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Diseases and Medical Disabilities of Enslaved Barbadians, From the Seventeenth Century to around 1838 (Part I)¹

JEROME S. HANDLER

Abstract

The disease environment, health problems, and causes of mortality of enslaved Barbadians are described. Data largely derive from documentary sources; also included are bio-archaeological data from analyses of skeletons recovered from Newton Plantation cemetery. Major topics include infectious diseases transmitted from person to person, as well as those contracted through water, soil, and other environmental contaminations, and diseases transmitted by insects, parasites, and other animals; nutritional diseases, including protein energy malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies, anaemia, and geophagy or "dirt eating"; dental pathologies; and lead poisoning, alcoholism, traumas, and other disorders, including psychogenic death or illness caused by beliefs in witchcraft or sorcery.

Introduction

Many of the diseases and ailments that befell enslaved Barbadians also afflicted Whites. Certain problems, however, were almost entirely confined to the enslaved population. Moreover, as a group, enslaved persons, particularly children, as Governor Parry reported in the late eighteenth century, were "more liable to take diseases from their numbers and general intercourse". Indeed, as in all Caribbean slave societies, infant and child mortality rates were high and life expectancies at birth were low.² Mortality aside, non-lethal ailments and afflictions could also leave their victims seriously debilitated, and many of the enslaved people also suffered from lingering illness or experienced tem-

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porary discomfort or pain. Others were permanently disabled or maimed from one kind or another of accident or disease.

"Along the whole margin of the West Coast of Africa, from St Louis, Senegal, on the north, to Benguela, on the south," wrote a correspondent of the *London Times* in 1864, "this gigantic range of territory is one cesspool of fever, dysentery, and everything that is deadly and detestable."³ In a relatively unusual vein for a European of this period, the correspondent spoke well of West African peoples, finding them "courteous, thorough men of the world, loth [sic] to shed blood", but his characterization of their early disease environment was echoed by many European contemporaries, and is readily endorsed by modern scholars.

In his important and pioneering study of the bio-history of Caribbean enslaved people, Kenneth Kiple argues, following other scholars, that West Africans arriving in the New World were "survivors of one of the most formidable disease environments in the world". Not only did West Africans often suffer from considerable malnutrition and the diseases it caused, but they were also commonly exposed to such infectious diseases as leprosy, scabies, yaws, various skin afflictions, and a variety of parasites and worms; diarrhoea and amoebic dysentery were frequent symptoms of a multitude of infectious and nutritional diseases, and mosquitoes transmitted elephantiasis, sleeping sickness, malaria, and yellow fever. West Africans were also exposed to such easily contagious illnesses as smallpox, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, mumps, and influenza. In brief, in Kiple's words, the "slaves destined for the Americas left behind them a land that had molded them with massive malnutrition on the one hand, and a host of man's most dangerous diseases on the other".⁴

The plethora of infectious and nutritionally based diseases was greatly increased for the enslaved population during the psychological trauma, inadequate diets, congestion, poor sanitation, and maladies of the so-called Middle Passage. Moreover, the slave trade continued to serve as the main channel through which a multiplicity of diseases found their way into the Caribbean. The general epidemiological conditions that confronted enslaved Barbadians fit into this wider pattern. In fact, the island's health problems were not fundamentally different from those in many impoverished tropical areas in today's world. Although modern medicine has eliminated or greatly checked many diseases as well as reduced infant mortality, in another age, of course, the benefits of modern medicine were absent. Still, the tropical environment of Barbados was conducive to the development and spread of

organisms that caused infectious disease. These features of the physical environment were amplified for the enslaved population by, for example, their considerably polluted water supplies, generally poor sanitary conditions, and housing and settlement congestion.⁵ Famine conditions and persistent malnutrition also reduced resistance to infectious diseases. The vulnerability to infectious disease, in particular, was especially pronounced among infants and small children and was compounded by the unsanitary conditions in which enslaved people lived and prepared and consumed their food.

The Barbadian disease environment may have been somewhat milder than that in some other West Indian territories; nonetheless, enslaved Barbadians shared many problems with those throughout the Caribbean. This article, however, is particularly concerned with how issues surrounding health and medicine were specifically manifest in the environment of Barbados and particularly among the enslaved people as these are revealed by the primary sources on Barbados.

As with most areas of the social and cultural life of the enslaved people, the documentary materials are sparse and superficial. These common limitations are magnified with respect to health and medicine by the virtual absence of information for the 1600s and early 1700s, and especially by the diagnostic inadequacies, confused definitions, and naiveté of early European medicine and the Caribbean medical literature of the slave period. By modern medical standards many diseases were misdiagnosed, others were unrecognized or unidentified (and thus were not reported or alluded to in the primary sources), and causes of mortality were often stated incorrectly. Thus, it is impossible to identify precisely the range of maladies and illnesses that afflicted enslaved Barbadians or to quantify the frequency of the illnesses from which they suffered. Qualitative impressions are given in the following pages where the data allow, and this article is fundamentally reliant on the written word, with its many errors and ambiguities. Exceptions to this rule are diseases that were identified from physical or bio-anthropological data. These data were derived from analyses of the skeletal remains of a population excavated from the slave cemetery at Newton Plantation in the early 1970s, and they permit some quantification (see below).⁶

Infectious Diseases: Person-to-Person Transmission

The enslaved population was always vulnerable to readily communicable diseases that spread rapidly, the Barbados Council reported in the

late 1780s, "owing to the infection being more easily conveyed among a number of people living, as it were, in small towns". When serious epidemics hit Barbados periodically, some of them severely affected all racial groups, while others seem to have caused proportionately (and numerically) greater fatalities among the enslaved people. The Barbados Council, for example, was certain that the enslaved population was decreasing, and gave as one major reason the "epidemical diseases, which often make great havoc among them". In a number of cases, the epidemics are not named or described, but references to the high mortality among the enslaved population during these periods indicate the severity of the disease environment.⁷ A good part of this environment included diseases normally transmitted from person to person, and some of these diseases could be especially fatal to a population that was already weakened by other illness and malnutrition.

Smallpox

"One of the scourges of eighteenth-century life", smallpox was very common in England and was probably introduced to Africa by Europeans in earlier times.⁸ However, as the slave trade brought infected Africans to the New World in greater numbers, West Africa probably became the major provenance of smallpox introduced into the Caribbean. As long as the trade persisted, imported Africans "continued to be a dangerous source" of the disease throughout tropical America.⁹ Slave traders often knowingly, though not willingly, transported the virus of this highly contagious disease to the New World. For example, Thomas Phillips, an experienced slaving captain who made trips to Barbados, generalized on how "the Negroes are so incident to the smallpox, that few ships that carry them escape without it, and sometimes it makes vast havoc and destruction among them".¹⁰

Accompanied by vomiting, high fevers, headaches, severe backaches and other bodily pain, smallpox produces sores that dry into scabs. In the final stage of the disease the scabs fall off and leave the telltale legacy of smallpox, its pitted scars or pock marks. One either died from the disease or, if it was not fatal, acquired lifetime immunity from it. Smallpox sometimes could be acquired indirectly, for example, if a healthy person came into contact with the pus- or scab-contaminated clothing worn by the corpse of a smallpox victim. However, the vast majority of smallpox victims contracted the disease by inhaling the virus through close personal contact with an infected person. Thus, the slave

caravans or coffles, coastal holding stations, forts and barracoons, and the even greater shipboard crowding of the so-called Middle Passage were ideal for this transmission.¹¹

In early Caribbean history, smallpox was a "terrible killer" throughout the region¹² and Barbados was not exempt from its ravages. As with conditions in the African slave trade and the trans-Atlantic crossing, the disease also spread easily in the crowded and congested conditions that marked community and household life among the enslaved people. This is not to suggest, of course, that these people were the sole victims of smallpox. The disease affected all Barbadians, and there is no evidence that enslaved persons were disproportionately infected compared to Whites. However, because of their population size, the enslaved people doubtless suffered in greater numbers.

In general, smallpox kills about 25 percent of its victims, but survivors of the disease acquire lifetime immunity.¹³ In Barbados, newspaper advertisements of enslaved persons who ran away in the 1700s and early 1800s often pointed to an earlier bout with smallpox. They recorded, for example, persons who were "much pitted" or "much scarred" by the disease. (Ironically, having survived smallpox, thus probably making them more valuable to their owners, these persons now bore physical marks that potentially assisted in their capture if they absconded.)¹⁴

Smallpox epidemics may have occurred in Barbados during the seventeenth century when, for example, in the late 1670s and during the 1690s major unnamed epidemics hit the island.¹⁵ However, the disease is only identified by name for epidemics that occurred in 1701, 1705, 1709, and possibly 1714.¹⁶ "Raging distempers" were widespread among the enslaved people in 1716, and in 1722 "an uncommon mortality . . . reigned throughout the island"; these may have been smallpox or typhoid epidemics.¹⁷ Without citing his source, Robert Schomburgk reported a smallpox epidemic in March 1738 that affected 3,000 persons. There were other smallpox epidemics in the 1740s and, in general, as Griffith Hughes wrote, referring to the 1730s and 1740s, "we are seldom free from it in some part of the island or other".¹⁸

Inoculation (that is, variolation) against smallpox greatly reduced fatalities after its introduction during the 1720s or 1730s, but the disease continued to affect Barbados throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁹ However, the epidemics were less severe, probably because of inoculation and improved inoculation techniques that were developed in the 1760s, as well as the greater number of survivors with immunity and

fewer imported Africans as the slave trade to the island diminished. The so-called Jenner method of vaccination was introduced to Barbados around 1800, and smallpox was all but eliminated as a danger to the island's black and white populace.²⁰ Barbadians were exposed to the disease in 1819 and several times thereafter during the slave period, but there is no evidence that epidemics took place; and, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, this once dreaded disease had become but a minor disorder.²¹

Chicken Pox, Measles, Whooping Cough, Mumps

In the late 1780s, Governor Parry suggested that even though black and white children were vulnerable to the same diseases, "such diseases as children in general are liable to, attack the children of slaves more frequently".²² Yet, the Barbadian sources contain few details on several well-known and very communicable diseases to which young children were especially susceptible.

Hughes first mentioned chicken pox as a disease which "visits this island at set periodical times". His information came from "a very old and ingenious physician" of Barbados, who reported chicken pox epidemics in 1692-1693, 1711, 1728, 1746-1747 - at approximately eight-year intervals. No racial group is mentioned, but all groups were affected. Dr William Hillary also reported, without mentioning racial groups, that in March 1755 "several children had that exanthematous eruption, called the chicken-pox", and the disease "continued among children" into the following month.²³ However, there is a possibility that some or all of these alleged chicken pox epidemics were another disease.

Probably introduced to Africa by early European or Muslim travellers, measles is one of the most easily transmitted childhood diseases. It is a highly contagious virus that can be fatal, especially to malnourished youngsters; actually, measles itself can precipitate severe nutritional disease. It will, however, usually result in lifetime immunity for those who survive it.²⁴ For Barbados, the disease was first mentioned by Hughes as occurring in the 1730s or 1740s, but he mentions it in a marginal note, next to his description of chicken pox; he is clearly using both words synonymously. In his comprehensive work on the island's diseases, William Hillary does not seem to mention measles. However, in 1747 the doctor at the Codrington plantations reported that about half of the enslaved people on the plantations "were afflicted with small-

pox and measles". According to Kenneth Kiple, some of the early epidemics identified as smallpox actually may have been measles. In any case, measles was considered a regular killer among the children on Newton Plantation in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and in 1837 Sturge and Harvey learned that "measles and other epidemics" had destroyed a great number of free black children since emancipation.²⁵

The Barbadian sources only occasionally explicitly mention whooping cough (pertussis). Hillary reported how it "seized many children in this town and island" in 1753, and by 1755 "some few" of them (racial group not mentioned) in the eastern parishes still had the disease. In general, he wrote, whooping-cough "seems to be equally as infectious to children, as either the small-pox or measles". Later in the eighteenth century, a white diarist reported how "hooping cough" had been "extremely severe" among the children of his household.²⁶ In general, whooping cough epidemics were probably more frequent than the sources indicate, and the disease may have been identified under other terms.²⁷ Similarly, James Grainger, the first doctor to write a medical manual for the treatment of enslaved persons in the West Indies, observed that Blacks and Whites were "very subject to an external swelling of the glands of the neck, etc. called the mumps".²⁸ However, mumps do not appear to have been identified as such in the Barbadian sources, although the disease may have been referred to by another name; in fact, some of the cases that Grainger called mumps may have been diphtheria.

Diphtheria

A highly contagious and frequently lethal infection if not treated, diphtheria is not generally found in the tropics. However, it occasionally occurred in the Caribbean and may have been more common among enslaved children and women. Called "putrid sore throat" in the early sources,²⁹ diphtheria, whose symptoms include a moderately sore throat, may have occurred in Barbados but, perhaps, was diagnosed under a different name, such as "sore throat".

Sore Throats

Whether of a viral or bacterial origin, sore throats can involve painful neck and throat swellings, but are associated with any number of diseases. In the mid-eighteenth century, Grainger observed that "more

Negroes for some years past have perished by sore throats, than by any other disease". Sore throats were given as a cause of death among Newton's children during the late 1700s and early 1800s.³⁰ From this limited information, the diseases included under the rubric "sore throat" cannot be identified. Sore throats are among the symptoms of measles, mumps, and diphtheria, and are also associated with influenza.

Colds, Influenza, Croup

Enslaved people were commonly afflicted with various contagious diseases that were not necessarily fatal, but which were debilitating. Under certain circumstances, these diseases could develop into illnesses that might prove deadly, especially to the young, the weak, or the elderly. Some of these diseases have been mentioned above. Also, enslaved (and white) Barbadians, like persons elsewhere in the region, often experienced "colds" and "coughs"; sometimes the "colds" were probably other infections that were misdiagnosed, especially when they were held responsible for fatalities.³¹ In 1823 an influenza epidemic in Barbados affected the servile population at Newton. "[A]lthough not fatal, but to infants and very old people," reported the manager, "the greater part" of Newton's servile population were confined "to the hospital". Kiple writes that influenza, with its fever, headache, sore throat, muscular pain, appetite loss, etc., was "occasionally epidemic and harvested many lives" among enslaved West Indians, particularly the children and the elderly.³² It was also one of those diseases that could produce bacterial pneumonia, particularly among the elderly, very young, or people with chronic lung problems.

Croup – an infection of the breathing tract with a distinctive cough – can prove fatal to children. One child death at Newton was attributed to this disease, but the term does not seem to appear in other Barbadian sources that mention diseases among the enslaved population.³³ However, croup could have been indicated or implied in discussions of various respiratory disorders or influenza.

Pneumonia and Tuberculosis

The Caribbean enslaved peoples were especially vulnerable to certain lung ailments that were absent in African disease environments; their susceptibility was increased by their congested living quarters and poor nutrition. In a paper delivered at a meeting of a society of Barbadian

planters in the early nineteenth century, Dr [Walter] Caddell, a plantation doctor, observed how enslaved persons on the plantations, debilitated from poor nutrition, often died after having succumbed to "dysentery, pleurisy, catarrhal affections which are annually epidemic in this country". Catarrh was a vague nineteenth-century term that could refer to any one of several respiratory problems while, in this context, "pleurisy" may refer to pneumonia or to tuberculosis of the lining of the lung. Although pneumonia is usually not mentioned in the Barbadian sources on diseases among the enslaved people, its common symptoms of severe chills, high fever, headache, cough, and chest pain could easily have been subsumed under other maladies by early European diagnosticians. In modern times, respiratory diseases have been a chief cause of mortality among the Barbadian working class, and up to the early 1970s pneumonia was still one of the major causes of death for Barbadian children under age five.³⁴

Yet, because there are several types of pneumonia, it becomes "a hopeless task", Kiple argues, "to discover precisely what was behind the various pneumonia like illness that plagued West Indian slaves"; and "causes of death such as 'fever', 'catarrh', 'lung abscess', 'debility', and 'cold' do as much to conceal pneumonia as they do to reveal it and we can only assume . . . that it was a much more important cause of slave death than the data indicate".³⁵

Tuberculosis was another European-introduced disease to which many enslaved persons were highly vulnerable. The major symptoms of the disease may develop slowly and tuberculosis may not be immediately obvious. Its early symptoms, including, for example, listlessness, vague chest pains, and loss of appetite and of weight, occurred in a variety of illnesses that afflicted the enslaved population. Kiple observes that it is difficult to isolate tuberculosis in the primary sources because it was unrecognized by diagnosticians or confused with other diseases. However, he suggests that it was not uncommon among enslaved people, and was frequently "undoubtedly misdiagnosed as leprosy, venereal disease, and dirt eating".³⁶ When tuberculosis involved extensive swelling of the lymph glands under the arms and around the neck, diagnosticians might have identified it as "scrofula", an old term for this phase of the disease. However, when the disease progressed into the lungs, its major symptoms would have included frequent coughing up of pus-filled sputum and ultimately blood. Under such circumstances, it might be assumed, tuberculosis was readily observable and, when recognized, was identified as "consumption".

Tuberculosis by its several early names is not mentioned in the early Barbadian sources (although apparently present), but by the turn of the nineteenth century it may have been more easily diagnosed. "Consumption" and "scrofula" together were considered important causes of death at Newton over 1796–1801 and 1811–1825. Higman independently analyzed cause of death data for Newton and Colleton plantations for the last few decades preceding emancipation. He found that about 12 percent of the deaths were attributed to tuberculosis. However, it remains uncertain whether the disease was diagnosed correctly and whether it actually was the cause of death in all or most of these cases. Although J. Jackson, a doctor visiting Barbados in the 1860s, learned that tuberculosis was "much more common" among the island's black population in post-emancipation times than during slavery, his comment reflected more the diagnostic limitations during the slave period than the actual incidence of the disease.³⁷

Ainhum, Leprosy, Yaws

A number of the diseases discussed above were introduced to Africans by Europeans. However, several quintessential tropical diseases that afflicted enslaved Barbadians were brought to the Caribbean from Africa itself.

Ainhum, a condition unique to Blacks in Caribbean slave societies, was among "several afflictions that mimicked leprosy", a disease it was often confused with by early Europeans. Ainhum involved "a linear constriction of a toe (especially the little toe), with the constriction eventually amputating the toe".³⁸ The disease was identified separately from yaws and scabies (see below). Primary sources usually do not give this disease a special name, but Grainger called it "joint-evil" and described it as a common complaint "confined to the Blacks". He noted briefly that "joint-evil . . . commonly attacks the toes, the joints of which successively drop off almost without pain, and always without a fever. It stops when it reaches the foot . . . The patients are in all other respects healthy".³⁹ Judging from Grainger's description of "joint-evil", it was ainhum, and it differed from what other early diagnosticians called joint-evil but which actually referred to leprosy. In either event, the "disease of ulcerated toes" was common among enslaved Barbadians, and often incapacitated them from labour; newspaper ads of enslaved persons who ran away sometimes point to this condition when they mention, for example, enslaved persons who were "missing a toe".⁴⁰

Requiring prolonged close contact for transmission, the infamous disease of leprosy was brought from Africa. In Barbados, leprosy seems to have been first reported as such in the 1680s or 1690s, and it was widespread by the 1730s, if not earlier.⁴¹ Whites were "not exempted from this dreadful calamity", but, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, Blacks were its principal victims.⁴² Richard Towne, writing in the 1720s, gave a relatively extensive description of the disease. He reported that "joint-evil" (a common contemporary term for leprosy) frequently occurred among both Creole and African-born Blacks, reducing its victims to a "miserable loathsome life". Producing widespread skin lesions and causing destruction of facial cartilage, leprosy is not usually lethal, though Towne and others considered it otherwise. By the late 1770s or early 1780s, leprosy seems to have declined (perhaps due to the decreasing slave trade to Barbados), but the disease was still far from rare, and plantation records suggest that it was still fairly common. For example, from three to five of Seawell's approximately 185 Blacks in the 1790s were identified as lepers, and the disease was considered responsible for eleven Newton deaths from 1796 to 1801 and 1811 to 1825. Leprosy was identified as a major cause of mortality at Newton.⁴³

However, it is important to emphasize that the leprosy diagnosed at Newton and Seawell may have been confused with something else. Leprosy is rarely fatal, and Kiple points out that white doctors in the Caribbean either used the term for several illnesses or confounded leprosy with other diseases; in short, "leprosy quickly became a generic term connoting all sorts of illness including those created by New World parasites and nutritional circumstances". Leprosy, Kiple maintains, was not "as widespread among the slaves as physicians believed it to be". He suggests that a variety of infectious and nutritional diseases "could easily have become ulcerated or gangrenous" and may have been called leprosy by contemporary diagnosticians. For example, many of the deaths attributed to leprosy were most likely the nutritional disease called beriberi, while leprosy and yaws were often confused. The third phase of yaws, when "bone lesions are frequent . . . and nodules as well as ulcers erupt on the body", could have suggested leprosy, while leprosy was called yaws in other diagnoses. In general, then, from information in the sources it is often difficult to determine "the extent to which yaws was called leprosy and vice versa".⁴⁴

However much early Caribbean doctors and planters confused leprosy and yaws, both diseases arrived from Africa and were spread by prolonged personal contact, involving skin-to-skin transmission.

Producing ulcerating sores on the body that can eventually lead to bone and tissue destruction, yaws is a highly contagious disease (whose spread, as with similar diseases, was facilitated by congested and unsanitary living conditions) that early diagnosticians considered very common in Barbados and elsewhere in the Caribbean. However, it rarely afflicted Whites.⁴⁵ In Barbados, yaws was regarded as much more common among the African-born than among Creoles, the latter even getting it "in a milder manner" than the former, and "Free Negroes" were "not more exempt from it than slaves".⁴⁶ Yaws could lead to permanent crippling, but was not viewed as a cause of death in Barbados, although elsewhere in the Caribbean deaths among the enslaved population were sometimes attributed to it.⁴⁷ In Barbados, the disease seems to have decreased over time, probably because fewer Africans were imported and the African-born population was a distinct minority by the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ Yet, it must be emphasized that what contemporary observers diagnosed as yaws may not have been yaws at all, but any number of diseases, including leprosy, pellagra, or syphilis. Yaws and syphilis, in particular, were often confused by early writers because of the similarity in their physical manifestations.⁴⁹

Venereal Diseases

There is little direct documentary evidence for venereal diseases in Barbados (or in other Caribbean slave societies). In the earliest direct reference, Griffith Hughes distinguishes between the "body-yaws" and the "running, or the wet, yaws". Both were very common in Barbados but "unknown in Northern climates". Hughes implies that both diseases afflicted Blacks as well as Whites. Wet yaws chiefly attacked the joints, particularly the knees and elbows, and was believed to be transmitted from infected parents to "their unhappy children". Early colonial writers often erroneously assumed that yaws was spread through sexual contact, and also could be inherited.⁵⁰ However, the superficiality of Hughes's description precludes determining if wet yaws was really an inherited disease. Since he claims it was "unknown in Northern climates" the disease probably was not syphilis. Without describing any symptoms, later writers also suggested that Barbadians were affected by the "venereal taint" or "venereal cases", and give no indication that such cases were unique to Blacks. In fact, in 1790 Walter Pollard, a white Creole, recommended an unnamed herbal medicine that was successfully used in Barbados against skin disorders and venereal disease. This

medication, "like many great discoveries originated from the Negroes", he wrote, and he clearly implied that the disease in question was not confined to one racial group.⁵¹ However, the sparse detail in the historical sources precludes identification of the disease, and the "venereal taint" in Barbados could easily have included a variety of diseases that were, in fact, non-venereal.⁵²

Hughes's brief description, quoted above, may fit gonorrhoea, one of the most common infectious diseases. Its symptoms include pus flow from the sexual organs, difficulty in urinating, and inflammation of the tendons on the wrists, knees, or ankles. Moreover, by the mid-1800s, after emancipation, gonorrhoea is documented for Barbados. However, "syphilis in all its forms" was also "exceedingly common", and congenital syphilis, transmitted from an infected mother to her foetus, was identified as one of the causes for the high infant mortality in Barbados during the early twentieth century.⁵³

Although modern scholars occasionally mention that enslaved people in the Caribbean suffered from venereal diseases, sometimes specifying gonorrhoea or syphilis, with one or two exceptions, virtually no details are given. In fact, despite the ambiguity of the historical records, syphilis was not only present among Blacks (and Whites) in Barbados during the slave period, but it may also have been more common than can be inferred from those records. The evidence for the assumption of the presence of syphilis in Barbados derives from physical anthropological analysis of the teeth from skeletons of enslaved persons excavated at Newton plantation in the early 1970s. This analysis suggests that close to 10 percent of Newton's enslaved population suffered from congenital syphilis (transmission from mother to child), and that the disease was a major contributor to adult mortality and disability on the plantation. Since Newton appears to have been a fairly typical Barbadian plantation, it can also be suggested that the disease affected upwards of 10 percent of the island's enslaved population. Moreover, it must have contributed significantly to infant mortality and morbidity since, for example, congenital syphilis can often result in still births.⁵⁴

As with victims of yaws (to which syphilis is closely related but which is much less dangerous), syphilitic individuals would have initially acquired relatively mild skin lesions which probably would not have been noticed by early medical observers. However, ten or more years after the initial infection about one-third of untreated cases result in more serious effects. These include potentially lethal cardiovascular and neurological problems: aortic aneurysm, insanity, and paralysis.

Destructive lesions of the viscera can cause death in late acquired syphilis, and patients also develop other destructive skin and bone lesions that occur in the late stages of yaws. The consequences of untreated congenital syphilis are even more destructive. Before penicillin therapy was introduced around 1950, miscarriage was common, and about a quarter to a half of full-term pregnancies resulted in stillbirths. About 25 percent of untreated persons died in early infancy. Surviving children frequently became blind, deaf, and mentally deficient. They often developed incapacitating skeletal and soft-tissue deformities and characteristic facial and dental abnormalities. Children infected with syphilis from birth would have experienced sickness, feeding difficulties (for example, children with sores in their mouths are difficult to feed), and the mental and physical handicaps resulting from this disease throughout childhood. A great deal of Newton's high infant mortality probably was caused by congenital syphilis as well, and many of the deaths that Newton's white doctors and managers attributed to consumption, convulsions, dropsy, fever, fits, inflammation, joint-evil, leprosy, marasmus, rheumatism, scrofula, sore throats, and teething could easily include the diverse symptoms of acquired and congenital syphilis.⁵⁵

Unidentified Skin Disorders

Written sources often refer to unidentified ailments characterized by leg or body ulcers or sores; for example, serious cases of "sore legs" on one plantation, and, on another, severe "ulcers on their legs", with "many being almost cripples there". John Waller, a surgeon in the British navy, observed many enslaved persons at Bridgetown harbour with "the loathsome marks of a cutaneous disease", perhaps scabies or yaws. Referring to the West Indies in general, Grainger reported how "ulcers about their ankles and toes" afflicted the enslaved people "too frequently". Whites were also afflicted. However, Grainger concluded, they were less vulnerable because they "generally wear shoes and stockings", implying that such "ulcers" resulted from ground or soil infestations (these infestations probably included chiggers; see below.) Whether or not his explanation was correct, it is clear that infections caused by environmental contamination and poor sanitation formed an extremely significant dimension of the Barbadian disease environment.⁵⁶

Infectious Diseases: Water, Soil, and Other Environmental Contaminations

Diarrhoea and Dysentery

Although Father Labat could not possibly have understood why, when he visited Barbados in 1700 he became convinced that the water "causes numerous illness, which become epidemic among the Negroes". As throughout the Caribbean, diseases intimately related to inferior sanitation and spread through contaminated food or polluted drinking water were major factors in the disease environment of Barbados. Such gastrointestinal disorders as diarrhoea and dysentery (often called "flux" and "bloody flux", respectively) affected all racial groups, particularly during the rainy season, but they especially plagued enslaved persons and poor Whites.⁵⁷

Diarrhoea and dysentery, the latter marked by severe pains and frequent watery stools containing mucus and blood, were omnipresent throughout the slave period. Neither was inevitably fatal, but bouts with them, particularly among malnourished young children (who could easily acquire dysentery, for example, through hand-to-mouth contact with the faeces of infected individuals) and the already sick and elderly, could certainly leave people severely weakened. Moreover, since chronic diarrhoea and dysentery produce dehydration and increase nutrient losses, they also make individuals highly vulnerable to other diseases.

Diarrhoea, properly speaking, is not a disease, but a symptom; as such, it could have been symptomatic of any number of disorders or conditions. For example, in the late 1700s William Dickson observed how hunger in Barbados could drive enslaved persons to consume unripe fruits and vegetables, a practice that was believed to cause diarrhoea and other medical problems. Dysentery, however, was considered a serious cause of death and, according to Richard Sheridan, it was "believed to have been by far the most fatal of all slave diseases".⁵⁸ It could spread rapidly and result in intestinal haemorrhaging, perforation of the bowels, and severe dehydration.

In Barbados, dysentery epidemics occurred with some regularity and could have devastating results. "With what fury this tyrant has raged this last season", wrote a Barbadian doctor in 1744, "and the numbers it has swept from the surface of this small island". "Sickly times again", reported Governor Grenville in 1750, "bloody fluxes prevail fatally here". Dysentery, he wrote, is "a distemper so obstinate and malignant

in this country that it is looked upon to be but one degree less dangerous than the [yellow] fever". When dysentery appeared among enslaved plantation workers, observed William Hillary, "it generally became infectious and spread amongst them, so that many more were seized with it". "We have of late lost some of our old people with the flux", wrote the manager of Codrington plantations in 1732; "we have had it pretty severe for about a month . . . I have buried 8 Negroes since Christmas last". During an island-wide epidemic in 1799, "a great many Negroes were lost by dysentery" on Newton and Seawell Plantations, and in 1812, a plantation doctor observed how dysentery is "annually epidemic in this country". Some unidentified epidemics, such as the "epidemical distemper" that raged for three months in 1770 and affected "many" Whites and Blacks of all ages and sexes, also could have been dysentery.⁵⁹

Typhoid and Paratyphoid

The slave period sources for Barbados, as for the Caribbean in general, do not specifically mention, or they inadequately identify, typhoid or paratyphoid (the latter is a variant of the former, caused by a different species of the same bacterium). However, the generally low hygienic level of the enslaved population and particularly their polluted water supplies make it quite likely that both diseases were prominent in Barbados. Kiple has speculated for the Caribbean in general that typhoid and paratyphoid "shared credit with pneumonia for most of the slave 'fever' deaths" reported in the early sources, and "a fair portion of slave 'fevers' as well as some of their diarrheas and dysenteries, would today have been diagnosed as typhoid". Nutritional deficiencies also made enslaved persons susceptible to typhoid.⁶⁰

The frequency of typhoid or paratyphoid in Barbados was indicated by a plantation manager who reported that "slow fever", an early name for typhoid, had caused "the great decrease of slaves in 1812". The frequency is also suggested by J. Jackson, a medical doctor who visited the island in the 1860s and learned that "formerly a low typhoid fever prevailed, with haemorrhage from the bowels and an affection of Peyer's patches [that is, a type of open sore that can be associated with typhoid], but, of late years, this is less frequent".⁶¹ Symptoms of typhoid include headaches, profound weakness, cough, watery diarrhoea, rash, and a high fever.

In fact, as suggested above, some of the unidentified epidemics or

"raging distempers" that were so catastrophic to enslaved Barbadians during the eighteenth century were probably water-borne diseases, particularly typhoid and paratyphoid. Other unspecified, albeit widespread, epidemics post-dating the arrival of smallpox vaccination in the early 1800s (thus, probably eliminating smallpox as one of these unidentified epidemics) fell into a similar category. For example, in 1804 the Newton attorney reported that a "great deal of epidemical fever amongst the Negroes . . . has been very prevalent in most parts of the island", and in 1821 a Methodist missionary wrote that "the Fever has made its appearance . . . and many have been by this painful scourge hurried out of time to eternity".⁶²

Tetanus and Neonatal Tetanus

This potentially lethal infection must have been very widespread among enslaved Barbadians, as it was throughout the Caribbean.⁶³ The tetanus bacteria are often present in the intestines of large farm animals such as cattle and horses. Their manure contains the bacterial poison, where it resides in the upper levels of the soil. The heavy plantation reliance on large animals for traction and fertilizer, combined with the winds that fanned Barbados and dispersed the tetanus bacteria, and the frequent wounds and bare feet of enslaved people, made environmental conditions particularly conducive to tetanus infection.

Hillary observed that enslaved Barbadians were "more subject" to tetanus than Whites, and perceptively noted that the major reason for this vulnerability was because the former went barefoot and were thus "more exposed to such injuries". Moreover, they were engaged in work that made them "more liable to get such wounds". In the 1840s Davy learned that during slavery tetanus was "rife and destructive", and even in the (post-emancipation) mid-nineteenth century Jackson discovered that the disease was "quite prevalent".⁶⁴

A major killer of enslaved infants, particularly within the first month of birth, was "jaw-falling" or "locked jaw" (as it was often called in Barbados), that is, neonatal tetanus, a major cause of death in other areas of the Caribbean and still a major killer of new-born infants in many parts of the impoverished world. In 1812 a group of Barbadian planters attributed tetanus to the "mismanagement & improper applications to the navel". They were surely correct in focusing on treatment of the navel as a major cause of neonatal tetanus; it is through a dirty dressing or poor care of the umbilicus that infection occurs and the bac-

teria enter the body and attack the blood stream or motor nerves. Neonatal tetanus probably accounted for most cases of infant mortality.⁶⁵

"Lockjaw" was listed among the causes of deaths at Newton Plantation during the late 1700s and early 1800s, but "fits", which were independently recorded as causing death in two children, may have been tetanus (or tetany) whose symptoms include painful bodily spasms (as well as headaches and fever).⁶⁶ Writers on diseases among enslaved Barbadians in the earlier periods do not generally mention tetanus by name, but it was undoubtedly much more common than is indicated in these early sources.

Infectious Diseases: Insects, Parasites, and Other Animals

A number of infectious diseases transported by Africans to the New World were caused by parasitic worms and insects, important carriers of infectious diseases in tropical areas. The ravages caused by the mosquito are among the best known. Although such diseases as filariasis (a term that includes elephantiasis) can be spread by the mosquito, the insect has had a much greater impact on human history for its role in yellow fever and malaria.

Yellow Fever and Malaria

The deadly and easily spread viral infection of yellow fever was common in tropical Africa and, indeed, probably originated there. Carried by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, yellow fever was a major scourge in the Caribbean for many years. Barbados was not exempt from its havoc; in fact, the island provides what may be the earliest case of a yellow fever epidemic in the Caribbean. During 1647-1648, the disease "raged violently" for several months and ultimately killed thousands, including, perhaps, as many as six thousand Whites.⁶⁷

Throughout the early Caribbean, yellow fever was a significant cause of mortality among Whites, and when they contracted the disease it was often fatal. On the other hand, infected Blacks usually suffered only a very mild form of the disease and very rarely died from it.⁶⁸ Even in modern West African tropical or rain forest areas, "yellow fever is rarely recognized in the indigenous people", and there is a "steady increase in immunity with age, until in adolescence most people are

immune".⁶⁹ Aside from 1647 to 1648, serious yellow fever epidemics hit Barbados in 1671 and (possibly) in 1680; in the 1690s (including the year 1700), several epidemics intermittently subsided and flared up, but overall the disease "raged for several years" and resulted in "thousands" of fatalities. Referring to the 1690s, Oldmixon learned that the "pestilential fever" which had "so infected" Barbados during those years had "carried off above a third part of its inhabitants". Oldmixon's mortality estimate cannot be independently verified; yet, the disease clearly caused a tremendous number of deaths, and he implied that these occurred exclusively among Whites. None of the sources mentions fatalities among the enslaved population during these epidemics. Thus, this deadly disease which Africans contributed to the New World environment became, for justifiable reason and with some historical irony, a much feared killer among Whites.⁷⁰

Yellow fever epidemics intermittently hit Barbados during the eighteenth century and in 1793 the disease killed "from fifteen to twenty whites" in Bridgetown every day, "and about half that number of blacks and people of colour".⁷¹ This may have been the last major epidemic in Barbados, perhaps because of the fewer number of slave ships arriving from Africa. However, in late 1816 the island, as well as others in the Lesser Antilles, may have experienced another epidemic.⁷²

For several possible ecological reasons the *Anopheles* mosquito, which carries the easily spread malarial protozoa, did not make any observable impact on Barbados. It was not found breeding on the island until the late 1920s, and in 1927–1928, the island experienced its first malaria epidemic, with over four thousand cases reported in a two-year period. Although malarial patients were in Barbados during the late 1800s and early 1900s, having contracted the disease in neighbouring islands which harboured the *Anopheles* mosquito, Barbados seems to have been malaria-free during the slave period. However, persons with malaria occasionally came to Barbados during slavery, but they, too, evidently acquired the disease in neighbouring islands.⁷³

Kiple stresses that malarial fevers were often confused with yellow fever by early Caribbean writers, "particularly when their victims hemorrhaged internally".⁷⁴ In the very unlikely case that some very early epidemics in Barbados were malaria,⁷⁵ they nonetheless would have affected Whites much more than Blacks. The genetically determined anomalies of blood cells, such as sickle-cell anaemia, commonly found in populations of African birth or descent, confer a high degree of immunity to malaria, even though the ability of African populations to

resist the disease is not absolute. Malaria was traditionally a major cause of mortality among infants and small children in West Africa and still is a major cause of child mortality in the region. Still, enslaved Barbadians, as those elsewhere in the Caribbean, certainly had a higher degree of protection against malarial infection, particularly falciparum malaria, the most lethal of the several types that affect humans. However, African-born persons among the enslaved population were carriers of the disease which, as with yellow fever, was so deadly to Whites.⁷⁶ Aside from the apparent absence of the *Anopheles* mosquito in Barbados, the relative immunity of Africans and their descendants probably helps explain why the unidentified epidemics with a high incidence of fatalities among the enslaved population reported in the early Barbados sources were not malaria or, for that matter, yellow fever.

Filariasis

Caused by a filarial roundworm, filariasis is spread through the bite of the *Culex* or *Anopheles* mosquito or some other insect. In the West Indies, the vector of filariasis is *Culex fatigans*, "a prolific domestic breeder" in stagnant or greatly polluted water with a high organic content. When Dr George Low visited Barbados in 1901 he found no *Anopheles*, but "myriads" of *Culex* were breeding in a variety of places. When the mosquito draws blood from a person infected with filariasis, it ingests the larvae produced by the adult worm. The mosquito supports the growing larvae and transmits them when it bites its next victim; the larvae enter into the new lymphatic system, developing into adult worms in about a year.⁷⁷

A common disease in West Africa, many Africans arriving in the Americas carried filariasis in their blood. However, they appeared healthy because the clinical symptoms of the disease are delayed, sometimes for many years after infection, while the worm matures. Early symptoms of filarial infections might include periodic glandular pain and general malaise. These symptoms, Todd Savitt has written, could persist "over the course of many years" and were sufficiently general that, presumably, early doctors did not readily associate them with a particular disease.⁷⁸

There are several manifestations of filariasis. Its most visible and dramatic form takes place in its last stage, often occurring many years after infection. A great swelling occurs, usually in the scrotal or labial areas and the legs. Today called elephantiasis, it was this symptom or

manifestation that gave rise to the name "Barbados leg". The island became, as Kiple has noted, "an early endemic focus of filarial infection" in the Caribbean, and the region's first scientific descriptions of elephantiasis were written by doctors in Barbados.⁷⁹

The term "Barbados leg" or "Barbadoes disease" seems to have been used mainly by non-Barbadians. Although the term was ultimately adopted in Barbados, Barbadians preferred calling it "Guyana leg"; however, during the slave period it was more apt to be called the "glandular disease" or "fever and ague".⁸⁰

In his *Treatise on the Glandular Disease of Barbadoes*, Dr James Hendy reported that elephantiasis "was unnoticed" in Barbados until about the 1690s. Francis Briggs, an Irishman, was the first white man in whom it was observed: "it was so uncommon . . . at the time to see a person with these large legs, that this poor man's name was used as a bug-bear to frighten children". However, Hendy adds, "it is not improbable that the Negroes might have been affected with this disease, and their complaints not sufficiently attended to".⁸¹

Contemporary medical personnel viewed elephantiasis as seldom fatal. By the 1720s, if not earlier, and throughout the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon among the enslaved population, and Blacks were affected more frequently than Whites. However, the disease, observed Dr George Pinckard in the 1790s, "even suffers not the Europeans to escape". He reported that "male and female, young, middle-aged, and old, black and white, are now all subject to its attack; and in walking the streets, the eye is distressed at almost every corner with the appearance of this hideous deformity".⁸²

Elephantiasis, however, was not confined to Bridgetown. The disease was distributed throughout the island, though, as Hendy observed, the leeward side was most affected. By the mid-1810s, a British army doctor noted that elephantiasis continued to be "not uncommon among the native inhabitants", adding that the disease was "more common in Barbados than in most other of the tropical islands".⁸³

Reports conflict somewhat on the incidence of elephantiasis over subsequent years. Just prior to emancipation, Orderson, a white Creole, maintained that it "now is scarcely known amongst us", while a British army physician, admitting that elephantiasis was far more common in earlier periods, reported, "[S]till we cannot walk half a mile without seeing some cases of it." The disease probably diminished in Barbados because of the decline in the slave trade and the many fewer Africans coming to the island to reinforce the infection. In the mid-1840s Dr

Bovell observed that elephantiasis was "scarcely seen among the rising generation". Yet, an American doctor learned perhaps with some exaggeration that in the 1860s the disease was still "quite as common as it ever was" and continued primarily to affect poor Blacks. Around 1900, Low reported, there was still a "large amount of filarial disease" of one kind or another in Barbados, and both Blacks and Whites were infected.⁸⁴

Chigoes, Lice, Scabies Mite

Other insects also transmitted infections which could result in irritating skin diseases as well as in more dangerous pathologies such as gangrene and tetanus. Commonly called in English the chigger, jigger, or chigoe, *Tunga penetrans* is a tropical flea native to Central and South America from where it spread to Asia and Africa. Europeans were troubled by this insect from their earliest arrival in the Caribbean, and chiggers afflicted Barbadians throughout the slave period and well into modern times.⁸⁵ Although Whites were vulnerable to this minuscule insect, it was, Hughes reported, "troublesome chiefly to Negroes, and particularly to such Negroes as are brought hither from Guiney".⁸⁶ The usual lack of foot covering or shoes among Blacks (and poor Whites) made them especially susceptible, and chiggers, wrote an eighteenth-century planter, "sometimes infest Negroes beyond their own power to destroy them". Many people bore the marks of their infestation.⁸⁷

Invading the skin through the feet or toes, chiggers generally laid their eggs between the toes or under the toe nail. Their presence usually would be discovered by a moderate itching and "afterwards with a throbbing itching pain".⁸⁸ Although occasionally a "cataplasm of the newly-extracted juice" of a local shrub was used to kill chiggers, the most common method involved extracting the egg sac with a pointed pen knife or large needle. However, a planter reported, when chigger infestations were very great, even "the pen-knife is seldom effectual to pick them out of the flesh".⁸⁹

Aside from considerable itching and "much smarting pain", chigger-transmitted infections could result in festering sores and serious, sometimes incapacitating, lameness in the feet. But the chigger was often a pathfinder for tetanus and other infections and throughout the Caribbean it was, Kiple conjectures, probably "responsible for much mortality". Moreover, the unsanitary procedures employed to remove chiggers most likely increased the patient's vulnerability to tetanus.⁹⁰

In his treatise on disease in Barbados, Hillary reported on "a sort of itch, which the Negroes call in their language *crocrow*". He did not describe "*crocrow*", but implied that it was contagious and common among the enslaved people. Grainger also reported that "a species of itch which Negroes from Guinea often bring with them to the West Indies . . . they call the *Crakras*. It chiefly infects the ankles, and often, if scratched or neglected, produces inveterate ulcers." *Crocrow* (or *crakras*, *craw-craw*), today known as scabies (also, *psora*), was carried on slave ships, and is generally widespread in the tropics. The disease is communicated by close contact and is transmitted by the scabies (or itch) mite which burrows into the skin. Producing lesions on the hands or thighs, scabies also causes intense itching, which can lead to skin damage from scratching and thus make the injured person vulnerable to other infections. Early doctors sometimes confused scabies with yaws or leprosy.⁹¹

Lice were another potential carrier of disease, but there is little information. Strolling through Bridgetown in 1796, Pinckard was appalled at seeing "pairs of Negroes, of both sexes, sitting and lying about with their heads in each other's laps, picking out the swarms of vermin" infesting their hair. He learned that this activity was also very common on the slave ships. Another visitor to Barbados even gave the removal of "vermin" as a reason why enslaved people bathed so frequently (see also, below).⁹² However, bathing, particularly in plantation ponds, was another source of danger for it exposed them to water-borne bacteria and viruses, as well as certain worms.

Parasitic Worms

A number of West African parasitic worms also infested the enslaved Caribbean population. These worms most certainly produced considerable damage to an already malnourished and hungry population. They robbed enslaved persons of badly needed nutrients, thus exacerbating an already precarious existence. In the Caribbean, as in West Africa, children bore the brunt of such parasitic diseases. In fact, Kiple writes, "in regions where kwashiorkor is prevalent, deaths are frequently attributed to diarrhea or worms and these two causes of death seem to have accounted for the bulk of the deaths of the slave young who had not perished as infants".⁹³ As with several other diseases, worm infestations were caused by contact with water and food that had been contaminated by human faeces or infected soils.

The Guinea worm (*Dracunculus medinensis*) particularly attracted the attention of European observers in the Caribbean, not only because it was so common among the enslaved population but also, perhaps, because of its dramatic appearance – sometimes approaching several feet in length. Brought to Barbados from West Africa, all Barbadian sources agree that Guinea worms chiefly afflicted African-born persons among the enslaved population, and were almost never found among the Barbadian-born; they “seldom or never” occurred among Whites.⁹⁴ These “exceedingly long” worms “generally bred in ponds of stagnant fresh waters”, and burrowed into the legs of their victims.⁹⁵ The worms lived under the skin’s surface, usually in the lower leg. Their eggs would develop into a blister that could burst when the leg was immersed in water while the infected person was bathing or swimming. The open blister discharged the larvae into the water, and the larvae, in turn, renewed the cycle by invading those who drank the water or otherwise came into contact with it. It is worth stressing again that enslaved Barbadians frequently bathed in the plantation ponds which were also their main sources of cooking and drinking water.⁹⁶

Although the Guinea worm could produce prominent swellings, contemporaries concluded that it “very rarely, if ever, proves mortal”, and the worms were easily removed. However, aside from blisters with burning sensations, their presence could cause such symptoms as nausea, diarrhoea, and vomiting. Judging by the dates of the sources that report on them, the frequency of Guinea-worm infestations on Barbadian plantations decreased over time, probably with the reduction of arrivals of enslaved persons from Africa. In any case, Guinea worms are not mentioned beyond the late 1780s, and even then they apparently were entirely confined to the African-born.⁹⁷

Intestinal worms were also common. While they infested all age groups, Barbadian conditions “prones all children to breed worms”, observed Joshua Steele, a late eighteenth-century planter. Small children, particularly in the post-weaning stage, were singularly afflicted with worms, considered by doctors and planters a major cause of their frequent intestinal pains, dirt-eating, and mortality.⁹⁸ Intestinal worms are not identified or described in the Barbadian sources, but several types afflicted enslaved Caribbean people in general, and were, Kiple notes, “active in creating a fair share of the bowel and lung complaints so frequently registered by the slaves”.⁹⁹ Most, if not all, of these worms were probably present in Barbados. The trichuris worm, for example, causes trichuriasis, a condition still observed among malnourished chil-

dren on the island in the 1960s. Trichuriasis infection usually has no symptoms, but when infestation is severe, it can cause nausea, intestinal pains, diarrhoea, and occasionally anemia.¹⁰⁰

Hookworm was another widespread roundworm from Africa. Its larvae usually enter the body through the feet, and in the Americas the hookworm commonly attacked both Blacks and Whites who customarily went barefoot. The conditions in Barbados during the slave period (including the favourable habitat provided by the cane fields) certainly were conducive to hookworm; in fact, it was one of several diseases that commonly afflicted Barbadian children in the early twentieth century. However, as Kiple has stressed, "one must distinguish between hookworm infection and hookworm disease". Although hookworm infection was "probably widespread" among enslaved persons who could be "carriers" of the hookworm, they were relatively more immune than Whites; the disease itself only "troubled some", and "was probably not a major factor in damaging black health" during the period of slavery.¹⁰¹

Other Animal-Borne Diseases and Ailments

There is little information on the impact of other animals on the Barbadian human disease environment. Whatever the impact, however, there is no suggestion that enslaved persons were disproportionately affected. Flies could have continually transmitted amoebae and viruses, and there are some indications that centipedes not uncommonly injected their very painful poisons. Scorpions and poisonous spiders could have done the same, and the occasional bites of infected dogs produced rabies (hydrophobia) fatalities in Blacks and Whites alike.¹⁰² Perhaps the raccoons once living on the island and the bats inhabiting its caves even played a role in transmitting rabies, and Barbados's monkeys may have contributed to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century yellow fever epidemics. Similarly, rats were a major pest in Barbados throughout the slave period, but it is difficult to determine their role in the human disease environment. People may have suffered painful bites from time to time, and rats, as with flies, could have been responsible for a continual transmission of amoebae and viruses, including the spread of diarrhoea and dysentery. In addition, some people may have acquired leptospirosis, an infection transmitted in the urine of infected animals, including bats, rats, and raccoons. The symptoms may include jaundice, fever, headaches, and muscular pain.¹⁰³

Typhus is usually associated with cold climates and is not normally considered a tropical disease, but lice could have carried typhus to humans from infected rats. Perhaps the transmission among the enslaved population took place with the sharing of the woollen caps and jackets issued by plantations as clothing rations. In what appears to be a unique reference, a plantation manager reported that on his plantation in 1811, "the cause of the great decrease" of the enslaved population was "putrid fever". The *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies putrid fever as typhus. Until the mid-1800s, Kiple writes, West Indian physicians, "who saw much typhus among military personnel and presumably much typhoid among the slaves, made little effort to disentangle those fevers from the bundle of fevers tormenting the whole of the Caribbean basin".¹⁰⁴ In all, typhus may have existed in Barbados, and more commonly than the primary sources directly indicate.

In general, then, enslaved persons suffered a wide variety of infectious diseases. Many of these diseases were highly contagious, and were easily spread under the unsanitary and congested living conditions of the slaves. The susceptibility to infectious disease was greatly increased by their general debilitation, resulting from frequent undernutrition and omnipresent malnutrition. Thus, in slave pathologies, as among all human populations, infectious and nutritional diseases were often closely linked.

(To be continued in Part II.)

NOTES

1. In attempting to clarify medical issues and translate the diagnoses and symptoms given in the early primary sources into modern medical terms, as well as inferring a variety of diseases not mentioned in these sources, I rely greatly on Kenneth F. Kiple's seminal *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). In addition, various medical texts and modern encyclopaedias, including Kiple's edited volume, *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) have been used extensively. I have also benefited from discussions with Kiple and his generous advice and suggestions on various drafts. Barbara Ogur, MD, and Henry Vaillant, MD, graciously read earlier draft materials and were particularly helpful in clarifying a variety of issues. Michael Clarke, MD, also gave early assistance in the identification of some diseases. Needless to say, these individuals bear no responsibility for the errors I may have made. I also thank Ken Bilby, Erika Day, and JoAnn Jacoby for their help with various research issues.
2. David Parry, Replies to Queries, in "Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council . . . Concerning the Present State of the Trade to Africa", *Parliamentary Papers* 26 (London, 1789), part 3. Abundant literary evidence from Barbados reflects the wider Caribbean pattern of the vulnerability of small children and infants, particularly in their first month (e.g., Godwyn Morgan, *The Negro's and Indians Advocate* [London, 1680], 84; Edward Littleton, *The Groans of the Plantations* [London, 1689], 1920; Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* [London, 1750], 14; Barbados Assembly, *Barbadoes: Report of a Committee of the General Assembly upon the Several Heads of Enquiry &c. Relative to the Slave Trade* [London, 1790], 45; Raymond Richards Collection of Miscellaneous Historical Documents, University of Keele Library [Staffordshire, England], "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership, 1811-1812 and of the Agricultural Society, 1812-1816" [1 June 1811-6 April 1816], 128-34; Letter from Taylor, 1 August 1833, in United Brethren, *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren* [London, 1832], 473).

Although infant mortality rates were very high, their magnitude cannot be determined precisely. Higman estimates that in 1817 the rates for the Eastern Caribbean British colonies, including Barbados, may have been typically "in excess of 400 per 1,000" live births; during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was probably even higher. Kiple estimates the rate for the Caribbean plantations as a whole at around 500. In Barbados, Newton Plantation records for a thirty-four-year period in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries indicate a child (five years and under) mortality rate of about 371 per 1,000. Although there are no data on infants (under one year), their rate was undoubtedly much greater. This rate is also suggested by the mid-eighteenth-century records for the Codrington

Plantations which indicate a mortality within the first three years of life of over 500 (Barry W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984], 318; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 113, 234n64; Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978], 286; J. Harry Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados, 1710–1838* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958], 55; Mary Butler, "Mortality and Labour on the Codrington Estates, Barbados", *Journal of Caribbean History* 19 [1984]: 48–67).

To put these figures into a comparative framework, over the five-year period 1919–1923, when the material conditions and standard of living for the Barbadian working class were much closer to the slave period than they are today, the infant mortality rate averaged 296. The rate continued to drop over the years; by the early 1950s, it averaged about 133, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, about 66, and with a greatly improved medical delivery system in the post-colonial period, by 1980 it had been reduced to an estimated 22; in 2000–2003, it was around 12 (*Colonial Reports – Annual. No. 1225. Barbados. Report for 1923–24* [London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1924]; Colonial Office, *Barbados, Report for the Years 1954 and 1955* [London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1957]; Barbados Government, *Barbados, Report for the Years 1962 and 1963* [Barbados: Government Printing Office, 1965]; United Nations Common Data Base [<http://winstats.un.org>]; UNICEF [<http://www.unicef.org>]).

3. W. Winwood Reade, Letter to the Editor of *The Times* (London), 23 June 1864.
4. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 13, 37, 53, 61, 75; see also Gerald Hartwig and K. David Patterson, "The Disease Factor: An Introductory Overview", in Hartwig and Patterson, eds., *Disease in African History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978). For a summary of Africa's role in the New World disease environment, see also Philip D. Curtin, "Disease Exchange Across the Tropical Atlantic", *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 15 (1993): 329–35.
5. Jerome S. Handler, "Plantation Slave Settlements in Barbados, 1650s–1834", in Alvin O. Thompson, ed., *In the Shadow of the Plantation: Caribbean History and Legacy* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002), 121–58.
6. Handler and Lange, *passim*; R.S. Corruccini, J. Handler, R. Mutaw, and F.W. Lange, "The Osteology of a Slave Burial Population from Barbados, West Indies", *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 59 (1982): 443–59; Jerome Handler and R.S. Corruccini, "Plantation Slave Life in Barbados: A Physical Anthropological Analysis", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14 (1983): 65–90.
7. Barbados Council, Replies to Queries, in "Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council . . . Concerning the Present State of the Trade to

- Africa", *Parliamentary Papers* 26 (London, 1789), part 3; see also, for example, Littleton, Groans, 20; University of London Library, MS. 523/593 (Newton Estate Papers; hereafter NEP 523), Farrell to Lane, 29 November 1804; Methodist Missionary Society Archives, Box 1821-1822, no. 250, Shrewsbury to Society, 10 January 1821. On the slave settlements as small "towns" or villages/hamlets, see Handler, "Slave Settlements". Cholera was absent from Barbados until a major epidemic hit the island in 1854.
8. C.C. Booth, "William Hillary: A Pupil of Boerhaave", *Medical History* 7 (1963): 297; Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patient's Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 4-5.
 9. Donald R. Hopkins, *Princes and Peasants: Smallpox in History* (University of Chicago Press, 1983), 172, 221; cf. Dauril Alden and Joseph C. Miller, "Unwanted Cargoes: the Origins and Dissemination of Smallpox via the Slave Trade from Africa to Brazil, c. 1560-1830", in Kenneth F. Kiple, ed., *The African Exchange* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), 35-109.
 10. Thomas Phillips, "A Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, ann. 1693, 1694, from England, to . . . Barbadoes", in A. Churchill, ed., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 6 vols. (London, 1746), 6: 253.
 11. For example, Hopkins, *Princes and Peasants*, 3, 172; Alden and Miller, "Unwanted Cargoes", 39-40.
 12. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 144.
 13. For example, Hopkins, *Princes and Peasants*, 6.
 14. See, for example, *Barbados Mercury* 1783-1805, passim; Jerome S. Handler, "Escaping Slavery in a Caribbean Plantation Society: Marronage in Barbados, 1650s-1830s", *New West Indian Guide*, 71 (1997): 183-225.
 15. Atkison to Lords of Trade, 26 October 1680, in *Calendar of State Papers - Colonial Series, 1677-1680* (hereafter, CSP-CS), 618; John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America*, 2 vols. (London, 1741), 2: 117.
 16. Minutes of Council of the Massachusetts Bay, 6 March 1701, in CSP-CS (1701), 112; Massachusetts Historical Society, Thomas Prince, "Journal of a Voiage from New England . . . to Barbados", 26 May 1709; Boston Public Library, MS. U.1.14, vol. 1, no. 11, Samuel Chace to Benjamin Wright, 24 April 1705; *ibid.*, no. 13, John Oxley to Hannah Fishbourn, 1714.
 17. United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "Barbados Journal", 172, John Smalridge to Society, 18 May 1716; Society of Friends (London), *Epistles Received*, vol. 2, fol. 319 (Epistle from Barbados), January 1722.
 18. Robert Schomburgk, *The History of Barbados* (London: Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848), 85; Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops*, 56; Hughes, *Natural History*, 39.
 19. For example, William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery* (London, 1789), 154; Thomas Mante, *The History of the Late War in North-America, and the Islands of the West Indies* (London, 1772), 163-65. Some enslaved persons may have independently inoculated themselves earlier, without Europeans being

- aware of it. Direct evidence is lacking for this practice in Barbados or other West Indian areas, but inoculation against smallpox existed in various parts of West Africa in pre-colonial and early colonial times (see T. Edward Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* [London: J. Murray, 1819], 409; Jean Baptiste Durand, *A Voyage to Senegal* [London: Printed for R. Phillips, 1806], 136).
20. In March 1802 a Barbadian planter residing in England learned that vaccination, "a discovery so highly beneficial to mankind", had been "introduced in the West Indies and Barbados particularly" (West India Committee, Alleyne Letters, John Foster Alleyne to Richard Smith, 17 March 1802).
 21. Richard Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 267; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 280, 334; Alfred W. Crosby, "Smallpox", in Kiple, *Historical Dictionary*, 300-4.
 22. Parry, Replies to Queries; Barbados Assembly, *Report of a Committee of the General Assembly*, 4.
 23. Hughes, *Natural History*, 39; William Hillary, *Observations on the Changes of the Air and the Concomitant Epidemical Diseases in the Island of Barbadoes* (London, 1766; orig. pub. 1759), 74-75. Hillary, a Quaker physician, practised medicine in Barbados for twelve years, from 1747 to 1759, and his experiences on the island led him to write one of the more celebrated early works on West Indian diseases; it is also one of the earliest treatises by an English doctor that specifically treats tropical diseases. However, Hillary was primarily interested in diseases that affected Whites, and rarely specifically mentions enslaved people (Booth, "William Hillary"; cf. E.M. Shilstone, "The Washingtons and their Doctors in Barbados", *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* [hereafter, *JBMHS*] 20 [1953]: 71-80; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 22-24).
 24. For example, Frank C. Ramsey, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition in Barbados* (New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1979), 153-54.
 25. Hughes, *Natural History*, 39; Hillary, *Observations*, passim; Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops*, 56; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 132, 193n14; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 98-99; Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837* (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1838), 3.
 26. Hillary, *Observations*, 45, 74; James C. Brandow, ed., "Diary of Joseph Senhouse" [1776-1778], *JBMHS* 37 (1986): 398.
 27. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 131-32; cf. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 344; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 213.
 28. James Grainger, *An Essay on the More Common West India Diseases* (London, 1764), 41; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 28.
 29. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 132.
 30. Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 40; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99.
 31. Richard Towne, *A Treatise of the Diseases Most Frequent in the West Indies* (London, 1726), 100-101; Abraham Mason, "Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Thomas Birch, Relating to . . . an Epidemical Disorder", *Philosophical*

- Transactions of the Royal Society* 52 (1764): 477–78; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 20; Seale Yearwood, Letters to A. Frere, March 1796 and 26 April 1797, *JBMHS* 16 (1949): 15; NEP 523/899, Reece to Lane, 31 July 1823; Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Iland of Barbados* (London, 1657), 93; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99.
32. NEP 523/899, Reece to Lane, 31 July 1823; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 144.
 33. Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99. Croup could refer to several respiratory diseases. It was also a manifestation of diphtheria, although its presence in the West Indies, including Barbados, is difficult to discern from the primary sources (Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 132; cf. James D. Cherry, "Croup", in Kiple, *Historical Dictionary*, 81–83; Carmichael, in *ibid.*, 94–96).
 34. Dr [Walter] Caddell, Report on the Health of Barbados Slaves, Meeting of 14 November 1812, in "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 104; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 113–21, 143–44; Ramsey, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition*, 105. After independence in 1966, conditions improved greatly: between 1966 and 1996 deaths from pneumonia and influenza "decreased more than threefold" (E.R. Walrond, "Health in Barbados 1966–1996", in Trevor A. Carmichael, ed., *Barbados: Thirty Years of Independence* [Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996], 75).
 35. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 21, 143–44.
 36. *Ibid.*, 141, 142.
 37. Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 341; J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases of the Island of Barbadoes", *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 76 (1867): 448.
 38. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 136; cf. P.E.C. Manson-Bahr and F.I.C. Apted, eds., *Manson's Tropical Diseases* (18th ed., London: English Language Book Society, 1982), 18–19.
 39. Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 54, 66–67.
 40. "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 128–34; Yearwood, Letters to A. Frere, 113; *Barbados Mercury*, 1783–1819, *passim*.
 41. Referring to the 1730s and 1740s, Hughes reported that leprosy first appeared in Barbados "about sixty years ago", and that "it hath spread very much within these twenty years" (*Natural History*, 40).
 42. *Ibid.*; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 53; see also Hillary, *Observations*, 324; James Hendy, *A Treatise on the Glandular Disease of Barbados* (London, 1784), 43; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 21, 136.
 43. Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 189–92; see also United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Letter Books, Series B, vol. 6, no. 132, Codrington Attorneys to W. Morice, 28 May 1779; Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, 43; Parry, Replies to Queries; Dickson, *Letters*, 34, 36, 140; NEP 523/276, "List of Negroes on Seawell", 15 April 1791; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99.
 44. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 136–39, 243n28. For example, during the 1600s and

- early 1700s leprosy and filarial elephantiasis were frequently confused (B.R. Laurence, "Barbadoes Leg: Filariasis in Barbados, 1625-1900", *Medical History* 33 [1989]: 483).
45. Hillary, *Observations*, 339-52; Hughes, *Natural History*, 42; David Parry, "Extract of a Letter from Governor Parry to . . . Lord Sydney, August 18, 1788", *Parliamentary Papers* 26 (London, 1789), 15; John Brathwaite, Replies to Queries, in "Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council . . . Concerning the Present State of the Trade to Africa", *Parliamentary Papers* 26 (London, 1789), part 3; David Mason, "A Descriptive Account of Framboesia or Yaws", *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* 35 (1831): 54; cf. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 21, 138-39; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 83-88; Curtin, "Disease Exchange".
 46. Parry, "Extract of a Letter", 15; see also Dickson, *Letters*, 153; Hillary, *Observations*, 341. Modern scholars utilizing primary materials have also emphasized the relative frequency of yaws, particularly among African-born enslaved persons in the Caribbean (Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 21, 138-40; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 340-44; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 83-88, 201, 214).
 47. For example, Dickson, *Letters*, 153; Hillary, *Observations*, 344-45; cf. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 340, 344; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 138; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 201, 214.
 48. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 21, 139-40; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 83, 88, 214. By the late 1780s perhaps as much as 86 percent of the enslaved population was Creole; by 1817 the number had increased to 93 percent (Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 29).
 49. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 138-39; K. Jacobi, D.C. Cook, R.S. Corruccini, and J. Handler, "Congenital Syphilis in the Past: Slaves at Newton Plantation, Barbados, West Indies", *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 89 (1992): 145-58.
 50. Hughes, *Natural History*, 42.
 51. Dickson, *Letters*, 153; Philip Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes, etc. etc. etc.* (London, 1786; reprinted with additions, London, 1797), 81; Walter Pollard to Lord Hardwicke, 22 November 1790, quoted in Karl Watson, *The Civilized Island: Barbados, A Social History 1750-1816* (Ellerton, Barbados: K. Watson, 1979), 122.
 52. See, for example, Jacobi et al., "Congenital Syphilis"; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 243-44n29.
 53. J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases", 447; also, James Bovell, "Observations on the Climate of Barbadoes . . . with remarks on . . . Barbadoes leg", *British American Journal of Medical and Physical Science* 4 (1848): 198; Ramsay, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition*, 14. For example, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, 83 to 86 percent of the deaths attributed to syphilis were of children under 3 years old (*Colonial Annual Report*, 1927-1928, 1928-1929, 1931-1932).

54. For a detailed technical discussion of the evidence for congenital syphilis and its implications for the health and quality of life of enslaved Barbadians, see Jacobi et al., "Congenital Syphilis".
55. Ibid; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99. Congenital syphilis is not mentioned in modern studies of early Caribbean medical issues, and the physical findings at Newton cannot be inferred from the primary documentary sources. However, these findings contribute to a deeper understanding of mortality and morbidity, and offer a hitherto unrecorded pathology among enslaved West Indians. They also provide another example of how physical anthropology and archaeology (bio-archaeology) can contribute to the medical history of enslaved Caribbean people and provide information that is unavailable or limited in written sources. In her recently completed analysis of forty-nine additional skeletons, excavated from Newton cemetery in 1997 and 1998, Kristrina Shuler "found no evidence of syphilis in any form" ("Health, History, and Sugar: A Bioarchaeological Study of Enslaved Africans from Newton Plantation, Barbados, West Indies" [PhD diss., Department of Anthropology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 2005], 257).
56. West India Committee, Alleyne Letters, John Foster Alleyne to Richard Smith, 6 December 1801; NEP 523/276, "List of Negroes on Seawell", 15 April 1791; John A. Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies* (London: Printed for Sir R. Phillips and Co., 1820), 3-4; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 66-67.
57. Neville Connell, ed., "Father Labat's Visit to Barbados in 1700", *JBMHS* 24 (1957): 171. See Barbados Assembly, *The Report from a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, Appointed to Inquire into the Origin, Causes and Progress of the Late Insurrection* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1818), 51; Dickson, *Letters*, 76; Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, 43; Hillary, *Observations*, passim; Hughes, *Natural History*, 35; Dale Ingram, *An Essay, on the Nature, Cause and Seat of Dysentery's* (Barbados, 1744); Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 100-101, 114-15; United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Letter Books, Series A, vol. 24, p. 288, John Vaughton to SPG, Barbados, 11 August 1732. For water supplies in the plantation settlements, see Handler, "Slave Settlements", 134-36.
58. Dickson, *Letters*, 7; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 209.
59. Ingram, *An Essay*, 49; Huntington Library, STG, Box 25 (no. 15), Henry Grenville to George Grenville, 22 August 1750; Hillary, *Observations*, 118; Vaughton to SPG; Yearwood, 115; NEP 523/423, Wood to Lane, 21 October 1800; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 104; William Sandiford, *An Account of a Late Epidemical Distemper* (London, 1771).
60. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 145, 146; cf. Ramsey, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition*, 12; Charles W. LeBaron and David N. Taylor, "Typhoid Fever", in Kiple, *Historical Dictionary*, 345-49; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 341.
61. Barbados Assembly, *Report from a Select Committee of the House of Assembly*,

- Appointed to Inquire*, 48; J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases", 447. In fact, roughly a century after emancipation, typhoid (that is, enteric fever) was still a major cause of mortality on the island (see, for example, *Colonial Annual Reports* for the period 1920–1939 [London: His Majesty's Stationary Office]).
62. NEP 523/593, Farrell to Lane, 29 November 1804; *ibid.*, 688, Haynes to Lane, 3 December 1810; Methodist Missionary Society Archives, Box 1821–1822, no. 250.
 63. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 120–25; Higman, *Slave Populations*, 344.
 64. Hillary, *Observations*, 227; John Davy, *The West Indies, Before and Since Slave Emancipation* (London: W. and F.G. Cash, 1854), 102; J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases", 446; cf. Bovell, "Observations on the Climate of Barbadoes", 113–14, 144.
 65. Dickson, *Letters*, 155; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 14–15; Bovell, "Observations on the Climate of Barbadoes", 144; Society for the Improvement 1811–1816, 138; cf. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 120–25. In fact, neonatal tetanus may have been more common than tetanus (H. Vaillant, personal communication).
 66. Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99. Tetany is an infantile nutritional disease that was often confused with neonatal tetanus because of their similar symptoms. Kiple argues that a "significant percentage" of neonatal tetanus in enslaved children was, in fact, probably neonatal tetany, and that it undoubtedly caused many of the deaths that were attributed to tetanus in the early West Indian sources (*Caribbean Slave*, 123–25).
 67. British Library, Sloane MSS. 3662, John Scott, [1668], "The Description of Barbados", fols. 54–92; Scottish Record Office, GD 34, William Powrey to Archibald Hay, May 1648; Richard Vines to John Winthrop, 29 April 1648, in *Winthrop Papers*, vol. 5, 1645–1649 (edited by Allyn Bailey Forbes. Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1947), 219–20. cf. James Goodyear, "The Sugar Connection: A New Perspective on the History of Yellow Fever", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 52 (1978): 5–21; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 165; Curtin, "Disease Exchange", 347–48. The number of deaths among Whites reported in Barbados was probably exaggerated; nonetheless, yellow fever would have affected a significant percentage of the white population.
 68. Goodyear, "The Sugar Connection", 7; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 18, 161–65. In fact, Kiple (*ibid.*, 179–80) credibly argues that yellow fever was a major reason for the emigration of Whites from Barbados during the 1600s, along with the more customarily discussed "push factors" stemming from the expansion of the plantation system.
 69. Manson-Bahr and Apted, *Manson's Tropical Diseases*, 272. The *Cercopithecus* was one of the African animals susceptible to yellow fever and acted as a repository for the mosquito-borne virus (*ibid.*, 271). The Barbados green monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops sabaeus*) originally came from the Senegambia region during the seventeenth century, and it may have played a role in the island's yellow fever epidemics (Jean Baulu and Julia Horrocks,

The Green Monkey of Barbados [Barbados: Letchworth Press, 1984]; see also note 103, below).

70. Oldmixon, *British Empire in America*, 2: 117. In the 1690s in Barbados, yellow fever was called "the new distemper", and later "Kendal's fever", the "pestilential fever", and the "bilious fever" or the "putrid bilious fever"; however, by the 1730s or 1740s it was usually called yellow fever (Hughes, *Natural History*, 37; Hillary, *Observations*, 75). References to yellow fever epidemics in the seventeenth century (including 1700) are in: John Burnyeat, *Journal of the Life and Gospel Labours of John Burnyeat* (London, 1839; orig. pub. in 1691), 194; Alexander Dalrymple, *A Collection of Voyages Chiefly in the Southern Atlantic Ocean* (London, 1775), 61–62; Leo Francis Stock, ed., *Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments* [Proceedings, 12 April 1671] (Washington, DC, 1924–1941), 1: 384; *ibid.*, 2: 461–62; CSP-CS (1677–1680), 618; *ibid.* (1693–1696), 15, 445; *ibid.* (1700), 228, 265, 404; *ibid.* (1700), 797; Society of Friends (London), *Epistles Received, 1691–1695*, vol. I, fols 161–63, 217–21, 229–30; Phillips, "Journal of a Voyage", 253.
71. Cooper Wilyams, *An Account of the Campaign in the West Indies, in the year 1794* (London, 1796), 9. For other references to yellow fever in the eighteenth century, see Thomas Chalkley, *A Collection of the Works of Thomas Chalkley* (London, 1766); Hughes, *Natural History*, 37; Henry Warren, *A Treatise Concerning the Malignant Fever in Barbados and the Neighboring Islands* (London, 1741); Hillary, *Observations*, 75.
72. August Hirsch, *Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology*, 3 vols. (London: New Sydenham Society, 1883–1886), 1: 322–25. The *Aedes* also carries dengue fever. Hirsch reports an 1828 epidemic in Barbados and other islands, but his primary source is unclear. In any event, to this day dengue remains a threat in Barbados (*ibid.*, 1: 63; Walrond, "Health in Barbados", 75–76; cf. Manson-Bahr and Apted, *Manson's Tropical Diseases*, 263; Walter D. Glanze, Kenneth Anderson, and Lois Anderson, eds., *The Mosby Medical Encyclopedia* [New York: New American Library, 1985], 217).
73. Colonial Office, *Annual Reports, 1927–1928, 1928–1929*; George C. Low, "Malarial and Filarial Diseases in Barbadoes, West Indies", *British Medical Journal* 14 (1902): 1472–73; Laurence, "Barbadoes Leg", 483; Hirsch, *Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology*, 1: 220; cf. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 341; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 164–65; Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 24.
74. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 164.
75. Watson is alone among modern scholars in suggesting this, but he provides no evidence (Watson, *The Civilized Island*, 122).
76. Davy, *The West Indies, Before and Since Slave Emancipation*, 85–86. For the implications of the sickle cell trait and its relationship to malarial protection and the relative absence of the disease in Barbados during the slave period, see Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 14, 15, 17.
77. K.H. Uttley, "The Mortality and Epidemiology of Filiariasis Over the Last Hundred Years in Antigua, British West Indies", *West Indies Medical Journal*

- 8 (1959): 238–48; Low, "Malarial and Filarial Diseases"; Todd L. Savitt, "Filariasis in the United States", *Journal of the History of Medicine* 32 (1977): 141–42.
78. *Ibid.*, 141; "Filariasis", in Kiple, *Historical Dictionary*, 125–28; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 73–74. The *Culex* could have come to Barbados by sailing ship and survived, for example, in water casks; once established, the island contained optimal breeding conditions for the mosquito (Laurence, "Barbadoes Leg", 487).
79. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 73–74; Hirsch, *Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology*, 3: 716; Savitt, "Filariasis in the United States", 142.
80. Andrew Halliday, *The West Indies* (London: J.W. Parker, 1837), 69; Robert Jackson, *A Sketch of the History and Cure of Febrile Diseases*, 2 vols. (London: Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1820), 2: 261; J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases", 446; George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 3 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1806), 2: 120; Henry Fraser, Sean Carrington, Addington Forde, and John Gilmore, *A–Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Kingston: Heinemann, 1990); Frank A. Collymore, *Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect* (4th ed., rev. and enl. Bridgetown, Barbados: Advocate Co., 1970), 15; Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, v; J.W. Orderson, *Creoleana; or, Social and Domestic Scenes and Incidents in Barbados in Days of Yore* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1842), 45–46; Brandow, "Diary of Joseph Senhouse", 398, 412n52.
81. In actual fact, Hendy says the disease was "unnoticed" until about "eighty years ago", but he first made this statement in his 1774 doctoral dissertation (Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, 6–7; see also Jerome Handler, *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627–1834* [Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971], 43).
82. Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2: 120, 121; cf. Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, 57, 68; Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 184–88; Brandow, "Diary of Joseph Senhouse", 412n52. For comments on the frequency of the disease and comparisons of its occurrence among Blacks and Whites, see Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 184–88; Hillary, *Observations*, 304–5; Hughes, *Natural History*, 40; Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Drawer 5a, Alexander Anderson, "An account of the island of Barbadoes", 1785; Orderson, *Creoleana*, 45–46; John Williamson, *Medical and Miscellaneous Observations Relative to the West India Islands*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Printed by A. Smellie for the author, 1817), 1: 27.
83. Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, 36–37; Robert Jackson, *A Sketch of the History and Cure of Febrile Diseases*, 261.
84. Orderson, *Creoleana*, 45–46; Halliday, *The West Indies*, 69; Bovell, "Observations of the Climate of Barbadoes", 170; J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases", 446; Low, "Malarial and Filarial Diseases".
85. Hughes, *Natural History*, 41; R. H. Arnett and R. L. Jacques, *Simon and Schuster's Guide to Insects* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981); W. Linsenmaier, *Insects of the World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972); Alfred W.

- Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1972), 209.
86. Hughes, *Natural History*, 41–42; see also Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 65; Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2: 62–65; Hendy, *Glandular Disease*, 32.
 87. Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes*, 94; Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies*, 3–4.
 88. Hughes, *Natural History*, 42.
 89. *Ibid.*, 15, 124, 144; Hillary, *Observations*, 341; Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes*, 27; Robert Poole, *The Beneficent Bee* (London, 1753), 237, 277. In 1796, George Pinckard gave a detailed description of how chiggers were extracted, a method not very different from that described by Ligon over a century earlier (Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 2: 62–65; Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 65).
 90. *Ibid.*; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 18; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 136–37.
 91. Hillary, *Observations*, 346; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 19; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 137.
 92. Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 1: 260; Anon., *Authentic History of the English West Indies* (London: Printed for the author, Dean and Munday [printers], 1810), 42.
 93. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 62, 131.
 94. Hughes, *Natural History*, 41–42; see also Parry, "Extract of a Letter"; Hillary, *Observations*, 319; Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 179–83; James Lind, *An Essay on Diseases Incidental to Europeans in Hot Climates* (4th ed., London, 1788), 53; cf. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 20, 73; D. Maier, "Nineteenth-Century Asante Medical Practices", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21 (1979): 65; Curtin, "Disease Exchange".
 95. Hughes, *Natural History*, 41–42; cf. Alexander Gunkel and Handler, eds., "A Swiss Medical Doctor's Description of Barbados in 1661: The Account of Felix Christian Spoeri", *JBMHS* 33 (1969): 14–15; Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 179–83; Hillary, *Observations*, 319.
 96. Handler, "Slave Settlements".
 97. Towne, *A Treatise of Diseases*, 179–83; Lind, *An Essay on Diseases*, 53; Hughes, *Natural History*, 41–42; Gunkel and Handler, "A Swiss Medical Doctor's Description of Barbados", 14–15; Parry, "Extract of a Letter".
 98. Joshua Steele, "Letters of Philo-Xylon" [1787–1788], in William Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts* (London: n.p., 1814), 153; Grainger, *Common West India Diseases*, 46; "Minute Book of the Society for the Improvement of West India Plantership", 119, 128–34; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery*, 99.
 99. Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 73; cf. Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 215.
 100. Ramsey, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition*, 48; Glanze et al., *Mosby Medical Encyclopedia*.
 101. Ramsey, *Protein-Energy Malnutrition*, 15, 17; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 71–72, 101–2.
 102. Gunkel and Handler", "A Swiss Medical Doctor's Description of Barbados",

- 10-11; Hillary, *Observations*, 258, 263-64; Hughes, *Natural History*, 33; J.B.S. Jackson, "Diseases", 446; Schomburgk, *The History of Barbados*, 683.
103. The West African green monkey became a pest not long after its introduction in the seventeenth century and continued to be so throughout the slave period. Although its numbers fluctuated, bounties were offered for its elimination and by the 1830s the monkey population had been significantly reduced. By the 1840s, as Schomburgk noted, monkeys were "nearly extirpated, and only a few remain in the gulleys and deep recesses". He also observed that the raccoon, which was also introduced in the late seventeenth century, "is now equally scarce". From the seventeenth century and throughout the slave period (and later), rats were also a scourge and laws were enacted offering bounties for their destruction (see Schomburgk, *ibid.*, 178, 683; Davy, *The West Indies, Before and Since Slave Emancipation*, 138; Richard Hall, *Acts, Passed in the Island of Barbados* [London, 1764], *passim*; Hughes, *Natural History*, 66; Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, MS. 610, Alexander Anderson, 'Barbados' [ca. 1784-1785], 2; K. Helgen and D. Wilson, "The History of the Raccoons of the West Indies", *JBMS*, 48 [2002]: 1-11).
104. Barbados Assembly, *Report from a Select Committee of the House of Assembly, Appointed to Inquire*, 48; Kiple, *Caribbean Slave*, 145.

Public History, Landmarks and Decolonization in Trinidad¹

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Abstract

This article explores the process of symbolic decolonization in Trinidad through an examination of the treatment of its public monuments and icons inherited from the colonial period. The article argues that symbolic or iconic decolonization in Trinidad has been slow and halting, without any emphasis on the construction of new symbolic commemoratives. It suggests that this is due largely to the personality and vision of Dr Eric Williams, a Caribbean historian and the chief architect of the new nation. A Creole nationalist, his understanding of the past did not allow for the destruction of physical monuments. His successors have a less clearly defined historical vision and their attempts at symbolic decolonization are guided by the political expediencies of the independence period.

The Colonial Period

Usually when historians refer to public history they refer to their efforts at seeing public monuments – statues, public buildings, bridges, etc. – as texts that can be read, interpreted and mined for insights into the minds of their creators and their times. Invariably, of course, a ruling or governing elite commissions these public monuments and they are designed to impose a hegemonic vision of the world on the society. This has been so in imperial, metropolitan societies as well as in their colonial appendages. In metropolitan societies the statuary has reminded imperial citizens not only of the majesty of their “social superiors” but also of the grandeur to which they belonged as citizens of far-flung empires. In colonial societies public monuments have been used to testify to the power and superiority of the colonizer.²

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The urban landscapes of many former colonial societies are littered with a plethora of public monuments celebrating imperial victories, including the conquest of the colonized territory, and statues or buildings glorifying the exploits of individual colonizing agents – soldiers, sailors, governors, missionaries and so on. These signifiers of colonial domination were erected in the high noon of colonial rule and were usually placed in the major centres of colonial administration. They were placed in front of colonial legislatures or in the centre of public parks and squares, often giving their names to these public spaces. They gazed over the daily peregrinations of the colonial masses, who had constant reminders of their membership in an imperial system and their position of subjection to colonial rule.

The identity and original importance of some of these monuments were lost with the passage of time, and the significance and meaning of these landmarks often elude succeeding generations. At best, they have become merely convenient landmarks for the purpose of giving directions, and more often than not the convenient target for the faeces of irreverent birds. The homeless people of these third world nations find shelter in the public squares and on the steps of the statues dedicated to the heroes of their colonial past, their bodies now creating tableaux of despair, almost as bizarre monuments to the destitution that faces many persons in these post-colonial societies. Other statues had longer intergenerational mnemonic lives only because they were linked to public holidays and annual celebrations.

During the period of colonial rule the colonized peoples did not have the political steel or opportunity to erect those monuments that could give their version of their important historical moments or individuals in similar concrete ways. It is not surprising, then, that there have been controversies in some countries over which statues to retain and which new ones to erect in the post-colonial era. Removing statues and landmarks is fraught with political peril for the unwary and those who do find themselves in political hot water as the recipients of angry remonstrances from defenders of tradition. This is so, whether it is in the metropole, as the mayor of London, England, experienced as a result of his recent suggestions to remove two statues in London's Trafalgar Square, or in the ex-colony, as experienced by those who dared to contemplate interfering with Lord Nelson's statue in Bridgetown, Barbados.³

There is an oft-repeated, though probably apocryphal, story about an African leader who opined that the erection of a statue to the *Anopheles*

mosquito would have been the most appropriate tribute to African resistance to colonization. Unfortunately, in the independence period many new rulers had other ideas about worthy recipients of national awards and recognition. They often opted for the use of public funds to indulge in an orgy of self-aggrandizement as they cluttered their public spaces with statues of themselves and with eponymous prestige projects – public buildings, airports, highways – at considerable public expense. Fortunately, many of these iconic tributes to massive egos soon joined their colonial counterparts in splendid abandonment or disrepair, or became the targets of vandals, and many a concrete visage can be found surveying the ruins of post-independence adventures like a modern-day Ozymandias or like the *disjecta membra* of Derek Walcott's *Great House*.⁴

By and large, Anglo-Caribbean public spaces have been spared the excesses of egotistically inspired statuary; the egomania for which some of their political figures are known has not been concretized into imposing blotches on the landscape. But, more importantly, in some Anglo-Caribbean countries there is only now emerging a debate, sometimes acrimonious, about who are national heroes and the appropriate ways in which to acknowledge them, that is, whether their contributions warrant a statue, a street or a public building, and the location of this acknowledgement.⁵

Only in recent times have ex-colonial African countries erected monuments, invariably under UNESCO urgings, which draw attention to the Atlantic slave trade, the African Holocaust that was the progenitor of the colonization of the continent.⁶ Although enslavement (and its inevitable concomitant of resistance) is such an indelible part of the making of the Caribbean, few countries in the Anglo-Caribbean have symbolic public monuments evoking memory and recognition of this formative era and event.⁷ The French Caribbean is much better served in this regard. In the Anglo-Caribbean some progress has been made within the last decade, but most administrations were slow off the mark and only responded under considerable public pressure or when the political payoff for such an act seemed obvious and sure.

Although there are now public holidays for Emancipation and Indian Arrival in Trinidad, there are no specifically dedicated monuments to slavery or to indentureship.⁸ Nor is there any public monument to the indigenous population and the holocaust they experienced. There is a statue of a loin-clothed Amerindian hidden off Saddle Road in Cantaro, but there is no easily available and verifiable information on its origins,

nor does it appear to be part of the public inventory.⁹ The short experience of slavery (and this is not to deny its elements of horror) in the island, as compared to the rest of the Caribbean, has left little of the physical reminders of the old system to dot the landscape in the way in which it is inescapable in some other parts of the Caribbean. The rapid maturing and modernizing of the plantation system and the society have also taken their toll on much of the physical evidence of the system of indentureship. In a word, the frontier nature of the society has encouraged a rapid obliteration of the evidence of the slave and indentured pasts on the physical landscape. This does not mean that Trinidadian activists have not borrowed heavily from the regional vocabulary of "victimhood" in their rhetoric. But the search for commemoratives of a slave past by Afro-Trinidadian memorialists has often led them into embarrassing moments as they reinvent their histories to suit the contemporary requirements of political emotion.¹⁰ Attempts to identify a vault in downtown Port of Spain as a slave cell, or a tree in Woodford Square as an instrument used to hang enslaved persons, or St George V Park in St Clair as a slave burial ground, have been challenged as archaeologically and historically groundless.¹¹

But all of this is not to say that the image of its colonial past, with few exceptions, was not stamped on the public face of pre-independence Trinidad. Its public squares and monuments, in particular, bore testimony to its governance by its British colonial overlords. At independence in 1962, the nationalist government inherited an inventory of public memorials, which included statues of Columbus and Lord Harris, a monument in Woodford Square, a memorial commemorating the 1918 Armistice, and a number of named public squares.

The Columbus statue, in honour of the adventurer who claimed the island in the name of Spain in 1494, stands in an eponymous square at the edge of the city, in the midst of a slum area, and was the locale for an annual festival commemorating "Discovery Day". The square was originally called Tamarind Square, presumably because of the numerous tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) trees in the area and continued to be called so long after the name was changed to Columbus Square in September 1880. The statue of Columbus and accompanying fountain were donated by Hippolyte Borde, a businessman of the area, and the Roman Catholic Archbishop conducted the religious part of the ceremony at the dedication of the monument.¹² It is now the haunt of increasing numbers of destitute vagrants, homeless drug addicts and other victims of the unequal wealth creation and distribution of the post-independ-

ence years. Columbus has also lost some rank as a hero. The public holiday and celebrations previously associated with his name and Discovery Day have been replaced by those of Emancipation Day (though not without protest).¹³ But the most telling de-ranking of Columbus had to await the Mighty Shadow's calypso "Columbus Lie" (1984), which was a response to the international celebrations to commemorate the quincentennial anniversary of the arrival of the Genoese sailor in the Americas.

Apart from the public space occupied by "the Discoverer", some of the most prominent and prime spaces in the nation's city landscapes are identified with colonial governors. Lord Harris, a colonial governor between 1846 and 1854, during the early years after emancipation, has major memorials named after him in both the capital city and San Fernando. In 1846 the governor donated a strip of Crown land in San Fernando, the main commercial centre for the southern plantation belt, for the erection of churches and public buildings, alongside which was to be a promenade for pleasurable walks and recreation in the town.¹⁴ The promenade was named after him. In Port of Spain a square was named after Governor Harris and housed a statue of the honoree. A private citizen, Mr Protheroe, gave the statue to the city commissioners in 1905.

The "decolonization" of the Port of Spain space dedicated to Lord Harris came about as a result of a criminal accident rather than any planned government programme. In 1994 the once striking statue was vandalized. One newspaper claimed that the police had reported that "some homosexuals were having a modelling show in the square when the statue was dislodged. It fell and broke into several pieces. One of the models was reportedly trying to pose with the statue when the incident occurred." The newspaper report further claimed that some drug addicts had removed the broken parts of the statue. The pieces were eventually recovered when a man of "no fixed place of abode" was found in possession of three bags containing the body parts of the statue at a slum near the city dump called Beetham Estate.¹⁵

It is clear that some enterprising drug addict with less concern for the dignity of the governor than for the satisfaction of his immediate urges had proceeded meticulously to dismember the statue. He had transmuted the effigy of colonial governance and power to marketable scrap iron which was exchanged for usable cash with which to purchase his narcotic of choice. When the body parts were discovered the debate over whether the statue should be reinstalled was instructive. It revealed

a society at war over its historical soul, still uncomfortable with certain aspects of its colonial past, and not knowing what to do with the baby of the present and the bathwater of the past.

Swords were clearly drawn. On the one hand were those who saw the former governor only as the representative of an evil colonialism – a white overlord with no place in the independent nation. On the other hand were those who reminded the nation that it was Harris who, as governor, was responsible for, among other things, early attempts at the urban beautification of the frontier society that was Trinidad; the reform and expansion of local government; the establishment of structures for free primary education; and the initiative for the establishment of the Public Library. It was the same Harris, married into a local family, who had remarked shortly after emancipation that a race had been freed but a society had not been formed. The debate over what to do with this statue was revealing in its irony. The intense contestation in the modern era over symbols in the public space indicated that a cohesive society was yet to be formed.

Although the square still bears the name of the former governor, the statue was never actually reinstalled and the square remains with a non-functioning fountain, an empty pedestal and a missing statue. If the reinstallers have their way, it would be not so much because they had won the popular debate but more likely because they were better placed in the society to influence official decision making on the matter. But the popular anti-Harris sentiment is still there – in part a reflection of an education system in conflict with the historical vision of popular politics. A reinstalled Harris could quite possibly fall victim again to a kidnapper to whom his contribution is not worth a handful of plums. There is now a generation of Trinidadians for whom the statue has lost all assertorical value and now only has importance as a cash convertible (the parts were sold for TT\$20); and for whom debates over statues and national symbols are not as important or pressing as the satisfaction of immediate needs. For that generation there is no connection between the statue as a symbol of a usable past and their contemporary concerns.

Lord Harris Square, itself, and Victoria Square, named after the British monarch during whose reign slavery ended, were created from rubble from the Red House, the colonial legislative building which had been destroyed by fire during the water riots of 1903.¹⁶ These riots were an important part of the political development of the city and the nation; but the memory of the events and their meaning seemed to have been

buried with the rubble, and there is nothing to trigger public historical consciousness of the events. For a long time Lord Harris stood erect, surveying a square created from the rubble drawn from the people's struggle against colonial rule. At night, the homeless descendants of those who had struggled against the system he represented joined the governor, perhaps sometimes to observe the fashion forays of homosexuals, another group of the society's outcasts.

In the centre of the city is Woodford Square, with a fountain surrounded by the images of huge, life-sized mermaids, a gift of George Turnbull, a merchant of the town, and installed in 1866. Woodford Square also boasts a bandstand, which was opened in May 1917 and often featured concerts by the police band, a practice that was officially recognized as an integral part of the bread and circuses which supported colonial rule.¹⁷ The area was the site of a Carib settlement during the period when what is now Port of Spain was known as Conquerabia by its original aboriginal inhabitants. Woodford Square, although laid out by Governor Woodford (1813–1828), was originally called Brunswick Square and named after the wife of George IV, the British monarch. But in May 1917 it was renamed after Governor Woodford.

On the western side of the square is the Red House, the seat of government, with Trinity Cathedral (Anglican) on the south side, and the City Hall with the Office of the Mayor, the Old Public Library and the imposing Hall of Justice (1985) on the northern perimeter. The Hall of Justice is an ugly, aesthetically displeasing celebration of concrete, perhaps in keeping with the tasks its occupants have to perform in dispensing justice. It was built by a local firm, in collaboration with a British firm of architects, with some of the petro-dollars during the oil bonanza of 1973–1981. It jars with the Victorian aesthetic of some of the neighbouring structures and has nothing of local inspiration to commend it. It speaks volumes about the in-betweenity of tastes and attitudes to decolonization of those who commissioned it and approved its design in the era of independence.

As old photographs and prints show, Woodford Square was an imposing place with considerable aesthetic appeal and clearly designed to be one of the breathing spaces of the capital city in the colonial era. It became the headquarters of the early nationalist movement and from its Victorian-styled balustrade/bandstand the likes of Dr Eric Williams and C.L.R. James denounced colonialism, spelt out the historical necessity of West Indian nationhood, and made the irrefutable case for independence. The nationalist movement, in recognition of the public education

campaign that Williams led, unofficially renamed the square the "University of Woodford Square". It had developed an atmosphere reminiscent of London's Hyde Park. At night it became a lecture hall; during the day it was the scene of numerous tutorials over the history and future of the Caribbean, and Trinidad's role in it, conducted by self-appointed tutorial assistants of Williams, the historian turned politician. Williams claimed that it was "a centre of free University education for the masses, of political analysis and of training in self government for parallels of which we must go back to the city state of ancient Athens".¹⁸

Years later, in the tumultuous times leading up to 1970, when the new generation of nationalists tried to conduct their classes on decolonization and neo-colonialism at the "University of Woodford Square", they found that "Chancellor" Williams had locked the gates to the university. In an ironic twist, the leaders of the anti-colonial movement, who had seized a colonial public space in their struggle, decolonized it and converted it into a symbol and site of anti-colonialism, now in political power denied their children access to it. Woodford Square had become, not a site for popular democracy, but for the partisan interests of certain sections of the ruling People's National Movement (PNM). The gates would remain locked for some years, not allowing even ordinary PNM supporters to enter their old stomping ground. When it was finally reopened in safer times, what had been a stirring symbol of the new Caribbean struggling to be born, with its claim for an enlightened, informed and participating citizenry, had lost its lustre, vigour and vitality, and attractiveness. The space remains, and the few diehard local lecturers of lesser reputation and their tutorial assistants have to compete with increasing numbers of the destitute, the homeless and the mentally deranged.

Two other, smaller squares carry names that have no real historically emotive purchasing power with the contemporary population. In the west end of the city is Adam Smith Square, named after the chairman of the Town Board (1907-1914), and later mayor of the city (1919-1920). The members of the Town Board were the administrators of the city until the restoration of its charter in 1914. They had taken over from the town commissioners (1899-1907), who had replaced the Old Borough Council which had been established in 1853 and abolished in 1899. Few Trinidadians know anything about this chairman, including, most likely, the current members of the city council, whose responsibility it is to maintain and upkeep this public space.¹⁹ It now has

importance as a judging point for bands and individuals parading during the annual carnival celebrations.

The other small square, George V Park, is at the virtual boundary of Port of Spain and the "new" city of St James. Traditionally, the area is more popularly known as Pompeii. This space was originally part of the St Clair estates, owned by the Grey family. The colonial government had transferred this portion of the estates to the Town Board when the area of St Clair was incorporated into the city at the turn of the century. During the Second World War, the United States constructed a temporary army camp there as part of its lend-lease agreement. The park abuts a middle- and upper-middle class residential area. When it was suggested that it be renamed Emancipation Park and converted into a place commemorative of the Trinidad slave experience, the tenor and tone of the negative responses revealed a virulent vein of discrimination bordering on racism, but masquerading as class, still existent among some members of the educated social elites in the society.

In the northeast corner of the city is Memorial Park with its War Memorial, which was first unveiled in 1924, honouring those who have given service and in some cases their lives in the First World War (1914–1918). It is now also a testimonial to the colony's contribution to "the war to end all wars", as well as the Second World War (1939–1945),

Sculpted at a time when Trinidad was firmly in the imperial embrace, there is nothing about the memorial to hint at the nascent nationalism nipping at the heels of the imperial overlords. For a glimpse of that nascent nationalism one would have to look elsewhere than in the public spaces and statuary.

The Post-Colonial Period

Public commemoratives erected in the colonial period probably had a much easier passage than their counterparts in the post-independence period when such commemoratives are prone to fall victim to racial and ethnic divisions. A statue to the Mahatma Gandhi, the father of Indian nationalism – donated by Ramdeo Sampat-Metha, president of the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Foundation, sculpted by B.K. Guru, and installed in 1988 – occupies a small square in west-central Port of Spain. Another statue to the Mahatma occupies one corner of Harris Promenade in San Fernando. These statues are not part of a common celebration of anti-colonial struggle in which the importance of the Mahatma's role in the process of decolonization and nationalism is highlighted and emphasized. They tend to be partisan commemoratives, given the highly racialized political climate in Trinidad. Similarly, there are two statues to Tubal Uriah Butler, a local labour leader of the 1930s, who, in waging a struggle for better working conditions, also championed constitutional reform and therefore earned his place in the local pantheon of anti-colonial heroes. Both statues are in the South, one on Harris Promenade and the other in Fyzabad, the scene of his struggles against the multinationals that dominated the oil industry. The commemoration of Butler's efforts barely rises above racial partisanship, despite them being rooted in working-class struggles; and Butler's collaboration with East Indian activists, such as Adrian Cola Rienzi and Stephen Maharaj, are usually ignored. Rienzi's name is attached to the headquarters of the United National Congress (UNC). The Congress is the current parliamentary opposition to the PNM, and despite its oft-repeated claim to be a party committed to multiracial and national unity, is popularly acknowledged as the representative party of Indo-Trinidadians, especially the Hindu community. Its headquarters is in central Trinidad, the former agricultural heart of the island. This, in itself, ensures that Rienzi is associated with a partisan racial/ethnic identification rather than the multiracial labour movement and the national community for whom he struggled.²²

There are few commemoratives or statues to politicians who have risen above the ranks to be considered national statesmen rather than partisan politicians. Captain Cipriani is perhaps the closest. The nationalist movement has identified this white Trinidadian of Corsican parentage as Trinidad's first national hero. Eric Williams described him as one of the great trinity of the movement for self-government (the two others being Butler and Patrick Solomon), and a person who "gave dignity to the barefoot man".²³ Shortly before independence, the municipal council erected a statue on what was then called Marine Square to honour the former three-time mayor of Port of Spain as one of the acknowledged anti-colonial activists who had led a campaign for political and constitutional reform.²⁴ Not even the Black Power Movement of the 1970s questioned his place in the nationalist hagiography, and it is interesting that during the demonstrations of the 1970s his statue remained untouched, although the nearby cathedral was desecrated.²⁵ In 1976 The Might Sparrow, in his calypso titled "The Statue", further solidified the monument in the popular imagination by picturing it participating in the carnival celebrations. The life-sized statue dominates the intersection of Frederick Street and Independence Square and, although his name, career and contribution may not be familiar to many persons born since independence, his statue certainly has recognition value, if only as a city landmark. In a well-kept Square in Scarborough, the sister island of Tobago, there is a bust of A.P.T. James (1901-1962), a man recognized as a Tobagonian "national" hero because of his vigorous defence of that island's interests as a member of the Legislative Council from 1946 until his defeat by A.N.R. Robinson of the PNM in 1961. The memory of "A.P.T." in what is virtually racially homogeneous Tobago escapes the racial partisanship that characterizes commemoration in Trinidad, where there is no popular memory of him.

Eric Williams, the acknowledged Father of the Nation, is on record as insisting that there should be no public memorials in his name. He requested that at his death his mortal remains should be cremated and his ashes scattered in the Caribbean Sea – one supposes in recognition of his life-long commitment to the establishment of a Caribbean nation. His political successors for some time seemed to have honoured his wishes and stayed away from any public commemoratives. But they may have succumbed to the seductions of political expediency and eventually engaged in a flurry of naming. Although in continued respect for his wishes no statue has been erected, the state named two notable complexes of buildings after him. They are the Mount Hope Medical

Services Complex, and the Financial Complex which houses the Ministry of Finance and temporarily housed the Office of the Prime Minister in downtown Port of Spain. Both of these complexes were built as a result of the petro-dollar bonanza over which he presided as prime minister and chief developmental architect. One is also tempted to believe that the complexes were chosen in recognition of the complexity of that enigma that was Eric Williams.²⁶ But the stay on statues in his honour may well be over since the incumbent PNM government (since 2001) has signalled its intention to place a bust of him in the national legislature where he spent twenty-five years, until the time of his death.²⁷

A few statues have been erected in honour of non-politicians whose service to the national community has earned them the right to be memorialized through national monuments which occupy permanent spaces on the landscape. Some streets, sport fields and other minor public spaces under the control of local authorities, rather than the central administration, have also been named or renamed after local politicians. However, there is no statuary commemorating local politicians or political activists. Politicians have to tread warily in making these kinds of decisions for fear of unleashing the verbal and physical violence that often reveals and accompanies the underlying tensions of the society.

A case in point was the upheaval that accompanied the suggestion put forward by the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) (1986–1991) to use funds recovered from an investigation into corruption under the PNM administration to install a statue of Gene Miles. The latter was a low-ranked civil servant who, during the PNM administration, had revealed a minor corruption scandal (minor only in comparison to other instances of corruption which would be revealed in later years), as her father had done in a pre-PNM administration. She was vilified and persecuted for her whistle-blowing, and because of her lifestyle, which included liberal consumption of alcohol, she achieved notoriety as a town character and later died under pitiable circumstances. The NAR's suggestion of a statue in her honour may have been offered as poetic justice against the PNM that was blamed for her tragic demise. But Abu Bakr and his followers, inspired by their version of Islam, saw this suggestion as a flagrant waste of public funds by an uncaring administration and used it as one of the excuses to justify their storming of the Parliament. The case for a statue for this civil servant has not been made, although she still occupies a kind of mythological place in the popular imagination and in calypso.²⁸

The religious organizations have also left their imprint on the Trinidadian landscape. The Christian denominations which have long dominated the society, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, have left marks on the landscape outside of their principal churches and cathedrals in prominent places in the city. The Christian ritual, the Way of the Cross, which commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, involves the reenactment at fourteen stages of the arrest, trial and execution of Jesus Christ at the end of the week designated as a Holy Week, which leads into the Easter weekend. There are at least three known spaces in Trinidad – East Dry River, San Juan and Arima – where the Church in its politically influential heyday had been able to get the state to permit it to erect on publicly owned and maintained thoroughfares monuments depicting the various stages of Jesus’s journey to Calvary.

Carapichaima – are on private property.³⁰ For years, as part of a process of revitalization, the Hindu community engaged in a number of religious rituals, including the circumambulation of the island and the renaming of certain public geographical spaces. This was done to establish symbolic links between themselves, India (the homeland of the original immigrants) and Trinidad (the space for which the descendants of these immigrants are staking a claim for inclusion and acceptance).³¹ But this renaming has all been unofficial and, as noted above, the stamping of symbols of Hindu civilization on the landscape has not been on public or state-owned property. While in office as prime minister (1995–2001), Basdeo Panday had installed a *murti* and a *jhandi* on the grounds of the official prime minister's residence.³² Patrick Manning, his successor, a self-confessed born-again Christian, sought to remove these symbols of the personal religious orientation of his predecessor from state property. Manning's move was disingenuously interpreted as evidence of religious and racial discrimination. In the ensuing flurry of accusations what was lost was an opportunity to discuss the role of religion in the decolonization of independent Trinidad. However, in a society in which all politicians engage in obscene pandering to religious groups, like many other debates, this one degenerated into racial posturing.

Cultural symbols are no exception to this rule; in fact, it is an arena in which the fiercest battles are being fought with serious implications for symbolic decolonization.³³ The steelband, although acknowledged as the only percussive instrument developed in the twentieth century and undoubtedly Trinidad's singular contribution to world musical culture, is itself a disputed symbol in the nation's iconography. Any gestures toward the steelband is easily read as merely empty politicking, even by steelbandmen, and in many cases they are right on the mark. Any government assistance to the steelband movement is entered in a register designed to identify racial bias since the steelband is erroneously seen as only an Afro-Trinidad instrument. The declaration by the government in 1995 that the steelpan was officially the national instrument was seen by one segment of the society as evidence of racial bias and the critics claimed equal designation for the *dholak*. Arguments that the steelpan was indigenously created, as opposed to the instruments imported from India that are touted for national status, fall on ears deafened by the sounds of the *dholak* and the *dhantal*.³⁴

Some commemoratives have been erected around the steelband. In 1971 Fitz Blackman, mayor of Port of Spain, called for contributions

from community groups to erect a monument in tribute to the steelband. A sculpture of three steelband players, done by Pat Chu Foon, was paid for by the Lions Club of Port of Spain, erected first on the western side of the Promenade, and then moved to the eastern end, behind the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, where it presently rests.³⁵ In John John, a slum on the outskirts of Port of Spain, there is a monument to Winston "Spree" Simon, one of the acknowledged pioneers of the steelpan.³⁶ In the southern city of San Fernando, the second major city and the capital of industrial Trinidad, the roundabout at the corner of Coffee and Ciperó Streets boasts an impressive statue of a playing "panman", which the Borough Council erected in 1977 on a site reputed to be the home of the first steelband in San Fernando. Samuel Wharton of Point Fortin sculpted it and Belgrove's Funeral Home maintains it. With few exceptions, commemoratives that have been erected of the steelband have been funded through private contributions rather than government funds.

Calypsonians, like steelbands and steelbandsmen, have been recognized through the naming of streets in some of the newer government-sponsored housing developments. Recently, the government has also issued a series of postage stamps with the faces of some of the well-known bards. However, with the exception of the Mighty Sparrow and Lord Kitchener – the duo who unarguably have done the most for both the modernization and the international reputation of calypso – there are no statues of calypsonians.

Lord Kitchener's statue, sculpted by Pat Chu Foon, stands at the Roxy Roundabout, on the strip adjacent to George V Park and the boundary between Port of Spain and St James. The statue at the roundabout was not the result of a government initiative; it was erected by the Lions Club and Harvard Sports Club. The sculptor succeeded in capturing Kitchener in his classic calypso-performing pose, that is, with a leg kicked in the air and a hand gesticulating, and with his characteristic hat on his head. Although there is no obvious connection between the honouree and the location, the statue is a well-received statement inscribed on the city's landscape. Most observers agree that the statue speaks to them, and for them, about this important artist and art form in the cultural development of Trinidad. After Kitchener's death a bust was also unveiled in Arima, his birthplace. There was much controversy while he was alive over attempts to lobby for the award to him of the Trinity Cross, the nation's highest honour; he did receive a lesser national award.

Honouring heroes of the past or selecting historical commemoratives has its own perils, but no less so is giving honour to those who are alive. Revisionists would always find the Achilles heel or the feet of clay of those who are gone, and historical commemoratives are always judged by the subjective requirements of the present. In the case of the living, modern systems of communication, which facilitate an almost instant democratic access to information on all aspects of the life of the claimants for honour, provide the means for immediate judgement on the moral suitability of the honouree. Moreover, the way in which the public perceives the historical moment or how the artist has portrayed his or her ideas of the individual is often cause for conflict between the representational freedom of the artist and the subjective needs and prejudices of the receiving public. Testy publics often discipline artists and impose guidelines on them for the way in which they want their public heroes and events represented in their public spaces. The recent controversy in Jamaica over the Redemption Song statues in Emancipation Park, as well as earlier conflicts over both the Bob Marley statue in 1983 and the statue erected in 1965 commemorating the centenary of the Morant Bay uprising, are some examples of how public tastes ran contrary to artistic imagination.³⁷ The initiative to create a statue of The Mighty Sparrow, the living legend of calypso, although ultimately a storm in a teacup, provided Trinidad with an example of this kind of conflict.

Madan Gopal, the sculptor of the Sparrow statue, though born and schooled in India, was of Indo-Trinidadian parents, and his grandparents were indentured immigrants who had returned to India. He himself had returned to Trinidad in 1982 with his father to create the thirty-six-foot-high statue of Divika Nanda at the Divali Nagar. Having heard much of Trinidad from his grandparents and parents, and of Sparrow, Gopal considered himself enough of a "Trini to the bone" – to use a phrase from one of those syrupy nationalistic calypsos of 2003 – to attempt the sculpture of this national icon.³⁸ The statue was done as a private commission for the "Hail the King" committee. The finished product, on an elaborate five-foot-high pedestal, is located on the St Ann's Roundabout, in close proximity to the president's residence and the entrance to the middle-class neighbourhoods of Cascade and St Ann's.

The reactions to the statue included complaints that the face did not resemble that of Sparrow, and that the stance was too stiff.³⁹ In some of the letters to the editors of the national newspapers at the time, the

writers opined that because the sculptor was from India and not local-born, he was unable to capture the "essence" of the singer. The calypsonian Black Prince expressed in classic calypso style all the nuances of the complaints and, more importantly, put his finger exactly on the unarticulated point which lay below the surface.⁴⁰

In his opening verse Black Prince assured Sparrow, to whom the song was addressed, that he understood and appreciated fully Sparrow's decision to accept this honour and testimony of all that he had done for the art form, but that he (Black Prince) was shocked that "when the great day came / they gie ah next man you fame". Given what was widely viewed as the lack of verisimilitude in the statue, this surely seemed like a case of mistaken identity. Black Prince, however, explained that it was a common failure among sculptors – citing the statues of "Kitch" (Kitchener) and Butler as examples – to be scrupulously exact in their reproduction of their subjects. In fact, Black Prince invoked even Almanac, the visually challenged (blind) calypsonian, who, he claimed, "saw" the statue and could not recognize Sparrow. He accused Sparrow of customary disingenuity ("as a man always in the mix / you know how to play politics") because Sparrow had earlier claimed, in response to the complaints, and probably in an attempt to make peace, that he had no problem with the facial representation. The statesman-like stance that the sculptor had given the statue was also cause for complaint. There was nothing of the calypsonian as performer in the stance ("Not a mike they put in your hand / Ha' you stand up like a war veteran"); nor of the "saga boy" image of the calypsonian as sardonic savant ("you jacket coulda have more style / and they leave out your Birdie smile"); and, as fellow calypsonian Almanac had observed, that even Sparrow's signature companions would not have been impressed ("he tell me if Jean and Dinah should pass / They go say you looking like a real ass").

Even the location of the statue was cause for complaint. Black Prince revealed that Bomber, another calypsonian, had told him that "even the location off / your statue shoulda be down dey on the wharf". This was a rejection of its location in proximity to the middle-class neighbourhood and a preference for the wharf. The suggested location would have reflected the immigrant origins of Sparrow's family and of the society. But the wharves were also symptomatic of the urban milieu of dock workers, prostitutes and rumshops, which constituted the mix that created Sparrow and from which the artist drew much of his inspiration during his early career.

But Black Prince's most telling complaint is one which ties it in to our concern with statuary, representation, decolonization and nation building. He thought that he himself could have done a better job ("better they did gie me the wuk / When ah done wid you people woulda shock"), and clearly he would have included some reference to sex and sexuality, which the sculptor omitted. When he checked out the statue his first comment was:

Well ah went and check it as man
It ent have nutten for the Village ram
Gopal make you look like a mimic
That statue ent you - must be Benwood Dick.

And later:

They leave out the space in you teeth
And ah can't see your bandy feet
On top you head it ent have no muff
Below you waist that stuff ent enough.

"Village Ram" and "Benwood Dick" are references to two calypsos from Sparrow's lengthy repertoire of calypsos detailing his imagined sexual prowess and adventures. All of the signifiers which were crucial to the identification and recognition of the Sparrow *persona* as the nation's sexual exemplar and hero *par excellence* were missing. Those things that made him the Village Ram, that is, the unmatched sexual predator and performer, were absent, and the sculptor had instead reproduced the polite Benwood Dick - "the man from Sangre Grande", who, though he claimed memorability because of his sexual competence, really was the image of gentility. Hence, Black Prince could exclaim in bewilderment:

Sparrow whey it is they do
That statue ent you
Sparrow who is that in true
That statue ent you.

Absent from the well-intentioned Gopal representation was the Sparrow who, in his 1956 signature tune "Jean and Dinah", declared, "The Yankees gone and Sparrow take over now". This was a declaration as nationalistic as Williams's declaration that he had "let his bucket down" in his speech in 1955 when he resigned from the Caribbean Commission. Sparrow's lyrics were fuelled by the same nationalistic fervour that Williams had been stoking and which was to later find expression in the march on Chaguramas for the return of the base and

the repudiation of the lend-lease agreement of 1941. "Jean and Dinah" won Sparrow the calypso crown and launched his career on Sunday, 12 February 1956, as surely as Williams's speech on 21 June 1955 and victory in the elections on Monday, 26 September 1956, would launch his undefeated political career of twenty-five years. If Williams, in his 1955 speech, sang the chant of the black, urban middle class of teachers and others who felt frustrated in their ambitions by the restrictions of colonial rule,⁴¹ Sparrow sang the nationalistic chant of a male, urban underworld of pimps, johns, sagaboyes and cuckolds who were rejoicing over the possibility of reclaiming the favours of those women who, they claimed, had forsaken them for the blandishments of the American military men. Black, urban Trinidadian males associated themselves with the sentiments that Sparrow and Williams expressed, and both of these men's careers and statements became part of the national iconography.

Black Prince was unapologetic about how his cultural hero should have been represented in the public space. In his final chorus he changed "Sparrow wha' they doing *you*" to "wha' they doing *we*", making it a complaint on behalf of the collective about an injustice done to them. He asserted tellingly at the end, "Look like they ent get the message / Whey we love is your old image". Not for him the foreignness of the alien mermaids in Woodford Square, the asexual Columbus and Lord Harris, or for that matter the statesmanlike demeanour of Cipriani. Rather, the calypsonian opted for the rampant male sexuality of Sparrow in full flight as the Village Ram, if the mixed metaphor could be permitted. For if new local heroes are to be exhibited in the public spaces of the decolonized society, then they must be imbued with and exude all those attributes that the society finds aesthetically pleasing and be mirrors in which the society can see itself, warts and all. The calypso has been this reflector in the past, and now that its performers are being honoured, a certain degree of verisimilitude and respect for reality is demanded.

Conclusion

The erection and removal of public statuary are political acts and statements that reflect the contestation over the historical narratives of the society and the location of political power. Regime change in most societies has been accompanied by symbolic efforts of the new elites to signal their relationship with the past and through those acts make their claim for the present. In some cases, dependent on the elite, it has

meant a complete rejection of the old regime and a forging of a linkage with an imagined past that is reflected in an aggressive attitude towards symbolic destruction and construction. In some cases, especially where the new elite are unsure of themselves, and/or their hold on power, there has been a tendency towards reconciliation with aspects of the past and therefore a more conservative attitude towards symbolic deconstruction.⁴²

Symbolic or iconic decolonization in Trinidad has been slow and halting, and without any emphasis on the construction of new symbolic commemoratives. In the period 1956–1981, when the administration was controlled by the political party that benefited electorally from the rising tide of nationalist fervour, there were only some halting and almost hesitant steps in this direction, despite the intensity of the rhetoric. The Black Power uprising of 1970 and its demands forced the hand of the government, which reluctantly gave in to some symbolic naming. The bonanza of petro-dollars (1973–ca. 1981), which facilitated the construction of state buildings, highways and stadiums, allowed for the elaboration of naming as an approach to symbolic decolonization. The hesitancy in the earlier period could be attributed to the personality and particular vision of Eric Williams, a Caribbean historian and the chief architect of the new nation. His understanding of the past was one that did not allow for the destruction of physical monuments of the colonial era. For him, Trinidad was a society in which colonialism had provided a "fundamental underlying unity" where "all have messed out of the same pot, all the victims of the same subordination, all have been tarred with the same brush of political inferiority. Divergent customs and antipathetic attitudes have all been submerged in the common subordinate status of colonialism."⁴³

His was an inclusive approach to history, which suggested that all that went into the making of Trinidad had to be remembered. Moreover, those physical reminders had to be there so that the people could remember how far they had come. Old ideas and attitudes had to give way in the making of the new society. However, he was too much of an historian to believe that the destruction of old statues erased the past or was crucial to the making of the future.

His successors had less of that sense of history; if they had any ideas of history at all, or any cultivated philosophy of history, it is not evident in their public statements or actions. After his death in 1981, successive administrations seemed to be engaged much more in the process of symbolic decolonization, but this was not part of any carefully thought

out and articulated strategy, rationalized by reference to history and done in the service of nation building. By and large, these post-1981 efforts occurred in response to pressures from below for symbolic change of the bread-and-circuses variety, and were determined and coloured by the partisan racial politics of the society. It is important to note, also, that women are sorely under-represented in the post-independence commemoratives. To the extent that Sparrow and his career became part of the iconographic making of the nation, those claimants for national space who have felt excluded from the imagined and real community could now justifiably contest this stamp of rampant Afro-male sexuality. Sadly, there are no new statues or public monuments that serve to evoke the imagined inclusive independent community through a rescripted version of the colonial past.

NOTES

1. This article is dedicated to Carlton R. Ottley (1910–1985) and Michael Anthony, pioneer historians in the urban history of Trinidad. The article has its origins as a plenary address delivered at the Third Text and Testimony Collective Conference, *City Life in Caribbean History*, held at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, in December 2003. I am indebted to Dr Bridget Brereton, Dr Anthony Luengo and Mr Lennox Grant for the comments that they made.
2. On public monuments see Donald Martin Reynolds, ed., *Remove Not the Ancient Landmark: Public Monuments and Moral Values* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1996). On their assertorical roles see especially the chapter by Mary Mothersill in the same collection.
3. *National Post* 2, no. 310 (21 October 2000): A15; see also Patricia Mohammed, "Taking Possession: Symbols of Empire and Nationhood", *Small Axe* 6, no. 1 (2002).
4. See Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), "Ozymandias", in Elliott Coleman, ed., *Poems of Byron, Keats and Shelley* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 491; Derek Walcott, *In a Green Night: Poems 1948–1960* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962), 19.
5. B.W. Higman, *Writing West Indian Histories* (London: Macmillan Education, 1999), 210–13; see also Mohammed, "Taking Possession".
6. See examples in Senegal, the Republic of Benin, and Ghana. Some of these sites have now become part of a tourism of guilt and "victimhood", including the slave port at Gorée. See also Dana Rush, "Contemporary Vodun Arts of Ouidah, Benin", *African Arts* 34, no. 4 (2001). On the creation of tradition around these sites of memory, see Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social*

History of a West African "Slaving" Port, 1727–1892 (Oxford and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press, 2004).

7. On the other hand, note, for example, the huge statue of the Maroon in Haiti, and the life-sized statue to Schoelcher in Cayenne. Among the recent additions, there is now the controversial statue commemorating emancipation in Jamaica. For a discussion of monuments, see Laurence Brown, "Monuments to Freedom, Monuments to Nation: The Politics of Emancipation and Remembrance in the Eastern Caribbean", *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 3 (2002); Gert Oostindie, ed., *Facing Up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001); Marial Iglesias Utset, "Decolonizing Cuba: Public Culture and Nationalism in the Years 'Between Empires', 1898–1902", *Journal of Caribbean History* 37, no. 1 (2003).
8. Public holidays are part of the decolonization process, not only because of the public parades and celebrations associated with them and the way in which they utilize public space, but also because they have become the preferred strategy of symbolic decolonization, rather than the removal of the older statuary. The use of the urban space through street parades – including carnival and the Independence Day celebrations – is another important part of urban history and decolonization which is the subject of another study. On the recognition of Emancipation Day in the wider context of the rehabilitation of the African dimension of Trinidad, see Frances Henry, *Reclaiming African Religions in Trinidad: The Socio-Political Legitimation of the Orisha and Spiritual Baptist Faiths* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2003). See especially chapter 3 for the establishment of these holidays. On earlier celebrations of emancipation in Trinidad, see Bridget Brereton, "The Birthday of Our Race: A Social History of Emancipation Day in Trinidad, 1838–88", in B.W. Higman, ed., *Trade, Government and Society in Caribbean History 1700–1920: Essays Presented to Douglas Hall* (Kingston: Heinemann Educational Books Caribbean, 1983). On emancipation in Jamaica, see Barry W. Higman, "Slavery Remembered: The Celebration of Emancipation in Jamaica", *Journal of Caribbean History* 12 (1979). On the political controversy surrounding holidays, see Parsuram Maharaj, "Arrival and Indian Culture", *Newsday*, 27 May 2003; and especially Selwyn D. Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* (St Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies School of Education, 1999).
9. I have been informed by Dr Anthony Luengo that the Amerindian is Hyarima, who apparently was an historical figure and an ally of the Dutch in fighting the Spanish in 1636, although the commemorative plaque erroneously claims that he was involved in the Arena revolt of 1699.
10. See Bridget Brereton, "History and Myth in Narratives of Trinidad and Tobago's Past", *Trinidad Guardian*, 24 February 2005, for an interesting comment on this matter.
11. Gerald A. Besson, *The Angostura Historical Digest of Trinidad and Tobago* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria Publishing, 2001), 128.

12. H.C. Pitts, *100 Years Together: A Brief History of Trinidad from 1797 to 1897* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: The Trinidad Publishing Co., 1948).
13. However, the Columbus celebrations continue in Moruga, the reputed site of his original landing, where costumed villagers reenact the arrival on the first Monday of every August. Some Moruga villagers were very vociferous in their objection to the renaming of the holiday.
14. Michael Anthony, *Anaparima: The History of San Fernando and the Naparimas*, volume 1, 1595–1900 (San Fernando, Trinidad: City Corporation of San Fernando, 2001), 15–16.
15. See "Statue Missing after Fall", *Trinidad Guardian*, 6 July 1994; "The Way of Lord Harris", *Trinidad Guardian*, 7 July 1994; George John, "Where is the Lord?", *Trinidad Guardian*, 9 July 1994; "Part of our History Destroyed", *Trinidad Guardian*, 13 July 1994; "Homeless Man Denied Bail", *Trinidad Guardian*, 20 July 1994.
16. Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783–1962* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 149–51; K.O. Laurence, "The Trinidad Water Riots of 1903: Reflections of an Eyewitness", *Caribbean Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1969); Brinsley Samaroo, "Mournful Monday – The Commemoration of the Water Riots of 23rd March 1903", *Newsday*, 30 March 2003.
17. See National Archives, London, Colonial Office documents, 875/50/6, "Displays in the Colonies" (1949).
18. Eric Eustace Williams, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister* (London: André Deutsch, 1969), 133. Both George Lamming and Gordon Lewis also had praise for the role and importance of the site.
19. The British-born Adam Smith was also one of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council. On the history of Port of Spain, see Carlton Robert Ottley, *The Story of Port of Spain – From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Diego Martin, Trinidad: Crusoe Publications, 1977); Michael Anthony, *The Making of Port-of-Spain: 1757–1939*, vol. 1 (Port of Spain, Trinidad: National Cultural Council of Trinidad and Tobago, 1978). For a history of municipal government, see Alvin Magid, *Urban Nationalism: A Study of Political Development in Trinidad* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1988).
20. On war memorials in the Commonwealth, see Allan Greenberg, "Lutyen's Cenotaph", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 48, no. 1 (1989); Catherine Mariarty, "Review Article: The Material Culture of Great War Remembrance", *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (1999); Katie Trumpener, "Memories Carved in Granite: Great War Memorials and Everyday Life", *PMLA [Transactions and Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America]* 115, no. 5 (2000).
21. See letter from Cipriani to Colonel A. Dueros, 27 October 1914, in Gerard Besson and Bridget Brereton, eds., *The Book of Trinidad* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria Publishing, 1991), 418.
22. For a short biographical note on Butler, see Bridget Brereton, Brinsley Samaroo, and Glenroy Taitt, *Dictionary of Caribbean Biography*, volume 1, *Trinidad and Tobago* (St Augustine, Trinidad: Department of

- History/Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1998); On Rienzi, see Kelvin Singh, "Adrian Cola Rienzi and the Labour Movement in Trinidad (1925-44)", *The Journal of Caribbean History* 16 (1982); Kelvin Singh, *Race and Class Struggles in a Colonial State: Trinidad, 1917-1945* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1994).
23. Eric Eustace Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Printed by PNM Publishing, 1962).
 24. *Ibid.*, 225.
 25. See an account of the demonstrations and desecrations, in Raoul Pantin, *Black Power Day – the 1970 February Revolution: A Reporter's Story* (Santa Cruz, Trinidad: Hatuey Productions, 1990).
 26. On Williams as enigma, see, among so many others, Ken Boodhoo, *The Elusive Eric Williams* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002).
 27. Radhica Sookraj, "PNM to Put Bust of Dr Eric Williams in Parliament", *Trinidad Guardian*, 17 February 2003; Steve Smith, "No Bust of Dr Williams in Our Parliament", *Trinidad and Tobago Express*, 2 February 2003; George John, "Remembering Williams", *Trinidad and Tobago Express*, 7 April 2004.
 28. See Selwyn D. Ryan, *The Muslimeen Grab for Power: Race, Religion, and Revolution in Trinidad and Tobago* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Inprint Caribbean, 1991); Hollis ("Chalkdust") Liverpool, *From the Horse's Mouth: Stories of the History and Development of the Calypso* (Diego Martin, Trinidad: Juba Publications, 2003), 242-43; see also Pantin, *Black Power Day*, 107-8, where it is reported that the poet Derek Walcott wrote a eulogy dedicated to her and published it as a paid advertisement in the *Trinidad Guardian*; see also Lennox Grant, "Who Remembers Gene Miles, Not N.A.R.?", *Trinidad Guardian*, 24 July 2005.
 29. Marie Therese O.P. Retout, ed., *100 Years of the Catholic News (1892-1992): Memories and Milestones* (Port of Spain: Printing Services, 1992).
 30. Parsuram Maharaj, "Hinduising the Landscape", *Newsday*, 2 September 2003.
 31. See Ryan, *Jhandi and the Cross*, 52. For a sense of the feeling of continued injustice and discrimination, see also Sat Maharaj, "The Struggle Continues", *Trinidad Guardian*, 21 May 2003.
 32. A *murti* is a religiously installed image (icon) of a Hindu deity; a *jhandi* is a prayer flag symbolizing the completed performance of a Hindu religious ceremony.
 33. There is a growing literature on this subject. Among others, see Ryan, *Jhandi and the Cross*; Viranjini Munasinghe, *Callaloo or Tossed Salad? East Indians and the Cultural Politics of Identity in Trinidad* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001); Viranjini Munasinghe, "Redefining the Nation: The East Indian Struggle for Inclusion in Trinidad", *Journal of Asian American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2001).
 34. A *dholak* is a small-barrelled drum, and a *dhantal* is a percussion instrument consisting of an iron or steel rod struck by a horseshoe-shaped beater. For a discussion of their origins and uses, see Tina K. Ramnarine, *Creating Their*

Own Space: The Development of an Indian-Caribbean Musical Tradition (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001). On the steelpan controversy, see Ryan, *Jhandi and the Cross*, 60–65.

35. "Tribute to Pioneers on Promenade", *Trinidad Guardian*, 19 February 2003.
36. Terry Joseph, "Remembering 'Spree' Simon", *Trinidad and Tobago Express*, 18 April 2001.
37. Barbara Ellington, "Emancipation Park: A Dream Realised", *Jamaica Gleaner*, 11 August 2002; Gwyneth Harold, "Redemption Song: Symbol of Freedom?", *Jamaica Observer*, 10 August 2003; Arlene Martin, "The Statue Stays", *Jamaica Observer*, 18 August 2003; "Rape of Democracy", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 2003. For instances outside of the region, see Eric Levin, "For Irate Citizens, Public Sculptures Belong Anywhere but on a Pedestal", *People Weekly*, 14 November 1983.
38. Wayne Bowman, "His Dream Is to Share", *Trinidad Guardian*, 12 May 2001.
39. "Monument to Discord", *Trinidad Guardian*, 25 July 2001.
40. "The Statue", in Black Prince, *LOCHO* (compact disc) (Trinidad: Electro Sounds Digital Publishers, 2003). All further lyrics cited are from this tune unless otherwise stated.
41. For the full speech, see Selwyn Reginald Cudjoe, ed., *Eric E. Williams Speaks: Essays on Colonialism and Independence* (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux Publications, 1993), 111–65. For Williams's assessment of the impact of the speech, see Williams, *Inward Hunger*, 131–32.
42. See, for example, Aygen Erdentug and Berrak Burcak, "Political Tuning in Ankara, a Capital, as Reflected in its Urban Symbols and Images", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26(4): 721–34.

Imagining Womanhood in Early Twentieth-Century Rural Afro-Jamaica¹

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Abstract

*Storytelling was an important means of gender socialization in early twentieth-century rural Afro-Jamaica. This article examines messages about appropriate female behaviour in two collections of Jamaican folktales: Walter Jeckyll's *Jamaican Song and Story* (1907) and Martha Warren Beckwith's *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (1924). It concentrates in particular on the ideas conveyed in the tales about motherhood and the place and roles of married women. It demonstrates that the tales articulated three models of womanhood that built on African and European norms of femininity and argues that rural Afro-Jamaica's past of slavery and colonialism explains the emphasis placed in the tales on female submission and male domination.*

Introduction

Folk tales, myths and legends often conceal more than they tell; it is our business as either listeners or readers, to wrinkle out the hidden meanings, associations and suggestions.²

As a result of high illiteracy rates and poverty, the views of Afro-Caribbean men and women in the post-emancipation period are largely absent from the archive. Folktales are one of the few sources that give us an insight into their value system. Storytelling was an important pastime in the rural Afro-Caribbean community. Several nights a week, young and old gathered to listen to stories that were intermingled with dance and song. Among the many messages conveyed in Caribbean folktales are ideas about appropriate female behaviour. This article explores ideas about the place and roles of women in early twentieth-century

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Jamaican folktales as a means of opening up the debate about the construction of norms of black womanhood in the post-emancipation Anglo-Caribbean. Historians working on gender in the Anglo-Caribbean have thus far focused mainly on the period of slavery and have been more concerned with women's lived experiences than with gender ideology.³

The tales examined are those in Walter Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story: Anancy Stories, Digging Sings, Ring Tunes and Dancing Tunes* (1907) and Martha Warren Beckwith's *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (1924).⁴ These are the most comprehensive published collections of post-emancipation, Anglo-Caribbean folktales.⁵ This, however, is not the only reason why this article concentrates on Jamaica. As the scholarship on the post-emancipation Anglo-Caribbean is heavily biased towards Jamaica, it is easier to contextualize messages about appropriate female behaviour in Jamaican than in other Caribbean tales. Both collections draw their material from rural Afro-Jamaica. Jekyll collected his 50 tales in the Blue Mountain region and Beckwith collected her 138 tales in the north-western parishes. Both Beckwith and Jekyll were outsiders to rural Afro-Jamaica. Beckwith was an American ethnographer, who collected the tales during two visits to the island in 1919 and 1921, as part of a larger project on Jamaican folklore. Jekyll had arrived in the island in 1895 to escape the restraints of British society and spent his time translating books and collecting tales and songs.⁶ We know relatively little about the methodology adopted by the two collectors. Both mention that they had taken the tales down verbatim: Jekyll from his male employees and Beckwith from some sixty men and women of differing ages and classes.⁷ Jekyll's remark that he hoped that his collection would find its way into the nursery and that it would "pay tribute to Jamaica's dusky inhabitants with their winning ways and their many good qualities", and Beckwith's opinion that the tales reflect "true folk art", suggest that both collectors altered and perhaps even suppressed the stories told to them.⁸ We should also not rule out that their informants had carefully selected the stories that they dictated. In other words, the tales in the two collections may differ from those that were told at informal social gatherings.

Considering that storytelling was an important means of socialization for a large part of the Afro-Caribbean population until very recently, it is surprising that so few scholars have examined their content.⁹ A notable exception is Carol Bryce Davies, whose article " 'Women Is a Nation . . .': Women in Caribbean Oral Literature" (1990) provides a short survey of dominant images of women in Caribbean folktales from

the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries.¹⁰ The first section of this article confirms Davies's conclusion that women are marginalized in Caribbean folktales. It provides a brief comparison of the way male and female characters are represented in the two collections. The second section deals not with representations but with expectations. It demonstrates that the tales present motherhood as one of the most important roles expected of rural Afro-Jamaican women and explores the various motherly duties listed. Another expectation of rural Afro-Jamaican women was marriage. The third section looks at the marital advice that the tales gave to women, such as the criteria on which they should base their choice of husband and, more importantly, the way they should relate to their husband. The last section is a conclusion which argues that the tales offered women three different models of womanhood, each of which firmly endorsed male domination and female submission. By comparing the ideas about motherhood and marriage in the tales with those articulated in the mother country at the time, the article tries to determine whether Afro-Jamaicans were able to move away from the norm of womanhood in the dominant, that is white, English, middle-class, culture in the post-emancipation period. And by invoking other primary sources, it tries to demonstrate that the ideas of womanhood in the tales are representative of those held by early twentieth-century rural Afro-Jamaican men and women.

I

As Marina Warner has shown in her study of European fairytales, folktales take on "the colour of the actual circumstances in which they are or were told".¹¹ A comparison then of male and female characters in the two collections should give us some indication of the status of women in early twentieth-century, rural Afro-Jamaica. Women appear in only one fourth of the tales. There are three further indications of the marginality of rural Afro-Jamaican women. First, there are proportionally less female than male protagonists. For example, women play a leading role in only five of the sixteen tales with female characters in Jekyll's collection. Second, female characters are predominantly passive, that is, things happen to them or they unquestioningly follow other people's orders, while male characters, even the most minor ones, are active. Finally, only one-third of the female characters have a name, compared to three-fourths of the male characters. While some of the named female characters have a proper first name, the majority have a comical name,

such as Miss Nennen-kennen-wid-a-turn-down-gown. And only one female character has a surname: Mrs Goolin. Very few male characters have a comical first name and most have surnames.

The tales thus illustrate that rural Afro-Jamaican women were considered to be less important than their men folk. They were also supposed to be dependent on them, as can be deduced from the fact that most of the nameless female characters are introduced by their relationship to a male (such as "the mudder of Simon Tootoos"), and also from the duties undertaken by the female characters. Female characters are primarily portrayed as looking after the needs of their husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, suitors, and employers. The tales indicate that in return for their services, women were entitled to male protection and support. About one fourth of the female characters, for instance, are rescued from a horrible fate by a son, a brother, or a lover.

The afore-mentioned features of the female characters in the tales therefore suggest that patriarchy was the underlying principle of social stratification in early twentieth-century, rural Afro-Jamaica.¹² The two following sections will show that rural Afro-Jamaican women were expected to put themselves under the domination and protection of the men in their household. They will pay attention to the strategies that the storytellers used to convey this message, and will also explore how much leeway female characters had in their relationships with their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons. The final section will provide a tentative explanation of the origin of the patriarchal ethos conveyed in the tales.

II

Most female characters take care of children. Among them are not only biological mothers but also other-mothers; that is, women, such as grandmothers and stepmothers, who rear children that are not their own. The importance that early twentieth-century, rural Afro-Jamaica attached to motherhood cannot only be deduced from the abundance of images of women who mother, but also from the various tales of women anxious to become mothers. In "The Water Crayfish" (*JAS*, 99),¹³ for instance, a woman who "was always wishful of adopting child", takes home a girl that she has found near the river. Miss Wheel in "The Two Sisters" (*JAS*, 74), resorts to a more drastic measure to mother. She kills her younger sister, Miss Grace, and takes the latter's baby "fe her own self".

Metropolitan society at the time also placed a high value on motherhood. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, it was argued that a woman would find her identity and life fulfilment through childbearing and child-rearing. By the turn of the century, motherhood was not just seen as a woman's destiny but also as her primary duty. This shift in maternal rhetoric was largely the result of a declining birth rate among the middle classes and a high infant mortality rate among the working classes, both of which were seen to threaten the health and welfare of the British nation. To counteract this threat, it was deemed essential that women from all classes acquired knowledge from authoritative sources about the raising of healthy and responsible citizens. Childcare manuals, advice columns in women's and general interest magazines,

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instance, that the colonial government set up a Bureau of Health Education.¹⁶ Most of the child and maternal welfare initiatives in the island in the 1910s and 1920s were carried out by charities, such as the Women's Social Service Association, which ran free infant welfare clinics.¹⁷ The lack of child and maternal welfare provision, and the abundance of other-mothers in the tales suggest that we cannot read the emphasis that the tales placed on motherhood simply as a filtering through of the metropolitan ideology of motherhood. The glorification of motherhood in the tales goes back to the days of slavery. For enslaved Jamaican women, as for their African ancestors, childbirth was the main rite of passage. Prolific childbearers among enslaved women were held in high esteem, while those who were childless were objects of compassion. The latter, however, could gain the status associated with motherhood by adopting children whose mothers had died in childbirth or were sold away.¹⁸

"Alimoty and Aliminty" (*JAS*, 77), another sister-rivalry story, suggests that it was not so much the number of children that a woman reared that determined her status within the community but her success in raising them. One of the sisters in this tale has a daughter called Alimoty who "everybody love", while the other sister has two daughters who "nobody love". The tale narrates the latter sister's attempt to make her daughters as popular within the community as Alimoty. It is mainly through its ending – the mother loses both daughters – that the tale conveys the message that a mother had to train her children to behave well because her children's behaviour reflected on her. Madeline Kerr's *Personality and Conflict in Jamaica* (1952), which is based on fieldwork carried out in rural Jamaica in the late 1940s, confirms that successful child-rearing was for rural Afro-Jamaican women one of the main avenues to gain social status. It mentions not only the painstaking efforts that mothers undertook to ensure that their children "turned out good", such as making sure that they kept good company, but also the fact that the community paid close attention to the dress, deportment, and speech of children and that it judged mothers accordingly.¹⁹

Having established that the tales reflect the value that rural Afro-Jamaica placed on good mothering, we now need to answer the question how the tales defined good mothering. To facilitate this, I will first examine images of biological mothers and then those of other-mothers. This analysis will illustrate that, like their metropolitan counterparts, rural Afro-Jamaican mothers were expected to meet their children's physical needs, turn them into responsible members of the society, and treat

their male and female children differently. It will also show that the tales attached a different weight to the attributes of good mothering than the metropolitan advice literature on child-rearing and that they defined them in a different way.

As for a mother's duty to look after her children's physical needs, the tales define this first and foremost as providing children with food. Several mothers give their sons plenty of food to sustain them on a long journey and others grow peas and raise livestock. There are, however, also tales of mothers struggling to feed their children, such as "The Children and the Witch" (*JAS*, 110) in which a mother, who has nothing but "a slice of bread and cold water" for her children, accepts her husband's decision to leave them "in the bush". The metropolitan ideology of motherhood also defined this motherly duty primarily as feeding the children. Its concern, however, was not, like that of the tales, with the quantity but with the quality of food. Mothers were, for instance, told to breastfeed their children, and when weaned to provide them with nourishing food.²⁰ The economic context in which the tales were told helps to explain this difference. From the late nineteenth century until the Second World War, rural Jamaica witnessed high levels of distress, including reduced wages, unemployment, and an increase in the costs of living.²¹ As a result, rural women found it difficult to feed their families. They often tried to supplement the family income by raising more produce in their gardens and selling it in the market or by undertaking paid work. Single mothers found it even more difficult than women with partners to feed their children. As employment opportunities for women in rural parishes were few and not well paid, many single mothers moved to urban parishes to look for work as domestic servants, often leaving their children in the care of a relative.²²

As for the second attribute of motherhood – turning children into responsible members of the community – the status-bestowing aspect of child-rearing explains why this features so prominently in the tales. A mother was not only expected to teach her children obedience and disciplined habits but also to instil in them the values of the community. The story "Lucy and Janet" (*JAS*, 82b), for instance, told mothers that they had to teach their children not to be rude to others. The mother in this tale is a very selfish mother who neglects her main duties. She has sent her two daughters "far to school" and allows only one at the time to visit her. She furthermore does not collect the daughter herself but sends her three dogs. On her way home in August, Lucy encounters an old-witchman who tries to kill her. The dogs, however, rescue her as she

has been very kind to them. When Janet returns home in December, she does not share her breakfast with the dogs and quarrels with them. The dogs punish her for her rudeness, as they fail to rescue her when the old-witch man attacks her.

The tales suggest that as part of their duty to turn their children into responsible community members, mothers had to give them a Christian upbringing. Various mothers try hard to make their children say their prayers, go to church, or live according to Christian principles. The mother in "Parson Puss and Parson Dog" (*JSS*, xxix), for instance, uses the help of a parson to force Toad to marry her daughter. Other contemporary sources lend support to the idea that turning their children into good Christians was seen as an important duty of rural Afro-Jamaican mothers and one that the community especially judged them on, such as the report of the 1932 court case in which Muriel Hatchett sought compensation for the "loss of service" that she had suffered following her daughter Irma's pregnancy, which was the result of rape by a local dentist. Muriel emphasized in her statement that "she was a member of the Wesleyan church" and "an assistant leadress", that she had brought Irma up in the church and that the latter took communion, was a member of the choir and also a Sunday school teacher. Asked by the dentist's lawyer to elaborate on Muriel's and Irma's reputation, several witnesses mentioned first and foremost their active church membership.²³

A clear indication of the patriarchal ethos of early twentieth-century, rural Afro-Jamaica is the emphasis that the tales place on a mother's duty to distinguish between her male and female children. Mothers were told to be lenient with their sons and strict with their daughters. In only two mother-and-son tales does a mother disapprove of her son's behaviour: "Simon Tootoos" (*JAS*, 66) and "Jack and the Bean-Stalk" (*JAS*, 114). Although Jack's mother is "annoyed" that Jack has disobeyed her order to sell a cow, she does not, like Simon's mother, punish him for his disobedience. The ending – Jack gives his mother the money that he has made from swapping a cow for "a cap of bean" – suggests that the tale served as a means to convey not only the message that mothers had to be lenient with their sons but also that they had to defer to them. The message to show deference to sons is more clearly expressed in tales in which mothers allow their sons to go on dangerous trips. The mother in the "Three Brothers and the Life-Tree" (*JAS*, 123), for instance, does not object to her sons' decision to look for work elsewhere. As a proper mother, she even bakes them "two pone" to sustain them on their journey. The youngest son, who is the only one to survive

the trip, rewards her for her deference by visiting her when he has become king of the land.

However, the mother-and-son tales sent women in the audience conflicting messages about the proper way to relate to their sons, as in some of these tales a mother's deference results not in a reward but in suffering. In "House in the Air" (*JAS*, 17), Brer Tiger breaks his neck because Anancy's mother followed her son's wishes, while in "White Belly and Anansi" (*JAS*, 136) Anancy's mother dies as a result of her blind submission to her son's orders.²⁴ Considering that female characters who were punished or suffered served as anti-role-models, these two Anancy tales seem to convey the message that women should not unconditionally defer to their sons. The first tale, for instance, suggests that a mother should only obey her son if his demands did not pose a threat to the fabric of the community.

Both biological mothers and other-mothers in the tales allow their female children less free time than their male children by giving them more chores around the house, and they also supervise their female children more closely than their male children. The girls in "The Fish Lover" (*JAS*, 78a) and "Juggling Straw Blue" (*JAS*, 79), for example, have to fetch water, while the girl in "The Water Cray-Fish" is looked after by Anancy whenever her mother goes out. Madeline Kerr observed the same phenomenon during her fieldwork. Mothers, for example, did not allow their daughters to play after school.²⁵ Statements in the aforementioned court case also suggest that rural Afro-Jamaican women carefully guarded their daughters. Muriel mentioned, for instance, that she did not allow Irma to "go for drives with anyone", while her sister Kathleen told the jury that whenever Irma visited friends she had to be home by nine.²⁶

The strictness with which rural Afro-Jamaican mothers raised their daughters served to protect them against seduction and pregnancy. By sending her dogs to collect her daughters from school, the mother in "Lucy and Janet" clearly failed to protect her daughters' virtue sufficiently. The mothers in "Leah and the Tiger" (*JSS*, xxxvi) and "Tiger Softens His Voice" (*JAS*, 91), on the other hand, are very concerned about their daughters' purity. To protect them against seducers, they build them a house far removed from the outside world. At first sight, these mothers seem excellent role models. Both take their duty to feed their children seriously and one of the mothers even reminds her daughter to say her prayers at night. However, the tragic end of the tales – both girls are attacked by a tiger – suggests that these mothers fell short

of the norm of motherhood. As we shall see, a marriage in which a husband and wife occupied separate spheres and carried out distinct roles made a woman respectable. By hiding their daughters from the outside world, these two mothers did not allow them to become respectable women. They form a striking contrast in this respect with the mothers in "Parson Puss and Parson Dog" and "The Three Sillies" (*JAS*, 125), who allow their daughters to court and actively encourage them to marry their suitor.

As mentioned, metropolitan mothers were also asked to distinguish between their male and female children. Like rural Afro-Jamaican mothers, they were told to prepare their daughters for their future roles as wives and mothers by giving them domestic chores. They were not told, however, to be lenient with their sons. In fact, the latter's future role as defender of the British nation required them to be rather strict with their sons. Child-rearing manuals and other means through which metropolitan women learned about the proper way of mothering placed far less emphasis than the Jamaican tales on a mother's duty to protect her daughter's sexual purity. While this difference may reflect the prudery of metropolitan society, it should not be ruled out that its past of slavery made the sexual purity of girls a particularly pressing issue for rural Afro-Jamaica.²⁷

The tales in which a married mother follows or fails to follow her husband's child-rearing decisions also reinforced the patriarchal ideal. As we have seen, the mother in "The Children and the Witch" accepts her husband's decision to leave their children in the forest. She is rewarded for supporting her husband's decision as the children return home with "cake and nice things" that enable the family to survive. Those familiar with the Hansel and Gretel story will have noticed that this tale differs in an important respect from the Grimm brothers' version; it is the father and not the mother who makes the decision to leave the children alone in the forest. The change that Afro-Jamaican storytellers brought about in the Hansel and Gretel story can be read as what Gerda Lerner has called a "patriarchal intervention".²⁸ It helped to convey the idea that men were the ultimate decision makers in the family. The mother in "Leah and the Tiger" fails to pay heed to this important lesson. When she tells her husband, after one of her visits to Leah's tree house, that the girl told her that she had heard a "great rolling like groun' shaking", and had begged her to come home, her husband responds: "[W]hat make you lef' me daughter a bus? Go back for him to-night." The mother refuses to do so, saying that Leah is in no imme-

ciate danger and that she will bring her home the next day. However, the next day she opens the door and "finds only one finger of her daughter" left. Hearing the news that his daughter had been devoured by a tiger, the husband "catch up one big junka 'tick an' lick down the wife". Tales such as this one told the audience that when it came to child-rearing, a woman could make the day-to-day decisions but had to leave the important ones to her husband.

According to the tales, then, a good mother was caring and self-effacing, and paid due respect to the men in her household. The economic conditions did not make it easy for rural Afro-Jamaican women to live up to this ideal. Like their enslaved ancestors, rural Afro-Jamaican women could rely on a network of family and friends to help them cope with their maternal responsibilities so that they could achieve the power and status derived from successful child-rearing. Gladys Bustamante, the wife of the first prime minister of Jamaica, mentions in her memoir that when she was in her late teens she moved in with her widowed aunt, a mother of three young children.²⁹ The support network for mothers is strikingly absent in the tales. This is another "patriarchal intervention", because by not mentioning the network the tales hold up the ideal of the male as the main provider of the family.

Other-mothers constitute about 25 percent of all mothers in the tales and include several stepmothers, two childless women who adopt "stray" girls, and a godmother. The abundance of other-mother tales reflects not only the importance that rural Afro-Jamaica attached to the practice of other-mothering but also the fact that there was a great concern about this practice at the time. As mentioned, many women with children moved to other parishes to look for work. It has been estimated that some 26,400 women changed parish between 1871 and 1921.³⁰ In addition, many women with children moved to other parts of the Caribbean and to North America. According to George Roberts, Jamaica lost 28,300 women as a result of out-migration between 1911 and 1921.³¹ This female movement increased the number of other-mothers, as most female migrants with children left them in the care of a relative or friend until they had found a job and settled in. Read against this background, then, the other-mother tales served to a large extent to convince women not to hesitate when asked to look after another woman's child. While most female migrants left their children only temporarily in the care of other-mothers, there were many, especially those who moved abroad, who left their children for longer spells of time in somebody else's care. One such female migrant was Gladys Bustamante's

mother. She moved to Cuba to look for work and left her three-year-old daughter with her parents. Although she quickly settled in, she did not send for her daughter. Even when she returned to Jamaica several years later – married and with four children – Gladys stayed with her grandparents.³² As more and more other-mothers were asked to take care of their adopted children for longer periods of time, there was an increasing need for clear instructions in other-mothering. The tales conveyed these primarily through bad other-mothers.

The most important duty of an other-mother was to treat her adopted children as her own. This meant first of all that she had to provide them with the same amount of food. The other-mother in "Grandy-Do-An'-Do" (JAS, 69) clearly conveys this message, as she dies as a result of withholding food from her adopted daughter. Second, it meant that she should not demand heavier chores from her adopted children than from her own. Several other-mothers make their adopted daughters fetch water, while their own children are given lighter tasks and/or exempted from domestic work altogether. Third, it indicated that she should discipline her adopted and her own children in the same way. The evil stepmothers in the tales live up to the rule that a good mother should be stricter with her female than male children. However, the strictness with which they treat their adopted daughters is not inspired by a concern about the adopted daughter's sexual purity but by hatred or envy, and it far exceeds that used for their own daughters. Some of the evil stepmothers even use their own sons and daughters to "police" their adopted daughter. Furthermore, other-mothers were expected to put their own needs and interests aside, as is conveyed by the two childless women who adopt "stray" girls. One of these women had adopted a girl for no other reason than to have somebody "to sup with" (JAS, 69). Finally, it signified that they should be prepared to give the adopted children back to their biological mothers. The godmother in "The Boiling Pot" (JAS, 102), for example, gives her godchildren back after several years without any reservations and receives in return praise and money.

Other-mothers, then, were to be as caring, devoted, and self-sacrificing as biological mothers. However, it was not always easy for women listening to the tales to pick up this ideal of motherhood. Mothers who are punished or suffer terribly often display qualities expected of good mothers. Miss Wheel, for instance, undertakes painstaking efforts to breastfeed her sister's child. However, living up to the first attribute of motherhood did not prevent her from being put to death for killing her

sister. In other words, women could not just place the mothers in the tales into "good" and "bad" categories and deduce from this the standards for good mothering. They had to filter out all the mother images in the tales.

III

A striking aspect of the mothers in the tales is their marital status; only 35 percent of them are married. This figure reflects the social reality of early twentieth-century Jamaica. Between 1900 and 1925, the marriage rate was about five per thousand of the population, compared to sixteen in metropolitan society.³³ The majority of Jamaican women at the time were in a visiting union (a steady sexual relationship in which the partners did not live together), or in a common-law marriage.³⁴ Many women moved from visiting unions to common-law marriages, and finally to formal marriages. The last part of this cycle is described in "Bull-of-the-Land" (*JAS*, 101). King Henry leaves his common-law wife and three children after he discovers that she has burned the clothes that turn him into a bull. Realizing her mistake, the woman goes on a three-year search for King Henry. The story ends with a happy reunion, followed by marriage. As the children are very young, the woman was probably in her late twenties when she moved from cohabitation to marriage. However, most Afro-Jamaican women at the time did not complete the cycle until they had passed their childbearing years.³⁵ The decision to marry was largely determined by economic factors. According to some white contemporary observers, Afro-Jamaicans only married if they could afford a lavish wedding.³⁶ Recent research has indicated two other economic factors: the provision of a house and the husband's ability to provide for his wife so that she could withdraw from paid work. In some instances, it took so long before these three economic conditions were met that grandchildren could serve as wedding attendants.³⁷

Courtship tales make up one third of all the tales in the two collections. This fact illustrates how much rural Afro-Jamaica held marriage up as an ideal to which women should aspire. This section begins with an examination of a very popular type of courtship story, the so-called monster-marriage tale, which shows that for rural Afro-Jamaicans marriage had to meet certain conditions. This is then followed by an analysis of the place and the roles of married female characters, which suggests that a greater degree of submission within marriage was

expected of rural Afro-Jamaican women than of metropolitan women.

The various monster-marriage tales follow roughly the same pattern. The girl, who is usually an only daughter, refuses a number of suitors until the monster – an animal or the devil – arrives. She marries him against her brother's warning that her husband is not who she thinks he is. The brother then follows the couple and upon hearing his sister's song of distress, rescues her from the monster, who is usually about to devour her. The monster-marriage tales told girls not only to be careful in the selection of a mate but also to respect their brothers and seek their guidance and protection. The latter message is most clearly conveyed in those monster-marriage tales in which a girl is rescued by a brother whom she did not respect prior to the event. The two girls in "The Devil-Husband" (*JAS*, 86a), for instance, are saved from a horrible fate by their "yawzy brudder" whom they "didn't care about". While girls in the metropolitan society were also taught to accept that they were less important in the family than their brothers, they were generally not asked, like Jamaican girls, to regard their brothers as substitute fathers.³⁸

As for the selection of a mate, the monster-marriage tales told girls that not looks but a suitor's ability to provide, should determine their choice. The girl in "Yellow Snake" (*JSS*, xxxiv), for instance, rejects every suitor but Snake on the grounds that he is ugly. The girl in "John Crow" (*JSS*, xliii), on the other hand, chooses John Crow because his "watch an' chain and his coat an' shoes" suggest to her that he is rich. However, she needs to be rescued by her brother because she has forgotten another important lesson regarding mate selection, namely to check the suitor's credentials. The two lessons are also conveyed in courtship tales other than monster-marriage tales. The girl in "A Misunderstanding" (*JAS*, 126), for instance, chooses as her husband a man who shows her three properties. When she asks, a few years into their marriage, for money to buy kitchen utensils, she is told that there is none. It is only when she suggests that he should sell one of his properties that she learns that he does not own them. As punishment for not having ascertained her suitor's ability to provide, she has to spend the rest of her life in poverty.

Monster-marriage tales targeted not only girls but also mothers. The latter were told that their involvement in their daughter's courtship should consist of more than arranging a lavish wedding. They should ensure that their daughter selected a mate on the basis of his ability to provide and help her check the suitor's credentials. The mother in "John Crow" forsakes both duties. She tells her daughter that the musician

Anancy will make a good husband because "he can get him own dance any time him ready". And when her daughter decides that she prefers John Crow, she accepts her choice without checking whether he had paid for his clothes and shoes. The tales also told mothers that they should consult their sons about their daughter's wedding. This lesson comes most clearly to the fore in "The Play Song" (*JAS*, 87b) in which a mother rejects her son's warning that her daughter was courting the devil with the words, "Go 'way, sah! What you know? You can call a gentleman like dat de debbil?" Her son's remark after the rescue, "Didn't I tell you dat man was a debbil, an' you would not believe it!", served as a reminder for mothers in the audience that they should defer to their sons, especially in the absence of a father.

By telling girls to look to their brother for protection and mothers to listen to their sons, the monster-marriage tales reinforced the patriarchal ideal. It could, however, be argued that they also undermined it as it is the mother and not the father who assists the girl in selecting a husband. The prominent role of mothers in the monster-marriage tales can be read simply as a reflection of the social reality. As many mothers were not married or did not live with the fathers of their daughters, they were the only ones available to assist their daughters. It is also possible, however, to read it as a means used by storytellers to instill the idea that it was a mother's and not a father's task to help daughters select a mate because a mother was responsible for the respectability of female children. Such a reading is supported by the courtship tale "The Three Sillies". The father in this tale takes a sincere interest in his daughter's courtship but leaves it to his wife to instruct their daughter in the proper way to treat a suitor. She tells her daughter, for instance, to provide her suitor with food. He also does not overrule his wife's decisions. When the suitor asks why the girl takes so long to bring him an orange, the mother answers, "Me husband, me an' me daughter considering what to give the first pickney [baby] name." The father adds weight to his wife's decision with the words, "Yes, missis, we consult now."

Monster-marriage tales were also popular in the metropolitan society at the time.³⁹ One of the best-known European monster-marriage tales is "Beauty and the Beast", which emerged in the mid-eighteenth century. This tale differs in three ways from the Jamaican monster-marriage tales. First, it follows an opposite trajectory. A monster-suitor is gradually transformed into a human being and subsequently joined in wedlock with a beautiful woman. Second, it allocates a far more important role to fathers. Contrary to the girls in the Jamaican tales,

Beauty has not selected the mate herself but has accepted her father's choice. Third, it does not present economic security but companionship as the basis of marriage. Beauty's father has selected the mate not on his ability to provide for his daughter but on his values, such as kindness.⁴⁰ The latter feature explains why "Beauty and the Beast" gained in popularity at the same time that metropolitan society witnessed the rise of what is generally referred to as the "companionate marriage", that is, a legal union in which the partners were companions and provided one another with sympathetic support.⁴¹ As Shani D'Cruze has noted, this marriage, which was firmly established as an ideal in the early twentieth century, did not necessarily imply an equal relationship or "the blurring of differential sex roles".⁴² In other words, the husband was still regarded as the main provider but now had to give his wife both financial and emotional support. As a result, other criteria than a suitor's ability to provide became important in a woman's selection of a mate in metropolitan society.

Edna Brodber's interviews with forty-five Afro-Jamaican women born between 1861 and 1900 show most clearly that economic conditions prevented rural Afro-Jamaican girls from choosing a mate on the basis of such criteria as kindness and patience. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that she had accepted her neighbour's marriage proposal because he was able to provide her with the "general assistance" that she needed to take care of her two younger sisters and her "illegitimate" son. The terms that this woman used to describe her husband – "a person" and "the young man" – also suggest that she regarded marriage more as an economic than as an emotional relationship.⁴³ Financial security, however, was not the only reason why many rural Afro-Jamaican women at the time opted for marriage. Another is the social recognition that came with marriage.⁴⁴ The earlier-mentioned court case illustrates that a woman's marital status was a marker of her respectability. The defence lawyer argued, for instance, that it was not surprising that Irma had responded to the dentist's advances, considering that her mother had never married her father.⁴⁵ While the tales in the two collections reflect the idea that marriage was a means towards economic security, they do not really illustrate that marriage was also a status-enhancing institution. Married women are seldom distinguished from other women, and if they are, it is simply by referring to them as "Mrs".

Thus far we have seen that the tales define marriage primarily as an economic relationship. They also attach two other labels to marriage.

First, it is seen as a contract terminable only by death. Although several tales narrate difficulties between husbands and wives, none ends in separation or divorce. Second, it is regarded as an institution in which husband and wife carry out distinct roles and occupy different spheres. The message that husbands should enter the public sphere as breadwinners is conveyed in various tales through negative role models, such as Anancy, as well as through positive role models, including husbands who go off to search for work in order to provide for their families. As for the proper sphere of wives, the tales suggest that rural Afro-Jamaican women were not so much to be "angels in the home" as "angels in the yard". Only two married women are firmly located in the house, carrying out domestic chores. The others are situated in the yard surrounding the house, tending the vegetable garden and looking after small livestock. The fact that the women who undertake paid work in the tales are all single is a clear indication that a married woman's sphere was not supposed to extend beyond the yard.

Absent from the tales are married women who sell excess produce in the local market. Various scholars have concluded that in the post-emancipation period females dominated among the produce marketers.⁴⁶ The 1911 census lists 33,888 women as hawkers, peddlers, and higglers, that is, 30 percent of all women aged between 15 and 64 who claimed an occupation.⁴⁷ There were also many women who did not claim an occupation but who went regularly to the market to sell excess produce and home-made products, including many married women. Considering that the tales reflect to a large extent the socio-economic reality of rural Afro-Jamaica, the absence of married female higglers is particularly striking. Even more striking perhaps is the fact that the only marketers of produce mentioned in the tales are married men. Like the absence of the female support network, this inversion of the socio-economic reality served to reinforce the ideal of the bread-winning husband.

According to the tales, then, the only work that a married woman could undertake was unpaid work that kept her within her proper sphere, enabled the physical survival of her family, and did not threaten her husband's role as the breadwinner. They furthermore suggest that a married woman was not powerless within the domestic sphere. There are several Anancy tales which convey the idea that women only had to obey husbands who exercised their roles of provider and protector, such as "In the House-Top" (*JAS*, 5c), in which the selfish spider Anancy kills his submissive wife in a conflict with Brer Tiger over a pig. "The

Magic Hat and the Staff of Life" (*JAS*, 106) told women more directly that they could and should speak up to their husbands if the survival of the family was at stake. The wife in this tale orders her husband Jack to take a cow to the market and sell it for twenty pounds. When she learns that he has sold it for three, she tells him that she will have nothing to do with him until she gets her twenty pounds. Her insubordinate behaviour is rewarded as Jack manages to procure a hundred pounds from the men who tricked him into selling the cow. This tale, however, reinforces the idea that a woman should submit to her husband's wishes if he was a proper provider and protector. When the comen realize that Jack has tricked them, they try to take revenge. To protect his wife and family, Jack conceives of a plan to trick the comen and orders his wife to comply with it. She follows his orders and as a result the men leave Jack and his wife alone.

The tale "The Dumb Wife" (*JAS*, 96) suggests that the reasonableness of a husband's demands also determined the extent to which women had to submit to their husbands. Mr Goolin, who had "married him wife fe so many years dat de wife turned dummy", offers a monetary reward for anyone who can make his wife talk. Anancy manages to make Mrs Goolin talk and receives the reward. Female silence is a common theme in European folktales. One can find female characters that observe a strict silence before they marry, which demonstrates their anxiety about the change in their status from girlhood to womanhood, and also female characters that have silence imposed upon them as a punishment.⁴⁸ Considering that Mrs Goolin had been married for a long time, her silence does not reflect an anxiety about marriage. The fact that Mr Goolin offered a reward suggests furthermore that her silence was not imposed as a punishment for her refusal to comply with his wishes. A more likely reading is that Mrs Goolin had imposed silence upon herself in order to make her husband treat her better. The last sentence, "an' Mr Goolin and his wife was talking up to t'-day", suggests that her tactic to make Mr Goolin a less demanding husband had worked. A statement by one of Madeline Kerr's informants suggests that like Mrs Goolin, many rural women had husbands who placed great demands on them, while often shirking their responsibilities. When asked why she did not remarry, the widow Ethlyn Grant replied: "Them only want you to work for them. Them may support you at first and then you have to work and mind yourself. *You can get no rest.*"⁴⁹

While the tales emphasize that married women were allowed some degree of power within the domestic sphere, their overarching message

regarding husband-and-wife interaction is the same as in the prescriptive literature of the metropolitan society at the time, namely, that in return for his economic support and protection, a wife should put her husband's interests first and respect him as the ultimate head of the household.⁵⁰ Several tales told women that failure to live up to this ideal could lead to chastisement, including the earlier-mentioned "Leah and the Tiger". Some of them also addressed men. For instance, "Mr Lenaman's Corn-Field" (*JAS*, 65) and "The Language of Beasts" (*JAS*, 121) told men how much force they could use. Mr Lenaman tells his wife that she should not "break" any corn while tending the field. She, however, forgets her husband's instruction and breaks one. Even though she confesses her sin, Mr Lenaman "got vex an' starts to beat the wife". The wife in "The Language of Beasts" is not beaten because she fails to obey her husband's orders but because she gives him orders that interfere with his role as provider. A rooster tells her husband that "two good lick" would make her "learn" her place, which he administers and she "never ax him a word again". His physical force contrasts sharply with that of Mr Lenaman, who hits his wife so hard that she eventually dies. The lesson that the physical punishment inflicted should be in proportion to the transgression committed is conveyed in this tale, not just through the wife's death but also through the devil who had told Mr Lenaman to hit his wife so hard that she "mustn't lef' to-day" (that is, hard enough to kill her).

There are various contemporary accounts, most notably court reports, which demonstrate that there were many husbands who, like Mr Lenaman, used excessive force to ensure the submission of their wives. A letter published in the *Jamaica Times* in April 1906 suggests that urban, middle-class Jamaicans did not approve of rural Afro-Jamaicans' acceptance of wife beating: "[Some husbands] are too austere to their wives. In turning of a straw they beat these poor daughters of Abraham as is pitiful to witness."⁵¹ These words mirror those used at the time by middle-class, metropolitan commentators to describe the physical abuse in working-class families.⁵² It could thus be argued that both rural Afro-Jamaicans and metropolitan working-class men and women were encouraged to regard marriage as a partnership and resolve issues verbally rather than physically. Economic circumstances prevented working-class Britons from living up to this ideal. The money that working-class women received from their husbands was often too small to feed and clothe the family. Their power as breadwinners led many working-class husbands to lash out against their wives if the latter failed

to make ends meet.⁵³ However, it is not only economic circumstances that explain why early twentieth-century, rural Afro-Jamaica accepted physical abuse as a means to ensure female submission within marriage but also its culture of physical violence. Rural Afro-Jamaican boys and girls grew up in households where physical violence was the most important means of enforcing discipline. Edith Clarke's study of Jamaican family life in the late 1940s shows that it was common for mothers to beat their daughters when they found that they were pregnant.⁵⁴ Newspapers and other sources show that physical violence was also rife outside the family. This culture of violence was a clear legacy of slavery. Like other New World slaveholders, Jamaican planters relied first and foremost on physical force to create hard-working and docile workers.⁵⁵

Rural Afro-Jamaica expected women not only to look after their husbands' needs and recognize them as the ultimate heads of the households but also not to bring any disrepute upon them. The tales suggest that infidelity was the greatest harm that a woman could bring upon her husband. In several tales, husbands resort to drastic measures to ensure the fidelity of their wives. The husband in "Contavio" (*JAS*, 71B), for instance, locks his wife up whenever he goes out, while the husband in "Sammy de Comferee" (*JAS*, 68) kills a potential rival. There are also tales in which husbands confront adulterous wives, such as the "The Tree-Wife" (*JAS*, 67) in which a hunter's wife has an affair with a neighbour while her husband is away. She regrets her affair but as she is afraid to face her husband, she does not go home but moves from house to house. She wants, however, to be reunited with her husband, so she spits along the way. When her husband comes home from his trip and finds her gone, he sings a song, calling her name. Her spit answers him and he eventually finds her and, as a proper patriarch, "catch him right back to home yard". This tale told women to be faithful and men that it was their duty to police the sexuality of their wives. In case a husband was absent, another male member of the family had to exercise this important duty, as is illustrated in "The Three Pieces of Advice" (*JAS*, 122), in which the brother of a man who has gone off to search for work regularly visits his sister-in-law.

While the tales hold up female fidelity, they do not condemn male infidelity.⁵⁶ "Jack and the Devil Errant" (*JAS*, 105) is one of several tales that reflect this double standard of sexual morality. When Jack has to go on a trip in order to hide from the devil, his wife tells him, "You must not kiss anyone . . . [because] you will forget me and never remember

me any more." He is kissed, however, by a dog and subsequently forgets his wife and marries another woman. The first wife attends the wedding. It is only after she performs a dance that Jack recognizes her. He falls on his knees and begs "her to forgive him". She does and Jack leaves his second wife and he and the first one "lived happy forever". This tale told women not only that they should be faithful but also that they should condone their husbands' outside affairs, no matter how hard it is to do so.

Metropolitan society at the time regarded not only extramarital but also premarital sex as off limits for women. Harrowing stories of girls turned out by their parents when pregnant and policies that disadvantaged women with children born out of wedlock were some of the means used to impart this important lesson.⁵⁷ The tales in the two collections express an ambivalent message regarding premarital sex. There are tales that seem to endorse premarital female chastity, such as the numerous courtship tales. But there are also tales, such as "Bull-of-the-Land", in which women marry only after they have become mothers. As these women are not punished and do not suffer, these tales seem to approve of premarital sex. Madeline Kerr noticed that girls who were found pregnant were usually sent away by their mother. They usually spent some time with relations and then returned home in time for the delivery of their babies, with "no ill feeling" existing on either side. Kerr's remark that this ritual "seems to be a formal expression of what the mother thinks a daughter ought to do",⁵⁸ suggests that we could read the courtship tales as an expression of the norm of premarital female chastity, and the tales about women who only marry after childbirth as a reflection of rural Afro-Jamaican life.

The contradictory messages about premarital sex suggest that for women it was as difficult to distil from the tales the ideal of wifeness as that of motherhood. Most tales firmly placed a married woman within the domestic sphere and endorsed the idea that she was to look after her family's needs, recognize her husband as head of the household, and remain faithful to him under all circumstances.

IV

Because of their contradictory messages and the fact that many of the "bad" female characters display positive qualities, the tales did not make it easy for women to deduce a norm of womanhood. I would argue, in fact, that the tales present women not with one but with three norms

of womanhood, each describing a different relation between motherhood and marriage. The first norm expects women to enter marriage as virgins, and when married to devote themselves solely to the concerns of their family. It also demands from them that they defer to their husbands and remain faithful. This norm borrowed heavily from the metropolitan norm of womanhood, but less its early twentieth-century than its late nineteenth-century version. It does not suggest that women choose husbands on the basis of their ability to give emotional support. The second norm of womanhood also borrows from the late nineteenth-century metropolitan norm but makes more allowances than the first for the socio-economic reality and also shows many similarities with the norm of womanhood that the enslaved peoples had brought with them from Africa. It allows women to marry after childbirth, values women's maternal duties more than their wifely ones, and allows women to disobey their husbands' wishes, if these put their children at risk.⁵⁹ Like the other two, the third norm regards motherhood as a woman's main destiny and duty, and expects women to defer to the men in their household. It, however, does not hold marriage up as a desirable and necessary institution. It could be argued that this norm was a modified version of the ideal of African womanhood. During the era of the Atlantic slave trade, marriage in African societies was a necessary means to conclude alliances and ensure the survival of the group by providing it with legitimate offspring.⁶⁰ The lack of legal recognition of slave marriages and the many different African ethnic groups on the plantations reduced the value attached to marriage, which, in turn, led enslaved persons to place far more emphasis on childbirth as a marker of a woman's identity than their African ancestors. The economic conditions prevailing after emancipation made it difficult for many former enslaved persons and their descendants to marry, and hence bring the ideal of womanhood back in line with that of their African ancestors.

The tales, then, demonstrate that rural Afro-Jamaica found it hard to move beyond the dominant gender norms in the post-emancipation period.⁶¹ However, its ideals of womanhood differed from those in metropolitan society in respect of the emphasis that they placed on male domination and female submission. By drawing upon existing studies of womanhood in early twentieth-century Britain, I have tried to show that the deference that the tales expected women to pay to their husbands, brothers, and sons exceeded that in the metropolitan society at the time. The roots of rural Afro-Jamaica's patriarchal ethos were laid down during slavery. Planters and their white officers presented

enslaved men with a model of masculinity in which the head of a household could demand absolute control from his dependents in return for the food and other things provided, but was not necessarily expected to also protect them.⁶² As there were few white women in the island, it was not the white mistress but the plantation practices that sought to instil in enslaved women the idea that they were inferior and had to submit to men (such as working in the field from sunrise to sunset), including the sexual abuse of white men.

Various forces helped to sustain and also broaden the ideal of male domination and female submission after emancipation. Prominent among them are the policies that were introduced in the late nineteenth century, which aimed to bring the Afro-Jamaican population in line with metropolitan norms of family, sex, and gender, as a means to ensure social stability. The 1881 Bastardy Law, for instance, reinforced the role of the male as the provider by stipulating that the father of a child born out of wedlock had to contribute towards its support.⁶³ The colonial educational system and the white-controlled media were also important transmitters of the patriarchal ideal in the post-emancipation period. The curriculum and the method of teaching in Jamaican schools emphasized traditional sex roles.⁶⁴ As Edna Brodber has shown in her study of images of women in the *Daily Gleaner*, the island's most widely distributed newspaper, the white-controlled media presented male domination and female subjugation as the natural order of society.⁶⁵

In the early twentieth century, the majority of the Afro-Jamaican population lived in rural parishes. Storytelling was one of their main means of socialization, including gender role socialization. By describing and explaining the attributes of womanhood in two published collections of Jamaican folktales, this article has provided some insights into the construction of womanhood in post-emancipation Afro-Jamaica. Future research should explore ideas of womanhood in other media of gender-role socialization, such as newspapers and fiction produced by Afro-Jamaicans. Such a survey could suggest that there were more norms of womanhood in Afro-Jamaica than the three mentioned here. It should also explore the interaction of ideas of black womanhood with various markers of difference, such as gender, locality, age, skin colour, and class. Did Afro-Jamaican men and women articulate very different ideas of womanhood? Did urban Afro-Jamaicans have different notions of womanhood than their rural counterparts? Another important question that needs to be addressed is whether Afro-Jamaican women internalized the ideas of womanhood that they were exposed to. Did they, for

example, accept the double standard of sexual morality that comes to the fore in the tales? Although it is not easy to answer such questions considering the lack of primary sources, especially those produced by early twentieth-century Afro-Jamaican women, it is only by addressing them that we can gain a fuller understanding of the production and consumption of ideas of black womanhood in the post-emancipation Anglo-Caribbean.

NOTES

1. I want to thank Becky Griffin, Louise Griffiths, Simon Smith, and Jim Walvin for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this article.
2. A. Salkey, ed., *Caribbean Folk Tales and Legends* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1980), 7.
3. Studies on Afro-Caribbean women in the post-emancipation period have concentrated mainly on their working lives (see, for instance, R.E. Reddock, *Women Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A History* [London: Zed Books, 1994]; J. French and H. Ford-Smith, *Women, Work and Organisation in Jamaica, 1900–1944* [The Hague: Institute of Social Research, 1986]).
4. W. Jekyll, ed., *Jamaican Song and Story: Anancy Stories, Digging Sings, Ring Tunes, and Dancing Tunes* (London: David Nutt, 1907); M. Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: G. Stechert and Co., 1924). This article is based on the online version of Beckwith's collection (see www.sacred-texts.com/afr/jas/index.htm).
5. Other published collections contain mostly tales that their white collectors had been told as children by their black nurses (see U. Jeffrey-Smith, *A Selection of Anancy Stories* [Kingston: Aston W. Gardner and Co., 1899]; P. Milne-Home, *Mamma's Black Nurse Stories* [Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1890]; P. Smith-Colman, *Anancy Stories* [New York: R.H. Russell, 1899]). They are thus less useful than the Jekyll and Beckwith collections for a project that aims to provide an insight into the value system of early twentieth-century rural Afro-Caribbean people.
6. L. Tanna, *Jamaican Folk Tales and Oral Histories* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications, 1984), 23; W. James, *A Fierce Hatred of Injustice: Claude McKay's Jamaica and His Poetry of Rebellion* (London/New York: Verso, 2000), 36–41.
7. Jekyll, *Jamaican Song and Story*, xxxix; M.W. Beckwith, *Black Roadways: A Study of Jamaican Folklife* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929), 215–16. As Beckwith included variant versions of the same tale, her collection contains almost 250 tales.
8. Jekyll, *Jamaican Song and Story*, xxxix; Beckwith, Preface to *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/jas/jas_02.htm).
9. Most studies of Caribbean folktales have been concerned with the structure

- of the tales in order to determine their African roots (see, for instance, M. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican Culture* [London: Pluto Press, 1988]; L.E. Barrett, *The Sun and the Drum: African Roots in Jamaican Folk Tradition* [Kingston: Sangster's Book Stores, 1976]; H.L. Flowers, *A Classification of the Folktale of the West Indies by Types and Motifs* [New York: Arno Press, 1980]).
10. C. Boyce Davies, " 'Woman Is a Nation . . . ': Women in Caribbean Oral Literature", in C. Boyce Davies and E. Savory Fido, eds., *Out of the Kumbula: Caribbean Women and Literature* (New York: Africa World Press, 1990), 165–93.
 11. M. Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: Fairytales and Their Tellers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994), 213.
 12. The term "patriarchy" refers in this article to a system whereby women are disempowered, compared to the men in the same group.
 13. Subsequent references to the tales in the text are given in this way: first, the collection (*JAS for Jamaica Anansi Stories* and *JSS for Jamaican Song and Story*), and then the number of the tale.
 14. This summary of the metropolitan ideology of motherhood is based on Anna Davin's "Imperialism and Motherhood", *History Workshop Journal* 5 (1978): 9–65; J. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900–1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); J. Lewis, ed., *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850–1940* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1986); E. J. Yeo, "The Creation of 'Motherhood' and Women's Responses in Britain and France, 1750–1914", *Women's History Review* 8, no. 2 (1999): 201–17; E. Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
 15. The term "metropolitan ideology of motherhood" refers in this article to the set of ideas about the importance, duties and obligations of motherhood which were conveyed through a variety of means, ranging from childcare manuals and domestic science classes to government policies.
 16. G. Eisner, *Jamaica 1830–1930: A Study in Economic Growth* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 343.
 17. P. Bryan, *Philanthropy and Social Welfare in Jamaica* (Mona: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1990), 39.
 18. On the African heritage of the glorification of motherhood in Caribbean slave societies, see L.M. Mair, "The Arrival of Black Women", *Jamaica Journal* 2–3 (1975): 2–7; B. Bush, "Hard Labor: Women, Childbirth and Resistance in British Caribbean Slave Societies", *History Workshop Journal* 36 (1993): 90–91.
 19. M. Kerr, *Personality and Conflict in Jamaica* (Liverpool: University Press, 1952), chaps. 4 and 6.
 20. Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", 26.
 21. For an explanation of the causes of the rural distress, see Eisner, *Jamaica 1830–1930*.
 22. Agricultural work was the main form of paid women's work in rural parishes. However, women strongly objected to this work because it was

strenuous, low-paid, and a reminder of slavery. For more on women's work in the early twentieth century, see G.W. Roberts, *The Population of Jamaica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 88-100.

23. "Dr E.H. Evans Is Sued by Mother", *Daily Gleaner*, 7 June 1932; "Trial of Suit against Dr E.H. Evans", *Daily Gleaner*, 8 June 1932. The aim of this case was not to decide whether the dentist had raped Irma but to ascertain whether Muriel was entitled to compensation because her daughter had been unable to help her in her dressmaking business while pregnant. For more information on this case, see H. Altink, "Respectability on Trial" (www.scsonline.freeserve.co.uk/carib.htm).
24. Both collections contain many Anancy tales. For more information on this type of tales, see P. Taylor, *The Narrative of Liberation: Perspectives on Afro-Caribbean Literature, Popular Culture and Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
25. Kerr, *Personality and Conflict*, chaps. 4 and 6.
26. "Dr E.H. Evans is Sued by Mother".
27. Lewis, *The Politics*, 90-91; C. Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 21-22. On the sexual abuse of Jamaican enslaved women, see S. Dadzie, "Searching for the Invisible Woman: Slavery and Re7039le W

39. Warner, *From the Beast*, 279.
40. M. Tatar, ed., *The Classic Fairy Tales* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 25–28.
41. The tale was adapted for musical drama and ballet in the early twentieth century (see J. Zipes, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 47).
42. S. D’Cruze, “Women and the Family”, in J. Purvis, ed., *Women’s History in Britain, 1850–1945* (London: University College of London Press, 1998), 75.
43. E. Brodber, “Afro-Jamaican Women at the Turn of the Century”, *Social and Economic Studies* 35, no. 3 (1986): 30–35. In this article Brodber provides extensive quotes from four interviews.
44. Smith, “The Caribbean Family”, 526.
45. “Dr E.H. Evans is Sued by Mother”; “Trial of Suit against Dr E.H. Evans”.
46. On female higglers, see S. Mintz, “Black Women, Economic Roles and Cultural Traditions”, in H. McD. Beckles and V. Shepherd, eds., *Caribbean Freedom* (Oxford: James Currey, 1996), 238–44.
47. R.A. Lobdell, “Women in the Jamaican Labour Force, 1881–1921”, *Social and Economic Studies* 37, nos. 1–2 (1988): 213, 231.
48. R.B. Bottigheimer, “Silenced Women in the Grimms’ Tales: The ‘Fit’ between Fairy Tales and Society in Their Historical Context”, in R.B. Bottigheimer, ed., *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 115–31.
49. Kerr, *Personality and Conflict*, 10. Emphasis mine.
50. J. Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), 250.
51. “Treatment of Wives”, *Jamaica Times*, 28 April 1906.
52. Lewis, *The Politics*, 10.
53. P. Ayers and J. Lambertz, “Marriage Relations, Money and Domestic Violence in Working-Class Liverpool, 1919–39”, in Lewis, ed., *Labour and Love*, 195–222.
54. Edith Clarke, *My Mother who Fathered Me: A Study of the Families in Three Selected Communities of Jamaica* (1957; Kingston: The Press University of the West Indies, 1999), 118.
55. On the link between slavery and the culture of violence in the post-emancipation and later periods, see M. Cain, “The Specificity of Violence against Women”, in C. Barrow and R. Reddock, eds., *Caribbean Sociology: Introductory Readings* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), 503–11.
56. Senior, *Working Miracles*, 171–72.
57. J. Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1989), 207–8, 214–15.
58. Kerr, *Personality and Conflict*, 44.
59. During the Atlantic slave trade, most African societies allowed girls a high degree of premarital sexual freedom. Marriage in Africa also differed from that in Western Europe at the time in that it did not expect a wife to devote herself completely to her husband and solely depend on him. Married women not only retained an enduring attachment to their natal family but

also carried out some form of trade, the earnings of which were used to meet family needs (see D. Paulme, ed., *Women of Tropical Africa* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971], 3–9).

60. Ibid., 3.
61. They did not differ in this respect from the freedmen and their descendants in the United States (see, for instance, V. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001]).
62. Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny and Desire*, 83–84.
63. C. Persis, "The Name of the Father: Women, Paternity and British Rule in Nineteenth-Century Jamaica", *International Labor and Working-Class History* 41 (1992): 4–22.
64. H. Ford-Smith, "Making White Ladies: Race, Gender and the Production of Identities in Late Colonial Jamaica", *Resources for Feminist Research* 23, no. 4 (1994–95): 55–67.
65. Edna Brodber, *Perceptions of Caribbean Women* (Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1982).

The Chaguaramas Affair in Trinidad and Tobago

An Intellectual Reassessment

MAURICE ST PIERRE

Abstract

This article assesses the efforts of Dr Eric Williams to use the US presence at the Chaguaramas Base in Trinidad to make space for himself and the political independence movement in the political fabric of Trinidad and Tobago, by redefining the base from being a space for the security of the Western Hemisphere to one that was incompatible with the nationalist aspirations of the twin island. It uses a conflated theoretical perspective that privileges social movement theory, analysis of space, and intellectual activity and data from the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, and the Eric Williams Memorial Collection in Trinidad.

Introduction

This article examines the efforts on the part of Dr Eric Williams and the Trinidad and Tobago government to transform the location known as the Chaguaramas Base from a place for US security into a social space that was embedded with specific social meanings intimately associated with the essence, and termination, of colonialism in Trinidad and Tobago. While there have been a number of insightful treatments of the Chaguaramas affair,¹ this article departs from those assessments by arguing that Williams's efforts were part of his role as a social movement intellectual. Thus, attention is paid to the extent to which Williams: (a) made space for himself and the political independence movement in the political landscape as he interacted with fellow challengers, as well as the American government and his many detractors in the twin island; (b) used various resources to transmit his ideas to his

followers; and (c) generated knowledge by way of a specific strategy and regarding information about the US presence at the base. Beyond the above, the article is guided by three major theoretical perspectives. The first deals with resource mobilization theory (a branch of collective action theory) that focuses on the manner in which resources that are generated by the experiences of participants are used by social movement leaders to forge a collective identity, often in the face of constraints on the part of the challenged.²

The second perspective concerns Henri Lefebvre's notion of production and reproduction of space by reproducing systems of inequality, in such a manner that locations are radically altered or become what he calls "representations of space".³ Using Karl Marx's notion of inequality based on relations to the means of production as a means of perpetuating structural inequality, Lefebvre, as others have done, is concerned with demonstrating how control of certain locations, rather than of the means of production, enables the controllers to sustain their hegemony over those who do not control certain spaces. As will be seen, however, the question of space has other connotations. Thus, as a social movement intellectual, Williams used the Chaguaramas issue to make space for himself and the political independence movement in the political fabric of Trinidad and Tobago, by aligning the removal of the Americans from the base with the nationalist aspirations of the twin island.

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for "50 over-age destroyers" which, if sold in 1930, would have fetched a price varying between US\$263,000 and US\$340,000, or an average of US\$300,000. During World War II, the base was an important US naval facility and, from the American perspective, was viewed as essential to the strategic defence of the Western Hemisphere. The terms of the Agreement also stated that "the United States Government was accepting no obligation, no commitment, no alliance . . . [and could] abandon its undertaking whenever it pleased them to do so with or without consent".⁷ In other words, typical of the colonial experience, the acquisition of Chaguaramas involved a transformation of a particular location in Trinidad to a "representation of space" by an imperial power. Further, as was earlier suggested, the manner in which the Americans gained control of the north-western peninsula was illustrative of the annexation of a particular space and a clear indication of the ongoing reproduction of inequality occasioned by the control of that space in the island.

Early Rumblings of Discontent

Important though it turned out to be, the Trinidad government was not the first to raise the issue of the ongoing presence of American bases in the West Indies after the end of World War II. Indeed, a group of prominent West Indian labour leaders at a conference in Barbados in September 1945 had voiced their resentment at the presence of US troops on West Indian soil, "more especially when these leases were contracted and executed without the peoples whom they concerned ever having been consulted". Placing the matter within the wider context of nationalism, Trinidad's Albert Gomes maintained that the continued presence of the bases constituted a "threat not only to the prestige and the self-respect of West Indians but . . . to their aspirations along the line of federation and self-government". As a consequence, conference delegates vowed to put forward the "strongest request that this land-lease agreement, as far as the establishment of US Bases in these colonies were concerned, *be revised if not entirely revoked*" (my emphasis).⁸

Internal Frictions

To some persons the lack of involvement of the West Indian peoples in the decision to locate bases within their boundaries was understandable, in view of the fact that (a) Britain was engaged in a "hot war"

(World War II) with her back to the wall and a speedy conclusion of the agreement was essential; and (b) as colonies of Britain what "Whitehall said went". However, the acquisition of the site in Trinidad to make room for the base led to friction for a number of reasons, not least because it involved the displacement of individuals. As Douglas Jenkins, American Consul General in Trinidad, frankly acknowledged, things had changed by early 1957, and the non-participation of the Trinidad and Tobago government and the people in the original decision had become "an irritant and constituted an ever present possible ground for objecting to the existence of the leased areas".⁹ Continuing, Jenkins noted that if the United States wanted to maintain the bases and other military installations, while avoiding friction and recriminations, a concerted effort should be made to maintain and foster the most friendly relations possible with the people, the West Indian governments and the imminent British West Indies Federation, especially against the backdrop of the thrust for self-government. Jenkins asserted further that the more educated segment of the society was aware of America's role in assuming the "responsibility of shielding the area, a burden which the United Kingdom was no longer able to carry, but that the average man was little impressed by this"; and having regard for the extreme insularity of the region, "there is little awareness of what is happening in the rest of the world . . . and no sense of responsibility to take a hand in the struggle between the free and communist worlds".¹⁰

According to Jenkins, the situation rankled over the lack of consultation of the local peoples about the terms of the lease, a fact the *Trinidad Guardian*, which was "pro-American" but "anti-bases", never failed to mention. In addition, dissatisfaction had arisen over the ongoing presence of "alien armed forces" enjoying immunity from local jurisdiction, considered a "derogation of sovereignty" by both the pro-British element and the local nationalists. While it is obvious that Jenkins's comments spoke to the base(s) in terms of reconstruction of space that privileged the Americans and by extension disadvantaged the locals, he noted that the prime source of friction concerned another manifestation of locale reconstruction, now known as eminent domain, whereby the space of the less powerful was taken over by the imperial government's decree ostensibly for the overall benefit of the nationals, but which clearly gave advantage to the powerful.

The location of the base on the northern shoreline was achieved at the expense of some of the island's more prominent and well-to-do population who had built weekend homes and a hotel in the area in ques-

tion. The base was also close to one of the island's most attractive and accessible bathing beaches. Not surprisingly, therefore, the residents of that area, from which emerged most of the active anti-base agitation, had not forgotten that they had to vacate that space to make room for the base, a situation compounded by the fact that they had to part with their property at "an officially assessed valuation and to be barred from the area".¹¹

These sources of friction, Jenkins noted, were exacerbated by the requirement that the boat-owners who had built weekend homes on the small islands lying off the western tip of the naval station had to obtain passes to moor their boats on the Trinidad side of Staubles Bay, a small enclave within the base, and were therefore at the mercy of the station commander, who could refuse them a pass. Moreover, these individuals were subject to the regulations of the US military patrols. This lent itself to frequent petty incidents involving military personnel and Trinidadians, who were galled at having to request passes, to stop at the entrance to the station to be checked by a marine sentry, and to adhere to a thirty-mile-per-hour speed limit, on pain of losing the privilege of transiting the base.

Another source of friction concerned the so-called intrusion into "prohibited waters" adjacent to the naval station by Trinidadian amateur and professional fishermen. This was exemplified on one occasion when a boat owned by a member of the Island Homeowners' Association ran out of gasoline and began drifting toward the shore. The result was that a marine sentry, presumably thinking that the backfiring boat was a gunshot, forced the boat's two occupants ashore at gunpoint and allegedly roughed them up, before turning them over to the base commander, who publicly supported the actions of the sentry and withdrew the boat-owner's pass. According to Jenkins, the men were subsequently turned over to the local police who promptly released them, leading the influential Island Homeowners' Association, whose president was the chief justice, and the *Guardian* to have "a field day publishing every claim and counter-claim on its front page under banner headlines and devoting its editorial column to caustic comments regarding 'trigger happy' Americans".¹² Thus, even before Williams and the People's National Movement (PNM) sparked a "Negro Nationalism" (within the wider Trinidad and Tobago nationalism), undreamed of a year earlier, the base at Chaguaramas had been a place of activities that marked it as a "colony within a colony", so to speak, which was clearly incompatible with the thrust for political independence. Although the consul gen-

eral stopped short of recommending that the Americans leave or that the lease be renegotiated, he did recommend that

- (a) consideration be given to establishing and supporting a local military force which in an emergency might be used to guard US military installations;
- (b) the US should renegotiate the amount paid to the Trinidad and Tobago government for rehabilitation and improvements of the Docksite, a section of the Port-of-Spain wharves;
- (c) favourable consideration be given to any request for the release of Waller Field as a site for the capital of the proposed Federation; and
- (d) special care be taken in the selection of officers to command military facilities, whose friendly and sociable manner might go a long way to smooth out relations with the large number of island homeowners.¹³

When the issue of a site for the federal capital came up at a conference in Jamaica, a sub-committee of the Standing Federation Committee (SFC) was appointed to look into the matter. This sub-committee met in Trinidad in March 1957 (about two months after Jenkins wrote his dispatch to the US State Department) and opted for the American base at Chaguaramas, "on grounds purely of its location by the sea, scenic beauty and its existing facilities, [as] the most suitable site for the Federal Capital". The sub-committee's recommendation was considered by the SFC at a meeting in Trinidad on 16-17 May 1957, during which the SFC noted that "Being assured that the foreign power in question [the US government] is anxious to extend the hand of friendship to, and to preserve the closest possible link with, our nation in embryo". The SFC concurred with the previous recommendation of the sub-committee, and resolved that the north-western peninsula should be the site of the federal capital. Thus it was that the struggle over Chaguaramas as representative space began to crystallize in terms of the promulgation of specific strategies on the part of the US government on the one hand, and the Trinidad and Tobago government on the other.

The American Strategy: A Case of Non-Decision Making

As envisaged by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz,¹⁴ the principle of non-decision making involves doing what is necessary to ensure that an action involving a shift in what they refer to as the "mobilization of bias" (or, simply put, the rules of the game or the rules of engagement) does not occur. This may entail: (a) non-response; (b) putting the challenge to the mobilization of bias at a point in the agenda whereby it

never comes up for discussion, much less a vote; (c) directing the challenge to a committee or series of committees peopled by individuals who are likely to be transient (like university students who may give up the fight for change because they have to prepare for exams, especially if they are graduating seniors); and (d) outright annihilation of the challengers. As will be seen, the Americans took recourse to two of the options and appear to have considered the fourth one.

Britain, the United States, and participants from the SFC (which included representatives from Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados) agreed to discuss the release of the base at a conference scheduled for 16–23 July 1957 in London. However, as the date of the conference approached, US policy, which took the form of dealing in semantics rather than substantive issues relating to the base, began to take shape. For example, on 10 May 1957 John Foster Dulles, American secretary of state, wrote to the American consul general in Port of Spain requesting additional information and background on the Federation's choice of Chaguaramas as its capital, and asking that the US ambassador in London be advised that, if pressed for a public statement, the consul general should withhold comment on the grounds that the request had not yet been received or considered by the US government.¹⁵ The very next day (11 May), the consul general noted that, while refusal to accede to the SFC's request certainly involved the risk of "providing a basis for virulent and sustained anti-Bases campaign, I believe if carefully and sympathetically dealt with, vital installations if not the entire area can be retained without serious adverse consequences".¹⁶

Further, in an effort to effect a degree of consonance in the strategies of the US and British governments, the British Foreign Office expressed the hope that there would be a summary of the US position "suitably tailored for Her Majesty's Government" for transmission to the SFC delegation. The US ambassador in London also suggested that in any media stories at the London Conference, rather than using the word "base" in connection with Chaguaramas, the words "facility" or "installation" should be used; and that the terms "Trinidadians" and "West Indians" should be used rather than "Trinidad", in order to put things in a wider perspective.¹⁷

Again, the Americans determined that though "we do not intend to depart from our Base position we must maintain the impression of having an open mind". Thus, in order that the West Indians not return home empty-handed, the United States would consider an offer of assistance in the construction of a site elsewhere, but only in the most general

terms and probably outside of regular meetings. Finally, the United States decided that it would try to place the burden on the West Indies of defending their position by demanding justification for, among other things, their choice of Chaguaramas as the federal capital site.¹⁸

It is obvious from the above that the Americans were opting for non-response, by refusing to discuss the matter. Thus, during the Conference in London, which was convened by the British Foreign Office, 17-23 July 1957, the US government submitted a memorandum setting out reasons why it was not possible to cede Chaguaramas either wholly or partially, and promised to give "sympathetic consideration" to any request for release of part of another base at Waller Field.

During the London discussions, David Ormsby-Gore of the British Foreign Office, on behalf of the United Kingdom government, stated that the base was originally established on a quasi-permanent basis and had hitherto been regarded in the United States as "an integral element in the United States defence plans for the Caribbean Area"; and that while "all possible regard is paid" to the view expressed by the Standing Federation Committee that Chaguaramas was the most suitable site for the proposed federal capital, "we are deeply conscious of the need to collaborate fully with the United States Government in plans for the security of the Caribbean area".

The American ambassador to London reiterated that it was not feasible for his government to accede to a request to give up the base, since it was still needed for security purposes, but that the US government would be willing to entertain a future request to relinquish the base. Indeed, he hoped that those present at the conference could "equally appreciate our grave concern to retain the location which best assures the ability to defend the strategically vital Caribbean Area. The provision of the best defense is important not only to the US, but to your Federation, and to the United Kingdom."¹⁹

Again, during a meeting on 5 September 1957, John Foster Dulles was asked about the meaning of a sentence in a letter of 21 July from President Dwight Eisenhower to British prime minister Harold Macmillan concerning the Trinidad base. It is said that the sentence claimed that the United States would never force itself into a base where it was not wanted or remain when it was not welcome. In a carefully worded response, Dulles said that what the president meant was that if deep-seated opposition to the base were to "develop and persist among responsible elements in the West Indies, he believed that US policy regarding retention of the Base would have to be revised [which] cer-

tainly did not mean isolated demands from politicians that we surrender the Base would cause us to 'grab our hats' and get out".²⁰

However, the response did not necessarily mean that the United States was averse to other "solutions" to the Chaguaramas issue. In a letter on 14 May 1958 to Washington, Walter Orebaugh, American consul general in Trinidad, stated that Ashford Sinanan, the leader of the opposition in the West Indian Federal Legislature, was the target of a suit brought against him by Williams for calling the latter "a degenerate liar", and revealed that Sinanan had asked for information on Williams's background which would help in his defence against Williams's suit. Orebaugh alleged that Sinanan was writing to a Washington lawyer about Williams's marital difficulties. Orebaugh noted that Sinanan, who had been helpful in the past, needed assistance which would then provide the United States with "the opportunity to put another nail in the political coffin of Eric Williams". "Accepting the policy to erase Williams from political power", the letter continued, "we must speed up the process of cutting him down from his pedestal. The recounting of the marital problem before the federal elections helped, and the Sinanan trial can be even more fruitful."²¹

In addition to the above, the United States considered efforts to remove Williams from office and not necessarily by democratic means. For example, continuing his ominous tone, Orebaugh suggested that it would be politic to have "someone who has access to the full record prepare a dossier on Williams which would contain information that is openly usable in an attack on his character and past associations". He surmised that "the FBI files, CIA records, and most importantly British Intelligence, must have a good deal on him". Recognizing that the use of official British sources could be "a touchy subject", Orebaugh, nevertheless, felt that any available information was needed as soon as possible, since Williams "could always move to get an early trial to try and damage Sinanan and his party before the up-coming Trinidad Legislative Council by-elections".²² The tone of the letter illustrates how US government personnel had sought to deal with a political issue in a non-political manner. This would not be the last time that Orebaugh would advocate trying to "get" Williams.

It also became apparent that US politicians, apart from being aware of the stance of West Indian leaders on the issue of the base, continued to be sensitive to the need to appease the third public in the equation, namely the West Indian masses, especially since the British had made it clear that political independence for the federated countries was a

real possibility in the near future. Thus, Orebaugh later noted that, notwithstanding the current rumblings of Jamaica's Norman Manley and the possibility of a "verbal explosion" on the part of Williams:

Now that the die has been cast, and the US-UK rejection of the WI claim is clear, it still remains for the decision to be accepted by the WI. Unless US retention of Chaguaramas is made palatable to the WI, we may only have won a Pyrrhic victory – and in the future, we could reap such fruits as come from offended sensibilities and a sense of frustration on the part of the leading politicians. When this is considered in the light of WI independence within five years, it is not at all unlikely that we will be faced at that time with a demand for US withdrawal from all Bases, in other words, a unilateral abrogation of the 1941 agreement.²³

Orebaugh acknowledged that, "Despite any legal posturing and even given US assurances as to the continuation of the treaty rights, there is little doubt that in the West Indian view it is within the practical power of an independent WI to abrogate the agreement. It boils down to the oft quoted statement that the US will not stay where it is not wanted."²⁴ Continuing, the consul general stated that while Williams would be anxious to use the base issue to deflect attention away from his party's weak performance at the federal elections, the United States had the support of the DLP opposition in the Trinidad and Tobago Legislative Council,²⁵ which might seek to obtain some political mileage from the Chaguaramas issue. Moreover, since Williams was facing dissension within his Cabinet and more recently within the PNM, the Chaguaramas issue could be the catalyst for an open break between Williams and three of his ministers (Winston Mahabir, Gerard Montano and Kamaluddin Mohammed), who were also troubled by his "dictatorial approach in the present government".²⁶

Nonetheless, Orebaugh concluded that, in spite of the above-mentioned factors and cross-currents, "the outlook for the successful resolution of the Chaguaramas issue is neither simple nor subject to mere reliance on the legality argument, whether in terms of the 1941 Agreement or in terms of the present constitutional status of the West Indies". This meant that unless the United States could "develop and count on West Indies cooperation", the situation was "likely to be worsened by the degree to which Eric Williams is able to expand his future political role". Therefore, it would be beneficial to recognize that the United States was "dealing with forces characteristic of emergent nationalism".²⁷

Orebaugh's comment regarding the exchange of assurances must be

viewed against the backdrop of Williams's comments in the Legislative Council on 20 June 1958. There, he reminded those in attendance of the statement made by Grantley Adams, prime minister of the British West Indies Federation, in the Federal House of Representatives, on 16 June 1958, that the federal government had maintained its stand on the Joint Commission Report, but at the same time had accepted two assurances proffered by the US government, namely (a) it would be prepared to review the situation in "say ten years time" in light of changes that may make it unnecessary to retain the base; and (b) in accordance with Article 28, to give sympathetic consideration to relevant representations made by either party (presumably either the US government or the Chaguaramas Joint Commission).

Orebaugh would later intone that, following the publication of the Report of the Chaguaramas Joint Commission and four months after the exchange of assurances between the US and West Indies governments that the matter would come up for consideration in "another ten years or so", the Chaguaramas issue "continued to be a *cause célèbre* in the West Indies [and] a source of constant irritation and harassment to the United States".²⁸ This, he felt, was due to Williams's perception of Chaguaramas, not merely in emotional terms but also as a nationalist issue overlaid with racial connotations.²⁹

The Trinidad and Tobago Strategy

Faced with the American refusal to even entertain the possibility of bringing the Chaguaramas issue to the table for discussion, which would involve the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Trinidad and Tobago, Williams and the PNM that had been elected to office in September 1956, decided on a strategy of chipping away at different facets of the US presence, and in some instances making what some would call doubtful legal interpretation of the 1941 Agreement, in order to get the attention of the Americans. Faced with an uncompromising stand on the part of the United States, and also now armed with the details of the 1941 Agreement, Williams, in his capacity as chief minister of Trinidad and Tobago, first made an expedient *volte face* from a 1956 pre-election promise to honour all international obligations,³⁰ and, during the July 1957 conference, formally proposed: (a) the evacuation of Chaguaramas by the United States; (b) the establishment of a Joint Commission of the four interested parties – Trinidad and Tobago, other West Indian countries, the United Kingdom and United States –

to select a new site for a base; and (c) revision of Article 28 of the 1941 Agreement, to allow for the transfer of the base to the new site and the formal association of the Trinidad and Tobago government as a signatory to the new Agreement. This posture was clearly intended to blunt the US effort at non-decision making that involved refusal even to bring the matter up for discussion.

The Trinidad and Tobago government also refused to release a cheque for BWI\$25,000, meant for the Citrus Growers Association, the marketing agent for the sale of citrus fruit from the Tucker Valley plantation that was located in the Chaguaramas Base area. Williams claimed that the fruit from the plantation was flooding the market and pricing local producers out of the market, and was therefore unacceptable and even illegal. While this may have been an exaggeration, it was all part of his strategy of "death by a thousand cuts".³¹ The naval station had originally decided to close down the plantation on 1 October 1958. However, in the absence of assurances from the Trinidad and Tobago government that "interference" in the affairs of the base would discontinue and an ultimatum from the Navy to settle the dispute speedily, the US authorities at the base decided to close down the plantation on 1 November 1958.

What was interesting about Williams's strategy was that it was tied to his request for a multilateral conference, as indicated above.³² The British government took the position that the sale of the fruit was a local matter to be dealt with by the Trinidad and Tobago government,³³ while the Americans held firm to the decision of the naval station to close the plantation at the announced date. They also expressed a willingness to hold informal talks between the consul general and Williams.³⁴ Fending off criticisms, especially from the two daily newspapers (*Trinidad Guardian* and *Trinidad Chronicle*), and the DLP opposition, that closing down the plantation would result in the loss of jobs of locals, Williams countered with the argument that the workers who were likely to be laid off were seasonal and would have been laid off anyway.

Another instance of the "death by a thousand cuts" strategy presented itself in the form of the Macquerife Club, which was intended for use by US base personnel, but which Williams contended was also being used by some members of Trinidad's elite. In his words, the Macquerife Club had become "one of Trinidad's biggest clubs, one of Trinidad's most exclusive clubs in which some 450 of the privileged few are allowed to go down there, pay for the most part except those who

hold courtesy cards, representatives of the government and so on, and pay entrance fees that would be \$60 a year in the case of bachelors and \$120 a year in the case of families." According to Orebaugh, Williams had asserted that the practice involved a "constant, almost daily violation of the currency regulations of Trinidad and Tobago", which prevented anyone without permission from making payments in sterling currency to non-residents,³⁵ which, since the base had separated itself from the rest of the island, Williams conveniently located outside of the sterling area. In addition, by making use of collective action frames³⁶ which portrayed the existence of the club as being not merely another locale of a select few but a place where those Trinidadians who availed themselves of the club's services were infringing the currency regulations, he sought to depict those Trinidadian club members as, in effect, disloyal persons. Beyond that, as he would do in the future, Williams was framing the American presence at Chaguaramas, and its ancillary manifestations (the club), as representative of a form of injustice whereby "social arrangements that are ordinarily perceived as just and immutable must come to seem both unjust and mutable".³⁷ This was also intended to create a certain degree of angst, especially given the nationalist rhetoric in the air. The result was that the club was forced to terminate its courtesy membership to local members.

Adopting what was arguably a somewhat apocryphal position, Williams also sought to depict the base as a location that was deleterious to the health of Trinidadians because of the emission of harmful radiation. According to Winston Mahabir, the PNM's minister of health and social services, in early 1957, during a "party speech in public, [Williams] announced in a highly dramatic fashion that he had substantial information of Radiation being used by the Americans at Chaguaramas". Mahabir, who was on the platform, later described Williams's claims regarding the existence of radiation as "the immaculate deception",³⁸ although he himself in a report to the Cabinet in mid-July 1959 stated that the presence of a US base involved the population in "hazards over which a Minister has no control".³⁹

Again, during a speech to a large crowd at the so-called University of Woodford Square (a public place in Port of Spain to which Williams gave that name) on 3 July 1959, Williams, referring to a number of American misdeeds in Trinidad, reportedly stated that radiation from the tracking station at Chaguaramas was a danger to the Trinidadian population. Though he was careful to point out that he was not qualified to judge the danger posed by the radiation, he went on to state that

a United Kingdom expert would soon arrive in the island to investigate the issue. As in the past, this statement put the Americans on the defensive and forced the consul general in Trinidad to issue a statement in the next day's press indicating that there was "absolutely no danger to the population of Trinidad from radiation connected with this installation".⁴⁰ The radiation factor, however, was not allowed to die and was taken up in various issues of the party newspaper,⁴¹ in particular the 31 December 1959 issue, which also attempted to keep the matter of the base alive, by running an article outlining the proposals made to the Americans by Williams for settling the imbroglio, which included the prescription that the 1941 Agreement should be reviewed clause by clause.

On 14 April 1960, during a lengthy speech in the Legislative Council, John O'Halloran, PNM minister of industry and commerce, after dealing with the history and the increasing incidence of use by US military aircraft of Piarco Airport and the concomitant loss of revenue this entailed,⁴² informed the House that the government had turned down a US government proposal for continued use of the airport.⁴³ Instead, the Trinidad and Tobago government imposed a ban on the landing of US warplanes at the airport, which took effect after 30 April 1960.

In keeping with Williams's stated policy of using "every possible artifice to keep the Chaguaramas issue alive and before the public",⁴⁴ various resources, such as the PNM newspaper, the Legislative Council, press conferences, and the "University of Woodford Square" were utilized as settings for moving the issue to the centre politically, so that it would become part of a national dialogue. Further, it will be noted that as a social movement intellectual, Williams used the political independence movement to institute a process of the reconstruction of social space (vis-à-vis Chaguaramas) by way of his relationship to fellow members of the colonized stratum, as well as with the colonizer stratum, especially the American consul general and the State Department.⁴⁵ For example, A.N.R. Robinson, PNM treasurer, in an article in the 26 May 1958 issue of the *PNM Weekly* that had "the party stamp of approval and one which was undoubtedly cleared by Williams", provided another aspect of the strategy the party would utilize in its bid to get rid of the Americans. Referring to the July 1957 Chaguaramas Joint Commission Report, Robinson stated that it "was intended to be merely a stage in the negotiations between the parties", and that the most significant finding of the report was that there were five alternative sites for a naval base in Trinidad. The article concluded with two statements that clearly indi-

cated that for the PNM the matter was far from closed. The first was that the United Kingdom government "must stand accused of grave discourtesy to the English-speaking people of the Caribbean", especially in view of the acceptance that the West Indies were well on the way to "independent nationhood", while the second opined that the words "Remember Chaguaramas" may well become a fixture in future dealings between the West Indies, and the UK and the USA".⁴⁶

Williams continued to turn the Legislative Council into a setting for the dissemination of his ideas on the Chaguaramas issue. On 20 June 1958, for example, in a speech to the Council he reminded those in attendance of the statement made by Grantley Adams, prime minister of the British West Indian Federation, in the Federal House of Representatives, that the federal government had maintained its stand on the Joint Commission Report, but at the same time had accepted two assurances proffered by the US government, namely (a) it will be prepared to review the situation in "say ten years time" in the light of changes that may make it unnecessary to retain the base; and (b) in accordance with Article 28, to give sympathetic consideration to relevant representations made by either party.⁴⁷ Without specifically mentioning what he viewed as an unacceptable, unilateral, and unauthorized liberty taken by the federal government, Williams stated once again that the 1941 Agreement was reached without any input from the Trinidad and Tobago government. Moreover, he noted that the Agreement had failed to deal with a range of issues that privileged the United States financially and otherwise, and discriminated against the host country. These included:

jurisdiction over US forces and Trinidad and Tobago nationals employed on the Bases; security legislation; arrest and service of process warrants; right to use the public services of Trinidad and Tobago; right to make surveys even on private property; exemption of US public vessels from compulsory pilotage or light harbor dues; right of US left hand drive vehicles to use the roads; exemption from licensing and registration fees; exemption from the Immigration Ordinances; exemption from import, excise, consumption and export taxes; right to establish postal services in the Leased Areas; exemption of US forces and nationals employed on the Base from income tax; right of the US to take any necessary measures in the vicinity of the Leased Areas to improve sanitation and protect health.⁴⁸

Beyond that, Williams made reference to the extent to which heavy US vehicles were damaging the roads of Trinidad and Tobago, which were not meant for such use and for which taxpayers had to foot the repair bill; and the failure of the local opposition over the years to

address these issues, while remaining content with attacking the current government for raising them. He informed his listeners, also, that the government had decided upon two courses of action. The first concerned the appointment of a commission "to inquire and report upon the legal basis of (a) the occupation by the United States of areas of Trinidad and Tobago from 1941 to the present day, and (b) the terms and conditions relevant thereto".

The second course of action concerned the publication forthwith of the 1941 Agreement, related documents, and the draft legislation to implement the Agreement, so that for the first time, "the people of Trinidad and Tobago may be informed of the facts, judge the situation for themselves, and express their views fully on what has been done and contemplated".⁴⁹ Clearly, then, Williams was stating, among other things, that the US actions, by making regulations that freed them from paying taxes for services which the citizens of the twin island had to pay; or being exempted from having to use the local postal service, which meant that the government had no jurisdiction over what mail entered or left the colony; or having to pay the costs of repairs to roads which US heavy vehicles helped to damage; or being exempt from the law for offences committed on the island, were patently and fundamentally inconsonant with the idea of political independence. His speech, therefore, was an unambiguous effort to continue to redefine and bring into the public sphere the Chaguaramas Base as a space that personified colonialist privilege and exploitation.⁵⁰

Williams's strategy of placing the issue in the public sphere also entailed bringing his case to the people in a public forum. During a lengthy speech on 3 July 1959 at the "University of Woodford Square", for example, he took advantage of the occasion to inform his listeners about a so-called crisis involving the constitution, and of his government's request for control of the police to be turned over to a government minister, which the DLP opposed. He told the gathering that he had met with Julian Amery, parliamentary undersecretary to the secretary of state for the colonies, on the matter. He also informed those present of the reasons for his government's cancellation of the 26 June celebrations of Cabinet Day. He declared that, "The central issue had nothing to do with the police, or with elections, or with portfolios, or with the ninth Minister, or with dictatorship", but rather "the crisis was Chaguaramas".⁵¹

There were possibly three components to the "crisis". The first was a constitutional one that concerned Williams's and the PNM's demand

that control of the police should be turned over to a PNM minister. The second concerned Williams's view that there were various press and popular misconceptions that suggested that the PNM government might be forced to resign. The third was the dispute over Chaguaramas.

Williams described to his listeners the 1941 Agreement, and drew their attention to a recent publication in the United States that had indicated that when the question of taking over the islands close to the base had been considered, originally, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the US president, had stated that he would be content merely with "taking certain areas as Bases because he did not want to be involved with two million headaches [as] it would be an economic drag on the USA". In other words, the Americans were interested in the place not the people.

Williams's speech spoke to the *process* by which issues were moved into the public sphere in that, like his press conferences which were later broadcast, and speeches at the "University of Woodford Square", no opportunities were provided, especially for an immediate US response.⁵² It is also interesting to note that at one point in his speech Williams told his listeners that while the DLP stood for radiation, the PNM stood for independence. Since elections were due to be held in 1961, it was evident that Williams had this in mind and was using the opportunity to campaign for the PNM's re-election to office.

Williams took the issue of the base to the public again during a speech on 17 July 1959 at Arima, which was later titled *From Slavery to Chaguaramas*. On that occasion, he drew a connection between a past form of servitude (slavery), which had inflicted wounds and left scars on the nation's body politic, and the current American presence at Chaguaramas, both of which he associated with colonialism. He concluded by assuring his listeners that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago "reserves the right, as any government elected by the people must reserve the right, to take such action in the face of unreasonable behaviour or unreasonable conditions imposed upon us, to protect the rights and liberties of one's own people". Again, during a meeting of the Legislative Council (which he obviously saw not only as a deliberative and decision-making body, but also as a forum for continuing ventilation of grievances associated with Chaguaramas), Williams, using hyperbole, attacked the "absurdity" of thinking that dumping twenty-five thousand boxes of free citrus on to the market from the base would not imperil the economy.⁵³

However, perhaps the most significant attempt to move the Chaguaramas issue into the public sphere occurred on 22 April 1960

when, during a march in the rain, a drenched Williams led his followers to the "University of Woodford Square", where he delivered a speech. On this occasion, which according to the *Trinidad Guardian* attracted an estimated ten thousand to thirty-five thousand people, he hoisted the Trinidad flag and burned ritually what he referred to as the seven deadly sins of colonialism, among which, not unexpectedly, were a copy of the 1941 Agreement and, for good measure, one of the *Guardian*. By that time that newspaper had gained a reputation for attacking Williams's personality (which the paper viewed as "authoritarian"), and some of his policies regarding Chaguaramas, the closing down of the Tucker Valley plantation, and the exclusion of locals from membership in the Macquerife Club.

This performance, which Williams later described as "a spiritual purification", in a clear reference to expiation of sins, was the most dramatic manifestation of "people power", and it appears that it was instrumental in convincing the United States and Britain that negotiations with a view to revising the 1941 Agreement would be desirable.⁵⁴ There followed a series of events that included an unprecedented visit from Iain McLeod, secretary of state for the colonies, who proposed three-stage talks: a London stage; a Trinidad stage with the United States, the United Kingdom and Federal observers; and a further Trinidad stage with a view to signing a new agreement. This last stage took place between 28 November and 9 December 1960 in Tobago, when the United States agreed to a phased withdrawal to be completed by the end of 1977, and to participate in certain high priority projects, including a developmental project involving the College of Arts and Sciences at the University College of the West Indies.

Summary and Conclusions

As we look at the David and Goliath struggle involving the Trinidad and Tobago government on the one hand, and the American government on the other, we notice that as Williams moved the Chaguaramas issue from the periphery of the consciousness of Trinidadians to a space in the centre of the nationalist struggle, he sought to portray this disjuncture not merely in political terms but, perhaps more importantly, in moral terms. Not unexpectedly and typical of the dialectics of colonialism, from the moment that it became clear that their presence would be challenged in order to make a space for the federal capital, the US government sought to defend its space. Among the strategies it employed

were rejection of the request for the release of the space; cloaking its arguments in legalisms and semantics; critically portraying Williams, in particular, as displaying paranoid and maniacal conduct; making not-so-veiled statements to "get" Williams; and attempting the time-worn colonial response of divide-and-rule.

Faced with the behemoth from the North, the Trinidad and Tobago government used a variety of resources, in particular the spoken word (especially the Trinidad variant of "speechifying"), a knowledge of history, different settings like the "University of Woodford Square" and the Legislative Council, and recourse to a strategy that became known as "pinpricking" or, as we put it, "death by a thousand cuts", to bring the Chaguaramas issue into the public sphere. To this end, frames of injustice were thrown into sharp relief as Williams sought continually to point out that Trinidad and Tobago nationals ought not to be bound by a treaty in regard to which they had no say, and that the British governor had opposed the Agreement which gave the United States rights to a certain space on the island. In this manner, Chaguaramas was cast in a completely different light as Williams selectively used history as a weapon, as well as the analogy of spatial differentials to point to the existence of two Trinidads, one privileged and the other underprivileged, to hammer home the incongruity of an American presence at the base and the quest to terminate colonialism in the twin island.

The Trinidad strategy was noteworthy for at least four other reasons. First, by moving the occupation of the Americans at the base into the realm of argumentative debate at public meetings, in the legislature, and at press conferences, Williams was able to make his case, albeit sometimes apocryphally, by putting the Americans on the defensive in such a manner as to restrict the possibility of a counteractive response from the resident consul general and the State Department. Second, taking his case and that of his government to the public, especially at public meetings at the "University of Woodford Square", involved a transformation of a space in downtown Port of Spain, and one that was only a stone's throw from the Parliament Buildings, from a park where sexual transactions were sometimes carried out, into a locale for serious discussion of matters of public interest. This was, of course, part of his role as a social movement intellectual to transmit knowledge to his audiences and his desire to make Trinidad the "Athens" of the Caribbean. Third, the strategy entailed the use of the issue of "space" in relation to Chaguaramas to enable Williams and the PNM to make space for themselves on the political landscape. Indeed, no clearer example of this can

be found than in Williams's argument that while the PNM stood for the departure of the Americans and nationalism, the opposition DLP seemingly stood for radiation and, by extension, non-nationalism. Finally, it was clear that Williams used the trappings of office to assail the US presence at the base in a manner that sometimes would not have been possible had his party not been in control of the government.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Ivar Oxaal, *Black Intellectuals Come to Power: The Rise of Creole Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1968); Selwyn Ryan, *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago: A Study of Decolonization in a Multiracial Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972); Annette Palmer, "The United States and the Commonwealth Caribbean 1941-1945" (PhD diss., Department of History, Fordham University, 1979); Colin A. Palmer, *Eric Williams and the Making of the Modern Caribbean 1956-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), chapter 3.
2. See, for example, John D. Carthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212-41; J. Craig Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements", *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 527-53. For a statement of the limitations of the resource mobilization perspective see, for example, Myra Max Ferree, "The Political Context of Rationality: Rational Choice Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory", in Aldon D. Morris and Carol Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Paul Byrne, *Social Movements in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997); and more recently, Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
3. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). Despite its importance to the analysis of historical patterns in the Caribbean, the concept of space in contentious activity has generally been neglected. For an interesting exception to this tendency see Juanita De Barros, *Order and Place in a Colonial Society: Patterns of Struggle and Resistance in Georgetown, British Guiana, 1889-1924* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).
4. See his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

5. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).
6. National Archives, Washington, DC, RG 59, Box 1, Louis V. Riggio, Assistant Officer in Charge, Trinidad and Tobago, to Stephen C. Sunderland, 15 March 1963.
7. Eric Williams Memorial Collection (hereafter EWMC), Folder no. 740, "Chaguaramas Joint Commission Report".
8. Caribbean Labor Conference in Barbados, September 1945, Full Conference – United States Naval and Air Bases, Proceedings as reported in *The Barbados Advocate*, 20 September 1945; RG 59, File 844C.5043/9-2845, American Consulate, Barbados, Report no. 62, Restricted, S. Reid Thompson, US Consul, to Department of State, 28 September 1945.
9. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/1-457, Box 2891, Dispatch no. 196, Secret, Amcongen to the Department of State, 29 January 1957.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. See *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
15. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/5-857, Box 2891, Confidential, Dulles to American Consul in Port of Spain, Priority 206, 10 May 1957.
16. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/5-1157, Box 2891, Confidential, Port of Spain to Secretary of State, no. 204, 11 May 1957.
17. RG. 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-257, Box 2891, Confidential, London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, no. 68, 2 July 1957.
18. RG. 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-1357, Box 2891, Confidential and Priority, London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, no. 359, 13 July 1957.
19. RG 59, "London Conference on West Indies Federal Capital Site, July 16 through July 23, 1957", General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Records relating to Trinidad and Tobago 1955-1963, Lots 64D 38 and 66D 43, Box 1, Confidential, Dispatch no. 619, American Embassy London to Department of State, 9 September 1957.
20. RG 59, Folder 711.56341G/1-356, Box 2895, Top Secret, Memorandum titled "Secretary Dulles Statement on Release of Chaguaramas Naval Base", 9 September 1957.
21. RG 59, Box 1, Secret, Orebaugh to William N. Dale, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Department of State, Washington, 14 May 1958. Williams had been held in contempt of court for failing to pay child support following the divorce from his first wife (See RG 59, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Records Relating to Trinidad and Tobago 1955-63, Box 1, Confidential, especially "Marital Difficulties of Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad", Memorandum for the Files, 12 September 1962, and James J. Laughlin, Attorney and Counsellor at Law,

- to Dean Rusk, 14 November 1961).
22. RG 59, Box 1, Secret, Orebaugh to William N. Dale, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Department of State, Washington, 14 May 1958.
 23. See RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/5-158, Box 2893, Confidential, Dispatch no. 328, "The Chaguaramas Issue: Current Perspective and Outlook", Orebaugh to Department of State Washington, 29 May 1958.
 24. Ibid.
 25. Orebaugh had reported that in April a group of DLP members of the Legislature and a group of senators from both political parties had visited the base. While the DLP team did nothing to conceal its complete opposition to the request for release of the base, the Senate group was more reserved, though some of its members shared the DLP's views (see RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/5-158, Box 2893, Dispatch no. 299, Orebaugh to Department of State, 1 May 1958).
 26. See RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/5-158, Box 2893, Confidential, Dispatch no. 328, "The Chaguaramas Issue: Current Perspective and Outlook", Orebaugh to Department of State Washington, 29 May 1958.
 27. Ibid.
 28. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-358, Box 2893, Dispatch no. 98, "The Chaguaramas Issue: Current Situation and Outlook", Orebaugh to Department of State, 17 October 1958.
 29. Ibid.
 30. Williams had stated that the PNM would "honor all international obligations, both economic and military, and especially the defense arrangements with the United States of America" (see EWMC Folder no. 757, "The PNM Restates Its Fundamental Principles", Lecture delivered at the "University of Woodford Square" by Eric Williams: Political Leader of the PNM, 14 June 1956).
 31. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-358, Box 2893, Confidential, Dispatch no. 65, Orebaugh to Secretary of State, 25 September 1958. The question of legality arose due to Williams's definition of the Chaguaramas Base as an entity outside of the territorial jurisdiction of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, according to his interpretation of Article 14 of the Agreement on the lease of the base.
 32. See RG 59, 711.56341B/10-2258, Box 2893, Dispatch no. 100, "PNM Resolution supporting Conference on Chaguaramas", Orebaugh to Department of State, 22 October 1958.
 33. RG 59, 711.56341B/10-2358 CS/G, Box 2893, Memorandum of Conversation, "UK Attitude Regarding Chaguaramas Plantation Citrus Problem", 23 October 1958, where the Colonial Office said that if the question of the legality of the sales were put to it, the answer would be that it is illegal; RG 59, 711.56341B/10-2458, Box 2893, Secret, Dispatch no. 2249, Whitney (London) to Secretary of State, 24 October 1958.

34. RG 59, 711.56341B/11-1458, Box 2893, Confidential, Dispatch no. 66, Dulles to American Consul, Port of Spain, 15 November 1958; RG 59, 711.56341B/11-1658, Box 2893, Confidential, Dispatch no. 113, Orebaugh to Secretary of State, 16 November 1958.
35. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-259, Box 2894, Dispatch no. 12, Orebaugh to Secretary of State, 5 July 1959.
36. The term "frame" refers to "a schemata of interpretation" that allows individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label" various occurrences in such a manner that what would otherwise be meaningless becomes something that is meaningful (see Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* [Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986], 21). Collective action frames are used as resources for the purpose of forging a collective identity, contextually, with respect to political independence.
37. See Frances F. Piven and Richard C. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 2. For a helpful discussion of collective action frames, see David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation", *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 464-81.
38. See Winston Mahabir, *In and Out of Politics* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Imprint Caribbean, 1978), chapter 4.
39. Quoted in Colin Palmer, *Eric Williams*, 122.
40. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-259, Box 2894, Dispatch no. 9, McGregor to Secretary of State, 4 July 1959.
41. See, for example, "Radiation - From a Correspondent in Britain", *The Nation* 2, no. 2 (13 November 1959); *The Nation* 2, no. 7 (December 1959): 10; "Radiation What it Is and How it Affects you", *The Nation* 2, no. 9 (31 December 1959): 1.
42. The government lost revenue because of non-payment by the United States of landing fees involved in these military movements which, during the twelve-year period (1948-1959), amounted to \$203,334.05, and parking fees which amounted to a further \$61,000 ("Trinidad Turns Down US Deal on Piarco, House Told of Loss in Airport Revenue", Comments by O'Halloran in Legislative Council Debates [Hansard], Fourth Session of the Ninth Legislature, Trinidad and Tobago Government Printing Office, 14 April 1960, Cols. 2146-2152).
43. Ibid.
44. Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger* (London: André Deutsch, 1969), 213.
45. In this context, it might be noted that while Eyerman and Jamison do make reference to the extent to which social movements generate new knowledge and therefore lend themselves to the production of intellectual activity, the actual process is not enunciated in any meaningful way (see Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach* [University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991]).

46. RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/5-2958, Box 2893, Attachment to Dispatch no. 331, Orebaugh to Department of State, Washington, 29 May 1958.
47. See EWMC Folder no.740, "The US Leased Areas in Trinidad and Tobago", Statement by the Chief Minister in the Legislative Council, 20 June 1958.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. For a similar discussion of this form of representative space employing what the author refers to as the binary opposition of city vs periphery see John Guidry "Trial by Space: The Spatial Politics of Citizenship and Social Movements in Urban Brazil", *Mobilization* 8, no. 2 (2003): 189–204.
51. Williams had stated that among his reasons for cancelling the celebrations was a desire to clear up a number of press and popular misconceptions. Among these misconceptions were suggestions from the press that there was a problem about which individuals would get which portfolios; there were concerns regarding a ninth minister; and that the government would have to resign and new elections would have to be called. Williams also said that somebody had suggested that the problem was nothing more than the old dictatorial pattern, and one member of the opposition had said that Williams had fired all of his ministers. Williams mentioned that he had gone to see the governor regarding the transfer of the police to an elected minister, and that the governor had forwarded the request to the secretary of state for the colonies, with an indication that the government desired an early reply in order to proceed with the planned Cabinet Day celebrations. In his reply, the secretary of state for the colonies had stated that since there seemed to be certain misunderstandings arising out of the visit of PNM ministers Patrick Solomon and John O'Halloran to London (about which Williams did not elaborate), the secretary of state was sending Amery to discuss outstanding matters with the PNM government. Since the PNM was unsure as to what misunderstandings had occurred, the Party's General Council had agreed that the celebrations should be cancelled, especially since the PNM did not want to "excite and inflame public opinion" any more than had been done. It was rumoured that Amery's visit to Trinidad was aimed at settling the matter of local control of the police. According to Ashford Sinanan, leader of the opposition in the Federal House of Representatives, "Amery had come out prepared to accede to Williams' demands and only sought to give the appearance of consulting with the Opposition". Furthermore, the "Colonial Office had 'double-crossed' the Opposition on the constitutional crisis which arose in Trinidad over the transfer of the police to ministerial control", because in September 1958 an opposition delegation in London had been promised that police control would not pass to Williams and his ministers (RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-1059, Box 2894, American Consul, Confidential, Dispatch no. 18, 10 July 1959, "DLP Views on the Current Scene in Trinidad", Memorandum of Conversation [Participants Ashford Sinanan, Simboonath Capildeo and Philip Habib]).

52. The consul general recognized this, which he felt was "not proper and [was] harmful to US prestige and national security" (see RG 59, Folder 711.56341B/7-259, Box 2894, Confidential, Dispatch no. 13, Port of Spain to Secretary of State 5 July 1959).
53. See "Dr Williams Hits Out at 'Free' Citrus from US Base", Legislative Council Debates (Hansard) Fourth Session of the Ninth Legislature (Trinidad and Tobago: Government Printing Office, 14 April 1960), Cols. 2152-59.
54. It should be noted that a lengthy statement by Edwin Moline, the new American consul general, recommended the advisability of a more flexible approach, including negotiations, especially against the backdrop of nationalism and impending independence (see RG 59, 711.56341B/12-1159, Box 2894, Secret, Dispatch no. 225, Moline to Department of State, 23 December 1959).

Centring the City in the Amelioration of Slavery in Trinidad, 1824–1834

CLAUDIUS FERGUS

Abstract

This article attempts to explore the importance of the capital town of Trinidad as a window to a better understanding of the slave system in that colony during the period of official amelioration. The article attempts to show that the enslaved were also actively involved in the construction of amelioration, and that the centring of the city in the amelioration experiment was largely their work. The article also explores a hitherto neglected aspect of the historiography of slave resistance by demonstrating how enslaved persons used the law to advance their own interests and harass and frustrate the slavocracy.

Introduction

Although scholars have studied aspects of urban slavery in the Caribbean, this subject remains marginal to the hegemonic plantation genre.¹ Nonetheless, colonial towns, particularly the political capitals, are of considerable importance to a broader understanding of Caribbean slavery. If the plantation was the heart of the colony, then the capital (often identified simply as “town”) was its brain. The capital legalized relations of power on slave plantations and buttressed the plantation authority structure through coercive state institutions. The most influential planters met in town to engage in political intercourse with the colonial authorities and, by extension, the Crown. In time, the town became a quasi-metropolis to which some planters retired, leaving their estates in the hands of managers and overseers.²

The town was also a meeting place for enslaved persons resident on

the plantations. In this respect, Port of Spain was typical. Enslaved persons from all local administrative divisions congregated in the Sunday market in town to trade wares, provisions, news and gossip, or drifted off to the rum shops, the most popular recreational space for men. Many of them increasingly sought employment under self-hire. During the amelioration period, enslaved persons also frequently went to town to lodge complaints with the protector and guardian of slaves. Because of the many opportunities for earning one's freedom price, the town also attracted many runaways who often met former acquaintances there. In spite of severe punishments for persons harbouring them, the more robust and skilled runaways were almost always guaranteed shelter while performing labour that was always in short supply in the city.³ New freedmen and women also often migrated to Port of Spain to start a new life, rather than seek employment on estates where they were likely to suffer the same rigours of slave labour, including brutal punishments.

The city evolved its own peculiar forms of slavery in which the life of the enslaved persons approximated more to "a free agent than a piece of property".⁴ Enslaved persons were employed in most, if not all, of the skilled, semiskilled and purely manual occupations associated with city life. Invariably, they shared more personal, albeit tension-filled, relationships with their masters than enslaved persons in plantation-based occupations.⁵ They were builders of public roads, mansions for the rich, ornate churches and cathedrals, and government offices; at the waterfront, they were stevedores and watercraft specialists, among other occupations.⁶ They were also the principal respondents before the criminal courts and the largest population in the royal jail with its notorious treadmill and chain gangs.

This article attempts to demonstrate the central importance of Port of Spain, the capital town, to an understanding of amelioration, which was intended to reform plantation slavery. The article deals with the office of protector and guardian of slaves, as well as the criminal courts, as critical domains of contestation between the plantocracy and a new, legally empowered enslaved group, determined to exploit the amelioration laws to exact as much benefit as possible for themselves, including their personal emancipation. One of the major corollaries of slave agency during amelioration was the partial transformation of the plantation landscape from a domain of planter paternalism into an experimental field of industrial relations – a revolutionary development for colonial slavery. This interpretation departs radically from the popular,

negative perspective of amelioration.⁷ In establishing continuity between *nouveau* manumitted, runaways and the group of older freed persons in Port of Spain, the article suggests that *petit marronage* became a vehicle for the broadening of social and economic contacts and opportunities within the town, and between it and the plantation. The article also represents such contacts as manifestations of cultural resistance to the hegemony of the plantation. It weaves much of the discussion round mobility of the enslaved people, including the incidence of *petit marronage*, because the extent to which these people engaged in such activities indicates, above all, their experience or interpretation of amelioration.⁸

In the Introduction to *Maroon Societies*, Richard Price defined the phenomenon of *petit marronage* as “repetitive and periodic truancy”.⁹ Words such as “deserting” and “absconding”, made popular during the amelioration period, speak to the same phenomenon. In rejecting such liberal interpretations as a devaluation of the Maroon *persona*, Asa Hilliard asserted, “Simple escape and simple freedom were liberty without an aim”.¹⁰ However, the Trinidad amelioration code, promulgated to meet the challenges that the new class of runaways created, definitely brings into question Hilliard’s assertion, and, instead, speaks to a new form of resistance executed under cover of due process, with a definite “aim” of destabilizing the slave system.

Interestingly, Trinidad emerged at the top of Barry Higman’s table of urban Maroons in the Caribbean for the following reasons: first, the relatively large population of Port of Spain, which “may have made it exceptional among the towns of the new sugar colonies”; second, the city’s large “free coloured” population; and third, the high proportion of African-born individuals among the enslaved population.¹¹ At the launch of the amelioration project, the free population of Trinidad (exclusive of Amerindians) amounted to 18,091, of whom 13,995 were “Free Coloured”, the majority of whom resided in town. The enslaved population totalled 23,117, including some 4,000 non-*praedial*s, the majority of whom were owned by Free Coloureds.¹² The latter was by far the fastest growing segment, increasing by over 1,500 in the first three years of amelioration, with manumissions being the biggest contributor.¹³ According to Higman, the combination of the factors mentioned above gave Trinidad the highest rate (0.8 percent) of urban *marronage* among the British colonies, compared to Castries (0.2 percent), Bridgetown (0.22 percent), and Kingstown (0.35 percent).¹⁴ Undoubtedly, the factors that Higman identifies were important dynamics of *marronage*.

However, the experiment in state-sponsored amelioration was no less so and, indeed, may well have been the key factor from 1824.

The Amelioration Experiment

Amelioration was an attempt to synthesize British philanthropy with Spanish law and jurisprudence, driven by the imperative of transforming Caribbean colonies into a competitive colonial enterprise.¹⁵ In that sense, the amelioration project was another phase in the "Colony of Experiment", as Trinidad was aptly described since the turn of the century, and also the most concentrated period of planter-initiated experiments in natural increase, launched since the mid eighteenth century. The idea of ameliorating slavery in the British colonies began as a management expedient on a few estates in Jamaica and Barbados, focusing on the welfare of enslaved women of childbearing age, in order to raise their fecundity and reduce infant mortality. The overall objective was the reduction in the cost of producing sugar, which was becoming less competitive against the French product.¹⁶ The initial success of those experiments was described by Richard Dunn as "a great discovery" of the planter class, "which gradually raised the Negro birth rate, lowered the Negro death rate, freed the slaveholders from dependence on the African slave trade, and cut costs".¹⁷ Endorsed by the British government since the end of the eighteenth century, amelioration remained focused on enslaved persons attached to plantations.

Providing the legal framework of the project was an Order-in-Council, dated 10 March 1824, some aspects of which had been given a trial run ten months earlier.¹⁸ The Order-in-Council was actually Britain's first slave code. Described by some contemporaries as the Black Code or *Code Noir*, it was amended several times up to 1831 in the form of new Orders-in-Council and gubernatorial proclamations. Perhaps more than the letter of the law was the character of its principal administrator, the protector and guardian of slaves, in the person of Henry Gloster, the son of Archibald Gloster, a former attorney general of Trinidad and chief justice in several West Indian colonies.¹⁹ The younger Gloster was hand-picked for the job by Governor Sir Ralph Woodford. Definitely in his favour was his competence in Spanish, French and the patois that the majority of the enslaved people spoke. At the time of his appointment, he was the solicitor general and fiscal (Crown attorney) to the Royal Audencia (Supreme Court) of Trinidad.²⁰

The protector and guardian of slaves was one of the most highly paid

officials in the colony. The Board of Council voted a hefty salary of \$6,000 per annum, to be supplemented by a diversity of legal fees.²¹ The basic salary alone tripled that of the office of procurador syndic (attorney for the Cabildo or Town Council), the *ex-officio* "guardian of slaves" under the 1812 Registration Order-in-Council. Henry Fuller, the former guardian of slaves, had exploited loopholes in the registration law and his Instrument of Office against the holding of property in enslaved people: soon after his appointment in 1818, he acquired three plantations and two hundred enslaved persons, which he simply transferred to his wife.²² The amelioration Order-in-Council closed this loophole, and thus had to be supported by an attractive financial package. If the planter-dominated Board of Council was expecting the customary payback in terms of conventional dispensing of master-slave "justice", they were to be deeply disappointed.

Gloster assumed the position of protector and guardian of slaves on 24 June 1824, marking the official launch of amelioration; he remained sole occupant of this office for the entire amelioration period. With the advent of the office of protector, Port of Spain entered into a new era for the enslaved people. The protector enjoyed the full authority of a magistrate. He was also advocate to the enslaved people in matters before the criminal courts, and the final arbiter in industrial and personal disputes between them and their masters or between them and other free persons of whatever status – in short, a virtual Ombudsman for the enslaved population.²³ The combination of responsibilities generated much misgiving among planters.²⁴ However, Gloster was highly respected by the enslaved people, the principal complainants in his "court". For the first time in the history of slavery in the West Indies, enslaved persons were provided with due process for all forms of grievance. Their enthusiasm in seeking redress supplemented the policing of the Slave Trade Abolition Act (1807), but especially the Consolidated Slave Trade Act (1824), which made any illegal importation of enslaved persons into the island an act of piracy, punishable by death.²⁵ This penalty was first proposed by Henry Brougham in presenting his "Slave Trade Felony Bill" in 1811, but compromised for less draconian fines and imprisonment.²⁶ Doubtless, enslaved persons in pursuit of legal remedies also contributed to the evolution of jurisprudence in Trinidad.

Prior to the launch of amelioration, the guardian would personally visit estates and plantations throughout the island to hear the complaints of the enslaved population.²⁷ However, under the amelioration Order-in-Council, the protector remained in Port of Spain, while his assistants

took care of complaints in their respective quarters. Largely because of the changed *modus operandi* under Gloster's administration, town became a relatively safe haven for *petit marrons* or runaways seeking his personal intervention, which was always guaranteed, once the protector deemed the complaint to be of a "serious or aggravated nature".²⁸ This degree of accommodation was alien to other "Crown Colonies". In Demerara, Colonel Young, the protector of slaves, complained that enslaved persons came to him "as a cloak for idleness", and condemned their complaints against their masters as criminal acts.²⁹ In St Lucia, the governor claimed that there was no need for a protector, because the planters "were more like parents than masters".³⁰ Indeed, research has shown that the style of arbitration by protectors in the latter colonies continued to be that of the planter-magistrate or procurador syndic of the pre-amelioration era.

Were enslaved persons more concerned with justice, revenge, or exploiting the quasi-judicial system in order to extract more rights and privileges from their masters? Whatever the balance, the numerous cases adjudicated by the protector of slaves and his assistants during the amelioration period in Trinidad suggest deliberate acts of resistance against the slave system. In this regard, Gloster's administration of amelioration facilitated resistance; but more so, by opting for magisterial arbitration in settling personal and industrial disputes, enslaved persons were demonstrating a remarkable deference to the rule of law, a sharp contradiction to the widespread belief that they were unfit for freedom.

Barring penalties for harbouring runaways, there was nothing in the original amelioration Order-in-Council to restrain enslaved persons from going to town to complain to the protector. Once a complaint was lodged, an enslaved person was automatically under Gloster's protection. Although he dismissed several cases brought against masters for violations of the amelioration laws, he generally refrained from punishing the complainants of "industrial" or labour-related disputes and personal aggravations, even when they confessed to misrepresenting the facts. This inclination opened a window of opportunity for enslaved persons to negotiate the terms of their return, the main demand being that they suffer no loss of occupational status.

The following "industrial" cases exemplify the ways that the enslaved people simply wished to get back at their masters for indignities suffered at their hands. Marianne of Le Bay Estate in Maraval complained that her master, Jean Charles Raymond, struck her with a piece of iron

for refusing to do extra work. Raymond denied the charge, but Marianne's defence was simply that "she thought her master intended to do so". The protector reported only that she was "returned to her duties" without being punished for making a false accusation. In another case, the estate manager of Felicity Hall Plantation in Naparima, Hamilton Pasea, ordered Skirmish to put Maria in the stocks for refusing to work overtime. Skirmish was later flogged because Maria had slipped her hands through the stocks and escaped. Not surprisingly, Skirmish complained to Pasea that he had flogged him unjustly and requested a pass to complain to Peschier, the assistant protector. Not finding that official at home, Skirmish made the journey to Port of Spain to see Gloster. However, when his matter was called, Skirmish told the protector that he was "perfectly satisfied" with Pasea's conduct, and that assistant protector Lacoste had already settled the matter to his satisfaction.³¹

On the other hand, Gloster's treatment of complainants who could not substantiate felonious charges (described in the Plantation Record Book as "capital offences"), including character assassination of their masters, was very different, and more in keeping with the tradition of a pre-amelioration guardian, "when he directed the punishment of a slave for misconduct".³² In any case, it was mainly the Court of Criminal Trial and specially empowered magistrates, as explained below, that ordered the return of enslaved persons to their respective estates for punishment, as a deterrent to other enslaved persons. Nonetheless, Gloster's liberalism definitely facilitated a decade of relentless resistance, as the enslaved people sought to undermine the slave system through juridical means.

Pains and Gains of the Urban Space

According to A.C. Carmichael, proprietress of Laurel Hill Estate, the possession of a pass was a thing of high honour among the enslaved population.³³ However, the historical data suggest a more complex scenario. Enslaved persons received passes or tickets to go to town to transact business on their own behalf or on behalf of their masters. Some masters sent enslaved persons to town to hire themselves out to third parties, vend in the market place, or even auction themselves to new owners. Many of those slaveholders were single women and children who possessed a few enslaved persons, or just one, often representing their only source of legal income. Interestingly, passes were also issued

by masters to allow enslaved persons to complain against them to assistant protectors, and by assistant protectors to allow enslaved persons to go to town to lodge appeals directly with Gloster against their decisions.³⁴ Enslaved persons with passes enjoyed considerable freedom, often in open defiance of their legal owners; such persons often chose when to return, and even negotiated the terms of their return.

Many enslaved persons defied the pass system by simply walking away from their place of enslavement, ostensibly to lodge complaints against their masters or managers, or to visit masters to complain against their managers and overseers, or simply to enjoy "free air" as retaliation against some high-handed treatment meted out to them. Interestingly, the amelioration Order-in-Council did not prescribe how complaints were to reach the ears of the protector or his assistants. Most certainly, it was the enslaved people who resolved that whereas the guardian had come to them prior to the amelioration period, it would be in their interest to go to the protector to seek redress for ill-treatment, whether or not they were given passes. Raphael of Buena Vista estate, St Joseph, considered the failure of the estate management to treat his severely ulcerated feet as a form of ill-treatment. As a consequence, he ran off the estate to see a doctor in town where he remained for three months. The doctor finally gave up because Raphael allegedly spent more time in the rum shop satisfying his alcoholic addiction than showing any concern in applying the prescribed remedies for his ulcers.³⁵

Town was also irresistible to enslaved men and women on secret rendezvous, especially on weekends. The punishment of confinement, collars and stocks, on their masters' authority, was no deterrent to hardened female runaways. Often the resort to stocks provoked more recalcitrance. Persistent offenders were sometimes offered reprieve in exchange for a promise of good behaviour. This worked for some individuals, but not for others, such as Maria del Rosario. For her, good behaviour meant giving up her habit of going to town on Fridays and returning on Mondays without consent. Maria once told her mistress that she could leave the collar on as long as she liked; she did not care.³⁶

The practice of self-auction provided enslaved persons with a greater opportunity to roam round town, or pursue their own independent economic activities there. Self-auction was not unique to Trinidad, as Howard Johnson has shown.³⁷ Unless the enslaved persons desired new owners, they often decided to spend their time doing other things, as in the case of Marie Louise and her daughter, Jeanne, who were sent by Vincent Monier, their master, "to seek new owners". Instead, he met

them in town selling yams and plantains from their provision ground. Although they gave him no satisfactory answer when asked if that was the way they were seeking owners, he left them there and returned home. Mother and daughter did not arrive until nightfall.³⁸

In demonstrating the complex nature of slavery in the greater plantation economies in the Caribbean, several contributors to the volume *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves*, examined the practice of “bargaining” between slaveholders and enslaved persons.³⁹ The following case is an excellent example of that phenomenon in Trinidad. Margaret Brown of Naparima had given Lucy Brown, her enslaved female, a pass to go to Port of Spain as a huckster, “on condition of paying her mistress \$6.00 per month”, but after two years, she had remitted only £16 (about \$80) “late currency”. However, her independence was questioned only when she failed to heed Margaret’s request to buy two pairs of shoes “for the children”. One day Margaret went into town and found Lucy sick and unable to work. In the presence of Gloster, Margaret indicated her willingness to arrange to get Lucy back on the plantation and to “pay every attention to her, that her state & sickness may require”. In spite of the guarantee of the protector’s office, Lucy refused the offer, and declared her intention to “stay in town and endeavour to seek an Owner”. At that point, Thomas Brown, the estate’s proprietor, proposed that 250 “perfect dollars” was a fair price, whereupon, Margaret “lent her a pass” to allow her to remain in town until she succeeded in getting a new master.⁴⁰

On the other hand, some encounters with masters could be terrifying. Such was the case of Charlotte, a “weak and sickly person”, who had gone to town to seek justice against her mistress who “used her too bad”. While in town, a male acquaintance took her to the mistress’ house where the latter kicked her and locked her up overnight in the garret. Next morning her mistress took her to the Cabildo stocks, then to the royal jail. Charlotte’s complaint only reached the protector through the intercession of the Alcalde (a Cabildo official) of the jail.⁴¹ In other cases, plantation owners resident in town provided enslaved persons with legitimate reasons to go there to complain to them. For example, Toby of Exchange Estate, Couva, ran off to town to complain to Dennison, “his owner”, about ill treatment at the hands of the estate manager. Upon Toby’s return to the estate, the manager ordered him to be flogged, although he had a “letter” from his master. With that, he promptly ran off again to town to see the protector of slaves.⁴²

One of the strongest pull factors of town was the market. The Sunday

market established by enslaved persons dates back at least to the seventeenth century, and had become an established institution in all plantation colonies by the turn of the nineteenth century. These markets were important aspects of the political economy of slavery, often providing the larger part of the food requirements and artefacts to all sectors of the colonial population.⁴³ Market vending provided industrious persons with earnings, increasingly utilized to manumit themselves or other relatives, or set aside to invest in improving the quality of their lives in the event of statutory emancipation, which the enslaved population awaited with increasing impatience since the Registration Order-in-Council. The marketplace was also the main social space for sharing news and gossip. Going to market was an alternative to going to church, and thus was the main occasion for putting on one's best dress. After market it was time for dancing and gaming, or rum drinking.⁴⁴

Market day enjoyed legal protection in the 1824 amelioration Order-in-Council; however, opening hours were limited to between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. As in other colonies at that time, the long-term goal was total abolition of this institution, thus removing the most serious rival to attendance at church. The amelioration code established Thursday as a new market day for free persons only, in order to compensate for the contracted Sunday hours, except "occasionally" when masters might permit their enslaved charges to take produce for sale.⁴⁵

Ultimately, one of the major objectives of market vending and self-hiring was manumission. In spite of the relatively small enslaved population in Trinidad, the number of manumissions was high. In the seven-year period between 1 January 1821 and 31 December 1827, a total of 965 persons obtained their freedom, 389 "gratuitously", and 576 paying a grand total of £37,466 1s sterling.⁴⁶ Interestingly, by the latter year, the official record began using the term "Free Blacks" to describe all free non-Whites.⁴⁷ The amelioration code made the protector the watchdog in manumission contracts, whether effected "gratuitously", by private agreement, or by suit commenced by the protector of slaves, as stipulated by law. Under the code, manumission was a right of every enslaved person able and willing to pay the freedom price, and so *petit marronage*, self-hiring, banking and manumission all became intertwined. Before a manumission was effected, the protector had to be notified, and the transaction registered in the Office of Registry within one month of its execution. Whenever enslaved persons and their overlords failed to reach a mutual agreement, the chief judge appointed an "umpire" to resolve the issue.

The data on savings and manumissions reveal that the enslaved people retained their traditional means of financial management, while the Savings Bank, established under the amelioration code, remained underutilized. Total deposits stood at £351 2s (local currency) – approximately \$1,555 – after the first six months of operation. At the end of 1827, the balance stood at \$1,339, but in that year alone \$2,269 had been withdrawn, mainly to purchase freedom, the chief objective of depositors.⁴⁸ In some cases, like that of Azar Brie, every bit (smallest fraction of a dollar) was withdrawn to meet the freedom price, setting the newly emancipated man back financially to ground zero to begin life as a free person.⁴⁹ Although the average price of manumission declined during the amelioration period, it remained relatively high, especially for highly skilled individuals. Whereas the average price of manumission between 1 January 1821 and 24 June 1824 was £70 10s 8d sterling, over the next three and a half years it fell to £62 13s 2d sterling.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the price for skilled and other “prime” labourers was generally above £100 sterling, and very likely to invite arbitration. One such case was that of Sam Samuel, the principal sugar boiler on Laurel Hill estate, whose freedom price was appraised at £250 sterling by his master’s attorney as against £216 13s 4d by the official umpire. However, it was finally determined at £173 6s 8d, a “gentleman’s agreement” between Samuel and his master’s attorney, allegedly in recognition of Samuel’s diligence during the previous harvest.⁵¹

Research has shown that slave-based plantation economies limited opportunities for meaningful employment of recently manumitted persons, whether agriculturists, craftsmen or vendors. While the general inclination of emancipated persons was towards urban migration, the general hostility of plantation colonies to “freedmen” compelled some of them to hire themselves out to estate proprietors, with the principal benefit being the unrestricted right to go to town on their free time. This practice was evident in Trinidad long before amelioration, and applied even to black soldiers who were emancipated upon discharge from the various Black Corps and West India Regiments that had fought in the Napoleonic Wars.⁵² Official hostility also humiliated many *nouveau libres* and frustrated their economic ambitions. An outstanding case of such hostility involved a discharged “American” soldier brought before the chief of police and charged with soliciting employment as a porter without being licensed. Unable to pay his fine, he was jailed for two days.⁵³

Enslaved Persons and the Protector's Office

In accordance with the amelioration code, the protector of slaves or his assistants adjudicated misdemeanours and other minor "domestic" disputes, while serious cases, including "capital" offences, were adjudicated in the criminal courts.⁵⁴ Once enslaved persons reached the protector's office, they were virtually immune from arrest and remained in town while awaiting a hearing.

Enslaved persons sometimes called upon Gloster to settle disputes involving "self-hire", a practice already common in Trinidad by the time of amelioration, but which lent itself to some very interesting legal tangles between enslaved persons and their owners, and between self-hired and their clients under the new dispensation. The following case is typical. Mary Newbold of Port of Spain accused McMartin of reneging on his agreement to pay her two dollars to clean his house. After a thorough investigation, Gloster ordered Mary to complete the job satisfactorily, and also ordered McMartin to pay her the two dollars when the job was completed.⁵⁵

Enslaved persons also visited Gloster to resolve love affairs and trade disputes. An interesting case is that of Anne Marie, a seventeen-year-old "fruit seller" of Port of Spain, who seemed determined to have her way in an apparent love triangle. She accused Samphon Bird, a freeman, of knocking her tray from off her head and breaking her fruit when she refused to heed his several warnings not to go inside of McComie's house. She fled the scene but only to get her mistress, Felicite Bono, to accompany her back to McComie's. It was left to Gloster to deduce that Bird was Anne Marie's husband. The matter was settled amicably when the accused volunteered to pay two dollars in compensation.⁵⁶ Similarly, trade rivalries in the market generated many physical altercations, some of which spilled over into the office of the protector. A case in point was an encounter between enslaved sixteen-year-old Paul, a "seller" of meat in Port of Spain, and Benjamin Baptiste, a freedman and rival meat seller. Paul complained to Gloster that Benjamin had pulled away a female customer from his stall "to go to his table to buy". He also accused Benjamin of cutting him with a knife when he asked the defendant to leave the woman alone. However, all of the several witnesses called testified that Paul was "decidedly wrong", and that the cut was accidental.⁵⁷

Enslaved persons seem to have made an art of absconding from their plantations to lodge complaints with assistant protectors within their

respective quarters. Because of Gloster's unstinting vigilance, these assistants were also prompt in issuing citations to masters even if they were accused of the most trivial offences. However, if an assistant was not trusted, or his judgement deemed unfair, an enslaved person might simply abandon that jurisdiction to visit Gloster in town, even without the requisite pass. William Burnley, Trinidad's biggest planter and slaveholder, complained that a circular despatch of Governor Woodford, dated 21 August 1824, seemed to permit enslaved persons "at their own election" to visit the protector in town. Burnley was a member of the Board of Council and the commandant of Carapichaima, and thus an assistant protector of slaves, in accordance with the amelioration code. Some two years later, Woodford also expressed his disquiet over the unbridled movement of enslaved persons across the country and into town "without passes, contrary to Regulations".⁵⁸

The Board of Council admitted that they faced serious problems in implementing the regulations curbing the mobility of enslaved persons, but voted against enforcing the law rigidly because "free persons might be taken up on suspicion of being runaway Slaves, from their not being in possession of any Document to show that they were free".⁵⁹ This was a far cry from the rigid enforcement of draconian regulations under Picton and Hislop, military governors, when *Alguaciles* and *Patroles* (different categories of police) were ordered to "arrest all Slaves found in the Streets & cart them to Gaol".⁶⁰ At that time, curfew for enslaved persons began at 9:30 p.m., and fifteen minutes later for Free Coloureds. The Council's new ruling was also a marked advance from the insecurity created by the Registration Order-in-Council, which provided for any free black or coloured person to be arrested and held in slavery until that individual's legal status was ascertained by the next "Returns of Slaves".⁶¹

Under Gloster, due process was swift. Invariably, citations were prepared for respondents on the same day and left at the "Town Agents" for delivery but, depending on the home base of enslaved persons, it could be several days or weeks before some masters even knew that these individuals had complained against them.⁶² There were several instances of slaveholders' sudden encounters with their enslaved charges in town. One such case involved two men owned by the assistant protector for Toco. He met them "amusing themselves in Port of Spain under the shade of the trees in the Court Yard".⁶³ The two had "absconded" twelve days before his arrival, but there was little that he could do immediately about their presence in town. As mentioned ear-

lier, until a complaint was heard and judgement delivered, enslaved persons enjoyed the security of the office of the protector. Although it was a serious offence to violate this protection, it was really the vigilance of the enslaved people that ensured such violations were kept to a minimum. As late as 1832, Gloster was compelled to remind an assistant protector that he had "no right to punish his slave after making a complaint until the same shall have been first decided by a magistrate upon the oath of a credible witness that such complaint was false and malicious".⁶⁴ Some cases continued for several days before final judgement was passed. Occasionally, the arrival of enslaved persons in town coincided with the departure of Gloster for some remote estate to mediate a dispute, thus allowing more time to litigants to enjoy "free air" in Port of Spain. Under the reformed 1831 amelioration Order-in-Council, Gloster was compelled to make more frequent mediatory visits to estates, in effect, granting greater liberty to absconders waiting for his return. At the conclusion of each case, the complainant was given a letter to ensure unmolested return to his or her home base. There is no record of supervision of departure, accounting for time taken to return, or of any enslaved persons forcibly carried back by their masters.

Yet, running away remained a serious offence punishable by masters, protectors and the criminal courts, depending on the seriousness of the case. Planters in colonies with a history of slave revolts understood that *marronage* was the handmaiden of revolt. For this reason *marronage*, plotting revolt and actual revolt were subject to the cruellest punishments imposed on enslaved persons, including amputation, gibbeting, drawing and quartering, slow burning to death, and floggings of up to 1,000 lashes with the cart whip.⁶⁵ Thus, during the amelioration period deserters were running a thin line between tolerable deviance and sedition. Indeed, the case of Juan Pedro Bari shows that the Board of Council's repeal of regulations sanctioning arbitrary detention of non-Whites did not really prohibit the discretionary powers of arrest of "vagrants" or suspicious characters. Bari was sentenced to one week on the treadmill in the royal jail because he could not justify his presence on the streets at midnight.⁶⁶

Planters were particularly fidgety in the wake of imperial announcements of continuing reforms, which consistently triggered waves of plots and actual revolts across the Caribbean. The Barbados "Bussa" revolt (1816), the Demerara revolt (1823) and the Jamaica "Baptist War" (1831–1832) bear testimony to the vulnerability of the plantocracy. All of those revolts hinged on mobility, legitimate as well as clandestine.

The data show that Trinidad experienced the ripple effects of these cases of unrest.⁶⁷ During such times masters were particularly vigilant and less given to leniency in dealing with suspicious absenteeism. A typical case in the aftermath of the Baptist War is that of Jacob, officially listed as "carpenter" but employed as a stable hand. He left his St Ann's home base without the consent of his master about nine o'clock in the morning one Sunday "to do something" in town, and returned after 4:00 p.m. Although Sunday was a free day under the amelioration code, certain categories of enslaved persons were exempt, including those charged with "the necessary and unavoidable preservation of the cattle or live-stock upon any plantation."⁶⁸ The following morning Jacob was cornered by several "negros" and flogged with a cat-o'-nine tails on the order of his master. After the beating, he promptly departed again, not to return – his destination, the office of the protector of slaves.⁶⁹

Enslaved Persons and the Criminal Courts

In the criminal courts, the protector, assisted by another advocate, represented enslaved people. The careful investigation of all criminal charges was a new feature in jurisprudence for plantation slave colonies. Although the criminal courts did not offer the same flexibility as the protectorate system to the enslaved people in seeking redress, some interesting outcomes of cases spoke to the influence of respected legal representation of accused persons.

The amelioration Order-in-Council abolished the Cabildo as a court of criminal jurisdiction for enslaved persons. All matters formerly under its purview fell to the Court of Criminal Enquiry and the Court of Criminal Trial, the latter formerly reserved for major crimes. The amelioration code retained the twenty-five-stripes limit that masters could legally inflict on the enslaved people as set out under the 1789 "Royal Cedula for the Protection of Slaves in the Spanish Colonies". However, in order to satisfy the insistence of slaveholders to have their enslaved charges receive "greater punishment and correction", a middling jurisdiction was created by gubernatorial Proclamation of 23 June 1824, which restored summary magisterial authority over enslaved people to the *Alcaldes* (magistrates) of the Cabildo, including the chief of police.⁷⁰ A further concession was made to the slavocracy in the amended amelioration Order-in-Council (1831). Under this new code, the entire membership of the Council of Advice was vested with the same magisterial

authority as the protector of slaves and assistants for adjudicating misdemeanours only.⁷¹

Revolt, mutiny, murder, *grand marronage* and character assassination of a white person were all capital offences, but because of the vigilance of Gloster, many enslaved persons escaped with "Not Guilty" verdicts. Anselme, who was accused of killing Michel, another enslaved person, and Angelle who was charged with assaulting and killing an enslaved female, are two of many such cases of enslaved persons escaping the death penalty.⁷² However, not all of them escaped unscathed. For example, Innocence Romeo was charged with falsely accusing Corryat, his master, of fatally shooting a young enslaved person. The attorney general called for the death penalty, but Romeo was saved by the protector's plea, which led to a reduced sentence of twenty stripes in public and another twenty stripes on Corryat's estate.⁷³ The day for the public whipping was not mentioned, but reference to the marketplace suggests the presence of enslaved persons to whom such brutality was supposed to be a lesson in truthfulness.

Undoubtedly, the intervention of the protector and the attorney appointed by the state to assist him mitigated some sentences by the criminal tribunals. The next two cases highlight outcomes of cases, which in many jurisdictions could end with severe punishments being inflicted on convicted persons. Instead, such outcomes must have given the enslaved people some hope in the justice system that was otherwise heavily loaded against their status and race. In the first example, Plato Anguilla was charged with attempting to wound fellow enslaved person, Richard Pearce, in Brunswick Square (later renamed Woodford Square). Although an *Alguacil* caught the defendant with a razor, the court delivered a "Not guilty" verdict, because the policeman admitted, upon questioning by Anguilla's attorney, that he did not actually see Pearce in the square at the time that he apprehended Anguilla.⁷⁴ The second case is full of the intrigues of a love triangle gone sour. Jaques Grand Guile of "Resource" estate, South Naparima, was charged with the assault and murder of Telemaque, an enslaved person on the same estate. Guile admitted that he found his wife, Anna Catherine, in "an improper situation" in the house of Telemaque. The accused also confessed to hitting Telemaque a couple of blows to the head during an altercation in the deceased's house. However, two doctors testified that they could not be absolutely certain whether Telemaque had died that same night from the beating or from apoplexy, a condition he was known to exhibit. As a consequence, the court ruled that Guile was "Guilty" of assault but

"Not guilty" of murder, and discharged him from custody because, in the opinion of the court, "the prisoner has suffered sufficient punishment by the confinement he had already undergone".⁷⁵

Even for serious violations involving cases of runaways, enslaved persons could hope for favourable judgements. For example, Thomas Barrow was accused of escaping from the royal jail. The attorney general requested a postponement of the trial because his key witness, Patrick Denohoe, overseer of the chain gang, was unavailable. However, the judge ruled that "the trial must proceed; Patrick Denohoe is fined the sum of Five Pounds sterling". Barrow was found "Not Guilty".⁷⁶

The different classes of judgements in the criminal courts give a clear indication that the new spirit of justice was not applicable to cases where *marronage* was seen unequivocally as permanent deprivation of private property. In such cases judgement was harsh and Gloster did nothing to change this aspect of the slave system. In this regard, the case of Carlyle Pompey is instructive. Pompey had spent more than three years as a Maroon in a camp deep in the Naparima forest. After his capture, he was brought to town for trial. The lawyer provided for his defence did not call any witnesses. Gloster himself claimed that he could make no defence, neither was any plea of mitigation entered. Therefore, the court sentenced Pompey to a flogging of 100 stripes in the marketplace and ordered that his leg be fitted with a twelve-pound iron clog for the next four years.⁷⁷ The length of time spent as a Maroon was obviously critical to the severity of the sentence, as the following case involving five male Maroons affirms. They were charged with absconding "for a considerable time" and imprisoned with hard labour varying from one to seven years and given between 80 and 100 stripes.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The cases and situations discussed are by no means exhaustive. For one thing, the amelioration period is blessed with an abundance of documents from various sources. A major shortcoming is the same as with the study of slavery everywhere: the voices of the enslaved people as litigants and witnesses are not as well documented for the towns as for the estates, as seen in the biannual "Returns of Punishments". Furthermore, the amelioration Order-in-Council required only proprietors of estates to maintain a Record Book. Thus, the relations between urban-based enslaved persons and their masters are captioned mainly in the Protector's Reports. Nonetheless, the sample of cases in this study

demonstrates the possibilities for further in-depth research into the history of urban slavery in Trinidad.

On presenting a petition from the Antigua House of Assembly to the House of Lords, Lord Dudley and Ward expressed a commonly held view of pro-slavery advocates that "the condition of the Negro slaves was the best in the West Indies, and better than that of the free Negroes, either in our colonies or elsewhere".⁷⁹ However, this study has shown how much value the enslaved people placed on the inalienable right to freedom, regardless of how paternalistic was the master. The cases also show clearly that the enslaved people were determined to reject the superiority complex of Whites, which subjected them to humiliation while expecting continued courtesy. In his essay on "Maritime Maroons", Neville Hall equated *marronage* with "the most viable alternatives to servitude short of the supreme act of rebellion".⁸⁰ This study has shown that instead of revolting or escaping, the enslaved population in Trinidad worked mainly from within the slave system, deploying their energies and wit to undermine it, by exploiting the limited legal opportunities which the amelioration laws had opened up to them. In this regard, they complemented their brethren in Barbados, Demerara, Jamaica and other plantation colonies in forcing the abolition of the slave system.

NOTES

1. Perhaps the only monograph for the English colonies is Pedro L.V. Welch, *Slave Society in the City: Bridgetown, Barbados 1680-1834* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003). This article in its original title, "Marronage and Urban Slavery in Port of Spain during the Amelioration, 1823-33", was read at the "Text and Testimony Conference: City Life in Caribbean History: Celebrating Bridgetown", 11-13 December 2003, during which Welch's book was launched. For a comparative study of Caribbean towns, see B.W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). For the Danish colonies, see Neville A.T. Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix*, ed. Barry Higman (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1992), 87-109. For Puerto Rico, see Mariano Negrón Portillo, *Urban Slavery in San Juan*, trans. Marianne Negrón (Rio Pedras: University of Puerto Rico, 1999).
2. Anthony de Verteuil, *The Years Before* (Trinidad: Inprint Caribbean, 1981), 286, 290-91.
3. CO 298/6, Minutes of Board of Council, Woodford to Council, 9 November 1826, 100-101.

4. B.W. Higman, quoted in Alvin Thompson, *Unprofitable Servants: Crown Slaves in Berbice, Guyana, 1803–1831* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 131.
5. Hall, *Slave Society*, 99–100.
6. For a discussion on the Danish colonies, see *ibid.*, 88–93.
7. See, for example, Bridget Brereton, *The History of Modern Trinidad, 1783–1962* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 59–61; Elsa Goveia, "Amelioration and Emancipation in the British Caribbean" (seminar paper presented to the History Department, the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1977); Margaret Rouse-Jones, "Freedom Before Emancipation: Manumission in Trinidad, 1808–1830", in James Millette, ed., *Freedom Road* (Cuba: José Martí Publishing House, 1988), 64.
8. *Marronage* was considered by slaveholders as the most extreme form of resistance short of revolt. Under the Spanish *Recopilación*, an enslaved person's absence of four days was as serious as assaulting a white person, and subject to the same 100 lashes, in addition to carrying heavy iron weights. See CO 295/60, Draft Amelioration Order-in-Council, 5 December 1823, Enclosure, 218–19. At the level of personal authority, Thomas Thistlewood, the infamous overseer of Egypt Plantation in western Jamaica, carefully documented hanging several of his enslaved charges, and the imposition of some of the worst forms of degradation for running away, even for a single day (see Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750–86* [Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1999], 30, 72–73, 144).
9. Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 2–3; see also Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 64.
10. Asa G. Hilliard III, *The Maroon within Us: Selected Essays on African American Community Socialization* (Baltimore, Md.: Black Classic Press, 1995), 54. Some scholars have differentiated between running away and *marronage* in relation to the numbers and independence of communities, the thesis being that isolation in the wilderness or "bush" is a fundamental of Maroon communities (see Silvia de Groot et al., "Maroon Communities in the Circum-Caribbean", in Franklin Knight, ed., *General History of the Caribbean*, volume 3, *Slave Societies of the Caribbean* [London: UNESCO Publishing/Macmillan, 1997], 169; Hall, *Slave Society*, 127–28). Thompson explains that for the Whites the term "bush" became a metaphor for barbarism and savagery, that is, the antithesis of "plantation", which was a metaphor for civilization (Alvin O. Thompson, *The Haunting Past: Politics, Economics and Race in Caribbean Life* [Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1997], 77–78; see also Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in the Caribbean Society, 1650–1838* [London: James Currey, 1990], 63).
11. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 387–88.
12. CO 300/38, *Blue Books of Trinidad*, 1824, 87.

13. CO 300/41, *Blue Books of Trinidad*, 1827, 8d.
14. Higman, *Slave Populations*, 386–87.
15. Quoted from unpublished paper by Claudius Fergus, "Las Siete Partidas: Matrix for Philanthropy and Legalised Violence during the Amelioration Experiment in Trinidad" (presented at the Ninth SOLAR Conference, Rio de Janeiro, 22–26 November 2004).
16. See J.R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery 1750–1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). David Brion Davis added the corollary that amelioration was intended to increase the security of the colonies (*The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966], 397).
17. Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the British West Indies, 1624–1713* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), 324.
18. See CO 296/6, Bathurst to Woodford, 20 May 1823, 82d–83; CO 295/60, Woodford to Commandants, 23 August 1823, 16–18.
19. CO 295/105, Gloster to Stanley, 12 January 1834, 162.
20. *Ibid.*; CO 300/37, *Blue Books of Trinidad*, 1823, 20d.
21. CO 295/63, Fuller to Bathurst, 19 August 1824, 201d.
22. *Ibid.*, 199d–200; CO 295/63, Trinidad Duplicate Despatches, Fuller to Woodford, 19 August 1824.
23. CO 318/69, Appendix to "Report of the Commission of Legal Enquiry in the West Indies, 1827", Clauses 6 and 8 of the Order-in-Council, 10 March 1824, 226–27. See CO 296/6, "At the Court at Carlton House", 10 March 1824, for manuscript of the Order-in-Council, 109d–158.
24. CO 295/63, "Memorial of Inhabitants", appended to Fuller to Bathurst, 19 August 1824, 202.
25. British Library (BL), *The Public General Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1824, "Cap. XVII 50 Geo. IV, An Act for the More Effectual Suppression of the African Slave Trade", 31 March 1824, 209–10.
26. BL, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol.19, "Slave Trade Felony Bill, 5 March 1811, cols. 233–40; BL, *The Public General Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1811, "50 Geo IV, Cap. 23, An Act for rendering more effectual an Act . . . intituled, *An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade*", 14 May 1811, 245–50.
27. CO 295/63, Fuller to Bathurst, 19 August 1824, 199d–202.
28. CO 300/19, Protector of Slaves Report, 1824, 19.
29. CO 300/22, Protector of Slaves Report, 1827.
30. *Ibid.*
31. CO 300/29, Protector of Slaves Report, 1832, 153–54.
32. CO 295/63, "Memorial of Inhabitants", appended to Fuller to Bathurst, 19 August 1824, 203.
33. A.C. Carmichael, *Domestic Manners and Social Conditions of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies: Five Years Residence in St Vincent and Trinidad* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 25.
34. CO 300/1, *Port of Spain Gazette*, 7 April 1827.

35. CO 300/28, Protector of Slaves Report, 1832, 134–36d. Gloster had referred this matter to the assistant protector of the quarter for investigation.
36. For promising good behaviour, see the case of Sophie (CO 300/30, Protector of Slaves Report, November 1831, 303–03d). For the case of Maria, see CO 300/33, Protector of Slaves Report, August 1834, 301.
37. Howard Johnson has shown that the practice was deeply entrenched in the Bahamas by late eighteenth century (see his monograph, *The Bahamas from Slavery to Servitude, 1783–1933* [Florida: University Press of Florida, 1996] 23). It should be noted that self-auction was different from self-purchase; the former involved a change of owner while the latter was a process of emancipation.
38. CO 300/28, Protector of Slaves Report, 1832, 170d.
39. Mary Turner, ed., *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas* (London: James Currey, 1995).
40. CO 300/28, Protector of Slaves Report, 1832, 197–99d. Lucy was brought to Trinidad from Dominica seven years before, and sold for the same \$250 that Brown was demanding. The case was another of the many that Gloster referred to the assistant protector of the quarter for investigation.
41. CO 300/33, Protector of Slaves Report, 1833, 256.
42. *Ibid.*, 338.
43. For a sample of the considerable body of literature on this subject, see Sidney Mintz and Douglas Hall, "The Origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System", in Hilary McD. Beckles and Verene A. Shepherd, eds., *Caribbean Slave Society and Economy: A Student Reader* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1991), 327, and see especially 330–31. For a link between the slave markets and the colonial economy, see N.A.T. Hall, "Slaves Use of Their 'Free' Time in the Danish Virgin Islands in the Later Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century", in Beckles and Shepherd, *ibid.*, 337–38.
44. See Hall, "Slaves Use of Their 'Free' Time," 338; Dale W. Tomich, "The Other Face of Slave Labour: Provision Grounds and Internal Marketing in Martinique", in Beckles and Shepherd, *Caribbean Slave Society*, 306.
45. CO 318/69, Appendix to the "Order in Council, 10 March 1824", Clause 9, 227–28. The earliest known suggestion for change from Sunday to Thursday came from Edward Long, a Jamaican planter. See also, Mintz and Hall, "Jamaican Internal Marketing System", 330.
46. CO 300/21, Protector of Slaves Report, 1827, 352.
47. CO 300/41, *Blue Books of Trinidad*, 1827, 86.
48. CO 300/19, Protector of Slaves Report, 1824, 7; CO 300/20, Protector of Slaves Report, 1826, 305; CO 300/21, Protector of Slaves Report, 1827, 352, 479.
49. CO 300/21, Protector of Slaves Report, 1827, 352. In this instance, the cost of manumission was £108 6s 8d sterling.
50. CO 300/21, "Correspondence of Government with Trinidad", in Protector of Slaves Report, 1827, 352.
51. CO 300/24, Protector of Slaves Report, 1829, 222d, 230d–31.

52. For examples in Trinidad, see BL, Add. MS. 36499, Cumberland Papers vol. 9, "Trinidad, 23 May 1802", 97d; CO 300/19, Protector of Slaves Report, 1824, 49.
53. CO 300/2, *Trinidad Guardian*, 29 August 1828.
54. CO 318/69, Appendix to "Report of the Commission of Legal Enquiry". In this sense, protectors were also magistrates (see CO 318/69, Clauses 6 and 7 of the Trinidad Order in Council, 10 March 1824, 226–27; see also *British Parliamentary Papers: Reports from the Commissioners of Inquiry on the Administration of the Civil and Criminal Justice in the West Indies and South American Colonies 1825–1829. Colonies West Indies*, vol. 3 (Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971), 312. For another comment, see CO 295/60, Peschier to Woodford, 14 July 1823, 42d. The Court of Criminal Inquiry was the only court for the trial of enslaved persons. While serious offences were defined in the Trinidad Order as "misdemeanours", planters' reference to "capital crimes" of enslaved persons included breaking open a rum cellar, stealing provisions of other enslaved persons and running away.
55. CO 300/32, Protector of Slaves Report, 1833, 290–93b.
56. CO 300/28, Protector of Slaves Report, 1832, 95b–98.
57. CO 300/33, Protector of Slaves Report, 1833, 360.
58. For Burnley's comment, see CO 298/6, Minutes of Board of Council, 7 October 1824, 105; for Woodford's, see *ibid.*, 9 November 1826, 100–101.
59. *Ibid.*, 101–2.
60. CO 298/1, Minutes of Board of Council, 29 November 1804, 202.
61. A. Meredith John, *The Plantation Slaves of Trinidad, 1783–1816: A Mathematical and Demographic Enquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 233–35.
62. CO 298/6, Minutes of Board of Council, 7 October 1824, 103–4.
63. *Ibid.*, 104–5.
64. CO 300/29, "Protector of Slaves Report", 1832, 39.
65. Werner Zips, *Black Rebels: African-Caribbean Freedom Fighters in Jamaica*, trans. Shelley L. Frisch (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), 100–104.
66. *Port of Spain Gazette*, 3 September 1828.
67. See Trinidad and Tobago National Archives, *Trinidad Duplicate Despatches*, "Court of Criminal Inquiry, 21 November 1823; CO 295/92, Excerpt from the *Gazette Extraordinaire*, 25 March 1832, 241; CO 295/92, Grant to Howick, 26 May 1832, 296–304.
68. CO 318/69, Order-in-Council, 10 March 1824, Clause 10, 228.
69. CO 300/28, Protector of Slaves Report, 1832, 140.
70. CO 318/69, "A Proclamation", 237. *Alcaldes* were men with considerable financial interest in slavery. Their re-incorporation as magistrates under the amelioration law went a long way in allaying planters' fears of malicious persecution by their servile charges.
71. CO 297/1, "Trinidad Ordinances 1832 to 1834", 4–20d.
72. CO 300/24, Protector of Slaves Report, 1828, 2–2b.
73. *Ibid.*

74. Ibid, 2b.
75. CO 300/19, Protector of Slaves Report, 1824, 48–49.
76. Ibid., 49–51.
77. CO300/24, Protector of Slaves Report, 1828, 43.
78. *Port of Spain Gazette*, 2 August 1826.
79. Reported in the *Port of Spain Gazette*, 3 June 1826. Members of Parliament presenting petitions on behalf of colonial agents often avowed that they did not concur with the views of the petitioners.
80. N.A.T. Hall, "Marine Maroons: Grand Marronage from the Danish West Indies", in Verene A. Shepherd and H. McD. Beckles, eds., *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000), 389.

Forging "Caribbeanness"

Cuban Insurgents, Race and Politics in the Turks and Caicos Islands, 1878–1880

PHILIPPE ZACAÏR

Abstract

This work examines the currents of communication and political exchanges that existed between Cuban insurgents and the people of the Turks and Caicos during the Cuban wars of independence. In 1880 for instance, the presence in the archipelago of insurgents headed by well-known Afro-Cuban leader Antonio Maceo greatly strained local politics. The people of the archipelago loudly expressed their support for the Cuban struggle in contradiction with British official policy. This essay shows that far from racial solidarity, Turks Islanders expressed a Caribbean consciousness that was born out of their position at the heart of powerful maritime networks between Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola.

I

On 6 September 1880 Robert Baxter Llewelyn, the commissioner of the Turks and Caicos Islands, was composing an alarming letter about the badly deteriorated political atmosphere of this British Caribbean colony.¹ Llewelyn called the attention of his superior, Anthony Musgrave, the governor of Jamaica, to "the indirect mischief that the presence of Antonio Maceo the Cuban insurgent and his followers are working in this very small settlement".² He warned of rising racial tensions:

Perhaps in few places in the West Indies is there a greater animosity of race than in Turks Islands and the arrival here of a mulatto "general" with "colonels" and "aide de camps" who have freely circulated amongst the coloured people that their mothers and sisters are slaves in Cuba and that they are fighting to release them has aroused a sympathy which is increasing and cannot but do harm toward the order and tranquillity that ordinarily prevails here.³

Further in the letter, the British commissioner added that Cockburn Town, the capital of the archipelago, located on the island of Grand Turk, had become a focal point for Spanish military vessels. Sailing from such neighbouring Cuban ports as Santiago de Cuba, Spanish men-of-war were manoeuvring to prevent Maceo and other exiled Cubans at war with Spain from planning a landing on the shores of their island. Llewelyn closed his dispatch by pointing out that the Turks and Caicos had also metamorphosed into a centre of political agitation and propaganda for the Cuban movement for independence:

The Spanish Gunboat *Jorge Juan* came in on the 17th and left on the 1st ultimo for Cuba. She returned here on the 29th and left on the 2nd instant so that for four days there were two Spanish men of war here. All this is exciting the people who imagine that this rebel Antonio Maceo must be a great hero. Many of the natives here are now wearing Cuban cockades and on Sunday the 2nd there were about half a dozen Cuban flags hoisted on poles, one in a very conspicuous place on the shore just opposite where the two Spanish Gunboats were lying.⁴

The defiant display of Cuban flags among the inhabitants of this British Caribbean colony occurred at a time when the idea of "Caribbeanness" was in the air. The principles of Caribbeanness existed in the thoughts of notable intellectuals, statesmen and military figures of diverse social and racial backgrounds of the Greater Caribbean. José Martí, Cuban journalist and writer, and Ramón Emeterio Betances, Puerto Rican doctor and intellectual, among others, shared the belief that they belonged to a single region, sharing a common history and identity, and aspiring to a common future.⁵ Their sentiment of being a part of more than one territory – to be Cuban, and yet feel Dominican, to be Puerto Rican and yet consider the Dominican Republic or Haiti as home – stands out in their political writings and actions.⁶

This expression of Caribbeanness emanated from two increasingly intertwined political battles. One relates to the struggle to free Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spanish colonialism. From 1868 to 1878, Cubans had fought a devastating but unsuccessful war with the aim of winning their independence.⁷ By 26 August 1879 a new insurrection against Spanish rule, known as the *Guerra Chiquita* or Little War, had broken out in eastern Cuba and had barely ended at the time of the arrival of Maceo and other insurgents in the Turks and Caicos.⁸

The second struggle pertained to the fight against the United States' imperial ambitions in the area. The promoters of Caribbeanness feared that their powerful northern neighbour would replace Spain as a colo-

nial power in Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as undermine the very survival of the independent nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.⁹ The US government, indeed, had repeatedly expressed interest in acquiring Cuba from Spain, as well portions of Haitian or Dominican territories for political, economic and military purposes.¹⁰ In an effort to win these critical political battles, the insurgents mentioned above called for the creation of a confederation of the Greater Caribbean islands. For Betances, who defined himself as "*el antillano*", the promotion of Caribbeanness entailed the transcending of the racial, cultural and linguistic differences existing in the region.

If the words and actions of Betances, Martí and others are relatively well known, we still lack a clear understanding of the scope of this ideal among the populations of the Caribbean at that time.¹¹ Did Caribbean peoples, following Betances's example, see themselves as *antillanos* rather than merely Cubans, Haitians, Puerto Ricans or Jamaicans? Did they share the conviction that the Cuban independence movement was theirs? Did the raising of Cuban flags and the political events that agitated Cockburn Town mean that the Turks Islanders were animated by a Caribbean consciousness? Conversely, was Betances's self-definition an exception? Was the transformation of Grand Turk into an animated centre of Cuban nationalism purely circumstantial and isolated?

On one hand, one can seriously doubt the popular appeal of Caribbeanness in light of the political shortcomings of its promoters. Betances's dream was not achieved after the United States emerged in 1898 as a new imperial metropolis for the peoples of the region. In addition, as historians Salvador Morales and Agustín Sánchez Andrés point out, Haitian and Dominican support for Cuban and Puerto Rican revolutionaries was always ambiguous. The two independent republics alternated between demonstrations of solidarity with their Caribbean neighbours and open collaboration with Spanish colonial representatives.¹² The failure to achieve some meaningful level of Caribbean unity gives credibility to scholars who have challenged the very existence of a "Caribbean consciousness".¹³ For Frank Moya Pons, for instance, "not only is the Caribbean politically, racially, and economically fragmented, but everything seems to indicate that fragmentation will continue due to the lack of a common consciousness of what are, or should be the common interests of all the countries of the area".¹⁴

On the other hand, many recent works on nineteenth-century Caribbean nationalism have suggested that the fragmented nature of

the Caribbean archipelago and its linguistic diversity never constituted impenetrable barriers to inter-island communication and exchange. Julius Scott demonstrates how highly mobile men and women of African descent – free and enslaved, soldiers and sailors – propagated news about the Haitian Revolution throughout the Caribbean basin.¹⁵ Haiti, commonly referred to as the Black Republic, helped individuals of African descent transform their perceptions of race and self.¹⁶ As Mimi Sheller puts it, "For many Afro-Jamaicans, Haiti became a powerful symbol of freedom and African progress, demonstrating the capacity for black self government".¹⁷ According to Sheller, "Afro-Jamaican merchants promoted open trade with their Caribbean neighbour, articulating an emerging Afro-Caribbean identity and sense of distinct interests counter to the European-controlled world economy".¹⁸ Although different in many respects from the Haitian Revolution, the Cuban upheaval that started in 1868 raised similar questions about the relationship between race and nation, and about the nature of freedom and democracy in post-slavery societies.¹⁹

II

Antonio Maceo, a son of free people of colour, had become one of the most prominent figures of the Cuban liberation movement, reaching the top of the insurgent military hierarchy during the Ten Years' War. Since 1878 he had fought relentlessly for the cause of *Cuba Libre* during his periods of exile in Jamaica, New York, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.²⁰ It was on the morning of 4 July 1880 that he and several other insurgents arrived in the roadstead of Cockburn Town. They did so in dire circumstances affecting the Cuban independence movement. Indeed, Spanish victory in the Little War had been practically secured since 1 June.²¹ On 28 June, in a desperate effort to alter the course of events, Maceo embarked from the Dominican Republic with thirty-four men and a cargo of weapons on the American steamer *Santo Domingo* bound for New York. As Maceo confessed in a letter of 1 July to Gregorio Luperón, Dominican political leader and friend, the ultimate goal of the trip was Cuba where he hoped to land shortly.²² Spanish intelligence believed that the insurgents' plan was to switch from the American steamship to an unidentified vessel once they reached the vicinity of Cuba.²³ Spanish pursuit of the *Santo Domingo* began while she was still in Dominican waters. The warship *León*, which had left Puerto Rico on 1 July, nearly missed the *Santo Domingo* in Cap Haitien two

days later and eventually encountered it in the Turks and Caicos late in the afternoon of 4 July.²⁴

The circumstances surrounding the Cubans' landing remain unclear as British Commissioner Llewelyn, Spanish Captain Emilio José Butrón of the *León*, and Maceo offered three different accounts of the events. In a report addressed four days later to the Spanish consul in Kingston, Butrón indicated that he had arrived in the roadstead of Cockburn Town around 6:30 p.m. Without waiting for the proper administrative authorization from the British port authorities, he left the *León* in a small craft in order to board the *Santo Domingo*, which was about to weigh anchor. There, after taking note of Maceo's presence, he held a meeting behind closed doors with both Captain Holmes of the *Santo Domingo* and the US consul who was also onboard. Subsequently, he told the captain about his determination to seize the vessel once it was out of British territorial waters in order to prevent the Cubans from carrying out their plans. Butrón added that Holmes eventually yielded to his demand to disembark Maceo and his group of insurgents in Cockburn Town before continuing his route.²⁵

It was twelve days after the arrival of the Cubans – a gap that might explain some differences with Butrón's testimony – that Llewelyn sent the following report to the governor of Jamaica:

These passengers were reported to the officer of customs here as being on board in transit for New York, and the Agent [of the *Santo Domingo*] assured him that they were not going to be landed here. And as it happened to be Sunday, the matter was not reported to me at all. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, I received a message from the Customs Officer that 35 passengers had been landed from the steamer supposed to be Cuban Insurgents and that a Spanish Man of War was coming in. I immediately sent for the Custom Honour Officer and upon his telling me of the assurance he had received in the morning that the passengers in question would not be landed here, I wrote a letter to the Agent of the Steamer who was on board her and protested against his conduct. . . . The Spanish man of war *León* anchored at about 6 p.m. and the Captain boarded the *Santo Domingo* but I am not cognizant of what took place at the interview he had with captain Holmes of the *Santo Domingo*.²⁶

As for Maceo, he wrote on 30 August to the governor of Jamaica "because of a problem [I] had experienced in Cap Haiti that made [me] lose [my] money, [I] found [myself] in the obligation to disembark on this island on 4 July. It has not been possible for [me] to continue my trip to New York on board of the American steamer *Santo Domingo*, since [I] had not been able to recover the lost sum".²⁷

Maceo's account corresponds closest with that of Llewelyn. How

could Butrón declare that it was after 6:30 p.m. when he boarded the *Santo Domingo* in order to pressure Holmes to disembark the Cubans in Cockburn Town, if, according to Llewelyn's testimony, the Cubans had already disembarked more than an hour earlier (that is, before Butrón's arrival aboard the *León*)? Maceo's account of his inability to pay for the remainder of his trip is confirmed by Llewelyn's observation that the Cubans "[had] kept on paying their passage from port to port as the Steamer stopped" and were now in a difficult position; and again, that "one of their number went . . . over to Porto Plata for provisions and returned with a general collection of all sorts of stores from private individuals. For I believe they have no money and this is a very hard place for even those who have money."²⁸

In view of the difficulties that the Cubans were experiencing, the captain of the *León* could boast that "not only we demonstrated to Maceo that we were watching him closely, but in addition, we forced him to stay against his will in an isolated place where he neither has supporters nor can he risk any ill-advised attempt to reach Cuba".²⁹ Butrón's confidence in the Cuban insurgents' isolation is all the more surprising since Llewelyn's letter of 6 September to the governor of Jamaica described Cockburn Town as a seat of Cuban nationalism. One can legitimately ask whether Maceo and his companions were as isolated as the Spanish account suggests.

It is, of course, well established that the Cuban insurgents could not count on the sympathy of British colonial officials.³⁰ Several hours after the arrival of the *Santo Domingo* and the Spanish warship, Butrón and Llewelyn met in discussion. The discussion led the Spanish officer to believe that the British authorities would cooperate with him. According to Butrón, Llewelyn displayed all signs of good will and promised his help in preventing the Cuban insurgents from boarding any boat en route to Cuba.³¹ Llewelyn himself explained this demonstration of goodwill:

I am doing all in my power to stop any breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act and have inserted a notice in the newspaper publishing the 12th section of the Act which declares the liability of all persons "aiding and abetting" as I wish specially to caution the owners of the small vessels here from running any risks by taking a Charter for a suspicious voyage.³²

In his attempt to warn the Turks Islanders against any collaboration with the Cuban insurgents, Llewelyn made promises that were consistent with official British policy regarding Cuban affairs. The British had been paying close attention to Cuban activities in Jamaica and the

Bahamas, their other colonies situated close to Cuba.³³ One year earlier, just a few weeks before the beginning of the Little War, E.M. Walker, the acting colonial secretary in Jamaica, had briefed the collector general of customs and the inspector general of police about possible Bahamian agency plans:

There being reason to apprehend that a filibustering expedition against Baha is being organized in Jamaica by so called General Calisto [sic] Garcia, and Maceo among others now in the Island. I am desired by the Lieutenant Governor to request you to impress on the Officers of your Department, both in Kingston and at outstations, the necessity of increased vigilance in the constabulary and the Customs Authorities, with a view to preventing any infringement of the "Foreign Enlistment Act", of any illegal exportation of war material.³⁴

Walker transmitted a copy of his instructions to Ricardo Palomino, the Spanish consul in Kingston, and advised him of the British government's desire to render the consul any assistance in its power in the matter. As a further demonstration of goodwill, Walker included a list of the most prominent Bahamian "conspirators" residing on Jamaican soil.³⁵ The diligent response of E.H.B. Hartwell, inspector general of Police, to Walker's request is proof that he followed the orders carefully:

I have the honour to inform you that the results of my enquiries tend to the belief that such an expedition is on foot; and that the Police is now actively engaged in watching certain suspected parties and keeping certain premises under strict "surveillance". According to information I have received, meetings of so-called Generals take place. And the "informer" also states that he knows the hiding places of arms and ammunition, how they are intended to be shipped, as also the proposed point of embarkation of the Filibustering Commanders.³⁶

The captain of the *León* left the roadstead of Cockburn Town on 5 July with great assurance of British cooperation. However, a week later the Spaniards resumed their close surveillance of Maceo and the insurgents when another Spanish man-of-war, the *Blasco de Garay*, anchored in the roadstead of Grand Turk.³⁷ The arrival of this vessel was due, without a doubt, to the threat that Maceo posed to Spanish colonial interests.³⁸

The composition of the group of insurgents must also be taken into consideration. Butrón had carefully noted that they comprised "blacks" and "whites (or passing for whites)".³⁹ The multiracial character of the group challenged Spanish traditional counterinsurgency propaganda. The Spanish military leadership had described the Little War as no more than a war of the races, a war led by Afro-Bahamians to establish a black republic in Baha at the expense of the Whites, following the Haitian

example of 1804.⁴⁰ The overwhelmingly apocalyptic depictions of the Haitian Revolution and its aftermath caused many Cuban Whites to remain loyal to Spain. Had Maceo and his companions been able to reach the shores of Cuba, they could have helped tear down the myth of a racial war, which the partisans of the colonial status quo had propagated skilfully. This certainly constituted a powerful reason for the Spaniards to resume their close surveillance of Maceo. It is no coincidence that Butrón felt compelled to cast doubt on some of the insurgents' racial origins by pointing out that some might be "passing for whites". In addition, although the group included a majority of Cuban exiles, many of them were also from other circum-Caribbean countries such as the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.⁴¹ Their diverse origins challenged Spain's diplomatic efforts to isolate the Cubans from their Caribbean neighbours and prevent them from receiving active support in men, intelligence and financial resources.⁴²

For about a month after the anchorage of the *Blasco de Garay*, there were no perceptible changes in Cockburn Town. On 19 August, however, Commissioner Llewelyn received an angry message from Manuel Dueñas, the captain of the Spanish warship: "Last night . . . the officers of this ship . . . were stoned by 10 or 12 coloured men. This aggression has been repeated this morning. . . . I shall feel myself obliged in spite of myself, to come on shore armed in my own defence and whatever conflict may arise the responsibility must rest with those who provoked it."⁴³ Llewelyn was prompt to react to Dueñas's complaints:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 19th August in which you informed me that some of the black people had pelted with stones the officers and crew of your boat when on shore here. Such conduct has been universally and indignantly condemned by all the respectable inhabitants of these islands who know how quietly and properly the crew of your vessel has behaved during your stay at this island. On my own part I can only express my extreme regret that such an outrage should have occurred and state that every step has been taken by me to punish the offenders, two are now in prison and three more are to be tried on Monday next.⁴⁴

By claiming that he was backed by "all the respectable inhabitants" of the Turks and Caicos, Llewelyn originally presented the attack as an isolated and meaningless incident caused by a few individuals only identified as "black". The number of the protagonists, however, as well as the repetition of the attack, points to the existence of a much deeper crisis. What were the unspoken causes of this outburst of tension and anti-Spanish violence?

Llewelyn's letter of 6 September to Musgrave shows that he considered the violence directed at the Spanish mariners far from isolated and meaningless. In that letter he vigorously attacked Maceo and the mixed group of Cuban and other Caribbean insurgents as he blamed them for raising racial tensions and contributing to the outburst of violence. From the onset of the letter, Llewelyn attempted to tear into pieces their very political status. For him, "they [were] not 'Political Refugees' but savage pirates and murderers".⁴⁵ He cast a doubt on the authenticity of Maceo's military title by insinuating that it was not compatible with that of a person of colour. In his view, the prestige associated with the title pandered to the political and social pretensions of the local population dangerously. More importantly, he denounced the fact that the insurgents promoted amongst the Turks Islanders their fight against slavery in Cuba. The commissioner's words suggest that the newcomers had not remained isolated from the inhabitants of Cockburn Town. Their active promotion of their cause undermined the efforts of Spain and Great Britain to prevent cooperation between their respective colonial subjects. In Llewelyn's opinion, the Turks Islanders' outburst of violence was the logical outcome of the insurgents' revolt against the colonial order:

[T]his feeling which culminated in the pelting of the Spanish Officers with stones . . . has been greatly increased because the officers of the Spanish Man of War *Blasco de Garay* . . . gave a ball on board to which nearly all the white population went and the coloured people were excluded. . . . But I am sorry to say that in the present line of conduct that they are adopting I have reason to believe the Cubans are exciting and inciting them, and Maceo is not fighting here for "Cuba Libre" but the blacks versus the whites.⁴⁶

It was the colonial order, represented by the exclusion of the coloured population from the ball given on board the *Blasco de Garay*, that the British commissioner sought to preserve by praising the Spanish crew's "proper behavior", and claiming the support of "all the respectable" – undoubtedly white – inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos. It was again the colonial order that Llewelyn sought to safeguard by highlighting Maceo's alleged anti-white agenda. For him, Maceo's acquaintance with C.G. Moore, a Turks Islander, was a proof of this agenda:

I sent for Antonio Maceo who came with his Aide de Camp and Mr C.G. Moore, a light coloured native of these islands in fairly prosperous circumstances, who is Haytian Consul and known by general repute to have often expressed his hatred of the white man in most violent language to act as Interpreter, as unfor-

tunately Maceo cannot speak French and I am not competent to carry on a conversation in Spanish. I append a "note" of the conversation that took place at the interview through Mr Moore in whose faithful interpretation I have no confidence but I give it as it happened. The arrogant insolent manner of Maceo and his "Aide de Camp" was however indisguiseable [*sic*].⁴⁷

It was not by mistake that the British commissioner specified that Moore was the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Haiti in the Turks and Caicos. Llewelyn implicitly evoked the traditional western depictions of Haiti, including violence, chaos and racial warfare, to prove that Maceo's association with Moore was potentially dangerous. In Llewelyn's view, this association was all the more dangerous since Moore worked as the editor of a local newspaper. On 27 August Maceo had indeed asked Moore to inform the inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos about his fight for "the emancipation of a people and the improvement of the blacks who live in Cuba in the most cruel servitude".⁴⁸ Maceo's use of the press to diffuse his message was another challenge to the commissioner's attempt to maintain a barrier of ignorance between the insurgents and the inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos.

However, Llewelyn's portrayal of the Turks Islanders' racial solidarity with Maceo and their shared desire to promote the interests of Blacks in their respective territories is highly problematic. Historians have established beyond a doubt that those who accused Maceo of attempting to promote a war of the races and create a black republic in Cuba completely misrepresented his true agenda.⁴⁹ In fact, the issue of race is absent from Maceo's own account of the events. The Afro-Cuban leader simply stated that "the commissioner must have known that the scandal that happened on the night of August 18th between the inhabitants of the island and the crew of the Spanish steamship was provoked by the fact that an official of this steamship beat some children in the street, and that none of my companions were directly or indirectly part of this scandal".⁵⁰ By insisting on the issue of race, the British commissioner was only repeating Spanish propaganda that aimed to undermine the Cuban independence movement. It is striking that the fifty or so Turks Islanders who addressed a letter of support to Maceo did not make a single reference to the issue of race in it:

We the undersigned inhabitants of the Turks Islands desire to express to you our most heartfelt sympathy with yourself and your colleagues in the position in which you now find yourselves in our midst, and to accord to you, even at this late moment, a most hearty welcome upon our shores. The right of asylum to

political refugees upon British soil has ever been held sacred, and whilst as dutiful subjects of our most Gracious Sovereign, we are bound to a passive obedience to those who are set in authority over us, yet, we cannot but express to you feelings of surprise and indignation that the constant presence of a Spanish ship of War in our roadstead, virtually blockading the insignificant port of Grand Turk ever since your arrival here, should be tolerated by the authorities. . . . In endeavoring to free your country from the galling yoke of the oppressor, you are engaged in a great and noble cause, in which you have not only our sympathies, but our prayers as well; and we now address you in the spirit of the British Law, which proclaims even to the defenceless and proscribed exile, the moment he sets foot upon British soil, that the ground upon which he treads is holy, and consecrated by the sacred genius of Universal Emancipation.⁵¹

It was not their racial identity with the insurgents but rather the nobility and legitimacy of Maceo's fight against slavery and for a free Cuban nation that drew their praise and support. Thus, they contradicted Llewelyn's interpretation of the conflict and proved that the British commissioner profoundly ignored or misunderstood their political aspirations.

The absence of any references to race in the Turks Islanders' address to Maceo may not be surprising. In his study of race relations in the Bahamian archipelago, with which the Turks and Caicos was politically joined from 1776 to 1848, Whittington Johnson argued that "the Bahamas may well have been among the leaders in race relations in the British West Indies colonies. Although it was not the first to extend voting privileges to free black and coloured males, it was the only colony to implement all the manumission requirements. . . . Furthermore, slaves were treated less cruelly in the Bahamas than in other British West Indies colonies, and the Bahamas had less racial strife than those colonies."⁵² We have not found any indications that Turks Islanders distinguished themselves from their Bahamian counterparts on the issue of race relations even after their political separation. Llewelyn's statement in his letter of 6 September that "perhaps in few places in the West Indies is there a greater animosity of race than in Turks Islands" remains unproved.

Therefore, the most critical reasons for the mobilization of the inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos in favour of the Cubans' cause must be found outside of the issue of race. Despite Llewelyn's strong belief in the racial factor, in his own letter of 6 September one can find another possible reason for the raising of Cuban flags in Cockburn Town. He had noted that "There are many of the natives here who have been in San Domingo and were there when the Spaniards were driven from thence

a few years ago, during which struggle some Turks Islanders were killed and there is a general and inveterate hatred of the Spaniards amongst the coloured people here."⁵³ His reference to the presence of Turks Islanders in the Dominican Republic suggests the possible influence of geography, maritime links and inter-island migration on the political *rapprochement* between the Turks Islanders, the Cubans and their other Caribbean companions.

The Turks and Caicos lie 145 kilometres north of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Their strategic location at the entrance of the Windward Passage between Haiti and Eastern Cuba had long attracted the interest of colonial powers.⁵⁴ In the nineteenth century, the Turks and Caicos had become an essential calling station for ships travelling between Great Britain and Jamaica, and also between the Greater Caribbean and the United States.⁵⁵ This was not without effect on the Turks and Caicos Islanders' perception of themselves and their relations with their neighbours. Indeed, historian Michael Craton indicates that the Turks Islanders had developed a feeling of closeness with their Caribbean neighbours to the south, rather than to the Bahamas to which they belong more closely geographically: "The inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos Islands can be forgiven their sentiment that the only Bahamians they ever saw were tax-collectors. The mail boat from Nassau sailed as far as Long Cay once a month, but only went on to Grand Turk four times a year. Boats going between England and Jamaica, however, often stopped there and it was natural that the Islanders should feel more akin to Kingston than to Nassau."⁵⁶

The Turks Islanders' sense of closeness to other Caribbean territories may have been heightened by the fact that they often sailed back and forth between their archipelago and Hispaniola. Theodoor de Booy, an early twentieth-century geographer, noted that "There are two means by which the Turks Islands laborer can make a living. In the first place, he can hire himself out as a stevedore upon the ships of the Clyde Steamship Company which call at the island in order to procure men for the loading and discharging of freight in Dominican ports. Failing this, the Turks Islander finds work in the various operations of salt making."⁵⁷ Mobility was thus as an integral part of the life of the inhabitants of the archipelago. An important community of Turks Islanders was established for instance in Puerto Plata, the major port-city of northern Dominican Republic.⁵⁸ In fact, the Turks and Caicos maintained strong commercial and political exchanges with that city.⁵⁹ Dominicans not only bought salt in the Turks and Caicos but were also used to sail-

ing there to buy small fishing boats from famous local carpenters, or temporarily to escape political persecution.⁶⁰

Interestingly, it was also in Puerto Plata that Turks Islanders came into contact with numerous Cuban exiles. After the Ten Years' War, Cubans had taken refuge in that city and had expanded to Santiago de Los Caballeros and Santo Domingo, two other major Dominican towns.⁶¹ As a result of this migration, Puerto Plata had become, according to Enrique Loynaz del Castillo, a Cuban resident, a bustling town.⁶² In fact, Cuban immigrants built the foundations of the modern Dominican sugar industry and in doing so contributed to Dominican economic expansion. They established the first steam-powered sugar mills in the district of Puerto Plata in 1874.⁶³ They helped to make the island a centre of attraction for other Caribbean immigrant workers, including Turks Islanders. Interestingly, also, Puerto Plata had become a den of Cuban nationalist activism with the publication of newspapers and the foundation of patriotic societies dedicated to the Cuban struggle for independence.⁶⁴ Last but not least, Puerto Plata had been transformed into a meeting place for Cuban, Puerto Rican and Dominican promoters of Caribbeanness.⁶⁵ It is indeed in that city that Eugenio María de Hostos, Puerto Rican patriot, intellectual and advocate of Caribbeanness, established residence in 1875 and met with Betances and Luperón, who shared the same ideal about the future of the Caribbean.⁶⁶

If one applies Scott's observations on the decisive role that sailors and highly mobile lower-class Afro-Caribbean individuals played in the dissemination of news about the Haitian revolution around 1804, it is arguable that the Turks Islanders were well versed in the critical political battles that agitated the Caribbean during their time.⁶⁷ Their mobility and position at the centre of major shipping networks make it unthinkable that the inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos would have been ignorant of the course of the Cuban independence struggle. Their frequent contacts with Cuban exiles in the Dominican Republic make it probable that Turks Islanders had developed some identification with those Cubans who struggled for the abolition of slavery, and for racial and social justice. Their numerous exchanges with Puerto Plata suggest that they might have become imbued with the spirit of inter-Caribbean solidarity that thrived in that Dominican city. Thus, when Captain Butrón of the *León* rejoiced that he had forced Maceo to land in an "isolated place" where he lacked "sympathizers", he was making a serious error of judgement.⁶⁸ The supposed isolation of the Turks and Caicos was far from reality.

The only feeling of isolation about which one can be sure was that of Llewelyn. For him, that isolation was in large measure due to the lack of troops at hand to deal with any emergency that might threaten the security of the islands: "In a bigger colony this band of 30 men would not be noticeable and the local police could manage them but here with three policemen we are defenceless and knowing as I do the characters of the ringleaders and the isolated position in which I am, I will trust this to be considered by the Governor as a reasonable cause for my anxiety and desire to get rid of them out of the settlement."⁶⁹

Llewelyn's argument that the events would not have happened in a larger jurisdiction may be drawn from the fact that British police reports in Jamaica ignored political exchanges between Afro-Jamaicans and Cubans. Nonetheless, since Cubans used Jamaica as a base of operations for their struggle against Spain, their obligation to secrecy makes it hard to imagine that they would have acted without the passive complicity of the local population.⁷⁰ Potential political links between Cubans and Jamaicans were only vaguely evoked in an 1886 report from the governor of Jamaica stating that "No doubt there are a considerable number of Cubans here who entertain bitter feelings against Spanish rule in their island, and who would gladly aid by money and personal efforts in any endeavour to injure that rule. I have also reason to believe that there are Jamaicans who entirely sympathise with the Cubans."⁷¹ However, no conclusive evidence seems to exist that the "sympathy" to which that governor referred led to events in any other British Caribbean colony similar to those that transpired in Cockburn Town. At the same time we should note that the events that agitated Cockburn Town were not entirely new to the area. The British commissioner may have ignored the fact that similar anti-Spanish demonstrations had erupted on two occasions, in 1877 and in 1879, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.⁷² What seems to distinguish the events in the Turks and Caicos Islands from those in Haiti is that the local population of those British islands apparently acted without any direct involvement of Cuban exiles.

In September 1880, Maceo composed a letter to the inhabitants of the Turks Islands thanking them for "the determination that [they] had shown so that free Cuban blacks and whites who suffer from the horrors of colonial tyranny could liberate three hundred thousand black slaves who live in the most cruel oppression".⁷³ These words leave no doubt that Maceo and the Cuban insurgents profoundly appreciated the active solidarity of the inhabitants of the Turks Islands. Even if the Turks Islanders did not openly say that they considered themselves as *antil-*

lanos, their political mobilization on behalf of the Cuban insurgents was consistent with that of the promoters of Caribbeanness. Adhering to the conviction that the Cuban struggle was also theirs, they demonstrated that they were animated by a Caribbean consciousness.

NOTES

1. National Archives, London, Colonial Office (hereafter CO), 301/64, Turks Islands, Original Correspondence, annex to dispatch no. 269, Robert B. Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary Anthony Musgrave, Grand Turk, 6 September 1880.
2. Ibid. Geographically, the Turks and Caicos belong to the Bahamian archipelago. They shared their history with that of the Bahamas from 1776 until 1848, after which they became a separate colony. In 1873, however, they were placed under the tutelage of Jamaica. Scholarly historical works on the Turks and Caicos proper are rare. Among the few are Paul G. Boulton, compiler, *Turks and Caicos Islands*, World Bibliographical Series, vol. 137 (Oxford, Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1991); Theodoor de Booy, "The Turks and Caicos Islands, British West Indies", *Geographical Review* 6, no. 1 (1918): 37–51. More information about the Turks and Caicos can be found in general histories of the Bahamas, for instance, Michael Craton, *A History of the Bahamas* (Third edition. Waterloo, Canada: San Salvador Press, 1986); Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, 2 vols. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).
3. CO 301/64, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 6 September 1880.
4. Ibid.
5. Paul Estrade, "Remarques sur le caractère Tardif et avancé de la prise de conscience nationale dans les Antilles espagnoles", *Caravelle* 38 (1982): 89–117; Thomas Mathews, "The Project for a Confederation of the Greater Antilles", *Historia* 5, no. 2 (1955): 183–231; Carlos Rama, *La Idea de la federación antillana en los independentistas Puertorriqueños del siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Librería Internacional, 1971); Hernán Venegas Delgado, "La confederación antillana: realidad y esperanza", *Caribbean Studies* 27, no. 1–2 (1994): 118–27; Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 264–307; Philippe Zacaïr, "Haiti on His Mind: Antonio Maceo and Caribbeanness", *Caribbean Studies* 33, no. 1 (2005): 47–78.
6. José Martí, *The Americas of José Martí: Selected Writings of José Martí* (New York: Noonday Press, 1953), 163; Luis Bonafoux, *Betances* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1970), 114–15.
7. Major primary and secondary sources on the Ten Years' War include Enrique Collazo, *Desde Yara Hasta el Zanjón* (Second edition. La Habana: Tipografía de La Lucha, 1893); Fernando Figueredo Socarrás, *La Revolución*

- de Yara, 1868–1878: Conferencias* (La Habana: Ediciones Huracán, 1968); Antonio Pirala, *Anales de la guerra de Cuba* (Madrid: F. González Rojas, 1895–1898); Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, *Guerra de los diez años* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1972).
8. María del Carmen Barcia, et al. *Historia de Cuba: Las Luchas por la independencia nacional y las transformaciones estructurales, 1868–1878* (La Habana: Editora Política, 1996), 322–36.
 9. Bonafoux, *Betances*, 114–15.
 10. Brenda Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902–1915* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).
 11. On Ramón Emeterio Betances, see Félix Ojeda Reyes, *El desterrado de París: biografía del doctor Ramón Emeterio Betances, 1827–1898* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Puerto, 2001); Paul Estrade, *Solidaridad con Cuba Libre, 1895–1898: la impresionante labor del Dr Betances en París* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2001). For further information on José Martí, see Paul Estrade, *José M. Tj-2e w 53895–5) ou(El foa ifor-) -Tf17.61*.

20. For the most detailed account, although dated, of Maceo's life, see José Luciano Franco Ferrán, *Antonio Maceo: Apuntes para una historia de su vida* (3 vols., 1951; reprint and revised. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1989). Other works of interest, although drawing largely upon Franco, are Philip Foner, *Antonio Maceo: The "Bronze Titan" of Cuba's Struggle for Independence* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1977).
21. Guillermo Moncada and Maceo's brother José, the leading Afro-Cuban protagonists of the short-lived insurrection, had surrendered and subsequently been deported to Spanish Morocco (see Foner, *Antonio Maceo*, 102).
22. Antonio Maceo to Gregorio Luperón, Puerto Plata, 1 July 1880, in Antonio Maceo, *Papeles de Maceo* (La Habana: Imp. El Siglo XX, 1948), 1:19.
23. Francisco de Serra, Spanish consul in Santo Domingo, to the governor of Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, 28 June 1880, in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, *Maceo en Santo Domingo* (Second edition. Barcelona: Gráficas M. Pareja, 1978), 325.
24. Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (hereafter MAE), Correspondencia Consulados (hereafter CC), H 1928, Kingston, Jamaica, Emilio José Butrón, Comandancia del Vapor *León*, to Spanish consul in Kingston, Jamaica, Kingston, 8 July 1880, annex to political dispatch no.13.
25. Butrón indicated that Captain Holmes received him cordially and made his decision with the full consent of the American consul. Butrón added that Captain Holmes declared that he had voluntarily delayed his departure from Grand Turk in order to allow the *León* to reach him there. Captain Holmes's objective was to avoid having the Spanish military search the *Santo Domingo* on the open sea, as the Spaniards used to do since the beginning of the Ten Years' War (see MAE CC, Comandancia del Vapor *León*, 8 July 1880).
26. CO 301/64, Turks Islands, original correspondence, dispatch no. 67, annex to dispatch no. 194, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 16 July 1880.
27. Antonio Maceo to Anthony Musgrave, Turks Islands, 30 August 1880, in Maceo, *Papeles*, 1:22.
28. CO 301/64, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 16 July 1880. This is also the version that the Dominican consul in the Turks and Caicos presented. For full text see Demorizi, *Maceo en Santo Domingo*, 121.
29. MAE CC, Comandancia del Vapor *León*, 8 July 1880.
30. For further information on the hostility of Great Britain and France to Cuban independence, see Gérard Aubourg, "Étude sociologique du dossier français sur la guerre hispano-cubaine: la guerre du peuple cubain, la position des Etats-Unis et de la France" (PhD diss., Université de Paris 1, 1974).
31. MAE CC, Comandancia del Vapor *León*, 8 July 1880.
32. CO 301/64, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 16 July 1880.
33. For further information on the impact of the Cuban upheaval on Jamaica, see Wolf, "Caribbean People of Color", 362-421.

34. CO 694/18, "Register of secret correspondence, West Indian Department", no. 50, E.M. Walker to Collector General of Custom and the Inspector General of Police, Kingston, 15 August 1879.
35. *Ibid.*, E.M. Walker to Don Ricardo Palomino, Kingston, 16 August 1879.
36. *Ibid.*, E.H.B. Hartwell to the Lieutenant Governor, Kingston, 22 August 1879.
37. CO 301/64, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 16 July 1880.
38. On 6 July Maceo escaped an assassination attempt by one of his men, Colombian native José Ramón Verdespino. Verdespino apparently was spying on Maceo for the benefit of the Spaniards (see Napoleón Tomás Lander to Prospero María Barrios, Caracas, 28 October 1897, in Maceo, *Papeles*, 2:280).
39. MAE CC, Comandancia del Vapor *León*, 8 July 1880.
40. See Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, 70–89.
41. Napoleón Tomás Lander to Prospero María Barrios, Caracas, 28 October 1897, in Maceo, *Papeles*, 2:278–85.
42. See Morales and Sánchez Andrés, *Diplomacias*, 50–72.
43. CO 301/64, annex to dispatch no. 269, Dueñas to Llewelyn, Grand Turk, 19 August 1880.
44. *Ibid.*, Llewelyn to Dueñas, Grand Turk, 21 August 1880.
45. *Ibid.*
46. CO 301/64, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 6 September 1880.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Maceo to C.G. Moore, Grand Turk, 27 August 1880, in Maceo, *Papeles*, 1:20.
49. See, for example, Eduardo Torres Cuevas, *Antonio Maceo: Las ideas que sostienen el Arma* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1995), 112–15.
50. Maceo to Musgrave, 30 August 1880, in Maceo, *Papeles*, 1:22.
51. Inhabitants of the Turks and Caicos to Maceo, in Maceo, *Papeles*, 1:282–83.
52. Whittington B. Johnson, *Race Relations in the Bahamas, 1874–1834: The Nonviolent Transformation from a Slave to a Free Society* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 166.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Craton, *History of the Bahamas*, 130.
55. Craton and Saunders, *Islanders*, 74–75.
56. Craton, *History of the Bahamas*, 209.
57. Booy, "The Turks and Caicos Islands", 42.
58. José Augusto Puiz Ortiz, *Emigración de libertos norteamericanos a Puerto Plata en la primera mitad del siglo XIX – La Iglesia Metodista Wesleyana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 1978), 10. We lack the exact population figures for Turks Islanders in Puerto Plata.
59. Rufino Martínez, *Puerto Plata* (Santo Domingo: Publicaciones de la Universidad CETEC, 1983), 58.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Official data for 1882 reveal that 301 Cubans resided in Puerto Plata. They

- formed the majority of the foreigners in the city. For more information on Cuban immigration to the Dominican Republic, see José Del Castillo, "Las emigraciones y su aporte a la cultura dominicana (finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX)", *Eme Emé Estudios Dominicanos* 8, no. 45 (1979): 15; Evaristo Herres Hernández y Javier López Muñoz, "La inmigración cubana y su influencia en Santiago 1868-1908", *Eme Emé Estudios Dominicanos* 5, no. 29 (1977): 55-104.
62. Enrique Loynaz del Castillo, *Memorias de la Guerra* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1989), 15; see also Del Castillo, "Las Emigraciones", 30-31.
 63. Juan Sánchez, *La caña en Santo Domingo* (1893; Santo Domingo: Ediciones de Taller, 1972), 30.
 64. Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, *Noticias de Puerto Plata* (Santo Domingo: Editora Educativa Dominicana, C. por A., 1975), 138-39.
 65. *Ibid.*, 139-40, 148-49.
 66. *Ibid.*, 32-51.
 67. Scott, "The Common Winds".
 68. MAE CC, Comandancia del Vapor *León*, 8 July 1880.
 69. CO 301/64, Llewelyn to Colonial Secretary, Grand Turk, 16 July 1880.
 70. Wolf, "Caribbean People of Color", 389-91.
 71. Governor Sir H. Norman to Earl Granville, King's House, Jamaica, 19 July 1886, in National Archives, London, Foreign Office, 420/67, dispatch no. 33, enclosure 3, "Further correspondence respecting the insurrectionary movement in Cuba".
 72. See Morales Pérez and Sánchez Andrés, *Diplomacias*, 54; Franco Ferrán, *Antonio Maceo*, 1:196.
 73. Maceo to the inhabitants of the Turks Islands, Turks Islands, September 1880, in Maceo, *Ideología Política: Cartas y Otros Documentos* (La Habana: Edición nacional del centenario de su nacimiento, 1950), 1:182.

Book Reviews

Douglas Hay and Paul Craven, eds., *Masters, Servants and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955*, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, x + 592 pp.

This is a massive book, densely erudite, and very wide in its geographical and chronological range; its bibliography is over thirty pages and each of the sixteen essays is based on extensive archival research. It comes out of the York Master and Servant Project, based at York University in Toronto and run by the editors; they have compiled a huge database of British and colonial Master and Servant statutes, from over a hundred separate jurisdictions between 1562 and 1955. Their project aims at understanding this vast body of legislation and its enforcement, and its impact on Britain and the empire.

In their lengthy introduction, the editors provide a magisterial survey of the evolution of this great body of Master and Servant law from its fourteenth-century English antecedents. This law was based on three premises: employment relations were governed by private agreements between an employer who had the right to command, and an employee who had to obey; these agreements should be enforced by summary jurisdiction of magistrates; and the uncooperative worker should be punished, not by civil damages for breach of contract, but by forfeit of wages, fines, forced labour, jail or whipping. This was a "distinctive conjuncture of civil contract, informal justice, and effective criminalization of the worker's breach", enacted in thousands of laws and enforced around the world, "in a web of closely related language, doctrine, and social practice".

While this book is not about slavery, the editors note that Master

and Servant law in many colonies had close links with slavery, and its abolition and aftermath. The line between freedom and coercion was never clear-cut. "Free" persons could be jailed and even whipped for breach of employment contract, up to 1875 in Britain, far longer in many colonies; enslaved persons, as Mary Turner especially has shown, might bargain collectively, stage work stoppages, earn wages and hold property, despite the ultimate dependence on brutal coercion. The legislation surrounding the Caribbean "apprenticeship" of 1834–1838 was very influential on post-1838 laws, and, of course, indentured immigrant workers all over the empire were enmeshed in a particularly rigid set of employment rules backed by penal sanctions. Master and Servant law regimes combined "a residual attachment to the subordination of bound labour with an emergent conception of the wage worker as party to a personal, contractual relationship of limited duration".

This body of law was essentially statute law, but it was enforced by lay justices, less often by legally trained salaried magistrates, in the "low" courts. Cases of this nature very rarely reached the high courts. This meant that the rulings were generally unrecorded, providing few records for legal or labour historians. At the same time it was cheaply and simply administered law, especially when, as was so often the case at home as well as in the empire, the magistrates were themselves employers. "Master and Servant law was low law", the editors conclude, "a marvel of efficiency, coercion, and finality".

The editors' joint introduction is supplemented by Douglas Hay's chapter on the development and enforcement of Master and Servant law in Britain from the Statute of Artificers (1562), the great Elizabethan code which was the real foundation of this body of enactments, to 1875. This erudite essay should be of considerable interest to historians of the Caribbean, especially those working on the nineteenth century. Hay shows that after 1800, Master and Servant proceedings in the magistrates' courts became more and more "criminalized": workers charged with breach of contract were increasingly viewed and punished as criminals, jail sentences became longer and harder (hard labour, including the treadmill and crank), expanding police forces were better able to make arrests, charged workers were referred to in court as "the prisoner". This more penal regime of Master and Servant law was at its height in the 1830s, just the time of the transition from slavery to apprenticeship to freedom in the Caribbean. Attacks on the penal aspects of the law began to be mounted in the 1840s, often by lawyers acting on behalf of trades unions, but it was not until 1875 that employ-

ment offences disappeared from the criminal returns. Thus five hundred years of penal employment law ended in Britain, while it continued to flourish well into the mid-twentieth century in many colonies.

An excellent chapter by Mandy Banton probes the Colonial Office's record of overview (or its lack) of Master and Servant law made by the colonies between 1820 and 1955. Except for the 1820s to 1840s, the era of activist and antislavery officials like James Stephen, the Colonial Office was generally complacent and accepting of colonial legislation. The long tradition of trust in the "man on the spot" (that is, the governor), the lack of a "reliable institutional memory" which would have better informed officials of earlier decisions and debates, the habit of the geographical departments of working largely in isolation with little interaction – all made for a passive approach, interrupted only sporadically by bursts of concern from a few individuals. After 1920 pressures from the International Labour Organisation, and from Labour politicians and trade unionists at home, did produce more sustained and persistent interest in reforming the colonial Master and Servant laws, especially abolishing the penal sanctions, but even in this period long delays and subterfuges were the norm.

Only three chapters deal with the Caribbean specifically. In chapter 8, Mary Turner considers the restructuring of the labour laws of the British colonies between 1823 and 1838, the period of the transition from "amelioration" to "apprenticeship" to "freedom". She provides a full yet succinct analysis of the crucial pieces of legislation – the Orders-in-Council of 1824 and 1831, the imperial Abolition Act of 1833, and various colonial laws which effected the transition to apprenticeship. She makes the important point that, in many respects, the apprenticeship legislation was harsher than the law and, especially, the custom that had prevailed in the last decades of slavery. Collective bargaining, negotiations over terms, hours, allowances and wages, even work stoppages, had become tolerated practice in the 1820s and early 1830s (though always involving the risk of corporal punishment for the leaders). But the draft Order-in-Council for British Guiana (October 1833), circulated as a model for all the crown colonies, essentially criminalized collective bargaining. "Combining", disputing terms, and work stoppages could all be punished by six months' imprisonment and thirty-nine lashes (admittedly only on the order of a magistrate). And the apprenticeship legislation became a model which set standards for Master and Servant law enacted after August 1838 to deal with "free" workers (or, in the case of Antigua, after August 1834). It also influenced the terms for inden-

tured immigrant labour. "The employers reinvented 'apprenticeship' and made it renewable", Turner concludes.

In a short but interesting chapter, Juanita de Barros discusses, not indentured labour in British Guiana, but Master and Servant law as it related to workers in Georgetown and in the interior (gold miners and timber cutters). In the city, stevedores (notoriously "troublesome" workers) were the main targets of this body of law, but after about 1890 Master and Servant law was mainly enforced against the interior labourers, especially gold miners during the boom of the early 1890s. It was used to keep these men for many months at a stretch in the interior, where conditions were miserable and illness and death quite frequent. Over 250 miners were prosecuted for breach of contract in 1891-1893.

An excellent essay by Prabhu Mohapatra compares the labour laws for indentured Indians, and their enforcement, in Assam, and British Guiana and Trinidad. Assam opened up as a tea plantation economy in the late 1830s, just when indentured immigration to the Caribbean began, and their labour laws, not surprisingly, were very similar, sharing the penal sanctions for breach of contract and many other elements. But the rates of prosecution were strikingly different. In Trinidad and British Guiana between 1880 and 1917, the average annual prosecution rate was over twenty percent of all indentured persons, the conviction rate was over fifteen percent, and the imprisonment rate was about seven percent. In Assam, the prosecution rates were never over one percent. Did this mean that the labour regime there was much milder? Mohapatra shows that the difference lay in the Assam planters' power to arrest and punish delinquent workers without any recourse to magistrates and courts: "Assam's indenture laws privatized the enforcement of the labour contract." From 1865 planters there had a private power of arrest and, extra-legally but routinely, they flogged these workers to force them to adhere to their contract. This "private 'Coolie catching' machinery of labour control obviated recourse to indenture law", except in cases of long-term desertion. Private arrest was abrogated in 1908 but, in fact, continued illegally well into the 1920s. In the Caribbean, where illegal corporal punishment did take place but never received official sanction, planters recognized that their primary mechanism of labour control lay in the penal sanctions and the magistrates' courts to enforce them.

The essays that I have mentioned will probably be of most interest to readers of this journal. But this extremely wide-ranging book also includes chapters on early British America, eighteenth-century

Newfoundland, and Canada, Australia, South Africa, West Africa, Kenya, Hong Kong and India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Anyone interested in the law and practice of labour control in the British

Pedro L.V. Welch, *Slave Society in the City: Bridgetown, Barbados, 1680–1834*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003, xvi + 253 pp.

Early in this book, Pedro Welch poses two rhetorical questions: "What can an investigation of a small town in a tiny island offer us by way of insights into the wider compass of colonial urban slavery in the English New World? Why Bridgetown?" (p. 52) His study tackles both questions, drawing on manuscript collections held in Barbados for its answers. Much of the book endeavours to comprehend Bridgetown between 1680 and 1834, both as a sugar island's social hub and as one of the Caribbean's principal ports.

Welch highlights the contrasts between urban and rural experiences in pre-emancipation Barbados. Gender and age ratios in Bridgetown differed from those in the island's rural parishes, with the town housing more white females and, indeed, more enslaved females, though both ratios and chronologies follow slightly different paths from those Barry Higman identified in Jamaica. For men, the urban trades that free European immigrants undertook covered a wide range of specializations, as did the job descriptions applied to enslaved people there. Most residents could hope to profit from the cash spent by a stream of transients, particularly sailors. Tables pieced together from runs of deeds, inventories and assessments in the town's Levy Books provide the core of this study. To contextualize these trends and explore what slavery meant for individuals, Welch examines incidents from Assembly petitions, governors' letter books and visitors' comments. His chapters are enlivened with such vignettes as a recollection from 1826 of a confident enslaved pilot berating the white steersman on the ship that he was piloting into the harbour for his wobbly steering: "Vy you no [s]teer [s]teady? Got tam you, Sir, Vy you no teer teady, I say" (p. 86). Such self-confidence was hardly the introduction to inter-racial exchanges in Bridgetown that either the visitor or, perhaps, Welch's modern readers expected.

Despite a mass of legislation that attempted to constrain the town's enslaved and free black populations, the cash economy of a busy port offered opportunities to some of the town's African-Barbadian workforce. The most conspicuous beneficiaries flourished, not among the port's enslaved pilots and skilled artisans but in the hospitality sector. Here the services offered to guests by the enslaved servants in the town's hotels and taverns could slide into prostitution. Even the elastic boundaries of "respectability" current among white women in Bridgetown would not stretch to include keeping houses of ill-fame, allowing space for a few free women of colour in this profitable niche. As Welch points out, "[T]hese were females who, within a few years of manumission, had accumulated enough property holdings to rival those owned by wealthy whites" (p. 170). His discussions of several of these women cite inventories to demonstrate the scope of their operations: in 1809 Susannah Ostreham's twelve bedsteads, nine with curtains, alongside her fourteen rush-bottomed chairs, ten cloth-seated mahogany chairs, twenty-one cherry wood chairs and fifteen green painted chairs, show a large clientele sitting down, besides social ambitions reaching well beyond a quayside rum shop. Tracing some of these women's activities through the island's surviving deed registers not only identifies their leases and purchases of landed property, but also reveals the efforts that several of them made to secure the manumission of some persons that they themselves held in slavery. The female hoteliers are a well-documented group, though these sources cannot offer comparable evidence for the experiences of the other enslaved women who made livings for themselves in Bridgetown or for enslaved male artisans.

This book should encourage further research on urban topics. In this instance an early decision to eke out a thin evidential base by generalizing across a long span proved effective in highlighting continuities. Subsequent researchers may well wish to investigate when or why urban social structures changed in the West Indies. How far, for example, did the arrival of yellow fever in the 1680s affect the proportions of free and unfree artisans available for hire in the port? This book offers a very useful baseline, besides providing suggestions on where we can look for answers. There are many more questions to ask.

A preface by Hilary Beckles and an afterword by Woodville Marshall both testify to the book's significance for future historians of slavery in Barbados. It deserves a wider readership. Anyone working on urban slavery or studying any of the Caribbean's slaveholding urban societies should find profitable insights here, as will researchers grappling with

intransigent data. After reading Pedro Welch's *Slave Society in the City* no one is likely to ask "Why Bridgetown?" again.

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James Robertson, *Gone Is the Ancient Glory: Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1534–2000*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005, xviii + 477 pp.

Towns and cities are complex, multidimensional spaces. To attempt to capture the flow of time, changing spatial configurations, social life and political events of any urban space within a single narrative is a challenging task. Narrative text has the capacity to deliver detail, as well as to describe multiple threads of events and their sequenced relationships. Yet narrative that seeks to describe urban realities so as to capture three-dimensional spatiality plus the dimension of time stretches text to its limits. Cinematography, and the more recent technologies of digital simulation and interactive virtual spaces, offer potential challenges to the primacy of the narrative text in presenting history. In the twenty-first century, the demand on text to match what screens and simulations can convey is overwhelming. Yet, James Robertson has proved himself to be a master of text, deploying the medium with such deftness that the reader develops an almost cinematographic engagement, seeing "frames" of moving images of Spanish Town as it inscribed and re-inscribed itself as a spatial entity. This inscription of a place occurs on the ground, as well as in the more complex terrains of the minds of its varied inhabitants. Robertson conveys both successfully.

Gone Is the Ancient Glory combines the archaeologist's sensitivity to material artefacts, the historian's capacity to make sense of masses of surviving text documents, and the storyteller's ability to tell a tale. Robertson's stated agenda is to investigate "how the material culture of Spanish Town, including . . . buildings, has shaped the history of the town that its residents knew" (p. 2). He seeks to recover the past through the voices of its actual participants, as manifested by traces of memory in written documents and surviving orally transmitted stories. However, he is by no means mute – his own "voice" can be discerned amidst the chatter of Spanish Town's protagonists, as his turns of phrase disclose

a tone of tolerant humour and mild sarcasm in relating certain values, motivations and actions, which would strike the contemporary sensibility as absurd or politically incorrect and even unethical. His tongue-in-cheek humour, however, suggests an ability to understand that the "lenses" through which historical *persona* viewed were quite different from contemporary times.

Robertson's work is significant in Jamaican historiography in that it tackles a specifically urban history, whereas much existing history writing has understandably focused on plantation economics and the culture of slavery. Further, his work overtly probes the emergence of the built environment and the relationships between people and the spaces that they created. His detailed exposition of architectural changes, the inscribing of routes, boundaries and landmarks, and changes in flora and fauna is woven into the already well-known stories of conquest, competition with Kingston, emancipation, the Morant Bay Rebellion and other events. What emerges is a very keen sense of the consciousness of Spanish Town's residents of creating a specific *place*. This is a complex, multilayered process, in which competing interests had somewhat different versions of this place in mind. In fact, while Robertson ably recreates the physical fabric and spatial dimensions of Spanish Town throughout its history, his attention to people's opinions and thoughts also recreates the more subtle "maps" of mental aspirations and perceptions. Nowhere was the sense of competing places more obvious than in the long-standing rivalry between Kingston and Spanish Town, which ultimately cost Spanish Town a great deal of its "ancient glory".

The Spanish Town of Robertson's recreation is very "alive". His sharp retrospective vision, or what he calls "Academic historians' 20:20 hindsight" (p. 307) – and it has great acuity in his case – captures so many details of the town's textures, tones and atmosphere, and the moods of its inhabitants, that it leaves the reader feeling very acquainted with its daily rhythms. Although historical records often tend to privilege the elites, the governing classes and the literate, Robertson has made a valiant effort to include people of every category. And so the reader is aware of the polymorphic composition and juxtaposition of peoples that colonial/Creole society engendered – Tainos, Spanish Catholics, Portuguese Jews, enslaved Muslims, Maroons, Protestant missionaries, African-Jamaicans, sick and disenchanting soldiers, rowdy assemblymen, pompous colonial administrators, Rastafarians, street sellers, tourists – men, women and children.

Arguably, the most significant thread in Robertson's narrative is that which follows the emergence of a Creole space – in the built environment, values, institutions, language and mannerisms. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are particularly rich with details of architectural history, tracing the motives and activities related to significant construction projects during the British colonial era – including the major public buildings in the square, the Rodney Temple, the Iron Bridge, the renovated cathedral, as well as several Protestant chapels. Other elements of the built fabric are described, such as middle-class houses and slave yards. The post-emancipation "chattel house" typology is mentioned and illustrated. (p. 241).

While Robertson can be credited with including a diversity of architectural typologies and housing across the social classes, the amount of detail devoted to each is skewed in favour of the public buildings, for which surviving documentation probably makes for easier discussion, given their scale and importance. There is no detailed treatment of the design elements and materials of the chattel house. However, his discussion on the public buildings is valuable, underscoring the curious contradictions that were embedded in colonial island life. For even while the designers and builders had mental templates of English precedents, the local climate, town setting, materials and workmanship steadily moulded the construction to match a space fabricated outside of England. The nature of the fabrication of Spanish Town is a point that Robertson reiterates throughout his narrative.

Robertson's narrative discloses other contradictions: the aspiration to glory in an environment where prosperity was subject to the whims of destiny – foreign wars, plant disease, political factions, imperial policies. Technological expertise in the form of building construction, the Iron Bridge and the railways is juxtaposed against human injustice and oppression. Knowledge of legal codes and colonial management systems is set against ignorance of how to deal with tropical diseases. Innovative ideas such as a university, health tourism and heritage management coexist with failures in implementation.

Robertson ends his narrative with a short section on "Heritage zones and heritage policies" (p. 312), terminating a final chapter that surveys post-independence developments in Spanish Town and its environs. Ending on the note of the preservation needs of the historic centre shifts the focus from the chaotic, robust and even violent developments in contemporary Spanish Town to the "bones" of the historic square, signifying a mode of life now "dead". Robertson reflects briefly on the

theme of preservation. It remains for the future to see how the city chooses to engage with the layers of its past and its skeletal remains, so to speak.

In a volume so rich, is it justifiable to mention omissions? Perhaps Robertson has written his narrative so as to make it accessible to both scholars and the interested public, and has avoided weighing down the story with theoretical jargon. However, in a text devoted to urban history and configuration, there are no references to existing works that have theorized urban morphologies and meanings, as well as the peculiarities of colonial urban spaces.¹ Having said that, on the whole, James Robertson has produced a valuable history and, save for three observable typographical errors, the text is highly engaging and reader-friendly. The maps and illustrations, while of a small scale, offer a visual supplement to the text.

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NOTE

1. See, for example, Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005); Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds.,
Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas, Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2004, xi + 329 pp.

Building on the success of *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (1996), their edited volume of essays on free and enslaved black women, David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine have collected another impressive set of essays analysing the lives of women in slave-based societies from across the Americas in their new, and in many ways complementary, volume. This remarkably balanced set of articles discusses women's lives in a wide range of geographic settings, from Antigua west to New Orleans and from Kentucky south to Brazil; in rural and urban settings; and under a variety of imperial regimes, including Spanish, French, British and US. Comparisons among the conditions of free women of colour are further enhanced by the chronological span of this book, beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing to the middle of the nineteenth.

The breadth of coverage permits the reader to consider the lives and experiences of women of colour and, even more, to reconsider the very concepts of freedom and bondage. After all, how free was a "free" woman of colour when social practices and legal restrictions still limited her self-determination? The editors conclude that women of colour could never completely escape slavery's hold on their lives because colour prejudice, enforced by local precepts, curtailed their autonomy, even if these restrictions occurred in different forms in the various settings represented in these essays.

The editors divide the essays into two sections. The first chapters, listed under the heading "Achieving and Preserving Freedom", describe the ways in which women obtained free status, whether through *marriage*, self-purchase, lifetime or deathbed grant. In Martinique and Guadeloupe sheer laziness on the part of enslavers who demanded little or no work from their former bonds people, but also failed to complete the official procedures that would have allowed these women to

enjoy documented manumission, left them in an in-between, "quasi-free", state as *libres de fait*. Documentation in other settings, such as the US South, left officially "free" women of colour in "quasi" freedom. As late as 1861, US free women of colour occasionally sought to re-enslave themselves because of the limited opportunities that they were offered to support themselves and their children, or they would be forced to leave their still-enslaved family members under state laws that exiled free persons of colour manumitted after specified dates. The second set of essays, listed under the title "Making a Life in Freedom", considers how women lived as free persons of colour within slave societies. Because two of the essays discuss New Orleans and two discuss Brazil, the geographical range of this section is more limited, and there are no essays on British colonies.

As a snapshot of the state of scholarship on free women of colour in 2004, the book reveals some important trends. First, in these studies, as in the larger historical profession, the growing importance of religion in post-Marxian history is quite striking. Religious institutions provided avenues to manumission and means of activism for women who were already free. At the risk of reviving the Tannenbaum debates, Catholicism seems particularly significant as a route/agency for women, but this may reflect the concentration in the second half of the book on Catholic societies. Second, the titles of these essays refreshingly reveal a focus on the history of *women*, as does the title of the volume as a whole, though gender analysis is included in many of the essays. When even Joan Scott, in her introduction to the second edition of her essays on the theory of history, admits she planned for gender to be a useful category of analysis, not the only one, historians need to expand our approaches to women's pasts. The editors and authors of this volume are to be congratulated for taking this step and for encouraging us to be aware of the complexities of categories like "freedom" and "bondage" for women.

My only quibble with this book is a minor one. Given the importance of the volume for scholars and students who want to understand comparisons among locations, an index that included topics, not just proper nouns, would have made the book far more useful. That aside, this book provides an exceptional opportunity to understand freedom and slavery in a comparative, yet coherently organized, fashion.

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The enormous impact of Cuban music on popular culture throughout the twentieth century in the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America, and as far as West Africa, is a well-established fact among historians and musicologists. By virtue of its long history of recorded output and endless innovation in musical styles, from *son* to *timba*, Cuban music has attracted a great deal of attention among scholars. A spate of high quality works have appeared over the past two decades detailing key moments in the development of Cuban music and the lives of

of Cuban rhythms, and late twentieth-century fusions with jazz, rock and roll, and contemporary dance music, are all documented.

It is this comprehensive approach that is the book's major strength. There are fascinating entries on Indo-Cuban instruments, such as the *mayohuacán* and the *foto*, that highlight the deep roots of the country's musical traditions. The author also points out, *en passant*, the oft-overlooked role of various other Caribbean musical forms in the development of Cuban styles. For example, the *tahona* (also the name of a large tambourine) is a musical variant of rumba brought to Santiago in the early nineteenth century by enslaved migrants from revolutionary St Domingue (modern-day Haiti) (p. 208).

As with books that offer this broad survey, Orovio privileges coverage over depth. His intention not to produce a "phone book" (p. vii) is followed through with admirable precision. Nonetheless, this approach produces expected imbalances in the entries. Lesser-known or long-forgotten musicians, such as José "Cheo" Marquetti and Francisco Roja, are given their rightful place in the history, alongside giants such as Beny Moré, Celia Cruz and Gloria Estefan. However, the Buena Vista Social Club, easily the most successful Cuban music outfit over the past two decades, is only briefly mentioned and so does not detail either the several albums that individual members have produced since the mid-1990s or their subsidiary projects.

Similarly, the advent of contemporary North American musical influences on Cuba, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, specifically, hip-hop, is largely unrecognized in this revised edition. This is unfortunate, especially since it has been estimated that there are well over two hundred hip-hop groups currently in Cuba. That Orishas, the most internationally successful of these groups, is not given an entry in this revised volume is a major oversight. Similarly, a consideration of the international appeal of Cuban music, expressed in groups such as West African Orchestra Baobab, and Africando, both of whom explicitly use Cuban rhythms and occasionally musicians, would not be out of place here. Perhaps what is most absent is a more complete introductory essay that places the shaping of Cuban music within the broader context of the country's dramatic social and political changes. Finally, the book could have benefited from a more extensive bibliography. The list of references is far too thin.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, *Cuban Music from A to Z* accomplishes the major task of bringing together a great deal of information on its subject. It will no doubt remain an indispensable reference

book for researchers and fans of one of the Caribbean's most monumental musical heritages.

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