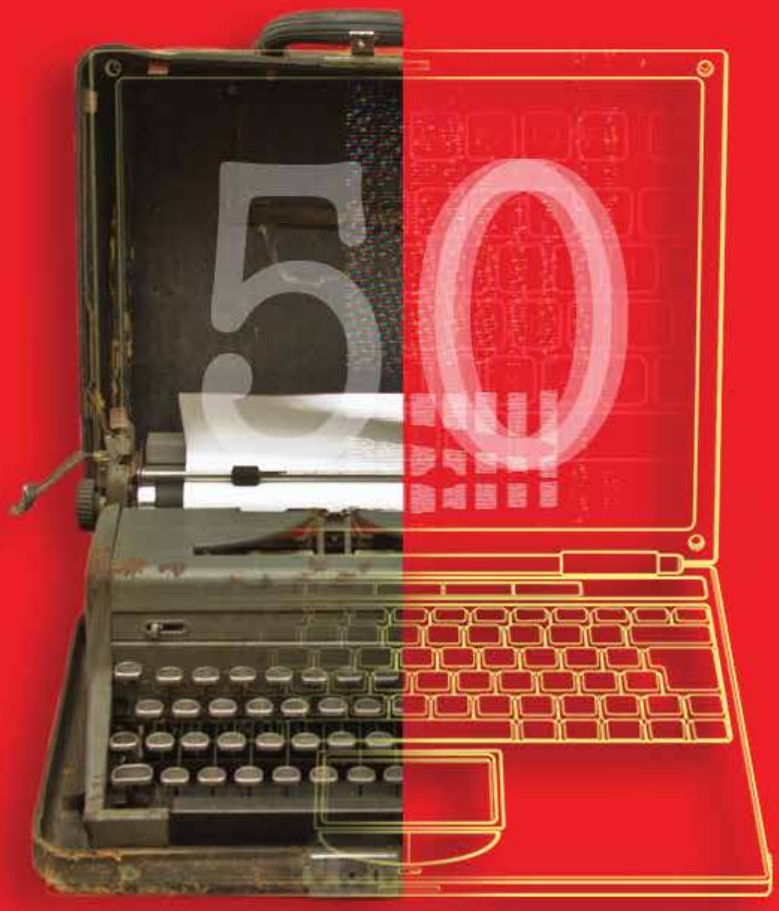
Volume 8

Bim

Arts for the 21st Century



BIM LITFEST | BIM LITERARY FESTIVAL AND BOOK FAIR 2016

Barbados' 50th Anniversary of Independence

The Rt. Excellent Sir Grantley Adams C.M.G. Q.C.
(1898-1971)

First Premier of Barbados.
First Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation.

Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Freundel Stuart Q.C. M.P.
(1951–)

BIM: Arts for the 21st Century

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***BIM*: Arts for the 21st Century** is edited collaboratively by persons drawn from the literary community, who represent the creative, academic and developmental interests critical for the sustainability of the best Caribbean literature.

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***BIM*: Arts for the 21st Century** is produced twice each year and publishes creative works, essays and critical expositions that meet the needs of the literary and artistic community. It accepts submissions that focus on literary, artistic and cultural phenomena within the Caribbean and its Diaspora. *BIM* accepts and publishes academic articles that are of high quality, but which are not too heavy with jargon to the exclusion of the wider reading public. *BIM* accepts non-academic contributions of high quality, including book and other reviews, poetry, short fiction, photographs and cartoons. In future issues, it will also accept digital art, electronic sound and digital video files, and critical comments on these. In all cases submissions will be subject to scrutiny by the editorial committee.

Manuscripts should be forwarded in double-spaced format, preferably with an accompanying electronic text file in Microsoft Word format. Endnotes are preferred. Photos should, at a minimum, be 300 dpi in quality. Submissions should contain the name of the author and title of the contribution on a separate page, but the author's name should not appear on subsequent pages of the actual manuscript. Correspondence should be sent to:
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To Da-duh In Memoriam

Paule Marshall

Oh Nana! all of you is not involved in this evil business

Death,

Nor all of us in life.

—Lebert Bethune. At My Grandmother's Grave

I did not see her at first I remember. For it was not only dark inside the crowded disembarkation shed despite the daylight flooding in from outside, but standing there waiting for her with my mother and sister, I was still somewhat blinded from the dazzling sheen of tropical sunlight on the water of the bay which we had just crossed in the landing boat, leaving behind us the ship that had brought us from New York lying in the offing. Besides, being only nine at the time and knowing nothing of islands I was busy attending to the alien sights and sounds of Barbados, the unfamiliar smells.

I did not see her, but I was alerted to her approach by my mother's hand which suddenly tightened anxiously around mine, and looking up I traced her gaze through the gloom in the shed until I finally made out the small, purposeful, painfully erect figure of the old woman headed our way.

Her face was drowned in the shadow of an ugly rolled-brim brown felt hat, but the details of her slight body and of the struggle taking place within it were clear enough — an intense, unrelenting contest between her back which was beginning to bend ever so slightly under the weight of her eighty odd years and the rest of her which sought to deny those years and hold that back straight, keep it in line. Moving swiftly towards us — so swiftly it seemed she did not intend stopping when she reached us but would sweep past us out the doorway opening onto the sea and like Christ walk upon the waves, she was caught between the sunlight at her end of the building and the darkness inside — and for a moment she appeared to contain them both: the light in the long severe old-fashioned white dress she wore which brought the sense of a

past that was still alive into our bustling present and in the snatch of white at her eye; the darkness in her black high-top shoes and in her face which was visible now that she was closer.

It was as stark and fleshless as a death mask, that face. The maggots might have already done their work, leaving only the framework of bone beneath the ruined skin and deep wells at the temple and jaw. But her eyes were alive, unnervingly so for one so old, with a sharp light that flicked out of the dim clouded depths like a lizard's tongue to snap up all in her view. Those eyes betrayed a child's curiosity about the world, and I wondered vaguely seeing them, and seeing the way the bodice of her ancient dress had collapsed in on her flat chest (what had happened to her breasts?) whether she might not be some kind of child at the same time that she was a woman, with fourteen children, my mother included, to prove it. Perhaps she was both, child and woman, darkness and light, past and present, life and death — all the opposites contained and reconciled in her.

"My Da-duh," my mother said formally and stepped forward. The name had a sound like that of thunder fading softly in the distance.

"Child," Da-duh said, and her tone, her quick scrutiny of my mother, the brief embrace in which they appeared to shy from each other rather than to touch, wiped out the fifteen years my mother had been away and restored the old relationship. My mother, who was such a formidable figure in my eyes, had suddenly with a word been reduced to my status.

"Yes, God is good," Da-duh said with a nod that was like a tic "He has spared me to see my child again."

We were led forward then, apologetically because not only did Da-duh prefer boys but she also liked her grandchildren to be "white", that is, fair-skinned — (and we had, I was to discover, a number of cousins, the outside children of white estate managers and the like, who qualified). We, though, were as black as she.

My sister being the oldest was presented first. This one takes after the father," my mother said and waited to be reproved.

Frowning, Da-duh tilted my sister's face toward the light. But her frown soon gave way to a grudging smile, for my sister with her large mild eyes and little broad winged nose, with our father's high cheeked Bajan cast to her face, was pretty.

"She's goin' be lucky" Da-duh said and patted her once on the cheek. "Any girl-child that favours the father does be lucky."

She turned then to me. But oddly enough she did not touch me. Instead, leaning forward sharply, she peered hard at me, and then as quickly drew back. I thought I saw

her hand start up to shield her eyes. It was as if she saw not only me, a thin intractable child who it was said took after no one but myself, but something in me that for some reason she found disturbing, threatening. We looked silently at each other for a long time there in the noisy shed, our gaze locked. She was the first to look away.

"But Adry," she said to my mother and her laugh was cracked, thin, apprehensive. "Where did you get this one here with this fierce look?"

"We don't know where she came out of, my Da-duh," my mother said, laughing also. Even I smiled. After all I had won the encounter. Daduh had recognized my small strength — and this was all I asked of the adults in my life then.

"Come, soul," Da-duh said and took my hand. "You must be one of those New York terrors you hear so much about."

She led us, me at her side and my sister and mother behind, out of the shed into the sunlight that was like a driving summer rain and over to a group of people clustered beside a decrepit lorry. They were our relatives, most of them from St. Andrew although Da-Duh herself lived in St.Thomas, the women wearing bright print dresses, the colours made more vivid by their darkness, the men rusty black suits that encased them like straightjackets. Da-duh, holding fast to my hand, became my anchor as they circled round us like a nervous sea, exclaiming, touching us with their calloused hands, embracing us shyly. They laughed in awed bursts: "But look Adry got big-big children" / "And see the nice things they wearing, wrist watch and all!" / "I tell you, Adry has done all right for sheself in New York.,."

Da-duh, ashamed at their wonder, embarrassed for them, admonished them the while, "But oh Christ," she said, "why you all got to get on like you never saw people from away before? You would think New York is the only place in the world to hear wunna. That's why I don't like to go anyplace with you St. Andrews people, you know. You all ain't been colonized."

We were in the back of the lorry finally, packed in among the barrels of ham, flour, cornmeal and rice and the trunks of clothes my mother had brought as gifts. We made our way slowly through Bridgetown's clogged streets, part of a funeral procession of cars and open-sided buses, bicycles and donkey carts. The dim little limestone shops and offices along the way marched with us, at the same mournful pace, toward the same grave ceremony — as did the people, the women balancing huge baskets on their heads as if they were no more than hats they wore to shade them from the sun. Looking over the edge of the lorry I watched as their feet patterned the dust. I listened, and their voices, raw and loud and dissonant in the heat, seemed to be grappling with each other high overhead.

Da-duh sat on a trunk in our midst, a monarch amid her court. She still held my

hand, but it was different now. I had suddenly become her anchor, for I felt her fear of the lorry with its asthmatic motor, (a fear and distrust, I later learned, she held of all machines) beating like a pulse in her rough palm.

As soon as we left Bridgetown though, she relaxed, and while the others talked she gazed at the canes standing tall on either side of the winding marl road. "C'dear," she said to herself after a time, "the canes this side are pretty enough."

They were too much for me. I thought of them as giant weeds that had overrun the island, leaving scarcely any room for the small tottering houses of sunbleached pine we passed or the people, dark streaks as our lorry hurtled by. I suddenly feared that we were journeying, unaware that we were, toward some dangerous place where the canes, grown as high and thick as a forest would close in on us and run us through with their stiletto blades. I longed then for the familiar, for the street in Brooklyn where we lived, for my father who had been unable to accompany us on the trip "home" because of his job, for a game of tag with my friends under the chestnut tree outside our aging brownstone house.

"Yes, but wait till you see the canes we grow in St Thomas," Da-duh was saying to me. They's canes father, bo," — she gave a proud arrogant nod. Tomorrow, God willing, I goin' take you out in the ground and show them to you."

True to her word Da-Duh took me with her the following day out into the ground. It was a fairly large plot adjoining her weathered board and shingle house and consisting of a small orchard, a good-sized canepiece and behind the canes, where the land sloped abruptly down, a gully. She had purchased it with Panama money sent by her eldest son, my uncle Joseph who had died working on the canaL We entered the ground along a trail no wider than her body and as devious and complex as her reasons for showing me her land. Da-Duh strode briskly ahead, her slight form filled out by layers of sacking petticoats she wore under her working dress to protect her against the damp. A fresh white cloth, elaborately arranged around her head, added to her height and lent her a vain almost roguish air.

Her pace slowed once we reached the orchard, and glancing back at me occasionally over her shoulder, she pointed out the various trees.

"This here is a breadfruit," she said. "That one yonder is a paw paw. Here's a Guava. This is a mango. I know you don't have anything like these in New York. Here's a sugar apple (the fruit looked more like artichokes than apples to me). This one bears limes". She went on for some time intoning the names of the trees as though they were those of her gods. Finally, turning to me, she said, "I know you don't have anything this nice where you come from." Then, as I refused her an answer, she said, "I know you don't have anything this nice where you come from..."

"No," I said and my world seemed suddenly lacking.

Da-Duh nodded and passed on. The orchard ended and we were on the narrow cart road that led through the canepiece, the canes dashing like swords above my cowering head. Again she turned and her thin muscular arms spread wide, her dim gaze embracing the small field of canes, she said — and her voice almost broke under the weight of her pride, "Tell me, have you got anything like these in that place where you were born?"

"No."

"I din' think so. I bet you don't even know that these canes here and the sugar you eat is one and the same thing. That they does throw the canes into some damn machine at the factory and squeeze out all the little life in them to make sugar for you all so in New York to eat. I bet you don't know that."

"I've got two cavities and I'm not allowed to eat a lot of sugar."

But Da-duh didn't hear me. She had already turned with an inexplicably angry motion and was making her way rapidly out of the canes and down the slope at the edge of the field which led to the gully below. Following her apprehensively down the incline amid a stand of banana plants whose leaves flapped like elephants ears in the wind, I found myself in the middle of a small tropical wood — a place dense, gloomy and tremulous with the fitful play of light and shadow as the leaves moved against the sun high above. It was a violent place, the tangled foliage fighting each other for a chance at the sunlight, the branches of the trees locked in what seemed an immemorial struggle, one that was both necessary and inevitable. But despite the violence, it was pleasant, almost peaceful in the gully, and beneath the thick undergrowth the earth smelled like spring.

This time Da-duh didn't even bother to ask her usual question, but simply turned and waited for me to speak.

"No," I said, my head bowed. "We don't have anything like this in New York."

"Ah," she cried, her triumph complete. "I din think so. Why, I've heard that's a place where you can walk till you near drop and never see a tree."

"We've got a chestnut tree in front of our house," I said.

"Does it bear?" She waited. "Does it bear, I ask yuh,"

"Not anymore," I muttered. "It used to, but not anymore."

She gave the nod that was like a nervous twitch, "You see," she said. "Nothing can bear there." Then, secure behind her scorn, she added, "But tell me, what's this snow like that you hear so much about?"

Looking up, I studied her closely for a time, sensing my chance and then I told her, describing at length and with as much drama as I could summon not only what snow in the city was like, but what it would be like here, in her perennial summer kingdom.

"...And you see all these trees you got here," I said. "Well, they'd be bare. No leaves, no fruit, nothing. They'd be covered in snow. You see your canes. They'd be buried under tons of snow. The snow would be higher than your head, higher than your house, and you wouldn't be able to come down into this here gully because it would be snowed under..."

She searched my face for the lie, still scornful but intrigued. "What a thing nuh?" she said finally, whispering it softly to herself.

"And when it snows you couldn't dress like you are now," I said. "Oh no, you'd freeze to death. You'd have to wear a hat and gloves and galoshes and ear muffs so your ears wouldn't freeze and drop off, and a heavy coat. I've got a Shirley Temple coat with fur on the collar. I can dance. You wanna see?"

Before she could answer I began, with a dance called the Truck which was popular back then in the 1930's. My right forefinger waving, I trucked around the nearby trees and around Da-duh's awed and rigid form. After the Truck I did the Suzy-Q, my lean hips swishing, my sneakers sidling zigzag over the ground. "I can sing," I said and did so, starting with "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter", then without pausing,"Tea For Two", and ending with "I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cents Store".

For long moments afterwards Da-duh stared at me as if I were a creature from Mars, an emissary from some world she did not know but which intrigued her and whose power she both felt and feared. Yet something about my performance must have pleased her because bending down she slowly lifted her long skirt and then, one by one, the layers of petticoats until she came to a drawstring purse dangling at the end of a long strip of cloth tied round her waist. Opening the purse she handed me a penny. "Here," she said, half-smiling against her will, "keep this to buy yourself a sweet at the shop up the road. There's nothing to be done with you, soul."

From then on, whenever I wasn't being taken to visit relatives, I accompanied Da-duh out into the ground, and alone with her in the gully I told her about New York. It always began with some slighting remark on her part: "I know they don't have anything this nice where you come from," or "Tell me, I hear those foolish people in New York does do such and such..." But as I answered, recreating my towering world of steel and concrete and machines for her, building the city out of words, I would feel her give way. I came to know the signs of her surrender: the total stillness that would come over her little hard dry form, the probing gaze that like a scalpel sought to cut through my skull

to get at the images there and to see if I were lying; above all, her fear, a fear nameless and profound, the same one I had felt beating in the palm of her hand that day in the lorry.

Over the weeks I told her about refrigerators, radios, gas stoves, elevators, trolley cars, wringer washing machines, movies, airplanes, the cyclone at Coney Island, subways, toasters, electric lights: "At night, see, all you have to do is flip this switch on the wall and all the lights in the house come on. Just like that. Like magic. It's like turning on the sun at night.

"But tell me," she said to me once with a little mocking playful smile, "do the white people have all these things too or it's only the Bajans that've gone up there to live?"

I laughed. "What d"ya mean," I said, "the white people have even better." Then: "I beat up a white girl in my class last term."

"Beating up white people!" Her tone was incredulous.

"How you mean!" I said, using an expression of hers. "She called me a name"

But for some reason Da-duh could not quite get over this and repeated in the same hushed, shocked voice "Beating up white people now! Oh the lord, the world's changing up so I don't even recognize it anymore."

One morning toward the end of our stay, Da-duh led me into a part of the gully that we had never visited before, an area darker and more thickly overgrown than the rest, almost impenetrable. There in a small clearing amid the dense bush, she stopped before an incredibly tall royal palm which rose cleanly out of the ground, and drawing the eye up with it, soared straight as an arrow high above the trees around it into the sky. It appeared to be touching the blue dome of sky, to be flaunting its dark crown of fronds right in the blinding white face of the late morning sun.

Da-duh watched me a long time before she spoke, and then she said very quietly, "All right now, tell me if you've got anything this tall in that place you're from."

I almost wished, seeing her face, that I could have said no. "Yes," I said. "We've got buildings hundreds of times this tall in New York.

There's one called the Empire State building that's the tallest in the world. My class visited it last year and I was all the way to the top.

It's got over a hundred floors. I can't describe how tall it is. Wait a minute. What's the name of that hill I went to visit the other day, where they have the police station?"

"You mean Bissex?"

"Yes, Bissex. Well, the Empire State Building is taller than that."

"You're lying now!" she shouted, trembling with rage. Her hand lifted to strike me.

"No, I'm not," I said. "It really is. I'll send you a picture of it soon as I get back so you can see for yourself. But it's way taller than Bissex,"

All the fight went out of her at that. The hand poised to strike me fell limp to her side, and as she stared at me, seeing not me but the building that was taller than the highest hill she knew, the small stubborn light in her eyes (it was the same amber as the flame in the kerosene lamp she lit at dusk) began to fail. Finally, with a vague gesture that even in the midst of her defeat still tried to dismiss me and my world, she turned and started back through the gully, walking slowly, her steps groping and uncertain, as if she was suddenly no longer sure of the way, while I followed triumphant yet strangely saddened behind.

The next morning I found her dressed for our morning walk but stretched out on the Berbice chair in the tiny drawing room where she sometimes napped during the afternoon heat, her face turned to the window beside her. She appeared thinner and suddenly indescribably old.

"My Da-duh," I said.

"Yes, nuh," she said. Her voice was listless and the face she slowly turned my way was, now that I think back on it, like a Benin mask, the features drawn and almost distorted by an ancient abstract sorrow.

"Don't you feel well?" I asked.

"Girl, I don't know."

"My Da-duh, I goin' boil you some bush tea," my aunt, Da-duh's youngest child, who lived with her called from the shed roof kitchen.

"Who tell you I asked for bush tea?" she cried, her voice assuming for a moment its old authority. "You can't even rest nowadays without some malicious person looking for you to dead. Come girl," she motioned me to a place beside her on the old-fashioned lounge chair; "Give us a tune."

I sang for her until breakfast at eleven, all my brash irreverent Tin Pan Alley songs, and then just before noon we went out into the ground. But it was a short, dispirited walk. Da-duh didn't even notice that the mangoes were beginning to ripen and would have to be picked before the village boys got to them. And when she paused occasionally and looked out across the canes or up at her trees it wasn't as if she were seeing them but something else. Some huge, monolithic structure had imposed itself, it seemed, between her and the land, obstructing her vision. Returning to the house she slept the entire afternoon on the Berbice chair.

She remained like this until we left, languishing away the mornings on the chair at the window gazing out at the land as if it were already doomed; then, at noon, taking

the brief stroll with me through the ground during which she seldom spoke, and after returning to the house sleeping till almost dusk sometimes.

On the day of our departure she put on the austere, ankle length white dress, the black shoes and brown felt hat (her town clothes she called them), but she did not go with us to town. She saw us off on the road outside her house and in the midst of my mother's tearful protracted farewell, she leaned down and whispered in my ear.

"Girl, you's not to forget now to send me the picture, you hear."

By the time I mailed her the large coloured picture postcard of the Empire State building she was dead. She died during the famous '37 strike which began shortly after we left. On the day of her death England sent planes flying low over the island in a show of force — so low, according to my aunt's letter, that the downdraft from them shook the ripened mangoes from the trees in Da-duh's orchard.

Frightened, everyone in the village fled into the canes. Except Da-duh. She remained in the house at the window so my aunt said, watching as the planes came swooping and screaming like monstrous birds down over the village, over her house, rattling her trees and flattening the young canes in her field. It must have seemed to her lying there that they did not intend pulling out of their dive, but like the hardback beetles which hurled themselves with suicidal force against the walls of the house at night, those menacing silver shapes would hurl themselves in an ecstasy of self-immolation onto the land, destroying it utterly.

When the planes finally left and the villagers returned they found her dead on the Berbice chair at the window.

She died and I lived, but always, to this day even, within the shadow of her death. For a brief period after I was grown I went to live alone, like one doing penance, in a loft above a noisy factory in downtown New York and there painted seas of sugarcane and huge swirling Van Gogh suns and palm trees striding like brightly plumed Watussi across a tropical landscape, while the thunderous thread of the machines downstairs jarred the floor beneath my easel, mocking my efforts.

Declaration Form

from Love & War

Linda M. Deane

Was the sky, the heaven
screw-faced that day?
Did it crush
crush you
to leave the child
with the ole folk to raise?

Did grass and cane and wind
quarrel your name
rain fall heavy-heavy
air cling like a second skin?

Did gullies and shoreline shrink back
shape shifting
like a mother's belly
after labour?

What made you flee
the uneasy,
overcrowded
peace

for a home among strangers;
castaway among familiars
each passenger an island
re-mapping her own route?

Did your mind ever settle
like floorboards and ceilings
tightening at their seams,
or did it churn with the Atlantic
stumble about deck
haunt the dorms or dining halls?

And the two children
not yours, but in your care,
how did you deliver them
under the sky's steely gaze;
the nun's reproving eyes,
to long, empty arms
on Southampton Dock?

What of your own cold comfort?
You, heading even further north?

Birthplace

John Wickham

Both in the crude flesh and in the spirit I had been out of Barbados for a number of years. In the several days and nights intervening between that first hurried and anxious departure — a bright clear morning in early December, my mother turning her face from me and pretending that here was no cause for weeping— during those days and nights which separated that clear-eyed and high-hearted moment of shaking the native dust off my feet from this creeping Atlantic crossing, I had suffered from no nostalgia.

I had not, indeed I did not know how to, put Barbados completely out of my mind: in my dreams it was always present, a curve of road, an old house, a vaguely recognised face, a girl's lazy laugh. But other elements were recalled as well — elements too bitter to want to remember — the constriction of too neighbourly gossip, the restriction of opportunity, the well-meaning but nagging insistence on conformity, the smug assurance of the blissful ignorant, the rejection of all spiritual finery, the ungodly pressure to worship the god of mammon. I had not forgotten Barbados, but over the years it seemed to have slipped away from me, the essence of its spirit seemed to have evaporated in the foreign air. The memories had become less urgent, the dreams remote and displaced,, the echo of the accent faded to a barely audible whisper, recalled only under the stimulus of the chance meeting of an unremembered friend on a foreign strand. And what is more, it seemed of no moment whatever to try to summon up these fast fading memories. My business was elsewhere, my friends others, other landscapes had grown familiar, the strains of other voices had fallen on these ears. I had not in truth come to such a pass as that other West Indian who has confessed to being plagued in his London nights by a recurrent nightmare that he was back in Trinidad. I had not come to that: my condition was one more of amnesia than of pathological terror. 1 could look forward without terror to a return but with only a mild and uninvolved curiosity, to a landscape upon which, as they say, I had not blessed my eyes these many years. As the ship left Liverpool in the murk and fog of an October afternoon and it came home to me that I should be seeing Barbados again, my heart gave a leap of delight at the prospect of seeing the land emerge out of the skyline. I had not, since I was twelve or thirteen, arrived at Barbados by sea and that was so long ago that I had forgotten what the sight was like.

The ship inched its way out of the fog-filled harbour and the whistles shrilled and the fog-horns bellowed like hoarse bulls.

The passengers went below and carried out the formalities of settling down in what would be home for seventeen days. The usual cross-questions were asked: Which cabin have you got? Where are you getting off? How long have you been away? Did. you like England? What about a drink when the bar opens? Have you seen the passenger list? The routine was being established.

One of the stewards pinned up the passenger list and I noted, among the first class passengers, the name of a man who had taught me at school. I looked forward to meeting him for not only had I liked the man but I enjoyed the prospect of hearing from him about Barbados. Mr. B was not a Barbadian but had lived there for many years and I knew that he saw the place clearly and whole. When finally I met him (having successfully negotiated the none too subtle barriers of segregation between the first class and the tourist class) he brought me nearly up to date on what had happened to many of my schoolfellows since I had seen them.

Mr. B himself had not been in Barbados for a year or so: he had grown tired of its aridity and had given it up to return to England where he had bought himself a cottage in the country. But, away from it, he had longed for Barbados and I got the impression that he lived in a sort of suspension, longing for England when he was in Barbados and for Barbados when he was in England. It was his good fortune that he had the means to indulge this ambivalence. He was able to see each England, as it were, from the vantage point of the other and his comments on them both were incisive. He was under no illusions about either place and he loved them both. There were things about Barbados which nauseated me. These he understood for they nauseated him also. But sharply critical as we both were of the Barbados environment, we both spoke within the terms of reference of our own very deep concern for it. And as we spoke about the familiar places and people, I could feel the telescoping of all the years of absence. Yes, this was the place I knew and these were the personalities which peopled it. It was as if the mists were clearing away and the picture of the landscape where I had been young was emerging clear and shining bright. The experience was as keen a pleasure as any I have known. I began to remember things which I had forgotten that I had ever known — this gesture, that mannerism and that outrageous eccentricity.

On our second or third evening Mr. B and I were sitting in the tourist class lounge or saloon or whatever it was called on this particular ship when Miss D entered, armed with her book and her woollen jumper against the chilly evening. I had had a few bouts of conversation with Miss D and had got to know her as well as anyone can get to know a fellow passenger in two or three days. She was English and was now returning from a long leave which she had spent with relatives and visiting galleries and museums

and the London theatre. She had completed one tour of duty in Trinidad and had liked it so much that she had decided to return for a second spell. Our exchange of talk had revealed that she painted in water-colours, that she belonged to the Art Society and that we had a number of mutual acquaintances although we had not ourselves met before. She learned that I read a great deal, that I was a West Indian nationalist, that I played cricket on Sundays and that I was a Barbadian. I liked Miss D. She had a charming, prim composure of manner which did not blunt a curiosity about everything. She seemed honestly interested in people, she had no airs and we promised that we would see each other when we got back to Trinidad.

This particular afternoon when Miss D entered the lounge I asked her to join Mr. B and myself in a drink. I introduced Mr. B to her and told her that we had been enjoying some reminiscences of Barbados.

"Barbados," she murmured, more to herself than to either of us, "I spent a short holiday there once and liked it."

"You mustn't feel obliged to say that, you know," I told her, "there is a good deal about Barbados that oughtn't to be liked."

She laughed and said, "But I did like it, I liked painting it. And then, Bajans are so amusing." After reflecting that Barbadians are frequently found to be amusing by people who do not live in Barbados, I noted that Miss D's use of the colloquial 'Bajan' indicated a more than superficial knowledge of the species. (This was in fact so: she had met many of them in her work in Trinidad.)

It was not, though not for the first time, that I noted the fact that to all people who know the West Indies and to many who do not, the mention of the fact that you are a Barbadian evokes amusement. All through the islands there are jokes about a Bajan policeman, a Bajan shopkeeper, a Bajan fowl-thief. To tell the truth, I have more than a suspicion that I understand why the idea of a Barbadian is a source of amusement to non-Barbadians. The reason is the same as that for which Don Quixote is a monumental figure of fun.

"But, on the other hand," I went on, addressing Miss D and assuming a sort of defensive attitude that I would not have expected from myself, "on the other hand, there is a good deal in Barbados that ought to be liked."

"Such as?" Miss D enquired.

"Mind you," I told her, anxious to be innocent of chauvinism, "mind you, I hold no brief for the place, but it is, after all, a repository of the finer virtues."

At which Miss D burst out laughing and I recognised what a lot of pompous and precious nonsense I had been guilty of uttering.

On the morning at the end of the journey, when the dull grey shape of the little island appeared on the horizon, I was leaning over the side thinking whatever thoughts were then appropriate to my personal situation when a voice, mischievous and with ever so faint a trace of mockery, whispered at my side, "There lies the repository of the finer virtues." Miss D's smile erased any suspicion of malice but I saw that I had been a fool.

That was seven years ago. I did not then spend more than a couple of days in Barbados. And now, after the lush green of Trinidad and the Windwards, the hillsides covered with the yellow poui flowers and the valleys vivid with the flaming immortelle in their seasons, the tidy patchwork of Barbadian fields, gentle brown and pale green in the dry season, convey a sedateness, a prim respectability to which the eye will have to accustom itself once more. The eye will also have to grow used again to the tiny wooden houses so perfect in their setting of "tidy roads and trim gardens — a landscape whose razor-edged economy allows no acre of earth to lie idle though it is not yet exploited to that extreme of husbandry which in Japan results in the cultivation of the very grass verges at the side of the highways. The contours of the fields whose curves and gentle swellings call to mind nothing so much as a woman's breasts, roll away in the blue distance to meet at last another blue of sea from which neither the eye nor the memory can escape.

Always, always the encircling sea,

Eternal … … …

Once more the accent falls upon the ear, an accent now strange since so long unheard, strange but subtly close to that permanent personal rhythm — heartbeat, pulsethrob? — which is acquired at one's birth and which conditions one's interpretation of experience and sensation. The voices in the bus, shrill and excessively quarrelsome over trifles, the cries of the fish women and the sweet potato men, the look, the smell, almost (I swear) the taste of mid-morning when the children are in school and the sunlit villages and tenantries and roads between the still unreaped canes are silent but for the whispered sibilance of the wind among the grasses. The faces sharpened by poverty and the strategies necessary to make a living, the black faces and the burnt red ones whose eyes have seen, except in their dreams of lost heritages, no other landscape but this. The faces walled in by the unquestioned creed that here in Belleville or Bathsheba, in Hastings or Holetown, is the world's beginning and end and hub and that what did not happen here in truth did not really happen at all.

The faces and the phrases bombard the memory and the imagination: here indeed is no repository of finer nor of baser virtues, here is neither more nor less than the place where a childhood and youth were spent and where one's ancestral spirits still hover. Here simply is the burial place of one's navel string. There is no need either to boast

about this nor yet to hide it; there is neither kudos nor disgrace in the mere accident of having been born in a particular corner of the earth. All that one gains in a private and personal view of the world, conditioned by the attendant circumstances and geography. With the recognition of this almost too simple fact comes a magnificent liberation of the spirit: the ancestral spirits are appeased, assured at last that their life is eternal now that they have been acknowledged.

People who live in small islands are, more than any other kind, subject to a sort of spiritual and intellectual incest. Ringed and imprisoned by the sea and thrown into continuous collision with their fellows, they fall easily prey to narrow-mindedness for it is not immediately obvious to many of them that there is a world beyond their horizons and that there are people whose habits and thoughts are conditioned by quite other landscapes. I had an early illustration of this when I was at the elementary school. Our teacher (this was the second or third standard as far as I recall) told us one morning that he had recently read somewhere of an incident which had taken place 'away'. A teacher had beaten a boy in school and the boy had returned the next day with his father and big brothers who had proceeded to beat the teacher up. This violation of the order of things could not, in Barbados at that time, be other than amusing if it were at all conceivable, and so we all burst out laughing. One small boy, more curious than the rest of us to discover the precise whereabouts of this mythical place where teachers were not unconquerable gods, put his arm up and asked, "Please, Sir, where did this happen?"

This, now that I look back at it, was a foolish question. The point is, or was, that it did not happen in Barbados and to be curious about the location of this impossible place was tantamount to an enquiry as to what went on behind the looking-glass. Our teacher gave an answer which I have never forgotten.

"Oh," he said carelessly, "I don't remember. It was in India or Jamaica or America or one of those low islands."

India, Jamaica, America, they were all the same to him, other islands, his mind not ever having operated in the context of continents. They were not Barbados and it was therefore a matter of inconsequence which among them was the scene of the incident he related. And he was a teacher!

Frequently I am asked by those who remember me whether I have noted the many changes in the island. The very tone of the question demands not only that I say that I have noted the many changes but also that I approve of them such as they are. The truth is that there has been precious little change. A few new buildings have gone up, people have grown older, fatter, richer, poorer, a few houses which one remembers as 'big houses' now seem pitifully small and neglected (some of them and their inhabitants make me think of Faulkner country) but nothing of the rhythm and essential structure

has changed. Indeed, how could it? True, the Empire and Spartan cricket match seems to lack the ferocity it once had, true there are more tourists in the streets and night-clubs along the coasts but not much more. One's schoolfellows, now advanced in years and status, are merely exhibiting the same tendencies of meanness and malice which one noted in the third form and under the sandbox tree at Harrison College. And those whom one loved in those days mercifully remain entirely lovable despite all that has passed in the intervening years.

Do I mean to say that nothing at all has changed? No, not quite that. I think I mean that what has changed is superficial, that nothing of what ties one to a place has altered. What one has always disliked is still there, what one has always loved is still, miraculously, in evidence. One afternoon while walking along the Old Bridge, I heard a hiss and a whistle and turned to see a ratface smiling at me. I recognised it immediately. It belonged to a man whom I knew as a boy and with whom I had played a great deal of cricket in various backyards. We exchanged greetings and I asked him how life had treated him. He told me that he had been working steadily now for four or five years, which was a welcome change from the casual and sporadic employment with which his youth had been afflicted. But what about your life? I asked. "Tell the truth," he said, his sharp face reminding me of the pictures of Ratty in "Wind in the Willows", "Tell the truth, there is plenty grass in the pasture, but I'm tied short." Which was exactly the sort of pithy thing he had always said and which was exactly the sort of statement one remembers as being particularly of this place. This had not changed.

I am walking along one of the suburban roads in Christ Church — roads lined by houses with well kept and even in the dry season well watered gardens and beware-of-the-dog signs on the garden gates. As I approached a house two young nursemaids emerge from the gate, closing it behind them. An enormous boxer bounds to the fence and threatens to break it down to get at me. One of the maids turns to the dog and quiets him with a gentle "Down Billy, what's the matter with you?" At which the other maid comments, "You know, he doesn't like black people!" The tragedy of this is that this is probably the perfect truth.

Whatever has changed has not yet been brought to the attention of the suburban dogs. Nevertheless, one cannot disavow one's ties of affection since, after all, one has to have an organic connection with some place even if it is a place where the dogs are more accurate interpreters of the situation than some of the people.

A New Panama

Karen Lord

It took less than an hour to assemble the house. The final screws and braces were tightened and the foreman re-checked the floors and walls with her level before declaring the structure sound. Then the team cheered, the owner of the new abode presented the customary bottle, and everyone, watchers and workers alike, went to the gathering hall to eat and celebrate. Everyone, that is, but the owner and a stranger who stayed in place as the community dispersed, like a beach pebble stranded by the waves.

The owner looked at him, but said nothing at first. She sat on her porch, idly handling a narrow piece of fretwork that had become detached during the unlading of the deconstructed house from the shipping container. She looked tired. She'd had a long journey.

'Hey, Daveed,' she said finally. 'Thanks for waiting. Everything got delayed, but I wanted to be here for the house-raising.'

'Hi Liberty. Love the neochattel design. So, have you read over my proposal?' The staccato string of words was smoothly spoken, as if the sound of courtesy could gloss over the fact of his fierce and abrupt efficiency.

Liberty slung the fragment of fretwork behind her, dusted her hands together, and stood up. 'I have. Let's go to the library.'

The library, like the main hall, was a permanent stone building. It reared up amid a small stand of young trees like a small, square tower, and the air inside was cooled and controlled. Liberty led Daveed to a small side room with seven chairs around a long, cantilevered table affixed to the wall. A thick buff envelope sat on the table like a drab centrepiece. The address was handwritten in uneven ink – not printed, not mere font masquerading as calligraphy. *Liberty Brathwaite, Caribbean Communities Inc., Barbados V149, Costa Rica.* The corner of the envelope shone with the subtle gleam of a 3D embossing, the words *Nereus Mining and Construction* underlined with a long trident.

Daveed glanced at it, then looked at Liberty in concern as he sat across from her with the envelope between them. 'Not signed?'

'Not yet,' she said, with neither welcome nor warning in her voice. 'I wanted to see you face-to-face and hear you speak.'

He looked out of the window at the compound. Cool green curtained the view, bright sun beyond made jewels of the wood and stone buildings arranged in careful, non-linear, familiar order. 'You've done well,' he said, so quietly that she barely heard him. 'There's no reason for you to take on a risk like this.'

She folded her hands and regarded him patiently. 'We already know that, so where is the *but*?'

He smiled. '*But* I think you're the only people who can. We've all lived through radical change. Asteroid mining companies in space habitats flooding the market with cheap minerals. The beginning of the end of oil-based economies and politics. Add to that the banking collapse, financial reform, and the telesatellite wars. Nation states disappearing beneath the ocean. Epidemics. Disasters. But your microstates have survived, adapted, and invented an entirely new kind of community and citizenship. Model villages built up into a model state without boundaries, achieving a new independence. That's unusual, and admirable.'

She shrugged off the compliments. 'Give us space, sun and support, and we'll flourish.'

'And that's exactly what I'm offering you.'

'It's not the w*hat*, it's the *where*,' she countered.

'You've made a life and living in every part of the globe. What's one step further? Don't your people have a saying, "home is a state of mind, and not of place'?"

She laughed at his boldness. 'I suppose we do, but even these scattered settlements dream of their old homelands. We live far apart, but our roots grow deep and broad and intertwined. We're always in touch with the centre and each other, and that's home. Can you at least give us that?'

He hesitated and said nothing.

'Another thing. I doubt you're doing this just because you admire us. What do *you* benefit from this? Would we really have the habitats all to ourselves? Wouldn't you be tempted to allow a billionaire or two, or try a little space tourism to keep the money flowing? Because if that's the case, it sounds to me like you're scouting for cruise ship staff, not colonists.'

She placed her left hand on the envelope and pushed it toward him. 'I think we've had enough centuries of being other people's servants, don't you?'

'Wait, let me–'

'I'm sorry you came all this way to be disappointed.'

He bowed his head in surrender, took up the envelope, and quietly left.

The hall was crowded with residents and guests, some physically present, some virtually. Three dining tables each carried a long screen of translucent glass that danced and flickered with the images of well-wishers from other communities around the globe. Liberty settled herself at a table with a plate of the usual finger foods and a small cup of strong drink, and started catching up with family, friends and colleagues in the hall and onscreen.

It was considered rude to virtually drop by another community's hall unless you'd been told the time of an event and given some sort of hint to show up, but access was ungated and not everyone followed the unwritten social rules. When the frowning, uninvited face of Senator G. Francis Jones appeared in front of her, Liberty took the opportunity to ignore him and focus on her plate.

'I thought you were going to sign it.'

Liberty glanced up from her food and eyed her professional nemesis with calm indifference. 'Oh, are you speaking to me?'

'Don't be childish,' he snapped. 'And don't expect me to apologise for voting against you and this entire foolish project.'

'I'm not expecting you to apologise any more than I expect you to accept that the Senate gave me the authority to decide. But I *should* have expected you would immediately assume the worst.'

He looked past her as her voice grew louder, conscious of the stares they were attracting. 'Lower your voice. Smile. Don't let them see us arguing.'

'Why not? Everyone knows I don't like you. Let them watch, let them talk.'

'Why did you say no? I thought you were a big fan of getting the Communities into space.'

'I am. But on our terms, G. Always on our terms and to our benefit.'

He drew back a little. Surprised approval leaked past the argumentative mask before he caught himself and controlled his features.

'I am a negotiator,' Liberty stated. 'I never grab the first offer on the table. Trust me, there will be others.'

He began to lecture her. 'Remember, Barbados is watching. We should be consolidating what we have, not abandoning our roots.'

Liberty shook her head in disbelief. 'You're thinking this is abandonment? I'm thinking about remittances that'll make Panama, UK and USA look like pocket change. I'm thinking about safety and security like nothing anyone has ever promised us, far less delivered. This could be the dawn of our empire. I *wish* you had an imagination.'

'I wish you had common sense,' he sneered in return. Then he vanished, having peevishly cut the link.

Liberty steupsed and drank off the rest of her drink.

The second offer came five weeks later, and the representative didn't even show up in person, choosing instead to videoconference their pitch. Liberty treated the bid with the condescension it deserved – ten minutes of blank-faced listening, thirty seconds of noncommittal acknowledgement and farewell, and two lines of formulaic refusal sent four days after. Three months later she saw two more hopefuls, both far more persuasive and present, and the month after that brought a deluge of ten proposals. Word began to spread within the mining industry and then beyond until the open secret was no secret but an explosion of media confetti – bright, flimsy, and hard to grasp.

Barbados demanded a report, and Liberty obeyed. She sailed the short distance from isthmus to island on her Community's own charter, docked at the floating port amid solar seaplanes and hydrofoils, and took the airship shuttle to the higher ground of New Parliament Hill.

Liberty scrutinised the landscape as the airship passed over. Twenty years of unpredictable tectonic activity had sanctified the new coastal plain as an untouched region of shifting sands and steady mangroves. The occasional modern ruin showed where the optimistic had built too soon. Then came the true ruins, the decayed spine of the hotels of the Platinum Coast, tsunami-ravaged then stranded far inland on the crest of a new terrace as the Caribbean Plate dipped and shrugged and rose again. For Liberty they were a monument to the death of tourism, the rise of expatriate citizenry, and the establishment of the global Caribbean Communities. They were also a reminder: many eggs required many baskets for survival.

Later, as she stood in the Senate Chamber and delivered her report, she tried to convey that truth in her concluding remarks.

'Some day in the future the new land will settle and we will reclaim and rebuild the old nation, but for now, you camp here on this territory as a formality to keep our vote in the United Nations. You govern less than ten thousand rather than hundreds of thousands and the House of Assembly is nothing but a handful of village council members.'

The President scowled, and a disapproving murmur rose from the benches.

Liberty raised her voice. 'I do not mean to be discourteous, but these are the facts. Diaspora saved us before and it will save us again.'

Still frowning, the President countered, 'But your own report suggests that no-one has been able to offer us a suitable situation. Why continue to entertain this idea?'

'The right offer will come in time,' Liberty said. 'Let the early adopters go forward and make the necessary mistakes. We'll watch and learn and be better prepared when we're ready to make our move.'

Debate continued for another hour, but at last the Senate agreed to follow her advice. Then, in typical Senate fashion, they decided that the growing importance of the colonisation project had overridden her original mandate, and appointed a six-person steering committee to 'ensure that the interests of the Government of Barbados were adequately represented'.

Liberty thanked the Senate with a strained smile. At least they'd had the sense not to put G. Francis Jones on the committee. From the expression on his face, he was happy to be left out and certain that the project would fail in time.

The walls and floor started to shudder and flex. Liberty knew that the new Parliament Buildings had been constructed according to the highest standards of earthquake engineering, but she couldn't help looking around in alarm. The Senators calmly began to gather their belongings and the President banged her gavel.

'Session is adjourned for today. Feels like a strong one. Please exit the Chamber with care and get home safely.'

What came next was unexpected to many, but certainly not to those who had been paying attention. Within a month of Liberty's visit to Barbados, the dominoes began to fall. Three mining companies scaled back operations and closed bases. The media buzzed again, this time with both urgency and substance, when two mining companies finally declared bankruptcy outright. The steering committee was baffled, and Liberty had to explain things to them using short sentences.

'Efficient production but bad planning. They could have worked together to control pricing, but they created a glut on Earth and there isn't enough demand offplanet. That's one of the reasons they're so eager to encourage space colonies or tourism or whatever. They need more consumers.'

'Does this work in our favour?' the Chair of the steering committee asked bluntly.

'Maybe,' Liberty replied cautiously. 'They need us more than we need them, but

desperation can make corporations lie. The last thing we want is to be stuck in a broken-down habitat. We still have to be careful.'

A simple transformation elongated the small meeting room in the library. The wall at the far end of the table where Liberty had rejected the Nereus envelope was now a screen, and the plain wooden table in Costa Rica blended into a darker, more richly polished version in Barbados. There sat the members of the committee, three on either side, making notes, talking quietly, and waiting for the real meeting to begin. At first Liberty thought she could see their table vibrating just a little, but she blinked once and it steadied. How strange that she could be peaceful with the concept of living in space but get nervy at a mere glimpse of her native land!

The door buzzed in warning, shaking Liberty from her musings, and opened to admit a tall woman with long black hair and light brown skin. She could have been taken for a local in several different countries, but when she spoke her greetings her accent was flat, neutral, international-American.

'Welcome, Esperanza,' Liberty replied, waving her to the chair at the head of the table, opposite the screen and in full-face view of the steering committee. 'We've had a look at your proposal, and we're very curious. Can you tell us more about your organisation? There's not a lot of information about you in the public domain.'

'We were majority shareholders in a couple of mining enterprises, but our real work is designing specialised modules for life support in extreme environments. I'd be surprised if you'd heard of us. We don't have a corporate name as such.'

'No corporate name? Then what is *Diné*,'one of the committee asked.

'That's the name of our people.' Esperanza turned to Liberty. 'But you know about that already, with your Communities.'

Liberty tapped her tablet. 'Your proposal offers bespoke habitats – not just repurposed mining bases or fast-build space hotels, but new, permanent habitats tailor-made to our specifications. What's the catch?'

She smiled brightly. 'We'll all be guinea pigs.'

'What?' said the Chair dryly.

'We're conducting research. We've been doing this for a while with mini-biospheres in the desert.' She shook her head. 'It's not a life for everyone. Small, isolated groups need the right balance of cooperation and distance, or they implode. You've been perfecting small-community life for generations. That gives you an advantage. This won't be like a space lab or mining base with a two-year tour of duty. Our habitats must be home.'

'Our?' Liberty asked.

'Well, yes. Researchers can be based on Earth and visit as needed, but a lot of our people want to become part your communities. If you'll have us.'

'Shared risk,' murmured a committee member, scribbling on her tablet. 'But how do you make money from that?'

'Improvements in habitat design and maintenance for one. First generation habitats were rugged and short-lived, because that was all the mining companies needed. Now those bases are disintegrating and putting large chunks of space debris into the atmosphere. The UN isn't happy. We hear the regulations on habitat construction are going to get a lot more restrictive. We've also been told there are plans to expand the UN bases on the Moon and Mars. They want permanent waystations between here and there, and they're willing to help us develop them.'

'Habitats, labs and ports? No tourism?' The Chair spoke neutrally but there was nevertheless a tension in the room as they waited for the reply.

Esperanza grimaced as if she'd heard the question too many times before. 'No. It's a model for some, but we've run the numbers and frankly it would be a waste of our resources.'

The Chair looked at Liberty and gave a slight nod. Liberty blinked in reply and turned to Esperanza. 'Thank you so much for meeting with us. You'll be hearing from us very soon.'

As soon as the she left, the committee leaned forward as one and began to speak over each other in excitement.

'It's the most thorough proposal we've heard and for that alone I like it.'

'Agreed. Quietly efficient, and most of all they're not desperate for money.'

'But waystations! We'd be building a gateway to new worlds!'

They all laughed, but kindly, at the excited outburst after all the careful and considered statements.

The Chair had the last word. 'Sounds like a new Panama.' He looked at Liberty. 'This is what you were looking for, am I right?'

Liberty shrugged. 'It's 2050 and Bajans have lived everywhere on Earth. Where else is there to go but up?'

A memory of sixty six

Winston Farrell

Looking back at six
At sixty six
A little boy at the window

It was like any other day
The prison bell broke morning
Before the first fowl cock crowed

A lazy sun stretching daylight
On gran-gran's bed
Nothing fancy within their little two-by-four

Six years old
Oblivious to the early morning shower
Knelt down beside his gran-gran
Hands clasped in a prayer
Elbows still asleep
On the edge of dawn

Maybe it was a school day
And the boy he had to learn a new anthem
On top of the old
God save the Queen
And Hannibal who he never knew was black
Crossing the Alps he could never find on a map

There is also this memory of a gloved white hand
Swiveling on a robotic royal wrist
While throngs of black faces flirt with flags
In the hot weight of afternoon sun

No fuss and fanfare independence curtains
No memories of stew dumplings
Gran-gran might have turned a mellow cou-cou
Laced with bonavis and green peas
That day was like every day
Gran-gran with her tray of contentment
And her little great-gran by her side

No grand memory of sixty six
Except for the step of the stallions
With their mounted guardians trotting pass his gaze
From his window he saw the new pride
And wondered where it was all heading
And why was he not present

Gran-gran in her rocking chair
And her little great-gran at the window
Eyes searching into the future

Next day came nothing changed
Prison bell before cock crow
The same lazy sun stretching across the bed

The residue of British hegemony
Lingers on the window sill
Long after gran-gran's passing

The boy grows into conscious manhood
Looks back in through the window
For some meanings to sixty six.

Limestone: An Epic Poem of Barbados

Anthony Kellman

Extract from the poem written in the author's Tuk Verse form.

Here, the spirit of the slain leader of the island's 1816 slave rebellion, Bussa, heads toward Africa and, looking back, witnesses his burial organized by fellow freedom-fighter, Nanny Grigg.

Chapter Six

Over heaving broad-backed
water with its reef-bones
that clatter with my people's grief,

ancient wings, with widest
threshing urgency
mount in dazzling immensity

April's washed blue sky—
These flashing crows' wings
contoured by glints of light:

spirit's duty. Nestled
safely on ancestral wings,
sad, yet joyed to be going home.

Looking back, I see them
hoist me on a cart,
raise Massa from the dust and dirt,

dangling, bloody. Soldiers
carry him carefully
towards the Great House. Mistress rushes

out to meet them, her white
cotton nightgown whirling
in haste, frills lapped in dirt and blood.

One son, hesitant in the
doorway, weeps and wails.
Proving manhood, the elder marches

father-ward to aid them
slowly up the steps.
Cane fronds wave as the 'U' cart leaves,

cartwheels groaning to reach
the clearing. Even though
dead a'ready, they hoist me over

the biggest cannon's mouth
and douse me with oil.
Fired flesh drops off in cindered chunks.

My head remains in place.
One raises his sword
and severs it.

With scorn, he takes it up.
They find my hut,
raise the skull on a bamboo stake

for all the crows to view.
My spirit grows heavy,
but beating ancestral wings bear

the weight of my sorrow—
an undertow sighing,
breaking like water below.

As distance grows my view
is hazier, but I glimpse
Nanny holding my skull. She wraps

it slow with a piece of
old crocus like pone
draped with banana leaves, brings

it to the yard. The tribe
begins to swell: old men,
women, children; Creole, African.

I swell again with grief,
but song's relief
reaches me, joyous and sad. The bird

of spirit holds me close
as we soar over the
lamenting ocean's sighing breast,

Laments, chants, prayers
rise triumphant
over reefs of ancestral bone.

Nanny's hands then calmly
lower my remains
into the grave. Women whose names

mean good hope and courage
sustain her with song,
adding strength to her earth-borne groans.

On The Rim Of The Circle

A. N. Forde

Pick! — Pick! — Pick! — Pick!

There it was again! Each separate stroke eating away into his consciousness. His brain quivered, shook like jelly.

Ever since those days last week — or was it last year? — this had happened to him. It must have been the sun that did it. The sun that he used to love as a child, impetuously, like a dervish. Now something of its fever hid under the skin, crept puckishly under his skull.

There it was again!

Pick! — Pick! — Pick! — Pick!

Each second a stab. Each second a nail struck into the noon.

Still there was delight in it, the delight of knowing that you were tuned to a tautness beyond that of those laughing fools, who pried shamelessly into your every glance, like greedy children prying into bottles of jam, afraid every minute that an arm would arrest them.

He didn't mind their staring at him; what he hated was neglect. Suppose they all planned not to notice him, as they had obviously planned to stare at him wherever he went or wandered. He was accustomed to being stared at. As he once told Ivan, his brother, "Trees can be such watchful beings." They were walking down an avenue in Maraval. "Look how they are winking at us — just like naughty people at the Band Concert."

"What trees?" Ivan had asked. "Winking?"

"Yes, their green eyes." But Ivan was not quick on the uptake, He couldn't see the dark brows of a tree, nor the slim disdain in the wink of a branch, nor the welcome in the crook of a tree-trunk. Ivan was too simple! Too simple!

Pick! — Pick! —

Ever since those days, out of time, those sharp days in the sun when he had charge of that road gang, "pick-axe-biting-rock" had been a slender and gradually more insistent theme beating in his brain. Sometimes he would still see the men, sweat irrigating their bodies, muscles straining in a mute but somehow mobile sculpture, and those pick-axes biting the rock.

Why did they stab so? Into the rock?

The rock. So much like the brain. His brain. The pick-axe would strike and send off such a shower of powdered stone. And the shower of powdered stone would be a shower of coloured ideas, too many to hold in the hand. They slipped away if you tried to grasp them when the pick-axe struck. So you just let the shock make its electric in the brain and the ideas would do their own will. Create their own pyrotechnics.

Yet it must have been the sun; and he had always hated a hat, though the fools had always warned him to wear one in the white heat on those white roads.

The sun. A king riding above the world. Some day he would ride like that to his palace but they didn't know, they wouldn't believe if he told them.

And then he fell! And he could hear the laughs ricochetting against his brain.

He could see their grinning faces. What fools! Did they think it mattered to him. But of course one must be sympathetic, have patience. They had not learnt to see coherence in the apparently incoherent. If they knew how he could see a perfect whole in every box of fragments. Take those pieces of glass there by the dust-bin. He could bet they couldn't see into the pattern, there, on the ground, before their eyes.

He tried to rise from his seat in the gutter. His fingers slipped away in the moss which cushioned, the channel of dirty water and he checked his body involuntarily with his right elbow.

They laughed again!

"Look at 'e clothes!"

"Buh dah man chupid, oui!"

"Poor ting" said an old woman, carrying a bundle looking like clothes on her head. "Poor ting, look how 'e dirty up all 'e white suit."

This time he put his hand firmly on the edge of the concrete road and pressed himself up. He rose unsteadily. A blackish-greenish hue lavishly stained his once-white suit. As he lunged forward again, gradually regaining his old balance, the small knot of bystanders, still in open derision, gave way to him.

"But he mus' be still drinking chile pap," laughed a street urchin, his clothes patched and torn as if according to some unusual whim.

"Go home and tell mammie," jeered another voice.

The sound of the word 'mammie' brought him back to the realization of going home again. He would have to get back, if possible, before dark, because they didn't know he had left the house. Mother, he knew, would as usual fuss over the inconsequential, when she saw him return.

"Herman, dear, what you done with yourself?" she would say. And if he sat in the comfortable Morris chair by the side of the radio, she was sure to prise him up lest he soil the cushion.

Life was such a prison among those who felt they were civilised. And what made them civilized? "A regard for the exterior," the outside of everything. They couldn't see deep into the crystal. Couldn't spare the time to reason out the irrational.

That was what he wanted. Time. To reason out the irrational. He knew at home they were restless because be wasn't working. But he had had enough of that. He didn't have to see the men sweating nor hear the pickaxes punctuating the sun-stricken silence.

He had it all with him. Inside of him.

Oh! there it was! He hadn't realized he had walked so far already. The gate of the Botanic Gardens. The sign garishly arched over the gate.

He stepped up to the entrance. Yes, it was cool. He would sit on that bench over there and listen to the trees.

He sat. Then reclined. Then lay flat on it, his feet hanging over the side rail on which you could rest your hands if you sat up.

And he thought it all over again, shaking the puzzling facts into some sort of unity. Oh! he was always doing that. Was that the aim of life and living?

Where was it he had first seen that woman? There she was coming through the Gardens. Had he not leaned over on his right side he would not have seen her.

His fingers played among the firm earth and freshly cut green grass which surrounded every standing tree, every bench around.

Why did she always follow him around? He would call her! Make her explain her spying.

Leaning over the edge of the bench which was parallel to and about ten yards from the edge of the road, he beckoned to her with a shy finger. But she didn't notice him.

"Come here," he said, and his voice trembled. He felt a measure of power leap from his voice and he said again, tremblingly,

"Come here,"

She seemed so alluring in her red-yellow-and-green shoes. Why did the shoes mock at him as she walked up the path?

Her bodice and skirt touched every contour of her body with a shy possessiveness.

"I want to speak to you."

What was he going to say, really? What could he tell her? That he was an artist? That those men who could pull music from a cloud and wrap it into the finery of a tone poem were like him? That those who could make pain and violence leap with poignancy or venom from a canvas were his brothers? Yes. They were one family. For like him they could fish a meaning and a purpose from diversity, could reap a message from the wind or the tree or the flower. Could find a clear outline in apparent distortion!

But she was going away without paying him any attention!

He half-fell, half-stepped off the bench, walked with a quick unsteadiness across the grass and pursued her up the path. She was about fifteen yards ahead of him. He hurried.

She must have heard the footsteps, for suddenly she looked around.

He smiled, invitingly he thought.

But her eyes seemed to crinkle in a minute terror. What fascinating eyes! You could stare into them for ever, savouring their mystery. Eyes always fascinated him. Just like a bee struggling in vain against a pane of glass. You could watch it and listen to the buzz of its struggling wings and the impatient knocking of its firm body, indefinitely. Queer how the trained mind can wander unharmed from one object to something dissimilar and still find the unity between the two incompatibles. But only the trained mind could do it!

He was within two yards of her now.

"Stop," he said.

She continued walking — with a queer imbalance, as if she would topple into a run at any minute. And then she did. She took to her heels as he was about to grasp her, and eluding his grasp, she screamed.

He laughed nervously: and then he felt a hard hand descend on his collar and he was pitched on to the ground.

The shock jolted him, and he looked up, to see a heavy man in a khaki shirt and pants and heavy boots standing over him.

"What you running behind the woman for? Eh? What you running behind she for?"

And then in a dictatorially final tone.

"Lissen! you do'n' come in heah again, eh! If I see you in heah again, I goin' put you where you belong."

"Get up," and the man pulled him up, "and get out," the last order being accompanied with a shove.

He was propelled violently down the path and, looking back for a moment, he saw the man watching him, and the woman half-turned away still staring at him over her shoulder. Where had he seen the woman before? was it the same woman? Sometimes she was slim and he would see her shopping in Frederick Street, her pocket-bag impeccably matching her shoes. Sometimes she would seem more plump, even shorter, in the bathing-suit that clung to her. As a matter of fact, at Maracas Bay, you got confused, and if you looked left you saw her and if you looked right, there she was again, cuddled in sand. You could never be sure.

He hoped he didn't see her again because she always led him into trouble. Someone would always intervene and he would be frustrated.

He turned right as he left the Garden gate. He had better go home. He was feeling somewhat tired now, and the incident in the Gardens had done nothing to give his mind the rest he needed. He might at least get a bit at home.

And so he walked swiftly, now troubled by an antagonistic dog as he stood momentarily near a gate, now baited by a couple of naughty children as they spotted his soiled clothes.

Some minutes later he turned into his street. It was spruce and clean as usual. The palisades in front of the houses white and green, or sometimes reddish-brown, with an occasional ambitious flower peeping through the rails. His house — his mother's, house — was about one hundred yards up the street and before it he could see a vehicle drawn up. You could tell the house from afar because the flamboyant hedge spilled its branches over into the road at times, and its red blood-drops added colour to its vocal green.

It was a shining vehicle, polished to a perspicuous flattery.

He reached it and pushed his head cautiously into one of its rear windows. He smiled. The man at the wheel was dressed in a khaki shirt and pants.

Was it the man in the Gardens? Why did these creatures follow him around — or rather anticipate him? Anyhow it didn't really matter. The man clearly was in a more conciliatory mood. Besides he wore a cap with a silver button gleaming in the centre of the forehead, and it suited him. The man was a liveried servant. No doubt.

"Hello" the man said. "I've been waiting for you." His voice was gentle and compelling.

"You have?" Herman said.

"Is that Herman there?" This voice was earnest and solicitous. "Herman?" The voice came from inside the house.

His mother came down the front steps towards him. He wanted to get into the car and tell the driver to drive him away fast before she reached but instead he stood waiting for the cool hand to fall on his warm hand. It did.

"Come in, Herman. We have been waiting for you. Come in. Please."

He went with her, still clutching his arm.

"Where have you been? We've been looking for you. You know you have to go out, don't you? We told you ever since you were to pay a visit this evening. We thought you had forgotten. But you have come back like a good boy, like the good boy you are." Her words were lulling him into an acquiescence, an acquiescence which he feared, for it always left him anxious to escape again and burrow head first amongst the skeins of wayward fancy. Her voice called you back to reality. To the need to eat. To sleep. To sit. To relax. To change your clothes. Yes, there was her voice again, pinpricking his consciousness.

"You must change your clothes now. You are going to meet friends."

"I don't want to meet any friends. I just want to be alone." The words skipped from his lips and he added almost impishly, "Alone on the rim of the circle."

"What circle?" she said. Then after a pause: "Don't worry about the circle. You're all right." She patted him.

Why were they always telling him that? As if he didn't know! They had entered the house and he was led gently to his bedroom. It was tidily put away. He sat on the edge of the bed.

"Let us get you dressed — like a good boy."

He was helped out of his clothes, the white jacket and pants were removed, soiled as they were, and dumped into a nearby clothes basket. He stood in his shirt-tails and had his face washed. Then they took off his shirt and the ablutions went on. The sun leaned into the room from its perch in the west.

Minutes later he was dressed, tie and all, in a light tropical fawn suit and was on his way to the car with his mother.

There was a certain constraint in her manner but that was not unusual, he thought. She was probably annoyed that he had refused the glass of milk she offered him.

"Get in," she said to him opening the back door of the car. He got in, and his mother sat beside him. The car moved off, almost stealthily.

Where were they taking him?

He looked at the liveried chauffeur in the front seat, at the sprung upholstery, at the shining gadgets on the dashboard of the car. And then he knew!

This was his car! How hadn't it struck him before? Yes, and those palm trees there were nodding in farewell to him. 'That humming-bird was skidding away through the air to announce his departure. Why did it have to be delayed so long!

"Don't excite yourself, Herman," the voice at his side prodded, "you'll be there right now."

He held his breath for a moment as the pick-axe beat out its heavy monotony. It had to come: this day for which he had been looking so long. The trees rushed past and stared backwards at him. People too were watching the car.

At last! There it was! His palace.

"Is that the palace?" he asked.

No word answered him for a time. Then,

"That's where we're going," was the reply.

He had guessed it all along. Some day he knew he would have reached it. His palace!

As the car drew up at the gates, a door-keeper stood stiffly inside the bars and asked whom they wanted.

"We've come to see Dr. Mahon, He is expecting us," his mother said. But she said it in an undertone whispered to the Gateman and he didn't hear the words. They never liked him to hear.

The gates were flung open and the car moved through. Yes, it was as he thought. His home. The fools would think those heavy brick walls too precise, and those square barred windows unsightly. But what did they know? Of what use were their windows? For people to fall out? He chuckled to himself. The bird in the cage lived in complete liberty alone on the rim of its circle. Now he would be able to live like that.

This wide massive building was a call to him. Those wide easily-mounted steps were a guide to his domain, his dominion. Here he would be master. Look at those faces peering through the bars ready to greet him. He had arrived.

The car stopped before the steps and a dapper man emerged from what looked like a side office.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Stannard," he said. "So you've come" He stretched out his hand to help her alight. Then he held his hand out to Herman, with the words, "so glad to see you." His grip was firm but understanding. And Herman smiled.

"You may leave him entirely to us, Mrs. Stannard. Everything is settled."

His mother and the dapper fellow stood talking for a little while. Then his mother shook the man's hand and came over to him. She bent and kissed him and he noticed a bright tear hidden in her eyelashes. He wanted to look at it closely; eyes always fascinated him so. Like a bee striking against a closed window-pane. But he refrained, impatient to be gone.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Stannard," he said. "So you've come."

"See you later," Herman answered, receiving the kiss apathetically. Then he turned from her and mounted the wide easily-mounted steps into the freedom of his new world.

The doctor waved goodbye from the top of the steps.

Jumbie Tribe

Robert Edison Sandiford

There was nothing pretty about this place, nothing to suggest how it had earned its enchanted name. The smell of fresh piss steamed in the alleys. Young men—would-be warriors—slouched by, either their boxers too high or their breeches too low. The powdered breasts of callipygian women, young and old, burst out of halters with pulchritude and bliss. Swan Street was like the island, a paradise long lost.

Elias—that was the name he barely remembered being called—ran to the end of the street, stopped by the lights, or rather by the man and the girl being stopped by the lights. He came to a crouch on the display window of what was once a dry goods store, now a hardware store and would be some other commerce sometime from now. To their left was the police station. Straight on past them was the mall ripe with papaw, soursop, turmeric, and thyme—an obeah woman's apothecary. To the right led onto the city's main thoroughfare, dead centre into Bridgetown.

Elias' rags rustled behind him. He stood what would have appeared sideways on the display window, if anyone in the street could perceive him, but, to him and his kind, there was no up or down, not even any left or right, and no beating heart to mark time.

"What was that?" he said, but not to himself.

It sounded like, *See I told you*.

The man and the girl stood at the crossroads, waiting for the lights to turn in their favour. A car passed swiftly, then another. Elias thought he did detect something. It was in the grip of the man's hand, the flinching of her body. There was a tugging. Maybe not a violent tugging, but in a proprietary manner Elias did not like.

"Well maybe it is," he said, nodding and believing her fully, he realized, for the first time. "Maybe. It. Is."

She had told him where they would be. He always took her into town on a Saturday morning for an all-beef roti and a coke, as a reward for being a good little girl in the week. "*My* good little girl," she mimicked the man in a voice still alloyed with respect. Elias observed them now, father and daughter. No. Not father and daughter, man and child. For it was not blood that created kin. Elias, in his night wanderings to frighten, make mischief, and hear confessions, had overheard the girl's angry prayers against

an unjust world, as if her words were meant for jumbie after all, and not another. From what the girl whispered as if to him in the schoolyard the next day, the man did not treat her the way any father should treat his nine-year-old child, or any child at any age.

The man was wicked. The girl said he came into her bed at night to pervert her dreams. He was dirty. He did things to her she had no words for, it seemed, only tears and more tears. Because she was a child, Elias wanted to believe her sad story…and the girl was not afraid when he revealed himself or afterward. This had never happened to him. Not since he became what he was in exchange for eternity. Had she been touched by the gods or forsaken? Her dark round face shone. The checks of her uniform emitted their own light….

Ah, to be human again, or something very like it, to feel the heat of an overproof sun, and matter to people in a way their stories about you would never allow. He had told Anansi the last time he petitioned him about his situation that he wanted to be thought of as noble and good again. Anansi switched rapidly, from monkey to rabbit from rabbit to flamingo from flamingo to turtle, yet spoke with one voice for his Kingdom: "Like the Djablès without hoof, or Tiger without tail?" Great Anansi, the God of Stories, reminded Elias that jumbies were made, not reborn, when they surrendered their spirit. Crick-crack! He couldn't go back.

But Elias had discovered that his kind could still know regret. And shame, too, like now, on this street, conspiring with something terrible in this girl to make itself.

Had he truly forgotten how easily one emotion could loosen others?

He was a merchant, once, a shopkeeper in this same street, selling silk and other fine fabrics, much as his family had done for centuries before in the Orient, from Syria to Persia. In his shop, there were framed, wraithlike images of bands of men between wars, swimming in their thawbs and capped by kufis. These were his forebears. They looked serious but happy to be leaving the desert, then serious but happy to be under a different sun. When his business collapsed in the Great Recession, so did he, and he was not able to get up again. His wife, a large woman from Lebanon with long satin hair who was never satisfied with less than she could have, packed her shawls and left him; his children, well-educated, upright, and assimilated (no thawbs or kufis for them), became appalled at his apathy and disowned him.

One dusty afternoon when he was at the shop to pack the last bolts of linen, he felt his life ebbing away (what else could it have been but a heart attack?), and he let go—of all the things of this world that made him miserable and weak. He found himself still here yet as he now was. There had been no redeeming intercessor, no offer by anyone of a red pill or a blue pill. He admitted that, in that moment before the next one, before this one, he had already made his choice for endless chaos. That was his story. But Elias

also knew he had been pushed out of that other life into this one.

Maybe it is the girl and I who are alike, reflected Elias, both of us abused. What she needed was the guidance he had been denied. He did not know if he would trust any human ever again, but Elias also was what he was because a people imagined him to be that way. He wanted them to stop. He would make the man stop for her.

The man and the girl stood at the crossroads, waiting for the lights to turn in their favour. Elias rose to give the man a stumble, a fall. On her way out of the schoolyard, the girl had asked him, "Could you help me?" He never really answered.

Now the girl turned to him casually. She nodded, wiggled her hand out of the man's hand and stepped back a pace. The man looked down at her, amused rather than upset, as if she was playing a little game. Before Elias could do anything, the girl leapt, head first, into a Fairfield bus racing to catch the green light.

The man stood at the crossroads, silent, shocked. Onlookers would later say that it was his fault, that he let go of the girl's hand when he shouldn't have, that she did not take her own life but that he threw her, and they could only suspect why. Blood covered the girl's dark face and checked dress. A scuffed black shoe had come undone.

Elias perceived what remained of the girl almost smiling nearby the shoe. The small gesture could still be called that, if only for a moment longer, while blood filled her lungs and the chambers of her heart hardened. Neither good nor noble, he watched her, asking without asking, and she said nothing. She had made him a witness to the secret of his own origins. She had tricked him into accepting it, better than Anansi…or maybe with his blessing. Did the story god and the girl know all along that he would let her? Was the small gesture for him? She wouldn't say, but Elias waited for her. She had to pass over her body to join him. He would welcome her to eternity as the jumbie tribe had welcomed him.

Crick. Crack. There was no going back.

Revelation

H. A. Vaughan

Turn sideways now and let them see
What loveliness escapes the schools,
Then turn again, and smile, and be
The perfect answer to those fools
Who always prate of Greece and Rome
"The face that launched a thousand ships"
And such like things, but keep tight lips
For burnished beauty nearer home.
Turn in the sun, my love, my love!
What palm-like grace! What poise! I swear
I prize these dusky limbs above
My life. What laughing eyes! What gleaming hair!

To A Tudor Street Shop Girl

H. A. Vaughan

You, too, seek beauty. Past the unlovely smells,
The aching days, the sweet but tawdry nights,
Past all the impatient shoppers' shouts and fights,
Past smirks and saucy words and titters, bells
Still ring for you in some fair land where dwells
Your gay young dream of interweaved delights.
The Prince still waits you there amid the lights
And festal music your desire compels

And yet, each evening, must you still prepare
To meet him should he pass your homeward way;
But not with sophistry of painted lips,
Prim speech or step—only the unruly play
About your forehead of some wisp of hair,
Your happy laughter and your swinging hips.

A Price To Pay

Timothy Callender

He started from sleep in terror — and leapt up from the ground. For a moment he could not understand the noise, and he crouched there in the shadows with the whites of his eyes large in the darkness. Then he realized that the noise was the barking of dogs, and the shouts of the police. They knew where he was. The dragnet was closing in.

He looked around with a growing panic and a bleak despair knocking at his heart. He was in the shadow of the trees, but ahead of him, where he had to run, the beach stretched long and deserted in the starlight.

He could not remain in the shadows any longer, because, if he did, with the men and dogs closing in on him, there would be no possible chance of escape.

He stood up for a moment, and then began to run. His feet pounded through the loose powdery sand. He was very tired, because he had already run a long way and had had very little time to rest. Yet, there was no question of stopping, for, around him and coming closer all the time, was the circle of capture, and conviction, and death.

Now, to his left, he saw the first lights of the torches fingering through the trees. He was running closer to the edge of the sea now where the sand was firmer, and he doubled himself over and prayed that the lights would miss him. The trees were intercepting their search and, for the moment, he was safe. But now, to his right, where the trees thinned out and disappeared, he saw the dots of light wavering from spot to spot, and he knew that they were coming up from ahead of him also. Behind him, the barking of the dogs sounded even louder. How far behind? Three or four hundred yards? He could not tell.

The only opening was the sea. He thought of this with a sort of surprise that he hadn't thought of it before. Still running, he turned his head and saw the rocks, heard the seething of the water over the long low platform of sharp coral stretching submerged out into the dark. He hesitated, and, as he did so, a torch, clearing the trees, stabbed the darkness over his head and fell upon him, etching him out clearly against the backdrop of the white sea.

"Stop," a voice shouted, and he froze in the glare of the light.

Then he turned, leapt out of the light, and plunged headfirst under the water, straightening out as quickly so as to avoid disembowelling himself upon the ragged teeth of the reef. The waves surged around him and already his lungs were bursting and his ears were pounding, for he had been almost out of breath when he took the dive.

He came up out of the water behind a rock which shielded him from the glare of the torches and this afforded him a little breathing space. Further out to sea he could discern a large cluster of bigger rocks, and he felt that if he could only reach them, he would be relatively safe. He was gauging the distance towards the rocks, when he heard voices, and he knew that the police were coming out into the sea, walking upon the platform of reef; and, as he looked, light gleamed whitely on the water, and jerked around from rock to rock, trying to spot him.

He took a deep long breath and plunged under the water again. Scraping his knees every now and then, he slowly worked his way towards the cluster, averaging his progress by the number of strokes he made. He surfaced again, and a beam of light skimmed over the spot where he had just come up. It was now moving away from him. He dived again. And now he reached one of the rocks that formed the cluster. He reached out and grabbed a sharp jutting portion of it. The insweeping waves threw him against it and bruised his body, blooded his gripping hands, but he did not lose his hold. He remained there whilst fingers of light patterned their search upon the sea and the sky and the rocks, and he shivered from fright and fear that, after all, he might not be able to escape them.

Three thousand dollars, he thought. That was a lot of money. That was the price they'd set on his capture. A lot of people will be looking for me in the hope of getting that, he thought. Three thousand dollars!

He stiffened and looked up. Above the noise of the waves on the rock, he could distinguish men's voices. And now he could hear the scrabbling noise of someone clambering up on the rock. He drew in his breath and pressed his back against the jagged side of the rock, waiting, his eyes staring upward. The rock rose behind and above him as he gazed from its base upward to the top edge silhouetted against the dark blue of the sky. He saw a pair of heavy boots, black and sharp against the sky, descending. He held his breath more deeply and his fingers clawed upon the rock behind. There was a splash. The policeman had dropped upon the rock-platform below, and staggered as he landed, the light of the torch dancing crazily around at the impact. And then... the torch dropped from his hand into the welter of the waves. The policeman was close to him, so close that he could touch him, but the torch was gone, and the policeman couldn't see in the overhanging darkness of the rock.

The policeman swore under his breath, then shouted "Hi! "

"Hinds? " someone replied.

"Yeah. I loss my light, man. "

"You ain't see nothing? "

"Hell, I don't know where he could have gone. I thought I was in front of him. You think he gone back in the opposite direction? "

"He was running this way, man. "

"So the smart thing to do is to head the other way as soon as he get in the water... "

"You might be right. Hell, why I ain't think of that before? "

"Hold on. I coming up to you. This place dangerous, man. A man could slip off one o' these rocks and drown easy, easy."

"Well, come up and lewwe go. We going have to wait till morning. We can't do nothing more now. "

The policeman scrambled up. The voices receded. The sea pounded on the rock as before.

The man waited for a few moments. Then he walked gingerly along the treacherous platform and slipped into the water. In the distance he could see faintly the retreating figures of the policemen. Under cover of the rocks, he headed for the shore. He swam warily, for the sharp teeth of the reef were not easy to avoid.

At last he reached the shore. The barking of the dogs had receded into the distance, and he ran along now, all caution gone.

"I don't want to have nothing to do with it, " his brother said. "That is your own business. It was only a matter of time before this sort of thing happen. You was a blasted thief all you life, Franklin, and now you reaping the rewards."

"All right, Joe, I is a thief, yes, but that isn't mean I is to get hang for a thing I didn't do... "

"You trying to say you ain't kill her? Man, read the papers. "You should see what they saying 'bout you. You up to your neck in trouble this time."

"But, Joe, you got to help me. Blood thicker than water. You can't let them get me for a thing I ain't done. "

"Look. You may as well stop saying that," his brother said. "Read this." And he threw a newspaper over to the hunted man, who took it and scanned it with terror-haunted eyes.

The headline said KILLER FORDE STILL HUNTED BY POLICE.

It told the world that he had killed a woman and that he had no chance to condemn or save himself.

Franklyn crumpled the paper into a ball, and threw it, in a sudden spasm of frustration, violence and fear, away from him.

"Everybody got Franklyn Forde class up as a murderer, " he groaned, "and, Joe, I ain't do it. You believe me, Joe, ain't you?" His eyes searched his brother's face in hope, but Joe's eyes were cold and hard and his lips compressed.

"Listen, you fool," Joe said, and suddenly his expression changed. Tears blurred his eyes, and he wiped them away brusquely. "We grow up together, and you know how we mother try her best. And you had to turn out so. Time and time again I tell you was to behave yourself, 'cause after all, you is my little brother. But no, you won't listen. And now you running away from a murder charge. And I ain't in no position to help you. The wife in the next room there sick. She sick bad bad. And I been seeing hell lately. The grocery bill over a hundred dollars now and the man say he ain't giving me no more credit. The children hungry. They gone school today without tasting a thing this morning. Look at the old house. Falling apart. I in enough trouble already, and now you can't find nowhere else but to run here. You want me to get you out o' the island. You only out to preserve your own life and you don't care what happen to me once you get 'way. The police can ketch me and lock me up, and it won't matter a dam to you."

"That ain't true, I only axing for a break, Joe. You won't never have to worry 'bout me no more. And you got to understand it is a mistake. I ain't kill nobody. I ain't done nothing to die for."

"You still lying?" Joe suddenly shouted. "You insulting my sense with that stupid lie?"

"I ain't do it." His voice was shrill with the need to be believed, to be believed if only for a moment. But his brother's face had resumed its former expression. It was like stone.

"I only went in the room to steal, I telling you. I search round and the woman sleeping on the bed. I ain't touch her. And then... I hear somebody else come in the room. The woman own husband. I had was to hide. And then *he* stab her. I watch him.. bram, bram, just so... and she scream out and she husband run. I jump up and run to her. I pull out the knife was to see if I could save her, and the blood spatter all over my clothes... you never see so much blood... and then everybody rush in and hold me. I ain't know how I manage to get away. I tell you is the same man got the police hunting me that kill the woman."

"Look, man, you want to get out this island?"

"Yes, yes, yes..."

"Why you don't tell your own brother the truth then?"

"I tell you I ain't kill nobody..."

His brother suddenly leaped up and struck him. He fell on to the floor. His brother leaned over him and slapped him back and forth across the face. "Tell me the TRUTH, boy. I want to hear the TRUTH!"

"What I tell you is the truth, Joe," he said trying to keep the panic out of his voice, the panic that kept hammering at his brain. "I ain't kill no woman."

His brother hit him again. And again. He opened his mouth to make another anguished protest, but he saw his brother's eyes, and the denial froze on his lips.

"All right, Joe," he sobbed, "I killed her, only I didn't mean to. I kill her. You satisfied? You going give me a break?"

They walked along the beach, their eyes darting from side to side with the fear of discovery in their minds.

"How far the boat-shed is from here?" Franklyn asked.

His brother pointed to an iron-corrugated roof among the trees. "Is here I keep my boat."

"Other people does use it?"

"Nobody there now. They fishing. I only stay home 'cause Sheila so sick. I wish I had the money to buy the medicine for her..."

I sorry, man, I wish I had some to give you."

All these years you t'iefing and yet you poor like me."

"Is life."

"You even worse off now. You is a murderer too."

Franklyn said nothing, but he was full of hurt when he saw his brother look at him that way.

Silence. And Joe was thinking again: suppose the police come to question me! After all, I am his brother, and the police will surely come. I don't want to get into serious trouble like that. And my wife, perhaps dying, and my children starving.

And Franklyn was thinking: What sort of chance I got, with three thousand dollars on my head. Is a wonder nobody ain't recognize me so far...

"This is the shed," Joe said at last. The boathouse was dark and gloomy inside as they entered. "The fishing boat there," Joe said. "It old, but it can get us where we going. Wait here now till I come back. I got to make sure everything clear."

"O K. Joe. Thanks for doing this for me."

Joe didn't answer. He looked at Franklyn for a moment and shook his head slowly. Then he walked out into the sunlight and down the beaten path that led to the village. After he was gone Franklyn shut the door securely and sat down to await his return.

Joe was gone a long time. When finally Franklyn heard a knock, he was relieved, but cautious. He waited until he heard Joe's voice call "Franklyn!"

Franklyn unbolted the door.

And then they were upon him and he went down under a mass of uniforms and clubs, screaming and struggling, as they pinioned his arms and dragged him roughly to his feet.

He snarled like a wild animal, and over the heads of the police in the doorway he saw his brother, his brother who had betrayed him. And, as he strove to get to him, shrieking out curses, someone hit him across the mouth, and they dragged him out into the open, and towards the waiting van.

Town considers herself from the direction of the bay

Linda M. Deane

Everything
from this bright
squint of bay

this afternoon
of unforgiving
angles, this hard
slap of sun right here

with its fire-walk
of tangled lines
in the sand.

From this
brittle promise
of escape

where the land
throws a curve
and, curving,

cannot help
but note
its own shape

cannot help
but play
at backing-back

cannot help
but catch
its own
idle gaze
and the sea's
complicit kadooment.

Wuk-up artists
could learn
a ting or two

from this
shiftless, shifting
coordinate

with the sargassum
somehow drifting
clear of the dreaming

arc of flat,
polished stones,
each one free to ride
its rhythm out

and sigh
before it dips
one last time
beneath the waves
that fashioned it.

Yes—

from that dappled,
rippling spot
where light tricks out
the blues-in-green—

in perfect imagining; everything

(the pebble too, of course, skipped
from the shore like a boss).

From this blinding lick of bay,
is it eye that fails, or memory?
Or sun just beastly overhead?
Everything's familiar, everything I recognise

except myself.

You Another Country

Esther Phillips

You are yourself another country;
your own prime meridian.
"It's easy," you said, " here's the key."
So I took courage and entered
thick forests, borders, pathways turning
and turning on themselves.
I tried to track you where your light
seemed brightest: your monument of thought.
Meteors clashed there, time shifted. Black holes
spewed out destinies of a New World.

I searched for calmer spaces.
Somewhere inside these tangled forests
there must be a tract where sunlight falls,
soft rain nurtures green shoots, and the sound
of the wind as it rises is the call of a heart—

Not every journey ends at Heartease.
Another mettle forges some pathways:
an axis underlies each turning
and friction lends its radiance
to the shadowy places. The seeker learns
to shape her own heart's harbour.

But you are not all forest.
You're unexpected springs where lines
still intersect. And all along your landscape,
meteor trails lay claim to Imagination,
that sovereign state where kindred souls thrive best—
You are a country worthy of habitation.

Night Of The Alba

Esther Phillips

The audience sees you standing
behind the podium, but I know
you've long flattened the walls
of the room; you've gone leaping
across the Caribbean Sea.

There you spin and toss the islands.
Like a fuller's earth you filter out
the slag of insularity, the waste
of creeping nationalism
until one shining stretch remains:
one place with one foundation,
one home named Region.

The crowd's applause signals your return.
O Captain, your sea-legs are weary.
You make your way towards me,
grasp in both of yours, the hand
I'm holding out.

You're anchored.

Reading Independence Day, Barbados

Mark McWatt

(For Kamau)

When I open the text of *Independence Day*,
as usual I skip the official blather
in the front, not bothering to look for
familiar names in the epistles dedicatory;
I flip past the tedious parades
of important citizens in upper case bold —
theirs is a story too often told
to captive school children and the assembled ranks
of those faithful to all the forms,
now receiving their official "thanks".

Instead I find, in some small middle chapter,
the empty beach of a page
with a slender column of writing
down one side, like a Brathwaite poem,
like a fringe of trees behind the naked
sand and the lapping waves.
Independence morning:
the children come dancing
down and imprinting with their feet and hands
the joy of a holiday in the sand;
the dragged cricket bat, the surfboard's skeg,
the old dinghy's battered keel
all cut the name of freedom
into memories I can feel...
I leaf past pompous buildings
festooned with fading bunting
that won't come down until it's time
for the Christmas lights;
I avoid the television's formal frown
and the jingoistic delights
of the pages of National Culture...

I find instead a lonely paragraph
near North Point, on sea cliffs
where I hear through my planted feet
the primordial boom and shock
of the clash between eternal wave and rock —
the same as was heard
by Arawak, by planter and by slave
arriving at this end of their island's tether...
I delight in the imagined echoes
of their passing, now mingled together
in the deep mutter of the undermining sea;
I savour its comforting, ironic harmony
on this two thousandth-and-whatever page
of the guilt and glitter of history.

I leaf along the north-east coast
not noticing the paper-cut from Pico Teneriffe
until the salt spray stings
near the pages of Cattlewash. There
I find the sand's wide palimpsest
inscribed at evening with a single trail
of footprints beside a strange, sinuous hieroglyph -
as if a sea-serpent and its master
had passed that way.
Further along the mystery is solved:
I come upon a lone reef-fisherman
dragging in the sand his metal spear
on which is impaled a cluster of sea-cats.
He heads home into the evening glow
of his own ageless contentment.
It is time. I too must go,
follow the sun across those ancient hills.
As I drive through the familiar clauses,
the intimate winds and hollows of the centre,
I am ambushed by sudden tears
(perhaps the setting sun in my eyes?)
and that fierce love for this adopted rock of home
that redeems the official cliche
as I close the book:
My freedom. My Independence day.

The Sisters

As ujal i was at the table topic tryin to sort out the pages of some translation of somebody's work . an african epic or long-poem perhaps. It was like everything i tried to do. to finish to ac-complish. cdn't get page or word or figure splashes into place. and my little sister at the nxt table close to me. had given up try-in to get me pay some attention to her and had turned to her hymnbook and was happily humming and reeding from its free. < dom pages. i knew that she was lonely in the same sea way that i was lonely at this woruk i cd not fish nor finish. But soon she get absolve into her own lovely reedin. And soon her other older sis-ter who was on the further side of her and who seem(ed) to be doin nothin juss perhaps sippin her own thots. get ketch-up in our little sister's humming and in no-time-at-all the two of them - each from their own each hymnbook. was reedin the black & wh-ite verses and then singin soffly from their hymnals. It was so << beautiful it bring pain into my heart – the same pain but diffrent that come – as ujal – as i get all miX-up miX-up miX-up tryin to sort-out the pages and finish the work i was doin. i loved them < so so til especially the little one so brave and confident and <<< peacefullness upon her . her two feet swinging happy underneath her chair. It was as beautiful as **my** side was not. Our Mother somewhere in the backroom dreaming this story o**ut** of sight

Kamau Brathwaite

Stone Wall

Esther Phillips

Near every line a Lazarus lurks.
His breath stirs the air.
Across the page his shadow,
like parched leaves, falls
for a long moment.

His stench fills the room.
You open the window
but never enough
lest you forget your own
downward journey

that says you must create
though your eyes and hands
are bound.
You wait for the word
to unwrap its layers
so only the core remains.

Your three days
are three thousand years.

Until a voice says, “Come.”
Weightless and silent as air
you move upward
from the unhewn rock
to meet the Word,
where Art gives in,
at last, to meaning.

Early, Early, Early One Morning

Austin Clarke

Suddenly, I could hear my mother's voice bombarding the small room in which I slept. "Get up get up get up! boy, you too lazy! You think the morning waiting on you? get up and get! The sun almost half-way up in the sky, and you in there still sleeping? This is Easter Morning! blessid Easter. The Lord rise-up outta Hell long long time, so you get up, too!... and don't forget to clean out the pig pens and the sheep pens. 'cause yesterday morning you didn' clean the pig pens proper', and you left back all my precious milk inside them sheep breasts. Come, boy! half the morning gone already! So get up!

She had hardly taken a breath in all this time. I listened to the beautiful mountains and valleys of her surging voice, and laughed inside my heart. I was already awake. I had been awake for about three hours. I could not sleep. I could smell the fresh delicious smells seeping under my door from the kitchen: the roasted pork, the great cakes, the fruit cakes, the sponges, the bananas, the golden apples, the rum and the sweet drinks and the new coats of varnish and polish on all the furniture in the house. This was Easter in our house. Everything was cleansed. Even the pig pens were given a clean white resurrection coat of freshness; and the front of the house was sprinkled with white marl. Everything was new, was clean, was virginal. My new clothes had been bought months before; and my mother had pressed them many times over, and had hooked them on a hanger on to a nail, high in the ceiling of her bedroom – where they could be seen, but not touched. Every chance I got, I would watch them: the seams in the short grey-flannel trousers, keener than a new Gillette, the sea-island cotton shirt pressed without a wrinkle or blemish and, rich and creamy as milk from our sheep; my cork hat, white as snow, (although no one in our Village knew what snow was, except having seen pictures of it in a book; or in the foreign Christmas cards which trickled into the Village from Overseas), and stiff as a dead man with Blanco; and my shoes like two mounds of black pitch, and shining, Lord Lord Lord! like nobody's business. And the tie. My mother never trusted her fingers to tie my tie: and she never trusted mine either. So,

I always wore ties, ready-tied, with an elastic band around my neck. All my ties had a savage stripe in them. This was my Easter outfit: new and clean from my underwear out.

I would be wearing to church this morning, at five o'clock. This was to be my first day as a choir boy in the Cathedral. No achievement of mine, in my eight years, had made so great an effect on my mother! Not even when, at seven, I had successfully fought off five girls, all sisters, with a thick piece of sugar cane. Not even when I won the long distance race at the church outing. Not even when she and my step-father came home tired as dogs one afternoon, to find that I had cooked a meal for them – a meal which I wanted to stand out as a single landmark; but which they interpreted as a boast, with the result that I was cooking their meals, every afternoon since then.

"Boy! You heard me say morning here? Well, get up!" And then I heard her opening the window of her bedroom, and talking to the darkness outside. "Lavignia! Lavignia? You sleeping, too? What time that clock o'yourn saying, darling? This blasted boychild I have in here still sleeping, thinking that the morning waiting 'pon him... the sun all up in the skies already! What time it saying? Thanks." And she closed the window with a bang, and suddenly, I could hear Lavignia's voice no more. And the barking of the dogs stopped: and the cackling of the hens ceased, as if someone had shot them dead.

I searched around in the semi-darkness for my clothes. I put on the ragged cap, now too old for me to remember its original colour and shape. Next, the shirt patched expertly in many places and looking like the quilted robe of Joseph; and then, the trousers, my step-father's which my mother forgot to reduce to fit me, and which wobbled about my legs like a school girl's bloomers. And then I rolled the crocus bag and the straw mattress from the floor, took them under my arms, and went into the yard to hand them over to the sun, to dry. I had wet my bed again. But she found it out, nevertheless. "Pissing pissing pissing! Looka boy, you don't know you too old for that? You not shamed?" I was glad it was only three o'clock in the morning; that none of the girls in the Village was awake; that nobody could hear her reproaching me for this normal behaviour. And there must have been something about this morning, this Easter morning, which held her silent, in crippled awe. For she did not strike me with the back-hand slap which she had perfected with such speed and accuracy, that it landed always, in the same fat spot of my face.

Again, the pigs and the sheep were on my mother's side: they had filled the pens with mountains of their droppings. And all the time I cleaned the pens, and washed the pigs, I wondered if it was like this in Bethlehem in that stable where Christ was born; if that stable smelled half as dirty as this; and whether God had purposely made that the birthplace of Our Saviour, to remind Him always to be humble. Or whether it was to give him an inferiority complex. And I was glad that I was not born in a stable. The pigs smelled evil. And after the pigs, the sheep. Rank rank rank sheep, whose perfume

would take a soap-factory of scrubbing to wipe off. And then I began to think of my first day in the Cathedral Choir. This morning, when Christ was supposed to have come out of the grave somewhere in a country so far from my little Village, I was going to walk up the aisle of the beautiful church to the sacred chancel, and send my prancing voice all over the church in a solo, in praise of Easter. And all the boys in the choir would envy me. Particularly Henry, who was only my substitute.

"Them pigs clean yet? You 'tend to the sheeps? Yesterday morning the sheeps had my milk lef' back inside their bubbies! And you forget to sweep-up the Yard. Boy! You think you is a man, becausing you is this big Cathedral Choir-boy! But lemme tell you something. Your backside ain' so mannish that I can't give you a proper tarring this bright blessed Easter morning, yuh!" I could feel the sting of the whip in the threat of her voice. And I knew she meant it. I hurried through my work, making sure that my eagerness to wear the rich linen ruff, the crimson cassock and the pearly white surplice did not cause me to be inefficient. The sun pretended it was going to come up above the tops of the sugar canes. But when I stood and waited for it, it changed its mind, and continued to give a golden glow over the entire Village, My work done, I bounded into the house.

"You don't intend to bathe? You intends to go in the people' church smelling like a pig pen? Looka, boy, get outta my eyesight and go to the Stand Pipe and get a clean bucket o' water and cleanse yourself with, hear?" Who could argue with a woman like this? Who would dare?

Across the pitchlake of the road, the canes were grumbling, and shaking their fists in my face. I imagined monsters coming out of them. Only last week, a boy had been beaten up by the Man in the canes. And as my head was swollen with monsters coming at me, I heard a rustling in the canes, and I dropped the bucket. And when I stopped running, I was beside our paling. My dog, Rover, came panting at my side. Again, he had frightened me. And I wanted to kick his head. But I only looked at him; and was very glad he could not talk. Holding on to his collar, I went back across the road to recapture my bucket, and get the water. A few malicious windows with heads and lights in them, were open. And I walked in the shadow of the canes this time – my dog was my guardian angel now! – so they would not see me.

"I thought you wasn't coming back!" my mother said "Is four o'clock. You not riding that bicycle outta this house today, bright Easter morning. You walking to church. 'Cause I slaved and slaved on those clothes o' yourn and no damn bicycle seat and bicycle spoke' going to mash-up my labours, you hear me?" And so, it meant walking two miles, two miles of canes, two miles of Men in the canes. In all that distance, I would pass only two houses, until I approached the Square in which the Cathedral was built. I would pass only two street lamps, which seemed to have been burning since

the day the Island was discovered, and which were never repaired, and which seemed ready to go out. I would be alone all that time, all that terrible distance, with only the brightly lit church in my heart, and the rich beautiful music in my ears. You not riding that bicycle outta this house today. No passenger buses ran in my part of the Island on Easter morning. At least, not at five o'clock in the morning. And the Villagers were so poor, that only one family was rich enough to own a broken-down car. But since that family was not a Christian-minded family, I could not hope for a lift to church. I was the only one in my Village who belonged to a big church, who belonged to the Church of England. My mother, who was brought up in that Church, had recently started to attend the Church of the Nazarene, because she felt its services were more like a part of life: were more emotional, more exciting, more tragic and more happy – something like that holy day when "those mens gather' up in a room in the upstairs part of somebody house, and talk' and talk', Lord! in so many diff'rent kinds o' language' and dialects, that you wouldda think the world coming to a' end!" There, she could stand up in her large congregation and open her heart to God and to them, and tell the world that yesterday, God step' in, and Satan step' out, Amen! and she was brought through pretty and nice. There, she could testify how God helped her, when she didn' know how the hell the day would end up. There, she could clap her hands, and stamp her feet till the floorboards creaked, and she could jump up in the air and praise God. And for all that, feel as if God was really listening. But in the Church of England, she was regimented to a sit-and-stand exercise of dull droning religious drilling. And she always complained that she did not understand one word of the Word the minister was preaching. He used words that simple common, poor people like my mother, could not understand – as if there was some conspiracy with the Word of God. And never, never, had anyone stood up in the Church of England and said, "Amen!" to God. It was such a strange church to her!

My mother then began the careful ceremony of dressing me. My hair was ripped by the comb, which this morning seemed too fine to plough the tough roots of my rebellious head. And each time the plough stuck, my mother cursed and said she didn't understand why the hell I couldn't have good decent black people hair like everybody else. After the combing, came the greasing. My hair would shine like the stars in the heavens. Then the powder under my arms, and the Bay Rum to make me smell "nice and proper." And the new silk vest with the price tag still on it. And then the underwear. And all these things she herself dressed me in, suspicious always, that I would destroy them. At eight years of age, she did not think I was fit to dress myself on an Easter morning to venture into the powerful Church of England's God. On went the three-quarter grey stockings, with a rim of blue and black. When I reached under the bed for my shoes. I heard her warning voice in my ears: "No no no no! You not mashing-up them shoes! You putting on them shoes, last thing! I want them shoes to return inside

my house without one bruise, you hear? Things too damn expensive these days, boy! And if I see a mark on them, well, God help you, hear?" And she meant it! I had suffered because of this, before. And all I had been guilty of, was that I had walked in a pair of new shoes, and a pebble had scratched the tip of one. But she had examined the soles of the shoes, and had decided that I had not walked in them "proper", that I had walked too much on the right side of the heels. This time, she would take no chances.

My shirt was the next piece of vestments in this ceremonial robing. I was made to stand like a piece of wallaba tree-trunk, not breathing, while she put my arms through the shirt, and buttoned every button herself. I could smell the richness of the cotton, and feel its warmth on my washed body. The ready-tied tie went on next, and then the trousers. Carefully, I put one leg through, and then the other, making sure not to touch the trousers themselves. She pushed the shirt gently into my trousers, and snapped the belt. Only my shoes remained! But I knew what to expect. For weeks she had made me drill about in the house, walking on old newspapers so that the soles would not be soiled, stretching the shoes which she always bought too small. I could never understand why. And even although she insisted that my feet were too big, that "big shoes don't look nice 'pon a little boy' foot", I could not really imagine that my mother would purposely force me into these undersized shoes, just for the sake of this belief.

But I inhaled deeply. I rested my hand on her shoulder as she commanded me, balanced myself on one leg, and got ready for the punishment and the torture. The shoe was too small. But that was not the point. It looked neat. My toes went in. I could feel a savage sting against my instep. My heel suddenly became as long as a cucumber, and it refused to go in. And as I touched the back of the shoe to see what could happen, my mother shrieked: "Good God, boy! Don't step on the back o' the shoe! You want to throw my money down the drain? You mashing it up. And suppose I have to take them back!" But I knew she would never take them back. Intransigence would never permit her pride to allow me to take them even to the shoemaker across the road for a stretching. I would have to make my feet get smaller. Not the shoes stretch bigger! " Come come! Eat this little food." I pulled a chair out from the table, and was preparing to sit, when I heard her voice again. "Boy! I didn't tell you to sit down and eat! Not in them trousers what I slaved and slaved so hard over, to press and make look nice for you, like if you is somebody decent! Stand up! Stand up and eat. It can't kill you!"

And so, I had to stand up and eat the little food: about two pints of green tea, warm and thick and rich with sheep's milk; a loaf of bread as big as a house, and a wedge of roast pork, enough for two people; and a banana. My mother believed in bananas. They "make your skin nice and smooth", she would say. I could soon feel the heavy load in my belly; and I felt good. I would wear any shoe now. Even a size Seven, instead of a Nine. "Come come!" she said, "Belch! Belch! You belch good and proper', while you

home. 'Cause I don't want to hear that you belch-out in public, in the people' church, or in the street, like if you don't have no manners, hear?" And I granted her her belch. A smothered, respectable belch, which although it did not quite satisfy her, yet it made her say nothing, since it was some assurance that I had already belched at home.

Now, the shoes! My hand was resting on her fat shoulders. I was balancing all my weight on my left foot. My right foot was said to be slightly larger than my left foot – although she never told me why. I knew the shoe would never fit. But I was not such a fool as to tell her so. "Put your weight on your instep, boy, do! Don't put all your weight on the whole shoe, 'cause the shoe won't go on, then!" Exasperated, she grabbed my foot, and forced it into the pincers of the shoe, while I remained silent, and in agony, "Hold there! Don't you move!" she commanded. And she left me. Coming back with the large pot spoon which we used as a shoe horn, she said, "Push! Push hard! Don't mash-down the instep. Push hard boy, like you have life!" The more I pushed, the smaller the shoe became. My face changed from black to blue to purple. Still, my judgement warned me not to comment on my pain, and certainly not on the smallness of the shoe. She would never believe. "Push! You pushing? Or you standing up there with your face like some ram goat?" At last, through some miracle, the foot went in. Never to come out again! Lord have mercy, I prayed in my heart, as the pain was already whizzing through my body. When the other shoe was rammed on, I was sweating. The perspiration stuck my sea-Island cotton shirt to my back. And she noticed it, and wanted to know why I was sweating. "You intends to sweat-up this clean shirt I just put on your back, boy?" I tried to stop sweating, tried hard, as if to stop it, I had only to turn off a faucet. "Walk off! Walk off, and lemme see how the shoes look on your foot, boy!" I held my breath, pushed my chest out, and asked God for strength. The shoes crucified me. I would never be able to walk on the smooth marble in the Cathedral. But I wanted to be at church this Easter morning. This was my Easter morning; and a simple thing like a biting shoe was not going to stop me.

"Okay! You ready now," she proclaimed, And she dusted my handkerchief with some perfume, tucked it into my shirt breast pocket and secured it with a gold-coloured small safety pin. "Now, turn 'round, and let me see you. Boy, you look real good! You look just like the white man at the Plantation' son. Just like a little doctor. Now, I want you to grow up fast fast, and be a doctor, hear?" And I knew that if I did not answer, she would want to know why. "Yes," I said, wishing that I was already grown-up, and was thousands of miles from there. She looked at me again and again, and then she took me into her bedroom, and showed me my reflection in the life-sized looking glass. Back in the living room, the white, sparkling-white Blanco-cleaned cork hat, with its green undersides to field the driving rays of the sun, was clamped on my head. I was now ready for the Easter world!

"Since you not riding that bicycle outta here this blessid Easter morning, I going to give you twelve cent', to put in your pocket. Now, walk down. I want you to look fresh when you enter that Cathedral Church, so that when people look at you, they could know you is somebody' child. Now, seeing that it is Easter, and you have friends, you must buy a penny in sweets... no, you hads better buy losengers to make your breath smell nice, and a pack o' sweeties... Every child like sweeties. And you ain' no damn diff'runt. And keep the rest for bus fare back home. You could afford to climb in a crowded bus, after church. It don't matter then, if your trousers crease-up a trifle. Now come back inside this house, looking tidy. Not as if you went through a pig' mouth. You hear' me?"

She put the twelve-cent piece into my hand, as if it was the last part of her inheritance, which I was to cherish for the rest of my life. I looked up at her, so large, so beautiful, so lovely and so black – a mysterious African Queen – with her hair braided neatly and long; with her white dress clutching the feminine twists and turns of her full body. She looked down at me, and she looked into my thoughts; and she smiled. She drew me close, close to her breast and her rolling soft stomach where I could feel the love and the blood pumping through her body. And she kissed me on each cheek, and said, with a voice that came from the depth of Africa: "I praise God that I didn' throw you in a blasted dry-well when your father left me pregnant with you, in this terribul world, with not even a half-cent to buy milk with! Lord bless yuh, son. You is mine, and I proud o' you!"

I was ready to go now. Outside, the morning was glorious. The sun had eventually decided to come up. And I could see its rays setting the tops of the canes on fire with a golden flame. The birds were scavenging for food. And the dogs and the chickens and the small children were quarrelling for their breakfast. My breakfast felt good and heavy and safe in my inside. "When you go 'cross the road, and see Jonesy, say Goodmorning. Say Goodmorning to Stella. And to Lavignia. I going call Lavignia now, and let her see how you look." And she moved away from me, and went into her bedroom, and called out for Lavignia.

"Why you don't let me say my prayers to God, in peace, this blessid morning, eh, Mistress Carlton? I here bending down on my knees before God asking Him who the hell he going send to lend me a shilling to buy milk with this Easter morning.

"He coming out now," my mother said, with pride.

"Who? God?"

"The bridegroom coming. Come outside, and see how he look'."

And Lavignia, apparently convinced that her prayers would be in vain, left her spiritual complaining, and came out in front of her house to see me, dressed like a little doctor.

"Mistress Carlton! this boychild o' yourn look first-class! like something to eat! Boy, you should be grateful you got such a nice mother. I hopes, to-Christ, you don't intend to forget her when you come to be a man, eh? 'Cause, if so, the birds o' vengeance pick-out your blasted eyes!"

And I had to answer Lavignia with as much respect as I would have answered my mother, and say, "No, please, Miss Lavignia, I won't never forget my mother."

"Good!" she said, and adjusted my tie although it was already adjusted properly. "Now, you go on down in the name o' the Lord, and sing that solo like if you is a born angel. Mistress Carlton!... but wait!... you give this boy some fresh crispy biscuits to help out with his voice? Biscuits good for the voice. If you don't have fresh ones, I have some. Come, boy, these biscuits does do wonders for your voice. Eat them whilst you singing, and the people in that Cathedral-church going think you is Michael the Archangel."

I took the biscuits and munched on them all the way down the road with the canes bordering it, mumbling mumbling, trying to take my mind off the torment of the shoes, and the threat of the canes. But the canes moaned, and the shoes burned. I walked in the middle of the creaking road, forcing my mind from my present predicament, and focusing it on the musty-smelling Changing Room in the loft of the Cathedral. I could see the ruffs, sparkling white. I could smell the starch in them. And they were ironed so many times by Henry's mother, that they shone; and when you ran your fingers over them, they were as smooth as glass. And the crimson robe! And the white linen surplice – all of them made to fit me, so long as I remained with an unbroken voice in the choir of this heavenly Cathedral. And I could see myself coming down the steps from the Changing Room, with the other choristers, and standing at the entrance of the church, while the Lord Bishop and his assistants waited for a few late worshippers to settle in their pews, And I could see the faces of that vast congregation: almost half the population of the Island, who came to the Cathedral in droves whenever the Bishop was preaching. Some came to church, as they would every Sunday, because they like to come to church: others, because they like the resplendent robes and the university hoods of the ministers – all colours under the sun, so pretty and so impressive and so learned! And more than once, I myself wanted to become a minister in God's Church of England, to swish my long flowing robes, and adjust my hood and hat, and large ruby-Cyclops ring every second of the service, and pour Communion wine at the rails, and mumble those few important indistinguishable words, while the sinners knelt before me and prayed to me and asked me for forgiveness, because they could not see God, or talk to Him, unless they had first asked me for forgiveness, and recognized me as His disciple. Now, I was walking up the aisle, so long and so smooth with its marble shining from the long underpaid hours of scrubbing by the church Sexton; my voice warbling;

and the men and women at the ends of the pews nearest the choir, nodding their heads and complimenting. How they raised their heads from their unmelodic hymn books, and nodded, and turned slightly with their eyes to locate the voice; and I, seeing them, raising my voice even higher and sweeter, until the organ seemed silent and voiceless as the dumb man who opened his mouth and sang aloud his soundless praise to his God, every Sunday at Matins. And then, my solo. The old heads nodding, and smiling, because they could not applaud in God's presence, in God's Church. And the organist, like an English spy, glowering at me, anticipating a wrong key or a blunder... and Henry, my solo-substitute, envious with praise. And then, when it is all finished, the choir and the Lord Bishop and the ministers walking down the washed-out, chastised church, with the congregation dumb and whipped by the sermon and the presence in the church of Christ's body, come from the dead... rejoicing, because this is Easter. And then, the Benediction said by the Bishop, and the sign of the cross which he always made as if he was chasing flies from his face; and the limp people kneeling to say a last something, a last word or two, in thanks, to their God.

I passed the first street lamp, and continued into the desolate, black morning, cramped by the thick unsympathetic fields of canes which refused to let the sun through, to keep me company, On and on, in perpetual misery from my shoes. At last, I had to give in, I took them off. I tied the laces together, and strung the shoes around my neck. The stockings, I pushed into my pocket. And then I ran, hurrying to church before the street should be crowded before I could be seen, and detected, and laughed at. But nothing happened all the way: I reached the vicinity of the Cathedral: and tall tomb stones like diminutive skyscrapers, and the trees in the grave yard of the church, and the blackbirds playing hide-and-seek unmannerly from tree to tree, and the houses coming alive... and finally, the Cathedral itself, facing me like my mother, unapproving. I would have to put my shoes and stockings on before I could cross the threshold of the West Portico. But I had to find some place to sit.

The bells were ringing now. I looked up to see them; and their laughter and rejoicing filled my heart with joy. And I yearned to be in the choir, in the chancel, singing my solo.

The congregation was arriving. Women were dressed in the white of angels, white hats, white shoes, as if they were proud to be part of this great resurrection morning, as if they had remained all their lives, new brides, new virgins. They were standing at the West Portico, waiting for the service to begin, waiting for the men to pass and whisper little controversial words for their ears. And most of the men, in the black of the funeral, wearing their suits of long-ago-black-now-purple, which fitted them like coats of armour, and walking stiff and proud in the morning sunlight spinning through the lazy mists, hovered around the North Portico, talking about the Test Match which had

ended in a draw. I could see Henry, my arch enemy, standing near them, loading his head with facts which later he would claim as his own; and with him were some of the boys of the choir. I lingered near the tall wall that kept the Cathedral from the fish cries and the whore-cries of the nearby Market. How was I to get into the church yard and sit on a tomb stone and put my shoes on my feet again?

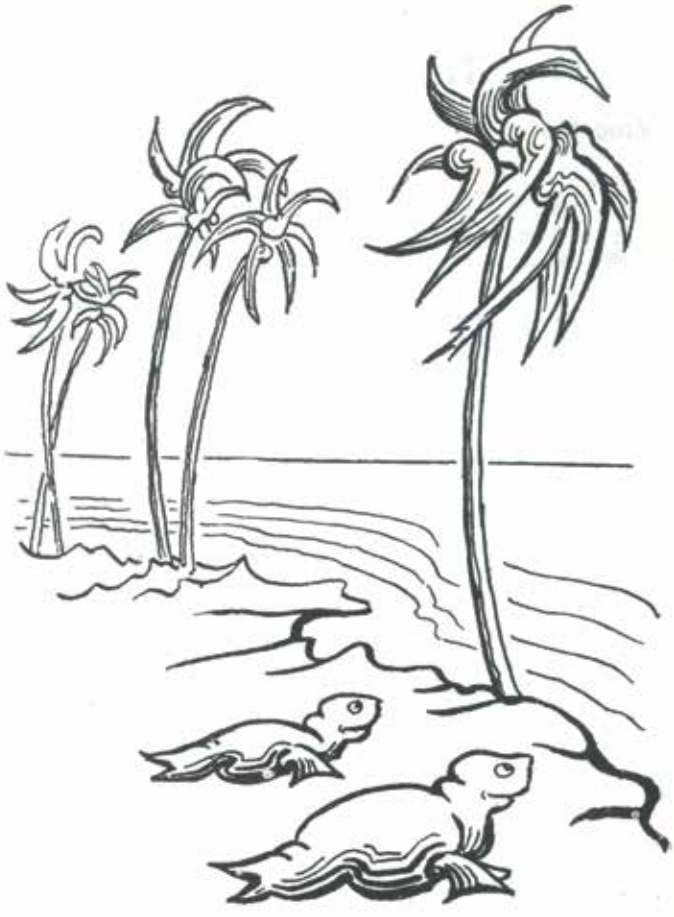
The organ began to rant and swell like a stormy sea swept by gales of Bach, breathing its powerful chords into the ears of the uninterested congregation. Everything was fresh. Everything was new. The organ was breathing now like a monster. Somebody important was arriving. From where I stood, looking over the tops of the short croton trees, and over the head of the white angel, silent and stationary in polished marble, I could barely make out the roosters sitting on the helmets of the Governor and his party. The Lord Bishop, his robes fluttering like the Union Jack in the breeze, came out to meet them at the North Portico. I could see the Prime Minister of the Island, his eyes red with sleep and rum; and his ministers standing uncomfortably in their official clothes; and the lords an ladies of the Island, all untitled, but all rich and white, coming to this old Cathedral so early in the morning. And they all seemed half asleep to me. As they disappeared into the church, I threw my shoes over the wall, and jumped behind them.

They were coming towards me now, coming up the aisle, towards the East Window. The important people, and the choir. I saw Henry, grinning into the pages of his hymn book. I saw the choir pass the multitude of people of all colours: the black, brown, light-skinned, light-brown and yellow-skinned, and approach the front pews of the church where the Governor and the poor white people and the rich black people always sat. And as they fled into their seats and into their stalls, all that was left was the wide white aisle, like a swath through a canefield, running straight out into the road, through the West Gate. There was a beggarman standing in the silhouette of the Gate, in the road, drinking from a paper-bag with which he was conducting, as the music romped and played.

And all the time, my tears fell on the clean, freshly-ironed cotton shirt, and into my shoes as I struggled to get them back on my feet. And when I looked up, and saw Henry step into the middle of the aisle, in the chancel, my heart broke. And straightway, I thought of my mother, standing at the entrance of the gate of our yard, waiting; waiting for me.

Water colour and ink] **ELEGY** *[Frank A. Collymore*

Frank Collymore



PHINNIPHIN

Frank Collymore

Triptych

Frank Collymore

I see these ancestors of ours
The merchants, the adventurers, the youngest sons of squires,
Leaving the city and the shires and the seaports,
Eager to establish a temporary home and make a fortune
In the new lands beyond the West; pawning perhaps
The old familiar acres or the assured competence;
Sturdy, realist, eager to wring wealth from these Barbadoes,
And to build, trade, colonize, pay homage to their King,
And worship according to the doctrines of the Church of England.

I see these ancestors of ours
Torn from the hills and dales of their Motherland,
Weeping, hoping in the mercy of time to return
To farm and holding, shuttle and loom, to return
In snow or rain or shine to humble homes, their own;
Cursing the day they were deceived by rebel standards,
Or betrayed for their country's honour; fearing
The unknown land, the fever and the hurricane,
The swamp and jungle — all the travellers' tales;
Only hoping, hoping for the miracle that would never be.

I see them these ancestors of ours:
Children of the tribe, ignorant of their doom, innocent as
Cattle; bartered for, captured, beaten, penned;
Cattle of the slave ship, less than cattle;
Sold in the market place, yoked to servitude;
Cattle, bruised and broken, but strong enough to plough and breed:
And, promised white man's heaven where they sing,
Fill lamps with oil nor wait the bridegroom's coming:
Raise chorused voices in the hymn of praise.

Portrait of a Prime Minister[1]

George Lamming

Parents have no idea what damage their love may inflict on children. Similarly, we do not know where an influence begins; nor can we trace with any certainty that subtle process whereby it works an effect on the choices we make. My own political curiosity didn't start with the man's interest in philosophy which dominated my reading after the 1950s.

But it may have had something to do with the boy who loitered among the crowds in Queen's Park, learning the acid and embattled language of men who aspired to be our leaders. And I had watched the riots at close quarters. Or even at an earlier date, when I feared and distrusted those white priests who led us in prayer at the apartheid church of St Cyprian's. Belleville is still a difficult memory for me.

A reflection on the source of influence is appropriate to any serious observation of Errol Barrow, the new Prime Minister of Barbados.

He has been here before, from 1961 to 1976. Even in Opposition, he sometimes gave the impression that he had lent the other office to his successor. A man of slow voice and very gentle manners, he surprises and often shocks Barbados by the things he says.

Once he apologised to an immense crowd in Independence Square for an unfortunate appointment he had made to the public service. On a similar occasion, he has lamented the fact that he helped to draft the Constitution which gives special liberties of speech to members of the House, explaining that he didn't anticipate the Chamber would so quickly accommodate such a great variety of vagabonds.

1 On May 28,1986, Errol W. Barrow, who had led Barbados into independence in 1966, won a resounding victory at the polls which brought him and the Democratic Labour Party into power after ten years in Opposition. In June of that year, Lamming wrote this tribute to Barrow which was published in the Nation newspaper. Less than a year later Barrow was dead.

I have heard him warn the poor to avoid taking their disputes into the law courts. He appears to have doubts about the honour of his own profession, and he has said so.

And yet, in person, he is the least offensive of men; easy, accessible, almost ordinary in his style of discourse. Be it fish market or supermarket, back alley or modern highway, the humble chattel home or posh ministerial office, he moves through these different orbits with a total lack of pomp or ceremony.

It is difficult to think of a public figure in Barbados who commands such a wide and genuine affection from his people. But there is a complex personality behind this veneration, and one example is provided by his relations with the Press.

> *If the media do not make you, they cannot break you. Consequently, even well-meaning and honest journalists find it difficult to secure interviews or responses from me as they will all confirm; chiefly because in public life, I am a private person. If my name never appears in the Press even if I won a prize of great value, I would remain completely unconcerned.*

This is a very revealing admission, and it says more than Mr Barrow may have intended. In the first place, I do not think it is true that the Press selects its targets with such care. The Press can destroy a career which they played no part in making; and may, indeed, do so for precisely that reason. But the passage is drawing our attention to an important aspect of Barrow as 'a private person'.

A public figure who can remain completely unconcerned about neglect or critical dismissal is making a declaration of astonishing self-assurance; a quality which might otherwise be perceived as arrogance.

And Barrow does have a degree of social confidence which is rare in most Barbadians, who always need to check out each other's origin before relationship can be approved.

It is as though he had escaped the pervasive inferiority complex which cripples the mind and imagination of most black men and women of the middle class.

Barrow has a powerful sense of his social and ancestral connection; and at the heart of this security is the O'Neal clan, and especially the heroic figure of his uncle, Dr Duncan O'Neal.

O'Neal, who was born in 1879, graduated from Edinburgh University as a medical doctor and returned to Barbados in 1924. For the next 12 years his life became an example of sacrifice and dedication which has never been surpassed in the political history of Barbados. He declared himself a socialist, identified with the cause of longshoremen and field labourers and every sector of wretched black life in the island. He launched the Democratic League, created the Working Men's Association, and

fought to teach a voteless black populace the importance of organisation.

Almost alone, he confronted the merciless citadels of white power, demanding the abolition of child labour, free medical and dental care of old people and children, a universal pension scheme, and the disestablishment of the Church on the grounds that no man should be asked to pay for another man's religion.

Barrow was the nephew, in a sense the son, of a man who came to be known as the father of democracy and who had earned that honour. He absorbed this influence as a boy and must have come to see O'Neal as the rock on which he would one day build his own spiritual house.

Barrow has this innate conviction that he has come from great stock. It is not at all surprising that many years later, in a public appeal to Caribbean Heads of Government, he should say:

> *I place special emphasis on defending the dignity and self-respect of our people, since it must never be thought that poverty is a good enough excuse for abandoning these virtues.*

His preparation for public life has another and quite different source of influence. The journey to Britain is critical in understanding the mental climate of his generation. Barrow didn't arrive as a student. Like any other loyal colonial of his time, he went to serve in a war. Crisis is a good opportunity for learning the anatomy of a society. The rigidity of the British class system would have been temporarily dislocated, narrowing the social distance between men and women of different origins. But the English are branded on the tongue, and accent immediately betrays every citizen's social formation. Barrow would have met English people of all classes, now forced into various forms of social intercourse which would have been impossible in more normal times.

A product of Empire, he caught a glimpse of those who had made the rules by which his own childhood had been indoctrinated. The next stage was inevitable. He would become the colonial in revolt. If he did not wish to be a revolutionary, it is also true he did not degenerate into that status we call conservative. For the colonial has nothing to conserve unless he consciously settles for a life of voluntary enslavement.

By the end of the war, Barrow would be a student with a difference. He was ripe for the influence of the London School of Economics, dominated at the time by the socialist theoretician, Professor Harold Laski. It was an influence which bore strange fruit across more than one continent. It was here, too, that the triumvirate of friendship, later known as the Barrow-Burnham-Manley axis, found its earliest soil. Years later, they would have settled many a discord by recalling the political intimacy of the London days.

It was a period of great change. The British people had repudiated their war hero, Sir Winston Churchill, in as decisive a manner as the people of Barbados have dealt with the party of the late Tom Adams.

The anti-colonial struggle was irreversible. London was the city and the intellectual training camp of many men who would become the dominant influence on the liberation struggles of their countries until independence was conceded: Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and his political advisor, the great Pan-Africanist, George Padmore. This was the political environment which Errol Barrow knew personally and whose influence he has never been quite able to escape. The radical tone of many of his recent statements is not new. It has a root and a line of continuity from Duncan O'Neal, to Nkrumah and Padmore and the honourable and courageous visit he made with his old friend, Michael Manley, to the Debt Conference in Havana. This could only have provoked controversy from commentators whose general backwardness included a specific ignorance of Barrow's political ancestry.

It is important to remind a younger generation in all territories that his political career is an inseparable part of the history of the regional integration movement; from his first meeting with Sir Alexander Bustamante, Dr Eric Williams and Dr Cheddi Jagan in 1963, to the formal launching of the Caribbean Community at Chaguaramas in Trinidad in 1970.

Until 1975, he had played a central role in helping to convene no less than 13 Heads of Government meetings which bore fruit in a variety of Caribbean institutions: the Caribbean Free Trade Area, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Meteorological Institute, the University of the West Indies Campus at Cave Hill, the Law Faculty, the Common Market and the Caribbean Community.

His credentials as a regional patriot are very impressive; and it is to be expected that his presence in Georgetown next week will carry the weight and authority of this personal record in the conduct of Caribbean affairs.

He would be less than human if he was not conscious of this singular distinction; for no other present Head of State would have had a comparable history of regional involvement.

Barrow has always avoided ideological debate; and in this respect he is very different from Burnham or Manley. He has that pragmatic liberal conviction that ideology should never be a precondition for arriving at agreement in specific areas which affect the human development of the Caribbean people.

His comment on the early meeting with Bustamante and Jagan is very instructive:

> *Indeed, an examination of the diversity of political methodology between Sir Alexander Bustamante, Dr Williams, Dr Jagan, and your*

> *humble servant, will disclose that ideological pluralism and a high level of political tolerance informed our discussions from the outset.*

His recent pronouncements on foreign policy confirm that he is essentially a regional nationalist with an old ambition to promote and defend the political sovereignty of the Caribbean people.

He is, therefore, suspicious of the motives which lay behind the Regional Security System, fearing that it is no more than a justification for dependency on the United States of America; and from their side of the coin, an excuse for them to make interventions in the Caribbean when certain policies of Government do not coincide with what they consider their best interests.

Barrow is not afraid of that anti-Christian virus which goes in the name of anti-communism; a shabby despicable campaign to rape the minds of all ill-informed people. In this respect, he represents a new force of moral resistance in the struggle for cultural sovereignty.

But there are certain areas of his thinking which cause friends and students a certain apprehension. It came as a shock that a man of his sophistication should hint that state-owned Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) might be abandoned to the commercial whims of a private sector which has no record of involvement in the cultural development of this country. It would be an unforgiveable blunder for him to proceed in that direction.

He has also provoked unhappy controversy by the charitable view he takes of the Guyana regime; and it is to be hoped that he will speak of this matter with greater candour than he has done in recent months. Personal friendship cannot be a substitute for political integrity.

On the other hand, he has wasted no time alerting us to the exploitative strategies of the governor of Puerto Rico:

> *The Puerto Ricans as a people have never displayed any interest in the Caribbean people...Now they have an economic problem, here is their governor rushing and saying, "We have something which will be very good for you."*

It is timely that he should draw our attention to the colonial degradation of Puerto Rico. But if he is right about Puerto Rico, he has got to be wrong about Singapore as an alternative model for Barbados.

Frank Walcott would not be safe in the care of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew who feels no pain in locking up trade union leaders. And prison is not a place we should ask Mr Walcott to contemplate.

Barrow is not a stranger to us; but there is something quite novel about his return to power. He has aroused great expectations among honourable patriots within the region as well as the Caribbean external frontiers in Europe and North America.

It is generally admitted that he has no great interest in personal power. He is not hungry for material wealth. And the vulgarities of social status have never attracted him.

These are the ambitions which normally motivate the region's political men, and apply with equal force to the appetites of many political women. He is singularly free from such distractions.

What then can be his ambition except to have a rendezvous with history? In a way, he had stated this in his open letter to the Heads of Government in 1982:

> *We have survived a long history of servitude and colonial exploitation, and there is no other road for us to take now, but a journey towards a larger freedom for all our people. Caribbean solidarity and regional integration can never be achieved as a by product of United States foreign policy.*

There is a distinct possibility that the next five years of his working life might be recorded as the most creative and memorable of his entire political career.

The Underbelly of Culture

Adrian Greene

We are a social species. Shared space breeds shared positions and practices. We call this culture.

Culture is a survival mechanism. It is a response to our needs. It provides for us. It keeps us from killing each other. It keeps us bonded and huddled together as a protection from the elements, wild beasts and marauding bands. If there is no perceived threat or need, there is no culture. When the culture is adequate the group is strong. Where the culture does not match the need or the threat, the group is weak.

There is a species of fish that schools when in the wild open seas. Once placed in a tank, with food provided for by humans and no natural predators, they break formation and swim any old how. There is no need for the bond. Culture gone.

Humans operate similarly. Individualism increases with a sense of physical security. We feel we need each other less. Satisfy a need, change the character of the threat, and you change the character of the culture.

Unlike fish we have a big brain and complex psychology. We do not only require food and clothing and shelter.

In a stable society, where basic needs are easily met and we feel physically safe, the character of threats and needs become primarily psychological. Culture shifts to focus more on the top levels of Maslow's hierarchy.

The culture increasingly needs to facilitate a sense of belonging, esteem and self-actualization. A society remains stable to the extent that its culture does this in a manner that encourages cooperation.

This is relatively simple in an isolated tribal society. The members of the tribe share a genetic and historical heritage. They develop systems to provide for their needs and deal with standard threats. Once the environment does not change, the culture does not have to either. One people, one culture. There is no popular culture nor sub cultures.

There is just “The Culture.”

Populations grow. Tribes form clans. Clans form states. States form nations. Diversity drives an increasing complexity. We face new challenges, needs and threats. Useless aspects of the culture fall away. The most successful positions and practices are retained. A new culture develops.

This is a hard journey. There is conflict and confusion. Blood may be shed as groups fight to have their culture become dominant. We identify with a culture and become one with it. This of course is a delusion. We are not our culture and our culture is not us. It is a symbiotic relationship. The culture helps us survive. We in turn give the culture life

Under the cultural delusion, we take a threat to the culture as a threat to us. It may be. That is if the culture still best serves its purpose. If the culture no longer addresses a need or threat or there is a better way, the culture itself can be a threat. If it has become ornamental, with little practical value, it is dead weight.

This is not easy to decipher. It is like the tonsils or the appendix. The purpose of a cultural organ may not be readily apparent. If we are too hasty to cut it out we may later find it had an undiscovered vital role to play.

Whether we appreciate the practical role of specific cultural traits or not, they can still feel integral to our existence. We will fight to defend a culture we think is essential to our survival. To attack that culture is to threaten my continued existence. And it may be. That is, if the culture is not obsolete.

When the environment or circumstances change the culture may no longer be adequate to deal with new needs and threats. It needs to change. Those under the cultural delusion may resist change even to their own detriment or that of their children. The relationship between man and culture is no longer symbiotic, but parasitic. The culture will kill its host.

The meeting of several cultures at a cross road presents a challenge. Each culture must develop a way to deal with the new factors in its environment. A society made up of several cultures needs to evolve a way to bond diverse groups and make them coexist. Cultural discord can become cultural harmony.

What allows cultures to come together is the fact that culture is not intrinsic nor hardwired. It is always an adaptation or an add-on. It is shaped by circumstances and can be reshaped.

Culture is rooted in human biology and psychology. It grows and branches in response to the external forces the society faces. The cultural features of a society are its armour, fashion, and weapons. They can be taken off, put down, removed or replaced.

A clash of cultures often strips a people naked. It can expose their blatant humanity. Values, attitudes and beliefs are no match for the desire to win in a race for resources.

Resting your cultural armour on the floor in order to move faster or be more manoeuvrable leaves you vulnerable to cultural penetration. Standing before your cultural opponents stripped of your cultural trappings and they the same, you have uncovered each other's deep humanity.

The sight of a bare bodied people, once clothed in thick layers of culture inspires intercultural curiosity and lust. It can lead to intergroup copulation, giving birth to a new group. A new culture may develop.

When several cultures find themselves sharing one space there is a cultural orgy: lustful, violent, chaotic, often creative. The parentage of the infant culture that emerges may be hard to establish. None of the elder cultures may want to claim it.

But the bastard child tugs at the heart of individuals from all of the cultures whose DNA it may share. They recognise themselves in it. They are drawn to it and repulsed at the same time. Repulsed because this young culture is immature, untested and unproven. It is untraditional, new. But so is the space in which it is born.

In the genetic structure of this new culture may lie the keys to surviving in this newly formed cultural space. If it does, this young outcast culture is destined to become popular.

No matter what culture you come from you will relate to base desires. At the core of all us is the search for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. You cannot help but feel what humans are wired to feel even if you feel it subconsciously, momentarily, reluctantly or begrudgingly, due to cultural conditioning.

A Popular culture is culture returning to the base level of human motive force. It falls back on that which is common to the species. The base drives present in all human beings are the glue that binds peoples who, on the surface, seem very different but at the core are very similar.

Popular culture is a reset button. Traditional cultures are evolved to mediate the animal instincts and temper them in the interest of the greater good. If traditional culture gets in the way of cultural merging; if cultural differences threaten the unity of two groups, if one group cannot totally extinguish the other, it is a popular culture that emerges to make them hold hands and sing kumbaya.

Traditional culture is like the cerebral cortex, designed to help us solve complex problems but nearly useless when confronting a hungry bear. Popular culture is a like resort to the brainstem in the face of an imminent threat of extinction of another group or the primal need of communion with those who share space.

The love of sex, drugs, battle and merriment is universal. Not even the Taliban has managed to stamp them out. The most austere societies have a bashy underbelly. The collective underbelly of clashing cultures turned up to the light, is what becomes popular culture.

It is a unifying force. Think Carnival. Out of many cultures one. Basic, base, mundane, but whole. This popular culture now has to find its own way to deal with the issues our animal instincts can cause. Traditional cultures addressed these issues, but in a different cultural context.

Humankind has not yet found the ultimate exorcism of our animalistic desires. Nor have we learned to harness them for eternal peace and prosperity. They continually rile up in the face of a threat or intense desire. Old cultural strategies must be updated in the face of new environmental and social realities.

The old ways may still find space to exist in the cracks of the new cultural edifice. They may act as a dam to stop the excess of the popular culture from spilling over. They may run parallel like a tug boat next to a steamer. They may patiently stand apart in waiting for the collapse of usurping culture. Or they may be woven into the fabric of the new cultural cloth to help make it more resilient.

But there is no fighting the new school. Some think they can approach it like a knight to slay a dragon. The dragon turns into a lovely maiden and seduces the sword out of their hands. You can join it like the Walk Holy band, and hope the your cultural immune system protects you from Pop Culture infection. Or you can try to stay as much out of its way as possible, huddling in church often for sanctuary until its shadow passes.

There is nothing necessarily sinister about Pop Culture. It is a response to a need or a threat. It is meant to save us from something outside or inside ourselves, like all culture. However, change itself is seen as threat. We are insecure with the new and unfamiliar. Over time we moulded, stretched or compressed ourselves to fit traditions built long before us. The hard work of unlearning and relearning is daunting.

Add to that the insecurity of the unknown stability and effects of a new structure. Traditional culture offers the comfort of familiarity. The new culture offers the discomfort of flux.

Nothing stays new for ever. Pop Culture at some point becomes traditional; that is, the aspects of it that sustain. Just like the evolution of nature, the evolution of culture is an exploratory and experimental process. There are false starts and dead ends. What lasts becomes the orthodoxy. Bob Marley was an anti-hero early in life and a National Icon past death. What parents of yesteryear called Banja music, unfit for Sunday airplay, is now Barbadian high culture.

Pop Culture is a pied piper. It will not reject adults but it aims to enchant the youth. It catches them before they have invested too much of their self-image in old traditions. It taps into the natural craving of youth for rebellion and independence. Pop culture helps to emancipate young minds from the oppression of their elders. Why is this necessary?

Most of us are not conscious adherents to cultural norms. We are passively programmed into cultural patterns from birth. We become subconscious devotees first and rationalise our devotion later in life. Not being active agents, we cannot easily adjust ourselves to unfamiliar ground. We are mindless agents of normalcy. The culture uses us to reproduce itself through our children. We inculcate values and indoctrinate the young, seemingly for their own benefit. It is the best we know.

If only we knew what we did not know. We can at least know that we do not know all. The manufacture of crystal balls is a dead art. The future cannot be foretold with %100 precision. The only clear prediction of future change is that it will happen.

In our effort to hold on to what is, we engage in a futile war with what will be. The drive to control and constrict the flow of culture will make a Bonsai tree of life. It may be pretty to look at, but puny and stifled. Traditional culture creates out of man a domesticated animal, not fit for survival in the wild. In an unpredictable situation we tend to return to a primal state of being.

The best way is to work with the tide of the times. You use the oars of your forebrain, to navigate the pull of your reptilian brain waves. We await the day when the generation gap is bridged by an ingrained cultural awareness that the current of youth and social growth is unstoppable.

Some have already figured this out. There is a 21st century element affecting the trajectory of culture. It has analysised the Popular Culture process, isolated active ingredients, and synthesized its products. Today the cycle of traditional culture to popular culture to traditional culture is not nearly as organic as once before. It is modified and directed by the most dominant institution created by man; Commerce.

The commercialisation of culture means that it is no longer simply a response to our needs and threats. It is more complex. Needs and threats are now artificially induced and manipulated by media and marketing.

Popular culture is being cultivated for the purpose of profit. We are being farmed. The consumer is livestock. We may have a wide pasture, but corporate shepherds have ingenious ways of ensuring that wherever we roam, we come back home to conspicuous consumption.

Popular culture, rather than being a mechanism of freedom, diversity and expansion, is now a herding tool.

Sovereignty as Barbados turns 50

Linden F. Lewis

In November 2016, Barbados will celebrate its 50th year of independence from Great Britain. In anticipation of the golden anniversary, the country has undertaken a year-long program of celebration. Each month the island provides a more elaborate, more spectacular, commemoration of national pride and accomplishment. The conjuring of national sentiment and memory is important at this time in history. It provides the body politic with an occasion for reflection of what it means to be independent, what sovereignty means for a society like Barbados, and whether independence has delivered on its promises. Unfortunately, this is not always a moment of sober reflection but rather a festival for self-congratulation, and the reinforcement of the myths of sovereignty and nationalism.

One is reminded on this occasion of another celebration, which took place in Barbados in 1989, this was the 350th anniversary of parliamentary democracy in the island. While acknowledging an established democratic tradition in Barbados, many had overlooked the fact that such a political practice did not devolve to working class people until 1951 when there was universal adult suffrage. Hence the occasion for celebration at that time was in praise of bourgeois democracy of the privilege of the Barbadian ruling class, which owned property, satisfied the educational requirement of the franchise, and was initially male, and predominantly white. That democracy was the privilege of the few was largely lost in the national euphoria associated with being the third oldest parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth.

What does independence mean to a people who have experienced this phenomenon as they approach their half-century of self-rule? For some, the idea of independence means autonomy; that capacity to make decisions in the national interest, and to assume responsibility for such actions. For others it is a national ethos, a pride of be able to imagine an identity not dictated by colonialism, to constitute a nation, to sing your own anthem, to wave your own flag, have your own motto, and to be

recognized by anyone who would take the time to notice, that you can take your place among the family of nations. Some people, however, view independence as a form of freedom. Freedom of course, always implies some notion of power. To be independent then, in the popular imagination, is to be free, powerful and to take orders from no one. Indeed, the father of independence, Errol Barrow, once boasted of being friends of all and satellites of none. History has not always been kind to this claim, but it was a bold enough assertion that resonated at the national level.

Writing at a time before Barbadian independence, however, it was George Lamming who tempered the enthusiastic embrace of the claim of freedom from colonialism in the heady days of an emerging nationalism. His proviso is brilliantly captured in the exchange between Crim and Powell in **Seasons of Adventure:**

> *The politics of freedom had always haunted Powell's imagination.*
>
> *'Independence ain't nothin' till it free,' he said. 'An' it don' have two freedoms any place . . .*
>
> *'But is what I mean. Free is free, an' it don't have givin' an' it don't have takin'.'*
>
> *Take it from me, Crim, you can take it from me. If ever I give you freedom, Crim, then all your future is mine, 'cause whatever you do in freedom name is what I make happen. Seein' that way is blindness from the start.'* (1979: 17-19).

Yet, despite the very prescient caution about misunderstanding the nature of freedom and how it is acquired provided by Lamming above, people continue to invest in the idea that with independence comes freedom and sovereignty. The question then becomes, how can Barbadians not believe in the myth of sovereignty, when it was so foundational to the argument about why Barbados should move toward independence? Another reason why sovereignty looms large in the political imagination of Barbadians is that it is a concept that is tied to the importance of territory. Territory in turn is the location of national consciousness and therefore pivotal to a notion of self-determination and defense of country. In a forthcoming article I argue the following:

> *In reality however, the permeability of national borders, the transnational character and influence of capital, the multiplicity of national identities of people, and the capacity of bigger, more powerful states to influence, intervene, and otherwise direct the political fate of smaller weaker states, all combine to render the centrality of territorial sovereignty unsustainable* (see Lewis, *"Sovereignty and the Real of the Social,"* forthcoming)

The reality is that the lived experience of sovereignty has little to do with

independence, autonomy, national belonging, equality or democracy, despite the fact that many believe that it does. Perhaps because of this popular misconception, there is such a passionate defense of the idea of sovereignty in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean.

Contrary to common belief, sovereignty is fundamentally rooted in undemocratic rule. Sovereignty does not operate outside of the practice of domination and subordination. From the outset, sovereignty is intended to promote the separation of the sovereign from the people. It is based on an unequal distribution of power and therefore perpetuates class hierarchy, and functions most effectively in the context of conflict and of exploitation. To suggest therefore that sovereignty ushers in an era of autonomy for which Barbadians should feel a sense of pride, is nothing short of a delusion. As to the notion that independence permits control over the national destiny, one only has to read the carefully constructed case made by none other than the father of independence himself, Error Barrow. In his address to the Barbados Constitutional Conference in London, in July 1966, Mr. Barrow is at pains to disavow England of any Barbadian notion of a radical political break from its political past. The following remark is aimed at reassuring the colonial authorities: "Our relations with the Crown have always been warm and it is the unanimous desire of our citizens that Her Majesty shall be Queen and Head of State of an independent Barbados" (1987: 88). Barrow felt the need to press home the abiding loyalty of Barbadians even further:

> *In our view, there can be no question whether Barbados is ripe and ready for independence. Three centuries of history answer that question in the affirmative. You have never had to shore up our finances; you have never had to maintain or preserve public order among us. Even now, without the help of thousands of our best citizens, your own hospital and transport system would be in jeopardy* (1987: 89).

Barrow must surely be aware that the above appeal with which he is seeming to convince the constitutional conference, is not so much a case about a people who feels competent to chart their own destiny, but rather it is a plea to recognize the propriety of Barbadian political and cultural practice, and a testimony to their commitment to conformity to colonial rules. Barrow was not yet finished outlining the case of the suitability of the Barbadian people for independence, he opined:

> *In two world wars, hundreds of our people have readily responded to your summons and some have never returned. The People of Barbados have never given you any cause for worry, and no British government has ever been forced, on our account to vindicate its policy at the bar of international opinion* (1987: 89).

Given the rest of the character of this great Barbadian leader, one can only surmise

that Mr. Barrow felt that he was presenting a compelling case for a people who had played by the rules and had achieved a degree of success that now inspires them to want to make their own decisions. However, if one were honest about reading the above excerpts from Mr. Barrow's speech, one would have to conclude that he had yielded to the entreaties of imperial power and years of colonial socialization. This pleading culminates with Barrow calling on the United Kingdom to expedite the wishes of Barbadians to "rendezvous with destiny sometime in 1966" (1989: 90).

It is interesting, however, that the above speech which is often quoted in Barbadian political circles, tends not to focus on the mendicancy of these remarks but to highlight what appears to be a strong anti-colonial statement at the end of the speech: "My Government, I assure you, Sir, will not be found loitering on colonial premises after closing time" (1989: 90)." On its own, this assertion appears to be a powerful anti-colonial statement, but certainly in the context of what preceded it, which is quoted above, it appears rather hollow. Indeed, this is precisely the type of dilemma that Powell, the character in Lamming's novel, inveighs against.

Barrow was not alone in this inconsistency of speech. Wynter Crawford's remarks on independence were equally perplexing:

> *Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, was the Chairman of the conference. In my opening remarks, I said that the West Indies were entitled to independence, and that it was time for the colonial system to be abolished in this area. I also said that, if the British West Indian people had to remain as colonials, they would prefer to be under the American flag than the British. This created a furore. At that time there was hardly a West Indian family in Barbados, St. Lucia, Grenada, Antigua or Trinidad that did not have relatives in America* (2003: 103).

Once again a close reading the remarks above of a progressive Barbadian politician, would reveal less of a demand to change one's political status, and more of an appeal to the logic that independence was a right that Barbadians had in some way earned. A statement of preference for one colonial master over another then complicates this point, if a people had to choose, "they would prefer to be under the American flag than the British." Colonial rule, whether administered by the British or the Americans, is still a system of political domination and economic exploitation, so that one type of rule should not be considered preferable to another. These confusions continue to resonate among those who fiercely defend the idea of sovereignty without fully understanding the problematic nature of this concept.

In addition to some of the conceptual problems with the idea of sovereignty, there are some economic and social issues that render the notion even more unattainable for peripheral capitalist countries such as Barbados. It is difficult to sustain an argument

about a nation's sovereignty, when an external credit-ranking agency such as the American financial service companies, Standards and Poor (S&P) and Moody's, essentially dictate the financial status of the country. Both S&P and Moody's have downgraded the bond rating for Barbados in recent years. Indeed, there has been a series of downgrades for Barbados from 2009-2014. These downgrades have come as a result of high fiscal deficits and a rising debt burden. Gross Government debt reached 106.8% in 2015. In general, the rating outlook for Barbados remains negative. These external ratings affect the economic prospects of small countries such as Barbados. They affect the credit worthiness of a country and its capacity to meet its financial obligations as they come due. In short, the ratings of S&P and Moody's have the effect of scaring off potential investors from the country because of the financial risk that characterize the economic environment. Your ability to control your economic destiny, to protect your sovereignty, to make decisions based on your own assessment of your needs, is severely hamstrung by such factors and external agencies over which you have no control.

The other factor that constrains the notion of sovereignty occurs in the realm of the social. Barbados is experiencing a crime wave, the intensity and severity of which it has never seen. There is a drug and gun culture that has gripped the Caribbean area as a whole. Barbados, which has long prided itself on law and order, justifiably so, has now become a casualty of such a trend. The result of this trend is the emergence of drug and other criminal gangs, drive-by shootings, sex-trafficking, kidnapping, and a rising crime rate, prompting the US Embassy in Bridgetown to issue a warning about robberies involving firearms, and a high level of violence (Caribbean 360 *http://www.caribbean360.com/news/us-embassy-issues-travel-alert-to-citizens-on-crime-in-barbados*). Granted, these developments are not peculiar to Barbados, but they further imperil lingering notions of independence, sovereignty and control over destiny and territory.

Indeed, Barbados could quite easily find itself in circumstances similar to Guyana and Trinidad, where the crime situation has so damaged the social fabric, that these societies resort to enlisting the help of foreign countries to restore stability. In a remarkable expression of powerlessness with respect to fighting the war on drugs in Barbados, the Attorney General, Adriel Brathwaite, signaled his approval of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's plan to set aside US$6 million to acquire a new sophisticated unmanned Aerial vehicle (UAV). This UAV would assist in capturing fast-moving boats and submarines, loaded with heroine and cocaine bound for the United States. Brathwaite notes: "I would have no problem with the drones for that purpose" (**Nation News online** *http://www.nationnews.com/nationnews/news/47181/yes-drug-drones*). One can surely empathize with what the Attorney General is facing. It is part of a larger problem. Nevertheless, there is no telling what else these drones

might be used for in the Caribbean. Furthermore, if we add this proposed UAV to the 1997 Shiprider Agreement, and factor in the influence of powerful capital and imperial interests, we would be able to see very clearly how the vaunted notion of sovereignty becomes severely compromised.

In celebrating Barbados at 50th, Barbadians should not allow sentimentality to color their judgment about the limitations of the ideas of independence and sovereignty. Despite the nationalist fervor with which these ideas are articulated, they come with considerable baggage, and do not deliver on the promise of protection of autonomy, territory or culture. To defend the idea of sovereignty and independence as though they represent democratic advancements is to invest way too much in flawed ideals. For small, peripheral capitalist countries, in the context of a global political economy, such ideas are even more difficult to sustain. Wisdom and critical self-refection should be the hallmarks of the political maturity of the nation.

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Health and 50 years of 'Freedom' in Barbados

E.R.Walrond

In addressing the question of Health and Freedom in the Barbados Independence Issue of the New World Magazine, I began the contribution by stating –

> *'In colonial territories the hospital has formed part of a system designed to look after the basic health needs of the poor. The public health need has been paramount, and the hospital service has remained relatively underdeveloped in relation to the size of their communities. It has provided a poor service for poor patients; whereas those patients who could afford to pay took their treatment in clinics at home and abroad'.*

In reflecting on that assessment and on our journey in the field of health over the last fifty years, Barbados has kept pace with the health indices of developed countries, still the statement remains true. The government's health system is still designed to look after the basic needs of the poor, and in spite of facilities for 'private' care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, those patients who can afford to pay take their treatment into clinics at home and abroad. Nevertheless, there have been many developments in health provision in Barbados, most of them have been positive but there have also been some negatives.

Public Health.

In the public health sector the basic services in the pre-independence era, such as near universal childhood immunization, have been maintained. The provision of potable water and sanitation services was spread to almost all households and affordable housing made available to most of the population. Unfortunately, the maintenance of

the water service has been allowed to lapse and today many households are without a reliable supply of clean water. Rusty brown water is not unusual and no information is made available to the public on the quality of water being provided.

The provision of potable water and the monitoring of food handling practices in commercial businesses, including street food vendors, has seen the elimination of outbreaks of diseases such as typhoid. Tuberculosis, scarlet fever and other personal hygiene problems such a head lice and crabs have been diminished by governments' provision of affordable housing over the years. The improvements in living conditions, secondary education for all, and employment for a majority of the population has seen significant changes in health related issues. Life expectancy has increased, infant mortality has decreased, and childhood under-nutrition has been eliminated. However, the pendulum of the disease burden in the population has swung and there is now widespread concern over an explosion of obesity, and its consequences of diabetes, hypertension and their offshoots of heart and kidney disease, strokes, lower limb amputations, expensive renal dialysis treatment, and severe arthritis requiring joint replacement.

Sanitation services consisting of garbage disposal, sewage collection and treatment have developed at a snail's pace. The sewerage service is only available for parts of Bridgetown and the South Coast leaving out other heavily populated areas. The discharge of effluent from hotels into the sea has been reduced, but the monitoring of bacterial content in coastal waters as well as other health indices are no longer made available in Chief Medical Officer's reports. The Bridgetown sewerage treatment plant, placed in a densely populated area, produces at times a stench that is experienced by motorists on a nearby busy road. An intermittent stench from land fill sites affects nearby residents and those along the 'affluent' west coast where wealthy 'foreigners' have been encouraged to own or vacation in luxury villas. It can only be seen as an indictment on our progress that recycling and the more systematic collection and disposal of household garbage remains at the discussion level for the entire 50 years of independence.

There are other health related issues that have changed significantly during the period, these include reduced tobacco smoking and motor vehicle fatalities, but there is increased marijuana use and gun shot wounds. Reduction in cigarette smoking was largely the work of community activists and occurred well before government would ban advertising and smoking in public places. The reduction in motor vehicle fatalities can be related to the rather late adoption of helmet and seat belt legislation. However, there has been a steady rise in motor vehicle accidents with the continual massive importation of motor vehicles, and the failure to introduce effective legislation related to reducing drinking of alcohol and driving. A consequential effect of the large number

of vehicles on the road is that the population gets little exercise in the course of their daily lives. This is associated with the rising tide of obesity, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Another problem that appears to have been ignored as a public health matter is the rising toll of the illegal drug trade and its associated gun violence. Treating this problem as a largely criminal matter has failed, and our governments have been loathe to discuss decriminalisation of the trade as an alternative means to control the proliferation of guns and violence.

Vector borne diseases, particularly dengue, chikungunya, and now zika, have been with us throughout the 50 years. The methods of control of the mosquito vector are well known and were effectively utilised in the elimination of malaria some 75 years ago. Yet little control is exercised until there is a public outcry about an epidemic or the country is threatened with a travel warning/ban to our tourist visitors. The public health inspectorate, that was so important in the elimination of malaria, is not as proactive as they were in visiting, inspecting and advising households on vector control.

The greatest public health crisis in the period came 20 years into independence. AIDS produced panic among health professionals and the general public alike. Because of its emergence among male homosexuals in the first instance, the stigmatization and hatred of those affected would be exploited by many in the community, including those quoting selected verses in the bible, who sought to justify excluding AIDS sufferers from all sectors of the community. Scientific evidence of how the causative HIV virus was spread, and in particular that it was not spread by casual contacts, would be challenged in the news media by well known columnists and even an editorial calling for a list of affected persons to be published. The panic within the only general hospital to which patients were admitted, was dispelled by putting in place a comprehensive education programme for all categories of staff. This alongside a multimedia public education programme helped to control the public's fears of casual contact transmission. However, safer sexual messages would be met with resistance, in particular from faith-based groups and those responsible for the education of children. It remains today that educating children about safe sexual behaviour is the only area in education where children are largely left to their own devices.

Local research into the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV has been particularly successful, but was marked for many years by the provision of antiviral medication for this purpose only. This singular purpose, justified on the grounds of affordability, had inevitably signalled that only the 'innocents' could be saved. However, vigorous advocacy for the affected continued from National Advisory bodies, and Barbados' representatives would play significant roles in the fight for HIV control

regionally and internationally. These efforts led to all those diagnosed benefitting from international efforts to make antiviral medication available to all those affected. Whilst the panic has settled, there has been no legislative action that would help to mitigate the continued stigma and discrimination of affected individuals. Barbados has clung to legislation passed down in 'savings clauses' from the colonial power; discriminatory legislation in relation to same sex behaviour is all the more sad since the colonial power has long since abandoned the legislation that was 'saved' to protect the Barbados public from themselves.

The public health threat of the chronic non-communicable diseases [CNCDs] has been recognised for a long time. While its progress has been followed by research efforts, including the establishment within the UWI of the Chronic Disease Research Centre, there has been no effective programme thus far to deal with the problem. What has emerged, sometimes with great fanfare, are programmes to deal with the end results – renal dialysis and transplantation for failed kidneys, cardiac surgery for blocked arteries, and a stroke unit. Meanwhile, Barbados has been labelled as the amputation capital of the world with the end result of more major amputations being done as patients are being referred too late for more conservative surgical attention. Advisories for dietary changes and exercise are repeated with little examination of the difficulties these can pose for the poor in the community, who are least able to give effect to the recommendations given. Fiscal policies that are intended to help the poor in the provision of food actually make the very items that produce the CNDCs the most affordable options. The celebration of any profitable business as good for the economy places no restriction on businesses that provide quick, tasty, affordable but bad choices for daily food intake. The government's fiscal dependence on the importation of motor vehicles has systematically eliminated the use of M2 - a term which would have been recognisable at the start of independence. The use of this natural vehicle, has been systematically reduced by the growing number of fast moving vehicles on the road and the provision of outdoor activity centres exclusively for the youth. The use of the beaches, once a popular activity for all ages, has been largely cut off for those without vehicular access, and for those who have full time employment by the unaddressed security concerns of evening use.

Primary Care.

The general practitioner service provided the bulk of the medical services in the island at the beginning of independence. This included a substantial proportion of the services in the hospital, particularly in surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, in 'Casualty' and in the existing government clinics. The 'visiting specialist' practitioners

would soon be faded out from the hospital as additional trained specialists in all fields were recruited. The GPs still constitute the bulk of the medical practitioners in the island and continue to earn their living in illness care rather than wellness care.

At the end of the first ten years of independence, legislation was passed to organise the GP services along the lines of the National Health Service in Britain. The Association of Medical Practitioners [BAMP] was invited to talk with the government's implementation team, and pointed out that the number of GPs available at that time was inadequate to meet the proposed programme. BAMP suggested that until sufficient doctors were available that the service could start with the enrolment of the elderly into the scheme, the expansion of services in multipurpose clinics, and the provision of free medication for the elderly, and for those who had diabetes and hypertension who had to take medication daily. The University proposed the introduction of specialist training for family medicine practitioners in order to increase the supply of trained persons in that field. The government quietly dropped its proposal but set about to implement the proposal which is now called the Drug Benefit Service, and supported the University's proposal by providing space for a GP training unit. Somewhat later, government would setup polyclinics around the island to provide public health, antenatal, childcare and general practitioner services aimed at those who could not afford to pay. Thus the GP services remain as they were 50 yrs ago but there are larger numbers available in the community. The proposal for training family oriented practitioners has been limited to a minority of practitioners. Therefore, general practitioner care remains as on demand care without the preventive and holistic care that could make a difference in stemming the march of the chronic diseases. The encouragement of the population to seek health insurance for these services has further entrenched the illness model of care rather than the path of maintenance of health that is required to tackle the CNCD's, as well as the early detection of cancers and their better and less traumatic treatment.

Hospital Care.

Hospital facilities for general, psychiatric and geriatric care, remain as they were at the time of independence. In spite of tremendous improvements in the technology of care, additional facilities, and the provision of specialist services in most fields at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the assessment made in 1966 remains. Patients have to put up with overcrowded clinics and wards, missing notes, delayed results of investigations, cancelled or overlooked surgeries, and a front line administrative staff ill equipped to deal with patients' anxieties. Private patients fare better only in that they pay for a private room, but there are no suitable facilities to see them as outpatients, and when they are being admitted they have to go through more hoops than the public patient. The result is that in spite of providing the best care

in the island for any difficult condition, and in fact having to act as the institution of rescue for other private facilities, it is not the preferred facility for those who are well to do. In addition, the rejection of the Lion's Eye Care Centre when it was already built and ready to be equipped, sent a most damaging signal to the international donor community. A similar policy act returned a failed private hospital acquired by government to nature as a ruin, and deprived the country of additional facilities, the need for which is now plainly apparent.

The governance of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, has remained a constant concern, notwithstanding the additions to the plant like the 'Specialist' block, the building that was to house the Eye Care Centre and the new A&E department. Maintenance of the government's hospitals plant has been a constant source of concern. A commission was set up to look into the QEH but very few of its recommendations have been put in place. Placing the administration of the QEH under a Board of Governance has made no apparent difference to bringing the public nearer to having an input into the institution. Actions that occur sometimes bear little resemblance to the Mission and Value statements of the hospital. The hospitals do NOT have a Code of Conduct that all staff can be asked to live by, and if a patient or a relative has a query about the conduct of any member of staff, there is no publicly known ethical committee or similar resource that their concerns can be channelled to. In this 50th year of independence all of the public talk is about how the hospital should be financed and there is loosely thought out talk of privatization. The fascination with 'private business conduct' as the only answer can only lead to the further disenfranchisement of the poorest and sickest in the community. It will inevitably lead down the path of the USA that spends twice as much per capita on health and hospital care as any of the other developed countries, and yet has the poorest overall health outcomes of those countries.

The concluding paragraphs of the article in 1966 stated –

> *'Perhaps the proposed extension of medical teaching of the University of the West Indies into Trinidad and Barbados, may provide the stimulus for integration of patient care, specialists services and nurses training. This will naturally mean that there will be a good deal of political interest in the health services, but it will be spread wide instead of along strictly party lines. No matter how much we regret it, a service that is going to spend as much money as the health service, must become involved in politics. But unlike other government services, the patients themselves can play a vital role in how good it is, if they are constantly on the lookout to improve it rather than to just take from it.'*

Role of the University.

Teaching of final year students was indeed introduced in the first year of independence, and in the subsequent years the University has had a great influence on improving the standards of care at the hospital and at the GP unit. The teaching programmes have grown to a full undergraduate programme, as well as several postgraduate programmes. Indeed, the introduction of specialist training in Accident and Emergency Medicine in UWI was first initiated at the Barbados Campus and has made a significant difference to the quality of emergency care around the Caribbean. Most of the leading specialists in the island are UWI graduates, but there is still a paucity of specialist trained family medicine practitioners. Many of the specialist services introduced, and research work done, have been the work of University staff members. It is regrettable that that the University, which has had such a crucial role to play in making the QEH a respected undergraduate and postgraduate teaching hospital, appears to have little role in the research and analysis of the issues facing the health services in general.

Politics.

The politics of health care provision during the 50 years has changed from provision of better services to that of crisis management and containment of costs. There is little or no policy action on changing the paradigm of health care provision to reducing the spiralling costs of illness care. This can be accomplished by the encouragement of community programmes for the adoption and maintenance of healthy behaviours, and the earlier detection of illness when they can be treated at less cost with better outcomes.

In summary, there have been great advances in illness care during the 50 years of Independence. Unfortunately, the prevention of illness and the maintenance of health and health encouraging facilities have not been accorded the priority they deserve. This path along with the treatment of health and illness as any other business has set the country on an unsustainable financial path. The country needs to change to an independent path of development that encourages the adoption of healthy life styles for citizens of all ages, whilst maintaining the gains that have been made in illness care.

Uprooting the 'Barbarity Time' in Barbados

Hilary Beckles

The 600,000 Africans imported and enslaved by the British in Barbados between 1627 and 1838 experienced the island as a place more barbaric and uncivilized than anything they could have imagined. This was confirmed in 1694 by an English slave trader who wrote from the West African coast that those he had captured for shipment across the Atlantic have "an apprehension of Barbados worse than we have of hell".

At the end of two centuries of chattel incarceration the legally freed Africans on the island referred to the period of their plantation imprisonment and enslavement as "The Barbarity Time". This is the term they used in conversation with the Reverend Grenville Chester in 1869 when he asked that they speak of their Barbados experience.

Blacks who survived 300 years of bondage had good reason to recall their journey as a metaphor for unrelenting evil. The island was host to a British regime in which man's inhumanity to man knew no boundaries. The colony was a corporate incubator for an unprecedented British experiment in fanatical financial fortune making. Unrestricted African enslavement was the model British investors and administrators used to set the island apart.

At emancipation, furthermore, the 83,000 Africans remaining on the island were survivors of the genocidal regime that had imposed a horrid holocaust upon entrapped Africans. With an African survival rate of less than 25 percent the island was as much a mass grave as it was a commercial success. The brutality within the barbarity helped to define the contour of the white supremacy system legally built and militarily enforced as a social culture and economic enterprise.

Barbados was the first colony in which Africans became a social majority in the Americas. This spectacular demographic profile had much to do with the level of

violence the British imposed upon African in order to assure their subordination. The military defeat of the African majority was the prime mandate of public governance. The severity of suppression techniques reflected both the intensity of African resistance and the military responses it engendered. Together they created a dialectic that determine the true nature of the "Barbarity time".

These aspects of the island's reputation were aggressively globalised. Everywhere in the imperial world it was known that the colony was unique in many ways. But the image that endured was as the place where Africans were experiencing the most severe brutalization by the British. The colony had the most developed military complex in the Caribbean. Blacks daily looked into the barrels of guns carried by parish militias, plantations police, and garrisoned imperial troops. By 1800, enslavers were in celebratory mode; that the enslaved creoles, born and bred in the colony, were believed to possess a defeated consciousness, crushed at the hands of their owners and hired poor white militias and police.

Rich whites used up their labour and bodies as replaceable property; poor whites abused them as legally defenceless chattel to be corralled and controlled. The solidarity of race and mutual economic interest within the white community sustained the effectiveness of the military complex. Propertyless whites had but their skins to protect and celebrate within the culture of black bondage, and they did so with alacrity. The fierceness of their fight to maintain freedom as an exclusive white reserve drove them to see spilt black blood as the collateral damage in the preservation of ethnic dominance.

Barbados then, began its modern journey as a place created in the cruel caldron of British brutality that led to the formation of the most racially oppressive social system of modernity. From that creation until today the society has been in flight from the legacies of bondage in search of a salvation that eludes the elites and terrorises the poor living in the tenantry. Uprooting the barbarity has been the principal project that polarized those from the plantations and those within parliament; the former representing the legacy to be lessened and the latter the symbolic of the future of liberty and justice imagined.

In all of this a nation was imagined as the framework and facilitator of this future. It came into being in 1966, rising from the ashes of a politically discredited and formally defeated colonialism. The nation imagined by its leading political architect, The RT Excellent Errol Barrow, was that it hosted a "just society", the ontological antithesis of the " Barbarity Time".

But before Barrow there was Bussa, who in 1816 led his fellow chattels and comrades into a revolutionary solution to the problem of human misery and degradation. General Bussa, as his followers called him, now The Rt Excellent, was

within an even longer tradition of seeking to eliminate injustice with arms, thereby providing the island with two traditions, two paths, two imagined identities. Together, the legacies of Barrow and Bussa represent the background against which can be measured the movement from the 1966 moment to this 50th celebration of statehood.

It has been no easy matter to convert Barbados, the first black slave society in the Americas, used as the template for other slave plantations colonies, into a free black majority democratic society, a template for liberty legislated and lived. In effect, to have imagined that this was possible, that a parliament of the people could rise above the plantations of the propertied, and set a course in the opposition direction, was to depart from the harshness of the realities considered unshakable. But, in 50 years of phenomenal effort, by the unleashing of energies once monopolized by sugar production, the majority of natives have forged a society known for its civic sophistication and community collectivism.

The discourse that details this journey has been as divisive as it has been deceptive. There is the top down diatribe in which the planter merchant mentality is said to have yielded a benevolence so bold that it gave birth to democratic institutions presently inhabited by grateful generations that sprung from the lowly cane fields, now to occupy high offices of state. For two decades Sir F. A. Hoyos told and wrote this fable, and gathered under his umbrella a cabal of colonial writers who found it impossible to break free of the ideology of elitist enlightenment that somehow pushed aside for a long while the radical efforts of the majority.

The Hoyos school of local historians constructed a theory of the colonial society as paternalistic and democratically enriched by a morally inclined planter merchant class that was enlightened and engaged with the oppressed masses. Several writers sprung up in the tradition of trite that sought to legitimize the governance of plantation power over labour represented parliaments. John Poyer, the real father of this line of writing, noted in 1808 that Barbados was a 'well constituted society', racially structured by nature that defined the varied intellectual capacity of each racial species. Karl Watson informed us in the post-colonial period that it was a 'civilized island', a place where racism was benign and a moral order incipient.

But in as much as the majority objected to the rule of the cane, writers reported from the field an altogether different, more scientific scenario in which the world today came into being on the backs of the black oppressed and its constitution created in the gutted bowels of those thousands who died, mostly bloodily, for its invention. For three hundred years the island was turned into a tomb in which Black Death and sugar profits were its two most distinguishing features. No other imagery could hold centre stage as the nation imagined emerged. Death and determination went together as casket and consciousness. Barbados was torn away from its colonial scaffold.

Since '66 the torn and tortured nation has agonized in the search for internal peace and equal justice for all. Historians, journalists and political scientists, as well as economists and lawyers, with a sprinkling of politicians, have written and spoken about this turbulence. The nation has been in a state of unrest simply because its cause has not been completed, and its founding values remain painfully in need of constant validation.

To speak of these problems of governance as current rather than historic has not been easy upon the lips. The latitude within the nation for freedom to be frank remains restricted as the concept of national interest is used as a tool to define and defile dissenters.

But the achievements of the nation at 50 have been many, mostly mighty. This is as fair an assessment as can be made within a context that enables some frankness. First, we acknowledge and must never forget, that in the same way powerful forces within the society did not support the emancipation from slavery of the majority, these forces did not agree with nor greet the independence now being celebrated. There was no broad based social consensus. There was steep opposition and a fair measure of resentment. The nation was said to be the creation of the ungrateful, those who rejected the blessings of colonialism and were willing to encourage the indiscipline of an African sensibility.

Nationhood, despite these oppositions and resentments has not failed. Barbados is light miles away from the paradigm of "failed nation status". It is a success model of sorts, especially for those willing to be firm in the desire for freedom but cautious to compromise in the interest of stability and ethnic harmony. It is the opposite of nationalism gone wild. It is the principle of pragmatism most pristine in its political implementation. Those, then, who wished for its failure did not witness any faltering but instead were treated to a persistent refinement and consolidation.

At best, the opposition has been able to hold on to relics of the old world long ruptured and set adrift. The economy remains anti-democratic. It has been most stubborn in the face of popular demands for equitable access and justice. Still marginalised are the majority black communities that know no other world than the austere. The modern fiscal discipline that has become the new theology has been their accustomed lot before and after the nation's creation. Black remains the symbol of small and insecure, and the ancient ethnic divide within the economy, despite modern manifestations of adjustments, remains resolute.

Gridlock now is the name of the game. Two major political parties, the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party that have been the principal architects of nation building within the procedures of the parliamentary order, have come to the end of the first phase of their journey. They can proudly claim paternity to the

democracy that flourishes within the national parliament, but blocked is their early determination to bring economic justice to the wealth distribution of the national effort. Both have finally been contained by the capital of the corporate elite that funds their existence and determines the most significant aspects of their policies and postures. The teeth have been pulled from the tigers that came into being with a determination to create a level economic playing field for the aspiring children of the independent nation.

The nation at 50, then, is at the crossroad. It has to choose which direction to take. There can be more of the same or there can be the choice of a new path. The former will require an indifference to public opinion and the latter will require the discipline of the power elites. The celebration of an half-century score in cricket vernacular is usually associated with the taking of a new guard and the determination to push on to a higher level. This is where the nation has reached. The scribes have done their work, and the pundits have praised the achievements of the moment. The future is now to be imagined as a world in which the youth will not live in the cultural and ideological frames and fractures that limited their parents and tormented their ancestors.

All hands on deck might be a benign metaphor for idealistic imaginings and will not therefore be used in this space. More realistic is that the nation will prepare for a new round of struggle in which public mobilization against entrenched injustices will be the norm.

As the nation approaches the centenary of the 1938 revolution one can feel the heat even though there is no flame. The shame of this circumstance is that economic power and ethnic elitism have proven to be intellectually and epistemologically unwelcoming of the democratizing impulse. Barrow's 'just society' has been framed but not filled out. The Rt Excellent Grantley Adams, who along with so many unsung heroes broke the political monopoly of the merchant planter elite, do not see from the great beyond the logical extension of their original agenda. The compromise at the rendezvous of victory has meant the consolidation of that which was fought against.

The youth, then, will have a struggle to shape their emerging consciousness in this second part of the nation's journey. Like the youth of all stages they will dream and they will come awake to truth that is unyielding. They can either fulfil the struggle of their time or they will compromise, and in so doing fail to fulfil their mission. Barbados has broken the branches of the barbarity of old, but the roots have remained alive and are exposed for effective excavation. Beyond 50 promises to be as remarkable a time as those that went before.

The white supremacy economic system, as a development model, remains as strong today as in 1966 when the broken trident came to represent many things other than economic domination. White economic rule has captured the funding

sustainability of political parties that originated in the labour movement. Black led labour parties, that had their glory days in the struggle against this culture, are now dependent upon them for large financing and the promotion of the 'good management image' necessary for electoral success. The subsequent dependence of elected government upon white supremacy patronage is the final irony of a defeated consciousness reconciled to the reality of persistent white power.

Democracy remains compromised and crippled. White minority economic rule subverts the popular political process, bending it into shape to serve its needs. Black denial and silence further serves to consolidate its grip for the long journey into the 21st century. Meanwhile, apologists for this betrayal of black rights and dignity spare no words in the criticism of those who speak to the non-sustainability of this sensibility.

The fact is that Barbados, using new and innovative measuring tools, can be classified as an unethical society. Post liberal economists are now ranking economies, not only in terms of their economic growth potential, but also by the extent to which they are open to all social and ethnic groups. The general exclusion of blacks in Barbados from the elite wealth accumulation process – maybe 1 percent has a foot in, speaks to the unethical nature of the economy. In 1900, only one of the 300 plantations on the island was owned by a black person. Today, they control no more than 1 percent of the investment capital on the island. That blacks have slaved in the economy for 200 years, and laboured under an apartheid labour regime for another century, speaks to the unethical nature of the economy on the 50th year of nation building.

Economic exclusion and the pretence at democratic inclusion go hand in glove. There is no national conversation around this circumstance. Black professionals, including bankers, lawyers, accountants, financial analysts, politicians, civil servants, and most academics, have taken this circumstance as natural, almost in the sense that Poyer, 200 hundred years ago, described the society as naturally racially structured. The relationship between silence and suppression is not always easy to unravel, but the idea of contributory subordination cannot be brushed aside as evidence of blaming the victim in its victimhood.

There seems to be no hope of any transformation in the near future. The Barbados model has become the template for post-apartheid South Africa that sees in it a balance between white power and black governance. This arrangement has been legitimised in a way that suggests each group bringing its special social skills to the table in the best interest of national development. There are no end to the lengths that some may go in order to rationalise the unsustainable.

Graham Gooding's Contribution to Science in Barbados

Frances Chandler

The late E.G.B. 'Graham' Gooding (1915 – 1987) was born in England of Barbadian parents. He was educated at the Lodge school and Harrison College in Barbados and Cambridge University in the UK. His love for science and agriculture was exhibited from early when in addition to the usual school subjects, he obtained a certificate of Proficiency in Agricultural Science. In 1934 he was awarded a Barbados Scholarship and proceeded to Cambridge University where he obtained an Honours degree in Natural Sciences , reading chemistry, botany and geology. Gooding was first and foremost a botanist, but later ventured into the related fields of agriculture, food technology and the environment.

E.G.B. 'Graham' Gooding

Gooding and others observed that there was no suitable book which identified the wild plants of the island. These "weeds" were hosts to diseases which affected agricultural crops in the region, and so it was important to be able to identify them. He therefore carried out classic ecological studies of Barbados and, moreover, its plants, with the research culminating in the definitive *Flora of Barbados* (1965) which he authored along with A.R Loveless, a former lecturer in Botany at UWI, Jamaica and G.R Proctor, Botanist with the Science Museum of the Institute of Jamaica. The Flora provided a useful tool, not only for plant enthusiasts but also for agriculturalists.

Gooding also authored several books and 60 scientific and technical papers including *Botany for the Caribbean* (E.T Robertson and E.G.B Gooding), *The Plant Communities of Barbados* (E.G.B. Gooding) and *Botany – A School Certificate Botany*

Course – Revised 1943 (E. G. B. Gooding). Many of these have been used in secondary schools, including The Lodge School, Barbados where he taught after he obtained his Cambridge degree.

In the 1960s, the Barbados Sugar Producers' Association realized the dangers of depending solely on sugar cane, bearing in mind the economic conditions in the sugar industry and the inevitability of mechanisation of the sugar cane crop, which in turn would mean that areas unsuitable for mechanisation would have to be otherwise utilized. Furthermore, at that time over twenty million dollars' worth of foodstuffs were being imported annually, and it was felt that at least half of this could be produced locally, with some also available for export.

Of course root crops like yam, sweet potato, eddoe and corn had been intercropped and/or rotated with sugar cane on plantations for years, but vegetable production was limited to backyard and market gardens. What was being proposed was a greater diversity of crops being produced on a commercial scale.

The Sugar Producers Association consequently established a Diversification Unit at Edghill, St Thomas in 1965 with Graham Gooding heading the unit. The aim was to test a number of crops, with the objective of selecting those which could take the place of cane on lands which were already uneconomic for sugar cane production, and to replace cane on other lands if the price of sugar fell further. It was hoped that the programme would result in a reduction of food imports and export of food crops where possible.

In a paper entitled "Crop Diversification in Barbados", Gooding looked at the various possibilities for replacing cane. He suggested that any replacement crop for sugar cane would have to compete in gross earnings per acre with sugar, be well suited to local climatic and soil conditions, have a ready market and be a crop to which our management and labour could adapt.

He noted that sugar production was being expanded in countries with low wages and that importing countries tended to buy on the cheapest market, regardless of whether their action perpetuated virtual slave conditions. Therefore the West Indies would find it hard to maintain relatively high prices in the face of this low cost labour and also the high efficiency in countries like Australia.

In considering a number of items which could possibly replace food imports and be grown on the lands which were expected to become available, he felt that beef was not an efficient way of producing animal protein, while he encouraged the development of a pig industry, including the production of ham and bacon, possibly even for export.

These recommendations appear to have been accepted, to the extent that decades later, Barbados has a well established pig industry, not only for fresh pork, but also for

a variety of processed products like ham, sausages, bacon and so on.

He felt that work by the Ministry of Agriculture suggested that milk production was practicable, though costly, bearing in mind the heavy dependence on imported concentrates. He recommended research on locally grown feed ingredients but felt that legislation would be needed to protect the industry from cheap imports. Experience over the years has certainly proved him right as the milk industry has experienced many challenges due to competition, the high cost of imported feed and the lack of locally grown feed ingredients.

Although white potatoes were not ideally suited to local climatic conditions, he felt that these were worth pursuing in light of the considerable quantities imported. The Diversification Unit, under his guidance, tested a number of white potato varieties, with some success. The quality of the crop was excellent, but generally the yields were not high enough to make the crop viable.

Gooding also recognised that onion was a high value crop worth researching. Here again, the initial work done by Gooding and the Ministry of Agriculture was built upon and we have seen considerable development of an onion industry over the last forty five years, with yields achieved by some of our most efficient farmers matching those obtained in developed countries.

It is noteworthy that Gooding recognised, even in those early days, that marketing was a serious constraint, and that much would have to be done before production and distribution of locally grown food was organised on a "fully satisfactory basis". He further recommended that some form of contract growing for internal markets would be highly desirable. As we all know, poor marketing arrangements remain the cry from farmers to this day. Gooding said then "it was hoped when the Barbados Marketing Corporation was established a few years ago that this would go a long way to solving these problems, but the hope has not been realised". Further proposals put as recently as 2009 for a more streamlined marketing system seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

Gooding hired some of the first graduates from the agricultural faculty of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad to conduct the research on the possible alternatives to cane. One of these graduates, Richard Hoad, an agronomist, describes him as competent, well organised and with excellent planning skills. Time would tell that he was also a man of vision who identified potential problems and recommended a number of measures to mitigate these problems. Unfortunately, many in authority did not heed much of this advice, resulting in the chaos in agriculture, especially the sugar industry, which he predicted and which we are witnessing today.

Although a large number of crops was considered for production by various sectors of the agricultural industry, research at the Diversification Unit concentrated on a select

number of crops- mainly corn, sorghum, sudan grass, soyabean, yam and sweet potato and to a lesser extent, white potato and onion. The Unit was also responsible for re-introducing Sea island Cotton to Barbados.

Although Barbados' soils are generally unsuited to growing pineapples, Gooding imported planting material and the crop was successfully grown in cooperation with the then Agricultural Development Corporation at Haggatts in St Andrew, where, like other areas in the Scotland District, soils tend to be slightly more acidic.

The Diversification Unit had no research station, so it conducted its trials on a number of sugar plantations, covering the various soil types and rainfall patterns in the island . These trials demonstrated that in spite of some challenges due to stealing and inadvertent harvesting, it was possible to obtain a great deal of useful and statistically analysable information. In fact he produced a paper entitled "Effects of fertilising and other factors on yams in Barbados" which documented these findings and was accepted by the scientific journal "Experimental Agriculture' in 1971.

Results of the unit's experiments with yams and sweet potatoes demonstrated that fertilisation and reduced plant spacing could significantly increase yields and improve quality. This was important for the survival of the fledgling yam export industry since it required yams of a definite size and shape.

Growing food crops and vegetables in close proximity to sugar cane can pose severe problems where drift of herbicides used on the cane damages vegetable crops grown downwind.. Gooding and his team conducted experiments using sorghum as windbreaks to protect the food crops. The windbreaks also served as water conservation measures.

In the 1970s Gooding, drawing on his experience with food processing in Scotland, Colombia and the USA, and with support from the Sugar Industry's Diversification Programme, successfully produced yam flakes and powdered eddoes, sweet potato, breadfruit and cassava starches on a pilot scale.

The yam flakes were attractively packaged and some shipped to the UK, but sales were disappointing. It was suggested by some that the packaging was too elaborate and made the product too expensive while others claimed that the largest Caribbean population in the UK at that time was Jamaican and they were accustomed to slices of yam rather than mashed yam. In later years, local hotels and restaurants saw the need for such a product since it reduced the time spent in kitchen preparation. But it was too late.

Gooding envisaged that corn could be much more profitable if it were grown with fertiliser and closer spacing and this could enhance livestock production. The Diversification Unit introduced a number of hybrid corn varieties which yielded well,

but were much more prone to insect and bird damage than the local field corn.

In 1971, Gooding was invited by the then President of the Caribbean Development Bank, Sir Arthur Lewis to join the Bank as Agricultural Projects Officer. He was involved in a number of projects in the English speaking territories from Guyana to Belize until 1976 when he moved on to work as an agricultural and environmental consultant with William Halcrow Consultants based in Bridgetown.

Gooding was concerned, as was Dr Colin Hudson, about the amount of land going out of sugar cane and lying idle . He carried out a study in the early 1980s where he estimated that well over 50 per cent of the 19,000 acres of sugar land lost in the previous twelve years were lying idle. This resulted in a dramatic reduction in sugar output.

Some of the factors listed as contributing to the loss of sugar lands were: cane fires, rise in production costs, government attitudes which appeared indifferent or even hostile to the industry, and government policies encouraging the sale of estate land in two and four acre lots, and associated land speculation. There was concern about substantial losses in foreign exchange and the operation of the sugar industry well below its critical mass level which would lead to the collapse of the industry. It was noted that further loss of land would hasten the collapse of the industry and no other field crops had yet been identified which could replace sugarcane en masse under the ecological conditions of Barbados.

Two policy guidelines were proposed (1) Inalienability of agricultural land should henceforth be paramount and (2) Every effort must be made to bring sugar production back to the target level, in excess of 120,000 tons per year, and to develop other agriculture in areas where it would not be in competition with sugar cane for land.

To implement these polices, government was advised to (1) retain the levy of $500 per hectare, with no upper limit, on idle agricultural land (2) revalue downwards agricultural land in certain areas, especially near urban regions (3) impose a high capital gains tax on sales of agricultural land to act as a deterrent to land speculation (4) criminalise destruction of agricultural land by removing topsoil.

He proposed that the agricultural industry should clear the idle land at their expense; lease the land to neighbouring estates; or develop new managerial and operational systems, more efficient and less costly than the more conventional systems.

As regards financing, it was felt that the initially high costs could be met from the rebate on the idle land levy, long term low interest rate loans from the then Barbados National Bank and from government grants obtained from idle lands levies.

It is noteworthy that Gooding recognised in this study that praedial larceny and

illegal dumping were practices which are deterrents to farming and that action needed to be taken to prosecute these offenders. He also recommended a system of licensing all farmers with produce for sale in such a way that it would be illegal to purchase farm produce from a vendor who could not produce a licence and it would be illegal to sell produce without a licence. It is amazing that 35 years later, we are still trying to implement a similar system to curb praedial larceny.

Gooding had a great love for Barbados and its areas of natural beauty and was passionate about the importance of preserving our environment for future generations to enjoy. He noted in 1976 "our natural environment is just as much a resource as, for example, our water and our soil. However, it is sadly neglected, scarcely appreciated by many of us and is being actively destroyed in the name of progress. Such destruction- for example of the coastline, by "overbuilding", of the reefs that protect our shores by over pollution, and of our agricultural land by speculative development, will ultimately lead to bitter resentment of the population, avoidance of the island by visitors and severe erosion of our agricultural population."

Gooding served for 13 years on the Council of the Barbados National Trust and 5 years as Chairman of the Government's Town & Country Planning Advisory Committee. He was President of the Bellair's Research Institute of McGill University and a member of the education committee of the Caribbean Conservation Association. Through these organisations, he worked unstintingly for conservation of the island's natural heritage.

The Graham Gooding Trust Fund, a registered charity, was established in 1990 and is supported by public donations. Each year it funds the Graham Gooding Biology Prize at the University of the West Indies and augments the Graham Gooding Book Collection in the University library. The Trust also seeks to continue the work of Graham Gooding in heightening environmental awareness and to this end hosts an annual "Eat Bajan Day" as an activity that builds on his legacy.

Graham Gooding died on November 24th 1987 at his home in Bedfordshire, UK at the age of 72.

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Trust Grows Environmental Awareness – Weekend Nation October 03, 2014.

Origins

Henry Fraser

"A Baker's Dozen - Critical Milestones in the Development of Barbados"

1. Introduction of sugar cane and the slave society
2. Abolition of the slave trade and Emancipation
3. The 1816 Rebellion
4. Establishment of The Anglican Diocese, led by Bishop Coleridge
5. The Cholera epidemic and the introduction of Piped water
6. Panama Canal emigration
7. 1937, the Dean and Moyne Commissions and the Trade Union movement
8. Adult Suffrage and Cabinet Government
9. Free secondary Education and the University of the West Indies campus at Cave Hill
10. Independence
11. The Growth of Tourism
12. The Explosion of Culture
13. The Inscription of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage site

1. The Introduction of sugar cane

It goes without saying that the most important development in Barbados after the Anglo-African settlement in 1627 and the skirmishes on the West Coast between the rival claimants in 1628, was the introduction of sugar cultivation.

Development was easier than in other Caribbean colonies because the island was unoccupied, the Spaniards having, it seems, captured and eradicated the indigenous population in the previous century. Sugar transformed the society, and led to the introduction of slavery with all of its horrors, and the transformation of an essentially small farm pioneering society into a slave society, which, within two decades, produced enormous wealth for the largest land-owning pioneers of the industry. The sugar cane came from the Far East via the Mediterranean and the Portuguese taking it into Brazil, and the technology came from the Dutch with the introduction of the windmill, replacing the early cattle mills. The most important description of the early slave society, of the flora and the people of Barbados, and of the sugar industry was the remarkable book by the English Royalist supporter Richard Ligon. His book A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados (1657) is an account of his three years living here from 1647 to 1650, working at Kendal Plantation, and befriending the rich and powerful. It was actually written from debtor's prison when he returned to London.

Slaves were imported from West Africa, from the Bight of Benin to the Western tip, where the English carved the country Gambia out of the area that became the French colony Senegal – from Angola to Gambia. Although thousands of indentured servants – those press ganged on the English docks, survivors of Cromwell's massacre of the Irish at Drogheda in 1652, defeated West Countrymen in the Monmouth rebellion of 1685, and survivors of the Scottish rebellion led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, were all sent to Barbados as labourers, they were soon outnumbered by the importation of Africans.

The slave society was rigidly regulated by severe laws which restricted many aspects of life for the enslaved, while creating wealth for the planters. Intermittent rebellions were ruthlessly crushed, and this unpleasant, often horrific period of our history, which lasted nearly 200 years, is extensively documented by many authors. The most important rebellion was that of 1816, commonly called the Bussa Rebellion. Another major influence of the sugar and slavery system was the ecological transformation of the island, with almost every available acre possible used to grow sugar; trees remained only in the deepest gullies and Turner's Hall Wood in St. Andrew. The neat pattern of sugar cane fields that characterised the landscape for 300 years has been transformed by extensive urbanisation and "new forest" on abandoned plantation lands.

2. Abolition of the Slave Trade and Emancipation

Although slavery owed its domination of the society to economic factors, its continued existence was largely justified by racial prejudice, and even the free coloured members of the society, chiefly the result of illegitimate relationships between

planters, overseers and slaves, remained victims of the racial prejudice well into the 19th century. But Barbados differed from other Caribbean colonies in having a larger proportion of resident whites to slaves, and a large population of poor (extremely poor) whites. Also, Barbados was unique in keeping up the numbers of its slave population by natural increase, with reduced importation, long before the period of amelioration in the last few years of the 18th century. Whether through better treatment and health care or not, is still unclear. (The only surviving evidence of the amelioration efforts is the derelict building at the Grantley Adams School, believed to be the only remaining slave hospital in Barbados.) To this natural increase is attributed a greater degree of creolisation in Barbados than in other islands, while the much greater proportion of resident plantation owners led to a more substantial infrastructure than in some of the other colonies.

But slave resistance and rebellion were ever present threats. A planned revolt in 1675 was aborted through the intervention of Anna Fortuna, "a house negro" at Prospect Plantation in St. Peter. A court martial was held and 42 slaves believed to be rebels were hanged. But in the late 18th century opposition to slavery on a moral basis grew steadily in England. In 1787 the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed, led by evangelical protestants and prominent Quakers, with the recognised leadership of William Wilberforce, M.P. Abolition finally occurred in 1807, but to the disappointment of many, including the slaves, it was not followed by emancipation. It was the major rebellion of 1816 in Barbados which finally hastened the long promised emancipation.

It was not until 1833 that the English Parliament introduced the Emancipation Bill and Sir Lionel Smith was appointed Governor-General of Barbados and the Windward Islands, to see it through. After considerable filibustering by the local Assembly it was eventually passed in April 1834, introducing the apprenticeship system from August 1st. The planters were heavily compensated "for loss of property" while the newly freed / partly freed apprentices continued in an unhappy limbo status, theoretically to become accustomed to freedom. Full emancipation finally came on August 1st, 1838. This in turn was followed by what I always call the dark century, when freedom was relative, Barbados' economy was frequently "in recession", wages and social conditions were appalling for the great majority, and hardly anything changed for 99 years until 1937.

3. The 1816 Rebellion

Apparently a rumour spread in early 1816 that the slaves were to be freed, and when this did not happen a rebellion was planned, and broke out on the evening of Easter Sunday, April the 14th. The several leading figures and events are summarised

in the A – Z of Barbados Heritage, and in greater detail by Professor Sir Hilary Beckles in his History of Barbados as The War of General Bussa. Bussa was a slave of African birth, and a ranger at Bayley's Plantation, current home of the famous British-Guyanese-Bajan musician Eddy Grant. His key role in the rebellion has so captured the imagination of Barbadians that the splendid Emancipation Statue designed by master sculptor Karl Broodhagen (and so named) is known by many as the Bussa statue! There were other key figures in the planning of the rebellion including Washington Franklyn, a free coloured man, who allegedly was going to be made governor.

The 1816 Rebellion not only hastened (though slowly!) emancipation, but it triggered a military defence system to prevent further rebellion – the chain of signal stations across the island, from Queen's House, the home of the General (now the derelict Queen's Park House) via Highgate to Gun Hill in the geographical centre of the island, at some 700 feet elevation. Signals were sent on to Moncreiffe in St. Philip and to Cotton Tower at the top of Bowling Alley Hill in St. Joseph and thence to Grenade Hall and Dover Fort in St. Peter, using a semaphore system, with wooden arms controlled by ropes at the top of each tower. The signal stations in fact turned out to have enormous economic and social value for the next century, for communicataion both ways between Moncrieffe, Speightstown and Bridgetown, especially for signalling sighting of ships, until the era of the telegraph and then the telephone. Today Gun Hill Signal Station is one of the most beautiful and dramatic visitor sites in the island, and looks down on The Lion, one of the "Seven Wonders of Barbados".

4. The Establishment of the Anglican Diocese, led by Bishop Coleridge

The Anglican church in Barbados, from the 1627 settlement until 1824, when Bishop William Harte Coleridge was appointed, was governed by the Bishop of London. According to the Diocesan History of Barbados, many appeals were made for a bishop, such as this: "It seems the strangest thing in the world, that any place which has received the word of God so many years should still remain together in the wilderness as sheep without a shepherd. There never was so large a tract of the earth overspread with Christians without so much as one Bishop, nor ever a country where bishops were so much needed." Apart from the exaggerated sense of the size of our 166 square miles, one has no doubt that the imminence of emancipation was a major factor in the increasing pleas for a bishop. And when Bishop Coleridge arrived it was with the passionate zeal to Christianise the slaves, who had been so rigidly denied the acknowledgement of a soul for 200 years, except by some unsung heroes such as the brave Reverend Marshall Hart of St. Lucy's Church, memorialised in the chancel of St. Mary's Church.

In his almost 8 year episcopate Coleridge organised the building of 18 churches, chapels and chapel schools, six of which had to be rebuilt after the 1831 hurricane! He emphasised and promoted Christian education as well as worship, and he established some 22 Friendly Societies. He transformed the Codrington Grammar School (now the Lodge School) into a genuine college, after the will (and the Will) of the benefactor Colonel Christopher Codrington, who died in 1710, 120 years earlier! Codrington College itself is a contender for one of the 13 critical milestones in our history, having trained so many Caribbean teachers and administrators for 120 years!

It can be argued that Coleridge made the single greatest contribution to the evolution of Barbados as a civil society, famous for its high literacy, work ethic, manners, morals and religiosity, while Bishop John Mitchinson (1873 – 1881) consolidated the educational base of the country during his shorter but equally distinguished episcopate.

5. The Cholera Epidemic and the Establishment of Piped Water.

It was the disaster of the cholera epidemic of 1854 that brought about a piped water supply, and greater attention to public health, with establishment of the Board of Health. Although this dreadful disease was present in Jamaica since 1851, the authorities did nothing about it, and Barbados was totally unprepared. Because of the scandalous squalor, accumulation of filth, terrible housing and overcrowding, it spread rapidly from the first case of a little girl from Fairchild Street attending Sunday School at Bethel Methodist Church on May 14th, and within a few weeks was taking more than 300 lives every day. In all 20,327 died, most from lack of water, and stories abounded of some buried alive. “Cholera grounds” were created for burial all over the island.

The famous humanitarian Moravian priest Reverend James Young Edghill – unsung hero of Barbados – wrote in his splendid book About Barbados (1890): “It was during the prevalence of cholera that the utter worthlessness of our water supply was made manifest, and Mr. J.W. Clarke took advantage of the revelations of the time to urge his scheme for the supply of Bridgetown with water. There can be no doubt that one of the results of the cholera was to advance the scheme that had been put forward before, with little good result, and that to the cholera we are indebted, in no small degree, for the Bridgetown Water Company as it now exists. It was, in a sense “the silver lining in the cloud of cholera”!

Indeed, it was seven years later that piped water was first brought into Bridgetown, from the Newcastle Spring, and celebrated with the erection of the Fountain in National Heroes Square (then Trafalgar Square). It was supplemented by the spring at Codrington College, but after a landslide in 1880, Bridgetown once more had no water

for 12 days! Fortunately, the underground lake at Bowmanston was discovered and by 1890 two pumps were installed, each of half a million gallons capacity, in a 232 foot deep well. Many other wells were brought into use, including one at the "New pumping station" near Pool in St. John – that dramatic, Lansdun-like derelict building between the abandoned fields of the CLICO plantations. And we now have newly discovered wells in St. Philip rescuing our suffering brothers and sisters in the North. So although demands have outstripped supply in our current crisis, there is no doubt that cholera changed the scene, and water brought better health.

6. Panama Canal emigration

Some 2,000 Barbadians emigrated to Panama to work on the construction in the first attempt to build a canal in the 1880s, but some 20 to 30 times that number followed between 1904 and 1914, for the second attempt. By the time of its completion in 1914 many had lost their lives. Many sent money home but settled there afterwards (more than half, it is estimated) while those who returned were able to buy land and property, and to qualify for the franchise. A bold effort was made in buying plantations, but some of those purchases remain in a legal tangle to this day.

Conditions were extremely difficult in "Hell's Gorge"; manual workers used pick and shovel, in the presence of explosives which killed many. Thousands died of mosquito borne diseases – malaria and yellow fever. And our workers and the Jamaican workers earned less than the white Americans. This blatantly discriminatory practice was defined by the terms the 'silver men' for the Jamaicans and Barbadians and the 'gold' for the Americans.

But the Panama migration provided a huge valve or outlet for Bajan workers, who exceeded the numbers needed for the sugar industry, and wages were considerably more than local wages, hence the attraction. And "Panama money" entered our culture and speech as did the ubiquitous and popular Panama hat! The canal did not exactly transform our society but it strengthened the financial base of many of the working people, permitted major house improvements, and facilitated the entry in to Parliament of some significant brown and black movers and shakers in the 1920s and 30s.

7. 1937, the Dean and Moyne Commissions and the Trade Union movement

The Democratic movement of the 1920s, led by Dr. Charles Duncan O'Neale and others such as Chrissie Brathwaite and Erskine Ward, was bolstered by the powerful pen of Clennell Wickham. Wickham suffered desperately for his advocacy, losing a libel suit and literally exiled to Grenada where he died at a relatively young age. But these voices, together with the growing discontent and working class protests across

the Caribbean, created a consciousness of the unacceptable stagnation, low wages, poverty, ill health and the general social ills of the society … what Sir Hilary Beckles called "freedom without liberties". And the spark that led to the Riots of 1937 was the deportation of Clement Payne on the evening of July 26th, 1937.

Clement Payne (now the Right Excellent Clement Osbourne Payne, National Hero) was born in Trinidad of Barbadian emigrant parents, but raised and grew up in Barbados from the age of four. He spent some years working in Trinidad as an adult, involved in radical groups, returning to Barbados in March 1937, and beginning a series of public meetings, urging social change. His often repeated message was "to educate, to agitate, but not to violate".

The details of his detention and deportation, leading to Sir Grantley Adams' efforts to have his deportation rescinded, (and in fact creating the turning point in Sir Grantley's political life) have been extensively covered elsewhere.

The Government immediately put in place the Dean Commission of Enquiry, comprising G.C. Deane, E.R.L. Ward and Matthew A. Murphy, chaired by the Barbadian judge Sir George Campbell Dean. After 31 meetings and 35 witnesses, the 41-page report was presented to the Governor Sir Mark Young on November 2, 1937 by the Commissioners. Sir Grantley Adams was the first witness called, and others included Dr. Harry Bayley, who eloquently pleaded for better health care for the people, and proposed a National Health Service – 10 years before the British and forty years before our more recent efforts!

The British Government in turn commissioned the much bigger and more thorough West India Royal Commission, known as the Moyne Report, of 1938 – 1939. Although this was not published until 1945, its recommendations began to be acted on in 1940, and it hugely helped to turn the tide in favour of reform, with considerable British funding for development and welfare. On July 2nd 1940, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Lloyd, led the second reading of the Colonial Development and Welfare (CD and W) Bill. Considering that this took place with Britain in a desperate situation in the Second World War, it is quite remarkable and merits a small section being quoted: *"As a result of the intensification of the war, I am afraid that the Bill may for some at any rate appear somewhat out of tune with the more instant and immediate military preoccupations of the present time … unreal though some of it may seem at the present time, it is very desirable, and indeed essential, that the Bill should be placed now on the Statute Book and not have to wait …"*

He went on: *"The Bill provides in the first place for the substitution for the existing Colonial Development Fund, which cannot exceed, as your Lordships will remember, £1,000,000 a year, of new moneys up to £5,000,000 a year for ten years for development and welfare and £500,000 a year for research. It also, and*

very importantly, provides for the extinction of a long list of loans by the Imperial Government to various Colonial Governments, the total value of which is something like £11,250,000." And again, for special note: *"The promotion of better nutrition, better health and better standards of education is as important for the development of our Colonial Empire as the building of new roads or the introduction of new crops ..."*

The CD and W Office was based in Barbados to oversee the £ 55 million programme, and a series of important social and political changes thus resulted from the Riots (otherwise known as the 1937 labour rebellion, labour unrest and Clement Payne's Revolution (Sir Hilary). These included: extension of the franchise in 1943, along with the vote for women (20 years after the rest of the West Indian colonies). legislation of trade union activity, minimum wage legislation and appointment of a labour officer, regulation of employment of women and children, and introduction of old age pensions. This last, although modest initially, and predating the National Insurance scheme, made a great deal of difference to the elderly and infirm, whose social and health care left a great deal to be desired, as the Victorian alms houses in each parish were oversubscribed.

Finally, one of the most important resulting social developments was the attention to health care. The first public health clinic was established at Arlington House in Speightstown under the leadership of public health hero Dr. (later Sir) Maurice Byer, and later a public health centre at Enmore (the former place of hanging!) Public health programmes led by Dr. Byer and Dr. Edgar Cochrane virtually eliminated tuberculosis, while the horrendous problem of infant malnutrition had to wait another 10 years for the work of Sir Frank Ramsey and his National Nutrition Centre. And the planning of a new hospital to replace the hundred-year-old General Hospital began in 1948 with a Royal Commission. The building of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital began 12 years later in 1960 and it opened in 1964, transforming tertiary care in Barbados. More comprehensive health care was to come gradually over the next two decades, with creation of well-located polyclinics and a Drug Benefit service, initiated in 1980, that has been the envy of many.

8. Adult Suffrage and Cabinet Government

The most significant of all political and legislative changes to follow the riots and the Commission reports was universal adult suffrage in 1951, and Cabinet government in 1954. By this time Sir Grantley had firmly established his authoritative power, winning victory for his Barbados Labour Party in the 1951 election. He was made Premier, and Mr. Ronald Mapp, Mr. Edwy Talma, Mr. Mencea Cox and Dr. Hugh Cummins were all given ministerial portfolios. But the complex history from Riots and the Dark Century to Nation State is too complex an evolutionary story to be detailed here, and

is thoroughly covered in A History of Barbados from Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean Single Market by Sir Hilary Beckles.

9. Free secondary Education and the University of the West Indies campus at Cave Hill

Formal secondary education in Barbados began with the Drax bequest which created Combermere School, Thomas Harrison's school founded in 1733, and the Codrington will which led to the establishment of the Codrington Grammar School, later the Lodge School. But the foundation of our often touted 98 % literacy and generally well educated nation is the comprehensive Anglican Church schools begun under Bishop Coleridge, supplemented by the early "ragged schools". Moravian and Methodist and private primary schools or "dame" schools. In the late pre-independence period there were five leading government secondary schools for boys and two for girls, and many private "high schools", of which the Modern High School of Mayor Louis Lynch was both the largest and the most successful. And while "T.T." Lewis, MP for Bridgetown for many years and known as the White Rebel, was the evangelist for free secondary education for decades, it was in the first term of the Democratic Labour Party under Errol Barrow (1961 – 66) that free secondary education came about, for those in the existing secondary schools. Over the next two decades the government secondary school system was greatly expanded from the existing seven to 22. A noteworthy social role of the older secondary schools was that of nurturing cricket at the highest levels.

Meanwhile, as a result of the Moyne Commission, the University College of the West Indies was established at Mona, Jamaica in 1948. It is widely acknowledged that the development of a campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) in 1963, at the temporary Trade Fair site at the Deep Water Harbour, and then at the spanking new Cave Hill site (chosen by then Premier Errol Barrow flying over it himself) in 1967, has had a "transforming" influence on Barbados. Codrington College had provided tertiary education for Barbados and the Caribbean since 1830, and with the opening of UWI it became a seminary, training only priests. It is now the Department of Theology, affiliated with the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the UWI at Cave Hill.

The dramatic expansion of the Cave Hill Campus comprises five full faculties, with the School of Clinical Medicine and Research expanded to a full Faculty of Medical Sciences in 2008. There are also several postgraduate schools and centres, including the research centres in Social Sciences, Environmental Research and Chronic Diseases, all with international reputations and strong

research outputs. Two major challenges for the university (and government) is matching educational programmes with job opportunities; and the continuing dominance of female graduates, in the ratio of 7:3. And a recent controversy has been government's discontinuation of tuition fees, a policy introduced by Mr. Barrow, when student numbers were under 500!

10. Independence

In this year of our Golden Jubilee of Independence, few would disagree that Independence was a good thing for Barbados, although continuing lamentations about the failure of Federation, the still birth of the 'Little Eight', the poor performance of CARICOM and the lack of Caribbean unity and Caribbean clout as a significant group of nations repeatedly question the wisdom of "going it alone". Nevertheless, most Barbadians recognise the pride that came with independence and the stimulus to many developments, particularly local manufacturing, representation overseas, and a dramatic impetus to the tourism industry. Since we occupy a place on the cusp between developed and developing nations, oscillating around position 30 on many indices out of nearly 200 nations, our motto Pride and Industry does not seem inappropriate, and the oft-quoted Kofi Annan statement that Barbados punches above its weight has been a cause for pride and some would say smugness, and even a tendency to rest on our laurels. That said, most consider that celebration of Independence should be an occasion for self-analysis, coming together and raising our standards in every way.

11. The growth of Tourism

We have been fortunate in that over the centuries we were widely considered safe and well developed, with "good hostelries", good roads and a literate and civil population. While occasional famous visitors came for health reasons, such as the young George Washington and his half-brother in 1751 (to cure his tuberculosis), tourism began in earnest with the steamships, especially from North America, and a thriving business developed with many South Coast and East Coast hotels by the 1930s. In fact, early tourism was very much Heritage Tourism, while establishments like the Crane Hotel and the Atlantis at Bathsheba (opened in the 1880s) were famous as health resorts, long before the era of beach and bikini! The West Coast followed in the '40s and '50s, with an explosion of high end tourism triggered by Ronald Tree and the Sandy Lane Resort. Cruise tourism was hugely facilitated by the building of the Deep Water Harbour / Bridgetown Port, begun in 1956 and completed in 1961; the building of the first, iconic Hilton Hotel, which opened in 1966 stamped Barbados as

business hospitality centre, and other chains followed.

Coincident with the decline in the sugar market, the drop in production to one tenth of what it used to be, and the dramatic decline in employment in the industry, tourism has replaced it as our "mono-crop", followed by off shore businesses and financial services. But tourism – our lifeblood – has been relatively stagnant, with the loss of gems such as Sam Lord's Castle. and the hotel plant is only now beginning to expand. Many see the way forward not simply by building new hotels, but by capitalising on our rich cultural heritage – the arts and crafts, cuisine and many magnificent restaurants, our historic state-of-the-art rum industry, our sport of Kings and polo, our folk games such as warri and stick-licking, our landscape and gardens, and especially our built heritage.

12. The Explosion of Culture

In Barbados, there has been a veritable explosion of culture of every form since Independence. In the past, the largely European cultural forms of theatre and music existed at one level, while African idiom, folk practices, some musical forms and dance operated at another level. Creolisation refers to the synthesis seen in the Caribbean, and iconic Bajan examples are our dialect (fusion of English and African, with unique variations), tuk band (fusion of African and Scottish music, often accompanied by costumed revellers), landship (dance and other cultural syncretions), food (pudding and souse, conkies, pone, rum and falernum), architecture (the chattel house) and the Cropover festival.

Before Independence, many aspects of cultural expression were the results of passionate pioneers, such as Joyce Stuart and Madame Ifill (step mother of National Hero Errol Walton Barrow, and adopted mother of Sir Henry Forde), promoters and teachers of dance; Frank Collymore and Therold Barnes (actors and writers, who were the founding editors of Bim and mentors to many aspiring writers, including Derek Walcott); and Golde White, Briggs Clarke, Kathleen Hawkins, Robert McCloud and Ivan Payne (Artists) and Karl Broodhagen (sculptor and painter). Our successful authors – George Lamming, Geoffrey Drayton and Austin "Tom" Clarke, and our "poet laureate" the historian and poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite, wrote and made their names and reputations overseas as did brilliant singers like soprano Nell Hall.

But the role of George Lamming's seminal, magnificent and much acclaimed first novel *In the Castle of my Skin*, first published in 1953 in London, was like a shining beacon in the staid, Eurocentric cultural world of Barbados. It enthralled the baby boomers of Barbados, and was read and discussed throughout the 50s and 60s. Even today one can see the inspiration of Lamming in some of the novels and

autobiographical works of the next generation of Barbadians. And just as the original *Bim* promoted creative writing for nearly fifty years, the re-incarnated *Bim*, edited by Esther Phillips, is publishing a new generation of writers.

Clubs like the *Green Room Theatre* performed plays, largely by European playwrights, while low key, amateur groups shared interests in photography, art or dance. The spirit of creativity was almost certainly inspired by Independence, with passionate pioneers who led the field in the post-independence era. Theatre, art, music and dance blossomed. Daphne Joseph-Hackett's leadership in theatre was followed by the dynamic *Stage One Theatre Productions*, led by doyen of theatre Cynthia (now the Honourable Cynthia) Wilson and the late, great director Earl Warner. African elements of theatre and dance were promoted by the Yoruba Foundation, launched by the charismatic Elombe Mottley, with wide-ranging cultural events at the *Yoruba Yard* in Fontabelle, including visual arts, dance, literature (including poetry) and music, especially drumming; and later came the *Pinelands Creative Workshop*, while comedy productions established a tradition for themselves, such as *Laff it off*, and *Pampalam* written by author, columnist and poet Jeanette Layne-Clarke. Modern dance was introduced with the formation by Mary Stevens, in 1968, of the *Barbados Dance Theatre Company,* while Richard Stoute has been the passionate promoter of talent in the field of singing and music, over many decades.

Traditional folk singing, tuk band and Landship performances operated widely across the island at community level, and especially at celebrations and "bank holidays", and perhaps the outstanding national musical performances were concerts by the *Barbados Police Band*, which also received considerable international recognition when it performed at the Edinburgh Festival. But we now have many internationally recognised artists, from saxophonist Arturo Tappin and singer Alison Hinds to superstar Rihanna, while the splendid quality of the St. Leonard's Boys Choir is a remarkable achievement.

Although there were several distinguished artists in Barbados in colonial days, such as Barbadians Golde White, Briggs Clarke and Ivan Payne, and the Canadian born Robert MacLeod and Austrian Madame Fela de Kuh, who made Barbados their home, they worked largely in isolation, with a limited market, and fine art was not taken seriously by many locals. The Barbados Arts Council began in 1957, and ran a gallery at Pelican Village; and the establishment of groups like DEPAM (De People's Art Movement) led by artist Omowale Stuart, in the 70s, brought many young artists into the limelight, and this coincided with the birth of the Barbados Community College and its Fine Arts Department, and the establishment of a number of commercial art galleries. Indrani Whittingham's art workshops have produced a cohort of enthusiastic artists, benefitting from inspiring teaching without formal college tuition. The

Barbados Art Collection Foundation / Barbados Gallery of Art was a major catalyst to high quality work, and created a hugely increased interest in art by the general public and collectors, and the possibility of more artists making a living in whole or in part from their work, through the opening of several galleries. And the introduction of the teaching of art (and music) throughout the secondary schools in the 1970s has been a great boost.

While our greatest, perhaps – Karl Broodhagen – has passed away, as have Gordon Parkinson, Oliver Burnett, Bill Grace and Norma Talma, this is a field with a genuine explosion. Outstanding among our big names are Arthur Atkinson, Fielding Babb, Virgil Broodhagen, Ras Ishi Butcher, Alison Chapman-Andrews, Wayne Branch, Vanita Commissiong , Joyce Daniel, Annalee Davis, Neville Legall, Clairmont Mapp, Corrie Scott, Lilian Sten-Nicholson, Ras Akyem Ramsay, Margaret Rodriguez, Heather Dawn Scott, Omowale Stewart and many, many others of considerable distinction, but far too numerous to mention. They are profiled – more than 200 artists - in the splendid new electronic Barbados Art Directory, by Corrie Scott and Kathy Yearwood. Akyem has been particularly successful in winning international awards. Water colourist Goldie Spieler has also developed an extraordinary ceramics studio and commercial enterprise, while there have been many young ceramicists, in the footsteps of Peter Cave and Maggie Belle, in parallel with the traditional Chalky Mount pottery .

But perhaps the major catalyst to the explosion of creativity and blossoming of so many fields of creative endeavour have been the National Cultural Foundation (NCF), launched in 1973, and our hosting of CARIFESTA in 1981, coordinated by Senior Cultural Officer Nigel Harper. Indeed, as so aptly put by Antonio "Boo" Rudder, in his splendid book Marching to a Different Drummer: Elements of Barbadian culture: *"The years prior to CARIFESTA IV were steeped in a sense of almost coercive apology for the vaunted myth that we in Barbados had no culture … The exposure that local audiences and artists gained from being immersed in this revolution of cultural expression called CARIFESTA, served to shatter the shackles of so-called cultural inferiority and prepare the way for the acceptance of an ethos that was increasingly being articulated by local cultural activists."*

It would be fair to say that Barbados had its fair share of creative people in every field, but little promotion thereof, and several factors perhaps contributed to the somewhat superior remarks of our Caribbean contemporaries in Jamaica and Trinidad about our so-called lack of arts and culture. The fact was that many of our best and brightest resorted to making their living and their names in London or New York, that we were perceived as a culture of cricket (and justifiably so) and sugar production, and cricket was dominant in every aspect of life, conversation and entertainment, to the apparent neglect of other cultural activities!

But CARIFESTA helped to create a new dynamic. Again I must quote "Boo" Rudder: "*In 1981 CARIFESTA blew all over Barbados like a virus. It was infectious but in a very positive sense. The artists who participated in CARIFESTA IV captured the hearts of thousands of Barbadians, daring them to dream and to have a vision – a vision that said we could act similarly."* And we have not looked back!

13. The Inscription of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage site

Finally, a major achievement of Barbados just five years ago, was the inscription by UNESCO of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage site. This means, in short, that Bridgetown and its Garrison has been recognised for its Outstanding Universal Value. The Garrison with is fairly well maintained, magnificent barracks and fortifications, is the jewel in the crown, but in fact Barbados has a rich architectural heritage, with its great houses, 75 splendid historic churches, windmills and iconic chattel houses. And capitalising on this heritage means that Barbados joins those countries of great historical interest, where heritage is itself a major attraction, over and above our reputation as a tropical paradise with beautiful beaches, rum punch and popular music, sun, sand, sea, sex and song, or one continuous party …In fact, with our high standard of living, health and education, UNESCO branding allows us to become "The Tropical Paradise with Everything"!

Bim
Arts for the 21st Century

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