

Distribution: limited

CCD-III/94/REG/INF.20

Paris, 17 February 1994

Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

***WORLD COMMISSION
ON CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT***

***THIRD MEETING
(San José, Costa Rica, 22 - 26 February 1994)***

First part

**Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean:
Public Hearings with leading figures and experts
(22-23 February 1994)**

**CULTURAL IDENTITY AND THE ARTS - NEW HORIZONS
FOR CARIBBEAN SOCIAL SCIENCES?
AND
CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN CARIBBEAN SOCIETY: DANCE AND SURVIVAL
BY REX NETTLEFORD**

1 6 2 7 0 5

Cultural Identity and the Arts – New Horizons for Caribbean Social Sciences?

The Historical Dimension

The organic relationship between cultural identity and artistic creation has long been known to be a significant phenomenon in the shaping of modern Caribbean society. The Hispanic wing of that fragmented disparate family of rocks and mainland out-posts recently designated the 'Caribbean Basin' on the agenda of hegemonic geopolitics, has long recognised the importance of arts and culture in forging their national and cultural identities, possibly because they broke with their historical imperial master much earlier than the Afro-Saxon wing of the region. Francophone Caribbean, with the exception of Haiti, remains politically the ward of its mother country but culturally yearns for its Caribbean reality following on that now historic return to his native country by the artist armed with the reassurance of negritude as well-spring for poetic expression and political consciousness.¹

The West Indies, alias Anglophone Caribbean and also known as the Commonwealth Caribbean (this part of the region still carries a plurality of designation, matching the internal plurality of self-perceptions) came only recently to political independence. Its pedigree in the struggle for freedom and rehumanisation on the part of the majority of the population, however, dates back almost to the beginning of the era of Caribbean history that followed on the fateful encounter of the Old Worlds of Europe and Africa on the one hand with the ancient

civilisations of the Americas on the other. The stage was therefore set very early for the quest for self-definition in what came to be a-historically labelled the New World. It was not 'new' to the indigenous peoples, many of whom disappeared after the contact with the *new-comers*. It was 'new' to the strangers comprising conquerors and vanquished, torturers and victims, enslavers and enslaved. The opposition of one category of inhabitants to another compounded the issue of identity within the context of political and cultural power play. Cultural identity was therefore a part of the genesis and the subsequent nurturing of an entire hemisphere. In this sense the contemporary United States and Latin America are no different from the Caribbean. Only that as part of the hemisphere the Caribbean of necessity approached the issue from the specificity of its own experience; and it is that specificity that has fed the creative vision, artistic sensibility and aesthetic energy of the region.

It is significant that the topic 'Cultural Identity and the Arts' should have been seen as a legitimate item on the agenda of a Conference on 'New Perspectives in Caribbean Studies' organised by Vera Rubin in 1984 to discover, articulate and define new and/or appropriate frameworks of Caribbean studies following on a quarter of a century and more of conscious observation, analysis and projection of the region's political, social and economic dynamic and potential.² The initiative speaks to a reality of Caribbean existence which forces out of many who have been trained in the hallowed, if still insecure, tradition of scientific non-normative social sciences, recognition of the fact that the arts, as products of the creative imagination, are as fundamental to the understanding of human society as are national income and GNP statistics, voter opinion scientifically polled and quantified, economic integration formulae, technology transfer options, and development theories encased in often different and opposing imported ideological frameworks.

No less attention must be paid to finding the pertinent, appropriate analytical tools or methodological devices to get to the heart of the region's cultural dynamics so that the Caribbean's contemporary life and projected future can benefit from the fruits of such acts of intelligence which describe the nature of artistic activity as they do scientific/intellectual activity. The two forms of creativity were never mutually exclusive as M.G. Smith who was poet before he was sociologist and Kamau Brathwaite who remains both poet and historian would affirm.³ One could hazard the guess that the social sciences in the Caribbean would benefit considerably if more of its practitioners were better informed by the arts of the imagination, not least among which

is numbered the study of the history of the region. The economist Arthur Lewis brought welcome insights to the issue of West Indian culture and identity in a characteristically provocative article published in the Law Journal.⁴ The call by Wilson Harris,⁵ as visiting artist to the UWI many years ago, spoke eloquently to the need for greater correspondence between intellectual activity and the arts of the imagination in support of his theory of the essential unity of man, with the Caribbean man as archetype – being a synthesis of ancestral Amerindian, African and European sensibilities.

The inclusion of the subject in a social science seminar admits, then, the centrality of the artist *qua* artist to modern Caribbean development in particular and generally to the shaping of new societies in their quest for new designs for social living – a quest which follows on the shifts of bases of power from colonialism to independence, from the orderly and predictable world of imperial domination to the post-colonial order threatening disintegration and disorder. If the study of the Rastafarian movement is considered proper for a social science faculty as part of the received intellectual concerns about cargo cults, redemption ethic and the like, it is no less appropriate for the faculty to engage in serious content analysis of the lyrics of Bob Marley as a guide to a fuller grasp of ghetto values, urban concerns and preoccupations among the marginalised poor. Social commentary by the calypsonians of the society's reaction to national policies, capitalism gone mad, political authority, or the self-importance of the native inheritors of the colonial power is a form of action – expressed through art – that addresses problems of self-definition and gives critical clues about a people's perceptions of themselves. These in turn can inform public policy and often do so more appropriately than the decisions arbitrarily taken for the people by political directorates and their planning advisers or the answers cleverly crafted by informants in response to cleverly crafted survey questionnaires of field researchers. Such scientific devices are useful and necessary in a modern state, but the other devices usually associated with artistic discovery and sometimes shared by anthropologists are no less so.

One or two Commonwealth Caribbean founding fathers (in the political sense) understood the centrality of the artist to the self-government ideal and sought to appropriate the work of artists without denying to artistic action its own inner logic and consistency. Even in post-revolutionary Cuba where the ethos of the new dispensation reputedly gave to the artist everything within the revolution while denying him all outside of it, the artist has managed to flourish independently sometimes with more traces of 'bourgeois' culture than

the guardians of the revolution would care to admit. In the English-speaking Caribbean, the independence of the artist went hand in hand with notions of democratic freedoms. Therefore Norman Manley of Jamaica had, in his political credo, a central place for the unfettered exercise of the creative imagination, the sort of process in which artists are involved. He saw nation-building itself not only as an act of intelligence but also as the work of an artist giving form to substance and grappling with the reality of human experience to take everyday existence to higher levels of civilised expression (the nation, democracy, civilisation).⁶

He even declared (informally) George Campbell the poet of Jamaica's self-government 'revolution' as Nicolas Guillen was to become for Cuba's transformation. However the nature of art does not always depend for its flourishing on such patronage. The common people whose music, dance, theatre and oral literature rank them among the greatest of artists in the region, are able to continue in their myriad acts of creativity under all sorts of adverse conditions. More than that, they provide individual talents with a vital source of energy, thus giving to the region groups of creative artists in a wide range of artistic activity that has served to promise the Caribbean (or individual parts of it) greater cultural certitude, sense of form and sense of purpose.

Foremost among such artists have been the writers – literate, healthily schizophrenic, insightful, and truly among the first to explain formally the Caribbean to itself, whether in the printed poem, novel or short story. George Lamming, a virtual dean of the corps, made early claims for the primacy of the writer as amateur, philosopher and guide to West Indian civilisation. The creative musician, choreographer, painter, sculptor were to follow in the writer's wake, some of them helped not a little by the improved technologies of communication, especially the electronic media and recording industry as well as the aeroplane facilitating the travel of artists and artworks within the Caribbean to Caribbean Festivals of Art (Carifestas) and outside the region on commercial or government-to-government cultural exchange tours.⁷

The Arts and Caribbean Social Reality

The notion that all art is mediated by social reality is not a monopoly of the Marxist intellectual tradition which has been presented as an option in the region's earnest search for solutions. Rather it is borne out by the facts of the Caribbean literary creative impulse. This is so whether the declared aim of this or that writer is to be a *writer* rather

than a *Caribbean* writer or to belong primarily to a 'tradition of the writer's craft; a tradition that overrides ethnic and social distinctions'.⁸ The truth is that none of these writers has been able to ignore the real-life issues of history (Caribbean history), race, colonialism, the plantation, neo-colonialism, social change, identity (national and cultural), linguistic loyalty to Europe's imposed standards of life and the awesome hold such standards have even on artists who are rebelling. Nor can they ignore Africa-in-the-Americas, the crucible in which much of what is artistically and culturally *Caribbean* was forged over four centuries of creolisation.

Somehow it is understood that Mother Europe needs fewer carbon copies of Shakespeare, Molière, Conrad, or Marlowe; Brahms, Beethoven or Mahler; Picasso, Van Gogh or Renoir; Petipa, Balanchine or Bournonville. She would rather settle for the original impulse of foreign artists encouraged to enrich her soil. Walcott and Naipaul are of interest to the North Atlantic precisely because they are not only good writers but writers with something unique to say about the human condition; and where they come from and how they were socialised and bred just happen to give that something a special pitch and tone of importance and relevance to a North Atlantic world, itself in search of new patterns and new designs for its continuing existence. The pretence that it is otherwise, is part of the self-parody of Caribbean artists playing others instead of being themselves.

Novels, poems, short stories, literary criticism, and plays are indeed laced with 'Caribbean pre-occupations even if notions of the writer's tradition', 'mainstream literature', or the 'humanist tradition' are considered the more desirable (and respectable) ends of artistic creation transcending, presumably, the insularity of regions or the provincialism of race and ethnic considerations. What a closer look at Caribbean artistic creation serving cultural identity may indeed demonstrate is that the so-called 'writer's tradition' *et al* is likely to be the richer for the textured and specific contributions by Caribbean artistic infusions.

The names of George Lamming, Wilson Harris, Jean Rhys, John Hearne, Derek Walcott and V.S. Naipaul – all creatures of the colonial Caribbean – have gained fairly widespread recognition in the North Atlantic. However, studies of serious world literature would also be the poorer without the names of Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Victor Reid, Martin Carter, Andrew Salkey and Samuel Selvon, to name but a few. The vigour of the creolised indigenous Caribbean languages must in any case determine their own criteria of judgement for artistic excellence and universal verities, and so the lyrics of the calypsonians and reggae artists (Marley's 'Redemption Song', Jimmy Cliff's 'Many

Rivers to Cross' do address universal verities in poetry), the verse of Louise Bennett, as well as the utterances of latter-day Jamaican dub poets,⁹ to whom writing down is secondary to oral-rendering, all challenge the arbiters of Caribbean artistic legitimacy to new perceptions of reality in the region.

Many of the world's great artists 'steal' as a matter of course from the past, if for no other reason than the past offers mankind many of the greatest that is tried and tested in the profession of art.¹⁰ Even in this, many a Caribbean artist has a problem. For the past from which they choose to steal does not often include their own Caribbean past either in its intensely creolised (native-born, native-bred) sense or in respect of that part of the past which spells Africa. On the other hand, that part which spells Europe, from the ancient Mediterranean to 19th century England and its extension into Anglo-Saxon contemporary United States, all have ready and willing imitators. Furthermore late-comers India, China and Lebanon are yet to count in any deep cultural sense to those who consider themselves to possess greater *Caribbean* ancestral pedigree – what with the conflict between the earlier arrivants to the Caribbean yet to be resolved.

It may well be remembered that at least one major Caribbean artist has volunteered a justification for the neglect on the basis that there is no Caribbean history, since history is about achievement and achievement has to do with creating.¹¹ Having created nothing, the region has achieved nothing. In effect, the place is in the long run incapable of development, cultural identity or any meaningful growth. V.S. Naipaul's 'castrated metaphor', to use Lamming's deliciously wicked phrase, need not be seen as anything more than a rhetorical excess spat out at a society that admittedly denies too many of its citizens a sense of place and purpose. Naipaul, for all his frustrations, is nonetheless a 'creation' of that very society, and a brilliant one at that. The myth he articulated persists, however, in pockets of cynicism and cultural perversity.

Happily it is being exploded by the active creative power and brilliance of not only writers but also painters, sculptors, dancers and musicians all over the region. The creators of the Cuban *son*, *mambo* and *rhumba*, the devastatingly observant calypsonians of Trinidad and the Eastern Caribbean, the Rastafarian-inspired reggae composers from urban ghettos of Kingston have all 'stolen' from the past – their own past. They draw naturally on the wealth of that past ancestral certitude and wisdom to create for the modern Caribbean still in search of itself. They entertain no inhibiting doubts about the pedigree of their own history both in the Caribbean and before the severance of

forefathers from far-off homelands. Although they are conscious of the brutality of suffering in that history, they are no less aware of the achievement in terms of creative acts by their forbears-in-exile, whether in the devising of new tongues to communicate with each other, in shaping the right music, movement patterns and belief-systems into ordered rituals of worship, or in the creation of operational frameworks for daily living despite every well planned effort to keep the majority population barely ahead of the beasts. Without being academic historian or sociologist of history, the Caribbean's popular artist, like some of his prestigious writer-colleagues, effectively uses the facts of history, in all their essence, both to interpret modern Caribbean society and to inform contemporary Caribbean life. A past without achievement could not have done any of this, unless of course such acts of the creative imagination and intellect as described are not seen as genuine acts of achievement.

The evidence, indeed, demonstrates that the Caribbean with its record of creative acts can help to determine a mainstream culture rather than be expected merely to enter one that is predetermined by the cultural norms forged and recorded (i.e. in written or notated form) over centuries in the nations that conquered, colonised and conditioned subject peoples like those who still inhabit the Caribbean. In overcoming the consequences of such conditioning, as a function of cultural identity or self-definition, the artists from among such peoples need to speak to each other *within* the region rather than continue to communicate through a connexion hooked up in London, Madrid, Paris or of late New York. If a Lamming once had to discover himself in London and an Aime Cesaire needed Paris to see the light, it has long become critical to examine and take seriously the discoveries on homeground. Derek Walcott (for all his latter-day New England encounters)¹² and, to a certain extent, Edward K. Brathwaite represent something of the new breed. In addition the return home (physically and mentally) of Lamming and others is important to the grasp of the import of the issue of identity through artistic creation and cultural action. The Alejo Carpentiers and Nicolas Guillens stand out as homegrown icons not only for post-revolutionary Cuba but for an emerging culturally coherent Caribbean as well. The popular artists of the ilk of The Mighty Sparrow of Trinidad or of Jimmy Cliff and the late Bob Marley of Jamaica have had no problems being homegrown *Caribbean* artists, secure as they have been in the knowledge that the wider world beyond the North Atlantic does provide profitable and appreciative markets for their work. They were, all three, 'heroes' at home before they were recognised abroad – in direct contrast to most

of the earlier Caribbean writers who sought legitimacy and recognition, if not identity, from the metropolitan centres of the North. The increased cultural awareness among Anglophone Caribbean people following on the transfer of imperial power to the region has facilitated greater access to legitimacy and recognition at home on criteria rooted in Caribbean reality. From this, 'schools' of painters, sculptors, choreographers, playwrights, and poets as well as creative intellectuals have benefitted not a little since the late 1950s.

The remarkable impact of Caribbean artist-musicians on the wider world with seemingly minimal concessions to the cultural dictates of the Establishment prejudices of Western civilisation throws into sharp relief questions about the market for, and the nature of, Caribbean writing. Could it be that writing as an art carries with it greater burdens of alienation than do other artforms? Publishing and printing facilities are admittedly either still rare or expensive in the region, yet more exist now than before and in any case the difficulties of publishing abroad while writing from homebase have been largely overcome.

The question of 'the market' cannot however be ignored. Who does the Caribbean writer really write for? Does he write for the Caribbean readership still growing but yet to offer that critical mass which brings profits? Is he addressing the more affluent North American suburban class or the intelligentsia now in the throes of discovering a Walcott and a Naipaul? Does he write for the British literati with a long tradition of playing patron to sibling talents from the outposts of Empire? Furthermore, what of the new governing elites of the developing world, many of whom are admittedly blasé before they are civilised? Better still, does the Caribbean writer write for the proverbial homogenised world devoid of class, ethnic, or cultural particularities? Or does he write for himself? Many of the performing artists, because their art needs an immediate audience, do sing, dance and act for their own people first, and for others secondarily. Can the literary arts, then, be regarded as the most appropriate for people who have been brought up in a strongly oral tradition against which has been counterpoised the scribal writ as part of a colonial conditioning?

Richard Dwyer¹³ felt no fear of contradiction when he wrote that 'all of them [meaning Caribbean writers] know that to want to *write* at all is to claim citizenship in a world elsewhere'. Can this be true, fair or reasonable in the contemporary world of the Caribbean which has conceded the necessity of Gutenberg and is even now in fear of the penetrative power of the aural and visual fare offered by the electronic media through television, video and radio? The choreographer, the music composer, the painter, the sculptor are all constantly bom-

barded with reminders of the superiority of European classical dance-theatre, of Beethoven's 'unsurpassable' symphonies, of the rightness of perspective and use of colour in a Titian or a Rembrandt, and of the perfection of Greek statuary. These artists are no less vulnerable than the writer threatened with being an alien in his own Caribbean homeland. Even the 'rootsy' popular artist must come to terms with a Michael Jackson or a Lionel Richie, to name just two of the 'pop' influences of the 1980s that have demonstrated the all-pervasive power of American satellite transmission.

The Caribbean is now challenged to fall back on the inner reserves of its own historical experience and cultural dynamic in order to exist on its own terms, which is partly what cultural identity is about.¹⁴ The experience is indeed instructive in such fields as music, dance, painting and sculpture as well as in many of the artistic expressions associated with religious rituals, masquerade and Carnival.¹⁵ A great many, if not most, of the artists in these fields have been drawn largely from the unlettered commonfolk – the people from below who are traditionally marginalised and denigrated. Not even the 'educated writer-exiles' have been able to escape the reality of Caribbean roots long after the fertiliser from the metropole has drenched their soil. All of this says something about:

- the arts (their role and function),
- other cultural indices (such as religion, kinship),
- value-systems at work in the society,
- identity (personal and collective),
- attitudes to political authority,
- the nature of economic activity, and
- the interaction between all these elements in Caribbean life.

Such were the 'issues' that prompted the authorship of *Caribbean Cultural Identity – the Case of Jamaica* with a sub-text which addressed cultural action and social change.¹⁶ So persistent is the urgency of this factor of the arts interacting with social reality and social change in dealing with cultural identity that a published account of the first 21 years of Jamaica's National Dance Theatre Company forced the author to place the story precisely within the context of 'cultural self-definition and artistic discovery'.¹⁷ The role and function of artistic expression, in this case the dance, as a tool of cultural resistance dating back to slavery and continuing through colonial (Crown Colony) rule to the contemporary contradictions in Independence, is covered in the volume. An examination of all this takes place within the context of the social mediation of creative artistic expression, the history of

marginalisation in the region of all such expressions forged by the people from below, the employment of survival-skills by those very same people resisting oppression and the history of 'suffering' and outcome of the phenomenon of severance from ancestral hearths. The further examination of the creative work, organisation, management, leadership structures, and policy-options open to the NDTC in terms of its own continuity, takes the book outside the genre of 'artist memoir' and attempts to relate the reality of certain deep social forces to what is produced through the arts of the imagination.

That such an approach could be anathema to the 'pure artist' as much as it is to the insecure social scientist who is overly jealous about the 'scientific' integrity of his 'discipline', there is little doubt. Yet, Caribbean social phenomena of which collective and individual creative artistic experience are prominently a part, remain refractory to mono-dimensional approaches to their analysis and explanation. Whether 'empirical' or 'intuitive' (both value-loaded terms in themselves), serious observation of such phenomena leads both 'observing' artist and 'researching' social scientist to some of the most challenging issues facing the generators of new, or the manipulators of old knowledge in the Western world of scholarship. Coming to grips with Caribbean reality is in no way helped by exaggerated claims to 'scientific' pedigree by often the most subjective of social science scholars coupled with parallel claims by those who are arch-sceptics about the dominance of 'science' in the Western intellectual tradition.

The wider world is even now abandoning such polarisation of knowledge and its generation in the service of humankind, and regards the resolution of the 'conflict' as vital to Man's secure entry into the Third Millennium. The subordination of the human sciences (including most branches of the social sciences) to the physical sciences is nowadays courageously questioned as to the validity of such ranking. One academic (out of an American university's Philosophy department) has reportedly argued that 'it is the physical sciences that depend on the human for their heuristic currency and that they need to be brought under the larger constraints of social existence if, together, they are to achieve their fullest philosophical potential'.¹⁸

This follows on the questions long raised by others about the nature of science and the limits to its claims to objectivity, prediction and the capacity to find perfect solutions for human problems. Within the social sciences themselves there are already signs of increasing openness, even a sense of daring, in the admission by economists into their equation of some of the variables that would be otherwise regarded as

alien and unquantifiable imponderables for which there need be no accounting. Structural adjustment 'with a human face', human resource development taking a central place in national development strategies, and public policy oriented towards social-cost concerns, are now major 'issues' for many an economist working in the developing world.¹⁹ This, one might add, does no known irreparable harm to the integrity of the work pursued by committed econometricians or empiricists whose place in the pantheon of academe's authorities is assured, precisely because the work they do is critical to genuine understanding.

Moreover, so is that of others who use other tools of investigation and analysis and focus on other themes both evident and emergent. The region, and the wider world for that matter, may well be now ready for yet more genuinely seminal work in the social sciences of the order of what it received in the 1950s from the cultural pluralism and stratification debate as well as from the studies, analyses and incipient theoretical constructs of the New World Group addressing up to the late 1960s, Caribbean economic integration.²⁰

The call into question by the Rastafarians of some of the fundamental premises on which Caribbean society was built and seemed content to reside remains a current of such revolutionary force and viability that the most sceptical of scholars have been forced to grapple with their thought and vision if not actually to enlist as adherents of their Faith.²¹ That the 'philosophy and opinions' of Marcus Garvey, the movement's major icon, should now be granted the relevance these have long had for Caribbean development and being, is another sign of the Caribbean social scientist's growing, if belated, expansion of his intellectual horizons.²²

Such new horizons promise to Caribbean social science greater texture and the internal richness matching the complexity of the real world beyond the UWI's campuses and equal to the still valid claims that the social sciences are part of the vanguard of problem-solving for a Caribbean rich in people-resources.

This challenging gift of humanity, for all its awesome dimensions, is anxiously awaiting mobilisation, not only for the rationalisation of the material resources which are admittedly limited (though very much in place), but also for the achievement of full mastery over the conceptualisation of approaches to the shaping of a Caribbean social order, recently inherited.

Paradigms, Models and Themes

The experience surrounding the nature, scope and function of creative artistic activity impacting on Caribbean self-definition may be seen as paradigm for the study and understanding of the development process in terms of both the region's actual dynamics and its potential for discovering some of the likely solutions to key problems. The assumption is that the 'bottom-line' for all that goes by the name of 'development' is creativity; and that creativity, though concentrated operationally in the realm of artistic action, is by no means solely restricted to that area of human activity. Indeed, the shaping of a society, the building of a nation, the planning and consolidation of a revolution, and the devising of institutional and operational frameworks in response to social and economic change, all place a heavy charge on the creative intellect and the creative imagination.

The creativity in state craft expressed, for example, by the fledgling United States, when it abolished the monarchy and devised a complex, cumbersome, but workable federal system, is of an order of invention no less desirable in the post-colonial Caribbean. The same can be said of the innovative impulse that drove the Soviet Union to radical transformation of much that had been Czarist Russia before 1917. The Cuban experiment is yet to achieve the pedigree of antiquity but her attempts at a new post-colonial society in 20th century Caribbean are also part of the creative process shared by artists and nation-builders alike. The manipulation of symbols by artists and creative politicians admittedly have much in common but the symbols in each other's grasp are different and of their own particular kind. This is not an argument for imitation, as many Caribbean Reaganauts, Keynesians, Westminsterites, or doctrinaire Marxist-Leninists would have it. It is an argument, instead, for the mandatory independent exercise of the creative imagination and intellect in the region's approach to statecraft and societal formation, as is demanded of the artist turning out a piece of creative writing, a musical score, a dance, a piece of sculpture, a painting, some utensil or other from the potter's wheel, or a yarn of fabric from the spinning wheel.

Much of this has taken place within the framework of historical realities in the Caribbean experience. The framework of history linked to existential realities suggests a number of approaches to the study of Caribbean life. These are not without their pitfalls since historical determinism, like all other theoretical constructs and models, leave out variables that may be critical to a fuller understanding of the phenomena with which one is grappling. Models are by definition selective

with respect to what is in and what is out. Suffice it to say that the study of the region without a sense of history is like a body without a nervous system. Neither artist nor academic can function adequately in the region without that sense of history or the importance of that history to the existential realities of contemporary Caribbean life. The artist, whether by intuition or on the basis of conscious study, is able to respond to the socio-cultural phenomena mediated by historical/existential reality and in so doing throws added light on the inner dynamics of Caribbean and, by extension, human society.

Out of this have emerged other constructs or frameworks within and through which investigation and analysis of Caribbean life and society have been conducted. Socio-cultural and psycho-cultural analyses may indeed draw on hypotheses of psychic inheritance rooted in the unbroken experience of dependency starting with chattel slavery and continuing with mother-sibling colonial relationships and the consequences of psychic and cultural conditioning. The resultant oppressive marginalisation of the mass of the population has produced among the tools of survival strategies of cultural resistance. These have manifested themselves largely in the exercise of the creative imagination to produce oral literature, creole languages, original music, dances, and ritual worship. The study of such products, as a function of resistance against denigration and oppression (social, economic, political and cultural), merit a priority place on the agenda of Caribbean Studies in the foreseeable future. The work already being done in conventional literature, history, cultural anthropology plus the actual 'texts' of artistic creations (as in creative writing, critical essays, musical compositions, dances, paintings, sculpture, pottery etc.) are the substantive aids to the task; but the multi-disciplinary methods of ferreting form and meaning out of Caribbean social phenomena now need to be transformed from the realm of rhetoric to effective action. New areas of investigative concern need to be discovered, though such labels as mass communication, socio-linguistics, ethnomusicology, psycho-history are gaining currency in the highly absorptive Caribbean.

Much of this may not lend itself to the quantification techniques of behavioural science. However, it does not rule out an important place for the measurement of (a) the marginalisation, in demographic and economic terms, of the mass of the population and (b) the correlation between those numbers and a headcount of those who create works of art that speak definitively to the society's perception of itself. It will take more than tabulated figures, however, to explain why the innovation in steel pan music came from the unlettered yards of Port-of-

Spain, the *mambos* and *rhumbas* from the ritual-derived recreations of the Cuban poor or why the invention of reggae took place in the 'government-yards' of Trench Town, and not among the social elite uptown. Even when the literate, born to or absorbed by education into that elite, write their novels, plays and poems, they dare not ignore the people from below and often use the rich experience of those people as a source of energy for their art. There are, however, other aspects of the arts which respond to scientific measurement. The arts as a source of income and employment is such an area. Any serious work of that kind would no doubt be welcomed as policy options for Caribbean decision-makers who have been exposed to UNESCO's recommendations citing 'cultural tourism' as a policy-tool in development strategy. Many Caribbean countries are aware of the importance of creative artistic skills to the field of advertising especially where free-enterprise corporate economic competition is being encouraged.

Book illustrating also needs artistic skills and would appeal to those who see education and mass communication (especially through television) as pivotal to the region's growth and development. Designs for cottage industries intended both for domestic use and export, prompt many politicians to take the arts seriously. There are politicians who focus on the entertainment value of the performing arts in particular, whether those arts are used in bread-and-circus fashion as sop to a restive populace, or mobilised to project a good 'image' of the country abroad, or treated as investment to attract much needed hard currency. There are also those who see the arts as genuine outlets for the human creativity deemed essential to a civilised society. The arts and the notion of cultural identity do admittedly defy analytical tools or an academic vision which is anchored in economic determinism.

Caribbean Marxists sometimes have difficulties coming to terms with the high visibility and seemingly forceful dynamic of superstructure (which is what the arts of the imagination are deemed to be) in a situation where the material base characterised by economic deprivation (unemployment, bad housing, inadequate supply of basic food) carry an undoubted sense of urgency. How does one deal with the notion that the Caribbean peoples have had their creative imagination and intellect to themselves and have used them as means of production to survive and to take themselves beyond survival? Ghetto progeny like the Mighty Sparrow, the late Bob Marley and hundreds before them challenge any doctrinaire hold Caribbean scholars may wish to have on an exclusive economic determinist approach to explaining social reality. Capitalist interpretations of that reality do not take the Caribbean much further either. A lopsided society inherited with all

the institutionalised injustices against the mass of the population, needs collective social action to facilitate the unleashing of individual creative energy that free enterprise philosophy purports to be able to do. The legal expropriation of the slave property of the Caribbean planters by none other than the British Government in passing the Slave Abolition Act of 1834 points to the ironies of Caribbean history.

To this day Caribbean governments have had to take the initiative in securing for the mass of the population minimal protection against the viler consequences of *laissez-faire* economics though not against the political liberalism which is its hand-maiden. The private sector is often the engine of development in name only. In fact though many Caribbean artists imitate the 19th century liberal traditions of Europe which guaranteed the right for them to starve in a turrett or voluntarily to pawn their talents to a private patron, they need the legitimation of their society in terms of guaranteed gainful employment, guaranteed markets for the goods produced by artists, and fair returns in income – material and psychic – for the talents they exercise, so as to escape alienation and anomie.

There is room, then, for both the scientific, empirical quantification methods of approach to the study of the arts in Caribbean society and the discursive, reflective, and intuitive devices reinforced by boldness of speculation and the application of what some sceptics would call poetic insights. In dealing with the socio-cultural phenomena of the region it may turn out that these different approaches are not mutually exclusive. Rather, a closer look at the phenomena in the field may produce methodological insights for further sharpening of tools of analysis. The sophistication of intellect and the sharpness of the imagination are both needed to help in such investigations. Acquaintance with the creative process as it applies in artistic production is not necessarily a hindrance, and can often be of tremendous help, to the academic investigator armed with his hopes of scientific observation and value-free rigorous analysis. The proverbial 'hunch' is admitted by natural scientists who do not have the inanimate elements they experiment with talking back at them. How much more, then, must social scientists, historians and students of the Humanities be dependent on that 'third eye' in dealing with the human factor in all their investigations into the human condition!

Certain thematic concerns will continue to invite greater focus than others and give clues to methodologies, theoretical constructs, new paradigms etc. *Creolisation*, as the substance of social and cultural formation, becomes a Caribbean concern subsuming such time-worn preoccupations as transculturation and acculturation. The indigenising

process in the Caribbean would claim to have clues to that organic, symbiotic interaction between peoples and cultures in their separate encounters. Played out in the context of economic exploitation and political domination the process gets triggered by elements of violence, resistance, counter-resistance, psychological conditioning and the countless unquantifiable ill-determined variables which defy the determinism of frameworks forged out of different and alien social and historical conditions.

Addressing creolisation brings the student of Caribbean affairs closer to the deep social forces as well as the complex, contradictory and dialectical reality of Caribbean life. The arts as impulse, consequence and occasion of the creative process at once complement and challenge the much discussed and sometimes discredited cultural pluralism of early Caribbean sociological analysis. As an agent of social cohesion cutting across class and colour barriers, the arts have been used as manifesto in meeting the negative aspects of cultural pluralism. Privileged Whites and aspiring Browns dance the dances and sing the songs that are the inventions of the Black underclass. Outsider Indians and Chinese beat pan, jump Carnival and sing calypsos and the Blacks have come to dance Indian dances and play Indian music in Trinidad and Guyana and even in Jamaica where latecomer groups are in a minority. There is, however, a continuing 'struggle' between the notions of high art (usually that which comes from Europe) and low art (that which comes from the descendants of Africans or others of the Caribbean 'folk' class), between the Little Tradition and the Great Tradition, between 'fine art' and 'folklore'; and this confirms the persistence of the pluralist commitment on the part of many Caribbean people – in sensibility if not in rigid social structures.

The phenomenon of *cultural pluralism* is not by any means dead and the attempt to relegate it to a spatial-temporal habitat in 18th and early 19th century Caribbean is to under-estimate the persistence of plantation structures and attitudes through sheer resilience and adaptability. Not even post-revolutionary Cuba can ignore the fact of this persistence as much of her artistic manifestations imply. The debate between the 'pluralists' and the 'stratificationists' may indeed turn out to be purely academic in the light of contemporary Caribbean realities. The primacy of *power* in affecting what social cohesion there is in the face of subterranean cultural exclusivities, may have indeed changed in degree but not altogether in kind. 'Black', 'Brown' and 'White' have long ceased to be exclusively epidermal. Rather, they signify 'culture' in many places and situations, whatever may be the ease of mobility of individuals shunting between classes and hurdling race categories.

A *social psychology of race* in the Caribbean here becomes another thematic imperative. It is intuited by many an artist but is often neglected by academics which may find the variable too difficult to measure in their quest for conceptual tidiness and methodological rigour. It is certainly ignored by political ideologies from both the Right and the Left which may find the phenomenon disruptive of established categories of identification. Without being racist, the Caribbean artist knows that his protagonists, besides being proletarian, bourgeois or petitbourgeois, are also likely to be denigrated Africans-in-exile, outsider ex-indentured Indian or Chinese, or privileged Whites burdened with the anguish and anxieties of an historically-determined sense of superiority which invites resentment, combat, guilt or cynicism. Therefore it is possible to play one thing or the other or everything together without the advantage or encumbrance of kin or skin. The hope of a Caribbean person is presumably rooted in a synthesis of contradictory elements in the dialectical reality of Caribbean life. This chaotic state of affairs is admittedly an ideal subject for the creative artist rather than for the solemn academic or the doctrinaire politician armed with his manifesto for changing the region come what may.

The relationship between *cultural policy, identity and mass communication* is another theme of extreme urgency in a region which is bombarded by the might of media technology. There are definite benefits – undoubtedly, the world-wide popularity of reggae artists and of Afro-Latin music must be attributed in large measure to the region's access to technology. That access carries with it a price which is paid in the satellisation of Caribbean artistic culture or the weakening of artistic products through instant penetration via the media.

The 'media' must not be restricted to the electronic though that, admittedly, is the most visible and the one with the greatest impact on the non-scribal mass population. The print media have long influenced the Caribbean's cultural identity through books authored by artists of the North Atlantic or by West Indians writing for a North Atlantic market and with metropolitan eyes and feeling, as well as through newspapers owned, controlled and operated by Caribbean persons of a decidedly Eurocentric bias. A place for serious research into who owns, who controls, who writes for the media is now proving a matter of urgency – not to speak of the need for on-going content analysis of programmes, headcounts on television and radio sets, assessment of access by Caribbean artists to these media, determination of the ratio of locally produced programmes to imported fare, and analyses of media-policy emphases with respect to arts and culture both on the part of Caribbean governments and private media houses in the re-

gion. The entire region is a ready-made gift for open discussion, bold speculation and myths. In this there has been no shortage of volunteers especially in the area of popular journalism.

Finally, the arts themselves invite serious study in their own right, especially in the way they operate in the Caribbean. Psychological categories place them in a position of priority on the societal growth continuum of imitation, adaptation/adjustment, creativity. The view that Caribbean society has been trapped by colonialism into an adaptation/adjustment stasis after barely abandoning imitation usually proceeds to the notion that the only breakthrough to independence is through a creativity which can manifest itself not only in artistic production but also in political revolution and strategies of fundamental social transformation. This hypothesis invites some serious testing especially since there is evidence of the vigorous co-existence of imitation, adaptation/adjustment and creativity in the region at the moment with the dominant mode shifting according to the set of circumstances being dealt with.

Another area of investigation and analysis directly related to the arts and cultural identity would be the cycle of artistic creative action based on the symbolic relationship between the ancestral/traditional mode of cultural expression, the contemporary and popular mode and the classic(al) mode which depends for its continuing vitality on the other two as it does on the conscious application of individual genius to the creative process. It seems that all societies, *to be societies*, should have the capability of activating all three modes of artistic/cultural expression. Further empirical and comparative study of societies in terms of this may indeed help to explode the persistent myth that all things classical (and therefore good) come from Europe and only the folk and ephemeral 'pop' material, as primary products, can come from places like the Caribbean. That the arts of the Caribbean linked to the question of cultural identity have been able in their actual manifestations to explode this myth is still to be acknowledged by the Caribbean itself. Having convinced itself that it has created something, the region may begin to believe that it does have a history and an existential reality worth taking seriously.

Those Caribbean scholars, economic planners and pragmatic politicians or self-acclaimed citizens of the world who see questions about the arts and cultural identity as psychic heresies against Western rationalism, humanism and practical commonsense, need to be reminded of the dismissal of notions of equality, liberty and fraternity as 'metaphysical nonsenses' when they emerged out of Continental European revolutionary zeal at the end of the 18th century. Those 'nonsenses'

were to feed the impulse of revolutionary change in the Americas and are part of the Caribbean heritage. The aspirations they engendered were to serve as stimuli for many who would regard themselves as 'progressive' in the region. Concerns about identity and its achievement through the creative imagination can indeed lead to a fantasy-filled romanticism. However, excellence of the products from the artists themselves and a tradition of intellectual sensitivity in dealing with the phenomena that are the stuff of artistic creation can also save the region from self-indulgence, chauvinism and another kind of distortion of itself.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 See Aime Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Paris, Presence Africaine 1966. *Cahier* was regarded as a 'lyrical autobiography' by many critics. It was written in 1939 before Césaire's return to Martinique. Raymond E. Betts (*The Ideology of Blackness*, Mass. D.C. Heath & Co., 1971) wrote that what all agree on is the power of the language, the rich images it evokes, the Caribbean world it discovers, the tenacity with which it clings to the native land wracked by colonialism. p. 103. Both Césaire and his poet/philosopher colleague, Leopold Senghor, were to become active politicians in Martinique and Senegal respectively.
- 2 This was the final conference mounted by the late Dr Vera Rubin, founder of the New York-based Research Institute for the Study of Man (RISM) on 'New Perspectives on Caribbean Studies: Towards the 21st Century and Prospects for Caribbean Basin Integration' at Hunter College, New York from 28 August to 1 September 1984. The conference was sponsored by RISM in collaboration with the City University of New York (CUNY), where this paper was first presented.
- 3 M.G. Smith who has taught at UWI, UCLA, Kings College, London and Yale University is known for his seminal work on cultural pluralism in the Caribbean and for his studies of the Nuer in West Africa. He also belongs to the early cultural movement that flourished alongside the self-government movement in Jamaica. Edward Kamau Brathwaite who was Professor of Cultural History in the UWI (Mona), has published work on the history of Jamaican plantation society and is the author of internationally acclaimed books of poetry, winning the regional Commonwealth Literary Prize from the Commonwealth Institute, London, in 1986. His *History and Society* course sought to integrate historical and socio-cultural studies into one degree programme.
- 4 Lewis, Arthur: 'Striving To be West Indian' in *West Indian Law Journal* (Council of Legal Education) Vol. 6, No. 1, May 1962.
- 5 Harris, Wilson: 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas', *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2, June 1970 pp. 98-122.
- 6 Nettleford, Rex: *Manley and the New Jamaica*, Longman Caribbean, 1971, pp. 98-122.
- 7 Caribbean-wide festivals of arts date back to 1952 when a 'meeting' of Caribbean artists was held in Puerto Rico exposing performing artists from all over the Caribbean to each other for the first time. The Festival marking the launching of the West Indies Federation in 1958 was another such important occasion though restricted to artists in the Anglophone Caribbean. Not until 1972 did the more recent set of festivals (Carifesta) begin with the first in Guyana, the second in Jamaica (1976), the third in Cuba (1978) and the fourth in Barbados (1981).

- A fifth scheduled to be held in Jamaica 1988 was first postponed to 1989 and then finally cancelled following on the ravages of Hurricane Gilbert. Trinidad hosted Carifesta V in 1992. Popular entertainers have long made international tours to Europe and North America but these have increased in frequency and intensity since the 1970s. Reggae superstars Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh are well known in all continents of the world. Tourist promotion tours have featured entertainers. Dance companies from Jamaica, Cuba and Trinidad have toured extensively. The Cuban companies have toured parts of Latin America and Eastern Europe. The Jamaican National Dance Theatre Company has toured the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, West Germany, Australia, Finland, USA, Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba and the Commonwealth Caribbean. The Trinidad Theatre Workshop under Derek Walcott toured the USA and the Caribbean while the Jamaican Folk Singers led by Olive Lewin has visited Argentina, the UK and the USA. An exhibition of Jamaican art in 1984 toured the USA under the curatorship of the Smithsonian Institution and displays of Trinidad costumes have been mounted in many cities of the North Atlantic, accompanying a variety group directed by Aubrey Adams ('Ambalaika').
- 8 Dwyer, Richard: 'Caribbean Textuality' *Caribbean Review* Vol. XI, No. 4, Fall 1982.
 - 9 Morris, Mervyn: 'People's Speech: Some dub Poets' *Race Today* Vol. 14, No. 5 (1983 pp. 150-157).
 - 10 In an interview in the *Trinidad Express* (14 March 1982) Derek Walcott reportedly said, 'Empires are smart enough to steal from the people they conquer. They steal the best things, and the people who have been conquered should have enough sense to steal back'. See Dwyer (*op. cit.*) 'Stealing' as an artist's stock in trade is acknowledged by a great American Modern Dance choreographer who in an interview at age 90 was reported as saying '... I steal. But I only steal from the best ... usually the past'. See Martha Graham in *Ballet International*, March 1984.
 - 11 Vidia Naipaul's much quoted and controversial paragraph from *The Middle Passage* (Hammondsworth, Penguin 1969) is a point of departure in a discussion of West Indian writing by Mohr (See Eugene V. Mohr's 'The Pleasures of West Indian Writing: An Introduction to the Literature', *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1982, p. 13). The actual quote is, 'History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies'. Professor Kenneth Ramchand of UWI (St. Augustine) in introducing Naipaul at a Public Lecture held in Port of Spain on Friday, February 7, 1992 insisted that the (in)famous Naipaul statement referred to the desolation by the colonial powers rather than to any inability of the Caribbean people themselves to create and achieve.
 - 12 Derek Walcott's recognition beyond his native Caribbean has been reinforced by his connection with the Boston literati and his longstanding friendship with the late Robert Lowell (see his article 'On Robert Lowell' *New York Review of Books* Vol. XXXI, No. 3, March 1984, pp. 25-30).
 - 13 Dwyer, Richard *op. cit.*, p. 12.
 - 14 Nunley, John and Bettelheim, Judith *Caribbean Festival Arts*, University of Washington Press in association with St. Louis Museum, Missouri, 1988.
 - 15 See Nunley and Bettelheim (*op. cit.*). The Prologue was written by Robert Farris Thompson and the epilogue by Rex Nettleford, who was also Special Consultant to the project. Significant research and writing on Caribbean Festival Arts and their social significance have been done over the past two decades by such people as Errol Hill, Sheila Barnett and Cheryl Ryman, Abner Cohen, Everton Pryce, Monica Schuler. See *Caribbean Festival Arts* especially p. 214.
 - 16 Nettleford, Rex: *Caribbean Cultural Identity - The Case of Jamaica*, Kingston, Institute of Jamaica and UCLA 1978.
 - 17 Nettleford, Rex: *Dance Jamaica - Cultural Definition and Artistic Discovery: The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica*, Grove Press, New York 1985. See Chapter on 'Cultural Resistance ...'.
 - 18 See Joseph Margolis: *Texts without Referents - Reconciling Science and Narrative*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1980; also Robert Scott Root Bernstein: 'Creative Process as a Unifying Theme of Human Cultures' in *Daedalus*, Summer 1984 pp. 184 ff; also C.P. Snow: *The Two Cultures: And a Second Look* Cambridge, CUP 1959; also Frederick Turner: 'Escape from Modern Technology and the Future of the Imagination in *Harper's Magazine*, November 1984 pp. 45-55.
 - 19 See Derrick Boyd: 'The Impact of Adjustment Policies on Vulnerable Groups: The Case of Jamaica 1973-1985' in *Adjustment With a Human Face II: Ten Country Case Studies* (A Study by UNICEF) eds Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Richard Jolly, Frances Stewart, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1988; also Khadija Haq and Unar Kirdar (eds): *Managing Development* Islamabad, North-South Roundtable 1988, being papers prepared for the Budapest Roundtable on Managing Human Development, September 6-9, 1987.
 - 20 The relevant works in the cultural pluralism debate are Smith (M.G. Smith's *The Plural Society in the British West Indies*, Berkeley, University of California Press 1965), Smith (R.T. Smith's 'Social Stratification Cultural Pluralism, and Integration in West Indian Societies' in *Caribbean Integration* edited by S. Lewis and T. Matthews, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1961) and Brathwaite (Lloyd Brathwaite 'Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism' in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* Vol. 83, 1960 pp. 816-836). These studies have since served as a point of departure for several other studies of Caribbean society. The New World Group comprised a number of academics (largely economists) working out of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UWI, Mona, Jamaica in the 1960s. Their focus on Caribbean economic integration was fitting response to the failure of the political federation (1958-61) and a natural, and probably non-self-conscious, response to the challenges of Independence fast approaching on the entire region. Among the major scholars identified with the movement were Havelock Brewster, C.Y. Thomas, George Beckford, Lloyd Best and Alister McIntyre. A slightly younger generation carrying names like Norman Girvan, Compton Bourne was to emerge in the 1970s with work of Caribbean-wide significance in such areas as Bauxite, Central Banking, and Science and Technology Policy Studies.
 - 21 See Smith, *et al*: *Report on the Rastafarians in Kingston, Jamaica*, Mona, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), 1960. This survey was co-ordinated by Arthur Lewis (then Principal of the UCWI). It not only informed public policy and helped to change negative attitudes towards the Rastafarian movement but also excited further and sustained interest in the study of the movement and its place in Caribbean social and cultural development. Earlier work had been done on the yet embryonic movement by George Easton Simpson of Oberlin College, Ohio, as part of his general interest in the nature and function of religious cults in the Caribbean region. In the late 1960s many from the student body at Mona were to become active members of the movement which spread to such other territories as Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia and later to Barbados, Trinidad and the British Virgin Islands. It was considered as part of the all-pervasive Black Power Movement which manifested itself in the support given by many of the young to the 1968 'Rodney riots' following the banning of the UWI History lecturer Walter Rodney, a Guyanese by birth, from Jamaica where the Mona campus is located.
 - 22 This echoes the views expressed by Rupert Lewis, a Reader in the Department of Government, UWI (Mona) on the occasion of the launching of the volume of essays: Rupert and Maureen Lewis (eds) *Garvey, Africa, Europe and the Americas*, Mona, Institute of Social and Economic Research 1986. Rupert Lewis is also the author of a later book - *Marcus Garvey 'Anti Colonial Champion'*, London, Karia Press 1987). The political philosophy of Garvey has been investigated by Tony Martin operating out of the United States. The impressive and almost complete documentation of Garvey's writing and utterances is edited in several

massive volumes by the Jamaican scholar Robert Hill, who also works out of the USA (UCLA) but who did begin his work on documentation in his studies for the Master's degree at the University of the West Indies in the Faculty of Social Sciences, at Mona, Jamaica.



Cultural Resistance in Caribbean Society: Dance and Survival

The creative acts of our people, forged collectively over time or by individual protagonists, . . . have thrown up classic expressions which have in turn become prime sources of energy for that vital quest for cultural certitude. . . . All such expressions emanating from social interaction now serve as the living archives of our patrimony as well as the testament of a valid collective experience signifying the germ of a definitive civilization.¹

It is in the nature of the times that millions of people who have been formally 'set free' from the shackles of colonialism should now lay claim to a definitive civilisation. They do so on the basis either of ancestral pedigree – as Africans and Indians perceive it, or of imminent realisation – as the anglophone Caribbean populations, all creatures of colonisation, would have it. These heirs of colonialism ferret out new or ancestrally based designs for social living and seek serviceable perceptions of themselves and of their societies emerging out of colonial rule. They forge novel and revolutionary modes of expression for continued advancement toward total liberation. They also search for alternative institutions appropriate to the imperatives of decolonisation and national development. This is so whether the first step on the road

to that definitive civilisation is through armed resistance which happened in 1776 in the North American colonies and was repeated later in much of Latin America, including Cuba or by means of a negotiated settlement for peaceful coexistence between the former colonised and coloniser such as the formation of the Commonwealth Caribbean.² Until the independence arrangements of the 1960s this segment of the Caribbean played the wily suntanned savage of a Caliban to the magisterial tutelar authority of Great Britain's Prospero.

The anguish of renewal and reshaping draws heavily on the resources of imagination and creative intellect – gifts of grace which as part of the irony of a subjugated existence served the subordinated people well. The ingenious stratagems of imagination and intellect that allowed the slaves or the colonised peoples to outwit the oppressive master bear eloquent testimony to this anguished past. The history of Jamaica and the wider Caribbean area abounds in the consequences of such irony, and many rebellions, both individual and collective, have been lost or won through the exercise of a fecund imagination and the application of a lively intelligence. Such rebellions continue to this day, not necessarily by means of a gun but often through the resourcefulness of artistic creativity – whether the artist is poet, playwright, painter, potter, musician, actor, or dancer. As I have stressed elsewhere, 'It is not by accident that the performing arts, which depend on dialogue and social interaction for their dynamic (and for collective plan and action), are the artistic cultural expressions which tend to carry greatest conviction among Caribbean people'.³

The Creative Artist and Society

Among these cultural expressions is the dance, or more accurately dance theatre. In reflecting on the role and continuing force of this art form, one must consider the concept of *marronnage*.⁴ In a society like contemporary Jamaica the effective creative artist mirrors the style and strategies of the former Maroons. Secrecy and cunning, coupled with fugitive sensibilities, are critical to the success of an art form's craft. Art protects its own sense of order, under cover, and ambushes society from under that cover of secrecy. Cunning, as well as physical distancing, is exploited in order to awaken that society and help guide it under its new dispensation. Thus the artist may confront society amicably or fight it in a hostile encounter – but always from what the South African writer Nadine Gordimer in another context describes as the 'jealous hoarding of private experience for transmutation into

fiction'.⁵ This is particularly true of the fiction of song, theatre, and dance. Nothing that the creators of art works could say or think would be truer than the fictions they offer in the forms themselves: literary symbols; shapes frozen in wood, stone, and clay; sound structured into song; or isolated movement assembled into dances. The external paradox of fiction as the purveyor of truth is but one of the many paradoxes that nourish and challenge the creative artist, just as the use of the mask as persona, itself a form of fiction, has nourished a people's strategy of cultural resistance throughout their creative existence.

Another paradox of painful urgency in developing societies such as those in the Caribbean is the contradiction of the artist's unrepentant self-containment and autonomy without the chance of ever escaping his having to define that self-containment and autonomy in terms of a wider social reality. The tension is revealed most clearly in the region's significant cultural products.

One must avoid the arrogance of interpreting one's society exclusively through one's private life. Through such self-indulgence an otherwise creative life 'drags on only as an appendage of the social process'⁶ and does not become an integral part of that process. The torment of this contradiction is part of the presumption of being a creative artist.

With the fullest appreciation of the mediation of the creative process by social reality, the creative artist in developing countries must break the privilege of privacy without surrendering totally to public prying. The artist must be involved and yet detached, concerned and caring but also aloof and skeptical. Jamaican society – true as well of the wider Caribbean area – is a beleaguered victim of underdevelopment, endemic poverty, and a threatening spiritual debility manifest in chronic self-doubt, cultural ambivalence, and almost pathological pre-occupations with recognition and status. Thus the society challenges the artist with intense contradictions.

Caribbean society still manages to educate and socialise much of its population to self-negation. This distorted vision of self and society compels certain creative artists to respond. It is their 'third eye' that has prompted the judgments and perceptions that are necessary correctives to the facile assumptions of unimaginative public leaders making important decisions about the society's material and spiritual destiny. Promoting confidence in the values manifested in fiction, poetry, music, dance, drama, and the plastic arts is what cultural development has been about in Jamaica. The work of writers during the 1930s, and of painters and sculptors later, mirrored this to a fine

degree. The story of the dance as it is reflected through the prism of the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) of Jamaica must be understood in the context of a tradition of dedication and vision. It is this sense of order and respect for its creative potential that has helped keep the society afloat.

I implicitly believe in the organic connection between the arts of a people and both their everyday living and their historical experience. The rooting of the products of the imagination – of which the dance may be the foremost elemental expression – in the reality of specific human existence is the surest guarantee of a living art form. It is this connection between the creative imagination and social reality that the National Dance Theatre Company is committed to projecting and promoting. This position does not refer to social realism, which I do not believe in, but rather it supports the answer implied in the question, ‘What is poetry which does not save nations or people?’ The question is equally valid in terms of the dance. For those who want to retain their individuality, or to protect that part of the spirit which must remain alive and inviolable for one to exercise the creative imagination, the fear has long proved unfounded. By its very nature the creative imagination lies beyond the reach of the vilest oppressor – whether it be person or system and no matter how great the advantage of armaments, instruments of torture, or devices that affect psychological disorientation. Yet the artist working in a society of struggle, which post-colonial Jamaica and the wider Caribbean area undoubtedly are, cannot escape the imperatives of the social context within which he or she must work. An artist soon discovers that he cannot have it both ways. Yet no special plea is being made for engaged dance theatre or music. Rather one speaks in the spirit of what Mervyn Morris, the editor of a 1983 anthology of Jamaican writing, claims for his volume: in projecting the myriad variations of form and theme, we contribute ‘to the unending process of our self-definition’.⁸

Such self-definition quite rightly seeks to address every aspect of life that would make Caribbean people less than whole. Those deeply involved realise that it is not always easy to be conscious of being a society that struggles toward self-definition and yet certifies values that go beyond that struggle. However, that is the challenge of any artist. It has been often repeated that the creative artist cannot escape from the schizophrenia of the dualities inherent in existence: part reality and part dream; inner landscape vying with outward reach; even the dialectical thrust of androgynous sensibilities challenging both men and women to more complex modes of artistic expression.

Artists must not make exaggerated claims for themselves. A bad artist is of no more use to society than an inept mechanic, but a good artist – writer, performer, or plastic artist – must make society understand that the practice of his/her craft requires keen observation and a special perspicacity, which results only from being able to move ‘under the surface of human lives,’ as it has been again aptly put by Gordimer.⁹ It is this capacity that will continue to give the Jamaican dancer, as well as other artists, not only a sense of place and purpose but also a permanent dynamic influence on society’s thoughts and feelings. If it is true that art lies at the heart of all events, then the investment by the artist in textured living and in a sense of history can only pay dividends of the highest order. A society of struggle needs this intuitive grasp of reality on the part of its artists, who must in turn be convinced that, even before the leaders are aware, the people usually know what to do.

It is the collective wisdom of the Jamaican people that signifies the richness of their collective experience, for it is in the crucible of that experience that much of what became known as Jamaican and Caribbean has been forged over four or five centuries. Survival on the village plots, and later in free villages, through practical frameworks of their own making; suffering on the plantation and now in the cities of ‘Babylon’; and severance from homelands – these processes together constitute a serviceable historical-cultural reference and a vibrant source of energy, not only for the creative impulse but also for the working plans of social mobilisation and economic development.

Placed against the historical and existential realities of survival, suffering, and severance, the dance in Jamaica assumes special meaning beyond that traditionally given it by the ruling classes, who may have seen it as yet another atavistic indulgence of a semi-literate, uninitiated people. Early accounts of the nature and function of dance, as designs for social living, among the slaves – and later among the freed black masses – leave no doubt about the majority’s view of the status of this most elemental of creative acts.

Early Responses to Jamaican Dance

In the 18th and 19th centuries there is no shortage of evidence of missionary and planter disapproval of the ‘severe exercise [the slaves] undergo in their violent and athletic dances’¹⁰ or of the dances not playing which were ‘so far from being Acts of Adoration of a god, that they are for the most part mixt with a great deal of Bawdry and

Lewdness'.¹¹ Such perceptions persisted even after emancipation. The body movements carried 'strange and indecent attitudes'.¹² When not construed as vulgar and ungodly, the dances of the blacks were considered ludicrous. An eighteenth-century writer noted that the slaves 'dance minuets with the mulattoe and other brown women, imitating the motion and steps of the English, but with a degree of affection that renders the whole truly laughable and ridiculous'.¹³ These movements might well have been intended as a mockery of betters by their inferiors, but according to the same writer, the slaves' 'own way of dancing is droll indeed; they put themselves into strange postures and shake their hips and great breasts to such a degree that it is impossible to refrain from laughing though they go through the whole performance with profound gravity, their feet beating time remarkably quick; two of them generally dance together, and sometimes do not move six inches from the same place'.¹⁴ Two other commentators, both writing in the 19th century but one before emancipation and the other after, found the dances of the slaves a 'display of unseemly gestures'¹⁵ and those of their descendants an exhibition of 'lascivious attitudes with which the greatest favourites were characterised'.¹⁶

There is no need to romanticise the slave as a paragon of virtue. Like their masters, whom they sometimes emulated as much as they resisted, slaves no doubt were also capable of coarse behaviour, drunkenness, and sexual adventurism, but to deny them any capacity for noble actions, intellectual ability, or moral integrity is to deprive them of their humanity – a somewhat unrealistic approach as events during slavery and afterward clearly demonstrated.

The response to music was the same. Most Europeans found the music of the Negroes cacophonous, although some observers did make concessions to the black man's natural sense of rhythm. Such critiques of the indigenous dances and rituals would hardly foreshadow the invention of a classic Jamaican or Caribbean dance theatre, since, according to most European commentators, the native dances lacked aesthetic weight, moral purpose, kinetic logic, discipline, or noble intent.¹⁷

As the poet and historian Edward Kamau Brathwaite quite rightly concludes in his study of the history of Jamaican Creole society, there was no way that a post-Renaissance European could understand the lack of distinction between religious and secular cultural expressions of the slave who 'danced and sang at work, at play, at worship, from fear, from sorrow, from joy. . . . Moreover, because this music and dance was so misunderstood, and since the music was based on tonal

scales and the dancing on choreographic traditions entirely outside the white observers' experience – not forgetting the necessary assumption that slaves, since they were brutes could produce no philosophy that "reach[ed] above the navel" their music was dismissed as "noise," their dancing as a way of (or to) sexual misconduct and debauchery'.¹⁸

The facts of history – and therefore of the culture by the people themselves – have served to reaffirm the staying power of the dance as part of a society's ancestral and existential reality. As the American cultural anthropologist Judith Lynne Hanna asserts, to dance is human.¹⁹ From the activities of those who, like the Jamaicans, have always expressed themselves in dance, Hanna discovers that 'dance interweaves with other aspects of human life such as communication and learning, belief systems, social relations and political dynamics, loving and fighting, and urbanisation and change'.²⁰ Everything in Jamaica's history confirms the dance – whether in rural clearings, on ghetto streets, or on the theatre stage – as elemental human behaviour in its various dimensions – physical, cultural, social, psychological, economic, and political.

While the physical aspect of dance is instantly represented in the explosive energy released during ritual worship and recreational play, the cultural dimension of these two forms of dance expression has always reflected the profound value systems of the Jamaican people. Dance also embodies social behaviour, historically proven by the complex of the jonkonnu ceremonies,²¹ which allowed Jamaicans to master their social environment through the irony of masked comedy as an expression of serious social commentary. The physical environment itself provided the Maroons with the camouflage for dances celebrating the invincibility of the human spirit in armed conflict. The psychological dimensions of dance find expression not only in the spirit-possession responses to the tensions of everyday existence but also in the therapy dancers are offered in formal studio training or actual performance. Although the economic aspect of dance, in terms of paid professionals, has limited application in the Jamaican experience, there has been a long tradition of full-time variety show artists and cabaret dancers, as well as Christmas mummings, who literally take to the streets for money. Audiences have always paid to see dance presentations, both amateur and professional, and many dancers – from the 18th century, when Haitian set-girls²² provided entertainments for the plantation homes (the Great Houses), to the present day – have had literally to dance for their supper. Dance can also be a political tool, and in the Jamaican experience it has cloaked defiance of the power structure through mimicry and has concealed the plan-

ning of slave rebellions. In contemporary times dance has reasserted itself in determining Jamaican self-definition, itself a political concern.

Above all the dance in Jamaica continues to be one of the most effective means of communication, revealing many profound truths about complex social forces operative in a society groping toward both material and spiritual betterment. These social forces are ignored at the peril of economic planning, political decisions governing developmental strategies, and ethical refinement. The perspectives of these various dimensions of dance must be kept in mind as we take a closer look at the features of survival, suffering, and severance that have shaped both the historical profile and the contemporary realities of Jamaica.

Dance and Survival

As a foremost creative activity serving Jamaican cultural resistance – not only throughout the periods of slavery and colonialism but also following independence – dance was a primary instrument of survival. First, it is a skill that depends on the physical and mental capacities of the survivor. One's body belongs only to oneself, despite the laws governing chattel slavery in the English-speaking Caribbean, which until 1834 allowed a person to be the 'property' of another.²³ Second, the language, least of all the master's. Even when there are borrowings, which are inescapable in a multicultural environment, they can be given shape and form on the borrower's own terms. These strategies are crucial in a situation of pervasive dependency, where all influences are dictated by the overlord. It is the exercise of the imagination – manifest in all forms of creative activities, from a dance or a few bars of music to the invention of various forms of worship – that has proved the best guarantee of survival, from the period of chattel slavery and colonial domination to the conditions of post-colonial geopolitical and economic encirclement. To function in the modern world, Caribbean citizens, despite the presence of expressive Creole tongues, may indeed have to write and speak in the master's language (French, English, Spanish, or Dutch); yet they can survive, dancing their own movements and singing their own music. Because of such modes of existence, this civilisation may be unique. Such a claim to cultural uniqueness was conceded by the West Indian Nobel laureate and political economist Arthur Lewis, who stated that the creative products of the Caribbean imagination constitute the one contribution

'above all others we know we can make to the common human heritage'.²⁴

This ability to contribute is both the cause and result of survival, and the jealous preservation of the means to do so becomes part of the common heritage. Consequently the majority of Jamaicans discover a flexibility in coping with a society that is yet to be organised in the interests of that majority. A hold on any activity beyond the control of a cynical power structure is a valuable weapon of cultural self-defence. The art of dance, comprising the dancer's own body movements informed by his own spiritual and emotional states, is such a weapon. Allied with music – which utilises various African-derived drums and idiophones as well as European instruments such as piano and strings – the dance takes on compounded energy as a source for survival.

Reaching beyond mere survival, the dance in Jamaica long ago refused to get stuck in genres of light-hearted entertainment, despite the ring games, lancers, schottische, and quadrille suitably adapted from the court and country dance of Europe. Instead the dance preserved its force through integrated links with religion in the worship of forbidden but persistent gods, divination rituals, and the configurations of a nether world beyond the master's laws. It has given to the cultural heritage of Jamaica such enduring life sources as kumina, pukkumina (popularly known as pocomania), etu, tambu, gerreh, dinkimini, Zion revivalism, and Rastafarianism.²⁵ Many of these rituals have their counterparts in other parts of the fragmented Caribbean, carrying names such as voodoo (Haiti and Santo Domingo), santeria (Cuba), shango (Trinidad), and cumfah (Guyana).²⁶ The cunning survival strategies may be well-concealed in religious rites reserved for the initiated, but they are no less effective when exercised openly in dance-filled jonkonnu masquerades, burru, dinkimini, bruckin party, or pre-Lenten Carnival. Such seemingly harmless merrymaking activities offer appropriate vehicles for the oppressed masses to comment freely, often in the form of wicked wit and ribald punning, on a society that gives them short shrift socially, politically, and economically. Such activities involve energies that are released through otherwise forbidden behaviour, especially in what may appear to be uninhibited and suggestive movements. Mimicry, artistic licence, understatement, and ironic metaphors certainly were not lost on the originators of formal Caribbean dance theatre, as the repertoire of the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica clearly illustrates.

In an effort to escape the negative effects of persistent poverty and psychological and cultural isolation, Jamaicans historically found

refuge in collective endeavours. Circles of protection – whether provided through community co-operation, configurations of the extended family, or ritual dances performed in the round to exorcise evil or celebrate communal achievements – offered the African-in-exile some kind of solace. Dance, which took the form of recreational ring games played under the full moon or the ceremonial worship of votaries moving around a table (pukkumina and Zion revival) or around drummers invoking ancestral spirits (kumina), reinforced the protective aspects of group activities. Dance was the organic link with Africa, helping to alleviate the isolation that threatened the cultural heritage of the individuals who ended up in the Caribbean. Life itself continued to be viewed in cyclical terms, involving the dead, the living, and those unborn. Ancestors close the circle when libations are poured.

The dance is not only a performing art, it is also an art of community effort that proclaims the virtue of co-operation over unrestrained individualism. It is self-evident how this relates to self-government, nation building, and social organisation. Traditionally, government leaders have dismissed the sensitive intellectual gifts of peasant experiences, precisely because they have been regarded as too mundane or folkloric to guide affairs of state. Yet it is the peasant who realises that the individual dancer usually has little to offer outside of community ritual. Even when he performs alone, the ritual dancer must have either a responsive audience or acceptance by the community spirits. Votaries, whose religious functions are clear-cut, must operate within a large framework, which invests such functions with purpose and meaning. Rivermaid, Cooing Dove, Engine Spirit, Bell Ringer, Indian Spirit – all such ritual participants relate not only to one another but also to the overall pukkumina rite. The characters of a masquerade band are always members of a team. What the violated individual is deprived of by the wider society is provided in ancestral rituals or contemporary ceremonies organised by the people themselves. Opportunity is given for social interaction which invests each actor with the dignity of a *persona*, even if it is as a 'king' or a 'queen' for only a short period of time. The slave, the denigrated African, the exploited proletarian, or the powerless worker in a factory – all with the lowest status during most of the year – can be shepherd, captain, king, queen, or courtier for a night or two in pukkumina, kumina, or bruckin party.

An inevitable interdependence is found in all social activity. Such activity draws on the mobilised energies of a wide range of participants in creative inter-action, which is not only the essence of nation building and other forms of communal organisation but also the essence of the efforts of a performing group, whether dancers, actors,

singers, or musicians. The choreographer, for example, is nothing without the dancer, who participates in the creation of the final product. A writer can discard material that doesn't work, but a choreographer cannot ignore the dancer, who is an instrument of his expression. A dance company – employing, besides dancers, the varied skills of singers, musicians, creative technicians, and stagehands – by definition offers a valuable example of the creative moulding of energies and skills into an organic whole. Joan McCulloch, an English-woman residing in Jamaica, wrote in 1946 from her experiences as a ballet dancer and teacher in England: 'The ballet brings together so much artistic talent – apart from the dancers and choreographers there are the composers, musicians, writers and artists. It is this artistic co-operation all working together, not for themselves, but for the whole, which gives us something for enjoyment that few other arts can equal'.²⁷ McCulloch's claim may be a trifle exaggerated. But the dance as a multidisciplinary art does offer opportunities for the development of talent through participation in a larger community. A sense of individuality is formed in the crucible of social interaction.

It is the collective experiences of the common people that are usually ignored by economic and political strategists of postcolonial Third World countries like Jamaica. These new power brokers in the Third World continue to look for solutions within the context of metropolitan centres, where they may have gained their formal education. Thus cultural activities are still afflicted by the externalisation of consciousness; metropolitan dance culture continues to dazzle Third World devotees into uncritical imitation or artistic paralysis. Such aping cannot be the basis of participatory democracy, which is the battle hymn of every republic seeking political stability as well as the judicious balance between social and economic justice for the individual and the responsibilities of collective action. Nor can it be the basis of any serious Caribbean effort at self-definition through artistic achievement.

As a traditional survival technique in the ordinary Jamaican's self-made design for social living, the dance offers an excellent tool for human development as part of the nation's strategies to shape a new society. Contemporary dance expression, rooted in a traditional-ancestral dance culture, encourages patriotic commitment, therefore avoiding the alienation and anomie that result from colonial dependency. Sustained structured training in preparing the body for performance – as well as the obvious rewards derived from the expenditure of energies – fosters productive work attitudes, self-discipline, and physical stamina. The by-products – not only increased health, body aware-

ness, and physical and mental co-ordination but also a better appreciation of the nation's cultural history through music and folklore studies – will add to the quality of life by transporting society beyond a preoccupation with mere survival to social concerns, such as the creative ordering of contemporary life. The dance as a force in the overall cultural development of Jamaica during the first two decades of independence has served to enrich the infrastructures of cultural life, taking the country from colonial outpost for commercial profit to an aspiringly self-reliant and self-respecting social organism.

Dance and the History of Suffering

The whole discussion of survival is involved with the potentials of existence through the exercise of the creative imagination, which is at the root of culture. Just as important to Caribbean life is the crucial fact of suffering, which has forced the individual to a quicker understanding of the dialectical imperative of the unending struggle to define self and society.

The nature of suffering in our discussion is centred less on the historical facts of physical maiming, legal curtailment of civil liberties, sexual exploitation, or even the dehumanising mechanisms of social control and psychological conditioning that set off plantation slavery throughout the Americas from anything that preceded it. The suffering we are concerned with, which is of great importance to creative artists and cultural representatives, focuses on the enduring consequences of that historical experience. The negative consequences of contemporary experience in areas like the Caribbean describe the profile of suffering: the persistent powerlessness of the majority nurtured on self-negation and a false consciousness that leads to identity crises; the institutionalised debasement of the creative products of those of African ancestry; the psychic and intellectual dependency of the entire Caribbean region on metropolitan standards sustained by the use of culture as a weapon of ideological penetration; and the threat of spiritual paralysis. The malaise that results from cultural domination by imperial mores parallels the dire consequences of economic domination manifested in the operation of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank loans, the debt trap, protectionist trade, and tariffs favouring the developed world.

The suffering of societies like Jamaica and other Caribbean nations is exacerbated when the new ruling classes become the most uncritical perpetrators of the old values and simply make the new regime

nothing more than the old imperial order with a darker skin. Notions of elegance and manners are at the heart of the metropolitan cultural ethos. Some of these notions are harmless enough, but a perennial problem for the new nations revolves around the question of transforming the empty power of manipulated symbols into power with substance. What is the power that must be mastered? Is it not the capacity of a people to make their own definitions about themselves and to be able to act on the basis of those definitions? No development strategy is likely to succeed without pinning its objectives to such definitions. The transfer of technology and developmental assistance makes more sense when self-definition is fostered.

The world of culture in general has always claimed a capacity for self-definition and has demonstrated its mettle under the imperial regime, when the colonial child was expected to copy the image of the imperial parent. Hence those rebellions have been most successful that address the suffering that results from self-doubt and self-negation. It was easy for the native successors to imperial rule to utilise the creative arts to develop the national consciousness and encourage pride in self. Energies expended on popular expressions of culture were acceptable so long as the authority of the new power structure was not threatened. Sometimes it was: indigenous cultural activities such as Rastafarianism (religion) and reggae (music) provoked displeasure and an ultimate ban by the Jamaican government.²⁸ In general, however, cultural expressions that seek to define a new order received support from Jamaican political leaders, who committed themselves to the free expression and liberal promotion of the creative arts. The dance, without losing its independence, has been a direct beneficiary of this governmental goodwill. If the dance as well as other art forms can be transformed from a passive position to an active one that attempts to relieve suffering and promote self-confidence, they will gain a special place in the development of a modern Caribbean society.

The arts will not succeed in the Caribbean unless the people themselves show respect for their intrinsic characteristics and view them as having a central position in society. The dance is particularly vulnerable in this regard: the legacy of Anglo-Saxon cultural attitudes undermines its acceptance, particularly among those who are ambivalent about the creative products of their own society. Among the grassroots population of the Caribbean, dance appeals in several ways to the ordinary experiences of the individual. Stripped of its reference to traditional life, however, dance is threatened by the indulgence of art for its own sake, without an organic centre and with all the usual

hang-ups of Western culture. Thus the view of dance as a divertissement or a minor art form suited the racial conceit of European masters, who normally considered the intellectual and artistic achievements of their African subjects inferior in all respects. The Puritan ethic – which condemned the expressive use of the body, the very instrument of dance – had an especially negative influence on the acceptance of the art by even the educated Caribbean population. This was particularly true of the educated male population, who confused eloquent body movement with Anglo-Saxon fears about effeminacy and homosexuality, a fear of great import to a male population reared on concerns about sexual prowess and the emasculation of their manhood under slavery. Nor was dance regarded as a suitable subject for the serious study of human behaviour. The American scholar Judith Lynne Hanna places the blame for this on a combination of Puritan ethics, social stratification, concepts of masculinity, and detachment from nonverbal behaviour. She points out that, after the collapse of the effete French monarchy, the ‘emergent bourgeoisie, anxious to protect its power, transformed the body from an instrument of pleasure into one of production. Furthermore, the body became a victim of social snobbery – a brute linking the bourgeoisie to the lower classes’.²⁹ Such attitudes were adopted by the educated classes in colonial outposts like the Caribbean. As soon as European classical ballet was accepted by the wielders of social power in the mother country, Caribbean cultural leaders immediately followed in their footsteps. The Sadler’s Wells Ballet (later Royal Ballet) became the model of serious art dance. The Jamaican white upper classes and aspiring light-skinned middle classes took a natural fancy to the developments spearheaded by Ninette de Valois in England.³⁰

In the Caribbean, the art of dance was connected to class status and racial consideration because of an historical race-class correlation. The dances of the black majority remained African-inspired and Creole in content and stylistic orientation. The dance forms of the established population were naturally Eurocentric. The European classical ballet, despite its firm roots in the national folk dances and court dances of Europe, became the hallmark of refinement and culture to the uncritical colonial. Therefore the society’s psychic suffering also manifested itself in the field of dance. Contemporary European historians and travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries had found the native people’s dancing quaint, barbaric, exotic, and lascivious. Such perceptions, which persisted even in the 20th century, are evident in an article by H.V. Ormsby Marshall published in 1939 in *The Dancing*

Times of London: ‘Notwithstanding all that the European landowners and the upper classes have done for the blacks by methods of education and gradual civilisation, there remains yet much to be desired to alienate them from the natural savage instincts which they inherit from their forefathers’.³¹ With patronising resignation the writer conceded that these people ‘show a natural symmetry in all their movements; their walk has a swinging grace about it that few could acquire from the most excessive desire or practice, and there is a distinct rhythm in all their folk dances.’ She felt, however, that it was ‘in their mode of dress, and in their dances, that they revert most frequently to their instinctive barbarism’.³²

Such have been the prevailing attitudes to the customs of people of African ancestry. In fact, anyone of African heritage was subject to crude but subtle forms of racial and class discrimination under the British crown colony system established in Jamaica in 1866, giving the official representatives of the crown complete jurisdiction over public administration of the colony. Although the British imperial leaders never officially pursued an assimilationist policy – as the French did in their empire – all institutions of growth, particularly educational and cultural ones, were determined in their indoctrination, preparing the native population to approximate as much as possible Englishmen or at least Western ‘civilized’ habits. Thus the colonials were taught a cultural sensibility that defined good art in terms of the dominant culture, extolling operas, symphonies, and sonatas; Shakespearean drama and the poetry of Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Kipling; the paintings of Gainsborough and Constable; and the kind of dance that the fledgling Sadler’s Wells company developed following examples of Diaghilev and the Russian emigres.

The brown middle classes imitated well enough but never totally escaped the ignominy of their African heritage. In due time these middle classes rebelled. It was they who spearheaded a nationalist movement seeking recognition for an autonomous existence. Thus, in effect, they caught up with the black peasant and artisan classes, who had created their own language (Jamaican patois), mating patterns (matriarchal and extended families), religious expressions (pukkumina and Zion revival), economic institutions of mutual aid (partner and co-operative day labour), music (mento and religious spirituals), and their own forms of dance (jonkonnu, kumina, bruckin party, burru). These expressive strategies of survival constituted the so-called subculture, in the view of those few who governed on behalf of the imperial power. This cultural domination was assisted by many native Jamai-

cans, who identified intellectually and aesthetically with the expatriate overlords.

When the brown middle classes, from whom the viceregal aides were drawn, became frustrated with their lack of power, they allied with the black labouring classes – as they had during the final days of slavery – to fight against the alien ruler. Although they provided the leadership for organisations struggling against colonialism – such as political parties, trade unions, and demonstration groups – they surrendered, as if by barter, to the indigenous creative impulses of the black majority. Some even blackened their faces to lend greater authenticity in performing Jamaican folksongs. The alliance provided black endeavours in the theatre, publishing ventures, and, later, music recordings with administrative and promotional expertise drawn from the privileged, educated Jamaican middle classes. At least partial victory over suffering was gained, particularly in terms of a society's self-identification and sense of place in the world.

The dance benefitted immensely from this new development. Despite a continuing preference for the refined dance forms of the mother country, emerging ideas about indigenous dances as being the source of any true expression of Jamaican dance theatre began to take shape. Such ideas prompted from Hazel Johnston, a London-trained pioneer of dance theatre in the European classical mould, comments that reveal an interest in a Jamaican dance theatre based on the native culture. Johnston also underlined the effects of psychological and cultural distancing of the privileged middle classes from the genuine artistic achievements of the Jamaican people. She felt that it was impossible to attempt anything in the direction of an indigenous style of Jamaican dance theatre until an 'intensive study has been made of the habits and gestures of the people. If there were in existence any recognised folk dances, the task would be very much simplified, but Jamaican native dances consist of improvisations which, however, bear similarity to each other. This is in itself proof of the spontaneity and natural aptitude of our people, but it presents almost insurmountable difficulties to the choreographer'.³³ The truth is that spontaneity and improvisations had always found purpose and distinctive form in everyday life – in formal religious worship and in the recreational play of the people. Doing fieldwork, a decade before Hazel Johnston, Martha Beckwith had discussed the existence of this tradition in her book *Black Roadways*.³⁴ About fifteen years later the choreographer and anthropologist Katherine Dunham in a journey to Accompong, a village of the ancestral Maroons, was inspired to a vision of a dance

theatre style that admirably exposed the experiences of plantation America.³⁵

The difficulties for the choreographer, which Hazel Johnston mentioned, were insurmountable for the Jamaicans supposedly because of the lack of a ready-made technique and vocabulary and an acceptable aesthetic framework, as the imported European classical ballet readily offered. Ivy Baxter, a former pupil of Hazel Johnston, was not daunted by such difficulties, and even before she made an intensive study of the gestures and habits of the people, she surveyed the immediate environment and began to create dances in the spirit of Jamaican realities, drawing on stories and folksongs as well as street gestures and the life of the marketplace.³⁶ In her search for a Jamaican way of expressing reality through dance, Baxter even took liberties with the technique she had learned at the Johnston Studio. She gained further confidence in her contacts with the Trinidad dance theatre innovator Beryl McBurnie, the 'mother of Caribbean dance,' who entertained no doubt that in Trinidad there were the makings of a Caribbean form of dance out of the rituals, gestures, improvisations, and rich history of three centuries of struggle.³⁷ Both Beryl McBurnie and Ivy Baxter are real pioneers who took the first creative steps in attempting to alleviate the suffering of the Caribbean people, particularly their sense of psychic inferiority and cultural deprivation.

In all fairness, Hazel Johnston did sterling work in the dance as she perceived it, giving Jamaica a notion of excellence and integrity in dance theatre.³⁸ Johnston died young, before the full impact of the self-government movement goaded Jamaicans like Ivy Baxter to the belief that they could be the creators of their own destiny, not only through their skill at political administration – with the vote, universal adult suffrage, and a native parliament and ministries – but also through their creative imagination. A university was established in 1948, and cultural ferment in literature, painting, sculpture, and musical theatre was perceived as part of the process of Jamaicans becoming themselves. Baxter was one of the beneficiaries of this activity: her group, the Ivy Baxter Creative Dance Group formed in 1950, was supported by native nationalist-oriented political leaders, one of whom, Norman Manley, placed cultural development at the centre of this programme for political change. Some of the early members of Baxter's group would have been the proud bearers of the new cultural orientation. When *Creations in Dance*, the first major expression of Jamaican dance theatre, was mounted at Kingston's Ward Theatre in 1954, the *pièce de résistance* was *Rat Passage*, Baxter's tale of a Jamaican

stowaway on a banana boat to the mother country which was danced to locally composed music rather than to excerpts from traditional European classic fare.³⁹

Dance and the Phenomenon of Severance

These early efforts to achieve 'through dance' a unification of the historical experiences merely underlined the persistently fragmented nature of Caribbean society. The notion that classical ballet traditions were superior to the barefoot dancing of the Baxterites – who were drawn from less privileged socioeconomic groups (unmistakably black and coloured) – was still being claimed, despite the demands of a burgeoning nationalism. In 1956 the newly formed Ballet Guild of Jamaica sponsored a joint concert featuring the Ivy Baxter Creative Dance Group, the Rowe School of Dancing, and the Fonseca School of Ballet. The titles of the dances themselves were illuminating: *Les Sylphides*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, and from the Baxter company, *Danse Elementale*. The severance of the Jamaican from himself was manifested by the frenchified titles, which in the minds of some seemed to guarantee the legitimacy of dance expression (the following year even the more earthy modern-style dance show inspired by Eyrick Darby was presented under the title *Danse Moderne*).⁴⁰ The music for the 1956 Ballet Guild Concert, which was distinctively different from that for *Rat Passage*, reflected the orientation of the dances. Baxter's choreography was hailed by the critic Orford St John, who stressed that it was a welcome departure from folk dances because Baxter had 'produced a ballet of ideas having some kinship with Massine's symphonic ballets'.⁴¹ Real challenges were apparently admitted only when the *ideas* were not rooted in Jamaican folk tradition or when the dances were modelled on European choreography. The Ballet Guild did not last, but the phenomenon of a society of severance, which the Guild in part sought to address, persisted.

The West Indian writers George Lamming and Edward Kamau Brathwaite have addressed the problem of fragmentation in the Caribbean. This in the beginning entailed the geographical and cultural isolation of the Caribbean islands from the cultural destinies of mainland territories, continued with a history of fragmented expectations in respect to liberation from slavery and colonialism, and now embraces contemporary experiences of cultural, ideological, and economic disintegration.⁴² Fragmentation is an integral part of severance: a striking example is the brutal effects on human beings forced to leave

their homelands. Moreover, severance further involves the subtle effects on individuals cut off from each other or separated within themselves. The conscious denial of continuity and tradition, of consistency and a united existence, is a result of that severance. The phenomenon once placed Kingston culturally and politically nearer to London (today New York) than to Havana, and Havana closer to Madrid (later, Moscow) than to Kingston. Curaçao is oriented more to Holland than to Trinidad, and Port-au-Prince still retains stronger ties with Paris than with nearby Santo Domingo. The separation was reinforced by a loss of contact with the native language. Entire populations had imposed on them the language of the imperial powers. Consequently there is not one Caribbean but many – English, French, Spanish, and Dutch – each existing in its separate linguistic universe, a significant example of the cultural severance that resulted when imperialism staked out its spheres of influence.

Within Caribbean communities linguistic segmentation – Standard versus Creole – reflects the prevailing ambivalence toward self-definition throughout the region. Despite this, there was the common experience of the struggle between confrontation and collaboration, between resistance and assimilation – in short, the process of creolisation from which there was no escape. As a result greater communication between communities in the region, as well as between different classes and ethnic groups within the communities, was facilitated. Some cultural forms lend themselves more easily than others to this kind of communication: for example, religion, from early syncretised religious expressions to contemporary Rastafari; politics, from the liberal support of self-government to the Third World ideas about postcolonial transformations; and music and dance, nonverbal communication that freely crosses linguistic, racial, and class barriers. Reggae and calypso and merengue and mambo belong to all the Caribbean people, whatever their place of origin. Such are the antidotes to severance.

Another aspect of cultural severance was the historical uprooting, both voluntarily and by force, of people from their ancestral homelands. For some, transplantation to the Americas drastically impinged on cultural memory. Yet there can never be a total uprooting: some notions of heritage would always be retained. Although there was a continuous influx of Africans to the Caribbean, by a strange paradox direct contact with Africans – and thus with vital cultural consciousness – was curtailed and in some places totally cut off after the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807. Thus in the British-controlled colonies in the Caribbean the creolisation process among inhabitants of African ancestry occurred much earlier than among the

non-African arrivals. The Europeans, who exercised political and social power, travelled freely to their countries of origin. Consequently the political, cultural, and religious institutions were continually replenished from Europe, preventing a sense of alienation from the homeland. Later the immigrant Asians (Indians and Chinese) were allowed contact between their adopted country and ancestral homes, and even the Lebanese merchants, fleeing the anti-Christian Turks, were eventually able to make contact with their country of origin. The indentured Indians and Chinese could return at the end of their contract. If they remained, they retained their cultural identity: they were allowed to buy land, worship their own gods, speak their own languages, run their own schools, sing their own songs, and dance their own dances. In practice this was not always observed to the letter, but there was an ethical and a legal commitment to indentured labourers. This cultural pluralism in its negative, and exploited, sense tends to encourage severance and fragmentation among the African majority. In its positive sense pluralism offers diversity, which becomes a springboard for the unifying forms that would inevitably emerge out of the process of creolisation.

The search for unity in diversity is the traditional concern of nation building – that is, in a strictly political sense, creating a nation out of a single geographical entity or forming from several entities a larger federation. Unity is also a concern of Caribbean culturalists, who view the area, with its common history of colonialism, slavery, and the plantation, as a cultural entity. This unifying concept of a definitive civilisation forms the basis of the wider concept of an American civilisation. In fact all of modern America was the result of the meeting of ancient civilisations – European, African, Asiatic, Levantine, and Native American – in circumstances historically perceived as expatriate settlers confronting the indigenous population, as imperial powers commanding subject colonials, or as economic masters exploiting slave and indentured labour.

Such a repertoire of conflict would inevitably produce psychic severance of self from self, saddling entire communities with an identity crisis. The Caribbean, entirely a product of colonialism, was particularly vulnerable. It was not until the 1930s that there was a general acceptance of Jamaica as a place the individual would freely choose to live in. It was the self-government movement that attempted to change the historical perspective, proclaiming that all Jamaicans, whatever their race or class, who were committed to living in and working for the country not only had a right to the land but should have the privilege of determining the future of the territory. Thus the

problem of psychic disunity was being addressed for the first time. Belief in self was critical, not only in fostering universal education but also in guiding the creative efforts that would inform progressive social action. Cultural activity was understood as a critical aspect of the search for the underlying unities of Caribbean life that would forge the social cohesion necessary to a society torn within and from itself.⁴³

Dance, as well as music, can indeed help restore to the Caribbean its existential unity, which was fractured by the continual struggle with the profoundly negative effects of the common experience of transplantation. The proposal being put forward here must not be misconstrued as the advocacy of using dance, through the rigour of its training, to support a society administered by command with little opportunity for participation from below. The correlation between the excellence achieved in classical ballet and the efficient state apparatus of the Maryinsky Ballet in czarist Russia, and the Bolshoi in the Soviet Union, may be an overstatement; but Nazi Germany did make a fetish of youths marching in well-choreographed formations, placing great emphasis on the precision and symmetry of gesture, from the extended arm hailing Hitler to the outstretched foot goose-stepping Germany's path to conquest. Caribbean society in its groping pluralist, albeit rebellious, state – is not likely to utilise its dance for such political effects. Yet it may help to forge a sense of order – made necessary not only by modern technological realities but also by the chaos of a fragmented history – which will force the region to develop its own discrete political, economic, social, and cultural configurations.

As a result of historical severance, Caribbean dance has many diverse forms, but increased study of these forms points to the existence of underlying unities. Dance, then, is subject to the challenge of preserving its texture without giving in to the myth that Caribbean creative experience has no structure or dynamics of Caribbean life. Fortunately there are those, making unequivocal cultural choices, who are committed to the search for underlying unities, who will not settle for a status quo of disparate expressions and also reject the dominant metropolitan modes as the norm.

The dilemma is not restricted to the dance. The teaching of language, whether standard English or standard Creole and its variants, involves the same conflict. Despite a global ecumenism, Caribbean religious experiences reveal a traditional struggle between Christian orthodoxy – the religious counterpart to European classical ballet in colonial Jamaica – and its populist model manifested in evangelical

fundamentalism and syncretised revivalism; in turn, Rastafarianism is in conflict with both the orthodox and populist expressions of Christianity. Although other world religions such as Hinduism, Islam, and the Baha'i faith are tolerated, Jamaica is considered a Christian nation with its ethos firmly entrenched in that religion. Significantly there is no parallel to the ethnic realities. Ninety-six percent of the island's population is of African ancestry; yet Jamaica is never officially described as a black nation.

Ambivalence in cultural certitude continually forces the dance to discover what will in the end be the fusion of thought, feeling, and form out of the real experiences of Jamaican and Caribbean life. The involvement is no different from that of political leaders, as nation builders, economic planners, and social engineers. Many creative artists, however, tend to accept the attitudes borrowed from Europe, which they perceive as creative activity set apart from everyday life. This approach is alien to ancestral traditions, not only in Africa or India, where the mass of the Caribbean population originally came from, but also in the Caribbean itself, where the task of coming to terms with their physical and psychic environment compelled Jamaicans to find new designs for social living. The notion that the gifts of refined perception and sensitive observation do not relate to social reality points to other sophisticated attitudes inherited from Europe, which are committed to the excesses of art for the art's sake and encourage the risky pose of the impoverished artist as an indication of real artistic talent.

Artists are encouraged to indulge in certain poses by a society that should at times leave them alone rather than try to analyse the impulses that goad them to creative work. To explain unfamiliar behaviour, mental disorder is not infrequently the diagnosis. Charges of sexual oddity and inefficiency – particularly by a society whose values are measured by conventional notions of sexual prowess and by the gross national product – are other stereotypes. Such perceptions run counter to the practical experiences of those at the core of Caribbean creative energy. It is they who sing and dance, recite their poems, and tell their stories as part of an existential reality. Men dance vigorously and with mock fayness (the female characters in the jonkonnu ritual are all men) without fear of being labelled sexual deviants, and the dances and rituals of spirit possession are appreciated by votaries and onlookers alike without fear that the participants are ready for the madhouse. Obviously one's upward mobility to the middle class may encourage some doubt in the minds of potential participants. Yet it is incumbent on these very people – who have the necessary skills devel-

oped through formal education – to offer some rational organisation, not only in building the economy and administering public affairs but also in effectively utilising the creative gifts of the imagination in order to give a sense of purpose to a developing society like Jamaica.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Nettleford, Rex: *Caribbean Cultural Identity – The Case of Jamaica: An Essay in Cultural Dynamics* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1978), p. 183.
- 2 Commonwealth Caribbean replaces the term West Indies, the earlier designation for the English-speaking Caribbean, which comprises thirteen independent islands and the mainland territories of Guyana and Belize. Starting with the colonisation of Saint Christopher and Barbados in the early sixteenth century, Britain held imperial sway until the 1960s, when Jamaica and Trinidad, followed by other Caribbean territories, became independent. They all joined the Commonwealth of Nations – a club of former British colonies formally presided over by the British monarch, who is also the formal monarch of several member states.
- 3 Nettleford, Rex: *Caribbean Cultural Identity*, p. 183.
- 4 See Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), for historical background on the concept of marroriage, used here as a figurative term for the sensibility that employs cunning, secrecy, resistance by camouflage as strategies of survival forged from the historical experiences of the Maroons, or fugitive rebel slaves. See also Robert Charles Dallas, *the History of the Maroons*, 2 vols. (London: Longman and Rees, 1803).
- 5 Gordimer, Nadine: 'Living in the Interregnum,' *The New York Review of Books* (January 20, 1983), p. 21.
- 6 Adorno, Theodor: quoted in *Ibid.*
- 7 Milosz, Czeslaw: quoted in *Ibid.*, 24.
- 8 Morris, Mervyn: Foreword, *Focus* 1983 (Kingston: Caribbean Authors Publishing Company, 1983).
- 9 Gordimer, N. *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- 10 Stewart John: *An Account of Jamaica and Its Inhabitants* (London: Longman, Hurst Rees and Orme, 1808), p. 263.
- 11 Sloane, Hans: *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados Nieves, S. Christophers, and Jamaica with a Natural History of the Herbs and Trees, Four-footed Beasts, Fishes, Birds, insects, Reptiles, and of the Last of Those Islands*, 2 vols. (London: The author, 1707–25), 1:vi.
- 12 Phillipo, James M: *Jamaica: Its Past and Present States* (London: John Snow, 1843), p. 242; reprint, introduction by Phillip Wright (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971).
- 13 Marsden, Peter: *An Account of the Islands of Jamaica; with Reflections on the Treatment, Occupation, and Provision of the Slaves* (Newcastle: S. Hodgson, 1788), pp. 33–34.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Kelly, James: *Voyage to Jamaica and Seventeen Years Residence in That Island . . .* (Belfast: James Wilson, 1838), p. 21.
- 16 Gardner, William James: *A History of Jamaica from its Discovery by Christopher Columbus to the Year 1872* (London: E. Stock, 1873), 184.
- 17 See Robert D. Abrahams and John H. Szwed, eds: *After Africa: Extracts from British Travel Accounts and Journals of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries Concerning Slaves, Their manners, and Customs in the British West Indies* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1983), especially Chapters 5–6.

- 18 Brathwaite, Edward: *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 220 (the bracketed interpolation is Brathwaite's). Brathwaite's quotation regarding philosophy is by Derek Walcott, from the sequence 'Tales of the Islands' in his collection of poems *In a Green Night* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), p. 26: 'Teach our philosophy the strength to reach / Above the navel; black bodies, wet with light, / Rolled in the spray as I strolled up the beach.'
- 19 See Judith Lynne Hanna: *To Dance Is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979).
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 21 The term jonkonnu (also John Canoe or Jonkanoo) is used in Jamaica and the Bahamas for masquerade bands of revellers that emerged in plantation history and were active during the three days' festivities at Christmastime. See Abrahams and Szwed: *After Africa*, Chapter 5, for eighteenth and nineteenth-century commentators on the ceremony. See also two unpublished Master's theses - Sheila Barnett: 'Jonkonnu and the Creolisation Process in Jamaica: A Study in Cultural Dynamics' (1977); Cheryl Ryman: 'Dance as a Major Source and Stimulus for Communicating Africanisms in Order to Effect a Process of Self-Actualisation' (1983), both Institute of Jamaica, for in-depth analyses of the development and cultural significance of jonkonnu in Jamaican history.
- 22 The Haitian set-girls - named for a set of dancers and also known as French set-girls - were featured in the Jonkonnu ceremonies from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1840s. These women revellers were organised in costumed groups, or sets, of reds and blues, and vied for audience attention through their fine dress and dancing. See bibliographic works cited in notes 17 and 21.
- 23 Slavery was legally abolished on August 1, 1834, but an apprenticeship period, lasting until 1838, was set by the Abolition Act as a timetable for ultimate liberation.
- 24 Lewis, Arthur: 'Striving to Be West Indian', *The Sunday Gleaner* (February 20, 1983), p. 18.
- 25 All of these names refer to African-derived rituals extant in Jamaica. Kumina embraces the dominant elements of music, dance, spirit possession, healing, and the use of herbs; as a rite it is practised on auspicious occasions mainly in the parish of Saint Thomas and to a lesser extent in the parishes of Portland, Saint Mary, Saint Catherine, and Saint Andrew. Pukkumina and Zion together represent the syncretised cults of Jamaican religious worship. The former has retained African elements of worship; the latter is more Euro-Christian in orientation, sharing with orthodox Christianity the authority of the Bible. Closely related to pukkumina are bongo, convince, and flenkee cults. Zion, which has its historical roots in Christian revivalism known as the Great Revival movement of 1860, deals with heavenly spirits such as angels, archangels, and apostles. Pukkumina involves ground spirits regarded as evil by the Zionists. The distinction between the two movements reveals the persistent dialectical relationship in the society between Africanisms and the culture of the colonising power. Since the 1970s Zion revivalism has again inspired evangelicalism.
- Tambu is a recreational rite derived from African customs, and in terms of dance it bears strong resemblances to kumina, which, it is believed, is a secular variant of it. Tambu is danced in Trelawny in the Wakefield and Friendship districts. Etu is claimed to be yoruba-derived and danced at wakes in the parish of Hanover. Etu is also danced on festive occasions such as weddings and dinner parties. African cuisine is featured and the most proficient performers in the circle are rewarded with shawls; hence the shawling dance in the National Dance Theatre Company's 1983 work *Gerrehbenta*. Gerreh is another recreational dance best known in western Jamaica. As a 'deadyard ceremony,' performed at wakes, gerreh utilises ring games and dances of skill; for example, the calembé stick dance, featuring a dancer walking on two poles horizontally held by two men while in motion. Dinkimini, also a deadyard ceremony, is recreational, offering the dancers a wide range of innovation. According to Cheryl Ryman, 'the aim is to defy death by life - great activity with marked sexual overtones, a prelude to new life is a display of man's re-creative capacity' (see *NDTC Newsletter* [July 1983], p. 11c).
- Rastafarianism is a popular religious movement flourishing in Jamaica since the early 1930s; it has spread throughout the world by means of its music and a lifestyle that appeals to nature. Its beliefs are centred on human dignity and the brotherhood of man as well as on the divinity of the former emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie and the repatriation to Africa of the uprooted black man. Rastafarianism has been a source of energy for creative expressions in language, music, art (painting and ceramics), dance, fashion (clothes and hairdos), and diet (natural foods). See the excellent article by Cheryl Ryman, 'The Jamaican Heritage in Dance,' *Jamaica Journal* 44 (June 1980), p. 2-14.
- 26 For information on voodoo see Harold Courlander: *The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian people* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960); Lavinia Williams: *Haiti-Dance* (Frankfurt: Bronners Druckeri, 1959); Fradrique Lizardo: *Danzas y Bailes Folkloricos Dominicanos* (Santo Domingo: Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1982). For santeria see William Bascom: 'A Focus of Cuban Santeria,' in *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 6, No. 1 (1950): pp. 64-68. For shango see George Easton Simpson: *Religious Cults of the Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica, and Haiti*, rev. ed., Caribbean Monograph Series No. 7 (San Juan: Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, 1970). For cumfah see Frank Pilgrim, 'Some folk Dances of Guyana,' paper presented at the UNESCO Cultural and Conservation Conference, July-August, 1970, Kingston, University of the West Indies.
- 27 Quoted in Wycliffe Bennett, 'The History of Dance Theatre in Jamaica,' paper presented at the symposium on the collaboration between the National Dance Theatre Company and the Jamaica School of Dance, May 25-26, 1982, Kingston, Cultural Training Centre. See also Ivy Baxter: *The Arts of an Island: The Development of the Culture and of the Folk and Creative Arts in Jamaica, 1494-1962* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1970), especially Chapter 20, 'The Dance Renaissance.'
- 28 Rastafarianism is a modern theological invention, which gives to its adherents a black God hailing from Ethiopia. Reggae refers to the music that emerged from the ghettos of urban Kingston in the late 1960s and spread throughout the world as an international pop music form, largely through the work of Bob Marley, considered the superstar of the form, and Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh, Toots Hibbert, Gregory Issacs and bands such as Black Uhuru and Third World. The music - with an emphasis on a heavy four-beat rhythm, using bass, electric guitar, and drum with the scraper coming in at the end of the measure - accompanied songs rejecting establishment culture. For information on Rastafarianism, see Leonard Barrett: 'The Rastafarians', Kingston, Sangsters Bookstores, Boston, Beacon Press 1977. For a fuller description of reggae, see Stephen Davis: *Reggae Bloodlines: In Search of the Music and Culture of Jamaica*, photographs by Peter Simon, Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1977).
- 29 Hanna, Lynne: *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 30 See Bennett: 'Dance Theatre in Jamaica,' who quotes Joan McCulloch as follows: 'I am in touch with Miss Ninette de Valois, direct of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, who has shown great interest in our movement, and it is likely that one or two of our students will go to Sadler's Wells Ballet for their training.' Barbara Fonseca was the one chosen. Others went to Toronto, where they studied with Boris Volkoff. Ivy Baxter went to London to study with Sigurd Leeder (see note 36 below).
- 31 Marshall, Ormsby, H.V.: 'Native Dances of Jamaica, BWI,' *The Dancing Times* (June 1939), p. 287.

- 32 *Ibid*, (my emphasis).
- 33 Quoted in Wycliffe Bennett, *op cit*.
- 34 See Martha Warren Beckwith: *Black Roadways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1929; New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).
- 35 See Katherine Dunham: *Katherine Dunham's Journey to Accompong* (New York: Henry Holt and company, 1946). Dunham's fieldwork took her to Trinidad and Haiti as well.
See also Ruth Beckford: *Katherine Dunham: A Bibliography*, foreword by Arthur Mitchell (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1979).
- 36 See Ivy Baxter: *Arts of an Island*. In Baxter's book, Chapter 20, entitled 'The Dance Renaissance,' traces the work in Jamaican dance theatre from the 1920s to Independence. Considered the founder of Jamaican creative dance, Baxter studied first with Hazel Johnston in Jamaica and later in London with Sigurd Leeder – who directed the School of European Dance there during and after World War II before returning to Jamaica to lead the Ivy Baxter Creative Dance Group to national and wider Caribbean prominence.
- 37 See Molly Ahye: *Cradle of Caribbean Dance: Beryl McBurnie and the Little Carib Theatre* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Heritage Cultures, 1983).
According to the Jamaican journalist Ulric Simmonds, 'there is intricate variety in the art forms of Beryl McBurnie, the result of the cosmopolitan origins of the West Indies – the minuet and glissando of the French, the flamencos of Andalusia, the fatalism of the Ganges, the proud high step of Northern Europe, and above all the vigour of the African forest intermixed in a bewildering variety of beauty and expression. Here and there, you get a glimpse of the Aboriginal West Indian – the savage Carib, the gentle Arawak, the fierce Owiarria, the wrestling Warrus.' See Ulric D. Simmonds: 'Spirit of the Past with Art of Modern Theatre,' *The Sunday Gleaner* (August 14, 1955).
- 38 Baxter refers to the work of Johnston as monumental and avers that it 'coincided with the general awakening of the arts in the island.' See Baxter: *Arts of an Island*, p. 288.
- 39 *Rat Passage*, composed by Eddy Thomas and scored by Mapletoft Poulle, was the featured work in *Creations in Dance*; choreography was by Baxter herself. The piece was remounted by Rex Nettleford for the show *Sun over the West Indies*, performed in Washington and Baltimore in 1961.
- 40 Eyrick Darby, who worked for the most part in tourist entertainment, was a talented dancer and dance creator. He studied for a summer at Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts and did most of the choreography for the show *Danse Moderne*, which was presented under the auspices of the Baxter company.
- 41 Quoted in Bennett: 'Dance Theatre in Jamaica.' Orford St. John, a journalist and theatre enthusiast originally from England, founded the Repertory Players, based in Kingston; he directed and acted in several of their plays.
- 42 Edward Brathwaite dealt with the theme of fragmentation in his keynote address to the Caribbean Dance Seminar, December 6, 1979, at the Jamaica School of Dance, Kingston. George Lamming also stressed the theme in his address at the annual dinner of the Press Association of Jamaica, December 12, 1981, in Kingston.
- 43 For a discussion of cultural imperatives relevant to the self-government movement, see Rex Nettleford, ed.: *Norman Washington Manley and the New Jamaica: Selected Speeches and Writings, 1938–1968* (London: Longman, 1971), pp. 98–122.