those discussions (sometimes) engender. Nascimento’s Quilombismo established that cultural autonomy is inseparable from socioeconomic empowerment, and symbolic value is only valuable inasmuch as it is able to inspire real change in the various dimensions of race relations. The link between the symbolic and the material is equally strong on the side of those implementing quilombo-related policy, but in a less productive way. The material requirements for quilombo status are shaped deeply by concerns about the symbolic value of granting land titles. Culture, of course, is an extremely important dimension of that symbolism.

The quilombo issue also highlights the challenges that are inherent in politics of recognition where the discussion can be framed in different ways. Some define “quilombo” very conservatively, while others use the term “quilombo” to describe Afro-Brazilian autonomy in an extremely broad sense. Each perspective is accompanied by a different attitude towards race relations, and the extent to which race relations can, and should, be altered through concrete political changes involving social and economic restructuring and investment.

Finally, reflective processes such as those outlined above shed light on the ways in which politics of recognition are particularly complicated in hybrid nations, where more than one racial/cultural group seeks recognition from a state that is generally recalcitrant when it comes to disrupting the status quo. The Afro-Brazilian movement seeks concrete reparation from the Brazilian government in the form of land titles. However, the complicated and conflicted implementation of these policies has, in some cases, disrupted Afro-Brazilians’ conceptions of themselves and their communities in ways that are not always positive. Furthermore, it has at times pitted Afro-Brazilians against indigenous Brazilians in land disputes, even though

Nascimento's philosophy of Quilombismo heavily emphasized the solidarity between these two groups, and the inclusive nature of the quilombo settlements in general.

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# THE MOON HAS A DIRTY FACE: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE MIGRATION OF AN AMERINDIAN ORIGIN MYTH

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I hear their whispers.ethereal, soft and still. Daughter, if you do not remember us,  
who will? [Unknown]

“Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons...” Part III Article 14 Draft United Nations Declaration

(Keal, 2003: 229)

Every society has its own ideas about how the world began and how different beings and elements came to exist. These provide explanations for the origins of human beings, animals, plants, rivers, landscapes, stars, the sky, and other things including the Earth itself. The failure of Western science to acknowledge the understanding and insight inherent in the origin stories of Indigenous Americans/Amerindians – our society’s social imaginaries – has been a source of conflict and friction and ultimately limits our ability to understand one another. Taking into consideration recent migrational theories regarding the peopling of the Americas, this paper will focus on one specific myth, the origin of the moon, tracing its various similar elements, from the Northern polar extremities down into the jungles of South America and beyond, in an attempt to find/track a common thread/migrational pattern through the elements that resurface in different versions of this myth.

Most people are familiar with the word “mythology”, though it is not easily defined. Even the existence of mythology can be called into doubt. Wherever myths are deeply cherished, wherever they touch people’s lives they vanish and become something else. Many would say that they vanish completely. To some, they’re mere stories, for others they are our stories and histories. The following exploration is more story than history, yet it yields an important connection in the web that binds the indigenous of the Americas together as a family.

“As a result of some intimate and/or love affair, Moon acquires its present position/or appearance” ...the shaker/rattle sounds, all is silence in the circle of people attending the session...I am eight

years old and am continuing a journey that has been a part of my family for as long as there have been voices that speak.”

“Sun was a young woman and lived in the East, while her brother, Moon, lived in the West. The girl had a lover who used to come every month in the dark of the moon to court her. He would come at night, and leave before daylight and although she talked with him she could not see his face in the dark, and he would not tell her his name, until she was wondering all the time who it could be. At last she hit upon a plan to find out, so the next time he came, as they were sitting together in the dark of the *asi*, she slyly dipped her hand into the cinders and ashes of the fireplace and rubbed it over his face, saying, “Your face is so cold, you must have suffered from the wind”, and pretended to be very sorry for him but he did not know that she had ashes on her hand. After awhile, he left her and went away again.”

“The next night when the Moon came up in the sky, his face was covered with spots and then his sister knew he was the one who had been coming to see her. He was so ashamed to have her know it that he kept as far away as he could at the other end of the sky all the night. Ever since, he tries to keep a long way behind the Sun, and when he does sometimes have to come near her in the west, he makes himself as thin as a ribbon so that he can hardly be seen.” (Mooney, 1995: 256-257).

Although this is a rendition transcribed by James Mooney in *Myths of the Cherokee*, it is close enough to my paternal grandmother Mae Rogers Maxwell’s version that I share it with you. While conducting field research in Dominica with the Kalinago people in April of 2007 I received an edition of Kalinago myths from Garnette Joseph entitled “Kalinago Myths: A retelling”, as written and reinterpreted by Julius Green, and read the following:

Hiali  
(The moon is a man with a dirty face  
But in our lives he fills a vital place.

Before the moon was a moon, (it is said),  
A girl became pregnant (though not wed)  
By a lover, (if we’re right),  
Who courted her covertly at night.  
Yes, at night.

Who he was she didn't know  
But many people say it was so.

They say that the girl's mother on watch took a stand,  
And taking some soot in her hand, with her hand  
She daubed the lover's face with the same when he came.  
From then on the marks of the soot on his face have remained.

Well, in the morning  
With the dawning  
They found that the girl's lover  
Was really her brother.  
People mocked him so much that, he, for shame,  
(was the claim)  
Withdrew to the sky up on high.  
It is there and how you will see him now,  
With the soot on his brow,  
On his very brow... (Green, 2002: 9).

This was not my first encounter with a parallel myth, there are many among the various nations in the United States. But it was my first Pan-American experience and I became very excited by the possibilities it presented. Beginning with the northern extremities of the Americas, the following is an account of some of the tribes that maintain the "Dirty Face" and/or incestuous moon myth throughout the Americas.

**North America:** The North Alaska Inupiat, who reside in Alaska's Northwest Arctic and North Slope boroughs and the Bering Straits Region, have a version that they share with Noatagmiut (Noatak) that goes like this:

"A brother and sister were living alone in one house; the brother told his sister that she ought to marry and bring a hunter into the household to help out. The sister refused, saying they did not need help. She asked her brother to seek a wife, but he too refused, saying that he had enough clothing; one night the brother sneaked over to his sister's bed; wanting to find out who was violating her, she marked the man's face with ashes; in the morning the sister went to the *karigi* and saw the ashes on her brother's cheek; she tells everyone what has happened and announces that she is going to leave forever; picks up a stone lamp; walks counter clock wise in a circle; becoming hotter and hotter she ascends into the sky and

becomes the sun, her brother follows, he becomes bright, but not hot; from that time on the moon, the brother, pursued the sun, his sister (Gubser, 1965: 190-199).

The Caribou Inuit of Northern Canada's Keewatin Region of the Northwest territories is related as follows: people find brother and sister lying together; they are ashamed and rise up into the sky, turn into Moon and Sun; both carry torches, moon moves rapidly, his torch goes out so his light remains fainter than that of his sister (Rasmussen, 1930: 79-80).

The tale from Eastern Greenland, of which there exist four versions (some recorded as early as 1835) is very similar. Moon comes to his sister Sun; she smears his face with soot; in the morning she recognizes her elder brother, she runs with a burning torch...ascends to the sky running in circles, he follows her in her journey, thus becoming the moon (Thalbitzer, 1914: 397-403). The legend of how the brother moon pursued his sister sun up into the air is well known in Western Greenland. Nowadays people say that the spots to the right at the upper edge of the moon is the man of the moon himself; formerly the spots were considered soot, with which the sun had smeared her brother's face (Birket-Smith, 1976: 437-438).

The Koyukon are a group of people living in northern Alaska. Their traditional home is along the Koyukuk and Yukon rivers. The Koyukon language belongs to a widespread family called Na-Dene or Athabaskan, spoken by native people scattered throughout northwestern North America and in pockets as far south as California and Arizona. In their version, a girl rejects all suitors, but somebody visits her at night. One night, she ties a feather to his hair. In the morning, she sees the feather in the hair of the eldest of her four brothers. She puts on her best clothes and ascends from the East as the Sun. Her brother forgets to put on one of his moccasins and goes after her. He turns into the Moon. People do not look at the Sun, sympathizing with her shame (Chapman, 1914: 183-184).

The Caddo Nation is a confederacy of several Southeastern Native American Tribes, including the Adai, Cahinnio, Eyeish, Hainai, Kadohadacho, Nabedache, Nabiti, Nagodoche, Nadaco, Nanatsoho, Nasoni, Natchitoches, Nechaui, Neche, Ouachita, Tula, and Yattasi, who are related to the Pawnee, Wichita, and Kitsai. The Caddo Confederacy traditionally inhabited much of what is now East Texas, northern Louisiana and portions of southern Arkansas and Oklahoma. The different Caddo languages have converged into a single language. In the Caddo version of the myth, Moon is an unmarried Chief, who has a younger sister. He visits her secretly. She paints her fingers and smears his forehead and in the morning sees the marks on her brother. Moon is ashamed, ascends to the sky; where the paint can still be seen on his face (Dorsey, 1997: 11-12). The Cherokee people historically settled in the South

Eastern United States, principally the Carolinas, Georgia, East Tennessee and North East Alabama. In the Cherokee version (which has several variations), Brother Moon visited his sister Sun, she smeared his face with ashes and he ascended into the sky and has shunned her ever since (Mooney, 1995: 256-257).

**Meso- and Central America:** The Totonac people inhabited the eastern coastal and mountainous regions of Mexico at the time of the Spanish arrival in 1519. Today they reside in the states of Veracruz, Puebla, and Hidalgo. The Sierra Totonac's story is as follows: Lascivious Moon comes to women trying to lead them away, one of them splashes water over him, and this is the origin of the spots on the moon (Ichon, 1969: 57). The Cabecar, along with the Bribri, are the indigenous people of Talamanca and are part of the Amazon basin cultural grouping. They live in Costa Rica in the Taoamanca-Cavecar reserve which covers large areas of the interior Talamanca mountains. A smaller reserve, Kekoldi, is located just inland from Puerto Viejo. In the Kekoldi story, the female Moon is rendered dull in punishment for incest with her brother Sun (Stone, 1962: 55).

The Kuna are indigenous people of Panama and Colombia. Most live in three politically autonomous *comarcas* or reservations in Panama, and there are a few in small villages in Colombia. The greatest number of Kuna people live on small islands in the *comarca* of Kuna Yala. The other two Kuna *comarcas* in Panama are Kunja de Madugandi and Kuna de Wargandi. There are also communities of Kuna people in Panama City, Colon and other cities. In the Kuna version of the myth a youth sleeps with his sister and she smears her lover's face with *genipa*. In the morning, her brother cannot wash his face, so he runs away, ascends to the sky, and turns into the Moon. The marks are preserved on his face. Until they are old enough to know the true story, children are told that these marks represent a rabbit (Wassen, 1934: 5-7).

**South America:** The Warao are an indigenous people inhabiting the Orinoco Delta region. Most of the approximately 20,000 Warao live in northeastern Venezuela, with smaller numbers in neighboring Guyana and Surinam. In their version of the myth, two sisters paint their breasts to smear their brother/lover. Upon discovery, the brother first turns into a possum and then into the moon (Wilbert, 1970: 63-65). The Wayana speak a language of the Cariban family and live in the south-eastern part of the Guiana highlands, a region divided between Brazil, Surinam and French Guiana. Their rendering of the myth is as follows: To identify her unknown lover, a girl smears her lover's face with *genipa*. In the morning she recognizes her brother. He is ashamed, ascends to the sky and becomes the moon (Magaña, 1987: 54).

The Wayapi (Wayampi) are a Tupi-Guarani speaking group located in the south-eastern border area between French Guiana and the central part of the Brazilian state of Amapa, at the confluence of Camopi and Oyapock rivers and in the basins of the



Amapari and Carapanatuba Rivers. The Wayupi say that the moon was the lover of his two sisters. They smeared his face with *genipa* to know who was coming to them. In the morning he was ashamed and ascended into the sky (Grenand, 1982: 132). The Zapara are a South American people indigenous to the Amazon Jungle that straddles the border of Ecuador and Peru. In their story, Moon is married but also visits his sister. She smears her lover's face with *genipa* juice. He is ashamed and ascends into the sky. His wife turns into a bird that sings in the moonlight (Reinburg, 1921: 11-12).

The Macuna are a Tucanoan speaking group who live near the confluence of the Pira-Parana and Apaporis rivers, in the Colombian Department of Vaupes and the Brazilian state of Amazonas. In their story, Menery Yo is the daughter of Father of the world. She gets to see how her brother Umakano (the Moon) makes a hole in the sand to insert his penis to cause papaya and cotton to grow from his semen. She invites him to her hammock but warns that that would be the one and only time that he could visit her. He continues to visit her, so she smears his face with *genipa*. He cannot wash the paint off, so he drowns himself. He is revived and thrown up into the sky to become the spotted moon (Trupp, 1977: 50-56). The Ocaina and the Yagua who live in Peru (Girard, 1958: 137-138) as well as the Bora and the Tacuna who reside in Peru, Colombia and Brazil (Anderson de Thiesen, 1975: 17-19) tell a similar version of the myth in which the father smears his son's face with *genipa* in order to know who is violating his daughter. When the father finds out it is his son, he curses him and banishes him to the sky.

The Guarasu (Riester, 1977: 330-331) and Tupari of Brazil (Caspar, 1975: 195) have a similar myth: A sister paints her brother with *genipa* juice and this is the source of spots on the moon. The Apapocuva who live in the state of Sao Paulo give a two spirit twist to this story: Moon comes to his brother Sun to make homosexual love; Sun smears his face with *genipa* juice. In the morning Sun recognizes his younger brother and they ascend to the sky. First, Moon takes day for himself but is too hot; he takes the night so he can hide his face from his brother (Nimuendaju, 1914: 331).

This ends our story cycle, now I would like to juxtapose the distributional pattern of this myth with some of the most recent theories concerning human migration in the Americas. The dominant theory posits a single origin from the region of the Bering Straits. A recent study of DNA suggests that nearly all Native Americans can trace part of their ancestry to just six women, whose descendants immigrated to North, Central and South America as much as 20,000 years ago. The authors of this study, published in 2008 by the scientific journal *PLoS One*, believe that these women left a DNA legacy that can be found in about 95% of native people throughout the Americas. The founding mothers are believed to have lived between 18,000 and 21,000 years ago, though not necessarily at the same time, according to study co-

author Ugo Perego. The six founding mothers apparently did not live in Asia because the DNA signatures they left behind aren't found there. Perego believes that they probably lived in Beringia, the now-submerged land bridge that stretched to North America (National Geographic News 13-Mar-2008).

A theory that contests some dominant notions about the dispersal of all of the indigenous peoples of the Americas from the Bering Straits is put forward in The BBC Documentary "Ancient Voices: The hunt for the first Americans" (broadcast on BBC2 1-sept-99). Adherents of this theory contend that the first Americans were descended from Australian aborigines. As evidence, they note that the dimensions of prehistoric skulls found in Brazil match those of the aboriginal peoples of Australia and Melanesia. "The identity of the first Americans is an emotive and controversial question. But the evidence from Brazil, and a handful of people who still live at the very tip of South America, suggests that the Americas have been home to a greater diversity of humans than previously thought – and for much longer" (BBC News 26-Aug-99).

Our Pan-American Moon myth journey serves a number of purposes. Firstly it shows that there are common themes in the myths told by Amerindians because our peoples have lived side by side, exchanged goods and shared experiences for many thousands of years. Secondly, these threads reflect varying possibilities as to how the Americas were peopled. Hopefully these threads will create a dialogue between our indigenous nations, building bridges of humanity and interconnectedness that will benefit us all.

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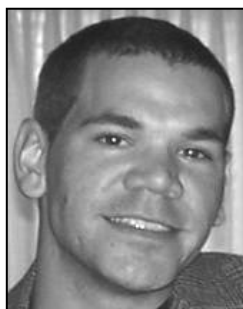
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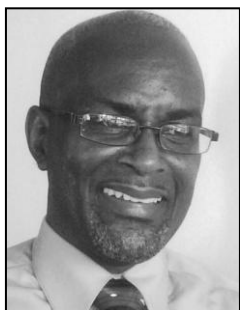
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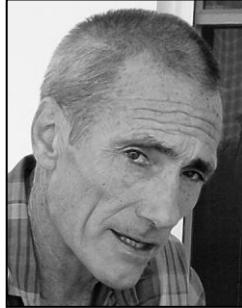
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