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THE CULTURAL PRODUCT

First Thoughts

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## THE CULTURAL PRODUCT

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## The Cultural Product

### INTRODUCTION

1. This paper attempts to set down in the most rudimentary way some very preliminary thoughts about "the cultural product". It does not offer a blueprint for action at this time but it ought, instead, to be regarded as a kind of "flyer" which takes a broad, impressionistic look at what the cultural product might be, together with some of the ways in which it could be of relevance to the quest of our people for their own "place in the sun."
2. It perceives the cultural product as an integral part of the life ways and the environment of the people and therefore sees cultural product development as an option for national growth which makes the people the principal determinants of the means by which they secure their own salvation.
3. Two main implementation structures are proposed:
  - (i) A Cultural Product Design and Development Centre
  - (ii) A Cultural Research and Publications Unit.

These structures work in tandem to bring to light a range of productive possibilities which may have relevance not only to the earning of money but also to the development of national self-worth, self-confidence and the will to try.

4. This paper makes no reference to the existing literature on development or culture. Even at the risk of re-inventing the wheel, its intention is to open a line of reasoning which begins at the very first principles.

## THE CULTURAL PRODUCT

### A. DEFINITION

(First thoughts)

The cultural product may be defined in the following ways:

1. Those products which are an integral part of the life and environment of the people. So that a pirogue may be necessary to people who live an island life within an archipelago of islands. Such an inhabitant may be a fisherman for whom a pirogue is a tool for securing his livelihood. Fishing nets, fish pots, etc., are the same kind of product.
2. Those artifacts which are modified or changed so that they may be accommodated within the lives and the environment of a given people, even though other cultures with different concerns may originally have created them. Therefore plastics, which may have been developed for metropolitan industrial purposes, become masks and other masquerade impedimenta at Carnival. Similarly, Roti, which is simply in India a word for bread, becomes a specific fast food in Trinidad.

3. Other cultural products, such as artifacts made from bamboo, calabash or clay occur simply because they are part of the local environmental resource.
4. The life ways of the people may demand certain products such as a costume for Carnival or fruit cake for Christmas or a Moon for Hosein.
5. The environment in which the people find themselves may impose certain behavioural stances which, for example, could require a siesta at midday, cotton clothing because of the heat or even a propensity for apparent idleness which may, in truth, be only a kind of adaptation to the rigours of the climate.
6. But the cultural product may also be determined by the cultural history of the people so that salt cod, which was a convenience for a plantocracy with slaves to feed could now, with the passage of time and circumstance, become a commodity for serious culinary consideration.
7. The religious and other rituals of the people require specific artifacts. The craft or art of drum making survives in part for this reason. The deya extends the range of products coming from the hands of potters

because it is necessary for Divali observance. Similarly, the steel drum, and all those who are concerned with producing it and playing it enter, not only the social fabric of music and music making, but also become part of the consequent economic considerations which follow from such activity.

#### B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CULTURAL PRODUCT

The cultural product thus emerges in many diverse forms, ranging from boat building and plastic fabrication through to environmental product development, the culinary arts, and may even include some consideration of a particular work ethic. But they share certain common characteristics which may be summarized as follows:

1. The cultural product has a quality of uniqueness which sets it apart from the mainstream of the merchandise of the wider world.
2. It is produced by technologies which are mainly indigenous and which do not have to be purchased or "transferred".
3. It is produced according to locally determined standards by the cultural factor which requires them. cultural requirement which calls them into existence.

4. It is produced from source materials which may, in large measure, be already available locally.
5. Because they are products of the people, they are created within already established systems of production which are socially viable and which are not at variance with the life ways of the people.
6. Their development may not require costly educational constructs but could grow out of the master/craftsman/apprentice relationship.
7. But such products enjoy only the most marginal existence and consequently the indices for development which they possess are not easily perceived.

## C. CULTURAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

### A Few Hypothetical Examples

#### 1. The Snowball

- (i) Sugar and coconuts grow here. Most local housewives know how to make sugar cakes. The current product is of irregular shape and size and it comes in various colours. A direction which it could take would be to standardize the shape and size and give it a name which would make it relevant to metropolitan cultures abroad. Such a shape might be round and the standard colour could be white and we might call it a snowball.
  
- (ii) We already have the skills for making glass and together with large supplies of the principal material - silica sand. Therefore a container of suitable design which would allow the product to be easily seen could also be made. We could try to sell this product in the winter to confectioners who

deal with handmade products which are exotic and costly - but only in the winter, because these are snowballs.

(iii) Little of factory, plant, etc., are required. A specification in respect of size, weight, shape, etc., together with a specific recipe, is distributed and contracts entered into for the supply of these snowballs from the very people who already make them. At a certain time they are collected in a central place for packaging and shipment.

(iv) A good marketing person would have a wonderful time selling these "snowballs from the sun" which are special because they are ONLY available in the winter months. Or perhaps because they are only available in the summer!!

(v) The money would be distributed among those with greatest need but it would not require them to stop taking care of their children and so on and would not tax them to produce beyond their individual capacities.

2. The Jam Pot

- (i) Sugar and citrus fruit grow here. Many people know how to make marmalade. But marmalade is already an established product in all sectors of the preserve trade - from bulk produced "Dundee" marmalade to highly specific and refined products which appear in upper trade emporia such as Harrods Food Halls. None of them contain Rum. Though there are Scottish marmalades of great price which contain Scotch whisky.
- (ii) None are packaged in a clay pot of the sort which the potters of Central make every day (except that these would require a lid and the clay and its inside glaze would have to be de-toxified if necessary). None of these products are also packaged in a tiny box of orange wood with an internal cushion of cane bagasse... a kind of package which would be protective and also exotic.
- (ii) A marketing man with a sense of tropical imagery would have a field day. So too would

the appetites of a jaded society which craves the novel and the natural.

3. The Piroque

(i) Have we ever taken a handmade fisherman's boat to the International Boat Show in Earl's Court ... with oars, and the promise to families of rowing for pleasure, in their own climates, in a boat from tropical waters? Could we not make a net or a fish pot part of the package? And what a nice thing it would be if we sent a folk group to serenade the prospective buyers with songs from the Caribbean? Or could not records of similar music be played at the point of sale of such a product?

(ii) Such a boat would be specific to the various communities in which they are produced - the Cedros boat or the Mayaro boat or the Carenage piroque or the boat handcrafted in Store Bay. The buyer would want to know about the timbers and their unique properties and would be invited to enjoy a West Indian romance without having to pay the full price of it.

- (iii) Once again, the money would go into the pockets of those who have the greatest need ... a just reward for the skills which they have but which are under-utilized.

#### 4. Textiles

- (i) Such a venture would involve some regional co-operation for the benefit of everybody. At all times, the creative marketing mind would be involved in the project from the very beginning.
- (ii) Montserrat and several of the other Leeward Islands produce sea-island cotton which is the best in the world. It can be woven as finely as the kind of silk which can be drawn through a wedding ring. It can be woven to a texture rough and durable enough to make furnishing fabric.
- (iii) Early West Indian trade was dominated, before sugar, by natural dyes from such forest timbers as logwood and fustic. Trinidadian design needs only a good design centre for

education and product development to put these ingredients together in all kinds of exciting and new ways. It should also be remembered that in a synthetic world, the natural product is at the upper end of the trade.

(iv) ... The skills of an innovative designer, a skilled user of the crochet hook, and sea-island cotton thread might, together, could make for some new and marketable products.

(v) These examples of course only hint at the surface of possibility. But the indications for a certain kind of development may easily be perceived. What is required first of all is the PRODUCT, the product which occurs within the context of LOCAL POSSIBILITY with all the value added in place.

D. THE CULTURAL PRODUCT, ITS DEVELOPMENT AND SOME WIDER SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS

1. This approach to development involves the small craftsman (as opposed to the small businessman) in a greatly enhanced requirement for his skills. But it does not, of course, EXCLUDE, the small businessman ...
2. Such a craftsman now has to teach those skills to those whom he will find himself having to employ.
3. Such recruitment will possibly occur within the community in which he lives, strengthening the community, making it less poor and saving some of its population from the necessity for urban or overseas drift.
4. Self-help acquires a new meaning because such a craftsman is certain that his products have some place to go.
5. But equally, such development requires the skilled artist/designer whose expertise is required if the products of the craft are to be conceived in the best way. The leather workers on the Drag have very good hands but their designs are poor. The product must

look good and also be well made. Product development of this kind aims at the achievement of the highest possible quality in all aspects of a given product.

6. In such a situation, art education is invested with new and vital focus and meaning. At the heart of such education, especially at tertiary levels, the key subject for consideration is the application of the best principles of design to local materials of all kinds. It must seek and nurture bright, well-read people who have talented hands.
7. The strengthening of communities because their populations are engaged in productive work at home, where they are their own bosses, where their children can perceive in such activities a future, could offer incalculable benefits to a society threatened with fragmentation, alienation, poverty and all of the griefs of the Third World.
8. By extension, a society pulling itself up in all sorts of innovative ways by its own efforts must re-direct the thinking of the capitalist, who may come to recognize the necessity for re-shaping his whole approach to entrepreneurship.

9. Equally, the establishment of such a track record places the country in a much better bargaining position for obtaining those goods and services which it cannot produce for itself. It earns the respect of the outside world by subverting dependency through its own genuine and indigenous efforts.
  
10. Industry develops in a geography of relevance.

E. THE CULTURAL PRODUCT AND TOURISM

1. One economic sphere to which the cultural product has always appeared to relate is tourism. The new "buzz" term is "cultural tourism" and it seems to manifest itself in schemes in which certain aspects of culture are offered as a kind of bait for tourists.
2. But in fact, tourism happens because it is in the nature of people to be curious about one another and to want to see the ways in which they differ. That has always been so.
3. Whether we like it or not therefore, the tourist sees all of those characteristics which make us different from him. But the way in which these differences are perceived is conditioned by the way in which we ourselves perceive them. If, therefore, we send a troupe of "native" dancers down to the docks to welcome a cruise ship, we should not deceive ourselves into believing that the tourist is in any way beguiled. When a tourist goes to see the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, he knows that the ritual is a respected part of British life and that it will be

performed whether he is there or not. There is bound, therefore, to be a difference in his response to our dancers as opposed to the activity of the Palace guard. And that response will not be because he prefers one costume over another.

4. This kind of cultural product tells the visitor what we feel about ourselves, offering sign posts for his behaviour and establishing guidelines for mutual respect. The debasement of the one does not earn the admiration of the other.
5. If, therefore, we want to share the steelband with the visitor, we make certain that there is a place in which the music will be heard to best advantage, where the musicians can give of his best. The basic pan yard does not provide such an environment. The same is true of song, dance and any other considered, as opposed to spontaneous, form of artistic expression. Pictures will hang in well-lit galleries. They are not propped up in little stalls along the way, embarrassing both the artist and the visitor who knows a tourist trap when he sees one.

6. These considerations plainly take us beyond the economics of tourism and place us firmly in the face of the whole basis upon which we see ourselves and how we, in turn, will be perceived and dealt with. These questions permeate all aspects of national life, our values, our standards and will determine the kinds of choices which we make for total national development. At the same time, we place "cultural tourism" where it will do us the greatest ECONOMIC good.
  
7. "Cultural tourism" as opposed to real artistic development is therefore a distinction which must be made ... and soon.

F. A BOOK ON CARNIVAL AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURAL PRODUCT

1. One aspect of the development of the cultural product is the collection, interpretation and dissemination of information about the life ways or culture of the people.
2. There is, of course, considerable documentation of the local cultural heritage but it has not been, for the most part, researched and interpreted. Publication has been scant and not always of the best quality. The same, incidentally, is also true of local text books for schools.
3. Much more of the history of the people is contained in their memories and those memories fail and die every day. This data has hardly been collected in any systematic way.
4. This is true, not only for Carnival, but it applies to all of the festivals, rituals and folk ways of all the people of both islands.
5. It is possible, of course, to start with a book on

Carnival, but since Carnival is itself multi-disciplinary and shares many similarities with other street festivals, mimetic traditions, the dance, a variety of musics and so on, it hardly seems feasible to produce such a book in isolation.

6. At the same time, it should be recognized that the book is not the only form of communication. Film and recorded sound are even more potent media and should concurrently be addressed. Still photography is also important. So too are museums.
7. This activity of collection, interpretation and dissemination of information could give rise to the following:
  - (a) Increased understanding of the cultural artifact, its origins, purpose, etc., so that designers have a research base for product development.
  - (b) Substitution of fact for myth in respect of the many ways in which the society persists in misunderstanding itself.
  - (c) Source material for the sound and electronic media which desperately needs a resource base if programming is to improve.

- (d) The rescue from obscurity of certain kinds of talent which the society cannot now recognize, but which it must, if it is to pursue the creative path to its own salvation.
8. Much more, obviously, may be said in pursuit of this line of reasoning. What needs to be done may be summarized as follows:
- (a) Establishment of a cultural research and publication centre of some kind to:
    - (i) Determine what information already exists.
    - (ii) Capture all the other data, written and oral.
    - (iii) Decide which media is appropriate for the dissemination of the specific information.
    - (iv) Write books, make films, etc., as soon as possible.

- (v) This should be regarded as a critical activity in the light of Carifesta 1991, etc.

9. The necessity to take the broadest route lies in the fact that all forms of cultural expression are equally in need of notice.

10. An "official" publication on Carnival in isolation from other forms of cultural expression will further marginalize people who already feel that what is important to them is being ignored.

11. Carnival, in any event, needs to be placed within the context of the cultural mosaic of the country if it is to be clearly understood.

12. Out of the Cultural Research and Publication Centre could come the following studies:

- (i) Carnival
- (ii) Phagwa
- (iii) Divali
- (iv) Ram Leela
- (v) Crab Racing, Goat Racing, etc.

- (vi) Folk Tales of Trinidad and Tobago
- (vii) Folk Songs of Trinidad and Tobago
- (viii) The Calypso Story
- (ix) The Story of Pan
- (x) Great Folk Characters
- (xi) The Story of Parang
- (xii) The Hosein Festival in Trinidad
- (xiii) A History of Costume and Fashion in  
Trinidad and Tobago
- (xiv) The Potters of Trinidad
- (xv) The Folk Crafts of Trinidad and  
Tobago
- (xvi) The Amerindian Heritage
- (xvii) Architecture in Trinidad and Tobago
- (xviii) The Trinidad and Tobago Environment
- (xix) The Religions of Trinidad and  
Tobago together with their origins
- (xx) Great persons in the history of  
Trinidad and Tobago
- (xxi) Patois and the variety of languages  
in Trinidad and Tobago
- (xxii) The painters of Trinidad and Tobago
- (xxiii) The great Carnival people
- (xxiv) Music and Musicians
- (xxv) The Calypso as WORD

(xxvi) The Food of Trinidad and Tobago,  
etc. etc. etc.

13. From these studies, the film, the poster, the post card, the stamp, the book - both for specific education as well as for general reading - ought to come.
14. Such a Centre could be established in tandem with the design/product development centre and in such a way we might begin the process of national development in authentic and indigenous ways.

G. CULTURAL RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS UNIT

Early Thoughts on an Urgent Task

A. RESEARCH

1. The development of a data base to contain the following:
  - (a) "Cultural" information over time
  - (b) Population information over time
  - (c) Natural environment information over time
  - (d) Built environment information over time.
2. Sources: libraries, museums(?), newspapers, etc., for written information. Also archives abroad - Smithsonian, Public Record Office (London), V&A etc., etc., Africa, India, China, etc., and other West Indian islands.
3. "Memory Bank" - special Research project among the old - throughout the country.

4. All data fed into the computer with an immediate accompanying interpretive note together with all authenticating information.
5. Questionnaires for research purposes could be administered at the same time as the census since people would be conditioned to answer questions.  
(?)
6. All research to be accompanied by old and new PHOTOGRAPHS, prints, drawings ... old and new, illustrations from old books - so that there are research teams - some looking for word, the others for images. But interpretation is always attached to every piece of data.

B. PUBLICATIONS

1. Writers and script writers, illustrators graphics people, editorial, proof reading, photography both still and moving - who will all draw from the data base.
2. Work carried out by teams who have strict deadlines once the data is in.

3. Design and illustration integrated with editorial  
... e.g., a great print such as the Illustrated London News Frederick Street Carnival needs a monograph for itself ... e.g., also, Cazabon's pictures need interpretation in the context of history, environment, fashion, etc.
  
4. Books for pre-school children could be handled almost completely graphically.
  
5. Early reading aids could be developed out of culture data so that they learn young!
  
6. Access to the following crucial support services:
  - (i) Colour separations of high quality
  
  - (ii) PRESS
  
  - (iii) MARKETING STRATEGIES
  
  - (iv) Video production
  
  - (v) Audio production

C. LIBRARY AND MUSEUM SERVICES

1. These two long neglected tools of education need to have their problems resolved, their systems rationalized and stabilized as a necessary adjunct to cultural information development.
2. Their collections could then be enhanced in the light of the new research.

D. THE MEDIA-PRINT, ELECTRONIC, Etc.

1. The archives of these institutions need to be brought into the information storage and retrieval systems of the libraries and museums.
2. The media need access to the data base as well as the products which have been developed at the Centre.
3. All processed data - film, books, posters, etc., should be integrated where possible into new museum displays so that they have a life lasting beyond the time constraints of the regular media.

4. Access to recording facilities for the production of records, cassette, C.Ds. now becomes urgent.
  
5. Now we can begin to have material for embassies, touring groups (such as steelbands), visitors, trade missions, etc. ... All that they could possibly want to know about the life ways of the people of Trinidad and Tobago ... in a wide variety of forms and focused at all levels of inquiry and understanding.

H. CULTURAL PRODUCT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

(Early thoughts on an urgent requirement)

1. Product Research

(i) Discover all that the environment produces together with their qualities. CARIRI would be the logical base for this.

(ii) Discover all the PRODUCTS already in existence and evaluate their EXPORT potential.

2. Skills Research

(i) Develop a man-power data base which takes ALL PRODUCTIVE SKILLS into account together with an evaluation of their levels.

(ii) It is necessary to know where these skills are located together with some understanding of the socio-economic status of each given community ... the number of young people, levels of employment, etc.

(iii) It is also necessary to evaluate the levels of those skills by examining actual samples of their products.

(iv) Samples of all products should be analysed and stored for reference.

### 3. Design Development

(i) "Form", they say, "follows function". But it is true to say that a concept like this is little understood and little applied to today's average "cultural" artifact. Where the product has a definite function, design is usually good - clay pots, boats, etc. Where function is taken for granted, design can often be very poor - some textiles and some fashion demonstrate this plainly.

(ii) Problems frequently occur because of the misapplication and misuse of a given material.

(iii) The aims of designer/craftsmen do not place serious importance upon the achievement of QUALITY.

- (iv) Design education in relation to materials could change this very quickly. The UWI Creative Arts Centre could be a logical base for recruits to this task, PROVIDED the Creative Arts Centre is funded and staffed FAST.

#### 4. The Role of The MARKET

- (i) It is not much use producing things for which no market exists. Nor is it much use producing goods which cannot compete because they are too expensive or because they are not finely made.
- (ii) Market research, pouring into the Centre, could help to stimulate choice of product and standards of finish.

#### 5. The Product

- (i) This is determined by the teamwork of the designer, the craftsman (who may himself be a perfectly adequate designer) and the marketing expert.

(ii) Packaging is an integral part of this exercise.

(iii) Point of sales and promotional activity are equally crucial and must be integrated with the process from the very beginning.

(iv) The Centre determines the quantity, quality, method of production, etc.

THE PRODUCT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT CENTREHow would it work?

1. The Product Design and Development Centre is perceived as being an institution which encourages private sector manufacture by bearing the initial costs of risk and experiment inherent in such work.
2. It provides the manufacturer with a ready-made recipe for success with a packaged product whose export potential has already been tested. The private sector's role would be to build upon this investment.
3. In this regard, the Centre would have to be very certain of the extent and nature of the plant, skills, equipment and manpower which the society holds, so that product development takes place within a framework of immediate possibility.
4. At the same time, the work of the Centre, using the tools of public education, could bring a whole new manufacturing class into existence of people who had previously been afraid to try.

5. Central to the Centre's activities therefore would be a co-ordinating mechanism to include factory people, media and marketing people and institutions such as CARIRI, the D.F.C., the E.D.C. and the Ministry of National Service, etc., etc.

This mechanism could be a Board or a Standing Committee of some sort which would bring the various perceptions of reality of the members to bear upon the work of the Centre.

6. Located within the Centre would be the following:
- (i) Design studios for product design
  - (ii) Raw materials repositories (with reports of their characteristics)
  - (iii) Craftsmen's studios with links to factories and other plant and equipment in both public and private sectors, so that sample production and testing can take place.
  - (iv) All or multi-media studios for packaging and the development of marketing strategies

(v) Samples of products of given materials already in existence together with analyses of their potential.

7. The manufacturer who takes up an option to produce would have to submit his products for the Design Centre's "seal of approval", or whatever form of accreditation the Centre determines, to ensure that standards are kept and that the product is not devalued.
8. While the aim of the Centre is to foster the design and production of new items for export, the Centre also exercises a regulatory, quality control function over all products which are to be exported.

In this regard, the idea of patents may perhaps be important, though patents ought not to create monopolies. Mechanisms to protect a quality product from the challenge of the cheap imitation without diminishing the notion of healthy competition, would have to be sought.

9. Another aspect of the work of the Centre must necessarily involve the preparation of designs for factory infrastructure - no matter how small a plant might initially be. These factories should be designed to function with maximum community outreach. Apprenticeship schemes, holiday

job programmes to encourage youngsters into the business would be crucial in this regard. Equally important would be the inclusion of such structures as pre-school child care centres so that mothers may join the work force without fear for their children's safety or without having to pay large sums to arbitrary nurseries, etc.

10. At all stages of its work, the Centre puts a cost on all that occurs so that the actual value of a product is always clearly recognized.
11. The Centre concerns itself not only with the development of indigenous materials but with the development of the manpower resource. So that products, the materials for which may be imported, but which require a high degree of a special, locally available skill would also be of concern.
12. Products emanating from such a Centre are fixed upon markets which can:
  - (i) play for high quality
  - (ii) are interested in variety rather than quantity
  - (iii) interested in products which they cannot produce for themselves.

13. In such circumstances, the role of the designer is thrown into sharp focus since a high order of creativity and imagination would have to be brought to the task from the very beginning.
  
14. Similarly, the skills of the craftsman would have to be honed to produce work of exceptional quality.

THE PROBLEM OF QUALITY

Quality products occur when there is "a discerning eye for the best, an ability to detect the slightest flaw and a consuming desire for perfection ... fine quality manufacturers, workers and merchants understand that good things don't happen by accident; they are made to happen by an unwillingness to accept second best."

Such products are highly desirable to certain people who, throughout the world, are themselves reluctant to accept second best. Such people will go to Harrods and Liberty rather than to Selfridges and they will have their shirts handmade by Turnbull and Asher. Such people will recognize pure cotton, silk, linen and leather. Their pearls will be real and they will not be beguiled by imitations, however successful they might be. These are the people who are happy to holiday in a cottage in Mustique but who would find the Hilton vulgar. Even though they come from societies made rich by their ability to produce vast quantities of synthetics in every conceivable form, they will themselves choose the real over the fake. But the real must also carry with it no flaw.

Societies like ours which are poor have neither the means

nor the technologies to produce the synthetic. But everywhere we are surrounded by the real.

Historically, certain of these raw materials left our shores to be transformed into all kinds of consumer goods, many of them of great value. But that money has never accrued to us.

We need, therefore, to supply - NOT the manufacturer/craftsman who supplies Tiffany or Liberty - but to replace those craftsmen with our own people and supply those emporia of quality goods ourselves.

But how, in a society like ours which is as yet unformed, which neither knows itself nor trusts its judgement, can such quality be created? More than that, how can we pursue the flawless in a world devoted to cost-cutting? How can "an infinite capacity for taking pains" be fostered in a fast-food dominated world? Indeed, one is bound to ask whether the pursuit of quality is, in fact, a worthwhile task. The succeeding paragraphs will attempt to open a line of reasoning which will try to show that the notion of quality could transcend the market place and make some connection between the search for perfection and national development.

7. When people in a post colonial situation find themselves in the jobs which their masters held, find themselves living in the houses which their masters had inhabited and able to acquire the goods and services which they had previously been forbidden, it is generally accepted that emancipation has been achieved.

8. But the goals of post-colonial societies are those which were fixed by what they saw of the life ways of the ruling class. As long as it was the British way, it was the best. Today's shift away from the British way to the ways of American T.V., is no more discerning. Both ways have had tragic consequences in that they have prevented the growth of any awareness of the possibilities offered by the immediate environment.

9. Now the metropolitan standards to which we aspire have nothing much to do with quality. Exposure to circumstances of perfection has largely been denied from us. We can know nothing of quality. When we go abroad, we hurry to Miami to buy the best which that plastic world can offer us. Or we hasten to Conway's in New York for "designer" jeans and cheap Japanese transistors in the unhappy belief that we are improving our situation.

10. Truly we are the sons and daughters of Columbus who had no use for the islands upon which he accidentally stumbled because they contained no gold.
11. The development, therefore, of the cultural product to the highest possible standards so that it becomes acceptable to the most discerning taste, must inevitably result in the increase of a sense of personal and community self-worth among people engaged in such activity. And these are the people, the small artisans, the artists, the marginalized, who need that sense of self-worth most urgently.
12. The urgency of this necessity arises out of our current circumstances of impatient poverty and the national reluctance to postpone gratification. Half a loaf is not perceived as being better than no bread. And no amount of propaganda will make such notions acceptable.
13. It is not enough to make money. The means by which money is made is equally important.
14. If, therefore, we can create constructs in which the independent craftsman, working together with a designer, can transform the materials of his own environment, with his own skills, using his own culture of work AND make money, then we can claim to have taken emancipation considerably further.

15. The need is for education to foster an understanding of quality. Travelling museum exhibits could help. The craftsman/designer who can spend some time in an institution such as the Victoria and Albert Museum may find his whole perception of what is worthwhile changed forever.
  
16. At the same time, the practising craftsmen are in urgent need of criticism to begin the long haul of transforming their products from being cheap tourist bait into artifacts which are rare, exotic and created with the wit and style which this population can genuinely claim to have.
  
17. All that has been said about quality in respect of artifacts applies to books, films, the media, the libraries and museums and to education in general.

CONCLUSION

It may be useful to conclude by describing a certain artifact which was made by a West Indian craftsman and which has become famous in the circles in which fine silversmithing is prized. The artifact is a coconut cup upon which the artist worked for some two years.

The hard shell of a coconut was soaked for a year in oil. Every week it was taken out of the oil and sanded so that eventually its surface acquired the brilliance and flawlessness of glass. No varnish was applied!! A piece of silver was then forged to the exact size and shape of the interior to make a lining for the cup. And so that all of the shell could be seen, the cup was suspended by handles which sprung from a free standing base, which was itself highly polished to reflect the bottom of the coconut, with all of its distinctive characteristics. The Smithsonian took this artifact on a tour of selected museums throughout the world.

2. This may be an extreme example of the kind of activity which the foregoing pages seeks to foster but it is illustrative

of what the cultural product can become when the emancipated mind, the creative intelligence and skilled hands are brought together in its service.

Nothing in this paper purports in any way to be conclusive. Crucial linkages have not been made. The scope of its concerns, even to those who would take it seriously (and many will not!!) is daunting. Critically, no costs are attached. No specifications of man-power requirements are even hinted at. But in identifying the need for broad spectrum research, publication and product development of the highest quality, the paper tries to open some thinking about the cultural product and to place it into some kind of framework for further consideration.

But despite its obvious limitations, the paper should not be interpreted as seeking to set aside the "REAL" world of current development models. But it does very seriously inquire whether there are no new options in which the people, together with the environment in which they find themselves, can begin to play more authentic and less precarious roles in their search for survival.

5. It would not be inappropriate to recall the frequently quoted words of the late Professor of History at Mona, Elsa V. Gouveia who said that:

"Good intentions are not enough, and the road to hell is paved with authoritative half-truths. No one is ever educated or liberated from the past by being taught how easy it is to substitute new shibboleths for old."