



UWI IGDS



CARIBBEAN REVIEW OF GENDER STUDIES

A Journal of Caribbean Perspectives on Gender and Feminism

CRGS SPECIAL ISSUE, FROM THE ARCHIVES

GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION: CARIBBEAN IMPACT, GLOBAL REACH;
PROFESSOR ELSA LEO-RHYNIE' WORK AND LEGACY



ISSUE 9

ARCHIVAL ISSUE
SEPTEMBER 2015



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



CRGS Special Issue, From the Archives

Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach; Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie's work and legacy

CONTENTS

i – iv	Contents
v – vi	Contributors
1 – 2	Executive Editor's Introduction to Special Archival Issue Patricia Mohammed

SECTION ONE — SELECTED PAPERS

from the Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium and CGDS 15th Anniversary Conference,
Mona, Jamaica, November 2008

Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach

EDITORIAL

3 – 12	Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach, Selected papers from the 2008 Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium Leith Dunn and Barbara Bailey
--------	---

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

13 – 34	"Moving From The Periphery": Elsa Leo-Rhynie's Contribution to Gender Studies and Beyond Keynote Address Day One of the Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium Marlene Hamilton
---------	--

- 35 – 48 Beyond the Frontiers: Feminist Activism in the 'Global' Academy
Keynote Address Day Two of the Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium
Amina Mama

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPER

- 49 – 76 Gender and Child Rights in Jamaica: A Gender Perspective
Aldrie Henry-Lee

GENDER ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES: THE GRADUATE EXPERIENCE

- 77 – 94 'You sure aren't a Real Man!' - Space, Power, and Possibilities for Men in
Social Care and Gender Studies
Warren Thompson

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- 95 – 106 The Elsa Leo Rhynie Legacy
Anthony M. Perry

SECTION TWO — DOCUMENTARY FILM

- 107 – 110 Becoming Elsa
Commissioned 2009
Patricia Mohammed and **Hilary Nicholson**
<https://youtu.be/R54KPgjZu44>

SECTION THREE — ANNIVERSARY KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

from the IGDS St. Augustine Unit

- 111 – 142 Stories in Caribbean Feminism: Reflections on the Twentieth Century
CGDS 5th Anniversary Keynote Address, 1998 (paper)
Patricia Mohammed
- 143 – 170 Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New Directions
CGDS 10th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2003 (paper)
Elsa Leo Rhynie
- 171 – 174 Making of Caribbean Feminisms and the WDSG
CGDS 15th Anniversary Opening Keynote Address, 2008 (video)
Patricia Mohammed
https://youtu.be/wnsir9e8i_o

- 175 – 178 "What's Love Got to Do With It? Sexuality, Work and Power in Caribbean Gender Relations
CGDS 15th Anniversary Closing Keynote Address, 2009 (video)
Violet Eudine Barriteau
<https://youtu.be/e4ppnG-68J4?list=PLwNx1cuS64LjPfesUKXnAi3-3lyCJhtbD>
- 179 – 194 Inescapable Entanglements: Notes on Caribbean Feminist Engagement
IGDS 20th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2013 (paper and video)
Alissa Trotz

SECTION FOUR — WORKING PAPERS

from the IGDS Nita Barrow Unit

- 195 – 244 Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean,
Working Paper No. 1 April 1998
Violet Eudine Barriteau
- 245 – 286 Women and Higher Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean:
UWI: A Progressive Institution for Women?
Working Paper No.2 February 1999
Marlene Hamilton
- 287 – 326 When the Closet is a Region: Homophobia, Heterosexism and Nationalism
in the Commonwealth Caribbean
Working Paper No. 5 March 2001
Tara L. Atluri
- 327 – 372 Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean,
Working Paper No.14 March 2008
Alissa Trotz

SECTION FIVE — SPECIAL PUBLICATION

from the IGDS Nita Barrow Unit

- 373 – 410 In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's
Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia
Special Publication, International Women's Day, March 2010
Violet Eudine Barriteau
- 411 – 418 Biographies of contributors



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>

Contributors

Tara L. Atluri

Undergraduate exchange student at the IGDS, 1999-2000 from the Faculty of Arts and Science ,
University of Toronto, St. George Campus, University College

Now

Assistant Professor, York University

Barbara Bailey

University Director, Regional Coordinating Unit
Institute for Gender and Development Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus (1996-2010)

Now

Professor Emerita (Gender and Education)
The University of the West Indies

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Lecturer and Head
CGDS, Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Now

Professor of Gender and Public Policy and
Principal, The University of the West Indies =, Cave Hill Campus

Leith Dunn

Senior Lecturer and Head
Institute for Gender and Development Studies, Mona Unit
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Marlene A. Hamilton

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration and Special Initiatives
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Now

Professor Emerita, The University of the West Indies

Aldrie Henry-Lee

Senior Lecturer and Associate Dean
Faculty of Social Sciences
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Elsa Leo-Rhynie

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Now

Professor Emerita, The University of the West Indies



Amina Mama

Barbara Lee Distinguished Chair in Women's Leadership
Mills College, Oakland, California

Now

Professor of Women and Gender Studies
University of California, Davis

Patricia Mohammed

Senior Lecturer and Head
Centre for Gender and Development Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Now

Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies
Executive Editor, Caribbean Review of Gender Studies
Campus Coordinator, School for Graduate Studies and Research
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

Hilary Nicholson

Gender Advocate

Anthony M. Perry

Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Warren Thompson

PhD Candidate
Institute for Gender and Development Studies, Mona Campus

Now

Teacher and Head of Eurhythmics Department
Port Antonio High School, Jamaica

Alissa Trotz

Associate Professor, New College, University of Toronto,

Now

Associate Professor in Women and Gender Studies and
Director of the Undergraduate Caribbean Studies Program
New College, University of Toronto



Introduction to Special Archival Issue

[Patricia Mohammed](#)

Executive Editor, Caribbean Review of Gender Studies

Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies

Institute for Gender and Development Studies, St. Augustine Unit

Unlike the majority of our journal issues, this special issue is both commemorative and archival. It contains a selection of papers, keynote speeches and working papers presented over two decades by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), now, Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), that are brought together in one volume for easy recall and retrieval by scholars and students. In this issue, we highlight in particular, papers from the CGDS 15th Anniversary Conference which honoured Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie, the first Professor appointed in the field of Women and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies. The issue is valuable in its own way as a recognition that, important as contemporary scholarship is, access to the unfolding history of the institution is key in understanding the intellectual tradition in Caribbean feminism and a critical component of Caribbean feminist discourse. As an open access online journal, the Caribbean Review of Gender Studies seeks to play a role both in producing contemporary research, as we have done in past issues, and in also making available to scholars the long tradition of research produced by the IGDS that may otherwise not be available to the increasing range of users who draw on the internet for their resources.

Background to the Elsa Leo Rhynie Symposium

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), Mona, Jamaica hosted the Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium and 15th Anniversary Celebrations of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies from November 9 through 11, 2008 at the Mona Visitors' Lodge and Conference Centre. The Symposium was held under the theme Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact Global Reach. The Symposium activities began with an opening ceremony on Sunday, November 9, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. at the Mona Visitors' Lodge. The Conference then continued with presentation and discussion sessions over two days on several topics including: Gender Studies in Higher Education: Retrospect and Prospect; Gender and Higher Education; and Gender and Caribbean Society. The Symposium was designed to recognize the sterling contribution of Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie who was appointed the first Professor of Gender and Development Studies in 1992 and served as the first Regional Coordinator of the institutionalized Centre from 1993 to 1996. In addition it served to commemorate and reflect on the genesis, development and future direction of Gender and Development Studies at The UWI, across the region.

Ref: <http://www.mona.uwi.edu/marcom/uwinotebook/entry/3344>



Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach: Selected papers from the 2008 Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium

Editors

Leith Dunn and Barbara Bailey

[Leith Dunn](#)

Senior Lecturer and Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, Mona Unit, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

[Barbara Bailey](#)

Professor Emerita, The University of the West Indies
Formerly: University Director, Regional Coordinating Unit
Institute for Gender and Development Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus (1996-2010)

Keywords: gender and education, gender studies, Elsa Leo Rhynie, education, gender Issues, Caribbean reality, IGDS

How to cite

Dunn, Leith and Barbara Bailey. 2015. "Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 3–12

Introduction

SECTION ONE

Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach

Selected Papers from the 2008 Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium

The Elsa Leo-Rhynie (ELR) Symposium entitled *Gender perspectives in education: Caribbean impact, global reach* was held on November 10 and 11, 2008. It celebrated the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) and the institutionalization of Gender Studies across the three campuses of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) as an autonomous, interdisciplinary programme of teaching, research, outreach and advocacy within and beyond the academy.

The ELR Symposium honoured Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie for her pioneering contribution to the advancement of Gender Studies at The UWI and her advancement to a number of leadership positions in the institution. Having served in the School of Education for a number of years, in 1992 Professor Leo-Rhynie was appointed as the first Professor of Gender and Development Studies and as Regional Coordinator of the *Project of Cooperation in Teaching, Research and Outreach in Women and Development Studies* between the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of The Hague and The University of the West Indies. She remained in this position until 1996 and was then appointed as Deputy Principal of The UWI's Mona Campus and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Studies. In 2006 she was appointed as the first female principal of the Mona Campus and served in that capacity until her retirement in July 2008. The Symposium included plenary presentations and panel discussions. A documentary film, celebrating her life and work was also launched. This volume

concludes with Elsa Leo-Rhynie's lecture at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the CGDS at The UWI St Augustine Campus.

The ELR Symposium coincided with two significant milestones. In October 2008, The UWI approved a request to enhance the status of the Centre to become the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, able to grant its own degrees. It also coincided with the expansion of academic offerings through the Mona Unit of the CGDS with the approval of a Major terminating in a BSc in Gender and Development, offered in collaboration with the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work. The Symposium was also incorporated into the 60th anniversary celebrations of the University and provided a special opportunity for reflection on the impact of the work of the Centre.

Like the mythical Sankofa bird, this collection of selected papers from the ELR Symposium reflects on the past and looks to the future of gender studies in the academy. The collection contributes to the burgeoning analysis of gender issues that reflect the Caribbean reality. It builds on the analyses presented in its precursor, *Gender in the 21st Century - Caribbean perspectives, visions and possibilities*, edited by Barbara Bailey and Elsa Leo-Rhynie (2004) which includes a collection of papers from the 2003 UWI Academic Conference held to mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the CGDS.

The thematic focus for the 2008 ELR Symposium was deliberate. Education is an area in which Professor Leo-Rhynie has had a passion and in which she had done pioneering research on the impact of gender on the education of girls and women in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region. Analyzing the causes and impact of gender differences in educational participation and achievement, of males and females, as well as the possible solutions, remain a central research theme of the Institute. This focus continued even after Professor Leo-Rhynie's retirement from The UWI. Speakers at the Symposium were therefore asked to address sub-themes related to this broad concern. The

papers included therefore provide various perspectives on a range of education issues which focus on the Caribbean impact and global reach of the Institute's work on gender and education perspectives.

Keynote Addresses

Papers from two keynote speeches are presented. The first is the keynote address, by Professor Marlene Hamilton, Professor Emerita, The UWI, Mona Campus which was delivered on Day 1 of the Symposium. Professor Hamilton is a former Pro-Vice Chancellor and her responsibilities at one point, included oversight of The UWI's Women and Development Studies programmes. Her paper, entitled: *Moving from the periphery - Elsa Leo-Rhynie's contribution to gender studies and beyond*, highlights the multi-faceted work of Professor Emerita Elsa Leo-Rhynie as outstanding scholar, administrator *par excellence*, creative researcher and dedicated member of The University of the West Indies family for many years. The main focus of this paper is on that aspect of her work between 1992 and 1996 on her appointment as the first Professor and Regional Coordinator of Women and Development Studies (WDS), in time to be renamed Gender and Development Studies. It takes as its starting point, Leo-Rhynie's inaugural professorial address entitled *Moving from the periphery* and reviews the well-reasoned directionality proposed for WDS as well as dreams held for the fledgling Centre. The paper examines the steps taken along the way to establish a dynamic and well regarded unit within the University. Issues such as disciplinary/interdisciplinary scholarship, building a research agenda and the activism/scholarship divide are critically examined. Also included is the effectiveness of the Centre at its 15th anniversary in delivering its mandate. The paper also looks at the other sides to Elsa Leo-Rhynie beyond the CGDS: as teacher and researcher in the Faculty of Education; as competent and effective administrator in her role as Deputy Principal of the Mona Campus and

Pro-Vice Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies; and as first woman to hold the post of Principal of the Mona Campus.

The second keynote speech was presented on Day 2 of the Symposium by Professor Amina Mama of the University of Cape Town and is entitled *Beyond the frontiers: Feminist activism in the 'global' academy*. In the paper Professor Mama contends that localized feminist movements that emerged out of nationalist and anti-imperialist struggles have been greatly enhanced in the post-colonial era by transnational networks and modes of activism that transcend national boundaries. She argues that in the context of globalization, the imperatives for transnational mobilization are more powerful than ever but at the same time the parochial interests and systemic inequalities continue to present challenges to the realization of transnational solidarities. The particular manifestation of these challenges is discussed in relation to the university as a space that is both nationally and globally constituted and which has a critical role in development/under-development processes. Within this space feminist interventions have given rise to gender and women's studies and the author posits that in southern contexts this scholarly field has maintained a strong link with the development industry and with women's movements. In the paper, the potential and challenge of thinking and working beyond the frontiers of the academy and its disciplines in order to sustain a critical engagement with global processes is discussed, in relation to gender studies.

Selected Conference Paper

The paper by Dr Aldrie Henry-Lee of The UWI Mona Campus, *Child rights: A gender perspective* examines challenges in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, highlighting the negative impact on children's rights when there is a gap between policy and practice. Evidence to support this position includes demographic and statistical data on socio-

economic status, child welfare and poverty to argue the importance of gender mainstreaming to ensure that the specific needs and concerns of both boys and girls are addressed in policies and programmes. The paper questions whether duty bearers (governments) always act in the best interest of boys and girls. Henry-Lee focuses especially on the needs and rights of invisible and excluded children in public and private institutions, street and working children and children exposed to various forms of violence, neglect in the home, schools and community, despite commitments to child protection. She also argues in favour of increasing avenues for child participation and recommends that children should participate in the implementation and evaluation of programmes which impact their lives. The paper makes a strong case for closing the gap between policy and practice and mainstreaming gender in child rights.

Gender across the disciplines: The graduate experience

A paper by Warren Thompson, an IGDS graduate student at the Mona campus, examines male participation in social work, a traditionally feminized, female-dominated profession, and in gender studies which putatively continues to maintain the legacy of the feminist project. The paper is entitled *You sure aren't a real man: Space, power and possibilities for men in social care and gender studies*. Thompson's paper examines the social and structural place of men in two female-dominated fields and reflects on the challenges that come from both within and without a hegemonic patriarchy. An analysis of the power dynamics that play out even as theory is created and new modalities of practice are fashioned is presented. The possibilities for a new terrain of gender studies both in the academy and the field are also examined. The author's own experience in both arenas is used as the lens through which the examination and analysis is carried out and the arguments developed.

Personal Reflection

Mr. Anthony Perry provides a personal reflection on *The ELR Legacy* from the perspective of a former graduate student. He traces his personal journey and experience, as a male student relating to Professor Leo-Rhynie led him to unknowingly, recognize the importance of gender in education. He contends that long before gender was a sociological construct to be studied, researched and written about, he had figured that there were differences between and among men and women. He points to the fact that the paper is not about exploring the epistemology or the contending and contentious debates about femininity and masculinity but about how a man was guided, mentored and nurtured by an exemplary leader and academic as he navigated his way through university to successfully complete a master's degree.

SECTION TWO

Documentary Film: *Becoming Elsa*

Becoming Elsa is a 19 minute documentary film commissioned for presentation at the 2008 ELR Symposium, and presented at the Symposium. The Director/Scriptwriter was Patricia Mohammed and Production Assistant and Co-Director was Hilary Nicholson. The film traces Elsa's early life, her journey in education from the St Andrew High School to The UWI, her later experience as a teacher in the UK and her sterling career as an educator and later Principal at The University of the West Indies. Against the background of inspiring music, interviews with Elsa and key stakeholders, it traces the origins and history of the Women's Studies Group which became the Centre for Gender and Development Studies. The film is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R54KPgjZu44>

SECTION THREE

IGDS Anniversary Keynote Speeches

Gender studies: crossing boundaries, charting new directions Elsa Leo-Rhynie

In this 10th Anniversary Lecture delivered at The UWI St Augustine Campus on December 3 2003, Professor Leo-Rhynie provides an insightful, theoretical and practical analysis of the rationale for and challenges of introducing gender as an academic discipline and the journey from activism to scholarship. She highlights the crossings of boundaries and borders and the establishment of the Centre to develop and deliver an interdisciplinary academic programme reflecting this history.

Crossing Boundaries: Against the background of the UN Decade for Women 1975-1985, the social and political ferment of the 1960s and 1970s and the political activism of feminists, Leo-Rhynie argues that the trigger and stimulus for crossing this boundary was feminists' attention to issues of power and influence in women's lives, and their relationships with men, the family, the community, their workplace and the State. She highlights the pivotal role of the Women in Caribbean Project directed by Professor Joycelin Massiah in the 1970s and early 1980s in crossing this boundary.

Crossing borders: The second major boundary crossing she notes, challenged the structure and organisation of knowledge in the academy. Gender studies she argued represented a major shift from disciplinary to interdisciplinary scholarship.

Creating Interdisciplinarity: Her comprehensive analysis of what is required to achieve interdisciplinarity remains relevant today and she outlines the

pedagogical challenge of charting new directions as well as the institutional challenges of creating an interdisciplinary Centre. Leo-Rhynie concludes by acknowledging the boundaries crossed, new directions, special pedagogy, research methodologies and critical analysis that are part of Gender Studies and her hope that the discipline will continue to influence scholarship and stimulate societal change.

This selection of papers and the documentary film, attest to the range and multidisciplinary scholarship of Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie's work, and her legacy which has expanded knowledge and use of gender as a tool of analysis to enhance policies and practices which impact the lives of Caribbean people.



“Moving from the Periphery” Elsa Leo-Rhynie’s Contribution to Gender Studies and Beyond

Keynote Address, Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium, Mona, Jamaica,
November 2008

[Marlene A. Hamilton](#)

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration and Special Initiatives

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Now

Professor Emerita, The University of the West Indies

Keywords: Elsa Leo-Rhynie, women's studies, women in education, gender in education, gender policy

How to cite

Hamilton, Marlene A. 2015. "'Moving from the Periphery': Elsa Leo-Rhynie's Contribution to Gender Studies and Beyond." 15th Anniversary Regional Symposium Keynote Address. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 13–34.

Introduction

It is an honour to have been asked to deliver this address in celebration of my "sister-friend" and colleague of more years than either of us would wish to acknowledge – Professor Emerita Elsa Ann Leo-Rhynie. I also wish to congratulate the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, especially the organizers of this Symposium, for choosing to celebrate your 15th Anniversary in such a meaningful manner. A special word of thanks to Shakira Maxwell for her assistance with the logistics of my presentation, the outcome of which you shall see presently.

As an aside, I checked the etiquette books to get some information on 15th Anniversaries – you know, the first is Paper, the 25th, Silver, and so on. What I discovered is that the 15th is Crystal, which to me conjures up images of a "Crystal Ball" (to look into the future), "Healing Crystals" (for their curative properties) and "Crystal Skulls" – yes, Skulls – which, according to Mayan traditions, are said to contain crucial information about humanity's true purpose and destiny.

So, Professor Bailey, if I were to give you an anniversary gift it would be a Crystal Skull, but this seemed unnecessary to me for you and your team are already working to fulfill its prophesy. Instead, I offer my good wishes to the CGDS and wish for this body continued success in its important endeavours.

Let me pause to recognize two others who have recently taken over responsibility for their respective campuses – Dr. Grace Sirju-Charran and Ms June Cuffie and thank them for their continued work with the Centre.

Let me now return to the main focus of my presentation – Elsa Leo-Rhynie. Ours has been an enduring friendship from high school, through university as students and then as staff of the institution, and more recently, into our retirement years. It

is not an easy task, however, to try to capture in a limited period of time, the essence of the person whose many talents have been devoted to the enhancement of The University of the West Indies' reputation, both at home and abroad, over an extended period of time. Like so many others, I have great respect not only for Leo-Rhynie's intellect, but too, for the ethics and values she has always espoused: and it therefore gives me much pleasure to participate in this seminar and to "big up" someone whose work has indeed demonstrated both "Caribbean Impact (and) Global Reach."

I have entitled my address, "Moving from the Periphery", which mirrors Leo-Rhynie's inaugural address upon her appointment as Professor and Regional Coordinator of Women and Development Studies (later to become Gender and Development Studies). Let me say up front, that I shall concentrate on those aspects of her achievements in this position (and my interpretation thereof) which I feel most confident to address, and leave it to those better informed to deal with other issues.

Setting the Stage

First, some background information. Leo-Rhynie was appointed Professor of Women and Development Studies in 1992 but her formal link with The UWI was forged in 1977 when she was offered an appointment as Research Fellow (and later promoted to Senior Lecturer) in what was then the Faculty of Education. We both learnt so much in those early days about what seemed to be the weirdest of topics such as factor analysis and multiple regression, and endeavoured to attend as many seminars as were available to enable us to understand the strange world of research methods which was, and still is, an important subject for all programmes offered by the Faculty.

Leo-Rhynie was awarded her PhD in Educational Psychology a year after joining the staff, and (as a result of the high standard of her dissertation) was one of the first (if not, the first) candidate of that period to be permitted to proceed straight to a PhD without having to complete a Master's degree. I want to add that she is "home grown" in the true sense of the word, having completed a BSc (Honours) degree in 1964 and the Diploma in Education (with a mark of distinction in the Theory of Education) in 1975, before the award of her doctorate in 1978, all from The UWI.

It was during this early period that an interest in women's studies began to surface in a recognizable manner. Leo-Rhynie is quick to remind that one Joycelin Massiah (a good friend of us both) who was then head of ISER at Cave Hill dragged us "kicking and screaming" (Leo-Rhynie's words) into the activities of the women's groups newly formed on each campus. These groups, spearheaded by Massiah for ISER and Peggy Antrobus for WAND, were intended to start the process of sensitizing UWI staff to women's issues and to lead to the introduction of a formal programme in due course.

The impetus came from the earlier "Women in the Caribbean" project which generated a great deal of vital information to be shared with the wider university community, and so the establishment of the Women's Groups was conceived for this purpose. As Leo-Rhynie puts it, Massiah was very much on the "academic" side, and Antrobus, the "activist" side, and together they provided the stimulus for this new endeavour. The fledgling operation largely confined its activities to Friday afternoons, but even these limited activities served to whet the appetites of the Mona women and, as I recall, one Mona man (Mark Figueroa) for greater dialogue about issues of consequence to women. The group also began to highlight and celebrate distinguished female academics and to bring them to the attention of the university community.

As the movement gained a footing within the institution, assistance was sought from universities which had already succeeded in implementing relevant programmes. Leo-Rhynie was a member of a UWI team which went to Halifax in 1982 to gather information for launching a similar initiative back home.

One of the outcomes of this exposure was a growing interest (within the context of the Faculty of Education) in researching gender differences, initially in terms of academic achievement and related issues such as subject choice and orientation, but over time, including various other dimensions such as teachers' responses to girls and boys in the classroom, students' own perceptions of each other, creativity among the sexes, and, on the broader front, the likely effects of school type.

These concerns began to filter into lectures delivered and post-graduate theses supervised. I want to draw your attention to the fact that Leo-Rhynie, beginning at this exciting period of research and discovery in the Faculty of Education and continuing even after she left the Faculty, is credited with supervising some ten Master of Arts (Education) theses which demonstrated a concern for gender differences, as well as four PhDs. She also critiqued and advised on many, many more.

Around this time we collaborated to write and subsequently teach, the first postgraduate course dealing with gender issues (*Gender Roles in Education*) - a course which, regrettably, is no longer on Education's books, but which, for a decade or so, was one of the best subscribed offerings in the Master's programme. While it attracted mainly women, there was each year, a smattering of men, including men of the cloth. They had to be very careful with any comments they made in class, for there were always a few female activists ready and able to "mash them up" if they were perceived to be unduly challenging of feminist doctrine. I recall, there was one occasion when, having heard Leo-Rhynie lecturing on some aspect of differences in self concept

between the sexes, a certain Reverend gentlemen (who I suspect, is well known to many of you here this morning) being unable to contain himself, jumped up and proclaimed in a loud voice, "That's exactly what St. Paul said"!

So, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues all, I suggest to you that these activities were the factors motivating what became for Leo-Rhynie, an over-riding interest in, and concern for, gender issues, and subsequently laid a foundation on which she would build in the years to follow.

Let us fast-forward from the '70s and '80s to the decade of the 1990s. There are two matters which I want to mention here: firstly, after a short period away from The UWI (during which time she experienced the positives and negatives of the corporate world) it became evident that Leo-Rhynie was ready to return home to The UWI. Secondly, the new and very limited operation of the Women and Development Studies Unit established with funding from the Ford Foundation (for proposal preparation) and subsequently, the Dutch Government (for the project itself, awarded with the proviso that the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) should work jointly with The UWI) was beginning to make its mark. While the "kick off" took place under Vice Chancellor Preston, it fell to his successor, Sir Alister McIntyre, to honour the commitment made to the Dutch to "institutionalize" the programme. This meant providing university funding, and putting in place core staffing, including someone at professorial level.

It was purely coincidental that I had, shortly before, been made Pro-Vice Chancellor with responsibilities which included gender concerns. It gave me tremendous pleasure and satisfaction to chair the Advisory Committee which, having interviewed a number of eminently qualified applicants, offered the recommendation to the University Appointments Committee that Leo-Rhynie should be appointed Professor of Women and Development Studies. Let me pause to recognize the significant ground-breaking role played by others such as Lucille Mathurin-Mair, Dorianne Wilson-Smillie and Hermione McKenzie, in

addition to Joycelin Massiah and Peggy Antrobus, whose contributions led the Centre to that point, and whose impact is felt even today.

The Inaugural Dream

Leo-Rhynie's appointment in 1992 was well received by the Academy, although there were serious doubts about the viability of the programme, as well as some resistance (both covert and overt) to any attempts at mainstreaming. Leo-Rhynie's immediate charge was to put in place a regional structure, and, at an early stage, she was drawn into the controversy about whether this new Centre should be named, **Women** and Development Studies or **Gender** and Development Studies. A cogent argument in favour of the latter - based on the impossibility of focusing only on women in any credible teaching and research agenda - carried sway, but not without there being reservations expressed at the highest levels.

In December of that same year, Leo-Rhynie delivered her inaugural professorial lecture to a packed audience intent on learning what her vision for the new Centre would be. The title, which included the term, "*Moving from the periphery*", captured in a sentence the direction to be charted, and was elaborated on in an intense, well conceptualized presentation which gave the audience much food for thought. Although I was very much present on that occasion - I believe I chaired the function - I have since re-read Leo-Rhynie's paper (in both the original form and the published version appearing in Pat Mohammed's *Gendered realities*) several times to mentally compare my reaction to the visionary note of the lecture with the more recent actualities. One conclusion I have arrived at is that Leo-Rhynie's vision for the CGDS has, to a great extent, been achieved, despite expected (and unexpected) pitfalls along the way. I have distilled out three issues for consideration this morning,

issues which I believe, present as important concerns defining the Centre's first 15 years and have sought Leo-Rhynie's assessment of each.

The first of these is, not unexpectedly, the process of *institutionalizing* (or, put another way) of *legitimizing* gender concerns in the Academy. The outcome of the battle to pursue the fledgling programme under the mantle of "Women and Development Studies" or "Gender and Development Studies" had already been determined, but not without a fight. Leo-Rhynie's recognition of the growing trend, internationally, toward the latter option was not without its critics, but, as she argued convincingly:

If (the) objective is to establish curricula to address issues of gender and analysis based on gender; if these issues are discrimination, domination, subordination, exploitation, oppression of one gender by another; if these situations could come about because of the nature of roles assumed and the interactions between the genders in specific cultures, races and classes, then the study of one group with the objective of changing these relationships and situations, seems impossible without reference to and comparisons with the other. (In Mohammed, ed. 156-157)

This argument was further strengthened by way of addressing other differentials such as power relationships, human worth, and levels of responsibilities between men and women: if we consider the view of some writers that "reconstruction and transformation of behaviours of masculinity is a necessary and essential part of the feminist revolution", then we are prompted to agree with Leo-Rhynie's original conclusion, that the radical feminist view of male exclusion must be rejected in favour of one which actively involved men in the process. In her words:

Gender Studies' seems to better describe the concerns of The UWI's WDS groups which include and emphasize, but are not exclusively, women's studies. (Mohammed, 157)

Another early decision was that autonomy of the Centre had to be maintained (sometimes, against all odds) so the requirement for a formal reporting mechanism was achieved by the formation of Boards of Studies on each campus. Each Board included representatives from different disciplinary areas, the library, and the student body, reflecting (in Leo-Rhynie's words) the Centre's concern "with cross-border knowledge in its broadest form".

Yet another positive was the Centre's success in securing funding from a variety of sources. In a recent interview with June Castello, Leo-Rhynie stated:

the fact that the Centre has been able to obtain significant external grant funding to support some of its activities, the innovative and highly visible scholarship in this area.... have been factors overcoming the conservatism and skepticism of some sectors in the university, and have helped to establish the legitimacy of the Centre's work. (Interview with June Castello, 2008)

Leo-Rhynie has, in fact, listed her role in successfully negotiating a project with the Netherlands Government for US\$2.8 million as one of the highlights of her tenure as Regional Coordinator, even though the project (which had teaching, research and outreach components, as well as a capacity building intent) was implemented after she had left the Centre (2007-2010).

Let me end this section by proposing another benchmark. To my mind, an important development has been the impact of the Centre in contributing directly and indirectly, to the formulation of strategies related to gender and

development. Locally, this has impacted the work of governmental and non-governmental policy makers, and abundant evidence of this is also to be found at the regional and international levels, through bodies such as CARICOM and the United Nations.

The next issue arising from Leo-Rhynie's inaugural address is that of the *interdisciplinary* nature of any gender-based programme. As Chhachhi pointed out and Leo-Rhynie reminded us, "Women's Studies does not mean 'add women and stir', but rather, requires a reformulation of disciplinary concepts and a new approach to social reality" (1988:79). Advised by the outcomes of the *Women in the Caribbean* project, Leo-Rhynie spoke at that time of the "Multi-faceted nature of WDS" and made the case for inter-disciplinarity being the best vehicle through which to pursue work in this area, despite underlying problems such as staffing, funding and basically, "fitting into the university's academic structure". The argument made is captured in the following statement:

Interdisciplinarity becomes a process of clearing hurdles of disciplinary language, disciplinary methods, disciplinary content, of effecting 'translation' of these disciplinary concepts into interdisciplinary discourse, and through a process of 'dialogue' across disciplines achieving a broader, more comprehensive and more complete view of specific problems, promoting an integration and a synthesis, which provide a comprehensive base for the search for solutions.
(Leo-Rhynie, 1998 – 10th Anniversary address)

The programmes to be developed would "assess, analyze and challenge existing disciplines and traditional methods of acquiring and disseminating, knowledge", and at the same time that such work would be undertaken intramurally, "a strong link would be forged with the community and

organizations addressing women's concerns." (Mohammed, 157). The overarching concern was that the programme should be so structured as to integrate research, teaching and action, for basic to this debate was her recognition that the new Centre would be called upon to answer the question, "is Women's Studies a discipline?", whether articulated in this rather crude fashion or more subtly put.

Time has provided an unequivocal response, for the academic quality and significance of the Centre's work speaks for itself. To quote Leo-Rhynie (1998) at the CGDS 10th Anniversary lecture held at the St. Augustine campus:

"Team-teaching, cross-listing of courses, cross-campus teaching, seeking and obtaining agreement for joint appointments to the CGDS as well as to a disciplinary area, and the designation and listing of lecturers who work in gender from a disciplinary perspective as 'Associate Lecturers' are all strategies which have been employed to ensure the interdisciplinary thrust, but also the maintenance of autonomy. The further education of lecturers through staff fellowships, of graduate students through study grants and the contributions of visiting lecturers, initially from the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague and also from each campus..... (have) enhanced understanding of the scope of the concerns which are part of the gender and development initiative."

Leo-Rhynie has chosen to lead by example in these endeavours, and her contributions have been many. In preparation for this address, I asked her to identify areas in which she felt she had made a particularly significant contribution. She spoke to:

Developing and offering a Master's programme in Gender and Development Studies as well as a concentration in (this area) in association with the (relevant) Master's programme offered by the Consortium Graduate School (now incorporated into SALCC) (Personal communication, 2008)

I submit, Ladies and Gentlemen, that this does not represent the totality of Leo-Rhynie's outstanding leadership as Professor and Regional Coordinator of the Centre!

The third and final area I wish to speak to, that of *scholarship*, has, to some extent, been embraced in the earlier discussion, following as it does on a number of the issues already raised. In her inaugural professorial address Leo-Rhynie reminded the audience that Women's Studies was committed to the objectives of feminist scholarship (and I pause to remind you that there has been a re-formulation of this descriptor over time), and embraces a programme of research and teaching whose intended outcome is the production of new and credible knowledge in this area. In a 1998 lecture, Massiah expressed the view that the quantum and quality of the work being generated represented the maturing of a discipline which, at that time, was a "work in progress". Ten years later, Massiah would probably arrive at the same conclusion, which, in my opinion is desirable, given that every dynamic operation should be governed by the continuous setting of new goals once the initial targets have been met.

In her more recent reflections, Leo-Rhynie has regretted what appears to be a diminishing in the level of motivation of young scholars to that demonstrated in the early days. That this may have come about as a result of the institutionalization of Gender and Development Studies is at least part of the explanation. But perhaps, this should be regarded as the sounding of a warning bell against complacency, especially when one is reminded that Gender and Development Studies is still a "work in progress".

Yet, there is an impressive menu of teaching and research activities, both intra- and extra-mural, developed over the years; for, as Leo-Rhynie points out:

Over the past fifteen years, the Centre for Gender and Development Studies has been engaged in raising searching theoretical and methodological questions, generating and documenting new and important information....developing new courses and teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels....The Centre has had a strong impact on the rethinking and transformation of disciplinary discourse - in science, in sociology, in education, in literature, law and history, as well as research methodology. (Leo-Rhynie, 10th Anniversary address, 1998)

It follows, then, that the CGDS has to be regarded as the "Caribbean hub of scholarship in this area", committed as it is to "preserving the tradition of crossing boundaries and charting new directions" (*Ibid*).

I concluded this aspect of my informal interview with Leo-Rhynie by posing two questions:

"During your tenure as Professor and Regional Coordinator of the CGDS, did you experience any disappointments?" and
"What has provided you with the greatest satisfaction in this position?"

Her response to the first question was, perhaps, to be expected - "resistance at The UWI to accepting GDS as a legitimate discipline" The second question was answered in a typically Elsa fashion:

"A special satisfaction I have experienced came long after I left the Centre. All three Unit Heads on the campuses, as well as the Regional Coordinator who replaced me achieved professorial status and the reviews of the external assessors in all cases were highly complimentary. Two of the three Heads are now deputy principals on their campuses".

'Nuf said!

Life After the CGDS

One of the consequences of outstanding leadership in a particular area is that the individual is targeted by others who may wish to benefit from that individual's expertise. Consequent on the appointment of Professor Kenneth Hall as Principal of the Mona campus in 1996, Leo-Rhynie was invited to assume the post of Deputy Principal.

She fulfilled her new responsibilities creditably, especially since she was given specific duties in areas near and dear to her - student matters and quality. Despite limited funds she was able to put in place many improvements and innovations, certainly not the least of these being the new 800-room Rex Nettleford Hall of Residence, with its Multi-Purpose Block. As I mentioned to Leo-Rhynie on several occasions, the skills she honed during this taxing exercise would look very impressive on her resume, should she ever decide to apply for a Project Manager's position, post-retirement!

Another noteworthy achievement during this phase was the establishment of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC – for some reason, this always reminds me of a duck!) which was to become a model for similar initiatives set up at a later date on the other campuses. This particular activity

held her in good stead in 1998, when she was appointed PVC and Chair of the Board for Undergraduate Studies.

Leo-Rhynie brought to her new responsibilities as PVC the same intellectual acumen that had become her trademark. Her achievements during this period - when she had to again divorce herself from campus-bound activities and assume a regional perspective - were many. To mention a few: she was chair of the University Task Force on Examinations Reform and subsequently, on the Implementation Committee established to follow-up on the recommendations made; she implemented Exit Surveys to capture graduating students' opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of their UWI experience; she staged (with limited funding) an impressive conference on Quality Enhancement; she expanded the guidelines for making professorial appointments; and significantly, she prepared a paper on "The UWI Graduate" (which speaks for itself and which has been incorporated in the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan of the institution.)

I personally believe Leo-Rhynie's "comfort zone" was shaken somewhat in 2006, one year away from retirement, when, on the elevation of Professor Kenneth Hall to the lofty position of Governor General of Jamaica, she was asked to don the heavy mantle of principalship at Mona. However, whatever qualms Leo-Rhynie might have had were not evident to the university community as she rose to the challenges of this most involved, far-reaching and taxing position with her usual aplomb.

Her tenure as Principal spanned just over one year (no powers could persuade her to remain in the post), but even in this limited time there were many accomplishments to be placed on record. While some might not recognize the salience of what I am about to mention, the majority will, I believe, appreciate its significance: Leo-Rhynie organized the first ever full staff meeting for Mona, to secure employees' (all levels) input in the preparation of the new Campus Strategic Plan!

I will mention only one other noteworthy contribution, for this represents in a way, a new development for The UWI – certainly the Mona campus. The on-going discussions regarding institutional accreditation, confounded by the issue that The UWI is a regional, and not a national institution (and therefore, not answerable to national accreditation agencies) were circumvented by Leo-Rhynie's decision to seek registration, the first stage in the process, through the national body charged with responsibility for both registration and accreditation. I suspect that this provided the impetus for the other campuses to do likewise in due course.

Leo-Rhynie managed to maintain her research and outreach activities despite these heavy administrative duties. She is credited with some 48 publications in refereed journals, at least 13 significant reports arising from consultancies for bodies such as UNIFEM, the Jamaica Employers' Federation, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, several book reports and numerous unpublished papers, many of which have dealt with some aspect of gender and development. She has been awarded several fellowships (for example, through the ISS, USIS, IIEP and the British Council), and has been the recipient of various special honours, not the least of which has been the Government of Jamaica's Order of Distinction (Commander Class) and The UWI's Pelican Award given annually to a truly outstanding graduate of the institution. Her concern for, and interest in, students continued, and indeed, became even more apparent as Principal, and led to her being regarded as one of the Student Guild's strongest advocates.

Her outreach activities have been equally remarkable: while time does not permit me to cover the full spread, I want to make special mention of Leo-Rhynie's chairmanship of the Dudley Grant Memorial Trust, and of her work as a Privy Counselor for Jamaica. She has also served on the Boards of the Environment Foundation of Jamaica, the Grace Kennedy Foundation, and, not to overlook her roots in education, the Caribbean Examinations Council.

In bringing this address to its logical conclusion, there are two final aspects which I wish to mention. The first you may think delayed, for I want to make a few comments about women in more general terms and not in respect of the CGDS specifically. (Indeed, there are a number of highly placed women in the Academy who operate outside of the Centre's umbrella). Ten years ago I had the honour of presenting the Dame Nita Barrow lecture, one in a series staged by the Cave Hill Gender and Development Unit under the leadership of Professor Eudine Barriteau. I entitled my paper, "UWI – A Progressive University for Women?" ending the title with a question mark, rather than a full stop or exclamation mark. "Progressive", to me represented opportunities within the institutional context that provide for the advancement of women achieved as a result of demonstrable merit, and recognized and rewarded in an appropriate manner. I will not detain you with details of the paper, but I want to mention three clusters which I considered important within the context of The UWI at that time:

1. **Attitudinal Barriers** - Legislation of university policy does not necessarily mean that the policy will be internalized. It cannot ensure that there will not be a negative response to women on the staff, including the few in senior positions within the institution. Indeed, it is often said in university circles (not necessarily at **OUR** university) that "a man is preferred because he is a man"; also, that women who have made it to the top are thought of as "honorary men".
2. **Institutional Responsibilities** - That space is now being provided for more women does not mean that it is accompanied by any yielding of male power or privilege. Leo-Rhynie was of the opinion then that men, having given women more space, were now trying to use that space for their own concerns; in her words, "to divert

women's energies into men's anxieties". Research on male underachievement is a case in point.

3. **Role Modeling/Mentorship/Networking** - This, to my mind, is one of the most important strategies, although I note that it has "largely been discounted by feminist theorists as a useful means of effecting change" And yet, "their importance to the careers of men has to be acknowledged". We also observe that "more and more, it seems, women are seeking the guidance of their more senior female colleagues, looking to chart a career path on their advice." What also has to be recognized, however, is the limited number of women in this category (Hamilton, 1998).

In the university, legitimacy with regard to women facing these issues is granted to those possessing "cultural capital - having recognized resources and values **and** power. Perhaps the very essence of Leo-Rhynie is her "cultural capital" and the fact that she has always endeavoured to use this to the advantage of both women and men in the Academy.

She has managed to accomplish a feat which has eluded many a woman - to achieve a balance between her profession and familial responsibilities. For Leo-Rhynie, this duality has not led to internal conflict and self-guilt, nor have her domestic responsibilities impinged on her professional performance or vice versa (after all, she has always recognized and addressed her priorities as they arise). And there are not too many of us who can claim to have been able to achieve this level of consonance within ourselves.

The Irvine Report (1945), charged with providing directionality for the establishment of the UWI (as UCWI initially), offered its strong support for the

particular benefit which women were expected to derive from higher education (obtained locally, and at a more affordable cost), since, in the Committee's words, this would enable an increasing number of women to "play their part fully in the life of their community."

Ladies and gentlemen, I submit that Elsa Leo-Rhynie epitomizes to the fullest extent, the intentions of the Irvine Committee and, on behalf of us all, I salute her accordingly.

Reference

Mohammed, Patricia (ed). 2002. *Gendered realities: essays in Caribbean feminist thought*. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press and CGDS.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



Beyond the Frontiers: Feminist Activism in the 'Global' Academy

Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium and 15th Anniversary celebration,
CGDS, Mona, Jamaica, November 2008

[Amina Mama](#)

Barbara Lee Distinguished Chair in Women's Leadership
Mills College, Oakland, California
Now
Professor of Women and Gender Studies
University of California, Davis

Keywords: feminist activism, feminist studies, black feminism, post-colonialism, race and gender studies, gender and higher education, Africa

How to cite

Mama, Amina. 2015. "Beyond the Frontiers: Feminist Activism in the 'Global' Academy." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 35–48.

Introduction

The Caribbean and Africa today share the challenges of being post-colonial contexts in the era of globalization. In some ways this merely reflects the long and durable historical relationship between the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora – as manifest in creative, activist and scholarly communities. Many leading postcolonial theorists from the Caribbean region visited and contributed significantly to Africa's liberation – Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, and George Padmore are among the best known. Even Che Guevara spent time in the Democratic Republic of the Congo before his ill-fated Bolivian journey. I am not sure if Elsa Leo Rhynie had any direct contact with Africa, but her work on gender in higher education has been useful. Other Caribbean feminists have direct involvement with Africa. Dr Peggy Antrobus has visited and contributed to the region many times, and close to hand, Professor Rhoda Reddock is well known to African feminists, and has recently spent a sabbatical at the African Gender Institute working on the pan-African connections of earlier feminists (Reddock 2014).

Many of us have personal connections too, and have had our ideas shaped by pan-African sensibilities and relationships, not to mention collaborative thinking and work. It is now close to 20 years since the early seminars that marked the initiative to establish gender studies in the Caribbean, and that ultimately gave rise to the CGDS. The CGDS has been an outstanding example of feminist activism in scholarly arenas – and has informed and inspired many of us in the feminist movements in Africa.¹ For example, the seminal volume *Gender in Caribbean Development* (Mohammed and Shepherd 1999) is used by the African Gender Institute's teaching programme as is the more recent volume, *Interrogating Caribbean masculinities* (Reddock 2004).

I will present some reflections that derive from my experience as a feminist intellectual worker, blessed with opportunities that have allowed me to bring my

political ideals and my work together. Like many of my generation I underwent years of academic training, schooling that was very separate from my personal and political concerns. During those years I studied the psychological sciences, but was simultaneously involved in anti-racist and feminist struggles as a community activist in the early black women's movement in Britain. I returned home to Nigeria to work with like-minded colleagues to establish independent intellectual spaces, including the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria.² In 1999 I moved to South Africa as the first Chair in Gender Studies at the University of Cape Town, where I was appointed to direct the African Gender Institute. There we were tasked with developing teaching and research, and developing continental linkages between the vibrant pan-African scholarly community and post-apartheid South Africa's historically isolated, racially-fraught scholarly community.

Africa's feminist thinkers work in multiple locations to integrate theories and practices, and link research with activism. Those of us equipped with the social consciousness developed by our involvement in women's movements treat the classroom as a key site – for changing consciousness and equipping students to effect change in the wider world. Indeed, the presence of over five million youths enrolled in Africa's universities at any one time provides a major motivation for working within them. More broadly, it is clear to many of us that independent African scholarship offers a unique and valuable vantage point on global processes; one that continues to have relevance to the Caribbean. Independent South-South connections and solidarities are as essential today as ever before.

Feminism is not easily defined in the Caribbean or in Africa where we face all the challenges of our post-colonial conditions. It is not only extremely diverse, but has also been complicated by our disparate histories of gendered colonialism, overlain with the varieties of nationalism that eventually yielded our independent nations. To this we must add the differentiated impact that the global development industry's policies have on our lives. Our bureaucracies,

armies, our media and our education institutions may be similarly organised, but their institutional cultures vary widely, as does the manner in which they are gendered. Feminism is diverse because it arises in response to the myriad manifestations of patriarchy and gender oppression. So it is that African and Caribbean feminisms have many trajectories and forms, as well as being situated within the broad tropes of globalization. Locally, feminist ideas infuse and influence all our major public institutions, from preschools to parliaments, in political, cultural, social, and economic institutions. The realities of globalization make it incumbent on us to make transnational connections and critiques that contribute to demystifying its more disabling economic, social and cultural features and challenging the extractive and exploitative orientation of the global order to the region.

Gender in African Universities

Universities in Africa have a long history.³ In the postcolonial period, they are not so much the global institutions they purport to be as deeply national ones, key sites for the production of national consciousness, many of them established after political independence, alongside the new anthem and flag. African scholars – now numbering hundreds of thousands - are located all over the world. But we have faced many challenges in developing a continental intellectual culture. Observers point out that the study of Africa is still heavily dominated by hierarchies of resources, intellectual discourses, and scholarly and research practices originating in the West (Zezeza 2003, 2006, Mkandawire 2005, Sall 2002). Gender and Women's Studies (GWS) reflects this broader scenario of global inequality, creating an imperative for strengthening local feminist scholarship, something that has been pursued in ways discussed below.

Historically, women's entry into modern African universities has been slow. Africa's mainstream academic cultures and institutions have remained deeply

patriarchal, with men far outnumbering women faculty, and the majority of scholars remain conservative in their gender politics and behaviour. Women continue to experience various forms of direct discrimination, ranging from overt harassment and patronizing treatment, to more invidious assumptions about women's intellectual capacity and availability for professional careers. This is true even in the few places where the undergraduate intake of women outnumbers that of men. Recent years have seen cultural and material conditions in even the internationally renowned universities decline, with increases in student poverty, campus violence, deepening religiosity and deteriorating infrastructure (Diaw 2007, Odejide 2007, Tsikata 2007, *Feminist Africa* 8 & 9).

The gender struggles in universities have not only been about entry and access, but also about ideas and knowledge production. This is most explicitly expressed in the immense effort that has yielded the GWS teaching and research programmes in the region. This process, while it has drawn on the experience of the Caribbean women's studies movement, has clearly faced its own contextual challenges. These include the peripheral status of the region in global arenas, the divestment of public education, the sheer expanse of the African continent, its political instabilities, conflicts and difficult infrastructural conditions. To these one must also add the diversity of scholarly traditions, and languages. While the Caribbean region has much better access to electricity, internet facilities and other key resources, some of these conditions will be familiar to Caribbean feminists. The feminist scholars in both the Caribbean and Africa have sought to address the under-representation of women in institutional cultures, structures and policies, as well as in the androcentric intellectual cultures and curricula of our universities (*Feminist Africa* 1: Intellectual Politics).

Feminist Studies in African Universities

During the last three decades, African feminists have begun to imagine and build a community that brings activist and intellectual work together, to advance social transformations both within and beyond the academy, and to push the disciplinary frontiers of social theory, and develop continental feminist intellectual work. The initiative that informs this discussion begins in 2002, when the African Gender Institute (AGI 2002) held the first of a series of continental workshops that set out a broad agenda which included establishing a feminist scholarly network, developing feminist research and curricula across campuses, and seeking to foster the connections between academic work and activism.⁴ The activities included the ongoing efforts to generate, compile and disseminate feminist knowledge, namely resources that will support teaching and research of a kind that responds to the knowledge needs of feminist political agendas, and thus strengthen the women's movement and activism in the region. This is all informed by the conviction that research and teaching need to involve more deeply grounded levels of engagement with African realities and conditions, albeit framed within a transnational framework that is alert to the manifest diversities of location and privilege. The overtly political conceptualization of this initiative reflects the growing concern that feminist scholars in the region are expressing regarding the emergence of a veritable 'gender industry', and the rise of depoliticized and technicist approaches and toolkits. While the growing currency of gender discourse may be welcomed and indeed accredited to the success of feminist activism, the fact that its uptake is selective, and so often falls short of women's movement agendas, makes this seem more like bureaucratisation or appropriation than social transformation. Indeed, insofar as the uptake of gender conserves the *status quo* and does not challenge unequal gender relations – for example in the distribution of access to power, resources and choices – it can actually serve to obscure rather than challenge gender inequality and injustice.

There are now over 30 campuses with some level of teaching and/or research in the 600 or so universities in Africa. The first gender studies course was initiated at Ahmadu Bello University in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Other initiatives took shape at the Universities of Ibadan and Dar es Salaam in the early 1980's, followed by many others in East, West and Southern Africa. The establishment of gender studies has real intellectual, political and epistemological impacts on the social science community in particular, as reflected in the activities of both the Council for Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the Organisation for Social Science Research in East Africa (OSSREA). The impact that these mostly small and poorly resourced gender studies initiatives have on the gender relations of the academy outweighs their limited size and capacity, in part because of the changing global context, evidenced by the uptake of gender in international governance institutions and development agencies. Within higher education arenas, the very existence of gender studies has been provocative, leading to continuous discussion and contention among both faculty and students, and ultimately raising the awareness of gender among each generation of students. GWS programmes offer hundreds of young African women a supportive route into higher education, as a key route to professional careers. Over the years this has contributed to the substantial growth of gender awareness in African contexts, and the increased presence of Africa's feminists in local political and international arenas.

The work of developing gender-transformative (feminist) teaching and knowledge-building has been energetically pursued under the auspices of the African Gender Institute from 1996 onwards. The particular project that began in 2002 was dedicated to strengthening feminist studies in Africa. To this end, following the agenda set out at the 2002 workshop, the AGI mobilized funding to lead a series of activities, carried out in collaboration with counterparts in East, West and Southern Africa. These included various field reviews and bibliographic projects, the establishment of the GWS Africa network and list-serve, and a resource website (www.gwsafrica.org) devoted to supporting feminist teaching by providing annotated bibliographies, review essays and

model curricula designed for African contexts. Key areas that emerged from the workshops included sexuality, gender-based violence, feminist legal and policy activism, conflict and peace studies, media studies. Also on the teaching front, a series of curriculum workshops was convened and hosted at the Universities of Ghana⁵ and Cape Town. These set out to develop and design curricula for feminist teaching in various African contexts, largely by rooting teaching in the strategic imperatives defined and pursued by the continent's feminist movements. Finally, we set out to conceptualize and establish an open access, continental gender studies journal *Feminist Africa* (www.feministafrica.org), the first issue of which was published in 2002 under the title 'Intellectual Politics'. The AGI-led continental project has given rise to various local initiatives and a range of research activities, notably those in Uganda at the University of Makerere, where Professor Sylvia Tamale has established a path-breaking project on Gender, Sexuality and the Law, and at the University of Ghana, where Dr Dzodzi Tsikata now directs the recently established Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy. These included the projects that set out to document African politics⁶ (*Feminist Africa* 4 National Politricks), sexual cultures from local feminist perspectives (*Feminist Africa* 5 Mapping African Sexualities⁷), and to critically engage with the gendered dynamics of the institutional cultures of African universities (*Feminist Africa* 8 and 9 Re-Thinking African Universities)⁸, as well as a number of projects addressing sexuality, gender-based violence and sexual harassment in universities.⁹

These initiatives have been seminal, succeeding in the face of a crisis of higher education as a result of externally-imposed economic reforms which divested universities. Suffice to say that these conditions have hampered local research and publication, compromising academic freedom in a manner that continues to present challenges. It is in this context that setting up independent teams of locally-based feminist researchers to carry out projects defined in consultation with local women's movements became a good example of a subversive political-intellectual strategy of working against the grain of hegemonic globalization processes.

Several questions arise out of the experience discussed above. Has the growth of GWS in Africa contributed to social and policy changes? Has GWS advanced/contributed positively to Africa's feminist movements? How do we sustain productive connections between feminist scholarship and feminist activism? And how does the Caribbean situation compare with the African situation, and what lessons and insights can we exchange? Can we move to establish stronger transnational collaborations and exchanges in the coming years?

Impact of Feminism Thinking

The interaction between feminism and public policy has been highly productive, but this poses its own challenges, which I will briefly highlight (see also Cornwall et al. 2004).

Today many scholars and scholarly institutions profess to be 'doing gender' or to have 'mainstreamed gender' by virtue of their involvement in the delivery of donor-supported gender projects, many of them housed in the dedicated structures – gender desks and offices - within state and civil society organizations that had previously had no such things in place. There are also many NGO's that do women's projects, and while these might all owe something to feminism, not all of these are feminist by any means – in the sense that they do not all work to change gender relations. This is not a judgmental observation – but the reality is that there are huge welfare service needs as a result of neoliberal globalization. For example, the retraction of public health, welfare and support systems, and the extremes of urban and rural poverty and deprivation, have exacerbated economic and livelihood inequalities. Rampant mineral excavation and militarization have proceeded to undermine the fabric of ordinary women's lives in ways too numerous and contradictory to detail.

However, it is clear that the 'rolling back' of the state has placed additional burdens on non-governmental women's organizations, and created a contradictory scenario. On the one hand neoliberalism has constrained public services and provisions, while on the other women's activism has kept gender in the picture. The outcome has been a ramification of gender discourses, and some hard-won legal and policy gains, evident in policy documents, but this is very hard to translate into practice when public spending is constrained. Even national budgets are moved out of public purview, to be signed behind closed doors, deals done between Ministers of Finance, World Bank executives, representatives of large corporations and global dealers in military supplies and services.

Concluding Comments

Today activist scholars based in African universities and research centres are making more concerted efforts to bring activism and scholarship together, often across disciplines, across borders and across other divisions, and opening up new fields and new paradigms for activist research. African feminist scholars are defining the field for themselves, linking feminist scholarship with the ongoing realities and struggles of African women, and resisting African men's dismissal of feminism as a Western imperialist intrusion.

The increasing presence of feminist scholarship in Africa reflects the emergence of a new generation of thinkers who are at once educators, researchers and activists. While the university is still reticent on its connections with independent movements, the engagement with public policy has a long history. Feminist scholars are at the cutting edge of efforts to re-think the role of scholarship and to promote synergies between social movements and activism.

What are the implications of all this for transnational feminist theory and activism, and the connections between them? The examples and experiences discussed here demonstrate exciting possibilities. The ongoing uptake of feminist pedagogic and research methodologies as part of activist strategy, the growing use of creative and trans-disciplinary approaches to knowledge-building, and the development of more complex and nuanced theorizations of the dynamics of gender in African political life, are all illustrative of the productiveness of building more consciously designed and strategic synergies between intellectual and activist work.

The value of establishing transnational intellectual activist networks between former colonized societies that today face the multiple manifestations of global forces cannot be overstated. For feminists, these connections offer us invaluable ways of theorizing and strategizing to transform oppressive legacies of the past and resist the negative effects of the increasingly global forces that would otherwise continue to keep our economies, our societies and our creativity at the margins.

¹ I had the privilege of participating in some of the initial workshops, when I worked on the Women and Development Programme at the Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands (1989-1991), and this later influenced the vision of a Pan-African feminist intellectual community that we developed on the continent under the auspices of the University of Cape Town's African Gender Institute (AGI). Mamphela Ramphele, who became South Africa's first black woman Vice Chancellor, and supported the establishment of the AGI, was also positively impressed by the Caribbean example (personal communication, 1991)

² This was founded at a national workshop sponsored by the British Council and held in Kaduna in 1996, and later registered as the Initiative for Women's Studies in Nigeria.

³ The oldest university on record in Africa, the Islamic University of Karrawyn, was established in the City of Fez back in 859 A.D., by Fatima El Fihria, a woman philanthropist.

⁴ The major support for the project we named 'Strengthening Gender Studies for Africa's Transformation' was provided by the Ford Foundation, duly acknowledged here.

⁵ Due acknowledgement to our colleagues at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

⁶ A collaboration with CODESRIA, supported through their multinational working groups programme.

⁷ A 4-country project supported by a Ford Foundation grant, carried out by AGI in collaboration with Prof T. Manuh at the University of Ghana and Dr C. Pereira of the Initiative for Women's Studies in Nigeria.

⁸ A 5-country collaboration supported by the Association of African Universities, led by Prof T Barnes and A. Mama.

⁹ A Southern African project convened by Prof J. Bennett and supported by a grant from IDRC - Canada

References

- African Gender Institute. 2002. *Strengthening gender studies for Africa's transformation*. Workshop Report. Cape Town: African Gender Institute.
- African Gender Institute. 2006. *Gender and institutional culture in selected African universities*. Research Report to African Association of Universities. (unpublished)
- Bennett, Jane. 2002. Exploration of a gap: Strategising gender equity in African universities, *Feminist Africa 1*. Cape Town: African Gender Institute,
- Bennett, J. (ed). 2007. *Killing a virus with stones? Research on the implementation of policies against sexual harassment in Southern African higher education*, Cape Town: African Gender Institute.
- Barnes, T and A, Mama. (eds). 2007. Rethinking Universities. *Feminist Africa 9*. (www.feministafrica.org)
- Bennett, J. (ed). 2009. Researching for life: Paradigms and power *Feminist Africa 11*. Cape Town: African Gender Institute, (www.feministafrica.org)
- Cornwall, A., E.Harrison and A.Whitehead. 2004. Repositioning feminisms in development. Special Issue of *IDS Bulletin*, 35 (4). Brighton, UK: University of Sussex.
- Lewis, D. 2003. Feminist studies in Africa: Review essay. Cape Town: African Gender Institute.
- Mama, A., T. Manuh and C. Pereira (eds). 2005. *Feminist Africa 5*. Mapping African Sexualities, Cape Town: African Gender Institute (www.feministafrica.org).
- Mama, A. and T. Barnes (eds). 2007. Rethinking universities. *Feminist Africa 8*. Cape Town: African Gender Institute. (www.feministafrica.org).
- Mkandawire, T. (ed). 2005. *African intellectuals: Rethinking language, gender and development*. London: Zed Books.
- Mohammed, P. and C. Shepherd (eds). 1999. *Gender in Caribbean development*. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press.
- Odejide, O. 2007. "What can a woman do?" Being women in a Nigerian university. *Feminist Africa 8*. Cape Town: African Gender Institute. (www.feministafrica.org).
- Reddock, R. (ed). 2004. *Interrogating Caribbean masculinities: Theoretical and empirical analyses*. Kingston: The University of the West Indies Press.
- Reddock, R. 2014. The first Mrs Garvey and others: Pan-Africanism and early feminism in the early 20th century British colonial Caribbean. *Feminist Africa 19*: 58-77 (www.feministafrica.org).
- Sall, E. (ed). 2000. *Women in academia: Gender and academic freedom in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Tsikata, D. 2007. Gender, institutional cultures and the career trajectories of faculty of the University of Ghana. *Feminist Africa 8*. Cape Town: African Gender Institute.
- Zezeza, Tiyanbe Paul. 2002. African universities and globalization. *Feminist Africa 1*: 64-85. (www.feministafrica.org).



Gender and Child Rights in Jamaica: A Gender Perspective

Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium and 15th Anniversary celebration, CGDS,
Mona, Jamaica, November 2008

[Aldrie Henry-Lee](#)

Senior Lecturer and Associate Dean
Faculty of Social Sciences

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Keywords: Convention on the Rights of the Child, status of children, child rights, invisible and excluded children, gender differences, violation, Jamaica

How to cite

Henry-Lee, Aldrie. 2015. "Child Rights in Jamaica: A Gender Perspective." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 49-76.

Introduction

A right is an entitlement. It is only recently that 'rights' and 'children' were discussed together. Children were to be seen and not heard. They were not treated as persons with rights and were considered the property of their parents. However, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989 – one of the most widely accepted human rights agreements. The Convention has been ratified by 192 countries. Jamaica ratified the convention in May 1991. The CRC defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years. The CRC consists of 54 Articles. Articles 1-41 are translated into rights for (1) Provision (survival and development), (2) Protection and (3) Participation.

Other relevant international commitments and fora that dealt with children's issues include:

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): 1979
- The World Summit for Children: 1990 & 1992
- Education for All Initiatives (EFA): 1990
- The International Conference on Nutrition: 1992
- The International Conference on Population and Development: 1994
- Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education: 1994
- Beijing Conference on Women: 1995
- World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen: March 1995
- The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention: 1999
- World Youth Programme adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995 and supplemented in 2005

- The 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
- The Millennium Declaration: 2000
- The Millennium Development Goals: 2000
- The Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment: 2007

Some of the Millennium Development Goals are child-specific. Goal Number 2 calls for the achievement of universal primary education. Goal Number 4 targets the reduction in child mortality and Goal Number 5 speaks to improvement in maternal mortality.

This paper examines the adherence to child rights in Jamaica. The gender differentials are highlighted to underscore the vulnerabilities of children by gender. Although, gender mainstreaming has been promoted in Jamaica at the national level, sex-disaggregated data remains deficient and this analysis draws mainly on available secondary data.

The Jamaican context

Having ratified the CRC in 1991, Jamaica is obliged to fulfill the obligations of this international agreement. All duty bearers, the State and all public and private institutions must ensure that:

In all matters concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, *the best interests of the child* shall

be a primary consideration (Article 3, Convention on the Rights of the Child).

This paper seeks to determine if, in Jamaica, all duty bearers act in the best interest of boys and girls at all times.

Before discussing adherence to Child Rights by gender, the Jamaican context will be discussed. Jamaican population numbers approximately 2.7 million (Table 1). Children constitute one third of the Jamaican population. In the age group 0-19 years old, there are more males than females. Jamaica's economic growth through the years has been less than impressive. In 2010, growth rate in basic value of GDP at constant prices (2003) was -1.2 (Table 2). Debt servicing stood at J\$168.4 billion and the surplus deficit was J\$56.5 billion. The economy is heavily dependent on remittances with that amount exceeding the amount earned from tourism – the next highest earner of foreign exchange. Total unemployment rate stood at 12.4 per cent with females being the disadvantaged sex.

Despite its insignificant economic performance, Jamaica's social indicators are reasonable. The literacy rate is 91.7 and access rates to safe water and any type of sanitary facility are at 81.3 and 99.9 per cent, respectively. Crime continues to be one of Jamaica's main social problems. Jamaica's murder rate is one of the highest in the Caribbean at 53 per 100,000 and its overall crime rate per 100,000 stood at 1244 in 2007. As will be discussed later, crime and violence have a negative impact on children.

On the national level, children can be expected to live until the age of 74.1 years (Table 3). Infant mortality rate is 16.7 per 1000 live births. Immunization levels are fairly high at 94.7 per cent with the maternal mortality rate (MMR) being one of the lowest in CARICOM. Data from the Economic and Social

Surveys of Jamaica reveal that the MMR has remained at 98.4 for the last five years.

Jamaica's Gender Development Index (GDI) has not changed through the years (Table 4). However, Jamaica's rank has been lowered from the 62nd to the 81st position globally in 2009. The gender empowerment index introduced in 2010 is 0.638 and places Jamaica, 84th globally.

Since the ratification of the CRC in 1991, Jamaica has implemented several policies and pieces of legislation to support the adherence to Child Rights. These include:

- The Child Care and Protection Act: (2004)
- The Early Childhood Commission Act: (2003)
- The Early Childhood Act: (February 2005).
- Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act: 2007
- The National Youth Policy: (1994)
- The National Policy of Action for Children: (2005)
- A National Policy for HIV/AIDS Management in Schools: (2003-2005).
- The Social Investment Initiative for Children launched in 2006
- Vision 2030 complements the New Framework for Action for Children (NFAC)

Drafts currently in progress are the:

- National Parenting Policy: (2010)
- New Framework of Action for Children (NFAC), and

- National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence: (2005)

Institutional support for the care and protection of children included:

- The Special Envoy for Children: (1998)
- The Early Childhood Commission (ECC) and Child Development Agency: (1999)
- The Office of the Children's Advocate: (2006)
- The Office of the Children' Registry: (2007)

Having outlined the national context, Jamaica's adherence to child rights using a gender lens is now examined. First of all, the rights of "invisible and excluded children" are now considered.

Invisible and Excluded Children

There are some children who are not under the responsibility of personnel in private and public institutions and are invisible and excluded. UNICEF defines excluded children as those who do not benefit from an environment that protects them from violence, abuse, exploitation, or if they are unable to access and benefit from quality essential services, information and goods in a way that threatens their ability to participate fully in society during their childhood and in the future¹.

Article 23 (CRC) states that:

"State Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community".

Yet, to a large extent children with disabilities in Jamaica (CWDs) are not provided with adequate dignity and opportunities for active participation in their communities. In the under-15 age group of persons with disabilities, 16,896 are males with 15,311, females (STATIN 2001:155). UNICEF Jamaica reports that more than 37,000 Jamaican children live with one or several forms of disabilities including sight, hearing, speech, physical disability, mental retardation and learning disability (3.86 per cent of children)². While the majority of the children are in the 5–14 age group and thus are of school-age, only 10 per cent of children with disabilities are enrolled in formal school-based and other programmes receiving funding from the Government.³ UNICEF (2007) reports that children with disabilities, in most cases, are excluded from the mainstream education system and therefore do not achieve their full potential. The Economic and Social Survey (2010; 22.16) documents that the Special Education Curriculum was provided for 4,554 students; however there was approval for only four autonomous schools. This shows a deficiency in learning facilities for CWDs.

Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development...

At least 16,000 Jamaican children engage in some form of economic activity, even as the Government tries to stem the problem through collaborative work with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The majority of Jamaica's child workers are found in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries, while there have been prosecutions of persons who involve children in prostitution. Other

workers include street children and market vendors in the larger metropolitan areas of Kingston, Spanish Town and Montego Bay. Jamaica's child labourers are predominantly male, aged 15-17 years.⁴

The available data on street children are not comprehensive. A national survey commissioned by the Ministry of Health and reported in the Jamaica Observer in 2003 stated that there were more than 6,000 street and working children in Jamaica. According to the survey, boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of 70:30, are on average 13 years old and are usually from a female-headed household of five, where his parent or guardian is marginally employed as a vendor, domestic helper, self-employed or unskilled worker.⁵

Another group of children which is "invisible" includes children who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Children (0-19 years) and young people (20-29 years) reported with AIDS account for 9 and 19 per cent respectively (28% cumulative total) of total AIDS cases, with AIDS being the second leading cause of death in children aged 1-4 years.⁶ UNICEF reports that adolescent girls are more vulnerable; girls aged 10-19 years are almost three times more likely to become infected with HIV than a boy of the same age.⁷ Cultural factors also reduce adherence to the rights of these children. There is early sexual initiation (15 years old for girls, 13 years for boys), young girls having sexual relations with HIV infected older men (50% of young women report having sex with partners five to ten years older than them), as well as high rates of forced sex (reported by 20% of girls).⁸

Child Provision Rights

Article 27 (1) of the CRC

States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Jamaica's economic vulnerability was established in a previous section. Witter (2007) and Smith (2008) analyzed the state expenditure on children in Jamaica. Social expenditure (as a percentage of public expenditure) on children is relatively stable but seems to be on the decline at 10.6 per cent in 2008 (Table 5). Health and education expenditure combined accounts for the major proportion (exceeding 90%) of social expenditure on children. However, as a percentage of GDP, the amount increased from 5.84 per cent in 2005/6 to 6.11 per cent in 2007/08 (Table 6). This commitment ensured that there is not a significant decrease in the social expenditure on children. This indicates that the State is attempting to ensure that investment in children is not too negatively affected by the national economic crisis.

National economic distress is linked to household welfare. Poverty rates in Jamaica are on the increase. In 2009, 16.5 per cent of persons in Jamaica were living in poverty; up from 9.9 per cent in 2007. Poor household welfare can have a negative impact on child welfare. Child poverty is a major social problem in Jamaica. Of the cohort of persons aged 0-17 years, 20.4 per cent live in poverty (Table 7). Poor households find it difficult to provide adequately for their children and child rights are more likely to be violated in times of economic deprivation. The analysis of national data on poverty, by sex of head of household, shows that slightly more males are in poverty than females (Table 8). When the analysis is done by gender of head of household, the difference is not statistically significant. Data analysis by residential area reveals that men and women living

in the rural areas are more likely to live in poverty (Table 9). Children living in the rural areas are more likely to have their provision rights violated.

The disparity by gender begins from birth. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, 2005), the births of 89% of children in Jamaica have been registered; slightly more boys than girls are born every year (51 and 49 per cent respectively out of a yearly average of 44,000) and the infant mortality rate for boys is higher than for girls. For infant mortality under one and under five years, respectively, the figures are: male 28, 33 Female 24, . The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Report (2005:33) reports that at age 6-9 months, 36 per cent of children were receiving breast milk and solid or semi-solid foods. By age 12-15 months, 49 per cent of children were still being breastfed and by age 20-23 months, 24 per cent were still breastfed. Girls were more likely to be exclusively breastfed than boys. For those deprived of familial care, more boys end up in children's homes; boys are more likely to be placed in foster care.

UNICEF in 2009 reported the HIV prevalence rate as 1.7 per cent. A Jamaica Daily Gleaner Report stated that young women in the 10-19 age group are three times more likely to be infected than boys in this age band⁹. HIV programmes and policies do not sufficiently address the specific realities and needs of women and girls."¹⁰ In Jamaica, less than one per cent of children aged 10-14 have lost both parents (MICS, 2005)

At schools, gender disparity continues. The CRC (Article 28) states that:

States Parties recognize the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

(a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all.

Access to early childhood education and primary level education is universal in Jamaica. At the early childhood level, in 2010, there was a high enrollment rate for children 3- 5 years. In 2010, there was a gross enrollment rate of 99.6 per cent of the children in this age cohort in early childhood facilities: 99.1 per cent for boys and 100 per cent for girls (ESSJ 2010:22.8). Of all those who were enrolled, 50.5 per cent were boys and 49.5 per cent were girls accounting for an almost equal gender distribution. However, female enrollment rates surpass those of the boys at the primary and secondary levels (Table 10). MICS (2005) also reported that attendance was lower among boys (89 per cent) than among girls (93 per cent). At the tertiary level of the eligible cohorts, for the females, the rate was 8.3 and for the males 6.8 per cent (SLC 2009 Overview: 8).

Girls outperformed boys at every level of the education system. Survival rates to Grade 5 are higher for girls than for boys (MOE) 2005/06: 88.8% (87.2% boys, 93.0% girls). Labour force statistics show this gender bias as higher percentages of females attain CXC and GCE certification, along with degrees (Table 11). In both public and private spaces, duty-bearers are not adhering adequately to the provision rights of boys and girls.

Child Protection Rights

The Millennium Declaration promotes the protection of children against abuse, exploitation and violence. Article 19, of the CRC, clearly states that:

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of

parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Children are the direct and indirect victims of violence in Jamaica. The home is not always a safe haven for children. In Jamaica, 87 per cent of children aged 2-14 years were subjected to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by their mothers/caretakers or other household members (MICS 2005:53). More importantly, eight per cent of children were subjected to severe physical punishment. On the other hand, 36 per cent of mothers/caretakers believed that children should be physically punished, which implies an interesting contrast with the actual prevalence of physical discipline. More male children were subjected to both minor and severe physical discipline (75 and ten per cent) than female children (71 and five per cent).

In public spaces, more males were victims of violence. In 2010, 87 males were shot as opposed to 26 females. The Children's Advocate annual reports revealed that in 2008, 960 of the 1,446 persons who went missing were children – over three-quarters of the missing children were female unlike the adult population where males were more likely to go missing. Over the past five years more than 300 children -- most of them boys -- have been murdered. At the same time, the report noted that carnal abuse has continued to rise (Children's Advocate's Report, Jamaica, 2008; or maybe more reported as a result of public education). Girls are more likely to be the victims of the sexual abuse reported in Table 12. Boys formed the majority of victims of other violent crimes (Table 12).

Table 13 highlights the gender differentials shown in Table 12. More boys received gun-shot and stab wounds and were victims of blunt injuries than girls. However, it is disturbing to note that in the age group five to nine years, girls were more prone to be the victims of sexual assault. Table 13 in fact reveals an increase in the reported number of victims of sexual assault for the age group 10

to 19 years. There is also a belief that “virgins”, especially girls, are a cure for HIV/AIDS. Another major concern is the relatively high prevalence of teenage pregnancy. Approximately 18% of births in Jamaica are attributed to adolescent girls (National Family Planning Board – Provisional Data 2008).

For those children who are in conflict with the law, their rights are not always upheld. In 2010, 1022 children were detained. Of that number 99 per cent were males. A distressing report in the Jamaica Observer newspaper noted that a child detainee was bitten by a rat while in the Admiral Town Police Station lock-up in Kingston.¹¹ The OCA (2011 p.10) reports that 53.0 per cent of the 209 children in conflict with the law who were interviewed, complained about their treatment by police which included being cursed, beaten or interrogated harshly. A UN Special Rapporteur on torture reported the continued practice of detaining children and adults together in lock-ups in police stations and some correctional centres (12-21 February 2010). The 2009 Armadale incident resulted in the death of seven female inmates in a fire that broke out when police used teargas inside the building to control the girls who were opposing the “lockdown”. The report also decried the use of lock-downs as an excessive punitive measure.

Both in private and public spaces, duty bearers do not adequately adhere to the rights of our children to protection.

Child Participation Rights

Participation of children in decisions affecting them is problematic. Implementing “participation” to ensure that it is not meaningless is difficult. It is not to be confused with “consultation” and “information dissemination.” Data on child participation in Jamaica are sparse. Discussing the issue of child

participation raises several issues specific to the process itself and is also related to age and gender.

How do we ensure that all segments of a group are included? The cultural belief that “Children should be seen and not heard” affects both sexes. How do we ensure gender sensitivity in the process? Child participation in Jamaica remains tokenistic. Although we have national youth councils in all islands, they lack resources for genuine consultation and participation of children. Boys generally prefer less structured fora, e.g. street corners, football fields, while girls generally can be found indoors. Implementing participation has to be gender-sensitive.

Of course, there is the legal issue: at what age should you be legally allowed to make decisions about your life? Should it be tied to the age of criminal responsibility or the age that one can vote and what are the implications for utilizing any of these ages? If we decide that children from a certain age can “express themselves in all matters” – what are the consequences? What happens in issues of reproductive health, sexual practices and preferences?

At what age does the parent become the facilitator and no longer the “Ultimate Authority”? In Jamaica there is no domestic statute which prescribes a minimum legal age at which a child may seek medical counseling without parental consent. Normally, parental consent is required for medical counseling and/or treatment of a child or minor. In the case of testing and receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS, the norm is to obtain parental consent for the child to access appropriate testing and health care. Should the child be able to access those without parental consent? This issue remains unresolved.

CDA (2011:13) points out that child participation takes places in several sectors of the society. These include:

- Development of Audio Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Caribbean Child Development Centre's Child Rights Education Project Phase 1
- Baseline Study on the Situation of the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Jamaica
- Kingston Centre Counseling Clinic or KEY Clinic (knowledge and education for youth)
- The Male Desk
- Public education and mentorship programmes in schools established three male youth mentorship programmes in schools in Kingston and St. Andrew (9-17yrs); established six male action groups among males from church, community and civic society
- Public Information Campaign – IDEVAW, NATFATIO Committee, schools education programme, Inter-American Year of Women
- Policy and Legislation – the Education Act, the Maternity Leave Act, Teenage Pregnancy Policy, Poor Relief law
- School Safety and Security Programme
- Institutionalization of DevInfo (JamStats)
- An Intervention to Address Behavioural Problems including Violence and Aggression in schools
- Caribbean Child Research Conference
- Boys Brigade Jamaica
- The National Festival of the Arts

However, there has been no assessment made of the impact of the participation of children in the implementation and evaluation of the relevant programmes.

The Way forward

Based on the discussion above, it is evident that at the policy and legislative levels, Jamaica has done much to promote child rights. However, a recent study carried out by the Organization of American States (OAS, 2011: 8) revealed that the main problem was not the absence of law but the lack of timely enforcement and follow-up. Implementation gaps continue to exist in the areas of child labour and sexual offences as well as physical violence against children. These gaps prohibit the full adherence to child rights in Jamaica.

Both boys and girls have their rights violated in Jamaica. Many are not properly provided for at home, school and in the community. In terms of provision rights, poverty affects both boys and girls and economic deprivation limits their access to those basic social services considered valuable in the society. Gender differentials exist in the education system where boys are disadvantaged and are out-performed by girls. Child protection rights are violated very often in Jamaica. Boys are more prone to be victims of violence although girls are more susceptible to sexual assault. Girls are particularly vulnerable to the sexual advances of older males infected with HIV/AIDs who believe that sexual intercourse with these girls will cure them of the disease. Participation rights for both boys and girls are not fully adhered to and while children participate in several processes in the various sectors, there is little evidence of the impact of that participation on the implementation and evaluation of programmes.

This discussion reveals that increased gender mainstreaming in the formulation of policies is needed for the improvement of services for children. Public

education must entail a gendered perspective to the promotion of child rights in Jamaica. Boys and girls are vulnerable in different ways and therefore gender-sensitivity is needed to ensure that we adhere to their rights and hold the “best interests” of the child paramount at all times.

References

- Child Development Agency. 2010. *Jamaica's Country Report on Child Participation*. Kingston.
- Caribbean Child Development Centre. 2010. *Situation of the promotion and protection of rights of children and adolescents in Jamaica*.
- Office of the Children's Advocate and UNICEF. 2009. *Children in Jamaica: Twenty years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Kingston, Jamaica.
- Office of the Children's Advocate. 2011. *A study on the profile of children in conflict with the law in Jamaica*. Kingston, Jamaica.
- Planning Institute of Jamaica. 2011. *Economic and social survey of Jamaica 2010*.
- Planning Institute of Jamaica. 2010. *Jamaica survey of living conditions 2009*.
- Smith, Christopher. 2008. *Jamaican children and the Government's budget*. Presented at the Bustamante Children's Hospital. Kingston, Jamaica.
- The Early Childhood Commission. 2007. *The status of the rights of the young child in Jamaica*. Kingston, Jamaica.
- UNICEF. 2006. *Violence against children in the Caribbean region: Regional assessment*. Kingston, Jamaica.
- UNICEF and PIOJ. 2009. *Children in Jamaica: The impact of migration and remittances*. Kingston, Jamaica.
- Witter, Michael. 2007. *Fiscal expenditure on services for children in Jamaica, 2003/4 - 2005/6*. Paper prepared for the Government of Jamaica and the United Nations Children's Fund, Jamaica.

Appendices

Table 1: Break-Down of the Jamaican Population

Age group	Males	%	Females	%	Total
0-4 years	112 639	8	109 186	9	221 825
5-9 years	122 599	9	118 583	10	241 182
10-14 years	143 524	11	133 137	11	276 661
15-19 years	127 619	10	121 619	10	249 402
20-24 years	100 758	8	107 235	9	207 993
25-34 years	207987	16	207987	17	438955
35-59 years	379245	29	230968	19	764732
60 years and over	134970	10	160390	13	298060
Total	1 329 341	100	1 189 105	100	2 698 810

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica

Table 2: Selected basic national socioeconomic indicators

Indicator	2010
Population	2,705,800
Population Growth Rate	0.3%
Growth in Basic value at constant GDP prices (2003)	-1.2
Debt Servicing	J\$168.4b
Surplus Deficit	-J\$56.5
Private remittance inflows (US\$m)	2171.41
Foreign Exchange Earnings (US\$m)	1992.0
Overall crime rate (per 100,000: year:2007)	1244
Murder rate (per 100,000)	53
% of Population Living in Urban Areas	52
Literacy rate	91.7
Labour Force Participation Rate	62.4%
Total Unemployment	12.4
Male	9.2
Female	16.2
Access to Safe Water	81.3 (2009)
Access to Sanitary Facilities	99.9 (2009)

Source: Planning Institute of Jamaica, Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica, 2010

Table 3: Selected Child Welfare Indicators

Indicator	2010
Population	2,705,800
Life Expectancy	74.13 years
Infant Mortality Rate	16.7
Crude Birth Rate	15.4%
Crude Death Rate	6.0%
Total Fertility Rate	2.4
Immunization rate (national)	94.7
Immunization Rates	
DPT	94.6
OPV	94.2
BCG	95.2
MMR	87.1
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,00)	94.8

Source: Planning Institute of Jamaica, Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica, 2010

Table 4: Gender Indicators for Jamaica 2004, 2009, 2010

	2004 ^a	2009 ^b	2010 ^c
GDI	0.762	0.762	
GDI Rank	62*	81**	
GII***	n/a	n/a	0.638
GII Rank	n/a	n/a	84

^a Human Development Report 2004

^b Human Development Report 2009

^c Human Development Index (HDI) – 2010 Rankings (2008 data)

* 144 countries & areas

** 155 countries & areas

*** GII replaced GDI and GEM in 2010

Table 5: Expenditure on Children in Jamaica as a % of Total Public Expenditure (2006-2008)

	2005/6 (Actual)	2006/7 (Revised)	2007/8 (Approved)
Recurrent	17.3	18.09	17.65
Capital A	1.46	1.12	1.57
Capital B	32.03	27.28	26.45
Total=Recurrent+ Capital A+ capital B	12.75	12.13	10.55

Smith (2008) p.21

Table 6: Expenditure on Children in Jamaica as a % of Gross Domestic Product (2006-2008)

	2005/6 (Actual)	2006/7 (Revised)	2007/8 (Approved)
Recurrent	5.19	5.82	5.32
Capital A	0.35	0.22	0.25
Capital B	0.30	0.43	0.54
Total=Recurrent+ Capital A+ capital B	5.84	6.46	6.11

Source: Smith (2008) p.21

Table 7: Poverty by Age

Age Group	2004	2007	2009
0-17 years	20.6	12.0	20.4
18-35 years	14.7	8.9	13.3
36-59 years	14.0	7.8	14.0
60 years and over	15.2	10.2	17.1
Total	16.9	9.9	16.5

Source: SLC

Table 8: Levels of poverty by gender of individual and gender of head of household

Year	All Individuals		
	Male	Female	Total
2004	17.5	16.3	16.9
2007	11.1	8.7	9.9
2009	17.7	15.4	16.5
	Heads of households (Only)		
	Male	Female	Total
2004	11.9	12.0	12.0
2007	7.2	8.0	7.6
2009	11.4	12.8	12.0

Source: SLC data sets

Table 9: Levels of poverty among all individuals by area

Area	Males			Females		
	2004	2007	2009	2004	2007	2009
KMA	12.8%	3.3%	9.4	9.1%	4.6%	9.7
Other Towns	5.6%	4.3%	4.4	4.8%	3.9%	10.4
Rural	14.2%	10.9%	16.2	18.0%	13.5%	17.2
Jamaica	11.9%	7.2%	11.4	12.0%	8.0%	12.8

Source: SLC 2004, 2007 and 2009 data sets

Table 10: Net Enrollment Rates % (End of Year Population)

	Primary			Lower Secondary			Upper Secondary			Total Secondary		
	Male	Femal e	Total	Mal e	Femal e	Total	Mal e	Femal e	Total	Mal e	Femal e	Total
2000/2001	93.6	94.1	93.8	78.1	80.2	79.1	51.1	58.0	54.5	67.5	71.5	69.5
2001/2002	93.3	93.0	93.2	77.5	79.7	78.6	51.4	57.2	54.3	67.3	70.9	69.1
2002/2003	92.9	92.0	92.5	83.1	84.8	83.9	54.7	60.8	57.7	72.0	75.4	73.7
2003/2004	92.9	90.8	91.9	85.8	85.3	85.6	54.5	59.9	57.2	73.8	75.5	74.7
2004/2005	93.5	91.0	92.3	83.7	83.3	83.5	67.8	51.2	59.5	77.6	70.9	74.2
2005/2006	92.1	90.0	91.1	80.8	81.9	81.4	59.9	67.1	63.5	72.8	76.2	74.5
2006/2007	93.4	91.0	92.2	87.2	86.9	87.0	59.3	67.9	63.6	76.1	79.4	77.8
2007/2008	90.1	90.4	90.2	84.9	88.8	86.8	60.0	69.8	64.8	75.2	81.5	78.3
2008/2009	87.5	89.3	88.4	85.9	89.0	87.0	64.1	72.9	68.4	77.0	82.8	79.8
2009/2010	93.7	94.9	92.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	72.5	80.8	76.5

Sources: GOJ 2009, Vision 2030 Sector Plan on Education (2009-2030), 8-10; ESSJ 2010

Table11: Highest examination passed by gender

Highest Examination Passed	2010	
	Males	Females
None	73.4	54.9
CXC Basic, JSE, etc.	1.7	2.6
1-2 GCE 'O'	2.3	2.3
3-4 GCE 'O'	2.9	5.8
5+ GCE 'O'	3.4	5.4
1-2 GCE 'A'	0.05	0.2
3 GCE 'A' or More	0.1	0.3
Degree	7.6	18.1
Other	2.0	4.5
Not Stated	6.5	5.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Source: STATIN - The Labour Force

Table 12: Crimes against children in Jamaica

Type of crime	2000 (0-18 Years)	2004 (0-18 Years)	2007 (0-19 Years)	2010 (0-19 year)
Murder	73	99	131	129
Shooting	85	147	119	113
Rape	473	536	242	435
Carnal Abuse	430	409	138	529
Robbery	78	111	105	297
Break-In	25	24	27	44
Larceny	n/a	n/a	n/a	20
Total	1,164	1,326	945	1,567

Source: ESSJ, PIOJ, various years.

Table 13: Violence Related Injuries Treated in Accident and Emergency Rooms

	Sexual Assault			Stab Wounds			Gunshot Wounds			Blunt Injuries			Total by Age and Gender
	2009	2008	2007	2009	2008	2007	2009	2008	2007	2009	2008	2007	
Under 5 Years:													
Boys	7	10	09	0	4	5	3	6	2	81	242	245	614
Girls	5	48	38	2	1	4	1	4	0	54	220	178	<u>555</u>
													1,169
5-9 Years old:													
Boys	20	8	17	8	21	20	4	5	20	206	528	447	1,294
Girls	60	111	112	4	10	8	5	5	8	127	343	255	<u>2,342</u>
													3,636
10-19 Years old:													
Boys	851	25	22	312	584	502	116	129	149	889	1,767	1,543	5,889
Girls	1,563	911	797	90	115	189	24	24	36	616	1,273	1,144	<u>6,785</u>
													12,674
Jamaica (Total)	2,506	1,464	1,295	416	2,636	2,409	153	1,309	1,253	1,973	12,775	10,532	

Sources: ESSJ 2008 and 2009

-
- ¹ http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/resources_3950.htm Retrieved July 1, 2011.
- ² http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/resources_3950.htm Retrieved July 1, 211
- ³ http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/resources_3950.htm Retrieved July 1, 211
- ⁴ http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Child-labour-horror_9046350. Retrieved July 1, 2011
- ⁵ http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/40260_6-500-street--working-children-in-Jamaica---survey
Retrieved July 1, 2011
- ⁶ http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/resources_3950.htm Retrieved July 1, 2011
- ⁷ http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/resources_3950.htm Retrieved July 1, 2011
- ⁸ http://www.unicef.org/jamaica/resources_3950.htm Retrieved July 1, 2011
- ⁹ <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20101121/focus/focus6.html>. Retrieved July 3, 2011.
- ¹⁰ <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20101121/focus/focus6.html>. Retrieved July 3, 2011.
- ¹¹ http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Rat-bites-juvenile-in-police-lock-up_9148460#ixzz1RMXKglMD
retrieved July 6, 2011.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



'You Sure Aren't a Real Man!' Space, Power, and Possibilities for Men in Social Care and Gender Studies

[Warren A. Thompson](#)

PhD Candidate

Institute for Gender and Development Studies, Mona Campus

Now

Teacher and Head of Eurhythmics Department

Port Antonio High School, Jamaica

Keywords: gender studies, gender roles, gender identity, patriarchy, men's studies, men, masculinity, pro-feminist men, social workers, social care

How to cite

Warren A. Thompson. 2015. "You Sure Aren't a Real Man! Space, Power, and Possibilities for Men in Social Care and Gender Studies." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 77–94

"The way you talk about listening to women, and supporting feminism, you must be a faggot. You sure aren't a real man!" (Kimmel, 1998, p.60)

Introduction

I am a 'pro-feminist masculinist'. I always received laughs whenever I introduced myself as such in some of my graduate classes in Gender and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies at Mona. The chuckles were however not uninformed and as the only male in the class for most of the courses, I was accepted in this new socio-academic category which I had carved out for myself. As a social work practitioner at the community level, the response was never quite the same whenever I declared I was supportive of feminism. In all fairness, in my professional life, I have less declared myself a pro-feminist than a feminist, and this battle still rages within me for a number of reasons. Firstly, when I say I am a feminist, people misunderstand and of course a discussion has to ensue on who is a feminist - that being a person who supports efforts to ensure that women have the same rights, freedoms, opportunities, and privileges as men. The misunderstanding among many with whom I have had this discussion is, more often than not, a mistaken association of feminists and feminism with feminine or effeminate behaviours and attitudes, or with the bra-burning, anti-male sentiments and imagery that characterized the radical second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Whatever the association, in each case I have felt that I have had to justify myself so as not to seem to wholly betray my masculine gender identity or the 'manhood club' to which I putatively belonged.

Secondly, I am conscious of the possibility that by declaring myself as a 'pro-feminist' rather than as a feminist, I am perhaps engaging in a process that emphasizes the differences between men and women, and focuses less on the similarities among them. If the latter is true, then I am contributing, without desire

to do so, to the creation of a distinct space within feminism, for men who identify with and are party to the feminist project, but who also seek to maintain a separate space and position from women. This is of course not what I want to do, and given the generally accepted and simple definition of a feminist, I have no reservation in challenging the creation of such a space. I therefore challenge my previous pronouncement, and simply contend that I am feminist who is also a masculinist. This for me is not a paradox, but requires reflexive engagement with the institutions and ideologies that perpetuate inequality between men and women.

I am also a social worker, and while this does not conjure images of similar severity as saying 'I am a feminist', it may nonetheless be considered as setting me in a seemingly transgressive position¹. I seek in this paper, not to romanticize males who participate in female-dominated professions and areas of scholarship, but rather to reflect on my own experiences, and the challenges experienced by men engaged in gender studies or social care work. In reflecting on this experience, I make use of Giddens' theory of structuration to discuss the positioning of men who engage in work which challenges patriarchal structures and ideologies that promote inequality on the basis of sex.

Men in Social Care

The term social care is not a significant part of the discourses around the delivery of social welfare services in the region. The term is mainly used in Britain where it describes a variety of services aimed at helping people overcoming difficulties in their personal lives. It is popular in social welfare policy discourses and is used to bring the act of caring, previously within the private sphere through unpaid work done by women, into the public sphere as a means of facilitating 'good social functioning' and well-being among populations. Social Care seeks to meet the physiological and psychological needs of people by

providing care, support, protection, advocacy, and welfare services to individuals who are marginalized, excluded, or disadvantaged. In this paper, I focus on social work as a social care profession, but with the understanding that based on its original British context, social care includes the continuum of personal and human services including education, nursing, youth work, social work, counseling, and mental health services, among others. Social work is given focus because it is the area of work with which I am most intimately familiar. This paper however makes the assumption that what is experienced by male social workers can be generalized within the Caribbean to also be the experiences of males who work in other female-dominated professions such as nursing and perhaps even in teaching, given that research has suggested that female-dominated professions, whether feminized or originally feminine, tend to hold similar experiences for men who enter (Camilleri and Jones 2001, Williams 1995).

Activities now referred to as social work have always been associated with women. The feminine gentility which perhaps reached its pinnacle in the Victorian era demonstrated its virtue through charitable and philanthropic activities. This was as a matter of course guided by essentialist ideas of feminine virtue which emphasized women's putative essential and natural tendency to care for those in need. Women thus engaged themselves in welfare services and charitable initiatives to relieve suffering and to reduce vagrancy and poverty.

Given that social work developed out of women's philanthropic activities, social work has always been associated with women and logically is a profession dominated by women. Abels and Murphy (1981) support this view and argue that there has been a persistent belief that women have been the most appropriate persons to carry out personal services. As such, they contend that social work manpower has predominately been women's power. Consequently, women have for the most part tended to be at the forefront in the profession, and the very first attempt to outline a social work method was Mary Richmond's 'Social Diagnosis' in 1915.

Social Care professions usually have ideals of alleviating suffering and poverty and ending people's experiences of oppression and marginalization by enhancing their coping capacities, or by helping them to help themselves. Even though women have been a significant majority in most if not all social care professions, there has still been a reproduction of patriarchal gender ideologies that negatively affects both women and men. The patriarchal gender system presupposes that a natural barrier exists between men and women: hence, what is essentially male is distinctly different from, and is opposite to, what is essentially female (Flax 1990). As such, two observations can be made about men's participation in social work. Firstly, because of the feminine and caring images attributed to social care roles, very few men enter these professions and they are generally considered non-traditional professions for men (Christie 1998; Gillingham 2006). This kind of caring work tends to be undervalued and the professions devoted to providing care have less prestige than the male dominated ones. Secondly, when men enter social care professions, they tend to channel into specialities or sets of activities considered more masculine, or they quickly move into leadership positions; many of these areas/specialities often become male enclaves within the professions (Williams 1995).

Within social care and the human services, men have, unlike women, used practice more instrumentally as a stepping stone to management careers (Howe 1986). Dominelli (2002) also demonstrates how many male social workers choose to practice in those areas where they are not required to have the clinical training necessary for direct practice with clients; these include programme management, administration, and even community practice. Supporting this is the fact that questions are raised about men's suitability for working in sensitive areas such as children's services and care or domestic violence (Pringle 1992, cited by Dominelli 2002, p. 86). Conversely, some of the 'masculinised' areas of social work practice are coming to no longer be considered social work, but as professions in which the traditionally masculine elements are definitional. Christie (1998) for example, described how probation officers in the United Kingdom are no longer subject to training in social work,

but rather training in criminal justice and security. As such Christie (1998) notes that the legal and control elements of the Probation Officer's job are considered more masculine and male appropriate than the nurturing and caring roles associated with other areas of social work.

Social care as a field of professional endeavours is therefore a site where masculinity and femininity are policed to ensure there is conformity with patriarchal and essentialist notions about what is ideal or appropriate for men and women; what is men's work as opposed to women's work. Feminist social workers argue that the profession reproduces dynamics of male supremacy (Dominelli 2002), and as such, men quickly move away from the practitioner ranks into leadership positions as mentioned before. But it is also true that these dynamics also work to oppress and marginalize men who desire to go against dominant patriarchal ideologies and enter those areas of practice considered to be untraditional for men.

Lewis (2001, 68) contends that care work is problematic for men because one cannot divorce the act of caring or the labour of 'tending' from feelings of love and commitment. Gilligan (1982) cited by Lewis (2001, 71) posits that the feminine personality comes to define itself by its capacity to care, and the opposite goes for the masculine personality — a personality he contends is defined by separation. To this end, the concern for others rather than self in the first instance — the "ethic of care" becomes central to the understanding of femininity. Lewis critiques Gilligan as bordering close on biological essentialism, but nevertheless, the labour and love of caring has been socially constructed as a central capacity of the feminine gender, and if it is not so, then something is thought to be wrong or lacking. Similarly, when a man possesses a strong capacity and desire to care, questions are raised about the extent to which he is a real man by way of his relation to the hegemonic model of masculinity.

Men's gender identities are socially constructed through work and the gender

division of labour (McLean 2003), and through their relative activities in both the public and private sphere, they validate their masculine identities. Men therefore often refuse to enter caring professions because they require that men perform tasks and express themselves in ways that are subversive to hegemonic masculinity. This is especially so, since men's masculine gender identities are constructed and defined in opposition to femininity and homosexuality. As such, men who work in non-traditional areas are expected to demonstrate their masculinity and exercise the power and entitlement that comes with being male. They therefore tend to progress quickly into leadership and administrative positions. McLean (2003) contends that when men fail to show this kind of ambition, they tend to be marginalized, or they experience some amount of tokenism by their female counterparts. Additionally, men who engage in care work are also considered different because care by men is viewed within the context of sexuality. The task of caring includes activities that have been excluded from the definitional heterosexuality of hegemonic masculinity (Pease and Camilleri 2001), and the intimacy involved in caring is often viewed as an expression of homosexuality (Christie 1998) and as an expression of a feminine essence. In addition, the recorded higher participation of mainly gay men in some traditional female areas of work make those areas specifically gendered and leads to assumptions about the sexuality of men who choose to participate in those areas.

For men, it takes courage to care. When we choose to enter social care professions, we engage in a reflexive and decided refutation of dominant gender norms, and legitimate the feminist mantra that the personal is political, by legitimating public concern over private and personal issues. Additionally, men who decidedly engage in care work may be considered as relinquishing some of the power bestowed by patriarchal gender ideologies. Pease (2001, p. 16) agrees that many men desire to change unequal situations caused by the patriarchal gender order, but that they are often unwilling to give up power by moving into areas of work that require that they use skills and perspectives that are antithetical to hegemonic masculinity.

At the same time, men's participation in social care work challenges the ways in which masculinity has come to be socially constructed. The more men enter care work, the more they affirm that social care needs to be considered as a human activity and not a gender specific activity. Caring should not only be appreciated as an act associated with feelings of love and obligation, but also as an essential social process and an important human responsibility.

Men in Gender Studies

Something happens when men engage in gender studies. Firstly, by engaging in the study of gender as the social construct(s) of sexual difference, we acknowledge that gender is a social category and unit of analysis that is necessary for an understanding of social life as it exists. To engage in gender studies is to acknowledge that gender is a political construction that affords privilege and power to one sex at the expense of the other. Relations of gender have historically been characterized by female subordination and male domination (Chhachhi, p. 87). Many scholars of notable repute have sought to theorize gender, a concept for which a single philosophy, theory, or meaning is perhaps infinitely elusive. Connell (1995) on one hand contends that gender is a practice and product of social interaction and does not precede this interaction, while Butler (1990) provokes the thought that gender is neither a practice nor product of social interaction predicated on the meanings assigned to differences in biology.

This theorizing of gender is in actuality a quest to understand the situations of gender relationships as they currently exist with an effort to challenge the historical situations of privilege and/or oppression based on sex. It is borne out of a quest for justice, however conceptualized, and as such, to engage in gender studies is to become engaged in a politically motivated process towards equity, freedom and self-determination for both men and women. It is important to

note that not all those who theorize gender are involved in the same project, because it is indeed possible to engage in gender studies and make arguments in support of the ideologies that perpetuate oppressive and inequitable situations and unequal power relationships for the sexes or for those who fall along the continuum of sex(es), gender(s), and sexualities. However, I believe it is the naming of the 'project' that makes the difference, and identification with the language of the discourse within the named project(s) of 'gender studies' implies the objective of challenging the ideologies and institutions that establishes power relationships based on sex and gender in a manner that privileges one sex and puts the other in a position of disadvantage.

Many Caribbean men who engage in the study and theorizing of gender, whether on masculinity issues or other gender related issues, often occupy spaces outside the academic department dedicated to the study of gender. Additionally many of these men do not identify themselves as gender activists or gender scholars, or even pro-feminists; even though a substantial portion of their scholarship supports the feminist project and the reconstruction of masculinity advanced by many feminists. The area of scholarship which men tend to concentrate when they focus on gender issues, that is, the study of masculinity issues in the Caribbean, has not often been referred to as gender studies, and claims a name for itself – men's studies or masculinity studies. This is so even though more often than not their study of masculinity is in actuality the study of patriarchal gender relationships and gender constructions. This is not to say that there is no room for men's studies in the academy, but to suggest rather that as men, we sometimes need to be careful of unwittingly participating in the game of creating different and separate spaces for men, even when we share the same subject matter with women.

The term 'gender' still carries with it images of women, and elicits images of the feminist movement out of which the study of gender emerged. I argue therefore that because of this, many men avoid categorizing themselves as gender theorists and associate themselves with the more 'masculine' sides of gender

studies, even though this engagement is usually a challenge to hegemonic notions of masculinity. It is not surprising then that in the 15 years of the existence of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, only two males have graduated from the graduate programme on the Mona Campus.

Approximately two years after I first wrote this paper (for the CGDS 15th anniversary Elsa Leo-Rhynie symposium), someone suggested we begin a group for 'men in gender' on a popular social networking website. I inquired what the value of such a site would be; the response was not positive or convincing. My inquiry was simply because I believed such a group would do more to advance the separation of men and women, even in a common area of scholarship. While there are occasions for distinct focus on sex-specific needs in some areas of research and practice, those of us who 'do gender' must challenge the potential creation of spaces where one sex holds an unjust position of privilege.

The way in which men participate in gender studies, as described above, is a result of a number of challenges that our engagement in gender studies presents to our masculine gender identities. Firstly, when we study gender, we undergo a process of knowledge construction that is based on subjective gendered experiences. This type of scholarship requires that we participate in epistemological processes that are not in keeping with positivistic empiricism which sees the knower as a 'featureless abstraction', without a sex, a gender and any other identifying feature (Code 1991, p.1). Gender studies requires that positivistic epistemological standards which lock women out of knowledge construction, be deconstructed and that new methodologies be fashioned in order to fully explore the dimensions of power and influence which characterize gender relationships (Leo-Rhynie 2004, p.420). The epistemology embraced by feminist scholars is a direct challenge to traditional and perhaps patriarchal ways of knowing. When men enter such processes, it can be interpreted as a betrayal of patriarchal privilege and power, and a challenge to the epistemological standards which have historically sought to lock women out of the scientific theory-building tradition.

Secondly, the study of gender requires that men acknowledge their position of privilege and power and the ways in which this position is afforded at the expense of women. It often also requires that we contend with this, not only in our scholarship, but also in our personal lives. Our study of gender requires that we engage in a reflexive process in which we question the extent of our commitment to a gender order that has privileged us, but which has also pressured us through entrenched ideologies, institutions and structures, to conform to its prescriptions on how we are to behave and live. It must be noted here, that in much of the work that examines men's oppression, (even where this oppression is attributed to women), patriarchy and its pressure on men to conform to hegemonic masculine ideals and its entrenched ideologies can always be found at the heart.

When men enter gender studies or into areas of social care which are thought to be transgressive of hegemonic masculinity, they are sometimes received with ambivalence by female counterparts. Christie (1998) for example, explains how women often become wary and fearful of men who enter child care areas of work because men are thought to be sexually aggressive and are more likely to be sexual predators. Similarly, Kimmel (1998) discusses the attempt of a small handful of feminists who are wary of men, who profess and do feminism, to identify the smallest iota of evidence that those men hold some allegiance to patriarchal power and privilege, thereby negating their profession of commitment to the feminist project. Hopkins (1998, p.41) locates this response to men engaging in gender studies within a problem of masculinity, for masculinity is believed to threaten every pure motive. This becomes even more problematic when essentialist assumptions are taken into account - that masculinity is not evident solely in behaviour and attitude, but is considered to be an inevitable possession and consequence of being male.

Men who engage in professions and fields of scholarship that oppose the privileging of males in society and oppose the social construction of masculinity in terms of detachment, separateness and oppression, experience a 'cognitive

dissonance' (Connell 1995), a conflict of thoughts, feelings and motivation in reconciling their masculine identities with their involvement in activities that are counter to and challenge the very foundations of those masculine identities.

Relinquishing Power

Kimmel makes the point that for men to support change in the present gender system, is for men to acknowledge their own powerlessness under patriarchy (1998, p.64). As such, the challenges to male participation in social care and gender studies are a result of patriarchal ideologies and institutions. There exists no one 'masculinity', but rather many different 'masculinities' that are defined by the different relationships between men and a hegemonic 'ideal' of masculinity (Connell 1995). Males who support changes in a gender ideology which putatively favours men are by the nature of their praxis, moving away from a hegemonic masculine ideal. This critique is perhaps sometimes an overwhelming part of the challenge affecting men's identification with, and participation in, both social care and gender studies. Many of the males with whom I have had discussions about why I chose to study gender, have confessed that they held assumptions about males who studied gender. I must note that the assumption was not about men who did masculinity studies or talked about manhood, but about those who spoke more about supporting women and changing the social relations of gender. I must confess too, that before I saw the need for a better understanding of gender issues, I too held assumptions about the young men who seemed to be supportive of feminism.

Patriarchy's sanctions on men engaging in these fields then is strong, especially for those of us who theorize the ways in which patriarchy oppresses men. By engaging in praxes that challenge age old structures of oppression on the basis of sex and gender, we subject ourselves to scrutiny; questions are asked about our sexuality because heterosexuality is a vital component of the hegemonic

masculinity which is protective of its patriarchal privilege. When there is an aberration of patriarchal 'proscriptions', patriarchy tends to lash out sexually (Kimmel 1998, p.64) and any man supporting changes in gender ideologies cannot be a 'real man', and hence he must be gay. This lashing out has not only come from men who have asked, 'why would and how could a man do gender and feminism?', but also from women. At least one of my female colleagues in the graduate programme in Gender and Development Studies also indicated to me, her own belief that gender studies attracts the men who are not 'straight' and as such are not 'real men'. Similarly, in a conversation about plans to change the name of the Bureau of Women's Affairs to the Bureau of Gender Affairs, a female friend expressed her opposition to the proposed change of name, on the grounds that if you replace 'women's' with 'gender', then 'all sorts of 'other people' will require services'. The 'all sorts' and 'other people' were in reference to homosexual (lesbian and gay), transgendered, and transsexual (including the inter-sexed and the androgynous), and queer persons, all of which are supposed to be taken into account when the term 'gender' is accounted for.

I have tried to justify to my male and female interrogators why it is that I 'do' gender studies and feminism, and how I believe that our awareness of gender inequality in its smallest form, and our attempt to correct that can create a better society. The response to my justification is almost always in the positive, and this gives me hope that the future of gender relations will be good, and that new and better cultural understandings of masculinity will come to be formed for a more equitable society.

Space and Possibilities

The theorizing of Anthony Giddens on the 'duality of structure' in structuration theory, and the 'double hermeneutic' of social science scholarship, seem to

capture most accurately the potential which I believe exists for men's participation in social care and gender studies, I make only brief reference to them here, but contend that the fundamental principles underlined by Giddens and which are now basic and commonplace to any student of sociology hold much meaning and promise for men who participate in nontraditional areas of scholarship and practice.

The 'problem' of masculinity must be analysed within the context of the institutional relationships or arrangements that produce inequality and create the 'tensions' that have brought masculinity under scrutiny (Connell 1995, p. 42). These institutional arrangements are products of a configuration of gender practice which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women, so much so that as alluded to in a previous section, some women raise a backlash against men who enter gender studies as an academic discipline, claiming as Kimmel (1998) would put it, that as soon as women get a "foothold on a legitimate domain within the academy", men rush in to displace them and "set up shop" (p.62).

Since hegemonic masculinity has caused masculinity in its varied forms to come under scrutiny, it needs to be made clear that it is not a singular type of scrutinizing which takes place. I contend that the scrutinizing of masculinity is a dual process. In one sense, those of us who do gender scrutinize hegemonic masculinity and its oppression of both women and men. In the other, society in general scrutinizes and sanctions subjected and subversive masculinities. Connell (1995) posits that hegemony is only established if there is a positive relationship between a cultural ideal and institutional power; it is this relationship that makes patriarchy legitimate. Through this relationship, institutions employ patriarchal rules and resources which reinforce the dominant ideologies. I find some similarity in Connell's 'institution' and Giddens's 'structure'. In Giddens's theory of structuration, it is these rules, resources, norms, and patterns of social relationships that constitute a social structure which is both enabling and constraining of the actions of those within it. Giddens argues that structures are,

at the same time, both the 'medium and outcome' of social interaction. Simply put, structures are created through individual action and human agency, but at the same time, human action and social relations are constituted structurally (Bryant and Jary 2001, p.11). Given this duality, structures can change through the agency of individuals. There is no pre-political being, and personal and political motivation is still at the heart of human agency. Therefore, as we engage in social care work or the study and theorizing of gender, we, as men, have the choice to either seek to reproduce patriarchal structures and systems in spaces we formerly thought to be female-appropriate, or challenge the presupposition of an extra-biological difference between the sexes and support equality between men and women.

Those of us who challenge patriarchal structures, whether through our involvement in social care professions or in gender studies, acknowledge that these patriarchal rules and resources are not static and timeless, but are socially produced and reproduced, and thus can be changed. In the immediate, many of us perhaps do not see how our involvement in these two areas may contribute to changing patriarchal structures and eventually the patriarchal gender system, because such awareness comes after a reflexive analysis of the oppression inherent in this system for both men and women. Nevertheless, over time, this constant challenging of the patriarchal institution will see a gradual cultural shift in how gender, masculinity and femininity, are understood and appreciated, and how gender relationships are negotiated. This will not be without resistance, but men's constant engagement in non-traditional areas will eventually influence the structure, its rules, and its resources. The academy has a role to play in producing knowledge which legitimately challenges the structure and its institutions.

In theorizing the double hermeneutic, Giddens contends that the social sciences do not only study the social world as the manner in which the natural sciences study the natural world, but contends that scholarship and research in the social sciences also help to shape the practices and products of the social

world. As such, there is dialogue between those of us who seek to create knowledge and raise consciousness, and the general population who legitimates this knowledge. As men, we too are a part of this population that legitimates knowledge, because it is not only in our scholarship or in our practice that we pattern and encourage a positive shift towards equality and equity in the gender system, but through our social interactions and our personal relationships. We legitimate new knowledge of how gender relationships are ordered, as we engage in a self-reflexive practice in which we monitor our own actions and behaviours.

Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning, I have structured this conversation of men's participation in activities to change the current gender system, within my experience in social work, a career that delivers social care, and my involvement in gender studies. I have discussed how participation in these two fields conflicts with hegemonic masculinity and impacts upon the masculine identities of these men. I have suggested that men's involvement in these areas of work and knowledge making has an important role in challenging and changing oppressive gender systems. Through time and continued effort, male practitioners in social care and gender studies, applying lessons from personal experiences and the experiences of women, will through their own social interactions contribute to an eventual shift in how gender and gender relationships are constructed and performed. This process includes a renegotiation of power and a reformulation of structures, as new spaces and possibilities are made open for both women and men.

¹ See for example: Thompson, W. (2011). Transgressive Realities? A phenomenological comparison of male social workers in two areas of social work practice in Jamaica. *Caribbean Journal of Social Work* 8/9

References

- Abels, P. and M. Murphy. 1981. *Administration in the human services: A normative systems approach*. USA: Prentice-Hall.
- Bryant, C.G.A. and D. Jary. 2001. Anthony Giddens: a global social theorist. In: *The contemporary Giddens: Social theory in a globalizing age*. C.G.A Bryant and D. Jary (eds) London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butler, J. 1990. *Gender trouble*. USA: Routledge.
- Chhachhi, A. 1988. Concepts in feminist theory – Consensus and controversy. In: *Gender in Caribbean development*, P. Mohammed and C. Shepherd (eds). Mona: ISER, The University of the West Indies, 76–96.
- Christie, A. 1998. Is social work a 'non-traditional' occupation of men? *British Journal of Social Work*, 28, 4: 491-510.
- Code, L. 1991. Is the sex of the knower epistemologically significant? In: *What can she know? Feminist theory and the construction of knowledge*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Connell, R.W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Dominelli, L. 2002. *Feminist social work theory and practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Flax, J. 1990. Postmodernism and gender relations in feminist theory. In: *Feminism / Postmodernism*, Nicholson, L. (ed.). New York: Routledge
- Gillingham, P. 2006. Male social workers in child and family welfare: new directions for research. *Social Work*. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6467/is_1_51/ai_n29250436/. (accessed December 15, 2008)
- Hopkins, P.D. 1998. How feminism made a man out of me: The proper subject of feminism and the problem of men. In: *Men doing feminism (thinking gender)*, Digby, T. (ed). New York: Routledge
- Kimmel, M.S. 1998. Who's afraid of men doing feminism? In: *Men doing feminism (thinking gender)*, Digby, T. (ed). New York: Routledge
- Leo-Rhynie, A. 2004. Gender studies: Interdisciplinary and pedagogical challenges. In: *Gender in the 21st century: Caribbean perspectives, visions and possibilities*, B. Bailey and E. Leo-Rhynie (eds). Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers
- Lewis, J. 2001. Legitimizing care work and the issue of gender equality. In: *Care work, the quest for security*, Mary Daly (ed.). Geneva: International Labour Office (57–77)
- McLean, J. 2003. Men as minority: Men employed in statutory social care work. *Journal of Social Work*, 3, 1: 45-68.
- Pease, B. 2001. Developing profeminist practice with men in social work. *Critical Social Work*, 2(1). <http://www.criticalsocialwork.com/units/socialwork/critical.nsf/982f0e5f06b5c9285256d6e006cff78/922c4c37984f3c6d85256ea800654bc5?OpenDocument> (accessed September 26, 2008)
- Pease, B. and P. Camilleri. 2001. Feminism, masculinity politics and the human services. In: *Working with men in the human services*, B. Pease and P. Camilleri (eds.). Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1-14.
- Williams, C. L. 1995. *Still a man's world: Men who do women's work*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



The Elsa Leo-Rhynie Legacy

[Anthony M. Perry](#)

Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Keywords: Elsa Leo-Rhynie, gender roles, gender differences, gender in education, family relations, epistemology

How to cite

Perry, Anthony M. 2015. "The Elsa Leo-Rhynie Legacy". *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 95-106

Introduction

This paper seeks to explore the male student/female academic experience through the personal journey of a student who, at the time, unknowingly came to recognise the importance of gender and leadership in education. It is a narrative. A narrative, because it is a tool that best captures the way in which I wish to reflect on the work of Elsa Leo-Rhynie.

I have chosen to present the ELR legacy in my voice; in the first person; and the "I" of which and through whom I speak is deliberate. Yet I will speak in the third person, as a way of attempting to be objective and less personal. That is, I step out of myself to speak of me, so to speak. This voice is reflective of the voices of many men whose lives have been made possible and important within and without the woman's movement. I have chosen to take the unconventional path of telling a story because traditional conventions embedded in quantitative methodologies speak little of feelings. I can make the connection now between the lives of the many women in my family and the lives of women and men in education and leadership because of the legacy bequeathed to me and us through the work of ELR.

Long before notions of gender, masculinities and femininities entered the discourse in higher education, business, and the professions or even in the family, there was some degree of recognition of the significant role of women in the family and the broader society. I also recognized that there was something different in being a boy/man in a family dominated by women and the immediate community in which I grew up and was nurtured, where the mothers and grandmothers of my friends were the bedrock of their family. I might have recognized that was how things were then. I did not understand what it meant in the context of gender and leadership. All I knew then that boys and girls, men and women were different anatomically and to be masculine and feminine were clear distinctions and there were no overlaps in their social constructs.

Connecting the past and present

Long before gender was a sociological construct, to be studied, researched and written about, I figured out the differences between men and women and among men and women. I had worked out quite early the differences as they were manifested in my family, among my friends and in the wider community: the many infant, primary and high school teachers in schools in Port Antonio, the ones who gave me voice in their classrooms, whose faces and personalities remain with me all these years. There were those who also sought to keep me silent: the ones who wrote on my report – talks too much in class, and there were others who gave me the space to be free. There were the mothers of my friends on that familiar French Avenue neighbourhood of Port Antonio; my sisters, sisters' friends and my friends' sisters all were the bedrock of that early knowing of the importance of women in “keeping it all together”.

But now, it is only in retrospect that I have come to know and understand and articulate the issues of gender across time and space, enabled by the lives of women in my family who were standard bearers and the strong foundation on which I stand: Amelia Williamson (my maternal grandmother), Linnette Perry (my mother), Linda Crosdale, Icylin Smith-White (cousins) and Violet Tate (my aunt). Then there were the contemporary women in education like Joan French, Amy Miller, Marlene Hamilton, Barbara Bailey and Elsa Leo-Rhynie.

Understanding the epistemology of gender in education

My journey (odyssey) through education and my career in teaching and educational policy has been, to a great extent, influenced primarily by women. So now I have come to this juncture of understanding and clarity because I have been able to connect the two halves – one of the long lines of women of my family and the other of women in education. The whole has provided a

deeper sense of knowing and has cemented in my consciousness the belief that the lives of women are played out on different stages yet speak to the same sets of values. Quite early though, there had been some understanding of how the lives of men and women connect in different ways; but much later how patriarchy was an accepted and acceptable construct that defined how men see themselves in relation to the women in their immediate space and in the wider global communities and permeated all aspects of our social, political and economic environment.

So this paper is not so much about exploring the epistemology or the contending and contentious debate about femininity or masculinity. It is my story. It chronicles the impact that ELR has had on education and specifically on one man whose education and career has been part of that legacy. It is about a man who has been supported, guided and nurtured by the women in his family and who has been mentored by an exemplary leader and academic as he navigated his way through university as a student and academic administrator. It is about the woman who encouraged him to go on to pursue higher education and paved the way for him to do that at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. It is about the woman who helped to sustain his professional path in the same institution where the academic relationship began. The legacy of Elsa Leo-Rhynie is rooted in what I believe to be her own personal philosophy - one not of radical feminist exclusivity or about just simply being here as an outstanding academician. Hers is one of transforming lives and "winning over the enemy" (Leo-Rhynie, 2002).

The Legacy

But what is this phenomenon that we call a 'legacy'? I believe that legacy is what George Washington Carver said it was:

No individual has the right to come into this world and go out of it without leaving behind distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it.

So it is. Elsa Leo-Rhynie is a legacy. In a quiet, deliberate, consistent, and conscientious manner Elsa created, carved and carefully constructed a path of academic excellence within the academy. Elsa Leo-Rhynie, through teaching, scholarship and service to this country, region and the world, broke the glass ceiling (sometimes reluctantly) before we recognized that there was one. One could argue that this outstanding academic leader did not fit easily into any category of the women's movement of the 20th century that was defined, that she herself recognized in her article "Women and Development Studies" (2002). Yet she was sensitive to the interpretations and challenged accepted notions of femininity.

Elsa was constantly engaged in feminist discourse; and published widely about science, women and development theories. Elsa Leo-Rhynie's legacy has been appropriately documented, repeatedly articulated and debated. Her legacy speaks to the academy in loud and unequivocal terms that gender and development studies are not peripheral to the work of academy.

The process of coming to understand fully the role of women in education happened over a 20-year period and Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie concretized for me what a woman, an academic and leader meant without either being in conflict with or overshadowing the other. Through her work, she demonstrated that being in leadership did not mean she had to sacrifice her humaneness. She did not have to justify why her family was always the sustaining force that kept her anchored.

It is upon reflecting on the legacy of Elsa Leo-Rhynie that I have been able to make the link between the educational experiences of Canada and the work

of women in Jamaica. There were always women around and it made no difference to me. They were there in the home and in the classrooms. So, before I left Jamaica to study in Canada in 1987, I never had to confront issues of gender; gender disparities; gender inequities or gender bias. I recognized that women were/are in the majority at all sectors of the education system. I knew they made significant contributions to family and community.

My years as a graduate student and graduate assistant at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto were more than completing graduate school. It was while at OISE that I began to understand the work of feminists within higher education. It was at OISE that I began to appreciate the work of the women's movement at a time when some colleges and universities in the United States and Canada ignored women's issues and when some academics believed that women's studies were challenging traditional theories of femininity and masculinity. Also, at that time in the 80s, feminism was still unfriendly territory that was perceived to be dangerous for women who wished to enter the mainstream leadership or study outside traditionally female disciplines. In fact, the massacre of 14 women engineering students at the Ecole Polytechnic de Montreal on December 6, 1989 by a lone gunman who blamed affirmative action policies promoted by feminists and their sympathizers, drove home in a sadly profound way to me, the rage that some men felt and the kind of virulent attacks that others would perpetrate to make their case. That bitterly cold winter night on the St. George Campus of the University of Toronto captured the mood of the moment as the news of the murders spread across Canada. Women and men, students and faculty members huddled together in lecture theatres, coffee shops and libraries, along corridors and outside elevators and washrooms, wondering what had gone horribly wrong in one man's head to drive him to commit such a crime against women. The answers and explanations were many.

I recall also the experiences of Jackie Thayer Scott (I served as her administrative assistant for one year) who was the Director of the School of Continuing Studies

at the University of Toronto in the late 1980s and the early 1990s and then President of the University College of Cape Breton Island in Atlantic Canada. Jackie fought against gender discrimination; championed the cause of violence against women at the University of Toronto and OISE and vigorously defended her stance on the nature and level of relationship that students and faculty/staff had with each other. Her soft-spoken manner and her sometimes hard-nosed yet principled position did not clash. Men and women within the university resisted her efforts to have the university confront the uncomfortable, contentious and insidious manifestations of gender discrimination and sexual harassment (the latter of which I was ignorant, sometimes believing that there was no such thing) when she chaired the committee that drafted the sexual harassment policy for the university. Some of her colleagues scoffed at her efforts and a few women within the University thought she was too strident. It was at the University of Toronto that I understood the significance of the word 'ogle' in gender discourse, when a distinguished professor charged and found guilty of 'ogling' at the University pool house. I used to wonder if any man would ever be so charged here at The UWI.

It was at the University of Toronto that I first heard Angela Davis speak about gender, feminism, racism and how women of colour had to navigate their way through the silence and the invisibility. So it was not difficult for me to recognise on my return to Jamaica and The UWI, that there was the indefatigable Elsa Leo-Rhynie who was foremost among those who were leading the 'quiet revolution' in women's studies at The UWI – one course at a time. The Canadian experience had led me to understand that feminists were not necessarily hostile to male ways of thinking and doing and being. I was conscious that women spoke with 'different voices'; were motivated by different social, political and economic experiences and came to higher education through various routes; some of whom did that delicate dance between family commitments and higher education. I can recall a woman who was in the Faculty of Education at the same time I was a graduate student who said to me that she could not continue because her husband had more than hinted that he had become

uncomfortable with her doing a master's degree and that their marriage was undergoing strain.

The legacy of Elsa Leo-Rhynie enabled the university to focus on gender; its multifaceted theoretical constructs; and the sociological perspectives that helped to explain the educational inequalities of the times. I recall, with some amusement I must confess, when a young female student leader commented at a university meeting that The UWI, particularly Mona, should find ways of getting more men in since she and other women were running short of options of suitable qualified men to be their husbands [my words] or something of the sort. Elsa and others almost "frothed at the gills" (a phrase I borrowed from the inimitable Marlene Hamilton). And it was Elsa (I believe) who took the young woman aside and scolded her (chastised might have worked better) for her apparent lack of understanding of the bigger picture.

I had long rejected the male marginalisation "theory" before I became involved in some of the work of the CGDS. The legacy of Elsa Leo-Rhynie empowered me to consider myself a pro-feminist as I made that connection that expressions of gender did not mean subordination of women to men. In understanding the lived reality of the domesticity of women in the Jamaican family I was able to resolve much of the gender ambivalence I harboured in spite of my earlier experiences in Canada. And the question I kept asking myself was 'where are the men in gender studies?'

But the legacy of Elsa Leo-Rhynie as a skilled, ethical and compassionate administrator will never be a footnote. I suspect that like Marlene Hamilton who came from the same science background, Elsa's careful, measured and meticulous method did not just happen. Her legacy speaks of how support from colleagues and the inspiration and joy one can get from what they do can make work easy. The work of the Board for Undergraduate Studies could not be described as easy, but Elsa made it so. She listened. She consulted. She

counseled. She cared. She spoke. Her voice was reasoned – anchored in an assured sense of self and purpose and she gave others a voice. I recall the early days of planning the 2007-2011 Strategic Plan when the entire Campus was called to add their voice to the discourse. A man from the Maintenance Department remarked that in all his years – and from all accounts he had been employed at The UWI for many years – it was the first time anyone had asked for his opinion – and from the Principal!!!! That is her legacy. – one of inclusion – devaluing no one, no position. A legacy built on the foundations of others she herself recognised as having left her a legacy.

But for me, if there is no other lesson to be learned from this journey through education that started in a 1968 programme; its twists and turns, peaks and valleys, it is that women in leadership can navigate all the routes that take them to that place of quiet confidence; belief that others have a voice, without giving into men's ways. That has been the legacy of Elsa Leo-Rhynie – of grace and dignity, of compassion and caring, of strength and unshakeable conviction, who believed and has demonstrated through her life's work that service is the tax paid for the space she occupies on this place called earth.

Reference

Leo-Rhynie, Elsa. 2002. Women and development studies: moving from the periphery. In: *Gendered realities: Essays in Caribbean feminist thought*. P.Mohammed (ed). Mona, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press and CGDS



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



Becoming Elsa

Documentary film

[Patricia Mohammed](#)

Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies
and

[Hilary Nicholson](#)

Gender Advocate



[Becoming Elsa](#)

View on IGDS You Tube Channel: <https://youtu.be/R54KPgiZu44>

Keywords: Elsa Leo-Rhynie, Women and Development Studies, WDS, CGDS, life history, film

Becoming Elsa

18:53 minutes

Director/Scriptwriter: Patricia Mohammed

Production Assistant and Co-Direction: Hilary Nicholson

Editors: Michael Mooleedhar and Christopher Din Chong

Camera 1: Mark Gentles

Camera Assistant: Lehard Colthirst

Sound Engineer: David Osbourne

Camera 2: Patricia Mohammed

Commissioned and published by

Regional Coordinating Unit

Centre for Gender and Development Studies

The University of the West Indies

Mona, Jamaica

Special Thanks

Elsa Leo Rhynie

Marlene Hamilton

Barbara Bailey

Andrew Leo Rhynie

Shakira Maxwell

The Public Relations Office, The UWI, Kingston Jamaica

Copyright 2009

How to cite

Mohammed, Patricia and Hilary Nicholson. 2015. "Becoming Elsa." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 107-110, Documentary film, 18:53 minutes

Becoming Elsa

Documentary film

Elsa Leo-Rhynie, Life History

Elsa Leo-Rhynie retired from The University of the West Indies at Mona, Kingston, Jamaica as Principal of the Mona Campus. This film traces her life as a Jamaican born woman who was committed to teaching and to the value of education, a scholar and friend who inspired a tremendous respect among those with whom she worked, among the members of her family and close friends. She would become the first Professor of Women and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies in 1993 and the first West Indian woman to hold the position of Principal of a Campus of The University of the West Indies. The film looks at the event that shaped her life and the people and institutions that were valuable to her. It was made for a symposium in her honour hosted by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (now Institute for Gender and Development Studies), Mona Campus in November 2008.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



Stories in Caribbean Feminism: Reflections on the Twentieth Century

CGDS 5th Anniversary Keynote Address, 1998

Patricia Mohammed

Senior Lecturer and Head,
Centre for Gender and Development Studies
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus
Presently
Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies
Institute for Gender and Development Studies, St. Augustine Unit
The University of the West Indies



Dr. Patricia Mohammed giving the keynote address at the CGDS 5th Anniversary event, 1998.

Keywords: Caribbean feminisms, IGDS 5th Anniversary, feminist activism, feminist history, keynote

How to cite

Mohammed, Patricia. 2015. "Stories in Caribbean Feminism: Reflections on the Twentieth Century." 5th Anniversary Keynote Address. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 111–142

Preface

Rhoda Reddock

Senior Lecturer and Head, CGDS

The UWI, St Augustine Campus

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies was established within The University of the West Indies system in September 1993. This marked the culmination of 11 years of lobbying, preliminary research and teaching by the Women and Development Studies Group, which had been established on each campus of The University of the West Indies (The UWI). The groups were formed in 1982, at a regional meeting called by Peggy Antrobus, then of The UWI Women and Development Unit (WAND) to consider the establishment of a programme and the recognition of the contribution which the Centre had made since its inception.

The main activities of the Centre, like other UWI departments, are teaching, research and outreach. Courses are disciplinary and interdisciplinary in focus and draw upon the varied approaches to gender analysis available from faculties and departments across the University. Although this approach to teaching is generally shared by all three centres, each has developed its own characteristics and each has an individual research programme on Caribbean masculinities, gender, science and technology, including gender and the environment and race/ethnicity, class and gender. A new area being developed is that of Gender and Sexuality.

The first gender-related course, AR301, piloted by Dr. Marjorie Thorpe, was introduced to the St Augustine Campus in 1986. Since that time a wide range of courses in literatures in English, Spanish and French, history, agriculture, sociology, natural sciences and other fields have come on stream. In 1997, the first group of graduate students entered to read for MPhil/PhD degrees; in 1998 an undergraduate Minor in Gender Studies was introduced in the Faculty of

Humanities and Education and in the year 2000, an undergraduate Minor in Gender and Development will be introduced in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

We at St Augustine were very pleased to have Dr. Patricia Mohammed deliver the address on this important occasion. Dr. Mohammed is a graduate of this campus (The UWI) and of the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague with which we have had a long and fruitful collaborative relationship. During the early phase of The UWI/ISS/IOP Project, she served as course director, with responsibility for organizing and managing a series of disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses on three campuses. She also organized the 1986 inaugural seminar out of which came the publication *Gender in Caribbean development*, edited with Catherine Shepherd and which is in its third printing. At the time of this lecture Dr. Mohammed was Head of the Mona Unit of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies.

In addition to her work at The University of the West Indies, as we will see in the pages ahead, Dr. Mohammed was also active in the women's movement of the early 1980's and was first co-ordinator of the Rape Crisis Centre of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Over the years we have had many opportunities to collaborate as Dr. Mohammed's work grows and develops in content and stature. The lecture reflects this growth and we are pleased to be able to bring this to you.

Message

Barbara Bailey

Acting Regional Coordinator

Gender and Development Studies

It is my special pleasure to convey warm greetings and special congratulations from the other Campus Units and the Regional Coordinating Unit of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies to the St Augustine Unit as you recognize and celebrate the fifth anniversary of the formal establishment of the Centre. This celebration marks another milestone in the life and development of the Centre and is even more significant because it coincides with the 50th anniversary celebration of the establishment of the University.

As I greet you, I would like to recognize those among you who were the early pioneers and visionaries and have been part of the Centre since its beginnings as the Women and Development Studies Group some sixteen years ago. Among this group are persons such as Marjorie Thorpe, Catherine Shepherd, Patricia Mohammed who is now Head of the Mona Unit, Jeanette Morris, Gordon Rohlehr and Bridget Brereton among others. Among these early pioneers I would like, however, to single out Dr. Rhoda Reddock, Senior Lecturer and Head of the St Augustine Unit, who through her dedication and commitment over the many years, has nurtured and spearheaded the growth and development of the Unit so that it now is a vibrant and visible aspect of the academic community of the St Augustine campus.

In many respects this fifth anniversary marks the end of a first cycle of events - initiation of an idea in 1982, development of the idea into a programme of teaching, research and outreach, implementation of a programme of Women and Development Studies finally leading up to institutionalization in 1993, of a programme of Gender and Development Studies across the three campuses of the University.

The intervening years between initiation of the idea and institutionalization of the programme afforded you the opportunity “to make vision a reality and to give vision a form”. This was only possible, however, through the collective effort on the part of many of you gathered for this celebration this afternoon; and I am sure that as you all continue the struggle to further extend the work of the Centre you are standing on the shoulders of these early pioneers and reaping the unearned increments of their sacrificial commitment and hard work which was carried out under very trying circumstances.

As with any new product the PR required to market and sell the product is never an easy task; this is particularly so when the product is Gender Studies. The mandate is to market this product not only as a legitimate academic discipline but also as an area of study that brings into question as well as the challenges of long accepted ideologies, power, structures and power relations. Your agenda is therefore both academic and political.

As might be expected, therefore, in the quest to establish Gender and Development Studies on the three campuses there have been driving forces and constraining forces. If the change process is to be maintained, however, the driving forces will have to overcome the restraining forces. I believe that many of you gathered for this evening's celebration have been a part of the driving force behind the growth of the Centre at St Augustine. I encourage you therefore to continue the work which you have started and wish you all the very best for the coming years.

Stories in Caribbean Feminism: Reflections on the Twentieth Century

Once upon a time, when the world was young, and women knew their places and men were assured of theirs. When women were the gatherers and the homemakers and men the hunters, protectors and providers, they all lived happily ever after... But was this the real story of the evolution of human culture, or is there another one waiting to be told? The history of most societies, if we look in the right places, is fertile with examples of women and men who did not conform and who challenged the limits of the time and space in which they lived. At one time women who disobeyed the unwritten rules were burnt as witches or consigned to the nunnery to spend the rest of their days. Yet history also redeems these same women who once defied the norms. Joan of Arc is an eloquent example.

In the introduction to his play Saint Joan, George Bernard Shaw wrote that "Joan, a village girl from the Vosges, in France, was born about 1412; burnt for heresy, witchcraft, and sorcery in 1431; rehabilitated after a fashion in 1458; designated Venerable in 1904; declared Blessed in 1908 and finally canonized in 1920. Of Joan he writes "she is the most notable Warrior Saint in the Christian calendar, and the queerest fish among the eccentric worthies of the Middle Ages... if Joan had been malicious, selfish, cowardly or stupid, she would have been one of the most odious persons known to history instead of one of the most attractive. If she had been old enough to know the effect she was producing on the men whom she humiliated by being right when they were wrong, and had learned to flatter and manage them, she might have lived as long as Queen Elizabeth". It took four centuries for Joan's full frontal attack on the patriarchal world to be openly forgiven, and that only by the first decade of the twentieth century.

Feminism to most people appears to be a twentieth century phenomenon, yet its roots precede the word by many centuries. The term feminism itself was

coined in the early nineteenth century by a man, French socialist Charles Fourier, “who imagined a new woman” who would both transform and be herself transformed by society. Some of this thought was no doubt influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* published in the late eighteenth century, in 1792. Wollstonecraft is described as the first major feminist, her book a trenchant critique of the debates on the rights of man which was bringing revolution to the United States and to France and considered threatening to the English parliament.” Wollstonecraft dared to take the liberal doctrine of inalienable human rights, and assume these rights also applied to her own sex. At this time they did not apply to women or to black slaves. Wollstonecraft's first book, a direct response to Edmund Burke's *Reflections*, was received with mixed emotions. On the one hand the response of revolutionary sympathizers was typical and supportive of her work. The conservative reaction from both women and men in London was cruel. She was called “a hyena in petticoats” by Horace Walpole, a writer of the time, and Hannah More wrote that “there was something so ridiculous in the very title that she had no intention of reading the book.” Today Wollstonecraft's first daring book is a classic in women's and gender studies and a must read for anyone wanting to appreciate the remarkable changes which have taken place in the status and social attitudes to women in Western society since the eighteenth century.

What influenced such women as Joan of Arc and Mary Wollstonecraft to defy norms of their time? Joan, of rural peasant stock, was the product of a pragmatic yet creative imagination, empty of selfish political motives. At least by the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft would not be burnt for daring to openly write what she believed to be true. By this time Wollstonecraft was welcomed as a champion of her sex when she travelled to France to improve her French and to see the Revolution first hand. Mary Wollstonecraft was born the eldest daughter of a small farmer of declining fortune in 1759, near London. Her father, angered by the steady erosion of his inheritance, frequently broke into a violent rage, and Mary often tried to defend her mother by throwing herself between them. Mary's upbringing was that of a gentlewoman of hard

times and much of her own education was self taught, due to her own intellectual curiosity. Women were generally encouraged to have accomplishments rather than sound education. From this relative obscurity in which she worked as a companion and a teacher, Wollstonecraft later joined ranks with others who had similarly progressive ideas. Her ideas about women's liberation were by no means geared to the abolition or estrangement from the other sex. Some of her main supporters in the end were men. It is useful to close this brief foray into her life story to say that, like all human characters, Wollstonecraft lived with the contradictions she also wrote about. She attempted to commit suicide over failure of a relationship with Gilbert Imlay, for whom she had borne a child, and later married William Godwin, at the peak of his career in British politics in 1796. She died in childbirth in 1797 after a brief but happy marriage with Godwin. Their infant daughter, also named Mary survived her, lived to marry the poet Shelley, and write the Gothic novel *Frankenstein*, another major classic of world literature. Ironically, at age 38, Mary Wollstonecraft, the prophetess of modern feminism, had died of one of the oldest scourges of womanhood - childbirth.

Why have I started a lecture on stories of Caribbean feminism extolling the virtues of European women who lived in other centuries and places? It is not to suggest that such challenges and creativity cannot emanate from within the Region and that a feminist tradition must be primarily measured against the western ideas and philosophy of sexual equality. My purpose in doing so was to first situate feminism in the Caribbean as part of a tradition of western intellectual thought and activism which long predates the twentieth century, although the use of the term feminist to describe women who were outspoken on the rights of their sex first appeared in English in 1890 to describe the suffragette women campaigning for the vote. The ideas of equality, whether they are of class, race or gender equality, are larger than the individual man or woman and are owned by no one society. They may be taken up and argued or struggled for differently in one society as opposed to the next, and in one

century as compared to the other, and from varying standpoints depending on what compels the issue to be raised.

The second reason I started with a broader reference point is to demonstrate the value of having the knowledge we do about these women – the way in which they have entered the literary and political text as a means of preserving both their memory and their ideas, and therefore what they have contributed to thought and struggle in their own societies. Thus I want to emphasize the value of recording the stories of our own struggles, in which ever way we choose so to do. What do we know of the women and men in the region who have struck a blow for gender equality? How were their ideas shaped? How many of them are researched thoroughly, have biographies written before social memory about them fades? This is not a self indulgent exercise, intent on glorifying a few characters who may stand out. There is a pragmatic goal attached to the recording of people and events. The history of most societies, particularly with the further democratization of historiography in the twentieth century, is about the people and events which shaped the society, its changes over time, its ideas and its specific cultural features. For example, a history of Trinidad and Tobago in the twentieth century without Eric Williams, his contributions, his ideas, as well as his idiosyncrasies, would not be representative of how this society evolved to date.

The recording of feminist history may itself be slightly different as the philosophy and theories of sexual or gender equality are still relatively youthful, even nebulous in some ways. The contributions to its spread are generally the work of many persons rather than one or two individuals. Perhaps the history of feminism needs to be written and recorded along the lines of an unfolding pageant, in which the different concerns, organizations, and anecdotes which document the major and minor roles played by various women and men as the scenes change, are jotted down and pooled as the story of feminism. This method also allows us to find the mode of expression which best reflects the style and questions which have concerned women of the region. We pride ourselves in

the Caribbean that we are very oral peoples. I think we are. Anecdotes are easier on the ear and at the same time provide the analysis or connections we are seeking to explain in a much more colourful and memorable way. They humanize events and bring alive the issues and ideas which they are intended to evoke. It is perhaps no coincidence that Trinidadian female author Merle Hodge's first major novel was called *Crick Crack Monkey*. Here Merle ostensibly deals with the complexity of class and race relations which typify Trinidad society, but, importantly, as they are experienced through the eyes of a young girl, thereby creating the necessary link with gender. Such stories become popular memory in the history of our societies, and they are inextricably linked to the way we see and define ourselves. Most crucially, the stories we record are legacies and lessons of struggle that we leave to future generations and these are then taken up and retold with their own flavour.

Clearly not all stories are fictional, but some are imbued with elements of fiction which may be necessary for the purpose of the time. For instance, in the writing of Jamaica's history, many historians have recorded the epic deeds of Nanny during the eighteenth century Maroon rebellion. In her own recovery of the role of women in Jamaican society, historian and stateswoman Lucille Mathurin-Mair dubbed Nanny the *Rebel woman*, the former a word which has particular resonance in the contemporary popular culture setting of reggae, dance hall and rebel music. To Nanny were attributed special powers in the maroon resistance to British enslavement: she was deemed to be the major strategist and imbued with the capacity to repel bullets by "bouncing them off her backside". Whether the latter point was real or imagined, or in fact, despite the leadership of Cudjoe, Nanny was herself the superb tactician who imbued through the force of her personality and courage the loyalty and the following of the group. In her own lifetime, Nanny received 500 acres of land from the Government of Jamaica for herself and her people. By the 1960's, with the emergence of the nationalist movement and the need for national heroes, Nanny was admitted as the first National Jamaican heroine. It seems with time she has also achieved another status in Jamaica society. In 1994, on a royal visit

of Queen Elizabeth the Second, of Britain, to Jamaica, her Majesty was due to visit The University of the West Indies. As usual the Mona road to the university, potholed in parts, in good Caribbean style, was quickly paved, while the front walls of the university entrance were whitewashed sparkling clean. The morning on which she the queen was due to actually visit, with the first light of dawn, like a deep gash against the white walls, there stood the words splashed in dripping black paint "nanny a fi we queen" – an inexorable political statement if there ever was one. As a sequel to this story, but also part of its ongoing relevance, within minutes of discovery, the walls were repainted, not before a photographer friend managed to capture this marvellous stroke of graffiti on black and white film. He produced it as a post card and attempted to sell it through the University Bookshop, which refused to display it for sales; they argued that it presented a bad influence for students at the campus. I leave you to work out the contradictions of this.

The unfolding story of Caribbean feminism is riddled with the same contradictions placed on womanhood, and with women's challenges against these. The articulation by women in defining femininity is unfortunately taken as a personal insult or challenge to male authority or manhood. A retelling of the details of this story will reveal a script that is far richer than that to do primarily with gender relations between men and women, even if the individual life experience of women in relation to men, or placed within a patriarchal dominant society, does initially raise the consciousness of these ideas. We relate to the world through the way we experience it, and for most people, their sex, class, race, skin colour and, perhaps, level of education, inform the ways in which they experience and react to the issues which affect them in life. That some of this history is already unfolding is very evident in the work already being carried out by various scholars and activists, among them Rhoda Reddock, Linette Vassell, Rawwida Baksh Soodeen, Shaheeda Hosein, Halima Kassim, Sonia Cuales, myself, and many others who may not have been included here, but who will certainly be incorporated into the larger project entitled *The Making of Feminism in the Caribbean*, which this lecture begins to speak to. For

Trinidad and Tobago certainly, Rhoda has contributed immensely in her books *Women, Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago* and the life of Elma Francois, as well as in her compilation of a collection of writings of Clotil Walcott, while Bridget Brereton's *Gendered Testimonies*, the 1994 Elsa Goveia Lecture delivered on the Mona campus, region, and serves as a constant reminder to us that we need to look before the 19th century, at the range of sources women may have left behind such as diaries and letters, to further uncover the fragments of this story.

It would be good to bring some of these older stories into dialogue with the newer narratives of the twentieth century and see the harmony or disharmony they evoke in the telling of an unfolding feminist tradition and voice in the region. In this lecture I concentrate on some which have been recorded from about 1900 onwards. In *Voices of Women in Jamaica*, Linnette Vassell reprints a 1905 speech by Miss Anna Marvin, the Principal of Shortwood College (a Teachers' Training College in Jamaica) on "A Good Woman."

The ideal woman must be pure. As we fence round our little gardens to keep out intruding animals who will spoil them, so young girls must fence themselves round, to keep their bodies and minds pure and holy. Self-respect is the best fence, for if girls really respect themselves, they will not allow themselves to do, or say, to listen to, or even to think what is degrading or impure.

The Jamaican proverb for this kind of control is "tie the heifer and loose the bull," an old time saying which is being challenged by men themselves today, including Barry Chevannes, who has written considerably on the construction of masculinity. The argument being raised is that the kind of freedom which men are allowed, does not prepare them for the responsibility which they must undertake in adulthood: it may in fact do them a disservice rather than provide

them with the privileges which it assumes. Maybe we women should recommend that they change it to "tie the bull and loose the heifer" now... after all 'the times they are a changin'."

In 1988 I did an interview with Mrs. Droupatree Naipaul, a Trinidadian of Indian descent, Brahmin caste, and the mother of V.S. Naipaul, two years before she died. She had this to say about the role of women.

Well, you have to be obedient and do your duty and not too much as people say, "backchat." If you feel something offend you, you go in your room or something and you sit down and cry and give vent to your feelings and then you come out...

You see a woman has a place in this world and when she abuse that place, she has lost the thing they call womanhood because she is no more that woman...

My sisters always felt the same way about their duty as wife and mother. It was an honour to me - everyday practice meant that I have a duty to do every day and must fulfill my duty every day.

Miss Marvin's dictum in 1905 that young girls must be fenced in and Mrs. Naipaul's convictions that Indian women should know their duty, are separated by eight decades, yet the notions are more or less similar. There is a remarkable recurrence of ideas pertaining to gender over the centuries, although these ideas vary by age group, ethnic group, religion, caste, society and individual predispositions. Even within the same ethnic group and historical time, there are competing ideologies. Another example, illustrates this point. Stella Abidh was the daughter of C.C. Abidh, school master and county council representative of

Couva in the 1920's. When Stella attained the marriageable age of 16 she refused to marry the suitable boy her grandmother had picked out for her, her mother having died when she was a child. She chose instead to teach at the Presbyterian school in the village. Stella recalls that when she was a child she would hear her father say that if he had a son he would send him to medical school, because if he had had the medical skills his wife would not have died in childbirth. One day Stella read in the newspaper about the first Indian woman who had become a nurse, one Rosalie Sanowar, and she began applying to do nursing. The replies came through her father and he approached her with it. "you know this letter is coming to you. Now I see you want to be a nurse. Tell me, if I give you a chance to be a doctor will you take this?" She said yes. To my knowledge at this time there were few, if any local women doctors, and certainly no local Indian woman who had done medicine. So the story continues that C.C. Abidh went to the Reverend Scrimgeour, the head of the Presbyterian church, to ask if he would facilitate his daughter going to Canada to do medicine. Rev. Scrimgeour's reply was typical and insightful of the attitudes to the local "native" population by missionaries in the early decades of this century. "I would not send a daughter to do medicine. Indian girls are morally weak and would not be able to stand those pressures." C.C., a fighting man, was not to be distracted. He went back to Stella and said this is what Rev. Scrimgeour said to me, but I want you to promise me that you will not be one of those Indian people to put me down if I give you this chance. "The rest is history and a still untold story of how Stella went on to continue and qualify as a medical doctor, come back to work as a District Medical Officer in South Trinidad, and, recognizing that most of what she was treating could be prevented, she chose to continue her specialization in Public Health. She became one of the first women to insist that attention to public health was necessary for a developing society concerned with the welfare of its peoples.

What do we know of the influences that shaped the early stirring of consciousness among Caribbean women, and how have they, regardless of class or race origins, defined the issues which affected all women in the society? What were the so-called feminists doing at the time? Well for one thing many of

those who spoke on behalf of women may not even have considered themselves feminists. Look for instance at the tone of this letter to the editor in the *Trinidad Guardian*, dated April 8, 1919, titled "Pity the poor wives."

Sir, kindly allow us a space in your valuable paper to call the attention of the Government and also to ask your kind support to help and advise us, the poor wives, sisters and daughters of the heart less proprietors of small dry goods stores in the island. We are a class who cannot strike, petition or grumble. Like dumb animals, we receive only food and a set of kamers (clothes), and no salary If the Government is going to shorten the hours of shop clerks, please include us in the schedule as we have been advised that when the shops will close at 7 or 8 o'clock, we will have to continue work as usual to 10 or 11 o'clock every day. Signed "Wives, Sisters and daughters."

Some women were clearly more outspoken and conscious of the political way in which these issues should be raised. Nellie Latrielle was a white Jamaican woman whose father had migrated from England in the 1840's. She was a committee member of the Child Saving League established in 1916, a founding member of the Women's Social Services Club, and active in the organisation's campaign for the vote in 1918 to 1919. She was concerned with the economic conditions of women of the poorer classes and involved in a domestic worker's training programme which she operated from her own premises at Rosedale Avenue.

The same premises were later sold to Amy Bailey, for the establishment of the Housecraft Training Centre.

Campaigning for the vote for women in 1918, Nellie wrote:

What are the qualifications of our women voting in Jamaica? I own no property, I pay no taxes, but I am deeply interested in the question and am delighted to think the day and opportunity is at hand when women may help in the questions that perplex our rulers. I don't think the silence of my sister Jamaican is due to indifference. What they may need is a leader; a qualified intelligent capable woman who will stand to the fore. I was in England at the most acute stage of the suffrage question and was deeply interested in the movement and listening to its wonderful speakers ... today I read your editorial and look around at my country women, who in those days were taught to look upon women wanting the vote as lost souls.

The lack of women who could provide leadership on public issues appears to be a major concern of early feminist activity in the region as we also see in Trinidad. From her research on women's political participation in Trinidad, Reddock recorded that on 28 August 1924, a newspaper editorial entitled "Women in Council", observed that so far women had given no public demonstration of their views and worse still, when the case was being put forward in the Council, none of the leading feminists of Trinidad (if there were any) had been present to encourage and applaud their champion. From this the editorial concluded that the political consciousness of women had not yet reached the articulate state. But was there a political consciousness of a different kind, not easily translated into the language of debates, party politics and state machinery of the time?

Rhoda Reddock recounts the life story of Elma Francois who was born in 1807 in St. Vincent and migrated to Trinidad when she was 22, leaving behind her 18-month old son to be cared for by his grandmother. Elma Francois was a founder of the Negro Welfare Cultural and Social Association which itself was responsible

for the formation of three major trade unions in Trinidad - two of which survive to the present - the SWWTU and the Federated Workers Trade Union, now part of the National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW). Elma's predisposition as a young working girl in St Vincent already displayed that of an inordinate concern for the conditions of working men and women.

According to Jim Barette, her long time friend, comrade and companion, Francois would sit and talk to him for hours about the conditions of life of poor people in rural St Vincent. Francois's interest and self-motivated intellectual curiosity about politics and the Black working people led to her own self-education on such issues. Jim Barette recalls that it was because of this they met. Barette, who later also became involved in the Negro Welfare Association and the Hunger marches of the 1930's led by Butler, admitted that at this time he had had no previous political or public speaking interest and had been quite content to leave the running of politics to the "whites" like Cipriani. "I said to her, 'where you learn all of this?' She replied, 'You must read, and you mustn't read stupidity. Look around you. Do not think that this is the right way for people to live? Look at those Indians sleeping on the ground ... Those Church people talking, but you think God meant people to live like this?'"

From the mid-twenties onwards, especially among the black and coloured middle class, women become increasingly active and outspoken on many issues, some which were dealt with under the rubric of social work, others which are more militant and outspokenly feminist. Gema Ramkeeson remembered some of the initiatives that became respectable for women to be involved in.

We recognized that there was a need to help but in the 1920's there was nothing. How was it to be tackled? We did not know? Then along came Audrey Jeffers who did as she learned in England. She set about forming her Coterie of Social Workers, who took the lead in setting up day nurseries

and creches where children and babies could be cared for during the day. She organized homes for blind women and men. She inaugurated a school feeding programme where meals were given free or for a penny for those who could pay.

Ramkeeson was born in 1910 and was extraordinarily active both in the Church and in a host of women's organizations which mushroomed from the forties onwards. She writes that as a school girl she came under the influence of Mrs. Beatrice Grieg, a Scotswoman who encouraged her first initiatives to organize young girls in Cedros where she lived, and Audrey Jeffers. In a delivery to the inaugural seminar in Women and Development Studies in 1986, (which unfortunately due to health reasons she could not attend but to which she sent a written paper), Gema Ramkeeson observed:

Today we can enumerate the tremendous strides our women have made. We know of female senators, ministers of government, judges, lawyers, professors of education... We can go on and on. At the beginning of the twentieth century, we were none of these. Nevertheless, as a social worker myself, I can be proud of the pioneering contribution we have made. I look now at you educated women, professionally trained, 'financially secure', independently minded, with every possible profession and opportunity open to you. And as you stand at the threshold of the twenty-first century, I envy you.

For those who were openly and self-avowed feminists in those salad days, there is a striking resonance with the attitudes to feminism today. Una Marson was a journalist, playwright and poet born in 1905 in Jamaica. Among her

accomplishments was the founding of the Jamaica Businesswoman's Association. She had this to say in 1937:

There has always been a tendency among the male of the species generally to sneer at even the mention of feminism. The very word conjures up in their minds chatty meetings of frustrated spinsters who are sublimating their normal instincts. They used to be called "blue stockings". At one period in England they were nearly all termed suffragette because they were fighting for women's suffrage.

Nesta Patrick recalls that in the 1950's when the League of Women Voters would venture into Laventille and St. James in cars to encourage women to vote, proclaiming the slogan "Your vote is your precious right", the men would stone the cars and shout "Women eh have no right to vote, dat is man's business" while the women themselves would taunt them with, "What all you want us to do, that is men's work." La plus même chose.

I have lingered on the women and the period of the earlier decades of the twentieth century as this past is intricately locked into the present debates within the region, in ways which are not immediately self evident but which close analysis will reveal. It also establishes how ideas about feminism and feminist organizing change over time, and hopefully create greater credibility that a movement which can span at least a century, and perhaps even be gaining momentum, is not rooted in shallow ground. One of the aspects which I have not dealt with, but is worth noting, is that of collaboration across the region. This defined some of the early initiatives and is particularly evident in the post-sixties when new ideas were again infused into this continuing struggle for gender equality.

One of the common elements which is to be found in the pre-fifties and post-sixties feminist struggle is that of extra-regional influences and regional collaborations and initiatives. The 1960's ushered in a new era, the "modern" woman, although this business of what is modern is itself a perplexing thing. Perhaps for every generation the next one is modern. For example, as far back as 1935, in a calypso entitled *Women will Rule the World*, Atilla warned Trinidadian men.

How different are the ladies of long ago
To the modern women we all know
If you have observed you are bound to see
The sex has changed entirely
Long ago their one ambition in life
Was to be mother and wife
But now they need clothes by the bale
Always smoking cigarettes and drinking cocktails

The ideas of feminism from the 70's onwards which began to spread across the globe like a virus, clearly caught on in all the islands. For instance, in 1981, when the CWP - Concerned Women for Progress - was formed in Trinidad, so was the CWP or Committee of Women for Progress in Jamaica. To my knowledge, since we were the ones who named the former, and we had not yet come into contact with the latter, the acronyms and similarity of the names were purely coincidental, understandably so. Both groups in fact began as women's arms to small left politics groups. By 1963 and 1964, women had founded the later more autonomous organizations which succeeded and emerged out of the CWP, first The Group and second Working Women, were both more explicitly female centred and focused. These early alliances with the left and with the men who supported and in part were able to empathize with the different conditions women faced, need, in my view, to be celebrated as part of the history of

second wave feminism in this society. It certainly made things lively in another way - as for some of us, these alliances were also romantic as well as comradely. Needless to say, women's groups allowed women the privilege and the right of having to go out of their homes to attend the numerous meetings – probably retaining the same function for some of us as the women who formed the social clubs - or were part of church women's organizations, doing good works for the community. There was a witty little quip coined by either Michael Als or Kim Johnson, I don't remember which, but in the way of jokes, indicates the still subtle male control over women's mobility in society. They used to tease us: "You say you going to meeting. Yuh mean you going to meet him".

The idea of a "meeting" now summons up a dreadness in my mind, but feminist meetings in those days used to be fun. We met at the Bank and General Workers offices, upstairs an ice cream and chicken and chips shop on Eastern Main Road in Laventille. Meetings and final arrangements for the next project would invariably end around ice cream or chips if we couldn't afford chicken. Some of the activities we took on were foolhardy even if they were inspired by good intentions. For instance, one Christmas we joined forces with the Consumer Protection Movement and organized a Don't Buy campaign, analyzing in the heydays of socialist thought that capitalism's greed was fed by lavish Christmas spending, which poor people could ill afford. As one of our stratagems, we produced a T-shirt painted with the traditional Santa Claus figure whom we dubbed Santa Jaws, and in retrospect a rather unattractive poster, saying "Don't Buy, Be Wise" or something equally inane. We deployed members with cars and in groups of four, armed with the same ugly posters, and pails of flour and water paste, went around town and the bigger malls then, including Valpark Shopping Plaza, to Port of Spain and St. James sticking up these posters nearer to midnight hour when we determined that the traffic of people and cars would be lighter. We had not counted on the police cars patrolling of course, so the pasting up became a real adrenalin pumping exercise, a rapid slap of the gluey substance against a pristine wall, one slopping glue, the other pasting

posters, and another one on the lookout for police or irate store owners, and then we were on our way.

There were some close shaves that night, but we had all agreed to meet up in St. James, and of course, everything must end with an old talk about who say what and who did what. And the only place open that time of the night was the College in St. James Main Road the favorite hangout of the strong arm of the law. So we ended up drinking with some of the same policemen who had cause to stop some of us in our goodly endeavours, to curb spending. I suspect our efforts made very little, if any, dent in the shopkeepers' pockets, but it sure taught us a good deal about organizing and teamwork. These were wilder, freer and certainly safer days, it seems for women. Eventually we had to stop having meetings or activities late at night as it gradually got more unsafe to be driving home on your own.

An interesting coincidence was when The Group decided to have a weekend retreat at Mayaro in 1983. We rented a beach house on the seaside, and of course we all traipsed down there, ostensibly to have discussions and create closer links, which we did. Alliances are not arbitrarily made, and the ideas of sisterhood were strong and vibrant in these heady days, and most importantly, we believed in it.

On the Sunday afternoon, we were all liming in and around the house, when lo and behold, a string of leggy girls in the briefest bikinis were suddenly being lined up against the rustic wooden fence and a few coconut trees which fronted our beach house, with a male photographer clicking away instructing them to face this way, shift a leg that way and so on. It turned out that these were the contestants in an impending south beauty show. The irony did not escape us. They had arbitrarily chosen the house we were staying in to pose against. Yet one of the very first daring statements we had made in Trinidad and one of the public activities we had carried out as the CWP was the picketing of a beauty

contest in the Jean Pierre Complex about three years earlier. We had a picket line supported by men and women, and the newspaper treatment of our efforts was far kinder than the slurs of the patrons going in to the show.

There were also sobering if humorous episodes which taught us some lessons that have served us well. The assumption that, as self-affirmed feminists, we spoke for all women was quickly dispelled. We had decided as one of our projects in the CWP to work with the "under privileged women" in Laventille, the working class sloganeering of the left movement clearly influencing the choice of projects and activities we tended to undertake. We had the theory right, made our contacts through Brother Resistance who lived on the hill, and set up a meeting with some women one Saturday afternoon, figuring out that this is the best time for them, and so on. We even tried to dress the part. Most of us were professional and middle class in our orientation, and in those days, rootsiness was expressed by the jeans and plain T-shirt to affirm solidarity with the masses.

A few women of the Laventille district we had targeted turned out to meet us that Saturday evening in the little parlour on the steep hill against which we maneuvered up and parked our cars precariously. They listened to us for a while, checked us out up and down, and finally, one of them echoed the general consensus of their group. "Who are you to come and tell us how to organize our lives and tell us about how to be a fulfilled woman and how to deal with our men?" she said, "All yuh who don't even know to be woman yuhself, wearing pants like men." Abashed, we withdrew from the top of the hill, certainly for me never to return again. What is interesting is that this story remained equally vivid in the mind of another CWP member of the time, Gaiety Pargass, who, like me, tells it when she wants to make a point about respect for others' experiences and circumstances about which one cannot make superficial presumptions. It took a decade more for the western feminist movement, with the advent of post modernist thought, to admit that there was no universal female voice, that women were differentiated by class, race, colour and society and that these voices needed to be identifiably different, even while unity in the struggle was sought. We had learnt that lesson very early.

Interestingly enough, Nesta Patrick had a similar story to tell about the intervention of the Coterie of Social Workers three decades earlier in the same territory of Laventille.

The responses to the Coterie's efforts to provide social services, arrange child care and so on, were met with – “all yuh tea ladies who could only drink tea - then sit around in your drawing room and talk we bad.” And again it was the recurrent idea that as women they had stepped out of their crease. “Why all you women doing job that men suppose to do”. I would like to think that there is no right or wrong on the part of either group, but a lot of lessons to be learnt on what we do and how we learn what our capacities are. Often the actions which some women have undertaken for others have been misread or misunderstood, yet they sometimes have far reaching effects which we ourselves do not anticipate.

Rhoda Reddock, an early member of the group WorkingWomen - a group which is still active - reminded me that the rampant societal debates which went on about the passage of the Sexual Offences Bill in Trinidad and Tobago were first started by this group. In 1986 WorkingWomen got wind that such a Bill was being introduced into Parliament, and finally, after much searching, located a copy of the Bill and found it was a very progressive piece of legislation. The members of the group decided to have a public forum on this Bill, sensitizing people to the issues it raised and the concerns for women.

Among its other clauses the Bill sought to decriminalize homosexuality, make a criminal offence of sex with minors under the age of 14, and introduce the penalty of marital rape. The public forum opened up the Bill to other interested groups such as church organizations, lawyers, doctors and social workers and in the one sense acted as a major sensitizing agent in the society at large about issues pertaining to and contained in this Act. Rhoda Reddock pointed out that ironically, perhaps due to the public debates and censure which then took

place, the Bill was altered and watered down in some parts, so that eventually when it was passed in 1987, homosexuality was criminalized to explicitly also include women as offenders, that women who had sex with boys under 14 could also be convicted, and the famous Clause 4, which related to marital rape, only applied to married couples who were separated or even if they share the same residence, who had lived separate lives. According to Reddock, perhaps if they had left it alone, the Bill would have been quietly passed in its original form. Then again it might not have been passed at all, and to date, Trinidad and Tobago remains one of the Caribbean societies which has consistently introduced progressive legislation to deal with issues such as sexual offences and domestic violence.

One of the most remarkable stories which needs to be told of the latter part of this century is of the coincidental and accidental ways in which successes are achieved, sometimes far beyond the original vision of any initiator.

Over twenty years ago, Clotil Walcott started campaigning about the conditions of women who worked in the chicken factory in which she was also employed and later, linking this to the question of wages for women's work, also formed the National Union of Domestic Employees with the apposite acronym of NUDE. In the early eighties, the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague was engaged in a project of examining women's struggles and Clotil, through Rhoda's presence in The Hague at the time, was invited to the ISS. There she came into contact with Selma James, ex-wife of C.L.R. James, who was also one of the founders of the Wages for Housework Campaign of British socialist feminists. Recognizing the links with what Clotil was engaged in in Trinidad, Selma James suggested that Walcott could become the representative of the Wages for Housework Campaign in Trinidad. So Walcott returned with renewed zeal on top of an already energetic mindset and began to write numerous letters to the editor and dredge up support for this campaign. Her letter writing and efforts caught the attention of Senator Diane Mahabir-Wyatt who took the matter to the Trinidad and Tobago Parliament, and Trinidad and Tobago

became the first country to take up the recommendations for recognition of housework in the Gross Domestic Product passed by the Nairobi Conference on women in 1985.

So progressive was this move, that in 1995 at the Beijing World Conference on Women, the Trinidad and Tobago legislation was used as the model to inform the drafting of the world conventions on unwaged work, which this conference identified as crucial to the continued recognition of women's role in social formation and in the economy.

1998 finds us now with fewer 70's-style feminist organizations and groups, but with NGO status; others such as the regional Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action, Women and Development Groups at the University, Rape Crisis and Women's Crisis Centres. We also have organizations which now involve men explicitly in the challenge which gender has raised for masculinity itself as, for instance, Fathers Incorporated in Jamaica and Men against violence against Women or MAVAW in Trinidad have emerged.

Some of us are no longer young and are perhaps less idealistic, but we are more pragmatic about what we can still achieve in our lifetime. The generation of second-wave feminists is still to be found as the ringleaders behind some of these initiatives. Cathy Shepherd, Jacquie Burgess and Tara Ramoutar work with CAFRA, and so did Thelma Henderson until her death from cancer. Gaiety Pargass is involved in Human Rights activism to save both male and female prisoners from the death penalty. Rawwida Baksh Soodeen, once Coordinator of CAFRA, now heads the Gender and Youth Desk at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, and Gemma Tang Nain holds a similar position with the CARICOM Secretariat.

On all three campuses of The University of the West Indies, for the past fifteen years there has been an ongoing project to introduce gender studies, first

through voluntary efforts by Women and Development Studies groups and through the pioneering work of Peggy Antrobus and Joycelin Massiah in Barbados. Successors to the earlier initiatives in which we participated, Rhoda Reddock and myself head the St Augustine and Mona Campus Centres for Gender and Development Studies, and there is another located in the Cave Hill headed by Eudine Barriteau. On the Mona Campus a Regional Co-ordinating Centre for Gender and Development Studies is headed by Dr. Barbara Bailey, while it also boasts the first professorial appointment in Women's Studies, a post held by Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie.

When we teach gender studies at the campus level, many of the students who do our courses are introduced to the feminist movement and to feminism, which to them appears as another dying *ism* along with socialism, Marxism, communism and in this day and age, perhaps idealism itself. Feminism 70's-style may already be a thing of the past in other ways as well. For instance, about two weeks ago Rhoda Reddock came up to Mona to attend another conference, and since she was going to be physically on this campus, we told the gender studies class she would be coming to do a guest lecture. "Miss she still alive" they asked incredulously. Perhaps it was just the idea to a student that if you read somebody's work in a book they must be dead, but it might also be that the ideas we expressed and the issues we raised are no longer relevant to the new generation – the same way that the concerns which Nesta Patrick and Gema Ramkeeson raised before that appeared old hat to us, and they had also moved on and forward from the concerns raised by Una Marson and Amy Bailey and Elma Francois before them. There are nonetheless continuities and recurrences, some of which I have noted and which may be useful to transmit to the new kind of activism possibly emerging through tertiary level education in women's studies now available at The University of the West Indies. But *the language of struggle*, as with everything else, must change, and, as we learned years ago, it is not our place to speak for others, in this case the younger generation who will define their own problems from their life experiences, and perhaps already are addressing them in ways inscrutable to us.

In his book *Age of extremes, The short twentieth century 1914 to 1991*, British historian Eric Hobsbawm devoted nine of the 600 odd pages to the feminist movement of the 1960's onwards. That he included the feminist movement at all as part of the chapter of "The Social Revolution" is itself significant. The twentieth century, in my view, has been the century in which the idea of gender equality has seeped into human consciousness in a manner which is difficult if not impossible to ignore. Perhaps one of these days, when the history of the twentieth century Caribbean is being written by future generations, the voices of women and the stories of feminism will have helped to shape a more self-confident and humane space which we call home, and will not have to be relegated to footnotes of history.

That feminism is challenging and upsetting is clear, otherwise there would not be the responses to date to its various manifest forms. We don't really know what it augurs for the future, but any movement informed by unselfish and sincere motives about the good of others cannot be reduced to the trivial pursuit of personal gain or glory. Perhaps, as Fidel Castro observed, we have to wait for history to absolve us after all. But the story of feminism has not yet ended. The third chapter has just begun.



CGDS staff and associates at the CGDS 5th Anniversary public lecture, 1998.

References

- Brereton, Bridget. 1998. Gendered testimonies, *Feminist Review* Special issue: Rethinking Caribbean Difference.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. 1994. *Age of extremes: The short twentieth century 1914-1991*. London: Michael Joseph.
- Hodge, Merle. 1970. *Crick crack monkey*. London: Heineman.
- Mathurin, Lucille. 1975. *The rebel woman in the British West Indies during slavery*. Jamaica: African Caribbean Publications.
- Mohammed, Patricia. 1990. "From Laventille to St Ann's: Towards a Caribbean feminist philosophy". CAFRA News, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Patrick, Nesta. 1988. My views on women's involvement in organizations in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. In: *Gender in Caribbean development*, ed. P. Mohammed and C. Shepherd. Women and Development Studies Project, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Ramkeeson, Gema. 1988. Early women's organizations in Trinidad: 1920s to 1950s. In: *Gender in Caribbean development*, ed. P. Mohammed and C. Shepherd. Women and Development Studies Project, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1994. *Women, labour and politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A history*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1988. *Elma Francois: The NCWSA and the workers' struggle for change in the Caribbean in the 1930's*. London: New Beacon Books.
- Rohlehr, Gordon. 1988. Images of men and women in the 1930's calypsoes: The sociology of food acquisition in the context of survivalism, In: *Gender in Caribbean development*, ed. P. Mohammed and C. Shepherd. Women and Development Studies Project, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Shaw, George Bernard. 1957. *Saint Joan*. London: Longman, Green and Co Ltd., (First edition). 11th Impression, 1966.
- Vassell, Linette. 1993. *Voices of Jamaican women*. History Department, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica.
- Wieringa, Saskia. (ed.) 1995. *Subversive women: Women's movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean*. London: Zed Books.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. 1792. *A vindication of the rights of women*. Ed. Carol Poston. New York: W. H. Norton.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New Directions

CGDS 10th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2003

[Elsa Leo-Rhynie](#)

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Now

Professor Emerita, The University of the West Indies



Prof. Elsa Leo-Rhynie, delivering the 10th Anniversary keynote address, 2003

Keywords: Women and Development Studies Group (WDSG), IGDS 10th Anniversary, IGDS history, The UWI, education, interdisciplinary studies, gender studies, feminist scholarship, feminist activism

How to cite

Leo-Rhynie, Elsa. 2015. "Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New Directions." 10th Anniversary Keynote Address. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 143–170

Preface

Rhoda Reddock

Professor and Head, CGDS, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus
January 2004

It's a pleasure for me to write this preface to the publication of the Public Lecture, which was given to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the St. Augustine Campus. Hosting this celebration was important as it served as an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and those things which we still need to do, to honour those who have contributed to our successes and to make a contribution to the growing body of knowledge on Caribbean Gender Studies coming out of The University of the West Indies.

We were especially pleased to have Professor Elsa Leo Rhynie as the lecturer on this occasion. Professor Leo-Rhynie has had a distinguished career at The University of the West Indies and was the first recipient of a professorship in Women/Gender and Development at The University of the West Indies. Professor Leo-Rhynie continues to serve as Chair of the Regional Steering Committee of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies in addition to the other positions, which she has held at The UWI, the most recent being Pro Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies. We were quite pleased that she accepted our invitation to deliver this 10th Anniversary Public Lecture.

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies was established within The UWI system in September 1993 with units on all three campuses and a regional coordinating unit on the Mona Campus. Its establishment was the result of 11 previous years of active lobbying, pilot teaching, strategising, training and early research and publication by members of the Women and Development Studies groups on the three campuses of The UWI. There were many persons who contributed to this process and we acknowledge their hard work, vision and foresight at the crucial early stage of this process.

Although the Centre was established in 1993, it was not until August 1994 that the first staff were appointed to the CGDS St. Augustine Unit. Dr. Jeanette Morris, then campus coordinator of the CGDS, hosted the first CGDS Board of Studies meeting during this period. In August 1994 the Centre properly began operations with an establishment of one senior lecturer and one secretary stenographer. No office space was allocated. Today we have a full-time establishment of five staff and three staff funded from non-university funds and we have definitely outgrown the space currently allocated to us.

Over the ten-year period we have also accomplished a creditable body of research and publications, introduced two minors in Gender Studies in the Faculty of Humanities and Education and in Gender and Development in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Additionally, our graduate programme attracts students from a wide range of research interests and backgrounds and is contributing to the developing of scholarship in this field. At St. Augustine, undergraduate level gender-related courses are now available to students in every faculty of The UWI except the Faculty of Engineering.

In addition to our research and teaching, our established outreach programme is considered an important aspect of our work. We therefore cherish our relationships with women's organisations, men's organisations, community-based organisations, arts and theatre organisations, government departments and international and regional organisations. These relationships have been very important in allowing us to fulfill our mission and objectives.

The Lecture presented by Professor Leo-Rhynie and published here is extremely relevant to this occasion. It traces the historical and intellectual processes which led to the emergence of gender studies within the University of the West Indies and the philosophical underpinnings, dilemmas and challenges that have shaped its direction over these years. She also interrogates the epistemological challenges which we have presented to the Caribbean academic community

and the wider context of education within our region and the world. I recommend this publication highly.

On this occasion it is true to say that we are quite proud of our achievements, but we must acknowledge that we owe much to the collaborative and cooperative action of many. This public lecture puts it all in perspective.

Message

Barbara Bailey

Professor of Gender and Education and Director, CGDS

I am very pleased to be associated with the publication of the lecture entitled *Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New Directions* presented by Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie as one of the many events planned by the St. Augustine Unit to mark the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Gender and Development Studies as an autonomous teaching and research centre of The University of the West Indies.

Professor Rhoda Reddock is not only distinguished Head of the St. Augustine Unit of the Centre but is also numbered among the pioneers who worked assiduously during the 80s and early 90s to lay the groundwork for the eventual acceptance of Gender Studies as a legitimate academic pursuit within the academy; and, I would venture to suggest, that since its establishment the Centre has contributed, in no small measure, to enhancing the international standing and visibility of the institution through the high quality of the teaching, research and outreach activities of the Units on all three campuses. Within the ten-year period, the Centre has instituted a non-degree certificate programme, an undergraduate minor on all three campuses and offers graduate level MSc, MPhil and PhD programmes. Among other things, the Centre has also produced six major interdisciplinary readers, based mainly on Caribbean research to support these teaching programmes.

The title of the lecture succinctly reflects the twenty year journey that the Centre has taken, from the conception of the idea in the early 80s of finding innovative ways to introduce Women and Development Studies, to institutionalization of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies in 1993. From the outset, it was clearly established that not only was Gender Studies a new academic pursuit in relation to The UWI experience but that it transcends and transgresses disciplinary boundaries and therefore brings with it new epistemological,

pedagogical and organizational challenges. In the journey we have therefore been forced to cross long established and entrenched academic and structural boundaries and chart new directions in establishing the Centre outside of the existing faculty modality. The journey has been exciting but the project is still a work in progress.

In many regards the Centre has therefore been in the vanguard in promoting one of the core values that The University of the West Indies proclaims to cherish and is determined to preserve that of 'cultivating multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration.' As we move forward into the next decade I fully endorse the sentiments expressed by Professor Leo-Rhynie in her concluding comments and reaffirm the Centre's commitment to preserving the tradition of crossing boundaries, charting new directions, producing active thinkers, researchers and learners who will be equipped to effect social and political change at all levels and in all sectors of Caribbean society and in so doing promote continued efforts to achieve gender equality and social justice.

Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New DirectionsCGDS 10th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2003

Elsa Leo-Rhynie

It is both an honour and a delight for me to be here with you to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) and to have been invited to participate in the St. Augustine celebration in this special way. I thank especially Professor Reddock and Dr. Mohammed, Rhoda and Pat, for inviting me, and thank you all for coming to share with us. I bring greetings from the Mona and Regional Coordinating Units in Jamaica and special good wishes from Professor Barbara Bailey, Regional Coordinator of the CGDS.

The past ten years have been eventful and highly productive – a decade of which the Centre can be justly proud. Although we speak of a tenth anniversary, however, the beginnings of CGDS date long before that, and we must salute and honour the pioneers whose work, dedication and commitment to our cause nurtured and brought Women and Development Studies from the margins of the University to its centre and ushered Gender Studies into the academy. Although the focus this evening is on the pioneers at St. Augustine, the trailblazers include Dr. Peggy Antrobus, Professor Joycelin Massiah, Professor Rhoda Reddock, Dr. Lucille Mathurin Mair, Dr. Marjorie Thorpe, Mrs. Kathleen Drayton, Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell, Mrs. Hermione McKenzie, Dr. Patricia Mohammed, Professor Barbara Bailey, Dr. Eudine Barriteau, Mrs. Louraine Emmanuel. We must record also the significant contributions of our colleague institution, the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, the Netherlands Government, the Ford Foundation, UNIFEM and other funding agencies whose generosity and commitment to social and political change have enabled and facilitated the work of the CGDS.

The title I have given this lecture is, "Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New Directions." This, I think, has been the hallmark of our work ever

since it started over twenty years ago. We were involved in a new exciting area of concern and activity, we were pioneering an initiative which not only opened up new avenues of research and scholarship but also captured our emotions and our spirit of social equity and moral 'rightness' and we recognized that our venture was one which had major implications for change. We had to be prepared to cross the boundaries of resistance to change and to meet the challenge of charting the course of the new directions demanded by that change.

Crossing boundaries: activism to scholarship

Gender studies had its origins in the social and political ferment of the 1960s and 1970s, and particularly the political activism of feminists, in which the concerns were with power and influence in the lives of women and their relationships with men, the family, the community, the workplace and the state.

The first boundary to be crossed was that between the activism of the women's movement and the scholarship of the academy. The trigger and stimulus for this boundary crossing was the Women in the Caribbean project, directed by Professor Joycelin Massiah and spanning the late 1970s and early 1980s, a project which was interdisciplinary in scope and innovative in implementation. This initiative took place during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985) and explored new research methodologies in documenting the lives of women across the English-speaking Caribbean. The innovative use of photography and video, which was bold new research technology at the time, to permit the actual reporting from the women themselves, of statements of their lives and experiences, provided a rich source of data and forced new approaches to analysis, and different ways of communicating the message. At the same time, the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of The University of The West Indies was newly established in 1977 as an arm of the Extra Mural

Department (now School of Continuing Studies). Dr. Peggy Antrobus was the first Tutor Coordinator of this Unit, and both she and Professor Massiah recognized the vital importance of getting the messages from the research and from the outreach projects of WAND into the university curriculum. Professor Reddock prepared a position paper on the "Introduction of a Programme of Women and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies", which was presented to a regional meeting in March 1982. The strategy developed to achieve this goal was that of forming, on each campus, Women and Development Studies (WDS) groups to promote the findings of the project across the region and also to see to their inclusion in relevant disciplinary courses. The strength and cohesiveness of these groups were achieved through meetings, seminars, formal and informal, campus-based and regional, carried out in a spirit of collaboration and partnership, and guided by a regional steering committee chaired by Professor Joycelin Massiah.

Funding to support the work of these groups in the Caribbean was sought and obtained from a number of sources, but chiefly from the Ford Foundation and the Government of the Netherlands. The intent was the introduction of a programme of Women and Development Studies in the university and central to the groups' strategy of crossing the boundary into the academy was the establishment of a record of scholarship in the field of study. This was achieved through the staging of a series of three interdisciplinary and seven disciplinary seminars between 1986 and 1994. These yielded over 120 papers, covering a range of topics, using a variety of methodologies, and all indicative of a surge of interest in, and the intent to be part of, the initiative to explore the historical and contemporary status of women, and most importantly to contemplate the societal gender systems which had governed the status of women and men over the years. Mathurin Mair (1988) in the foreword to the publication of papers from the Inaugural Seminar, commented that as seminar participants become involved

with the analytical tools of various disciplines, they are articulating a gender-focused critique of development theories and models which promises in time to penetrate academia and to inform processes of national and regional planning (p.x).

The work of the WDS groups served as a catalyst for the penetration of academia and for the exciting and dynamic growth of scholarship in the area of gender and development in the region. The papers from the inaugural seminar were published in a volume edited in 1988 by Patricia Mohammed and Catherine Shepherd, *Gender in Caribbean development*, and which was in use before the CGDS was formally institutionalized. It is now in its second edition and is still a valuable source book for students and those seeking an introduction to issues of gender and development. The tradition was continued after the formation of the CGDS with the publication, in 1997, of another edited volume, *Gender: A Caribbean multi-disciplinary perspective*, which contains a selection of papers from the interdisciplinary and disciplinary seminars. The sharing and collaboration involved in the development and staging of the seminars, and the networks which developed as a result, enhanced the work of each participant and in turn the work of the various disciplines; academics who hitherto had not thought of gender as a field of enquiry now found it a fertile source of new information and research. The work thus became 'both transformative and generative' (Lave 1997).

The boundary crossing into the academy was formally achieved in September 1993 when the Centre was institutionalized. Over the past ten years, the CGDS has been engaged in raising searching theoretical and methodological questions, generating and documenting new and important information using innovative, participatory research methodologies, developing new courses and teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The Centre has challenged patriarchal theories of knowledge and has had a strong impact on the rethinking and transformation of disciplinary discourse – in science, in

sociology, in education, in literature, law and history, as well as research methodology.

Crossing borders: from disciplinary to interdisciplinary scholarship

The second major boundary crossing challenged the structure and organization of knowledge within the academy itself. Marilyn Boxer (2000) recounts her experience as a young academic in the 1970s facing a curriculum committee to consider the establishment of a minor in Women's Studies at her college and her consternation at the opening question from the Chair of the committee: 'Is Women's Studies a discipline?' She interpreted the question as a mechanism to 'discipline' her and her colleagues who sought to disturb the academic community with this new and contentious area of study.

As feminist scholarship developed, it was very clear that its concerns transcended disciplinary boundaries. Most persons who now work in gender studies have come to that area from disciplinary backgrounds. When confronted with the myriad aspects of knowledge with which they had to cope in understanding the feminist literature, sociologists, psychologists, historians, educators and scientists all became interdisciplinary learners. This was essential so that they could grasp concepts, and be properly analytical, and where necessary critical, about the material which was now part of their area of scholarship. This learning forced scholars to question certain disciplinary concepts and boundaries, to redefine traditional categories of analysis and also rethink existing paradigms which had strong disciplinary bases. Given the broad concerns of persons working in the area, the limitations of existing methods of enquiry became evident, as did the need for new research methodologies to fully explore dimensions of power and influence which cross gender, race and social class lines.

The complex 'trans-disciplinary' nature of Gender Studies led to the use of the term 'interdisciplinary' as a relevant descriptor of the fledgling scholarship which crossed disciplinary borders; this created problems for acceptance by the academy, however, as the demand was that of proving Gender Studies to be a discipline in order for it to be recognized as equal to other disciplinary areas of study offered.

Interdisciplinary areas of study such as Environmental Studies have also faced difficulties in establishing their legitimacy within the academy, but the issue of gender has been an emotive one, challenging as it does concepts of power and hierarchy which typify many aspects of the structure of the academy, and presenting as part of this challenge a novel epistemological paradigm.

Lattuca (2002, 712) provides a definition of the term 'interdisciplinary' as:

An adjective describing the interaction among two or more different disciplines. This interaction may range from simple communication of ideas to the mutual integration of organizing concepts, methodology, procedures, epistemology, terminology, data and organization of research and education in a fairly large field. *The Journal of Higher Education* 73, no.6 (November/December 2002): 25-26.

This very comprehensive definition allows for a range of interactions within and across disciplines, and is based on the integration of knowledge across a fairly large field.

The process of crossing disciplinary boundaries and establishing interdisciplinarity within gender studies has been an evolutionary one. The objective of most academic disciplines is to produce scholars steeped in the content and

methodology of that discipline and who will be committed and loyal to the tenets which define it. These disciplinary 'tribes of academe' (Becher 1989) have been criticized by feminist and other interdisciplinary scholars as being limiting and untrue to the nature of knowledge and knowing and the requirement of openness and interconnectedness in learning. Relke (1994) comments that the disciplinary model of academic organization reflects:

a perception of knowledge as a fragmented group of hostile nation states, surrounded on the curricular level by the barbed wire of course prerequisites, and defended by an academic border patrol, heavily armed with credentials, who guard against unlawful trespass. *Vice-President's Colloquium Series*, University of Saskatchewan (1994).

Study within disciplines restricts and compartmentalizes knowledge, while interdisciplinary studies seek to link and integrate knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. Reality is multifaceted and not experienced in an ordered and structured manner in keeping with the disciplinary model. Disciplinary learning results in the development of partial and often distorted images of reality, yields half-truths, as it emphasizes one area of enquiry and knowledge with little thought to the inclusion and integration of relevant knowledge from other disciplines. In many instances, there is a total disconnect between what is taught in some disciplines and students' lives and experiences. Learning as a continuing process of students questioning their experiences outside the academy, and their experiences in their courses of study, within or across faculties, is not facilitated.

Achieving interdisciplinarity therefore involves:

- Deconstruction of the existing disciplinary structures and boundaries which have been established through a

thorough critique of how they were built up and the artificiality and lack of integrity of their 'separateness'

- Bringing together the work of analysts and critics in different fields and using a compare-and-contrast type of conversation to point to the areas where integration is possible
- Employing the tools of different disciplines (theories, methodologies) to arrive at deeper, more textured meaning of existing phenomena or to explain the particular needs of new concepts
- Developing tools specially suited to the field of study, which can enhance the understanding obtained using existing tools from other disciplines and also inform those disciplines in different and novel ways

The processes involved in achieving interdisciplinarity can take place within a discipline or can be used to facilitate and enhance work between or among disciplines, and they are particularly relevant when used to address the development of interdisciplinary programmes such as Gender and Development Studies. The questions raised by gender are not confined to a particular discipline as they are complex, multifaceted questions which reach across and beyond disciplines.

The inadequacy of discrete disciplines to respond to these multifaceted questions led to questioning and assessing critically the methods used in the production of certain types of knowledge, the politics and the ethics of these methods, the choices made in terms of what is omitted and what is included. This critical assessment is shared with students, who are encouraged to consider these issues even as they relate to the content of the programmes in which they are themselves engaged – Who made the choices of the content? The texts selected? The method of assessment? On what basis? What special institutional

and personal biases led to that configuration? The process is one of reflexivity, which has become a method widely used in educational and other programmes to stimulate critical thinking and develop a reasoned understanding of how the world is organized and how knowledge of that world is produced. Students of gender make the world, and individuals' experiences of that world, whether orally recounted, or documented in books and magazines or other media, sources of information which must be critically examined along with those recommended texts and readings which are provided with their course outlines. This approach opens up the possibilities for research and new methods of obtaining data which are not discipline bound and which encourage independent learning.

Interdisciplinarity thus becomes a process of clearing the hurdles of disciplinary language, disciplinary methods, disciplinary content, of effecting 'translation' of these disciplinary concepts into the interdisciplinary discourse and through a process of 'dialogue' across disciplines achieving a broader, more comprehensive and more complete view of specific problems, promoting an integration and a synthesis, which provide a comprehensive base for the search for solutions.

A major criticism of interdisciplinary learning is that it does not allow sufficient depth of knowledge and learning in any one area and so the student tends to have a superficial grasp of many concepts in different disciplines but is not 'grounded' in any one – even though there may be criticisms as to the arbitrary nature of that one. Friedman (1998) comments that:

If the danger of disciplinarity resides in potential overspecialization, the danger of interdisciplinarity rests in potential superficiality. Disciplinarity offers depth but also insularity; interdisciplinarity offers scope but also rootlessness (312).

The process of criticism, important as it is, must be accompanied by respect for the intellectual rigour and the historical underpinnings of each discipline, and the work of those who ensured that the components identified as representative of a discipline were sufficiently established for the area of study to be acknowledged and recognized.

One of the demands of most universities is that, upon institutionalization, an interdisciplinary programme conforms to the disciplinary demand of structure and organization and the somewhat arbitrary demarcation of the discourse of this scholarship into a 'disciplinary' framework. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary learning are now being emphasized in the literature on learning in higher education. This value has been declared by many universities but the structures to permit this have not changed sufficiently to permit true interdisciplinary collaboration, partnership and learning. The result is that the term 'interdisciplinary' has become a handy descriptor, and refers in most instances to a collection of courses, which imply that they are integrated in some way, but this integration may not actually be realized. Romero (2000) has warned, referring to graduate degree programmes in women's studies, that the institutionalization of these programmes may result in the construction of a Women's Studies discipline that is very similar to traditional disciplines, emphasizing research over teaching and certainly, over activism. This danger exists for programmes at the undergraduate level as well.

In Gender Studies, interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity are not mutually exclusive; both are relevant, institutionally as well as in scholarship. As Relke observes:

Women's studies is the interdiscipline par excellence. Gender also cuts across all other interdisciplinary programs in a way that virtually no other interdisciplinary theme does. Moreover, women's studies has its own discourse, its own burgeoning body of scholarship, its own highly sophisticated array of

interconnecting theories, and its own set of methodologies. Hence, it's also what I can only call a megadiscipline (Relke, 1994).

Gender Studies has indeed become what Lattuca (2002) refers to as a 'community of practice' with its own ways of knowing, its own methodologies of research and its own pedagogical demands.

Charting new directions – the pedagogical challenge

The imperative of interdisciplinarity was strongly intertwined with the need to change the existing structure of knowledge and its method of transmission, in order to create alternative narratives and a new pedagogy which would be liberating and empowering.

Pedagogy has been defined as:

the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies – the teacher, the learner, and the knowledge they together produce (Lusted 1986, 3).

That intersection, in an interdisciplinary gender studies programme, must be linked to the critical stance which governs the programme's development and structure. Given the feminist stance against oppressive and dominating experiences in the society, traditional methods of teaching which are teacher centred and which emphasize the power of the teacher as expert, as knower, as dispenser of knowledge, and the student as seeker and passive recipient of knowledge from the teacher, had to be critically examined and changed. The lecture room and tutorial encounters had to reflect a difference in the

traditional use of power through the objectives set, the teaching methods employed and the methods of assessment used. Thus students' opinions, their criticisms, their questions which challenge the teachers' views and those of other students must be encouraged, and the resulting participatory mode is expected to develop that analytical capacity and trigger the evaluative ability so important in challenging the status quo and effecting the transformation sought. The use of personal experience in teaching has been a major focus. This is closely linked to the activist origins of the feminist struggle – the practical problems of women in the field – and the strength of the interdisciplinary thrust was fed by the knowledge and interaction with women's lives, so that theories and analyses could draw on real life experiences. Socialization was not just a theoretical concept, it was observed; domestic violence and the trauma it produces was known because of the close connection between those teaching about power in sexual relationships and those who witnessed or shared the experience of the willful and traumatic expression of such power. This enhances learning as it emphasizes the situated nature of knowledge, and the different locations from which individuals speak – as students and teachers. It also allows students to develop the skills of analysis which permit an assessment of how these experiences have been influenced by people, events and situations. Thus they can develop a sense of self-understanding, an integrated sense of personal identity and the way in which this identity determines how persons locate themselves in the family, the workplace, the community and the world. There is a risk involved, however, that experience becomes authority, and rather than using experience to start new conversations, they become the only conversations. The use of experience, while valuable, must be accompanied by the critical analysis of the relationship which exists between experience and knowledge. Also, if interdisciplinarity is about 'translation' and 'dialogue' across existing disciplines, then there must be discussion among students who bring their varying perspectives to the classroom. Discussion groups allow students to understand the collective nature of the learning process and the different perspectives from which a problem or an issue can be approached. Students often find the reflexive process and the 'unlearning' of previous teaching and

learning methods, as well as the practice of sharing their experiences and arguments, intimidating and yet stimulating and liberating.

Enriching learning through the use of new pedagogical methods is both complex and challenging. Paolo Freire (1972) spoke of developing 'critical consciousness' and his views of education as the 'practice of freedom' found resonance with feminists who emphasized the need for education to liberate and transform the patriarchal domination of society. Questions have been raised, however, about the effectiveness of education in achieving change in certain areas (Freire 1988). Self-understanding does not necessarily lead to change; women who demonstrate the ability to think critically, to be analytic, to espouse strong feminist views, for example, remain in relationships in which they continue to experience the very conditions they openly denounce. Despite an understanding of patriarchy, despite their experience and critical analysis of male dominance and male privileging, they remain powerless to change this in their personal lives, at the workplace, in the community and the society. In charting new pedagogical directions, therefore, the question becomes – how can the message of gender be made more liberating?

In the late 1980s, intent on having the message disseminated, the women and men who were members of the WDS groups developed a course: 'Introduction to Women's Studies' and despite the lack of status of the WDS groups in the official university structure, negotiated its approval through the then Faculty of Arts and General Studies, which facilitated its administration. It was taught, starting first at St. Augustine in 1986, then at Cave Hill in 1987 and last at Mona in 1989, without compensation, by teams of WDS members and colleagues who recognized the validity and significance of feminist scholarship and who brought their diverse theoretical frameworks, disciplinary understandings and methodological approaches to knowledge generation and knowledge sharing to Women's Studies' classrooms. Although this was valuable, and provided a welcome introduction to gender through a consideration of many themes: in literature, education, history, law, religion and science, integration was difficult

and the pedagogy utilized varied with each presenter. Some of the students' satisfactions and the lecturers' difficulties were documented by Kathleen Drayton and Elaine Fido following the first year (1987/1988) of offering 'Women's Studies: an introductory course' as a university course at the Cave Hill campus. The course was open only to students in the Faculty of Arts and General Studies.

The following are excerpts from that report:

Student satisfaction:

It (the course) made me more aware of the contradictions regarding women in my own society...it also made me speak out more vigorously against these contradictions in other group discussions.

I had a traditional upbringing wherein I saw myself as being subservient to the male. I no longer see myself in that light. I see us as equals. I value myself now for what I am and not what society wants me to be.

Lecturers' difficulties:

The students' questionnaires this year show that they sensed a gap in our ability to cross over disciplines

We sometimes felt that we might have been relying on students to make the links between the different areas of knowledge which we as teachers should have been doing.

Women's Studies requires us to retrain ourselves as scholars and teachers so that we are able to deal at an undergraduate level at least with knowledge and skills which do not fall into our primary area of competence

The issue of integration was a persistent and troubling one, but once the CGDS was established, the faculty member appointed on each campus was able to facilitate that integration and also ensure that the pedagogy was in keeping with that expected in a programme which challenged power relations in a number of different settings, including classrooms. New courses, developed and taught by faculty attached to the CGDS, have consciously sought to address both the interdisciplinary and the pedagogical demands and have attracted students from most faculties. A minor in Gender Studies is now offered on all three campuses¹; cross campus teaching persists and allows for the considerable expertise from each campus to be made available to students on all three campuses.

Charting new directions – creating an interdisciplinary Centre

The CGDS was to be a new structure within the academy, with a unique interdisciplinary mission. Its autonomy as an interdisciplinary Centre was to be paramount and so it was not to be attached to a faculty. It was important, therefore, to devise an appropriate alternative model for approval, offering and administration of its courses and programmes rather than being forced to fit into the structure developed for faculties and which was inappropriate to the Centre's objectives. Special arrangements had to be put in place to allow for the reporting which is a well-established part of the disciplinary faculty structure. The formation of Boards of Studies on each campus has satisfied this objective; the Boards include representatives from different disciplinary areas, the library

and the student body, and reflect the Centre's concerns with 'cross-border' knowledge in its broadest sense.

The CGDS, in its interdisciplinary thrust, has tried to overcome difficulties which are not only administrative and bureaucratic but also academic. Team-teaching, cross-listing of courses, cross-campus teaching, seeking and obtaining agreement for joint appointments to the CGDS as well as to a disciplinary area, and the designation and listing of lecturers who work in gender from a disciplinary perspective as 'associate lecturers' are all strategies which have been employed to ensure the interdisciplinary thrust, but also the maintenance of autonomy. The further education of lecturers through staff fellowships, of graduate students through study grants and the contributions of visiting lecturers, initially from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague and also from each campus, have been sponsored, from 1986, by successive projects of the Netherlands Government, and have allowed for a sharing and cross fertilization of concepts and experiences which have enriched teaching, and enhanced understanding of the scope of the concerns which are part of the gender and development initiative.

Difficulties persist even ten years after institutionalization. The Centre's autonomy is frequently challenged, attempts are made to include the Centre as part of one or other disciplinary area, the Centre is often omitted from mailing lists which contain information sent to faculties but also relevant to its activities; problems even arise in providing computer codes for courses offered by the Centre and which are not faculty based. Although the UWI Strategic Plan 2002 – 2007 lists one of the core values of the institution as 'cultivating multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration,' none of the stated strategies address how this is to be achieved, and the difficulties involved in sustaining an independent interdisciplinary centre within The UWI persist.

The fact that the Centre has been able to obtain significant external grant funding to support some of its activities, the innovative and highly visible scholarship in this area, the requirement by several funding agencies that projects include a consideration of gender, have been factors in overcoming the conservatism and skepticism of some sectors in The University, and have helped to establish the legitimacy of the Centre's work.

At the same time, traditional disciplines have not remained static; they have had to adapt over time to accommodate new thinking and contemporary issues. Many have had to become more interdisciplinary in their approach, and gender is now a component of many courses, and is even completely integrated in some instances in the humanities and the social sciences. Thus, the work of gender studies has exerted a significant impact on the rethinking and transformation of disciplinary discourse, its pedagogy, as well as its research methodology.

Research has flourished and the research findings have fed, naturally, into the teaching carried out by each of the campus units, and into the curriculum design and development process involved in the preparation of new undergraduate courses. Ongoing research has informed new courses such as 'Men and Masculinities in the Caribbean,' those which comprise the taught Master's programme in Gender and Development, the offering of a concentration in this area to students from the Consortium Graduate School of the Social Sciences (discontinued when the Consortium became part of the newly formed Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies), and the supervision of graduate and undergraduate research. Research at the master's and doctoral levels encourages the depth of analysis necessary to add new empirical data to the current record and also to further challenge and critique existing theory.

Teaching and research activities have not been limited to the intra-mural programme; the CGDS has honoured its commitment to reach beyond the boundaries of the academy to the various stakeholders in spreading the theoretical and interdisciplinary message of gender to agencies and organizations regionally. The offerings of the summer Certificate in Gender and Development Studies (1992, 1994, 1996 and 1998 and 2003), included the development and ongoing review of curricula. The new Certificate by Distance Learning, introduced in 2003, has been a major project in curriculum building, partnership and collaboration to develop material for the distance mode yet retain the pedagogical demands of a programme in gender. The Gender in Policy and Planning course, which also involved curriculum design and development carried out within the Centre, has been of benefit to many policy makers, and that programme, along with the significant consultancy work of the CGDS undertaken internationally with the United Nations and other agencies, regionally with CARICOM and Caribbean women's groups, and locally with bureaux of women's affairs and other government agencies have been 'informing processes of national and regional planning', as envisaged by Mathurin Mair. Some of these projects not only involve the Centre in charting new directions through interesting and valuable research, they also ensure the crossing of boundaries back to our origins – supporting the outreach which is a major component of the mission of the Centre, and extending the theoretical analysis to the work of activists.

Conclusion

I have only touched on some of the boundaries and new directions which Gender Studies has crossed and charted, and we persist. After three decades of scholarship and massive volumes of literature, the dynamism of this area ensures its persistence and growth within the academy. Its interdisciplinary nature and its special pedagogy, methodologies for research and insistence on reflexive

thought and critical analysis, will continue to influence scholarship and stimulate societal change. The CGDS, the Caribbean hub of scholarship in this area, remains committed to preserving this tradition of crossing boundaries and charting new directions and to producing active thinkers, researchers and learners, equipped to initiate and effect social and political change within the network of regional and international educational institutions, governments and non-governmental agencies.

My very best wishes as you face the challenges of the next ten years.

¹ A minor in Gender and Development is also offered on the St. Augustine Campus. (Editor's note).

References

- Becher, T. 1989. *Academic tribes and territories*. Bristol, PA: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Boxer, Marilyn J. 2000. Unruly knowledge: Women's studies and the problem of disciplinarity. *NWSA Journal* 12(2), 119-129 .
- Drayton, Kathleen and Elaine Fido. 1988. *Evaluation: Women's Studies – An introductory course*. The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. (Mimeo).
- Dressel, P. and D. Marcus. 1982. *Teaching and learning in college*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Freire, Paolo. 1972. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. 1998. (Inter)disciplinarity and the question of the Women's Studies Ph.D. *Feminist Studies* 24(2), 301–25.
- hooks, bell. 1988. *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Lattuca, Lisa. 2002. Learning interdisciplinarity: Sociocultural perspectives on academic work." Quoted in *The Journal of Higher Education* 73(6): 25-26.
- Lave, J. 1997 "The culture of acquisition and the practice of understanding. In *Situated cognition: Social, semiotic and psychological perspectives*.
- D.Kirshner and J Whitson (eds.) 17–35. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum
- Luke, Carmen and Jennifer Gore,(eds.). 1992. *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall.
- Lusted, David. 1986. Why pedagogy? *Screen* 27(5): 2-14.
- Massiah, Joycelin. 1986. Establishing a programme of women and development studies in the University of the West Indies." *Social and Economic Studies*.35(1):151–197.
- Mathurin Mair, Lucille. 1988. Foreword. *Gender in Caribbean development*.
- Patricia Mohammed and Catherine Shepherd. (eds). UWI Women and Development Studies Project.
- Relke, Diana M.A. 1994. "Feminist pedagogy and the integration of knowledge: toward a more interdisciplinary university." Paper delivered to the Vice-President's Colloquium Series, University of Saskatchewan, 14 February 1994.
- Romero, Mary. 2000. Disciplining the feminist bodies of knowledge: Are we creating or reproducing academic structure? *NWSA Journal*,12(2).
- Stark, Joan and Lisa Lattuca. 1997. *Shaping the college curriculum: Academic plans in action*. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



The Making of Caribbean Feminisms and the WDSG

CGDS 15th Anniversary Opening, Keynote Address, 2008

Patricia Mohammed

Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies and
Campus Coordinator, School for Graduate Studies and Research
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus



Professor Patricia Mohammed delivering the keynote address at the Center for Gender and Development Studies, opening of the 15th Anniversary celebrations and launch of the WDSG Collection and handover to the Main Library (now The Alma Jordan Library), at the Learning and Resource Centre, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, November 2008.

View on the IGDS You Tube Channel: https://youtu.be/wnsir9e8i_o

Keywords: Women and Development Studies Group (WDSG), Caribbean Feminisms, Making of Caribbean Feminisms special collection, feminist activism, gender studies

How to cite

Mohammed, Patricia. 2015. "Making of Caribbean Feminisms." 15th Anniversary Opening Keynote Address. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 171–174

Background

On November 25th 2008, the Centre for Gender and Development Studies launched the Women and Development Studies Group (WDSG) component of the Making of the Caribbean Feminisms Special Collection. This component was collected and compiled by the then CGDS (now IGDS) to hand over to the Main Library (now The Alma Jordan Library, Special Collections) of The University of the West Indies. The first installment of the Bibliographic Dictionary was part of this collection and included interviews of women who have contributed to the making of Caribbean Feminisms over the years. The interviews and their transcriptions were also part of the project submitted to the Main Library. The work on this collection is ongoing.



Group picture, attendees at the Center for Gender and Development Studies, opening of the 15th Anniversary celebrations and launch of the WDSG Collection and handover to the Main Library (now The Alma Jordan Library), at the Learning and Resource Centre, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, November 2008. Left to right: Michele Seeraj, Gaietry Pargass, Camille Antoine, Annette Knights, Margaret Rouse-Jones, Dr. Joan Rawlins, Denise Dummett, Dr. Grace Sirju Charran, Dr. Marjorie Thorpe, Prof. Bridget Bereton, Prof. Patricia Mohammed, Prof. Rhoda Reddock, Glenda Ottley and Prof. Paula Morgan.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



What Love has to do with it? Sexuality, Work and Power in Caribbean Gender Relations

CGDS 15th Anniversary Closing, Keynote Address, 2009

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Head, Centre for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit
Recently Campus Coordinator, School for Graduate Studies and Research
Deputy Principal at the Cave Hill Campus
Now
Principal, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Group at the CGDS 15th Anniversary lecture. Left to right: Dr. Piya Pangsapa, Prof. Patricia Mohammed, Prof. Eudine Barriteau, Prof. Jane Parpart, Prof. Rhoda Reddock

[View on the IGDS You Tube Channel](https://youtu.be/e4ppnG-68J4?list=PLwNx1cuS64LjPfesUKXnAi3-3lyCJhtbD)

<https://youtu.be/e4ppnG-68J4?list=PLwNx1cuS64LjPfesUKXnAi3-3lyCJhtbD>

Keywords: love power, Caribbean gender relations, theory, sexuality, power

How to cite

Barriteau, V. Eudine. 2015. "What's Love Got to Do with It? Sexuality, Work and Power in Caribbean Gender Relations." 15th Anniversary Closing Keynote Address. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 175–178

Introduction

In this lecture Prof. Barriteau applies Anna Jonasdottir's construction of 'love power' towards developing a theory of sexuality and power in the contemporary Commonwealth Caribbean using Barbados as a case study. She engages in a triple play on the meanings of the word 'coming' and anchors these meanings to black feminist theorising of the concept of 'home'.

She explores some of the complications that romantic loving pose for Caribbean women. Of particular interest is the revelation of the continuities between ongoing attempts to subordinate women and the sense of powerlessness that often arises in women's heterosexual, socio-sexual unions. She attempts to track how these complications become extrapolated into wider systemic inequalities, (especially in conditions of work and employment), even as these are simultaneously reflected back onto the individual relationships and their representations of gendered hierarchies of power and inequalities.

Pivotal to the analysis is the centrality of work in Caribbean women's lives, as they navigate the intersections of the public and the private, production and reproduction. The challenge is to work backwards and forwards from the dynamics of that basic union (played out in private, intimate spaces such as the home), to contemporary developments in Caribbean political economy.



Audience at the public lecture "What love has to do with it? Sexuality, work and power in Caribbean gender relations" delivered by Professor Violet Eudine Barriteau, IGDS 15th Anniversary closing celebration and commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, November 2009, Daaga Auditorium, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus.



Inescapable Entanglements: Notes on Caribbean Feminist Engagement

IGDS 20th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2013

Alissa Trotz

Associate Professor in Women and Gender Studies and
Director, Undergraduate Caribbean Studies Program,
New College, University of Toronto and
Associate Faculty, IGDS, Nita Barrow Unit
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Prof. Alissa Trotz, delivering the keynote address, at the IGDS 20th Anniversary celebration, Learning Resource Centre, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, November 2013.

Keywords: Caribbean feminism, IGDS 20th Anniversary, keynote, Caribbean activism, gender studies, women in academia

How to cite

Trotz, Alissa. 2015. Inescapable Entanglements: Notes on Caribbean Feminist Engagement." 20th Anniversary Keynote Address. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 179–194

Introduction

It is an incredible honour to have been invited to share this twentieth birthday of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies. I would like to thank the faculty, staff and students for their amazing warmth and hospitality. Let me take this opportunity to also recognize Professor Barbara Bailey, whose commitment to gender equality is manifested not just in her contribution as Regional Coordinator of the IGDS, but in the work she has accomplished nationally, regionally and internationally. In particular, Professor Bailey's commitment to education and the foundational texts in Caribbean Gender Studies that she has co-authored/co-edited are an amazing legacy for generations of scholars to come.

We know that the IGDS was a dimension of women's and feminist activism in the Caribbean, from WAND to CAFRA, from Sistren to NUDE. We had taken our struggle to the academy, making these institutional spaces the site of our demands for recognition. Today the IGDS boasts a regional programme with a superb publication record, training undergraduate and graduate students, initiating collaborations with academic partners and communities. It extends itself to wider communities, whether it is the open access feminist journal at St Augustine, the work at Mona with Haitian colleagues after the earthquake to develop a certificate programme in Gender Studies, or the Summer Institute in Gender Studies at Cave Hill which brings together university students, farmers, civil servants, community activists and police officers from across the region.

But I do not want to run the risk of daring to name a tradition, happily an impossible task, for it is immense, non-linear and incredibly diverse. Instead I hope that the richness of the well from which I draw and the intellectual debt we owe to so many of you here today becomes evident in my reflections.

The establishment of the IGDS offered visibility at a moment in which free market fundamentalism was the new mantra, with its well-documented and devastating

consequences for women. The collapse of the Berlin Wall inaugurated end of history narratives, although in the Caribbean our end of history moment came with the implosion of the Grenada Revolution just thirty years ago last month. When a doctor gives you medicine and the ailment persists or get worse, the standard practice is to at least change the prescription. Yet three decades later we continue to take the same bitter pill of structural adjustment. The moment of institutionalization, then, came with its own urgent imperatives, underlining the necessity of the work done, being done and which we are still to do.

And it is an uphill battle. We see this in the anxieties about boys and men—a critical concern, to be sure, but one that has far too frequently diagnosed male marginalization as the consequence of women's achievements, as Eudine Barribeau has shown. In the face of the work being done to increase women's political participation, we can almost taste the backlash. Three weeks ago, a Government Minister in Barbados, responding to criticism by the female opposition leader, stated, "We're now only left to see her strip naked and run down Broad Street in her attempt to get attention." In Belize, a senior male parliamentarian unleashed a verbal assault on the only female parliamentarian that included references to male genitals and suggestions that she was "asking for it." At this year's Gender Institute in Barbados, students spoke of a calypso on the topic of women sacking men, where the word 'sack' suggested not only that women owed their rise through the ranks to the performance of sexual favours (so powerfully described by Singing Sandra in *Die With My Dignity*), but that they were now on top, with the power to both fire and sexually harass men. So much of our popular culture reinforces this sense of women out of place, like the glorification of alcoholism and domestic violence in the chutney song *Rum Till I Die* or the calypso hit, *Kick In She Back Door*.

This work is being done in a climate of public cutbacks, creating competition for scarce resources on a turf that is seeing NGOs playing an increasingly important role. While many NGOs are doing extremely valuable work, we know too that we have been forced to ask difficult questions about the consequences of an ever

growing reliance on donor funding, requiring us to constantly navigate the script that others would write for us. The identification of gender as a 'priority area' brings a certain visibility, but an approach that thinks of projects with finite ends, definite boundaries and carefully calculated numbers of beneficiaries will never square with the complicated, messy trajectories of movement building.

At a public lecture at the Caribbean Studies Association in Grenada this past June, Merle Collins suggested that we need "revolutionary thinking to grapple with the contradictions that shape us." Today I want to bring that spirit of revolutionary praxis to reflect on these contradictions, via a detour through a few cases that have recently made their way through national, regional and hemispheric legal systems. As feminist legal scholar Tracy Robinson has pointed out, law is "...a significant medium through which the Caribbean is imagined as a space to which some belong and not others." If we think of our efforts as drawing on our deepest desires to create what Guyanese poet Martin Carter memorably described as 'a free community of valid persons,' then indeed the law is a key site of the struggle for women's rights and gender equality. Engagement, however, requires us to grapple with some major contradictions. This is not a detailed exposition of matters before the courts, but a reflection that variously highlights aspects of a legal judgment, a context that haunts it, and the representational issues surrounding a case, thinking aloud about the lessons here for our commitments to gender equality across the institutional spaces we encounter (and I would like to thank my colleague from the Faculty of Law here, Arif Bulkan, whose work relates directly to what I am going to say).

The first case has given the faltering regional integration movement a much-needed boost. On Friday October 4, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) rendered its decision in the case of Shanique Myrie, a Jamaican national who, having been detained, humiliated, made to undergo a body cavity search and ultimately deported by the Barbados immigration authorities, filed an action against the State of Barbados. The CCJ awarded Myrie damages, upholding her

right (and the right of CARICOM nationals) to enter CARICOM Member States hassle-free under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

When I first heard the judgment my immediate impulse was to think of challenging students to popularize the decision, like creating postcards that could be made cheaply and handed out to travellers at airports informing Caribbean folk of their rights. Several innovative mechanisms are already in place for this kind of dissemination practice: Gabrielle Hosein's introductory Women and Gender Studies class that incorporates an activist component; Verene Shepherd's radio show, Talking History; Carolyn Cooper's weekly column in the Sunday Gleaner; Patricia Mohammed's engagement with the communicative power of film; CODE RED for Gender Justice's use of social media to inform, exchange ideas and strategize (what Honor Ford-Smith calls the modern day bush telegram).

There is much to celebrate, beginning always with the courage and determination of Shanique Myrie. But I want to encourage a discussion that can accommodate both celebration and the lingering concerns that remain. The most obvious tempering of our joy comes from the earlier decision of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Dominican Republic, to potentially strip citizenship from hundreds of thousands of persons of Haitian descent who were born in the country as far back as 1929. This outrage must be challenged for what it is: an attack on the citizenship rights of a group of Dominicans that comes out of a long history of discriminatory treatment of Haitians and Haitian-descended Dominicans. But our opposition should also be the occasion for us to avoid concluding that we are superior in light of the CCJ ruling. I am not sure that the rest of the Caribbean is so completely different from the DR in the degrading treatment that Haitians and Haitian-descendants receive. We are, after all, the very same CARICOM family that requires Haitians to have visas in hand before they set foot in many other member states, and this despite the fact that Haiti has been a full member of the Caribbean Community since 2002. Just for starters, will the CCJ judgment affect our own thinking on this matter?

We might also reflect on the significance of the Government of Jamaica joining the case as an intervener, which in layperson's terms I understand means a third party with an interest in the case. We might think about how to read the official national interest in the violation of Shanique Myrie, against a context in which the regional integration narrative is also about whether Jamaica is short-changed by CARICOM, a conversation that goes all the way back to the failed Federation but comes up today in relation to subjects like trade imbalances and the fate of Air Jamaica. In short, did the case provide an opportunity to present one country as an aggrieved member of a regional family, a national body that had been violated, disappearing the embodied violations that Shanique Myrie experienced?

Relatedly, I have been grappling with my discomfort with the way in which Shanique Myrie is described in the regional press as ushering in "a victory for all CARICOM citizens." True, this decision officially affirms intra-regional travel practices, but we need to reflect carefully on what all this symbolism means. To offer just one example one columnist concluded "...while the case gave redress to Myrie for her grievances, it was far more significant for its establishment of the rights of the people of CARICOM and for eliminating misconceptions of the supremacy of national sovereignty over Community Law." Far more? What does it mean for gender justice that in the immediate afterlife of the case, the claim of a general victory can so swiftly sidestep some very specific injustices that happened to Ms Myrie because of who she was taken to be? The physical sexual violations and psychic trauma that Ms Myrie experienced are part of the story and no less significant. The fact that she had to relive all of this before the entire Caribbean, through whispered speculations about her real motives for travelling to Barbados, are part of the story and no less significant. Shanique Myrie has put a face to the gendered discrimination and sexual violations that so many women have historically endured at regional border crossings. That it was not an issue before the CCJ, and that it continues to be side-lined in the court of public opinion, should not mean it is any less significant or that it does not matter.

But it is also true that Caribbean women are not at equal risk of being made to strip, squat, bend over, finger-raped and humiliated at regional border points. We have seen little critical examination of the class and gender dimensions of this case. We might well ask whether there is an unspoken investment in gendered respectability in our rush to celebrate Shanique Myrie as a Caribbean Rosa Parks. As a not insignificant aside, consider the difference between the dominant idea of Rosa Parks we are familiar with, as the diminutive mother of the Civil Rights movement, and the Rosa Parks who was a highly active member of the NAACP and attended meetings of the Communist Party. And fewer of us have heard of Claudette Colvin, told to give up her seat on a bus nine months before Rosa Parks. We should pause to consider whether the fact that Colvin was an unmarried pregnant teenager has anything to do with her story not being widely told.

In relation to the Myrie case, then, we should not forget the online commentaries about whether she was really a sex worker, opinions that will not disappear just because a judgment has been tendered. There is an insightful blog by Annie Paul, asking why a Jamaican news story covering the case found it necessary to describe Ms Myrie as 'fair-skinned, beautiful and well-dressed.' Paul concluded that style was substance, and that establishing gendered and sexual respectability was everything: What have we required of Shanique Myrie, and how has this silenced her yet again? Meanwhile the Caribbean Sex Workers Coalition has been calling for the right to freedom of movement and migration with dignity. What are the consequences for their struggles of our preoccupations with respectability that turn on policing the female body, on drawing lines in the sand between deserving and undeserving women? What will the CCJ decision mean for their bodies at border points?

Staying with this question of respectability brings me to the second case. On Friday September 6th, a judgment was delivered on a motion that had been filed in Guyana's High Court in 2010, and which challenged a law under which seven persons were charged with dressing in female attire for an improper purpose

under Guyana's Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act. Four of the seven arrested persons and the Society for Sexual Orientation Discrimination challenged the law as violating several fundamental constitutional rights. In his judgment, the Chief Justice awarded damages on the basis of the violation of the litigants' constitutional rights to due process. However, while he emphasized that there is nothing to prohibit "a person wearing an 'attire' for the purpose of expressing or accentuating his or her personal sexual orientation in public," the learned Chief Justice upheld the law in its entirety, rejecting all arguments about its unconstitutionality. Thus, cross-dressing remains illegal if worn for an improper purpose. What is given with one hand is swiftly taken away with the other.

There is much that can be said about this case, including how the vague term 'improper purpose' leaves the police with extensive discretionary powers in a context of widespread homophobia and transphobia,. Today, however, I want to comment briefly on the origin of these laws, developed in the late nineteenth century, and protected in the post-independence Caribbean by saving law clauses. A clue as to their proper intention is supplied by some of the other offences that remain illegal today, like "beating or shaking a mat [in public] between seven in the morning and six in the afternoon"; or "flying any kite or playing at any game" in public. Historian Diana Paton reminds us that "the vagrancy laws in the Caribbean, including those in the Guyanese Summary Jurisdiction Act [where the cross-dressing charges come from], date from a period shortly after slavery when the colonial authorities were looking for new ways to control the population...and...were mostly derived from Victorian ideas of respectability and proper behaviour." Against this backdrop, the constitutional challenge to the cross-dressing law confronts us with the exclusionary legacies of our colonial past that haunt our lives and laws today, marking some as more deserving and equal than others.

At work here is the intricate relationship between law, discipline and order, a project of class respectability that is gendered, sexualized, racialized. This anxious business of policing boundaries. Of keeping bodies in their place. Of dividing us from each other. We know this all too well. We do it ourselves and we do it to

ourselves. We instruct our children: Tie the heifer but let the bull run free. The threatening admonition of a grown man to a gay teenager walking by, 'Hey you, yuh better learn to speak wid yuh man voice.' In the court judgment we see this logic at work in the efforts to defend binary notions of men and women, and of male attire and female attire, all in the face of seven transgendered applicants whose very presence in the courtroom offered an embodied rebuke to the violence and blinkered limits of this thinking. They reveal what Aaron Kamugisha refers to as the cruel coloniality of citizenship that persists in our contemporary Caribbean, the uneven landscape framing our desires to belong.

How to keep a focus on futures beyond coloniality, while navigating the ways it seeps into the spaces that we inhabit, the inescapable entanglement? This brings me to the final case, the Saramaka People v. Suriname. In his book *Rainforest Warriors*, anthropologist Richard Price describes how the Saramaka Maroons, fed up with massive concessions being given to mining and logging companies by the Government of Suriname, took their fight to protect the rainforest that they had inhabited for some 300 years to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and won in 2008, although the reference by some to this landmark judgment as securing "territorial rights...for all of the Maroons and indigenous people" was somewhat premature, given the decision on a case less than one year later in neighbouring Guyana. That judgment, which found for a gold miner and against an Amerindian community, concluded that if mining operations were really affecting the claimants, they would simply have moved to other areas.

In Suriname, Richard Price describes how the Saramaka produced maps for the court that offered a detailed inventory of the territory they had occupied for hundreds of years. At one level, we might read the decision in their favour narrowly, in ways that confirm the satisfaction of legal standards of evidence to satisfy a claim of ownership. And surely this is not to be treated lightly. But, and this is what I want to underline here, this is not the entire story. There is a much deeper lesson. Audre Lorde (who passed twenty years ago last year) beautifully lays out the stakes for us: "Am I altering your aura, your dreams, or am I merely moving you

to temporary and reactive action? And even though the latter is no mean task, it is one that must be seen within the context of a need for true alteration of the very foundation of our lives." Price describes the Saramakas sacred connection to the land thus: "From the varied and complex ritual guards hung in fruit trees to prevent theft to the disposition of protective and curative plans around houses, from the snake gods and forest spirits who share garden spaces with Saramaka men and women to the river and sea gods who share their village landing-places... the relationship of people and their territory is rich, ongoing, systematic... historically, spiritually, and materially." And in Guyana, an Amerindian woman from a community challenging mining claims complained that "Those who claim to represent us should know how indigenous peoples are connected to their lands. Instead they act like they are clueless." What we see in all this is the strategic deployment of the law, which in the case of the Saramaka involved a transnational network of 'experts' that included sophisticated GIS mapping devices; 21st century Anansi so to speak!

The vexed question is, do we change the law (or enter an institution), or does the law/institution work its violence on us? It seems like a Faustian bargain, having to make oneself speak a language that reproduces the relations of domination in the first place—I know my colleagues working on the reparations issue must be thinking of this as well, figuring out a mechanism that delivers justice without reproducing the original obscenity of commodification of lives. What really stays with me is how the Saramaka seem to have engaged legal systems while at the same time indexing a form of belonging over and beyond the law that anticipates a future beyond coloniality. The maps to which they refer operate on a completely different register from the ones that the state privileges, with its emphasis on bringing 'development' to these communities. Rather than attempt to establish land as a commodity to be possessed, mastered, used up and then discarded, these Maroon (and indigenous) maps reveal a dense web of sacred obligations and relations with the land and with others. They are about knowing not owning, about the properties of land and not land as property. The deeper lesson goes well beyond what any legal judgment could ever deliver; as Toni

Morrison memorably puts it, these ways of storying the land offer maps “without a mandate for conquest.”

I was a child growing up in Guyana when members of the Wai Wai community came to town to construct the Umana Yana in our capital city in 1972. If you google ‘Umana Yana’ you will ‘learn’ that it is a “conical thatched palm hut,” and that it was originally built in Georgetown as a VIP lounge and recreational space. In fact in Wai Wai villages it is a meeting place, and as I have only recently learned it is also “the house-where-people-live,” a concept that denotes the reproductive energies of both the cosmos/upper worlds and the uterus. I invoke it here respectfully, as a tentative and generative metaphor for feminist engagement, framing our coming together to contemplate the fundamental questions posed by these indigenous struggles, struggles that to be honest we are yet to fully embrace.

Returning to where I opened this talk, in which the moment of the creation of Gender and Development Studies as a legitimate object of academic engagement was the same moment of the consolidation of neoliberalist globalization, let me suggest that these indigenous struggles offer critical insights into what it means to grapple with contradiction. How might we learn from and with them? We might seek out connections with the determined efforts of Caribbean women in the 1980s who led the challenge to structural adjustment programmes and free trade zones, as Rhoda Reddock has documented. We might ask whether opposition to land exploitation resonates with other movements, like the aluminium smelter protests or Highway Re-Route right here in Trinidad and Tobago. We might relate our insistence on the importance of caring labour with the following description an Amerindian woman gives about why she is protesting a mining claim: “I want fish and farine and cassava and food I grow on my own land. It is what I am accustomed to. I want to take my children and show them this plant is for diarrhoea and that is for pain or that is for cuts. We want to work the lands.” In these indigenous struggles we are seeing a comprehensive critique of the inhumanity of our contemporary situation, of a

system that sacrifices resources and bodies and dreams to profit, but a struggle that also offers a way of knowing and forms of relation that might lead us to each other and to ourselves.

Today, we inhabit the contradictions of institutionalization, of staking out interdisciplinary integrity for Gender Studies while simultaneously facing the territorializing imperatives that come with disciplinary specialization. We live in a time of rising education costs and debates over the introduction of student fees. A time where globally lipservice is paid to critical thinking while increasingly the humanities has to do daily battle to justify its existence. Where we work miracles in a context of scarce resources but do not want to be celebrated as indefatigable miracle women—that simply leads to more taking for granted of our time and labour. Where the model is increasingly one of what Law Professor Margaret Thornton recently referred to as the technopreneur, a highly masculinised model of the high flying, independent and successful academic.

The inescapable entanglement. It is impossible, and naïve, to disengage. These institutions are also the site of our activism. But as anthropologist George Mentore asks, “How to continue the engagement and not lose the Human sense of Being?” Operating strategically, like Anansi. Recognising with Audre Lorde what risks are worth taking in our efforts to “alter the true foundation of our very lives.” And always remembering the struggles of others that got us here, the foundation stones of institutional edifices that seem at times as if they float on air. The legal cases I referenced this afternoon are just one part of the story; just as crucial are the people and movements that preceded them: the women traders, domestics, small farmers, family members who traverse the Caribbean; LGBT activists; indigenous mobilizations. We must put all of this back in.

We put this back in because we know that a policy, a memo, a law are not enough without our constant vigilance—we do not know what sanctions are possible if a country wilfully disobeys the CCJ ruling on Shanique Myrie; the cross-

dressings ruling underlined how difficult it is to take on entrenched homophobia and transphobia; in Suriname the ruling of the Inter-American court continues to be disregarded. Elsewhere, organisations like the National Union of Domestic Workers join forces internationally to secure ILO Convention 189 establishing labour standards for domestic work, only to have to continue to agitate for its ratification across the region; we face a rising tide of domestic violence and sexual offences in a region that has among the most advanced legislation on these matters in the world.

We put this back in to remind ourselves of what are we working for and with whom. Norman Girvan's remarkable example of policy recolonisation in Jamaica where the IMF required the government to provide daily reports "on 13 items, weekly reports on 6 items; monthly reports on 22 items, and quarterly reports on 10 items," makes a compelling case for the importance of genuine accountability to the people of the Caribbean. We put this back in because the price of forgetting is a narrow careerism that deepens the distortions of our political culture, where a female Minister of Education can say that women should dress properly if they do not want to give temptation to men. Where a female Minister of Human Services, addressing allegations that young women had been blackmailed into performing sexual acts with young men that were distributed on DVDs and the internet, can state that on the basis of still photographs she had seen, this all looked consensual. We put this back in because advancement of a few at the expense of the majority can never count as true liberation.

And finally, we put this back in because there is an African proverb that says that when someone dies, they only truly cease to exist when we stop talking about them. Storying the movements keeps the energies and the aspirations alive, informing the work of new feminist generations, from Code Red for Gender Justice out of Barbados to the diasporic journeys of Jahajee Sisters in New York, who take the courage of our indentured foremothers as their starting point for connection. In our deepest moments of frustration or just plain tiredness, it reminds us that it is

okay to pause, to allow ourselves to be rejuvenated by the knowledge that so many others are on the journey as well.

We put this back in
because
we
cannot
survive and be whole
without it.

On this 20th anniversary, I close with a poem that Mahadai Das has bequeathed to us. She died in 2003, tragically, at 48 (this is the tenth anniversary of her passing); poet Ian McDonald says that “her heart broke and her mind raged.” Ever so gently, in a wistful and hopeful tone, she offers us herself as the lesson, a portal through which we might glimpse a whole, integrated, nurturing and returning cosmos, where passion and the stubborn certainty of a flickering but protected light guide our journey. It is within our grasp.

If I should ever die
Return me to the fire
If I should live again
Return me to myself.
Heartfire
flame in hurricane-lamp
Outside, into this storm.

Congratulations, once again. And thank you for inviting me to share this week's celebrations with you all.



Attendees at the opening of the IGDS, 20th anniversary conference and public lecture, Learning Resource Centre, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, November 2013.

Left to right, Back row: Professor Clement Sankat, Alissa Trotz, Jeanette Morris, Prof. Verene Shepherd, Peggy Antrobus, Prof. Rhoda Reddock, Prof. Mark Figuero. Front row: Dr. Grace Sirju Charran, Prof. Bridget Bereton, Dr. Piya Pangsapa, Prof. Jocelyn Massiah, Prof. Barbara Bailey, Prof. Elsa Leo-Rhynie, Prof. Violet Eudine Barriteau, Prof. Patricia Mohammed.



Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean

CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper No. 1, April 1998

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Lecturer and Head

CGDS, Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Now

Professor of Gender and Public Policy and

Principal, The UWI Cave Hill Campus

ISBN: 976 8083 07 5

Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS)
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper Series

Editorial Committee

Dr Eudine Barriteau, Director, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill

Dr Elizabeth Best, Part-time Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, The UWI, Cave Hill

Dr Alan Cobley, Head, Department of History, The UWI, Cave Hill

Dr Neville Duncan: Senior Lecturer, Department of Government, Sociology and Social Work, The UWI, Cave Hill

Ms Maxine McClean, Lecturer, Department of Management Studies, The UWI, Cave Hill

Dr Judith Soares, Tutor/Coordinator, Women and Development Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill

Ms Gemma Tang Nain, Deputy Programme Manager, Caribbean Community Development and Women's Affairs, CARICOM

Editorial Assistant

Ms Rhonda Walcott, Research Assistant, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill

Keywords: governance, local government, CARICOM, Commonwealth Caribbean, women and leadership, gender

List of Tables

Table 1: Basic Socio-economic Indicators for Commonwealth Caribbean

Table 2: Amerindian Population 1994

Table 3: Percentage of Female Headed Households

Table 4: Women Candidates in National Elections in Leeward Islands

Table 5: General Elections in Jamaica 1962 - 1983

Table 6A: Participation in Parliamentary Assemblies 1980

Table 6B: Participation in Parliamentary Assemblies 1985

Table 6C: Participation in Parliamentary Assemblies 1992

Table 7 Participation of Women in Political Decision-making

Table 8A: Participation in Local Representatives Bodies in 1980

Table 8B: Participation in Local Representatives Bodies in 1985

Table 8C: Participation in Local Representatives Bodies in 1992

Table 9: Members of Regional Councils by Gender

Table 10: Parliamentary Representatives by Gender

Table 11: Local Government Elections 1969 - 1986, Jamaica

How to cite

Barriteau, Violet Eudine. 2015. "Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 195-244

Author's Note

Undertaking the research for this paper proved to be a challenging exercise. A theme such as 'The Experience of Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean' assumes that information on local government exists and what is perhaps lacking is how women have fared in local government structure. Instead I found there is a paucity of information on local government in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Very little documented, accessible information exists. Library searches and different types of consultations and referrals reveal inadequate sources of information on women and local government. I was forced to modify the title of the paper because at this phase we do not yet know the experiences of women and local government.

Attempting to find material to write this paper underscored the negligence accorded to this aspect of political participation by political scientists and other researchers. Feminist researchers, political scientists and historians have yet to address the area of women and local government. To do justice to this inquiry, investigations into primary sources are required. Information on women and local government must be unearthed and analysed. This requires visits to countries for archival searches, assessments of original documents and interviews with key players. In the absence of all of these, I have attempted an outline of the profile and experiences of women in local government drawing on the experiences of women and political participation at the national level.

I wish to thank my staff for their generous assistance in putting together this paper. They are Mrs Veronica Jones, Ms Sherry Asgill, Ms Rhonda Walcott and Mrs Catherine Gibson. I appreciate your dedication and professionalism.

Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean¹

From the feminist point of view the questions of women's collective reality and how to change it merges with the question of women's point of view and how to know it²

The feminist struggle to reconfigure identities and gender relationships is an essential moment in the reconstruction of the institutions of civil and political society... Indeed conventional gender roles are so deeply entrenched in our identities that they blind us to the political injustices which are only graspable with the shifts in these roles³

Introduction and background

The Commonwealth Caribbean comprises twelve independent countries of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. It includes four British dependencies with limited self government. These are Anguilla, The British Virgin Islands, The Turks and Caicos Islands and Montserrat. The two remaining full British dependencies in the Commonwealth Caribbean are Bermuda and The Cayman Islands.

The Commonwealth Caribbean is geographically a small region with a total population in 1992 of just over five and a half million people. Only Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have populations that exceed one million. See Table 1.

The United Nations 1995 Human Development Report classify Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago as having high Human Development Indices [UNDP 1995: 226]. Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Lucia and St Vincent are ranked with a Medium Development Index. The majority of countries are ranked as middle income with a per capita GNP between US\$696 - 8,625.00. The exceptions are The Bahamas which is the only Commonwealth Caribbean country ranked with a high per capita income US\$8,625 or greater; and Guyana listed as low income with a per capita income of US\$695 or lower [UNDP 1995].

Table 1
Basic socioeconomic indicators for
Commonwealth Caribbean countries
1989-92

	Population 1992	%F	%M	GNP/Capita (US\$) 1990	External debt service ratio (%) 1990	Life expectancy at birth (years)1991	Infant mortality rate per 1000, 1990	Daily calorie intake 1989
The Bahamas	255,095	51.0	49.0	11,510	2.3	69	25	2,761
Barbados	262,653	52.1	47.9	6,540	13.7	77	10	3,279
Antigua & Barbuda	85,700	n.a	n.a	4,600	4.7	73	19	2,222
Trinidad & Tobago	1,283,000	50.1	49.9	3,470	19.0	71	25	2,853
St.. Kitts and Nevis	41,800	n.a	n.a	3,330	2.5	69	36	2,609
Grenada	91,200	n.a	n.a	2,120	7.3	70	31	2,706
Belize	189,392	49.1	50.9	1,970	4.1	67	45	2,656
Dominica	71,500	50.2	49.8	1,940	1.6	75	16	2,810
St.. Lucia	135,975	51.5	48.5	1,900	2.8	71	19	2,595
St.. Vincent & the Grenadines	107,600	51.0	49.0	1,610	31.0	70	22	2,604
Jamaica	2,460,000	50.9	49.1	1,510	-	73	16	2,609
Guyana	717,458	50.8	49.2	370	-	64	51	2,710
Turks & Caicos	12,300	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	74	2	n.a
Anguilla	9,700	n.a	n.a	n.a	1.0	75	5.3	n.a
British Virgin Is	17,000	48.7	51.3	n.a	n.a	69	29.8	n.a
Montserrat	11,000	50.3	49.7	n.a	4.7	71	11	n.a

Source: Towards Equity in Development: A report on the status of women in sixteen Commonwealth Caribbean Countries [Mondesire and Dunn 1995].

Race and Ethnicity

Socio-economic and demographic features merge with racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics that are relevant to understanding women's political participation in the region. A racially mixed population is one of the legacies of our history. Afro Caribbean people dominate in the populations of The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean countries. In Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana the population is almost equally composed of Indo Caribbean and Afro Caribbean people. Forty nine to fifty one percent of the population of each country is of Asian, East Indian ancestry. In Trinidad and Tobago East Indian women were 39.6% of the total female population in 1980 [Mohammed 1988: 382]. However, East Indian labourers are also part of the migration legacy of Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. If Indo Caribbean women constitute a significant percentage of the population of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, can we expect their proportionate participation for women involved in local government? If not, how does culture and ethnicity complicate political participation and skewed gender relations? In Barbados, Barbadians of European origin form about 4% of the population [Barbados 1992]. There are also Caribbean citizens of Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish and French descent [Mondesire and Dunn 1995:13].

Belize is probably the most diverse country ethnically. Its population comprises Creoles, Mestizos, Garinagu or Garifuna, Mayan and Ketchi Mayan, and Mennonites [Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 13]. The population of African ancestry accounts for 36.4%, but the Mestizo population is the largest single segment, at 43.6% [Belize 1991].

Indigenous peoples constitute small but significant numbers in the population of Guyana, Belize, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. See Table 2. In all these countries they are among the poorest of the population. They suffer

from shortages of basic infrastructure and have marginal access to the resources of the state [Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 15].

These populations include constituencies of women we know very little about. We need dialogue and research with indigenous women so that their concerns can reshape the political agenda. For instance, the Carib territory in Dominica represents one of the oldest forms of local government in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Its functioning and the place of women within it is extremely critical to our understanding of local government. Its existence simultaneously blends issues of race, ethnicity and gender with the rights of indigenous Caribbean people.

Table 2 Amerindian population 1994	
COUNTRY	POPULATION
Guyana	40,619
Dominica	3,400
St.. Vincent/Grenadines	6,000
Belize	26,000
Trinidad/Tobago	400
TOTAL	76,419

Source: Towards Equity in Development: A report on the
the status of women

Conceptual Issues on Gender and Governance

Commonwealth Caribbean countries have political structures derived from the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy. Elections are held regularly and changes of government are relatively peaceful although Jamaica has experienced some political violence during campaign periods leading up to general elections. The 1996 general elections in Guyana have been followed by political protests, street demonstrations, a CARICOM investigation and a rejection of the election results by the opposition PNC because of alleged widespread irregularities, some of which have been documented.

By the 1950's many of the structural obstacles to Caribbean⁴ women's participation in the political processes of classical democracy had been removed⁵. At the beginning of that decade the British colonial authorities widened the narrow franchise of earlier decades to give the vote to all women and men 21 years and over [Emmanuel 1979:1].

Yet possessing a *de jure* right to vote and to stand for elections has not produced a *de facto* inclusion and representation of women at all levels in Caribbean political systems. It has not transcended national government structures to be a common feature at the level of local government. Women in commonwealth Caribbean countries continue to experience a combination of subsystemic material and ideological barriers that thwart their full participation in the practices of governance nationally and at the community level.

Women and men committed to participatory democratic structures regard local government as one of the main institutions for reconstructing civil and political society. Bishnu Ragoonath defines local government as self government involving the administration of public affairs in each locality by a body of representatives. According to him it is a tier of government separate and distinct from central government but working in close partnership with it [Commonwealth Secretariat 1994: 2].

There are conceptual and ideological points of departure in those views of local government. In reality local government functions in the Caribbean to achieve several objectives. Where elections are held it maintains the presence of competing political parties at the constituency/community level. Through local government, parties can attempt to ensure their bases of support are not eroded while they pursue more global developmental policies. Local government also manages delivery of public goods and services and is presumed to do so more efficiently than central or national administrations. However local government in the Caribbean has not yet realised its potential for introducing more participatory, democratic processes.

A commitment to engender local government attempts to harness political will to remove, or at the least close the political gaps between women's *de jure* right to participate in the governing of their communities and their *de facto* experience of continuing albeit varying, levels of exclusion. It is an attempt to ensure that women make an input into the formulation of policy and the allocation of resources at the level where the state and civil society are in constant contact. Local government policy should be influenced by the people who have to live its prescriptions. Given our disproportionately high incidence of female headed households as revealed in Table 3, the circumstances of women's lives should influence local government policy as it should policy at the national level. Many policies introduced by local and national governments will affect women immediately.

As tax payers women form an important part of the tax base. If social services are reduced or expanded, as clients of these services policy makers must be aware of women's needs. As the main providers in the families they head there should be mechanisms for women to feed their concerns into the making of public policy. Finally as government workers who will deliver many of the public goods and services at the local level, government needs to draw on the service of women as public workers.

TABLE 3

**PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS
IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES
(1980, 1985 AND 1992)**

COUNTRY	1980	1985	1992
Anguilla	n.a	n.a	33.2
Antigua/Barbuda	n.a	n.a	n.a
Bahamas	n.a	34.5	35.8
Barbados	43.9	n.a	43.5
Belize	22.4	28.5	22.0
Br. Virgin Islands	25.4	n.a	28.7
Dominica	37.7	n.a	39.7
Grenada	45.2	n.a	42.7
Guyana	24.4	28.3	29.5
Jamaica	38.1	29.8	42.0
Montserrat	42.1	n.a	40.0
St.Kitts/Nevis	45.6	n.a	43.9
St.. Lucia	38.8	n.a	40.4
St.. Vincent/Grenadines	42.4	n.a	39.5
Trinidad/Tobago	25.0	n.a	26.5
Turks/Caicos	32.4	n.a	n.a

SOURCE: Towards Equity in Development: A report on the status of women

Women as citizens represent more than themselves when they negotiate or are denied negotiations for inclusion in local government. Caribbean women also represent a constituency of children and older dependents. Their needs and political relevance are not always articulated as primary citizens with an equal claim on the resources of the political system. Engendering local government strives to give women a collective political voice, to create a strong political base for policies that are just, equitable and people centred. Without a strong political base, institutions for women will be anchored in interventions based on goodwill and patronage [Govender 1997: 2] rather than the right to stake a claim as equal citizens.

Where does the required political will come from? It must come from women and men committed to exposing political spaces and political processes as gendered and biased against women rather than gender neutral. Many of the regional reports and papers on engendering local government assume an *a priori* commitment to equality by deploying the terminology of >gender= and >engendering=. I explore and discuss the genealogy of gender and the conceptual confusion of the concept elsewhere [Barriteau 1996]. Suffice it to note that gender analysis goes beyond sex-disaggregated data and filling the blanks in analyses of the organisation of social life for areas lacking in information on women. While noting gender has a pre-feminist genealogy in biology, linguistics and grammar, the concept functions in feminist discourse and its applied fields, to reveal how the structures within the social and political world produce and reproduce male domination and female subordination [Meehan 1995: 1]. Once we recognise engendering government constitutes an attempt to reverse women's political and societal subordination we are better equipped to understand why its implementation is fraught with difficulties.

The concept and practice of governance also bears some discussion. Governance is pivotal in any assessment and discussion of engendering local government. Neville Duncan insists that governance must include the most legitimate instruments of democracy. That is, participation and consensus

building [Commonwealth Secretariat 1994: 20]. He goes on to add good governance must include: human rights, an adequate notion of democratic functioning, honest and competent public administration, an efficient public service, and sound management processes [Commonwealth Secretariat 1994: 20]. However, citizens can come close to realising this wish list for the functioning of local government without the empowerment of women or the engendering of the processes of governing.

Engendering local government requires altering power relations to ensure greater political participation by women. Governance facilitates participation that must enable women to initiate actions and determine outcomes that seek to change existing social, political and economic systems and norms in order to equalize asymmetric relations of gender [IWTC 1997: 18]. Engendering local government is an exercise in reconstituting institutions and relationships of civil and political society to achieve gender justice.

To engender local government is an attempt to change the balance of political power at the community level to be more inclusive of women and gender issues. It tries to correct for earlier processes of citizenship that viewed women as politically irrelevant. The existence of local government promises a greater democratisation of governmental structures and greater power sharing in the practices of governing. It implies a devolution of state power from concentrated national centres to diverse local peripheries. Engendering local government therefore requires we use the conceptual tools of governance and power sharing to analyze women's experiences in local government.

Engendering local government through power sharing and governance forces us to consider two main issues:

1. Expansion of the capacity of the state to manage its affairs by empowering women through the process of

greater democratisation.

2. The linking of the state and civil society to transform the state from within [Jain 1996: 9].

Empowering women through political participation constitutes qualitative and quantitative change in Caribbean political systems and cultures. Expanding the capacity of the state makes demands on the resources of the state. It requires the state to allocate resources for personnel, bureaucracies, technologies and programmes. Even though it may be costly this change is easier to implement because the means of effecting it is *material*.

On the other hand empowering women in politics, or engendering governance requires fundamental reorganisation of our political culture, it is essentially *ideological*. Empowering women places pressure on the value systems of states. Research on Caribbean state systems reveals these systems are patriarchal and exclusionary of women's interest in the public domain [Henry-Wilson 1989; Barriteau 1994; Reddock 1994; Mohammed 1994]. Empowering women problematizes the power vacuum women still experience as citizens. It questions our system of values and our ethical culture. It requires a reordering of power relations to enhance gender justice in the public domain. At the core of the will to empower women is the contradictory tension between enabling women to have political power as a means of creating more democratic, participatory and just political and economic structures, and the enduring ideology that women should be subordinate to men. Empowering women is ideological in nature. It requires re-examining asymmetric ideological relations of gender that reinforce women's exclusion. Altering this is considerably more challenging.

Most of the literature discussing the desirability of women's greater political participation sidesteps a discussion on the issue of power and the required new practices of power sharing. Instead the discussion focuses on expanding

governmental capacity and removing structural barriers by enhancing women's political skills. Great emphasis is placed on leadership training and networking. These strategies are very necessary and must be pursued. However, it is naive to assume that women can be integrated from the local to the national level of political participation and leadership without resistance. We must face the fact that women's political inclusion alters power relations. This will be resisted by men and women who have grown accustomed to or are vested in maintaining the patriarchal status quo.

Devaki Jain makes the point that integration of women into local government not only links the state and civil society, but that it holds out the possibility of transforming the state from within. This is unlike pressure groups and other NGOs that attempt to transform political representation by pressuring the state from outside [Jain 1996: 9]. In other words engendering local government becomes the Trojan horse invading the gendered, exclusionary and very problematic political/public sphere and radically transforming it.

There are some powerful assumptions underlying this insistence that participation and governance be engendered. It goes beyond the concern that at 50% of the population, women deserve to have 50% of the political representation. Engendering governance assumes women bring both a different style of leadership to governance and a different matrix of concerns. There is some evidence that women do approach leadership differently. Judy Rosener in examining women leaders in business finds that women have a more nurturing consensus style of leadership [Rosener 1990]. Devaki Jain assumes that women will make the state more sensitive to issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice.

Whereas I do believe women and men may differ in leadership and management styles and may even focus on different concerns, I want to caution against an essentialist, reductionist interpretation of women's political

involvement. Instead I want to argue for recognising the importance of feminist consciousness and commitment in shaping the political agenda for women in politics. As a strategy this feminist consciousness must be nurtured in women interested in or involved in politics. I do not accept that women have an innate capacity "to care" more than men and will (devoid of lifelong socialization and acquisition of a gender identity constructed on nurturing) automatically make more humane, less corrupt leaders than men.

Maxine Henry-Wilson reports that on several occasions female parliamentarians in Jamaica refused to identify with women's interests and instead chose to articulate "a party line". [Henry-Wilson 1989: 244]. She used these occurrences to question whether a female community of interests exists. It does, but subscribing to it comes from a conscious decision to oppose women's subordination and not from the anatomy of being female. Or as stated by Johanna Meehan, "Before one can join the struggle, one has to be able to see there is one. Thus 'consciousness raising' becomes a crucial strategy which precedes and makes possible the universalist demands for equal rights" [Meehan 1995:8].

In Barbados in 1991 The National Democratic Party (NDP), sought to exploit the fact that it fielded seven female candidates for the general elections. The party boasted it had introduced a women's platform, and a women's agenda to the election campaign. It did not. The party sought to manipulate the fact that it was the only party with so many female candidates [Barriteau 1992]. The women in the party did not articulate any of the issues confronting women in Barbados who head 43.5% of households [Mondesire and Dunn 1995:113]. This was during the introduction of a structural adjustment and stabilization campaign. The effect of the latter on women in the Caribbean is well documented [Barriteau 1996]. The women's campaign rhetoric and pronouncements were the same as the male candidates in the NDP. There was no sensitivity to issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice because these female politicians had not problematized the context of women's lives in a

developing country [Barriteau 1992]. They neither sought to speak to women's reality nor were they interested in women's point of view.

As a strategy for empowering women and engendering local government, a critical mass of women in politics is necessary but this is insufficient. Women and men in politics must understand how unjust gender relations impinge on women's lives, skew the distribution of resources within society, and contribute to maintaining inequalities that are inimical for women, children and men.

Women and Political Participation

Women seeking elected public office are in a position unlike that of women in any other area of endeavour. Direct public competition between men and women take place only in electoral office ... Electoral office is about the only place where there is direct competition between men and women in a public forum.⁶

One has to work much harder to achieve success⁷.

Before I examine women's experiences within local government, I review women and political involvement in the Commonwealth Caribbean. I want to demonstrate that the difficulties women may experience in becoming fully integrating in the governing structures of local government are part of an historical continuum of an uneasy relationship between women and political participation and leadership in the Commonwealth Caribbean. I also want to establish that Caribbean women have been struggling for political inclusion for a long time [Reddock 1990, 1994; Henry-Wilson 1989]. The historical data reveal some continuities between women's experiences then and now.

According to Bishnu Ragoonath local government in one form or another exists in nine commonwealth Caribbean countries. These are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago [Commonwealth Secretariat 1994:2]. He notes that only in Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are the local government representatives and councils elected [Commonwealth Secretariat 1994:2]. In the case of Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent the local government councils are supervised by local government officers appointed by the central government [Commonwealth Secretariat 1994: 2].

Women's involvement in political parties, parliaments, governmental bodies and administrative managerial positions map out the broad contours for assessing women's experiences in local government. It indicates the extent to which the engendering of local government is viable or symbolic manipulation. Maxine Henry-Wilson states the latter is frequently employed 'to placate and neutralize the mass of the public and those sections of the populations who possess minimal effective decision-making powers' [Henry-Wilson 1989: 247].

Almost as soon as the political process allowed it, Caribbean women competed with men to become holders of political office. The granting of universal adult suffrage had an immediate impact in the Eastern Caribbean since most women could not vote or stand for election before then. In the Leeward and Windward Islands and Barbados a total of 30 women contested national general elections between 1951 - 1979, Table 4 [Emmanuel: 1979]. Table 4 shows that Grenada, Barbados and Dominica stand out as having a comparatively larger number of female candidates for that period. Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis (Anguilla)⁸ each offered one woman candidate in the 28 years covered by the data. Nine women contested elections in Grenada, followed by seven in Barbados and five in Dominica.

TABLE 4
WOMEN CANDIDATES IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN THE
LEEWARD AND WINDWARD ISLANDS AND BARBADOS 1951-1979

COUNTRY	NAME OF CANDIDATE	ELECTION DEBUT	OUTCOME OF FIRST ELECTION	% VOTE RECEIVED	² NO. OF CONTESTED ELECTIONS	POLITICAL AFFILIATION
Antigua	¹ Ms. Edith Richards	1956	Lost	2.6	1	Independent/Union
Montserrat	Mrs. Margaret Kelsick	1958	Lost	23.7	2	Montserrat Labour Party
	Miss Mary Taitt	1970	Won	52.3	3	Progressive Democratic Party
³ St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla	Miss Mary Charles	1971	Lost	22.3	1	Peoples Action Movement
Dominica	Mrs. P.S. Allfrey	1957	Lost	20.4	2	Independent
	Miss Mary Charles	1970	Lost	35.6	2	Dominica Freedom Party
	Mrs. Fadelle	1966	Lost	4.0	1	Dominican United People=s Party
	Mrs. Beryl Harris	1961	Lost	26.1	1	
	Mrs. Mabel James	1961	Lost	36.1	3	Dominica Labour Party
Grenada	Mrs. Nadia Benjamine	1972	Won	69.8	1	Grenada United Labour Party
	Mrs Cynthia Gairy	1961	Won	64.3	5	
	Mrs. E. James	1962	Lost	47.7	1	
	Mrs. E. Lahee	1957	Lost	28.1	1	
	Ms. H. Mascoll	1957	Lost	13.0	1	Peoples Democratic Movement
	Mrs. Waple Nedd	1972	Won	72.0	1	G.U.L.P
	Miss Gloria St Bernard	1957	Lost	7.9	1	Grenada National Party
	Ms. B. Sylvester	1976	Lost	36.5	1	People=s Alliance
	Mrs. E.L. Sylvester	1954	Lost	22.9	1	Independent

St. Lucia	Ms. R. Michel	1979	Lost	45.9	1	St. Lucia Labour Party
	Mrs. Y.H. Rock	1964	Lost	41.9	3	United Workers Party
	Mrs. L. Vos	1961	Lost	2.2	1	People's Progressive Party
St. Vincent & Grenadines	Mrs. P. John	1974	Lost	2.5	1	Mitchel/Sylvester Facti
	Mrs. Ivy Joshua	1957	Won	83.3	6	People's Political Party
Barbados	Mrs. E.E. Boume	1951	Won	51.5	3	Barbados Labour Party
	Mrs. Gertude Eastmond	1971	Won	52.0	2	Democratic
	Mrs. Carmeta Fraser	1976	Lost	22.4	1	Labour
	Mrs. Sybil Leacock	1976	Lost	43.4	1	Party
	Mrs. L. Martin	1961	Lost	7.7	1	Barbados
	Miss Billie Miller	1976	Won	50.9	1	Labour
	Miss N. Weekes	1971	Lost	42.5	2	Party

Source: Compiled from the appendices in Patrick A.m. Emmanuel, General Elections in the Eastern Caribbean: A Handbook, U.W.I. Cave Hill: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1979.

1. The data listed Ms. or Mrs., for some women, for others their names were just given. The inclusion of these indicates that married women were the majority of candidates.
2. Elections contested to 1979.
3. After 1966 Anguilla was not part of the state electoral system.

Of the 30 women competing for public office seven or 23% won their seats in their first bid for political power. All of the women who were elected on their first attempt were members of major political parties. No women won as independent candidates. This reflects an entrenchment of the two party system and the general weakness of independent candidates in the Westminster Parliamentary model.

It is difficult to determine what precise roles gender relations, party affiliation, class relations and prevailing socio-economic conditions played in women's electoral performance. Eugenia Charles would later emerge as the first female Prime Minister of the Commonwealth Caribbean and a formidable politician. Mrs. Cynthia Gairy and Mrs. Ivy Joshua won on every occasion they competed.

Not only did they receive relatively high margins but they were part of the victorious party. The point more relevant in their case is that they were the wives of the respective political leaders and Premiers/Prime Ministers of their countries. Eric Gairy and Ebenezer Joshua were charismatic, powerful leaders who dominated the political life of their era.

Class location and involvement in women's organisations are two distinguishing features of earlier female politicians. Rhoda Reddock notes that women members of nationalist, socialist and Marxist parties were often recruited from middle strata women's organisations [Reddock 1990:18]. Maxine Henry-Wilson states that women from "respectable classes" exerted influence primarily through social work. She comments that for some time this involvement was really a front for political activity. They used the cover of social work to articulate concerns of middle class women for political reforms and to demand changes in the conditions of working class women [Henry-Wilson: 239]. I have found a similar subversive strategy in the activities of women in the leadership of the International YWCA [Barriteau: Forthcoming].

The Voters Register of 1947 in Guyana, the last year in which the franchise was limited by property and income qualification, reveals the following about Indian women. They comprised 1.8% of all voters, 6% of all Indian voters and only 9.9% of all female voters [Poynting 1987:236]. Still in Guyana, The Women's Political and Economic Organisation, WPEO, set itself an overtly activist and political agenda. Established in 1946 its aim was "to ensure the political organisation and education of the women in British Guiana in order to promote their economic welfare and their political and social emancipation and betterment" [Peake 1993: 114]. According to Linda Peake the WPEO encouraged women to register as voters in the 1947 election. It deliberately attempted to influence the direction of local government.

Indeed it urged women in the charitable organisations to exert pressure on local government to bring about improvements in social welfare in general, and in housing in particular. Within its first three months it attracted approximately 160 members, both working and middle class women [Peake 1993:114].

This type of political activity coincides with pressure group politics. The WPEO was urging women to make local government responsive to the needs of the community.

A very significant feature is that the majority of the women, [Table 4], 20 or 66%, were married. Bledsoe and Herring speaking particularly of the United States, comment that, 'The low incidence of women in elected public office is at least partly a response to very practical restrictions on political mobility imposed by child care responsibilities, a duty that is still disproportionately placed on women' [Bledsoe and Herring 1990: 214]. The fact that the majority of women contesting elections in the Eastern Caribbean between 1951 and 1979 were married begs for further research. Superficially it seems to contradict the opinion that single women have more time for political activity. But what part did being a married "respectable" woman play in the selection of these women? Our societies are socially and politically conservative. Was the middle class, married status of the women seen as a positive factor for their candidacy? The period reported on is 19 years ago. We need more contemporary research to indicate whether single women are competing in equal numbers for electoral office or are now outnumbering married women as candidates.

The data does reveal a low incidence of women competing and an even lower percentage being successful. However, for the women who sought to be elected it is significant that the majority were married. Sixty percent of all those who contested the elections did so once. The fact that they had families may

have prevented them from further competition but it did not deter them in the first instance.

Maxine Henry-Wilson reports that a total of over 200 women were involved in electoral politics in Jamaica between 1962 and 1986. Of that number 194 contested elections in five local government elections between 1969 and 1986, see Table 5. [Henry-Wilson 1989:241]. Table 5 reveals the number of women contesting general elections between 1962 and 1983 in Jamaica. There is a slight but steady increase of women in electoral competition for that period.

TABLE 5
GENERAL ELECTIONS IN JAMAICA 1962 - 1983

Year	Total No. Of Candidates	Total Female	% Female	Total F/PNP	Total F/JLP	Total F/Other	Total F Successful
1962	114	3	2.6	1	1	1 (ind.)	1 (P)
1967	114	5	4.4	1	1	-	2 (J)
1972	113	5	4.4	2	3	-	2 (1P/1J)
1976	120	5	4.2	2	3	-	4 (3P/1J)
1980	126	12	9.5	4	5	3 (ind.)	6 (1P/5J)
1983*	66	8	12.1	-	8	-	8

*Election not contested by People's National Party.

Source: Maxine Henry-Wilson, *The Status of Jamaican Women*, p. 242. Compiled from *Report of Elections of Jamaica*, 1968, 1974, 1977, 1981, 1983 published by the Electoral Office, Kingston.

TABLE 6A
PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES 1980

COUNTRY	TOTAL	FEMALE	%	MALE		%
Anguilla	13	2	15.4	11		84.6
Antigua/Barbuda	-		-			
Bahamas	65	3	4.6	62		95.4
Barbados	45	4	8.9	41		91.1
Belize	26	3	11.5	23		88.5
Br. Virgin Islands	12	0	0.0	12		100
Dominica	31	4	12.9	27		87.1
Grenada						
Guyana	63	9	14.3	54		85.7
Jamaica	60	5	8.3	55		91.7
Montserrat	13	1	7.7	12		92.3
St. Kitts/Nevis	14	1	7.1	13		82.9
St. Lucia	29	2	6.9	27		93.1
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	12	1	8.3	11		91.7
Trinidad and Tobago	67	9	13.4	58		86.6
Turks/Caicos	18	1	5.6	17		94.4
GRAND TOTAL	468	45	9.6	423		90.4

Source: CARICOM : Mondesire and Dunn, 1995, p 102

TABLE 6B
PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES 1985

COUNTRY	TOTAL	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
Anguilla	12	1	10.0	11	90.0
Antigua/Barbuda					
Bahamas	70	5	7.1	65	92.9
Barbados	48	5	10.41	43	89.6
Belize	36	3	8.3	33	91.7
Br. Virgin Islands	12	0	0	12	100
Dominica	31	4	12.9	27	87.1
Grenada	7	2	28.6	5	71.4
Guyana	72	16	22.2	56	77.8
Jamaica	60	3	5.0	57	95.0
Montserrat	13	2	15.4	11	84.6
St. Kitts/Nevis	15	1	6.7	14	93.3
St. Lucia	29	1	3.4	28	96.6
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	12	0	0.0	12	100
Trinidad & Tobago	67	10	15.0	57	85.0
Turks/Caicos	18	2	11.1	16	88.9
GRAND TOTAL	502	55	11.0	44.7	89.0

Source: CARICOM : Mondesire and Dunn, 1995, p 102

TABLE 6C
PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES 1992

COUNTRY	TOTAL	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
Anguilla	12	0	0.0	12	100
Antigua/Barbuda	17	0	0.0	17	100
Bahamas	79	10	12.7	69	87.3
Barbados	49	7	14.3	42	85.7
Belize	37	4	10.8	33	89.2
Br. Virgin Islands	12	1	8.3	11	91.7
Dominica	31	5	16.1	26	83.9
Grenada	15	1	6.7	14	93.3
Guyana	72	12	16.7	60	83.3
Jamaica	60	7	11.7	53	88.3
Montserrat	13	4	30.8	9	69.2
St. Kitts/Nevis	15	1	6.7	14	93.3
St. Lucia	29	4	13.8	25	86.2
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	12	2	16.7	10	83.3
Trinidad and Tobago	67	12	18.0	55	82.0
Turks and Caicos	21	4	19.0	17	81.0
GRAND TOTAL	541	74	12.6	467	87.4

Source: CARICOM : Mondesire and Dunn, 1995, p 102

The CARICOM Report provides a contemporary assessment on women's participation in parliamentary assemblies [Mondesire and Dunn 1995: 102]. Tables 6A to 6C indicate what changes occurred in women competing with men for public office. In 1980 the larger independent countries reflect higher percentages of women in parliamentary assemblies. However, no independent country had higher than 15% women as members of parliament or as senators appointed to the upper house. Even though Caribbean women have been able to stand for election and vote for over 50 years in all countries (except The Bahamas) we still lack a critical mass of female politicians.

In 1980 in Guyana nine women held seats in the national parliament out of a total of 63 seats. In Trinidad and Tobago women also held nine of the 67 seats. Over the three time periods covered by Tables 6A-C, women's representation in parliamentary assemblies increased in three countries. In the Bahamas, women in parliament grew from 4.6% in 1980 to 7.1% in 1985 to 12.7% in 1992. In Barbados women held 8.9% of the seats in the House of Assembly and the Senate in 1980. By 1985 this increased to 10.4% and by 1992 women constituted 14.3% of parliamentarians. In Trinidad and Tobago women parliamentarians also moved from 13.4% in 1980 to 15.0% in 1985 to 18% in 1992.

Women's participation at the highest level of political decision making fluctuated in most dependent territories and independent countries between 1980 and 1992. Overall, women's political representation as a result of national competitive politics grew by 3%. In contrast, men's successful participation in national politics never dropped below 70% in any Caribbean dependent territory or independent country. In 15 out of 16 Commonwealth Caribbean territories men held 81% or more of the seats in parliament.

Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis bear watching. Between 1951 and 1979, as shown in Table 4, only one woman had contested general elections and then as an independent candidate. We must ask, do political parties in Antigua and

Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis have no confidence in women as candidates? Are we to assume Antiguan, Kittitian and Nevisian women are apolitical and do not want to support other women? I would caution against that interpretation. Instead we should juxtapose women's relative absence from electoral politics with the political culture of these countries, and women's leadership in other sectors of the society.

Women in Antigua have not been successful as candidates in the electoral system. The majority of women consider running for office to be part of a man's world. They therefore vote for men in preference to women. In the political history of Antigua and Barbuda, only two have been put forward as candidates by the opposition party. They were not successful [Inter-Parliamentary Union 1997: 43].

Earlier in 1997 women in Antigua launched a new women's organization called Professional Organization of Women in Antigua, POWA. They appear very organized and determined to make a difference. We wait to assess their impact on women's political leadership.

Table 7 disaggregates the data on women's participation in political decision-making into four major categories for 1995. These are: national parliament/assembly, national executive/cabinet, provincial government, local government [Commonwealth Secretariat, *Towards Gender Equality* 1996]. Grenada, St. Lucia, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago had the highest percentage of women in parliament in 1995. How does this translate into political leadership and influencing policy? Is there a correlation between women occupying top political office at the national level and the engendering of local government at the community level?

TABLE 7

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING AT NATIONAL PARLIAMENT/ASSEMBLY, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE/CABINET, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES AS AT JUNE 1996

COUNTRY	NATIONAL PARLIAMENT/ ASSEMBLY		NATIONAL EXECUTIVE/ CABINET		PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT		LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Antigua & Barbuda	NO STATISTICS GIVEN							
The Bahamas	4/49	8.16	3/13	23.08	4/16	25.00	Not given	
Barbados	NO COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE RECEIVED							
Belize	4/38	10.53	1/16	6.25	N/A		10/58	17.24
Dominica	3/30	10.00	2/9	22.22	N/A		99/313	31.63
Grenada	4/15	26.67	2/12	16.67	N/A		Not given	
Guyana	14/72	19.44	2/18	11.11	N/A		102/460	22.17
Jamaica	11/81	13.58	1/13	7.69	N/A		25/187	13.37
St.. Kitts & Nevis	2/15	13.33	0/7	00.00	0/7	00.00	0/3	00.00
St.. Lucia	4/17	23.53	1/13	7.69	N/A		30/75	40.00
St.. Vincent & The Grenadines	2/19	10.53	2/12	16.67	N/A		Not given	
Trinidad & Tobago	13/68	19.12	3/22	13.64	N/A		18/124	14.52

Table 7 discloses that the percentage of women included in cabinet was lower than the percentage of women in parliament. Women in parliament whether elected or appointed are not readily made ministers by their governing parties. In almost all cases the ministries women head are some variant of social services, community development and women's affairs, health or education. In Barbados, Ms. Billie Miller is the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Prime Minister. In fact in Barbados the three women elected are also government ministers. Only Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and The Bahamas have three women as members of cabinet. In Jamaica, Ms Portia Simpson is the Minister of

Labour and in The Bahamas, Ms Janet Boswick is the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Even if we generally assume a feminist consciousness on the part of women ministers, the lack of a critical mass in cabinet and parliament will seriously constrain efforts to introduce policy to alter women's political subordination.

Only The Bahamas and St Kitts-Nevis reported having provincial government. Bahamian women comprised 25% of this while no women were part of the "provincial government" of St Kitts-Nevis.

The comparatively low involvement of women in the governing bodies of parliament in the Caribbean is consistent with the findings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In its study the IPU found, with some exceptions, that filling of senior positions by women in parliamentary assemblies follows the proportions of women in the bodies concerned [Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997: 128]. They conclude instead of acting as enlightened elites parliament just follows the electorate in maintaining nominal involvement of women. Political parties in the Commonwealth Caribbean do not generally field over 25% of women as candidates⁹. In the recent elections in St. Lucia, the victorious St. Lucia Labour Party successfully ran two female candidates, Ms Sarah Lucy Flood new Minister of Health, Human Services, Family and Women Affairs, and Ms Menissa Rambally, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Financial Services. At 21 years, Ms Rambally is probably the youngest woman elected to parliament in the region [Barbados Advocate 17 June 1997: 10-11].

The IPU found that the nomination of women candidates remain a very slow-moving phenomenon [IPU, 1997: 116]. In Grenada two political parties, the NDC and the NNP, ran women as 13.3% of its candidates in the last general elections. The People's National Party and the Jamaica Labour Party, both of Jamaica, fielded 8.3% female candidates respectively. The Grenada United Labour Party, which in the 1950's and 1960's led the way with several female candidates, joined the St. Lucia Labour Party and the United Workers Party, also of St. Lucia, in offering no female candidates¹⁰ in elections before 1997 [IPU, 1997:121].

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study *Barriers to Women's Participation* suggests that since the majority of commonwealth parliamentarians win elections to parliament on a party ticket, political parties should play a significant role in redressing the existing gender imbalances [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association 1996:18]. Gaining a place on the list of candidates can be a major obstacle to many women considering a career in politics. Men are the gatekeepers to higher political office and may hold traditional views on the comparative merit of female candidates.

In a conversation with a senior official of a political party in Barbados, I queried why the party seemed to bypass women who had expressed a strong interest in particular constituencies. He replied choices are made in the final analysis on who is more likely to win for the party. Political parties seem unwilling to lead the way in ensuring gender parity in candidate selections. This suggests that they undervalue women's contributions to political parties. Women organize fund-raising events, run constituency offices, undertake a disproportionate share of campaigning and tend to be faithful, loyal, hardworking, supporters. Most of the political parties have either formal or informal women's arms or wings. Yet the vital resources women represent to the parties are not translated into more opportunities to contest elections on behalf of their parties. According to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, women "are awarded a disproportionate number of seats, have little influence on party policy and little leverage to push nominees for electoral office. They still largely make the tea and not the policy" [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 1996: 20].

The NGO Factor

The institutions and groups of civil society play a critical role in advancing women's participation in politics and in developing women's leadership. Women-centred NGOs have pressured political parties to examine the way they operate. They take on board a wide range of political issues. In the 1995 general elections in Trinidad and Tobago a coalition of women's organizations drew up a ten point women's political platform which they used to inform parties contesting the general elections what the parties needed to have to be truly representatives of women's viewpoints [Women's Political Platform 1995]. They organized a number of public fora and submitted to Prime Minister Basdeo Panday a list of women eligible to serve in high public office [Express November 1, 1995]. Within two weeks the same coalition was describing as unsatisfactory the appointment of only three women as ministers [Express November 24, 1995].

In Jamaica a women's political caucus, a bi-partisan grouping of women, operates to support women in and interested in politics. In Barbados in 1997 the National Organization of Women, NOW, brought together women from the three political parties in a public rally to share their experiences and frustrations as women politicians. It was the first time female politicians from different parties shared a public platform [Harris June 8, 1997]. The Dominica National Council of Women, DNCW, an umbrella organization of non-governmental women's groups has as one of its primary objectives making its members aware of the importance of their participation in political life. They offer seminar workshops and consultations in this area [IPU, 1997:34]. The effort of the WPEO in Guyana to politicize the conditions of women's lives and to encourage them to be active politically was earlier noted.

Women in Local Government

TABLE 8A
PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES
1980

COUNTRY	TOTAL	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
Anguilla					
Antigua/Barbuda					
Bahamas					
Barbados					
Belize					
Br. Virgin Islands					
Dominica	33	4	12.1	29	87.9
Grenada					
Guyana	235	52	22.1	183	77.9
Jamaica	552	70	12.7	482	87.3
Montserrat					
St.. Kitts/Nevis	5	0	0	5	100
St.. Lucia	60	13	21.7	47	78.3
St.. Vincent/Grenadines					
Trinidad & Tobago	137	28	20.4	109	79.6
Turks/Caicos	4	0	0	4	100
GRAND TOTAL	1026	167	16.3	859	83.7

Source: CARICOM : Mondesire and Dunn, 1995, p 105

TABLE 8B
PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES
1985

COUNTRY	TOTAL	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
Anguilla					
Antigua/Barbuda					
Bahamas					
Barbados					
Belize					
Br. Virgin Islands					
Dominica	35	3	8.6	32	91.4
Grenada					
Guyana	375	95	25.3	280	74.7
Jamaica	528	51	9.7	477	90.3
Montserrat					
St.. Kitts/Nevis	5	0	0	5	100.0
St.. Lucia	60	17	28.3	43	71.7
St.. Vincent/Grenadines					
Trinidad & Tobago	145	19	13.1	126	86.9
Turks/Caicos	4	0	0	4	100
GRAND TOTAL	1152	185	16.1	967	83.9

Source: CARICOM : Mondesire and Dunn, 1995, p 105

TABLE 8C
PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BODIES
1992

COUNTRY	TOTAL	FEMALE	%	MALE	%
Anguilla					
Antigua/Barbuda					
Bahamas	139	12	8.6	127	91.4
Barbados					
Belize					
Br. Virgin Islands					
Dominica	37	3	8.1	34	91.9
Grenada					
Guyana	460	102	22.2	358	77.8
Jamaica	187	24	12.8	163	87.2
Montserrat					
St.. Kitts/Nevis	5	0	0	5	100
St.. Lucia	75	30	40	45	60.0
St.. Vincent/Grenadines					
Trinidad & Tobago	170	37	21.8	133	78.2
Turks/Caicos	4	3	75.0	1	25
GRAND TOTAL	1077	211	19.6	866	80.4

Source: CARICOM : Mondesire and Dunn, 1995, p 105

The statistical information available on women in local government gave differing results for countries having local government structures. According to the CARICOM report local governments exist in seven independent Caribbean countries and one dependent territory. Tables 8A to 8C record the participation of women and men in local representative bodies for 1980, 1985 and 1992. Table 7 includes statistics on local government for The Bahamas and Belize along with the other countries for 1995. What is immediately noticeable is that women do not necessarily enjoy a higher degree of involvement in politics at the local level than they do at the national level.

In Dominica, women's participation in local government declined from 12.1% in 1980 to 8.1% in 1992 but dramatically increased in 1995 to 31.63%. Besides the government within the Carib territory, the local government structure in Dominica is over 100 years old. It originated in the late 19th century with two municipal town boards, Roseau and Portsmouth. In 1939 village boards were granted legal status and by 1954 became village councils [Jubenot 1996:5]. The local government system in Dominica has four municipal and 34 village councils.

Nalda Jubenot undertook a study of the role of women in the development of local government in Portsmouth, Colihaut and Dublanc in Dominica. She questioned 30 councillors as to why few women became elected members of local government bodies. Sixty three percent answered that responsibility for household and family takes priority, 17% replied women do get support from men; 13% felt women lacked confidence and 7% state that women view politics as a male domain [Jubenot 1996:20]. Eighty seven percent of all respondents felt that women had a definite contribution to make to the development of local government. The woman who has been the sole female Mayor of Portsmouth felt she had made an important contribution to the development of the community [Jubenot 1996:20].

Dominican women seem to be active in local government. In 1975 a woman¹¹ was elected Mayor of Portsmouth for the first time when she received the highest number of votes cast. Between 1975 and 1996 14 women served in the Portsmouth Town Council. Unfortunately, there are no statistics for the other councils [Jubenot 1996:14].

Guyana has one of the most complex local government structures in the region. The Local Democratic Organization Act No. 12 of 1980 established ten regional democratic councils that span the country [Johnson, 1996: 1]. The work of the Regional Councils is coordinated by the Minister of Regional Development who is accountable to Cabinet and Parliament for the functioning of local government.

A deliberate effort has been made to engender local government in Guyana but Urmia Johnson, in a study of women's participation in the local government system of Guyana, reports that the Bureau of Women's Affairs decentralized some of its functions to the Regional Democratic Councils in 1983 and 1984 [Johnson, 1996: 2]. To enable the Bureau to achieve its mission statement a Women's Affairs Regional Committee was established on each regional committee. This gave the local government system in Guyana a structure for mobilizing around women's issues. Johnson concludes that the Regional Councils have not afforded women effective participation in political decision making and in the economic and social spheres of these Regional Councils.

Johnson's study is very relevant. It provides insights in the working of the local government system from the perspective of gender. In addition, she integrates an analysis of race and ethnicity with women's political participation hence establishing ethnic and cultural differences. Table 9 shows that women constituted 20% of local government representatives on regional councils in 1992. The national government is formed by the People's Progressive Party/Civic Coalition and they had a slim majority over the People's National Congress for

Council Members. However, women are 51% of the PNC Council Members as opposed to 10% for the PPP. The other three parties had no women on the regional councils.

Table 9
MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCILS BY GENDER (SEX)
IN GUYANA, 1992

POLITICAL PARTY	M	F	TOTAL
People=s Progressive Party/Civic	89	10	99
People=s National Congress	60	31	91
Working People=s Alliance	8	0	8
The United Force	6	0	6
United Republican Party	1	0	1
TOTAL	164	41	205

Source: Stabroek News: 26/11/92, in Urmia Johnson=s AWomen=s Participation in the Local Government System of Guyana: @

On both councils the PNC (which draws its support from the Afro-Guyanese population) had a higher number of women representatives even though overall women's representation was lower than ever [Johnson, 1996: 32]. Johnson notes that in the two main political parties women have lower numbers than men in the highest decision making bodies. Table 10 shows sexual composition in the five political parties in parliaments. In the PNC women outnumber men in membership while in the PPP men outnumber women.

TABLE 10
PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES BY GENDER (SEX)
IN GUYANA, 1992

POLITICAL PARTY	M	F	TOTAL
People=s Progressive Party/Civic	25	3	28
People=s National Congress	16	7	23
Working People=s Alliance	2	0	2
The United Force	1	0	1
TOTAL	44	10	54

Source: Stabroek News: 26/11/92, in Urmia Johnson=s AWomen=s Participation in the Local Government System of Guyana: @

Occah Seapaul [1988] and Pat Mohammed [1988] discuss the societal and religious constraints and limitations placed on Indo-Trinidadian women. Seapaul highlights the passive role ascribed to women by traditional Hindu custom that requires her to focus her energies and interests on the domestic domain.

It was accepted that the roles for which Hindu women were destined were those of wife and mother. Marriage was the only profession to which they could have looked forward. The established culture that forced her into remaining in domesticity naturally restricted the developments of her interests and satisfactions which lay beyond the home [Seapaul 1988: 90].

Patricia Mohammed identifies the contradictions Indian women experience in wanting an expanded role in the public domain:

They were keepers of the culture, they were passive and submissive, they were expected to sacrifice their own ambitions for the benefit of their brothers and husbands. Despite all of this, we can see that some Indian women had begun to commit themselves to goals which identified with the national interest [Mohammed 1988:390].

It is not surprising when in relation to Guyana Johnson points out that even on local government councils where the PPP dominates, Indo-Guyanese women are the least represented in membership.

Generally women of African descent have a higher profile in public life and women's organisations and the statistics on women's participation on these councils reveal this. From interviews, it was noted that less Indian women participated in political life due to cultural factors and the view that a woman's place is in the home. [Johnson, 1992:33].

However, Johnson reported that many interviewees felt that with the election of the PPP/Civic government in 1992 women of East Indian descent felt they had more scope and opportunity for participating in community and public affairs [Johnson, 1996: 33].

In St. Kitts and Nevis there has been a continuing exclusion of women from local government between 1980 and 1992. For none of the three time periods covered in Tables 8A-C were women part of the local government structure. In the absence of other information it is difficult to determine whether women contested elections and were rejected or were not selected as candidates.

Again in 1996 (Table 7) women in St. Kitts and Nevis continue to remain outside the political process of local government. Table 4 reveals an historical trend of the low involvement of Kittitian and Nevisian women in national politics. As in Antigua, one woman contested elections in St. Kitts and Nevis between 1951 and 1979. This suggests a low level of politicization among women including perhaps an unwillingness by political parties to groom women for leadership positions. These suggestions aside, serious research is needed to examine women and political leadership in the Leeward Island states.

In St. Lucia women's involvement in local government grew considerably between 1980 and 1992, as shown in Table 8A - 8C. Women formed 21.7% of local government in 1980, 28.3% in 1985 and 40% in 1992. Table 7 shows that women maintained that ratio in 1996. In fact St. Lucia women in local government enjoyed the highest level of women's involvement in local government in the Commonwealth Caribbean. In 1994 Ms. Adelina Auguste was Mayor and Chairman of the Castries City Council while Ms. Lucy St. Cyr was Chairman of the Castries Village Council.

TABLE 11
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, 1969 - 86
IN JAMAICA

Year	Total No. Of Candidates	Total Female	% Female	Total F/PNP	Total F/JLP	Total F/Other	Total F Successful
1969	520	31	5.9	13	18	-	16 (10P/6J)
1974	558	51	9.14	24	24	3	25 (17P/8J)
1977	558	65	11.65	30	35	-	31 (28P/3J)
1981	552	70	12.68	37	34	-	38 (8P/30J)
1986	528	51	9.8	21	27	1 JAP	
						1 WPJ	

Source: Report of the Elections of Jamaica - 1969, 1974, 1977, 1981, 1986, published by the Electoral Office Kingston.

Key

PNP - People's National Party

JLP - Jamaica Labour Party

(These have been the two major political parties since the granting of Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944)

JAP - Jamaica/America Party

Jamaican women gradually increased their success in local government elections between 1969 and 1986 as Table 11 shows. They moved from 3% of the elected local government officials in 1969 to 6.8% in 1981. Candidates from the People's National Party were more successful than candidates from the Jamaican Labour Party even though both parties fielded roughly the same number of female candidates.

Summary

Constraints and Limitations

To assess the extent to which women are empowered in participating in local government structures we should employ the conceptual tools of power sharing and governance to the functioning of these processes. Unfortunately not enough data exist on the experiences of women in local government in the Commonwealth Caribbean to enable us to offer any definitive statements on women's experiences within them.

Interviews with women in local government, analyses of the programmes of councils, municipalities and boards, assessment of resources allocated to local government structures by central government, assessment of financing raised by local authorities and the kinds of programmes to which they are allocated, are all necessary to determine whether there is a correlation between women's active participation and leadership in local government, and the empowerment of women within government bureaucracies and communities.

These records do not exist in any readily accessible form. They now have to be collated or created. I suspect women in local government experience similar barriers to women in politics at the national level; however we do not know the particularity of their experiences. At this stage we do not have a record of who these women are, what they have done, what compromises they have been forced to make or alternatively how they may have influenced local government structures to reflect their agenda.

As a preliminary step we need a comprehensive research project that will unearth and construct the realities of women in local politics. We have yet to merge the questions of women's collective reality and how to change it with the questions of women's points of view and how to know it.

At this point the immediate project is to know the points of view of women in local government in the Commonwealth Caribbean. We must construct that data base because without it recommendations and prescriptions for change are tenuous. Having said that, the paper still indicates some areas for concern for engendering local government.

Culture played through ethnicity seems to influence the rate of participation in local and national politics of East Indian Caribbean women. Even though politics in Guyana is largely race-based (and I do not condone this) the political party to which the majority of Indo-Guyanese belongs does not have an acceptable percentage of women active. Culture seems to function as a barrier for East Indian Caribbean women although, we assume, to a lesser degree in Trinidad and Tobago, given the involvement and prominence of several Indo-Trinidadian women in politics. A good area for research would be a comparative study of Indo-Caribbean women and politics in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

I suggest that the link between local and national politics as it relates to women and empowerment seem to be negative. Nothing we have uncovered indicates a change in the uneasy relationship between women and political participation in the Commonwealth Caribbean. Women do not dominate national politics and elected women are still assigned "housekeeping" ministries. These are the ministries associated with the traditional reproductive roles of women. The irony is that these portfolios are critical to the functioning of government and society. However, like women's work generally, these ministries are not respected or ranked as prestigious as portfolios dealing with economic affairs, or international trade and investment. We will be entering a new phase of politics when a prime minister (male or female) holds the portfolio of social services and women's affairs. I look forward to this.

In St Lucia the new Minister of Women's Affairs has a portfolio that is staggering and grossly burdensome. It seems as if the decision makers in the new government have collected all the portfolios that are supposed to characterize women's work and assigned them to Minister Lucy Flood. Her portfolio of Health, Human Services, Family and Women's Affairs reflect that even in national politics the image of woman as nurturer and caretaker dominates. In conversation with Minister Flood in July 1997, she assured me her portfolios were neither staggering nor burdensome. She stated she could manage them and what is required is efficient, effective coordination of all the divisions by the various heads. I respect the Minister's opinion and admire her energy and conviction. My conclusion remains.

In Trinidad and Tobago, the women's political platform expressed early optimism on the naming of Kamla Persad-Bissessar as the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs. This was short-lived. By early 1996 she had been replaced as Attorney General. Ms Billie Miller in Barbados and Ms Janet Boswick in The Bahamas as Ministers of Foreign Affairs hold non-traditional ministries for female politicians.

I suspect but cannot confirm that at the local level women in politics will have similar responsibilities. Local government is often seen as the housekeeping division of central government. National governments tend to treat local governments as functioning only to deal with problems of sanitation, water, community health and maintenance of infrastructure and not the expansion of democratic decision making. Political parties do not seem to be interested in preparing women for leadership at the national level. It would be useful to discover if this is indeed a strategy at the local level.

Women NGOs seem to have a very critical role to play in engendering local government. The WPEO in Guyana, the Women's Political Platform in Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominica National Council of Women, the National

Organization of Women in Barbados and the Women's Political Caucus in Jamaica, have all done credible work to support women in politics.

Pressure from outside of government structures to incorporate women seems to be potentially more influential a source than the "Trojan horse theory" held by Devaki Jain. However, NGOs must guard against being overly optimistic about the significance of incremental gains. The political system is still gendered with entrenched patriarchal values shared by many men and women. Women have to build a critical mass of female and male politicians who understand the complications posed by the subordination of women and who have the political will to try to change it.

¹ This paper was originally prepared as the regional background paper for The Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Symposium on Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean, St. Lucia, June 30 - July 3, 1997.

² Catharine A Mackinnon. 1989. *Towards a feminist theory of the state*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 241.

³ Johanna Meehan. 1995. Introduction In: Johanna Meehan (ed.), *Feminists read Habermas: Gendering the subject of discourse*. New York and London: Routledge, 1-20.

⁴ Caribbean in this paper refers the Anglophone Caribbean countries and the British dependencies of the Commonwealth.

⁵ Jamaican women had a limited franchise based on property qualifications in 1919. While women had the right to vote and to stand for elections in St. Lucia in 1924, in Jamaica in 1944 and Trinidad and Tobago in 1946, women gained universal adult suffrage in the majority of British Caribbean colonies in the 1950's starting with Barbados in 1950. The Bahamas was last in 1961 with all restrictions to political participation removed in 1964. See *Inter-parliamentary Union, Men and Women in Politics, Democracy Still in the Making: A World Comparative Study* (Geneva: Inter-parliamentary Union, 1997):28; Maxine Henry-Wilson, The Status of Jamaican Women, 1962 to the present in Jamaica in *Independence Essays on the Early Years*, Rex Nettleford ed., 229-239 (Kingston and London: Heinemann Caribbean and James Currey, 1989).

⁶ Timothy Bledsoe and Mary Herring. 1990. Victims of circumstances: Women in pursuit of political office. *American Political Science Review* 84 (1): 213 - 223.

⁷ Elizabeth Thompson, Minister of Health, Government of Barbados, speaking on her experiences as a female politician, Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament, in Margaret Harris' Liz pours it out at Oistins *Sunday Sun* June 8, 1997: p.10A.

⁸ (See note 3, Table 4.)

⁹ The NDP in Barbados 1991 was an exception. In that year it fielded seven women candidates, 25% of the party's candidates contesting the election.

¹⁰ For St. Lucia this does not include the May 1997 general elections in which two young women 21 and 28 years were elected on the SLP ticket, one other woman unsuccessfully competed as an independent.

¹¹ Researchers must name individuals. I have seen several references to women in politics especially in the earlier periods and almost everything is known about her except her name.

References

- Barbados. 1992. *The 1990 population census*. Bridgetown: Government Printing Office.
- Barriteau, Violet Eudine. 2001. The challenge of innovative leadership of a traditional women's organisation: The World YWCA and Ruth Nita Barrow. In: Eudine Barriteau and Alan Copley (eds) *Stronger, surer, bolder. Ruth Nita Barrow: social change and international development*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Barriteau, Violet Eudine. 1994. *Gender and development planning in the post colonial Caribbean: Female entrepreneurs and the Barbadian state*. PhD diss. Washington D.C.: Howard University.
- Barriteau, Violet Eudine. 1992. The so-called female factor in the 1991 general elections in Barbados. *Advocate News*, March 21, 1992.
- Barriteau, Violet Eudine. 1996. Structural adjustment policies in the Caribbean: A Feminist Perspective. *NWSA Journal - Global Perspectives*. 8 (1), 142-156.
- Barriteau, Violet Eudine. 1997. *Theorizing gender systems and the project of modernity in the twentieth century Caribbean*. Mimeo. The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill: Centre for Gender and Development Studies.
- Barry, Jim. 1991. *The women's movement and local politics - the influence on councillors in London*. Aldershot, Surrey: Avebury.
- Belize. 1990. *1991 population census*. Belmopan, Belize: Government of Belize Printing Office.
- Bledsoe, Timothy and Mary Herring. 1990. Victims of circumstances: Women in pursuit of political office, *American Political Science Review*, 84(1): 213-223.
- Clarke, Roberta. 1986. Women's organisations, women's interests. *Social and Economic Studies*, 35(3): 107-156.
- Commissioning, David. 1997. DLP destroyed local government. *The Barbados Advocate*. June 25 1997: 8.
- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. 1996. Barriers to women's participation in parliament. London: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat. 1994. Caribbean local government workshop: Strengthening local government. Port-of-Spain, November 28-December 2, 1994.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat. Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, Fifth Meeting: *Toward gender equality: The Implementation of The Commonwealth Plan of Action - Gender and Development*. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Nov. 25-28, 1996.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat and British Council Division. 1996. *Regional Symposium on Women in Local Government (ASIA)*, 4-8 March. Collected papers From India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore, Maldives, Sri Lanka and India.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat Gender and Youth Affairs Division. 1996. *Women in local government - Regional symposium (Southern Africa)*. Johannesburg 7-10 May 1996.
- Duncan, Neville and O'Brien, K. 1983. *Women and politics in Barbados 1948-1981*. Cave Hill, Barbados: The University of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research.

- Emmanuel Patrick. 1979. General elections in the Eastern Caribbean: A handbook. *Occasional Papers* No 11. Cave Hill, Barbados: The University of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Govender, Pregs. 1997. Strategizing for a political voice: The women's budget in South Africa. *Dialogue*, 2(2).
- Harris, Margaret. 1997. Liz pours it out at Oistins. *Sunday Sun* June 8 1997: 10A.
- Henry-Wilson, Maxine. 1989. The status of the Jamaican woman, 1962 to the present. In: *Jamaica in Independence: Essays on the early years*. Rex Nettleford (ed), 229-253. Kingston and London: Heinemann Caribbean and James Curry.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. 1997. *Men and women in politics - Democracy still in the making. A comparative world study*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- International Women's Tribune Centre. 1997. Globalisation strategies for change: Women take on the world. *The Tribune Newsletter* No. 56 (April).
- Jain, Devaki. 1996. Panchayat Raj: Women Changing Governance. *Gender in Development Monograph Series #5*, New York: UNDP.
- Johnson, Urmia. 1996. *Women's participation in the local government system of Guyana: A focus on two Regional Democratic Councils: Regions 4&5*. Research Paper, Certificate Course in Gender and Development Studies, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.
- Jones, Kathleen. 1993. *Compassionate authority - democracy and the representation of women*. New York: Routledge.
- Jubenot, Nalda. 1996. *The role of women in the development of local government in Portsmouth, Colihaut and Dublanc*. Research Paper, Certificate Course in Gender and Development Studies, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.
- Kilkenny, R. 1984. Women in social and political struggle: British Guiana 1946-1953. Paper presented at the 16th Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, Barbados, April 1984.
- Meehan, Joanna. (ed.) 1993. *Feminists read Habermas: Gendering the subject of discourse*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Mohammed, Patricia. 1994. *A social history of post-migrant Indians in Trinidad from 1917-1947: A gender perspective*. PhD Thesis, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, The Netherlands.
- Mohammed, Patricia. 1988. The "creolization" of Indian women in Trinidad. In: Selwyn Ryan (ed). *Trinidad and Tobago: The independence experience 1962-1987*. 381-397. St. Augustine: The University of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research.
- Mondesire, Alicia and Dunn, Leith. 1995. *Toward equity in development. A report on the status of women in sixteen Caribbean countries*. Caribbean Community Secretariat Georgetown, Guyana.
- Peake, Linda. 1993. The development and role of women's political organizations in Guyana. In: *Women and change in the Caribbean*, Janet H. Momsen (ed). 109-131. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Poynting, Jeremy. 1987. East Indian women in the Caribbean: Experience and voice. In: *India in the Caribbean*, David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo (eds). 231-263. London: Hansib Publishing Ltd.
- Rao, Aruna and David Kelleher. 1997. Power, gender and organizational change: Images of power. *Dialogue*. 2(2): 4-5.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1994. *Women, labour and politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A history*. London and Kingston: Zed Books and Ian Randle Publishers.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1990. Women's organizations in the Caribbean Community from the 19th century to today. *Woman Speak*. Nos. 26 and 27, 17-24.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1996. *Report of the Commonwealth Women's Parliamentarian Group Task Force. Barriers to women's participation in parliament*. Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat, London
- Rosener, Judy B. 1990. Ways Women Lead. *Harvard Business Review* 68(6): 119-125.
- Seapaul, Occah. 1988. Hindu women in today's society: Moving away from stereotypes of dolls and playthings. *Caribbean Affairs*, 1(3): 90-95.
- United Nations Development Programme. 1995. *Human Development Report 1995*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations. 1993. *Women in decision making - Case studies on Costa Rica, Greece, Hungary and Sweden*. New York: United Nations.
- Women's Political Platform. 1995. *Women's Political Platform for the 1995 general elections in Trinidad and Tobago. 10 points for power*. Trinidad.
- Women's Progressive Organisation. 1983. *Forward with women's struggles*. Georgetown, Guyana: Women's Progressive Organisation.



Women and Higher Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean: UWI, A Progressive Institution for Women?

CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper No. 2, February 1999

Marlene Hamilton

Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration and Special Initiatives
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus
Now
Professor Emerita, The University of the West Indies

ISSN: 0799-0480

ISBN: 976-621-037-3

Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS)
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper Series

Editorial Committee

Dr Eudine Barriteau, Director, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Elizabeth Best, Part-time Lecturer, Dept. of Linguistics, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Alan Cobley, Head, Dept. of History, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Neville Duncan, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Government, Sociology and Social Work, The UWI, Cave Hill
Ms Maxine McClean, Lecturer, Dept. of Management Studies, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Judith Soares, Tutor/Coordinator, Women and Development Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill
Ms Gemma Tang Nain, Deputy Programme Manager, Caribbean Community Development and Women's Affairs, CARICOM

Editorial Assistant

Ms Sherry Asgill: Research Assistant, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill

Keywords: The UWI, women and higher education, women in academia, gender difference in academia, education

How to cite

Hamilton, Marlene. 2015. "Women and Higher Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean: UWI: A Progressive Institution for Women?" *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 245–286

Editor's Note

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Working Paper no. 2 is the text of the fourth lecture in the series *Caribbean Women Catalysts For Change* organised by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Cave Hill. The series, dedicated to honouring the memory of Dame Nita Barrow, late Governor General of Barbados, is part of a research project dedicated to analyzing and documenting the contributions of outstanding Caribbean women in the fields of: regional and international development; trade; politics and political participation; trade unionism and agricultural development.

Author's Note

Marlene Hamilton

Chair, I thank you for those very kind words of introduction. I also thank most sincerely Dr. Barriteau and members of the organising committee, for the tremendous honour afforded me in inviting me to give this lecture. To sing Dame Nita's praises is very much like gilding the lily. Nonetheless, those of us who knew her, no matter how slightly, seem to have some special memory which we like to share. Mine is of (perhaps) the last time I saw her close at hand (I had recently been appointed a Pro Vice Chancellor), when she turned to the Vice Chancellor and said, "Well, Alister, at last the University is growing up! You finally put a woman 'up there'" (or something to that effect).

I have strong memories of Mona's Graduation Ceremony in 1990, too, when Dame Nita gave the address to the graduating class, and commented at some length on the growing numbers of women being presented each year. She had

obviously reflected hard and long on this issue, and used the occasion of graduation to comment in the following manner:

Something very important, even dangerous, is happening to our societies. Women are outnumbering men in many areas of educational performance and productive enterprise. Yet at the same time, at the other end of the spectrum, illiteracy among women is increasing It is they (the women) who bear the brunt of structural adjustment programmes.

She continued:

As we stand here, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, in the regional institution of higher (learning), let us understand that THIS IS NOT A CHALLENGE FOR WOMEN. It is a challenge for the entire society; not the least of all the university community, which must turn its mind to real problems in our societies.¹

I would like to suggest, Chair, that this series of lectures, dedicated to the memory of a giant among Caribbean women and named in her honour, does in fact take up Dame Nita's challenge. My personal challenge at this time is to do full justice to the task presented me.

I express sincere appreciation to three of my colleagues and friends - Elsa Leo-Rhynie, Woodville Marshall and Peter Whiteley, for their insightful critique of the draft, and for their willingness to debate (explosively, at times) many of the issues raised.

Introduction

I have entitled my presentation, *UWI - A Progressive University for Women?* and I wish to recognise that this was suggested to me by someone with whom I worked closely for years, particularly during the period when I had responsibility for the Board for Undergraduate Studies. This person is Dr. Peter Whiteley. However, I have added a question mark, to indicate that there are some doubts - in certain quarters, serious doubts - as to whether The UWI is, indeed, a progressive university for women. It is my understanding that *progressivism* has been the subject of debate among feminist educators (a la Foucault) and in that context, has been used to embrace a consideration of shifts in power relationships - in the classroom (or lecture room) represented by the emergence of a more person-centred approach to teaching; in the instructional curriculum employed, through the design of one which deviates significantly from the male oriented, phallogocentric model; and in the general structure of the institution, whereby the male dominated, authoritarian and bureaucratic structures are discarded in favour of female oriented, more flexible and democratic models.

I should let you know that I do not support indiscriminately any position which concentrates on power relationships to the exclusion of other factors; rather, I choose to use the term, *progressive* to refer to opportunities within the institutional context that provide for the advancement of women achieved as a result of demonstrable merit that is recognised and rewarded in an appropriate manner. Basic to this is the issue of women's access to university education and the encouragement offered them to pursue a degree. Having offered you a disclaimer and suggested an alternative definition, I will get on with the business at hand. Last summer, I was in the United Kingdom when Cambridge University celebrated the 50th Anniversary marking the granting of degrees to women. Before 1948 - as early as 1869 - women were permitted to study for degree examinations (although they were not allowed to attend lectures) but, at the end of the day, they received no formal recognition of their efforts through the conferment of a degree. There had been numerous attempts to have the

University's Senate do away with this restriction from about 1896, but the all-male Senate, confident of the broad support of the all-male undergraduate body, held firm - and this was in spite of the growing numbers of British universities which, from 1878, were granting women the right to take an academic degree. The records indicate that, at a celebratory dinner held at Girton College in July 1948, Helen Cam, one of the first female lecturers appointed: ²

.... evoked the battle between St. George and the Dragon to describe the battle for women's admission, in which the women themselves had been forced to stand by while St. George did his bit on their behalf - and which, in the end, the dragon had died of old age.³

The fact that UWI is, in 1998, also celebrating a Golden Jubilee (in this case, of the institution's 'birth') was, as you can imagine, not lost on me. UWI (as University College of the West Indies - UCWI) a 'new' university founded in 1948 very much in the British tradition - after all, we were originally a university college in 'special relationship' to the University of London - actively sought to admit female scholars right from the start. The 1945 *Report of the West Indies Committee of the Commission on Higher Education* (popularly known as the *Irvine Report*), charged with providing directionality for the new entity proposed, makes this abundantly clear when it speaks to the issue as follows:

In this context there is another important consideration. The women of the West Indies, though some of them are already showing their quality, do not yet make their full contribution to professional life or to public affairs.... With greater access to higher education, the influence of women, valuable in itself and perhaps especially requisite for the solution of the difficult social problems of the West Indies, would make itself felt. It is probable that if University education could be provided in

the West Indies at a lesser cost than overseas and with residential accommodation, a gradually increasing number of daughters would be able to obtain higher education and play their part fully in the life of their communities.⁴

Given the very positive early start, when roughly one-third of the first group of thirty three students entering the new university were female, it is indeed timely, 50 years down the line, to pause to consider whether UWI has, indeed, proved to be a progressive university for women - hence my title. As my focal point, I want to consider the question of women's access to UWI as students and as academic and/or administrative staff over the years and to attempt to gauge the impact they have had, or are having, particularly within the university setting.

There have been numerous studies done, particularly over the past ten years or so, which have teased out various aspects of this theme, but the present effort is intended to offer a broader sweep. I propose to bring an inter-disciplinary approach to my paper - one informed by the disciplines of history, gender studies and education, although I can claim some authority in but one of these areas.

Historical Links: Women and Higher Education in Britain

In light of UWI's links with the University of London, particularly in the early days, it seems useful to comment on what Ann Brooks has termed the 'historical position of academic women in the (British) academy'⁵ before looking at the Caribbean. Margharita Rendel has indicated that by the end of the nineteenth century in England:

... the relevance of higher education to the professions and occupations other than the Church had become apparent, (and that) ... changes in the form of patriarchy (in the 20th century) were reinforced by changes in legislation, opening up the possibilities for women's employment.⁶

However, despite early gains by the group which was to become known as 'first wave feminists', 'significant closure remained in terms of access to academic institutions, subject areas and to academic appointments.'⁷ Indeed, the position articulated in the late eighteenth century by the French philosopher, Rousseau, was, it seems, not too far buried beneath the surface, particularly during the post- world war periods. To quote:

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them and to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times, and should be taught them from infancy.⁸

Basic to this concept which sought to define women's position 'relative to men' was that of an over-arching assumption that the feminine sex possessed inferior intellectual ability. Indeed, Edward Clarke argued in 1873 that, since the use of the brain for intellectual pursuits required excessive blood, women could ill-afford to engage in strenuous pursuits, for fear that blood would be 'drawn away from the nervous system and reproductive organs.'⁹

Lest you dismiss Clarke's treatise as a nineteenth century aberration, let me remind you that, as late as 1994, several articles appeared in the U.K. educational press which proposed, among other theories, that 'men have

larger and/or better brains than women, and women, because of their lack of testosterone, are incapable of competing with men at work.'¹⁰

But let us return to more serious matters. During the 1920s, 'attitudes toward female (undergraduate) university students (in the U.K.) were initially enthusiastic, but this interest declined between the wars.'¹¹ Further, even when the number of male undergraduates declined during the war years, this was not offset by any significant increase in the number of females.

More recent access patterns in Britain have demonstrated a greatly improved situation in respect of university enrolment figures for women. This, Rosemarie Deem maintains, is as a result of changes in state ideology reflecting provisions which enable women to participate more fully in the labour market, albeit in segregated sectors.¹² Indeed, these policies resulted in a global expansion of higher education in the U.K. in the 1960s, and, as such, saw increasing numbers of males, as well as females, entering university. By 1996, roughly half of these were women, although the proportion pursuing postgraduate studies was only about one-third. They were represented within most subject groups in nearly all British universities.

The position of women academics in the U.K., on the other hand, has been more difficult to assess due to a paucity of statistical data. Despite this limitation, Rendell, writing in 1980, has claimed that:

The proportion of women academics now is virtually the same as in the 1920s and the proportion holding senior posts virtually the same as in the 1930s.... Individual women have learnt it is not enough to be better than men they are (just) not perceived as scholars.¹³

The UWI Experience

We move on now to the UWI experience, and I begin by offering certain hard data on several issues - total enrolment patterns, distribution of the top academic awards, subject orientation - to provide a contextual setting. I need to point out that the disaggregation of these data by gender is, to be kind, incomplete and inconsistent in presentation. Indeed, figures for the first ten years provide much more useful information than is the case for later periods, particularly the 1970s and 1980s. Even the official UWI *Statistics* publications unfortunately do not at all times seek to provide gender-specific data, although there has been some improvement over the last five years or so.

TABLE 1
TOTAL ENROLMENT FIGURES

Year	Total Enrolment		Women (%)
	Overall	Female	
1948/49	33	10	30
1958/59	622	231	37
1968/69	4216	1559	37
1978/79	8531	4046	47
1988/89	11896	6560	55
1997/98*	20997	13442	64

Source: UWI Statistics for Relevant Years

* Provisional

Having made this point, I will now examine Table 1, which shows the total enrolment figures over ten-year intervals commencing in 1948. What emerges is an increase in the average percentage of women enrolled, from 30% through 37% (during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s) to 47% in the 1970s, 55% in the 1980s and 64% in 1997/98. This is against enrolment figures for both men and women increasing from 33 to 20,997 over the 50-year period.

The swing of the pendulum in the direction of women in 1988/89 calls for a more detailed look at the years immediately preceding this time. This pin-points 1982/83 as the period at which the shift actually commenced, there being 51% females registered in the institution out of a total of 9,573 students.

I should say something about the distribution of the top academic awards, the University (College) of the West Indies (U(C)WI) Open Scholarships and national Exhibitions. The Open Scholarships are embarrassingly small in number (there are only ten new awards, occasionally eleven, currently given annually, and, up to the 1980s this number stood at six). For the 1950s, the representation of women among the Open Scholars stood at 21%, for the 1960s, 22%; for the 1970s and 1980s, 30% and for the 1990s, 34%.

Women have fared better with the Exhibitions, gaining 34% in the 1950s, 38% in the 1960s, and 46% in the 1970s and early 1980s. (No data seems to exist centrally after this time). As an aside, what struck me in collecting these data was the almost complete absence of women gaining Barbados Exhibitions during the first ten years following the inauguration of these awards - only three of a total of twenty-two awardees (14%). This was marginally better for the Trinidad Exhibitioners (five women - 17% - of a total of thirty) although for Jamaica the position was much stronger, women having won thirty-six out of a total of eighty-four Exhibitions (43%). I would not venture an explanation for the differential at the present time, as this suggests the need for detailed study in its

own right and quite likely involves a range of variables, including policy issues and societal expectations.

TABLE 2
TOTAL ENROLMENT OF UWI STUDENTS BY ARTS/SCIENCE OPTIONS*

YEAR	OPTION	TOTAL Ss	MALES	FEMALES
1948 (N=33)	Sciences	33	23 (70)%	10 (30%)
(Only Medicine offered - males predominate).				
1958 (N=622)	Sciences	373	273 (73%)	100 (27%)
	Arts	249	118 (47%)	131 (53%)
(More males in Medicine and the Natural Sciences, but not in Arts; Faculties of Social Sciences, Engineering, Agriculture and Law not yet on stream).				
1968 (N=4216)	Sciences	2199	1593 (72%)	606 (28%)
	Arts	2017	1064 (53%)	953 (47%)
(More males in every faculty except the humanities - Law still not yet on stream).				
1978 (N=8542)	Sciences	3512	NOT AVAILABLE	
	Arts	5030		
1988 (N=11,896)	Sciences	4533	2705 (60%)	1828 (40%)
	Arts	7363	2628 (36%)	4735 (64%)
(More females in all Arts faculties, more males in all science faculties).				
1997 (N=18,380)	Sciences	6350	3405 (54%)	2945 (46%)
	Arts	12030	3362 (28%)	8668 (72%)
(More females in all faculties except Engineering).				

Source: Culled from various official UWI documents for the respective years.

* (Arts: Education, Humanities, Law, Social Sciences

Science: Agriculture, Engineering, Medicine and Natural Sciences)

The academic options pursued by the UWI students (Arts as against the Sciences) provide an insight into the shifts of emphasis over the years (See Table 2). Initially (that is, in 1948) there was only the Faculty of Medicine on stream - and it has already been noted that the enrolment of women stood at 30%. Ten years later (in 1958) when there were two other faculties in operation at Mona (Arts and the Natural Sciences) along with the Department of Education, males demonstrated their numerical dominance in the Sciences (73% to 27%) although, even at this relatively early stage, the differential in the Arts favoured females (53% women to 47% men).

In 1968, with the birth of the St. Augustine and Cave Hill campuses having taken place in 1960 and 1963, respectively, and the addition of Engineering, Agriculture and the Social Sciences, the representation of males in the Sciences remained virtually unchanged from 1958. Males' figures also indicated a 'recovery' of sorts in the Arts-based options due to their sizeable enrolment in the new Faculty of Social Sciences (53% males to 47% females).

The year 1978 reflected for the first time the presence of the Faculty of Law which had been inaugurated in 1970, along with a larger total enrolment in the Arts than the Sciences. (Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain disaggregated data for this year). The next decade (1988) pointed to the 'traditional' pattern of more men in the Sciences and more women in the Arts (accompanied, however, by an overall enrolment of 55% females). The final set of available data (for 1997) shows a similar outcome, although the differential for the Sciences had by now become much less (54% males, 46% females). In fact, it is only in Engineering that men significantly outnumbered women, by some 52 percentage points (76% to 24%). The overall enrolment of females stood at 63% at that time.

The next issue that presents itself here, particularly in light of UWI staffing patterns which will shortly be examined, is that of the post-graduate data, since one

would reasonably posit that this is the group from which academic staff are likely to be recruited. Unfortunately, it has proved even more difficult to verify enrolment figures here, especially where one seeks to concentrate on higher degrees - PhD, MSc, MA. Although it seems that the first postgraduate degree was awarded in 1953/54, no credible enrolment figures could be located prior to 1968. By that time, women's enrolment stood at 26%. By 1970/71, it had risen to 31%, and by 1980/81, it was 50%. Ten years later (1990/91) the percentage of women registered for higher degrees was still 50%, although the actual numbers had increased to the point where the Vice Chancellor, in his *Report to Council* in 1988, claimed that:

(The) growth in higher degree registration is noteworthy and is a clear response by the University to the needs of the community, as well as a recognition of its own need for future members of staff.

By the mid-90s there was an increase to 55%, and the most recent data (for 1997) give a registration of 58% women out of a total of 3,079, the majority being located in taught Master's programmes.

What of the actual graduates? While not unexpected, it must be also noted that first degree graduation patterns have followed a similar trajectory to that of enrolment from 1952 when U(C)WI presented its first graduating class. I was able to unearth data for the period, 1951/52 to 1961/62, showing a graduation rate of 36% females out of a total of 859, and for the period extended to 1971/72, an increase in the percentage of female graduates to 42%, out of a total of 6,051. However, apart from these early figures, the information available has many gaps as shown in Table 3. Nonetheless, indications are that the graduation rate for 12 women in the 1950s was in the region of 34%; in the 1960s, 38%; the 1970s, 44%; the 1980s, 54%, and the 1990s, 63%. In all instances, percentages calculated on women's graduation rates were higher than for their enrolment figures. I should add that the graduation figures presented for **all** programmes

(not just first degrees) based on the 1977/78 data provided an overall percentage of 66.3% women - 66% from Cave Hill, 73% from Mona, and 60% from St. Augustine .

TABLE 3
FIRST DEGREES AWARDED BY UWI

Year	Total	Females	Year	Total	Females
1951/52	11		1975	1160	
1953	35		1976	1275	
1954	42		1977	1281	
1955	47		1978	1285	
1956	51		1979	1361	684 (50.3%)
1957	75	308 (36%)	1979/80	1457	
1958	84		1981	1465	744 (51%)
1959	107		1982	1583	812 (51%)
1959/60	114		1983	1540	811 (53%)
1961	120		1984	1570	812 (52%)
1962	173		1985	1650	927 (56%)
1963	235	2521 (42%)	1985/1986	1687	943 (56%)
1964	333	117 (35%)	1987	1822	1058 (58%)
1965	332		1988	1756	989 (56%)
1966	384		1989	1800	1032 (57%)
1967	534	223 (42%)	1989/1990	1883	1110 (59%)
1968	570	220 (39%)	1991		
1969	588		1992	2319	1405 (61%)
1969/70	639	265 (41%)	1993	2190	1321 (60%)
1971	814		1994		
1972	835		1995	2905	1852 (64%)
1973	1003		1996	3017	1965 (65%)
1974	1078		1997	2979	

Source: UWI Calendars and Statistics covering these years.

1979 can be regarded as a bench-mark year, when slightly over 50% females graduated from UWI with first degrees; and this is against the larger registration of males up to 1982 already mentioned. This leads to the natural conclusion, therefore, that women were out-performing their male counterparts, during this period at least (1979 to 1982).

In 1996/97, for the first time the St. Augustine campus reported a larger percentage of women in the graduating class, thus at last joining Cave Hill and Mona in this regard, and contributing to the highest percentage of female graduates to that date (65%). Nonetheless, Engineering at St. Augustine still remains a predominantly 'male' discipline, having an enrolment of approximately 22% women at the present time.

Unearthing patterns among those awarded higher degrees proved equally challenging. What is clear is that all eleven graduates of the 1950s (the first were presented in 1953/54) were men while, for the decade of the 1960s only ten (9%) of the 110 awardees were women (all receiving the MSc award). Subsequent decades show a growing number of women gaining higher degrees, equalling men around 1993, and surpassing them the year following.

The most recent data (1997) show 62% (337) of the total awardees (542) being women - certainly a better record than the one-third reported earlier in this presentation for the UK. Special mention must be made of the year 1972, when the PhD degree was awarded to a woman (actually, *four* women) for the first time. The first doctorates were gained by men one decade before, and this has to be taken into account when we look at staffing patterns which, as you may be aware, are strongly skewed in the direction of males.

But before I grasp that particular nettle, I should like to address an important concern - where do our female graduates go upon receiving their degrees? To trace their professional lives from 1952 to the present would be a formidable

challenge, outside the scope of the present paper. Nonetheless, it was important to get a sense of this important feature, even if in very general terms. I limited my search in the first instance, to a sub-set of the women - those who had gained Open Scholarships or Exhibitions under the UCWI dispensation. In order to secure the information needed, I relied on feed-back from individuals who knew these women, where I could not locate them personally.

The main profession which UCWIs female graduates adopted was, overwhelmingly, some aspect of education, typically teaching at the secondary level (after securing a Diploma in Education) but also, in instances, at university (not necessarily the regional institution) or a tertiary-level institution after completing a higher degree. One became Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Guyana, and another is currently principal of one of the largest and most dynamic community colleges in the region (sited in Barbados). Two were at UNESCO, one in Paris, the other in the regional office.

I located three who had been civil servants, one, at the Government Chemist's laboratory in Jamaica where she rose, after some years, to the position of Deputy Government Chemist. It was reported that at least two of the eight medical doctors never did work after being awarded the MBBS. A ninth did not complete, while two others attempted to get into Medicine after graduating with the Bachelor of Science degree. One was successful, the other was not, and resorted to teaching like so many of her peers. One of the first medical graduates currently holds the title of professor (having returned to UWI about seven years ago after a distinguished career in academia overseas) and, although she is past the retirement age, is held in very high esteem by her colleagues and still demonstrates a level of research productivity which is not easily equalled by her male counterparts or her more junior colleagues.

I know of two other female graduates of this era who secured employment at UCWI after the award of their first degree. One remained in her initial post as

Administrative Assistant for several years, after which time she went into journalism. The other became an Assistant Registrar, and later, Campus Registrar at the Cave Hill Campus. Two of the group became librarians, one at UWI, where she rose to the position of Deputy Campus Librarian at Mona. She resigned over a decade ago to migrate along with her family to the United Kingdom. Three are professional writers, one on a part-time basis. Another is quite well known for her contribution to children's literature.

Whereas three of the sample became well known in other creative spheres, one as a floral arranger and two as pianists, I did not get a sense that there was any marked recognition of the women's contribution to the business community, except in one case, whom I shall name. Mrs. Gloria Knight, one of UWI's honorary graduands, certainly became recognised in Jamaica as a significant player in the private sector. At the same time, and up to her death in 1997, she ensured that her company proved itself to be a 'good corporate citizen' as the saying goes, through its efforts to improve the teaching of physics at A-levels and mathematics in the primary schools by way of a series of special videos, among other things.

Roughly one-third of these early female graduates went on to post-graduate studies, mainly the Diploma in Education as mentioned previously, but several of the rest gained scholarships tenable overseas (bearing in mind that UWI did not have a full graduate programme until the 1960s). It is not unexpected, therefore, that some did not return to the region, or else, as in the case of the distinguished medical practitioner cited above, relocated on the eve of their retirement.

Jumping forward in time to the present decade, I also tried to get a sense of where our recent graduates have been placed. I was very pleased to find that two of our three campuses, through their placements offices, carry out annual tracer studies of recent graduates' fields of employment. From the impressive data set provided by St Augustine and Mona, I was able to determine the number of women employed in each of the three main categories reported -

the Public Sector, Private Sector and Teaching. For Trinidad and Tobago, their greatest representation has been in the Private Sector, followed by Teaching, then the Public Sector. Less than 25 women each year have sought to enter a post-graduate programme.

In the case of Jamaica, strongest representation has been shown within the Public Sector, and here a breakdown has been provided, which points to the health services as by far the largest employer of UWI female graduates. The Private Sector ranks second, and banking and accounting/auditing are the fields best represented. Teaching is third, with virtually twice as many women as men entering the classroom. Graduate studies, as in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, has received few students each year, the number of women returning to UWI being under thirty. Details of these findings are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN FOR THE 1990s
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (St. Augustine)

CATEGORY	YEAR (%)						Av. % 1990s
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
Public Sector	30	41	15	20	13	21	23
Private Sector	35	33	49	57	59	57	48
Teaching	35	26	36	24	28	22	29
N=	92	121	129	102	192	209	N= 845

JAMAICA (Mona)

CATEGORY	YEAR						Av. % 1990s
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
Public Sector	37	33	31	38	42	40	37
Private Sector	38	35	41	34	31	28	35
Teaching	25	32	28	29	27	32	29
N=	377	374	378	355	361	347	N= 2192

OECS SUB-SET

CATEGORY	1996-98 (%)
Public Sector	53
Private Sector	20
Teaching	23
N= 75	

While not focusing on UWI graduates specifically (although one can deduce that most persons would, indeed, have graduated from this institution) a study commissioned by the Jamaica Employers' Federation in 1995¹⁴ showed that of a sample of 3,714 persons employed at eight local companies (2,004 men and 1,710 women), 481 had earned university degrees, 68 at the master's or doctoral level. However, their distribution across the various employment categories applicable to these companies (executive, senior and middle management, supervisory, and clerk/secretary) was, at the highest levels, skewed in the direction of males. Indeed, it was only for the Supervisory and Clerk/Secretary categories that women with degrees outnumbered the men.

I also had the opportunity of using some of the results of a study conducted in the non-campus countries intended to probe completely different issues, and was able to ascertain, from a small sample of 75 female graduates of the past three years, that most (53%) had secured employment in the Public Sector, followed by Teaching (23%) and the Private Sector (20%). Only a few (under five) had any plans for graduate studies but none to that point in time had managed to concretize such plans.

The last set of data which I secured (and was elated to obtain) relates to the medical doctors, specifically. The Medical Alumni have established a well-run secretariat at Mona, the Executive Officer of which keeps excellent records. She made the information (shown in Table 5) available to me from her data-base, which, while not complete, provides a reasonably accurate record of UWI's medical graduates over the 50-year period. What is immediately apparent is that, of the 1,273 female doctors traced, most are practicing in the 'feminine' side of the profession - in Family Practice, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Paediatrics. This seems to support findings reported a decade ago by my colleague, Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie and myself, that although there are more women entering traditional 'male' professions, they are, nonetheless, practicing the 'feminine' side of the profession.¹⁵

TABLE 5
FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION FOR FEMALE
MEDICAL DOCTORS WHO ARE UWI GRADUATES

SPECIALITY	NUMBER OF WOMEN	SPECIALITY	NUMBER OF WOMEN
Anaesthetics	46	Rheumatology	4
Radiology	35	Gastroentology	10
Haematology/Oncology	12	Internal Medicine	66
Pathology	65	Obstetrics & Gynaecology	129
Primary Health Care	73	Psychiatry	35
Pediatrics	118	Ophthalmology	38
Nephrology	9	Urology	3
Neurology	6	Microbiology	3
Endocrinology	3		
Cardiology	5	Ear, Nose & Throat	6
		Family Practice	366

Source: Information drawn from Medical Alumni data base

Given the title of this paper *UWI – A Progressive University for Women?* we have also to consider those women who joined the male-dominated ranks of UWI as staff. In this regard we recognise that women were not included in the initial cadre of academic staff in 1948, but, by the next year (with the establishment of the Natural Sciences faculty and Extra-Mural Department) they had made an appearance (five, including two research assistants and a resident tutor, out of a total complement of 43 – after all the *Irvine Report* had spoken to the need to attract “men and women of the first quality”). A sketch of the situation over the ensuing years shows that in the decade of the fifties the number of women academics held fairly constant (between seven and eight) equally spread across the Arts and Sciences and including Extra-Mural. In 1954, Medicine received its first female lecturer (in the ‘feminine’ field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology) and 1956 saw the first to be promoted to Senior Lecturer. (Contrary to popular belief, the noted historian, Elsa Goveia, was the second female Senior Lecturer at U(C)WI although she achieved the distinction of becoming the first female Professor in 1964.

The proportion of women on the teaching staff grew very slowly during the 1960s and 1970s, reaching an average of 28% in the 1980s, and 31% in the 1990s (and here we include both Academic and Senior Administrative staff). But an important consideration is that, coupled with these low numbers, is women’s very weak representation at the more senior levels - Senior Lecturer, Reader, Professor (or their equivalents).

The official *Yearbooks* and *Calendars* give us the relevant data: at the end of the 1950s there was a total of some 260 persons employed in teaching and research. The end of the 1960s saw an increase in the total teaching/research staff complement to approximately 475 (and another 90 classified as Senior Administrative) while the 1970s showed an expansion to 796.

The decade of the 1980s brought with it a further increase in the staff complement (Academic and Administrative) to an average of about 875 overall, and the 1990s raised numbers beyond the 1000 mark (1,247 for 96/97). However, consistently there have been more males in all categories of staff than females, except in the case of Assistant Lecturer where women have at times, been in greater numbers. But in any event, this last category does not, by its very nature, carry a large complement, rarely more than fifty.

At the other end of the spectrum, at the Professorial and Senior Lecturer levels, there has been a particularly notable under-representation of women. To cite some figures as shown in Table 6, the number of male professors has increased marginally during the eighties up to 1989/90 from 1980 to 1989, and over the hundred mark during the ensuing years. Female professors, however, ranged between six and eight during the 1980s, only reaching double figures in the 1990s (between ten and thirteen). The same holds for the Senior Lecturer category, where, during the 1980s, men have numbered between 200 and 235, and women, between 51 and 71. It seems, in fact, that female academics at UWI remain, in the words of Slater and Glazer (1989) "locked in the contract mill of the junior ghetto."¹⁶

TABLE 6

**NUMBER OF STAFF (MALES AND FEMALES) AT THE PROFESSORIAL AND
SENIOR LECTURER LEVELS**

YEAR	PROFESSORIAL		SENIOR LECTURER	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
1984/85	84	6	213	51
1986/87	83	7	216	58
1988/89	80	8	219	64
1990	89	7 (+2)	219	71
1992	104	13 (+2)	217	68
1994	106 (+21)*	10	235	52
1996	103 (+18)*	10 (+4)	200	69

Source: From UWI Statistics for these years

* Indicates number of Readers

I checked the numbers of full-time female academic/administrative staff holding PhDs, DMs or an equivalent qualification, and ascertained that in 1996/97 there were only 121 to be found (less than half the number of women employed). Of these, 64 had been awarded by UWI, and they, together with the other 57 (the non-UWI PhDs) were mainly at the Lecturer level. In terms of the principal officers at UWI, women (attached to the Centre) hold the post of Pro-Vice Chancellor, University Registrar, Deputy University Registrar, one Deputy Campus Principal and University Librarian. The University Librarian (who also doubles as Campus Librarian) is not counted as senior management, so in effect

there are four women in this category. Across the three campuses, of a complement of 15 senior staff there are only four females (one Deputy Principal, already counted above in the Centre category, a Bursar and two Librarians, one of whom is also University Librarian).

Women Professors at UWI

I fear I may be accused of repeating myself, but the point has to be made in no uncertain terms. Currently (for 1998/99) there are no female deans (there have been only five in the history of the university) and, of the 68 Heads of Department, only seven are women. There are twelve women at professorial level - six holding the title (one is now operating in an administrative capacity) five in senior management and a sixth who does not hold the title, who is the Director of a research unit shortly to be merged with another similar entity, currently headed by a man. With the exception of two at St. Augustine, all are attached to the Mona campus.

All of these women except for two, read at least one of their degrees at UWI, and in all but three cases, have been employed at the institution for fifteen and upward years. I sought their comments on several issues which embraced their personal history and experiences (academic background, career path, source/s of encouragement, barriers along the way, assumption of leadership roles, level of job satisfaction) as well as their perception of what I would call institutional concerns (UWI's responsiveness to the region's developmental needs, specifically with respect to women in higher education; the institution's employment and promotion policies, again, with regard to women; evidence of any 'glass ceiling'; the respect accorded the scholarship and leadership qualities of female academics by their male counterparts, etc.) I also probed respondents' personal efforts at mentoring female students and/or young female academics and, for those who had done their undergraduate studies at

UWI, any observable differences reported between female students of yesteryear and today.

The information has been insightful and informative to me, and should be able to support a full case study which I hope to tackle in the not too distant future. For the purposes of this discussion, I will instead attempt to distill certain patterns, at times presented as commonalities across the group, yet recognising, however, the small number of respondents involved. This obviously presents a limitation to the extent to which the information provided can be taken to be representative of university-wide positions relative to female staff members.

The first pattern points to a distinction between those women who entered UWI straight after school (the A-level route) as against the few who chose to work before attempting their first degree (one actually secured a position at UWI, and then did her degree some twenty years later). The high school group presented as having been strongly influenced by their parents' expectations that they should receive a university degree. For some, they were the first of their respective families to go to university and thus accepted the importance of achieving success which this brought. For a few, there was parental pressure to study Medicine - what more prestigious profession could one hope for? However, two had successfully lobbied for the Natural Sciences as an acceptable alternative, although for one this was the antithesis of her humanities bent. All but one had attended a girls' high school, and as one put it, "You simply did not recognise at that time that there could possibly be any inferiority in girls' intellect compared to boys. You knew you were competent, that you could succeed at your studies, and you proceeded to get the job done."

The working group - those who, for largely economic reasons entered the work force after school - were strongly self-directed, in that the decision to secure a university degree at a later stage was of their own making, and not that of their

parents. In one instance, her exposure through work to a certain field shaped a respondent's decision to do a first degree, then graduate studies, in the area. This particular woman pointed out that there were no external sources of encouragement operating for her - professionally, she saw the need to have a degree and acted to attain the target she had set herself.

Familial responsibilities curtailed advanced studies upon graduating with their first degree for some members of the A-level group which, by this time, were looking to marriage and raising a family. A few, however, found it possible to proceed to a postgraduate diploma or degree but after a couple years break because of the willingness of their mothers to assist with child care. Nonetheless, all spoke of the bi-directional pull upon them - to satisfy a growing desire to pursue further studies, at the same time being conscious of their familial responsibilities, particularly where their children were concerned.

It is of note that one respondent reported being confronted by such familial pressures later in life (and this was beyond the call to care for ageing parents which several others faced). In this case, having teenage children at the present time, when she is at the apex of her professional life, has imposed certain constraints in terms of her time and flexibility to travel on university-related matters. She also pointed out that this situation has brought with it a recognition that UWI (that is, the institution's management) does not demonstrate a concern for working mothers (at whatever level) and acts as if all staff should be at the Vice Chancellor's (or Principal's) beck and call. Is it really necessary to hold meetings after 5.00 pm, she queried? To receive a summons for a Saturday morning meeting at 6.00 pm on a Friday evening? Although this woman is able to afford a housekeeper, she is aware that more junior women might not be in the same position. In any event, she has taken the decision that her children are of greater importance and need her more than does the university after normal working hours. She also recognised that this position may well work against her promotion prospects in the future.

Another pattern observed related to academic staff members who had been in the institution for many years. For them, the offer of a position at UWI typically came after they had obtained their PhD, or at least, had gained a Master's degree and were fairly well advanced with doctoral studies. These women virtually 'grew up' at UWI, to the extent that one expressed the view that at times she felt she was 'part of the walls.' This period of academic maturing, however, has had its down-side in instances where in later years more senior (in age) colleagues (typically men) had difficulty accepting the professional competence demonstrated by these women. Promotion beyond their colleagues' levels was also an issue for some.

While three women had left as staff, then returned, two others had led a professional life elsewhere before joining UWI, one, in a senior management/consultancy capacity, the other in a professional service organisation. The former had been well on the way to obtaining her doctorate and engaging in an academic career when, because of the frequent call to move family occasioned by her husband's career, she took the decision to do an MBA and become a consultant. She opined that she came to UWI at an opportune time, when the institution had undergone an audit which called for a reorientation of certain practices which, she felt, she was well qualified to spearhead. She spoke to her successes in achieving her targets, but at the same time, to the perceived resentment (often subtle) of her as a woman in a senior management position, but more so, as an outsider.

It was noteworthy that one woman spoke to her perception of a position at UWI as carrying the level of status she craved and thus set out to obtain, while another referred to the fact that she had a PhD several times during our conversation, leading me to appreciate that she still placed much store on this accomplishment even after being on staff for some sixteen years. In this vein, one woman, in speaking to the need for university women to be 'super performers' if they hoped to have the ear (or respect) of their male colleagues went on to add that having first-rate qualifications is not enough - women have

to be the best teachers, the best researchers, the best administrators; and even then they are likely to be overlooked at promotion time, and the nod given to a less able man by other men.

As an aside, I am reminded of a statement reported in a Jamaican newspaper recently and made by a female Senior Lecturer of many years standing in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Mona. The staff member commented that her personal experience is of having had her views ignored in meetings, and of being amazed to hear the same views, expressed by a man, taken up some minutes later, and everyone says, what a good idea! Why didn't we think of that before? ¹⁷

Yet, role models for this group of women, where they have been acknowledged, have typically been male, and where a female has featured this has been on a more informal plane - almost behind the scene, so to speak. Only in one case was a strong and dominant female role model mentioned. It was reported that some sectors of the university community seemed to feel that women who advance at UWI owe their success to the patronage of certain influential men in the system. The interviewees, however, made it clear that they felt they had made it on their own merit and according to their own terms, neither of which had anything to do with their gender. This also seems to be the view of the Dean of Social Sciences, Mona, who, in referring to two of these women in the local media said of one, when she speaks, I never think, that's a woman; and of the other, her views are so wise and sound. Neither of them, he said, would have got their positions by way of tokenism.¹⁸

Overt discrimination along gender lines was thought to be absent at UWI, but several gave examples of what they considered covert discriminatory practices evidenced in such areas as contractual terms and conditions and the lower-level committees (often of a service nature) they had been asked to sit on. Three respondents reported attempts made by other women colleagues to

undermine them after they had been promoted, while one spoke to not being taken seriously by her male colleagues since she was not regarded as one of the boys.

It was suggested by three respondents that UWI women need to speak more to the problems they face, or, where they do speak, to do so in a louder voice. This, it was felt, would cause the institution to become more aware of the woman's issue. In one case, the view was expressed that it is only since females have been outnumbering males in enrolment, graduation rates and class of degree, coupled with the ascendancy of a limited number to senior management level, that the men are beginning to sit up and recognise women's existence. If this seems to be a stark statement, it might better be considered against the broader criticism that UWI has not, in the main, actively promoted what has been called by one interviewee, women's enfranchisement. In other words, the perception was that there has been little effort on the part of the university to offer the same treatment to men and women. Taken further, the view was that UWI did not seem to have articulated any specific path enabling women to play their role in the region's development - but then, again, some did not feel that UWI should define any such role for women. Rather, what was called for was a more informed and immediate response to our Governments' needs, whether these be addressed by males or females.

Differences were reported between current female students and those of yesteryear by participants capable of making an informed judgement on the matter. While female undergraduates of the 1950s and 1960s might not necessarily have been overtly aware of gender issues, this is not a matter of debate for today's women. Unfortunately, all too often they have demonstrated their complacency by, for example, being unwilling to assume leadership roles - there are still mainly male leaders in the Students' Guilds - so the women seem, therefore, simply to be riding on the gains made by female activists in the university who are of greater vintage.

By way of summarizing the general issues emerging from the interviews, it can be said that while there was recognition of UWI as a male institution, there was the view that the previous Vice-Chancellor had made commendable strides in opening the door to allow a few women in, thereby cracking the strongly evident glass ceiling. There is also a perception that some UWI women are “waiting in the wings”, being acceptant of male leadership, and demonstrating an unwillingness to step forward into the limelight. This, it is suggested, is probably because of a lack of self-confidence. None of my interviewees spoke to the need for special pleading for women, for it was felt that given the right environment, women scholars’ obvious competence would, over time, be recognised and appreciated fully.

One respondent, very knowledgeable about gender issues, pointed out that male and female staff at UWI should not be thought of as engaging in a race model, with the intention of one outstripping the other. (In any event, it has to be recognised that men and women have different starting points, hence the inappropriateness of the race model). Rather, what should be sought in her opinion, is the ladder model, calling for men and women to attain the goals set at their own pace. This it seems, is a realistic approach to take as I move on to my final set of concerns.

Conclusion

And here, I return to my theme: *UWI - a Progressive University for Women?* Well, based on the data spanning the first 50 years of the university’s life, what do you think? Is UWI a progressive university for women? What would Dame Nita say? After 50 years existence the institution has something to say for itself too; but I wonder whether this is very much different from what it ‘said’ on its 40th anniversary, ten years ago. Reviewing the numerical data available in 1988, an article, co-authored by Elsa Leo-Rhynie and myself, spoke to the greater

involvement of women in higher education during the 'eighties, but at the same time indicated that their *placement* was still in sex-stereotyped areas. Thus:

Women who pursue Engineering, Agriculture, Pre-clinical Medicine or the Natural Sciences (particularly the physical sciences), not only find themselves outnumbered by male students in class, but they encounter few, if any, women among their teachers.¹⁹

Reference made to the paucity of female teachers still holds today. However, enrolment data one decade later show larger numbers of women students than men in most subject areas - Engineering being the only 'male' faculty left. In addition, mention in the 1988 study to "the power, leadership, decision-making and control (being) completely in male hands" has to be modified within the present context in light of the promotion of several women to senior management positions. These women, along with their academic counterparts at professorial level must confront several unique issues - of helping educate new generations to a broader understanding of women's roles, and of assisting in shaping women's roles in organisations that have a very traditional masculine ethos.²⁰ A serious concern is whether these few women at the apex carry sufficient sway to achieve the level of success called for. Where their more junior colleagues remain silent, the task assumes Herculean proportions.

The level of participation of female staff members in such matters, as well as wider concerns pertaining to the university's governance have been criticised by several sources. Various explanations have been advanced (for UWI as well as other universities) some of which are credible, others, dubious. While we recognise that all do not necessarily demonstrate the same degree of validity, it can be accepted that they represent issues which women, more so than men, face, and, indeed, add support to the proposition reported in contemporary feminist literature of the '*difference*' between the two sexes. Barrett (1987) for example, explains this in two ways:

(The first draws) on the idea of difference between women and men (whether seen in timeless, essential terms or in a more socially constructed approach) and the other a more deconstructive model that emphasizes the specific social existences of women.²¹

In other words, this definition not only speaks of registering diversity of situation and experience between men and women, but also of an understanding of the positional rather than the absolute character of meaning between women. So, while recognising the importance of these issues to academic women, it is evident that each will not impact equally on every one of them. This, in itself can become problematic where certain women (particularly those in more senior positions) fail to recognise the extent to which others (typically their juniors) might be affected. The lack of support which this occasions is likely to further weaken the position of women in the institution and must be constantly guarded against by all concerned.

Let me offer brief comments about three clusters I consider most important within the UWI context.

Role Modelling/Mentorship/Networking

Role modelling, as a concept, and mentorship and networking, as strategies, have largely been discounted by feminist theorists as effective means for effecting change. Nonetheless, their importance to the careers of men has to be acknowledged, and, more and more it seems, women are seeking the guidance of their more senior female colleagues, and looking to chart a career path on their advice. Indeed, my 'professorial' interviews suggested that most of the group sees this as an important task for them to devote considerable time to (one even drew my attention to the fact that a few years ago she had worked

hard and long on another member of this group, to go after one of the 'top jobs' in the institution). However, we must bear in mind the limited number of women in this category: those who make themselves available are likely to carry considerably more than their male colleagues in this regard. Also, there are the others who *do not* make themselves available and whom, according to Weston (1990) must be reminded 'not to pull the ladder up after them.'²²

Institutional Responsibilities

For some, this issue is thought to address *Equal Opportunities*, and one observes that many universities have introduced an equal opportunities policy as a result of pressure from women academics. Even in the UK, which is generally thought of as ultra-conservative, the 1990 *Report of the Hansard Society Commission on Women at the Top* offered a liberal feminist approach to the issue, speaking to it as follows:

We recommend that all universities should appoint equal opportunities officers and that they should monitor and publish information about women's progress.²³

It is my understanding that in the U.K., while the response to this recommendation is by no means uniform, considerable advances have been reported for some universities. I do not know how such action would be received at UWI - in fact, I really would want to learn whether the Gender and Development Studies units on our three campuses, led by their regional Centre, would welcome the institution demonstrating in so-called tangible ways, its willingness to put in place processes designed to enhance the opportunities of academic women. I ask this in light of reports in feminist literature which suggest that the liberal feminist approach - basically, to create space for women at all

levels - can be counter-productive; for all too often the women then become marginalised within the very context they seek to make a difference.

That space is now being provided for more women does not mean that it is accompanied by any yielding of male power or privilege. What is particularly disconcerting is a point made to me on several occasions by the Professor of Gender and Development Studies at UWI, that men, having given women more space, are now trying to use that space for their own concerns, in her words, "to divert women's energies into men's anxieties." She feels that the research on male underachievement is a case in point. Although this is legitimately sited in the Centre for Gender and Development, is it not further evidence of the research agenda being directed to a male, rather than female, concern?

I would hope, however, that should UWI ever take steps in the direction of equal opportunities legislation (or, if you prefer, affirmative action), provision for such opportunities would not be based on a deficit model of women's careers, but rather, on the setting of targets for the promotion of suitably qualified female staff, at the same time putting in place (or, if you like, setting the stage by providing) the institutional support required. It would be equally important to take into account the need to ensure that women have a call in determining priority areas for research, for the allocation of research funds, for what is taught in terms of curriculum content and reading materials; at the same time making their voice heard on matters such as appointments and promotion.

Attention would have to be paid to various other matters, for example, the issue of child care and of sexual harassment and discrimination; so concern must be with the need for timely action on the part of UWI to accept its responsibility as an employer and to act to establish real equality of opportunities in an expeditious manner, reflective of the notion of 'access and success' that Kenway and Modra (1992) talk about.²⁴

Attitudinal Barriers

Legislation of university policy, such as is called for when addressing Equal Opportunities, does not necessarily mean that the policy will be internalised by members of the institution. Legislation cannot ensure that there will not be a negative response of male (and even female) colleagues to women on the staff, including the few in senior positions within the university. Indeed, it has often been said in academic (and other) circles that 'A man is preferred because he is a man.' It has also been said that women who have made it to the top are thought of as 'honorary men'!

The position which is widely held is that many academic women see their profession as secondary to their family responsibilities, for they have internalised the culturally prescribed role of women in the society. Some also acknowledge that this duality leads to a level of internal conflict and of self-guilt which, if not resolved, can become counter-productive and even, in the extreme, a cause of serious illness. Halsey (1992)²⁵, writing of the UK, claims that university women's lack of recognition is the fault of the women themselves, for they allow their domestic responsibilities to impinge upon their professional performance. Considerations such as a husband's attitude toward her career impact positively or negatively on the female academic's career, depending on whether he is supportive or otherwise. Career interruption for child-bearing and child-rearing also retard progress for the woman. But there are others who put a different slant on the matter, suggesting that far too many female academics are lacking in career motivation, that they are often simply 'drifting' career-wise, or else are plagued by the view that they are not as competent as the men. Indeed, some women have opined that their confidence and achievement levels are undermined by male values and that they are helpless to do anything about it. In the university, legitimacy is granted to persons possessing what is called 'cultural capital', that is, having recognised resources and values (Bourdieu, 1988)²⁶ and, I think we must add, power (although you may remember that at a

personal level, I interjected a disclaimer earlier in my presentation against power relationships). Nonetheless, we must accept that greater value is placed on those qualities traditionally identified as male, so women either have to choose to assimilate male attitudes and values or attempt the difficult task of changing them. The emergence of formal and informal women's groups and networks have done much to sensitize both men and women about the issue, and the fact that international agencies such as UNESCO and the Commonwealth Secretariat have, certainly within the past eight years or so, become quite vocal is to be considered a positive development.

Special mention should be made of ComSec's *Women in Higher Educational Management Programme*, initiated as part of the Commonwealth's response to the demonstrable under-representation of women at middle and senior management levels. This had as its genesis, the *Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development* which was presented to the World Conference on Women in Beijing and was more recently endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Auckland. While the *Plan* represents, it is claimed, a new Commonwealth vision for women towards the year 2000 and requires that all Commonwealth activities are gender-sensitive, the specific higher education programme addresses leadership training for women academics and administrators through a series of management and staff development activities. Also included in the design is the development of a Commonwealth-wide electronic network which is to be used to encourage participants to provide one another with professional and moral support.²⁷ I understand that the network is up and running, and is operated out of Malaysia.

While I appreciate fully, as I am sure you all do, the importance of the home environment and, particularly, formal education in ensuring that our girls are afforded access to university, I have concentrated my discussion on female staff, although the earlier sections of my presentation also addressed UWI's student body. I believe that what women academics are able to do is important to them as individuals, but also to female students in the university whose own notions of identity and autonomy are partly framed in response to

this. In this regard, the **visibility** of women scholars and administrators at UWI is of paramount importance, particularly in terms of the leadership they offer.

The literature is replete with examples of differences of style between male and female leaders and has generally presented the 'masculine' leadership behaviours in a more positive light. Yet, the 'feminine' behaviours need to be appreciated for the contribution they can make by way of creating an appropriate working climate and setting inspirational goals. The main abilities which women as leaders can offer are, as Middlehurst (1997)²⁸ puts it:

...flexibility and adaptability, ability to handle multiple demands, sensitivity to different perspectives, an approach to life and work which involves a longer-term view of how to make a difference for 'the greater good' of the family, group, organization or society.

One would therefore look for a change in the concept of leadership within the institution, a change that is accompanied by parallel shifts in the environment and operating context of UWI. I look forward to the day when our female leaders' styles become less exceptional and ultimately, more valued, at the same time maintaining a strong commitment to UWI's regional character and a clear sense of its institutional goals.

¹ The Graduation Address given by Dame Nita Barrow at Mona's graduation ceremony held on October 20, 1990, was entitled, *A Caribbean response to the challenge of change*.

² It should be noted that female lecturers were appointed at Cambridge University prior to the time when women were granted degrees from this university.

³ This statement, attributed to Helen Cam, appeared in the special 1998 edition of Cambridge University's *Focus*, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the granting of this university's degrees to women.

⁴ This appears at Minute 45 of the *Irvine Report*.

⁵ See Ann Brooks' interesting review, *Academic women*, published by The Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press, 1997.

⁶ *Ibid.* p.8

⁷ *Ibid.* p.9

⁸ This quote is reported in *Storming the tower - Women in the academic world*, edited by Suzanne Stiver Lie and Virginia O'Leary and published by Kogan-Page, (1990).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ See p. 13 of the Association for Commonwealth Universities' *Bulletin*, ABCD #18, (April, 1997).

¹¹ In Brooks, *op. cit.* p. 9.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Rendel's position on the issue of low numbers of women academics in the U.K. is reported on p. 11 of Brooks' *Academic women* cited above.

¹⁴ Information was obtained from the data gathered from a pilot survey conducted by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, and presented at a seminar on *Gender at the workplace* sponsored by The Jamaica Employers' Federation, December 7, 1995.

¹⁵ See E. Leo-Rhynie and M. Hamilton's article on Women in higher education - a Caribbean perspective, in *Education in the West Indies: Developments and perspectives, 1948-1988*; edited by D.R. Craig and published by UWI's Institute for Social and Economic Studies, 1996 (pp. 75-86).

¹⁶ See M. Slater and P.M. Glazer's Prescriptions for Professional Survival in J. Conway et al. (eds.) 1989. *Learning about women: Gender, politics and power*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

¹⁷ This was reported in Margaret Bishop's four-part article entitled, *Why so few women at the top in UWI?* which ran in *The Daily Observer* (Jamaica) during October, 1998. The immediate quote appeared in the October 12 section.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ This quote appears at p. 84 of Note #15, above.

²⁰ See Foreword (p. xi) by Elaine El-Khawas to the book on *Women as Leaders and Managers* edited by Heather Eggins and published by The Society for Research into Higher Education and the Open University Press (1997).

²¹ For the full discussion on this topic, see M. Barrett's article, The Concept of 'Difference in *Feminist Review* 26, Summer (1987) pp. 29-42

²² See Note #8

²³ This is reported in Ann Brooks' review (see Note #5 above).

²⁴ See J. Kenway and H. Modra's Feminist pedagogy and emancipatory possibilities, in C. Luke and J. Gore (eds.) *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 138-166) New York: Routledge (1992).

²⁵ See A.H. Halsey's *Decline of donnish dominion: The British academic professions in the twentieth century*. Oxford: Clarendon (1992).

²⁶ See P. Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus*. Oxford: Polity (1988).

²⁷ An excellent overview is provided by Dr. Jasbir Singh in *Women and management in higher education: a Commonwealth project*; which appeared in the *ACU Bulletin, ABCD* #133 of April 1998

²⁸ Reported in Heather Eggins' *Women as leaders and managers* - see Note #20 above



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>

When the Closet is a Region: Homophobia, Heterosexism and Nationalism in the Commonwealth Caribbean

CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper No. 5, March 2001

[Tara L. Atluri](#)

Undergraduate exchange student at the CGDS, 1999-2000
from the Faculty of Arts and Science
University of Toronto, St. George Campus, University College

ISSN: 0799-0480

ISBN: 976-621-090-X

Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS)
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper Series

Editorial Committee

Dr Eudine Barriteau: Director, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Richard Goodridge: Department of History, The UWI, Cave Hill
Ms Tracy Robinson: Faculty of Law, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus
Ms Gemma Tang Nain: Deputy Programme Manager, Caribbean Community Development
Women's Affairs CARICOM

Editorial Assistant

Ms Carmen Hutchinson Miller: CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill

Keywords: homophobia, heterosexism, sexism, sexuality, gender ideologies, gender relations, nationalism, Commonwealth Caribbean

How to cite

Atluri, Tara L. 2015. "When the Closet is a Region: Homophobia, Heterosexism and Nationalism in the Commonwealth Caribbean." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 287-326

Editor's Note

Working Paper number 5 began as a research project by undergraduate exchange student Tara Atluri to satisfy course work requirements for the course AR22B Women's Studies. This is an introductory course offered in semester II of the academic year 1999-2000.

Tara Atluri is presently completing her fourth and final year of undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto, St. George Campus, University College where she is pursuing an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Tara spent an academic year at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados where she completed various Law, Women's Studies, Political Science and Literature courses. She became interested in the issue of homophobia in the Caribbean after noticing a correlation between attitudes of intolerance towards homosexuals and widely accepted sexual attitudes of intolerance towards women.

She firmly believes that a women's movement that remains unconnected to issues of homophobia is failing to examine the root ideologies upon which patriarchy and sexism are based, and is therefore patching things up without ever challenging the source of the problem.

Tara Atluri's work represents the output of a new generation of budding feminist scholars that the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at Cave Hill is committed to supporting.

When the Closet is a Region

Homophobia, Heterosexism and Nationalism in the Commonwealth Caribbean

The DJ is spinning. It's a song about killing batty-men. And I watch all the men in the fete go wild. They bang on the walls and raise hands in the air as if they are protesting, or maybe worshipping something. I hate when this song plays. I hate it because my body is no longer my body-it is theirs. Breast and hip and leg turn from flesh into target with just one new track. Every man must find a woman to dance with. To hold so tightly that his fingers leave an imprint on my skin. Fingerprints that sometimes feel as if they will stay forever.

So here I am. And here he is breathing rum and cigarette down the back of my neck. While one hand inches up my skirt, the other is an imaginary gun shooting the imaginary batty men, who don't live here but yet, are everywhere. And in this moment it all feels like the same thing. As one hand squeezes my thigh so tightly the other squeezes the trigger and obliterates a man who deserved to die for acting like a woman. As the DJ shouts that homosexuals must burn, to the crowds delight, a man whispers what he'd like to do to me in my ear and my skin feels like fire, raw and blistered by all these names he marks me with.

The next day men will tell me how they are sure there were batty men at the fete. For some their homophobic paranoia will have swelled into rage and they will have cuts and bruises from a fear driven brawl. They will say that men were looking at them. That they think a few might have even brushed up against them on purpose. They will be disgusted and angry. They will tell me how wrong it is that they have to deal with anything like this. They will tell me that that is what women are for.

Introduction

Hypothesis and Method

Attempting to address homosexuality, homophobia and heterosexism in the Caribbean has been one of my most confounding experiences to date. Attitudes towards homosexuality range from vehement hatred complete with death threats¹ to a maddening silence, which is in itself a disavowal of sexual difference. What is equally disconcerting is the lack of information that has been produced in relation to homosexuality and homophobia in the Caribbean context.

I feel that there is a strong correlation between homophobia, heterosexism and sexism. From popular culture to constitutional inequity, homosexuality is dismissed, loathed and ignored by mainstream Caribbean culture. I feel that this fear of homosexuality keeps gender roles sharply intact, thereby normalising sexism. Furthermore I feel that homophobia and heterosexism are reinforced by Caribbean nation states, based on a discriminatory nationalism that uses both religious conformity and conformity to capitalist patriarchy as a basis for inclusion. I will explore the relations between homophobia, heterosexism, and nationalism as relations of power that 'sex the nation' in highly discriminatory terms.

Within this work my main areas of focus will be popular culture (in the form of dancehall lyrics), legislation, specific incidents which have gained attention from gay rights activists in the Caribbean and abroad, the stance that religious forces have (or have not) taken, and the relationship between homosexuality as 'Western imposition' and economic neo-colonialism.

I have noticed an overwhelming lack of Caribbean feminist scholarship that attempts to address issues of sexuality. Personally, I have noticed a tangible relationship between homophobia in the Caribbean and the treatment of

women. Therefore I do not think it is possible to have a homophobic women's movement' that really moves us anywhere. The silence surrounding homosexuality in the Caribbean must be broken in order to deconstruct this need to suppress difference, which I believe, is indicative of a larger paradigm of gender relations and nationalist rhetoric.

The term 'Caribbean' within this work will refer to the Commonwealth Caribbean, which has its historical roots in British colonial domination. My research deals mainly with the countries of Barbados, Trinidad, The Bahamas and Jamaica. I understand that all Caribbean nations have different histories, social norms and attitudes. My aim is not to generalise or exclude. However, I have had to piece together the little information available and based on this, draw my conclusions.

What I offer is not a broad-based survey of the varying attitudes towards homosexuality found in the Commonwealth Caribbean. There simply is not enough information to make this a reality, yet. Instead I will examine commonalities and differences in legislation and attitudes across nations, in an effort to identify common sources of oppression and power. This is the beginning of a conversation that is long overdue. But it is only the beginning.

Section 1

The Power Of Naming-Definitions and Theories

'Homophobia' is a widely used yet ambiguous term. As Hopkins states in *Gender Treachery: Homophobia, Masculinity, and Threatened Identities*:

For some, the 'phobia' suffix codes anti-gay and anti-lesbian activity as appertaining to psychiatric discourse-the realm of

irrationality, uncontrollable fear, a realm where moral responsibility or political critique seems inapplicable due to the clinical nature of the phobia.²

Epistemologically the term depoliticises violence faced by lesbian and gay people. However, 'Homophobia' has come into being as a political tool, meaning it carries more emotional impact than terms like 'anti-homosexuality'.³ 'Homophobia' in its widely politicised context refers to "...physical violence and strong verbal, economic, and juridical abuse against gays..."⁴ Therefore, despite its literary misgivings I will use the term 'homophobia' in its widely politicised context.

Heterosexism refers to 'a political situation' in which heterosexuality is seen to be natural, moral and superior.⁵ In a heterosexist culture "...heterosexuals are accorded the privileges granted them political power, sexual freedom...juridical non-interference"⁶ to name but a few. Heterosexism can be read as a precursor to homophobia. Heterosexism "...constructs the field of concepts and behaviours so that some heterosexuals' hierarchical view of this binary will be reactionary, for a variety of reasons, thus becoming homophobia (read: violent/abusive/coercive)."⁷ One way of conceptualising this relationship is to compare it to the correlation between sexism and misogyny. One can purport sexism without hating women; however, sexism can be seen as the root ideology upon which the extreme reaction of misogyny is based. Similarly while one can be heterosexist without being homophobic, heterosexism is culpable in the production of homophobia. It is often the context in which the extreme reaction of homophobia is based.

Further terms that I will employ throughout this work are 'the sexed body'⁷ and 'the heterosexual matrix,' derived from post-structuralist feminist Judith Butler. Legal feminist Carol Smart who also draws on Butler's work argues that within the law (and I argue within other cultural discourses as well) it is not only gender that

matters, but also the sexed body.⁸ This body according to Smart, "...is constantly being reproduced in law, for law reproduces self-evident and natural women and often in a sexualised and subjugated form."⁹ The sexed body refers to a construct that is not only saturated with sex, but with natural woman-ness or maleness.¹⁰ Within the concept of 'sexed body' is Butler's notion that bodies have no meaningful sexual essences prior to their 'mark of gender'.¹¹ Therefore, there can be said to be no essence of sex, which should impose binary divisions onto our lives. While I find Butler's work compelling, for the purposes of this paper I am not as concerned with notions of sex vs. gender, as much as I am with the 'natural' sexual essences that get mapped out onto the body, a mapping that assumes heterosexuality. The second term I will use from Butler is the heterosexual matrix (which I will also refer to as the heterosexist matrix, as it is both).

This refers to the dominant understanding that normal sexual desire arises out of sexual, biological and gender difference. It also imports a presumption of reproductive sex, reinforcing the naturalness of heterosexuality.¹² Within this paradigm, politicised gender identities of (often homosexual) men who perform femininity and (often homosexual) women who perform masculinity, invert the binary system but do nothing to destroy it.¹³ In a political context however, this 'gender treachery', complete with opposition,¹⁴ shows the arbitrary nature of gender and the overwhelming need some have to maintain it.

Many theorists have made linkages between homophobia, heterosexism and sexism. As Hopkins states, "Behind all homophobia... is the background of heterosexism. Behind all heterosexism is the background of gendered identities."¹⁵ While Hopkins' assertion is totalising, it offers one viable way of perceiving homophobia in a gendered context. As Gayle Rubin states in *The Traffic in Women*, within Western based cultures, gendered identities are constructed within a binary system in which men and women are defined in opposition to each other, and women are defined as the lesser of the two. Men are strong, women are weak, and so on, and so on.¹⁶ Heterosexuality is implicit

within this ideological construction of gender. Women and men appear gendered within a heterosexual matrix, as fully sexed bodies. They appear as two halves of a whole, man being the actor and woman, the acted upon.¹⁷

Gender categories however, offer up the paradox of being both natural and unstable. Gender norms must constantly be reasserted for fear of deviation. One such deviation occurs when men and women are erotically oriented towards members of the same sex. As Hopkins states, a man (and I argue a woman as well) who acts on this erotic orientation "...violates a tenet of masculinity (or femininity), and most importantly, appears to reject standards by which real men are defined as selves, as subjects."¹⁸

Within the heterosexist matrix, what is not masculine is feminine. However, as Hopkins states, "... 'feminine essences' do not easily coincide with 'male' bodies."¹⁹ Unable to cross freely between gender spheres, 'gender-traitors' are deemed to be homosexuals, despite where their sexual orientation may fall. Men who are too feminine are faggots; women who are too masculine are dykes. Their bodies are sexed in negative terms, and homophobia seeks to both punish and correct them, while reinforcing the superiority of the heterosexual.²⁰ Homophobia can be read as an effort to maintain and reproduce strict categories of gender, in which women are the inferiors of the male-female pair. As I. Bennet Capers argues in *Sex(ual Orientation) and Title VII*, heterosexism reinforces sexism in two ways. Firstly, by punishing "gender traitors" and rewarding gender conformists, "heterosexist hegemony perpetuates a schema that valorises passive, dependent women, thus contributing to sexism."²¹ Secondly, heterosexism subordinates women due to its hierarchical polarity.

As Capers states, "By creating opposites, society implicitly valorises one object over another.... female becomes both not male and somehow less than male."²² The binary heterosexist system creates man as superior and woman, through opposition. However woman is also necessary to form a definition of

man, as man and woman are defined by their differences. Therefore the binary system creates constructs that are both in opposition to each other, and mutually dependant on each other for identity.

Heterosexism also enforces sexism through its promulgation of patriarchy. As gay theorist Gary Kinsman explains,

Heterosexual identity is tied to the shifting social organisation of gender and patriarchal relations. Male heterosexual identity... is associated with the daily practices of men in the gender division of labour: a class organisation of masculinity that contains common features across class boundaries, shifting forms of family organization, the struggle for a family wage paid to the male breadwinner, male responsibility for 'his' wife and children, and male control over women's bodies and sexuality.²³

Heterosexism therefore perpetuates the subordination not only of lesbians and gays, but of heterosexual women as well. By examining the relationship between heterosexism and patriarchy it is clear that homosexuality creates "...fragmentations in the male role that could lead to less male dominance..."²⁴ Similarly lesbianism may refute "...the proposition that female sexuality exists only for the sake of male gratification."²⁵ Both lesbians and gays threaten the natural, moral state of the heterosexual, patriarchal family, and therefore their suppression is often integral to the maintenance of patriarchy. It is important to note that it is the symbolic significance of homosexuality that threatens patriarchy. As Capers states, .

When lesbians and gays question a society that denies them the right to adopt children, they question a society that says it is a woman's place to raise children, a man's place to be a

breadwinner, and both are needed to constitute a family. When lesbians and gays question a society that denies them the right to express their love physically, they question a society that says a woman's body is not her own, but is still the subject of governmental control...²⁶

By demanding an alternative view of sexuality, homosexuals threaten traditional heterosexist conceptions of sex and the family, thereby threatening patriarchy. This does not mean that homosexual relationships cannot reproduce the same gendered hierarchies and patriarchal underpinnings found in many heterosexual unions.

Furthermore as Butler states, the very assertion of the alternative lifestyle of the 'homosexual' reinforces the normalcy of the 'heterosexual', through opposition.²⁷ However, in response to the 'symbolic significance' of homosexuality, homophobia can be read as an effort to maintain the bipolar system of gender through which women are devalued.

Section II

Postcolonial bodies and Colonial Lies: The Caribbean Context

Caribbean sexualities are products of the historical experiences of the region. M. Jaqui Alexander states in *Not Just (Any) Body Can Be a Citizen* that one can trace the 'hegemonic repertoire of images' produced and reproduced through slavery and colonisation, left as a legacy to Caribbean nationalist leaders. It is not as simple as saying that sexualities were wholly pushed onto peoples, as power is never so linear.

However, it is necessary to examine how images have been repeated and redefined from colonial, through to post-colonial nation-states. Colonialism involved sexualising Caribbean populations in racial terms, and racialising them in sexual terms.²⁸ Elizabethan statutes of rape legitimised colonial masculinity by placing it outside of the parameters of rape, while black and other 'native' masculinities were criminalised for rape.²⁹ These laws also sought to "...solidify the cult of true womanhood and its correlates, the white Madonna (untouchable) and the Black whore (promiscuous).³⁰ Colonialism collapsed identities into sexed bodies. While 'native' sexualities varied in their constructions, they held in common the fact that "...colonised sexualities were essentially subordinated sexualities."³¹

Socialisation to British norms attempted to turn 'savage' into 'civilised'. The socialisation of respectability emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and coincided with the beginnings of modern nationalism. Those once believed to be incapable of rule were attempted to be turned into reliable rulers through assimilation to British manners, parliamentary modes of governance, and conjugal marriage.³²

The soon-to-be black middle class was schooled in British morality, civility and respectable citizenship, while 'women of reduced means' and the working classes were trained in the 'home'. The elites of the rising middle class would go on to form the Caribbean state apparatus.³³

Ironically it was within the 'women's wing' of nationalist parties that one first detects heterosexist constructions of the 'nationalist woman'.³⁴ Women's bodies were used to mark the nation. They were expected to defend their 'honour', and guard the nuclear family by transmitting 'proper' values to the nation's children. The middle class Caribbean woman, during the nationalist period was expected to be the pillar of feminine propriety. She would replace the white Madonna figure as the essential feminine type. Male patriotic duty however,

involved public service to the country and adopting the mores of respectability.³⁵ Therefore, as Alexander states, Caribbean nationalism came to be formed around "...notions of respectability, which, like eighteenth century European nationalism, came to rely heavily upon sexual gestures that involved the symbolic triumph of the nuclear family over the extended family and other family forms."³⁶

It was as if Black nationalists had to prove that they had learned their lessons well from the colonial masters. As Alexander states, "At one time subordinated, that masculinity now has to be earned, and then appropriately conferred. Acting through this psychic residue, Black masculinity continues the policing of sexualised bodies, drawing out the colonial fiction of locating subjectivity in the body (as a way of denying it)... as if to convey legitimate claims to being civilised."³⁷

The sexual politics of the region can be seen as both a product of European Enlightenment ideology, and the fact that this ideology infiltrated the Caribbean as the master discourse of colonial powers. To reiterate Alexander's powerful point, the psychic residue of masters and slaves remains and is acted out in Caribbean bodies.

If You Speak It, You Become It: On the issues of silence and shame

One of the most frustrating things I have found in trying to explore sexualities in the Caribbean, is the silence that surrounds homosexuality. As Lawson Williams states in *Homophobia and Gay rights in Jamaica*, when the Jamaica Forum of Lesbians All-Sexuals and Gays (J-Flag) was launched in December of 1998 many attributed the contempt directed towards J-Flag to its disruption of the 'balance' between gays and heterosexuals.³⁸ As Mark Wignall of the Daily Observer stated quite frankly in *J-Flag must cool its homosexual heat*,

"Jamaicans expect homosexuals to be quiet as they indulge their 'watchamacallit'. Jamaicans expect them to be ashamed, remorseful, penitent and retiring. None of us want them to take their song and dance routine to the National Arena or to Jamaica House."

Williams states, "...It is a common understanding that the issue of gayness must never enter the "national arena" or at least not in any way that gives the issue political legitimacy."³⁹ Any "out" homosexual activity would upset this 'balance', in which homosexuality is tolerated to the extent that it is invisible. This expectance of shame on the part of the homosexual is not particular to Jamaica.

In his article "Church condemns homosexual acts", Archbishop of Trinidad and Tobago, Anthony Pantin states that

"Regrettably, it has to be admitted that over the last few years, 'gay' people became very aggressive. I suppose they take for granted that the best way of defence is attack. So they refuse to accept that there is anything wrong with them: 'That's the way God made me and I have a right to enjoy myself as much as other people.'⁴⁰

Pantin goes on to state that while this is understandable that "...does not make it right."⁴¹ Pantin's article is indicative of religious forces in the Caribbean which are both productive of and complicit in homophobia. Like Myers, Pantin advocates shame and silence for the homosexual.

I offer all this by way of explanation. Silence and shame guard Caribbean homosexuality. Therefore, I have found few avenues upon which to form an analysis of heterosexism and homophobia in the region. Popular culture, in the

form of dancehall and reggae seems to be some of the only and concrete cultural discourses in which attitudes towards homosexuality are expressed outright. While dancehall and reggae lyrics have come under fire for their crude portrayal of sexual politics,⁴² they offer an opening. They are explicit. And while they may be explicitly prejudiced, they do what respectable silences do not. They start the conversation.

Before I continue, I would like to note the absence of material dealing specifically with lesbianism in the Caribbean context. Many lesbian theorists have critiqued gay rights discourse, because they are often silenced in favour of a discussion about homosexual men.⁴³ My attempt is not to silence these voices.

However, the silence is indicative of one of the largest gaps in information I have found. The little that is written about Caribbean homosexuality tends to focus on men. Homophobic popular culture productions also tend to be directed at gay men. However, as JFLAG states in *An Act to Amend the Constitution of Jamaica to Provide for a Charter of Rights for Connected Matters*, ...homosexual females are also looked on as deviant.

"Ironically the best evidence of this is that the Jamaican word for lesbian (i.e., sodomite) is actually derived from sodomy, the other word for buggery.⁴⁴ Furthermore JFLAG states that "...in socio-cultural terms-jobs, housing, general treatment-the Jamaica lesbian is just as discriminated against as her male counterpart."⁴⁵ Attitudes against lesbians have also become apparent to me in Barbados. While conducting my research I discovered an ongoing conversation on the bathroom walls of the Women's washrooms at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. Person A wrote, "...want a pussy to suck email me at: clit4u@yahoo.com."⁴⁶ Person B responded:

Re: To the slut who wrote the above and any other lesbian garbage on campus. With so many men out there how the

hell could you even dream of wanting a woman! There's absolutely nothing remotely sexy about a woman. Lesbianism is pure nastiness and wutlessness. Gun shot to you all. Yours Sincerely, A REAL woman!⁴⁷

Person C then wrote, "...you go girl!! Bun fyah pun dem lesbian cunts! Bitches!! Whores!!!"⁴⁸

What is interesting is how the homophobia of both B and C is represented as correction of a deviant femininity. B states that she is "A REAL woman," meaning that real women are heterosexual women, who exist within the heterosexist matrix. Furthermore words like 'whore' and 'bitch' are used to correct and punish the 'gender traitor'.

These are the same words meted out to heterosexual women who misbehave. Also B states that A should not engage in lesbians because of 'all the men out there'. Female homosexuality is seen as a deviation from the natural, superior heterosexual option. Therefore, by enforcing homophobia against women, both B and C reinforce heterosexist constructions of women as belonging to and being lesser than men. A lesbian is a 'whore', a 'bitch', while a real woman is a woman who behaves within her prescribed gender role as a sexually passive and demure woman who defers to men.

Missing the Beat: Dancehall, homophobia and sexism

Dancehall and reggae are world renowned for their homophobic and sexist lyrics. In the early 1990s Jamaican artist Buju Banton gained international attention with his song "Boom Bye Bye", advocating the murder of homosexuals. This song has been banned throughout Europe and North America.⁴⁸ After the song was banned however, it has been stated that Banton's popularity in

Jamaica increased. As Williams states, Banton's "...call to arms against "battybwoy"(male homosexuals), was widely celebrated."⁴⁹ Buju Banton is not alone in his homophobia. Artists Scare Dem Crew sing, "Batty boy fire bun dem", while Shabba Ranks sings, "Batty boy, bust gun pon dem."⁵⁰ In an interview with the Village Voice Ranks states that "If a man is thinking of homosexuality, he's thinking of disease and wrongdoings, so God himself hates homosexuals. In Jamaica if a homosexual is being found in the community then we stone him to death."⁵¹ From dancehall lyrics one can draw out the complex politics of heterosexism, nationalism, sexism and religious hypocrisy imbued within Caribbean homophobia.

The attitudes of Banton and his fellow homophobes are not peculiar to Jamaica. In *The Barbadian Male: Sexual Attitudes and Practice*, Graham Dann recorded similar attitudes on the part of Barbadian men. When asked to comment on homosexuality some comments included, "I feel them kinda people want killing man," "If I had my way I would burn all homosexuals in the place", and "Those people want putting on an island by themselves."⁵² What is interesting is the extent to which sexism is reinforced, alongside of homophobia. As dancehall artist Capleton sings, "Woman mi lotion, mi na lotion man."⁵³ Women are objectified, while homosexuality is condemned. The male gaze, which captures and defines women is enforced. It is meant for women, not for other men.

In order to prove a hegemonic masculinity that is defined in opposition to all that is feminine, these singers verbally attack homosexuals while objectifying women.⁵⁴ Sylvia Law writes, "Homosexual relationships challenge dichotomous concepts of gender. These relationships challenge the notion that social traits, such as dominance and nurturance are naturally linked to one sex or the other..."⁵⁵

Therefore imbued in dancehall artist's condemnation of homophobia, is a valorisation of traditional conceptions of men and women in which women are reduced to sexual slaves, with men as their masters. Again, these attitudes are not exclusive to Jamaica, or dancehall. In his study of Barbadian male sexuality Dann found,

... a panorama of views on homosexuality which range from total rejection to half-hearted acceptance. Nevertheless, underpinning most, to a greater or lesser extent, is the all too familiar sex typed dualistic world of male and female, in which woman is subservient to him. She is to feed him, clothe him and to satisfy his sexual desires. From the very beginning this was so. Any deviation from this order is considered unnatural and against the will of God.⁵⁶

Like dancehall lyrics, the Barbadian men surveyed by Dann, confirm that alongside a disavowal of sexual difference is a reinforcing of natural sexualities in which man is the possessor and woman the possessed.

Shabba Ranks, who has advocated violence against homosexuals both inside and outside of his music, extends his violence to women. In his song *Bedroom Bully*, Ranks sings:

"My daddy was a bedroom bully/Bedroom bully pon I-mom mommy/Then daddy bully Shabba Rankin mommy/ Then Shabba mommy 'ave a bully baby/An' de bully baby God Almighty was me/Mi a bedroom bully wid a over-bully/I am a bedroom bully without mercy..."⁵⁷

As Paulette Belvett states in *Freedom of expression and obscene lyrics: the right vs. the harm*, "...the DJ's boast of bullying may be seen as a glorification of assault and battery against women since the word 'bully' denotes the use of

force to hurt or frighten. In fact Shabba leaves us with no doubt that this is what he means as the song is punctuated with the sounds of a woman crying in agony".⁵⁸ Ranks who advocates the stoning and shooting of homosexuals, celebrates sexual violence against women. His attitudes read like a road map of a heterosexist continuum of sexuality and gender. In "Bedroom Bully" heterosexuality is described literally in its most bare, crude form. Ranks' mother and father have a conjugal relationship in which they produce a child, and in which man is actor and woman is acted upon. They pass these values down to Ranks, who reiterates them. Man is the attacker, the sexual initiator, both the 'bull' and the 'bully', while woman is the passive victim. Like Capleton, hegemonic masculinity is enforced through condemnation of homosexual "gender traitors" and through the possession, and objectification of women. The message that occurs and reoccurs is that 'real men' as opposed to homosexual men, abuse, rape, and neglect women in order to prove their masculinity.

This heterosexism, which simultaneously condones violence against both homosexuals and women, is discussed explicitly by Jamaican dancehall sensation Beenie Man, in his song "Weeping and Moaning." He sings,

"You nuh see pressure man a get outa man/Every night Peter
him wine pun Devon/Hold hotty-boy and bun(burn) dem one
by one/Look pon Patsy, Suzette and Yvonne/Look how de
gal-dem sexy and tan/I rather charge fi' rape Suzanne/More
than go a prison/Fi' wine pon Jonathan."⁵⁹

Beenie Man's message is disturbingly clear. In order to proclaim heterosexual masculinity, in order to protect himself from falling prey to homosexuality, the character/singer performs masculinity by objectifying, demeaning and in its most brutal form raping women. This is a perfect example of the way in which homophobia enforces a reiteration of masculine hegemony in expressions of sexual violence against women. Furthermore, what will be discussed later in this

work, is the disturbing realisation that the state actually legislates these sexual norms.

Judge Not? Religious Homophobia and Hypocrisy

There is also a current trend in dancehall, led by artist Capleton, which employs the “bun fyah” trope. This has religious connotations. As Whiskey Bop Johnnie Walker, a Jamaican DJ is quoted as saying, “Batty Bwoy in Babylon haff’ de’d ‘cause dem ah eat di bread from Sodom an’ Gomorrah.”⁶⁰

The biblical reference coupled with the death threat encapsulates the religious hypocrisy evident within dancehall, and the wider cultural milieu. Dancehall artists, religious leaders, and state managers alike frequently draw on the Sodom and Gomorrah reference; however violence against homosexuals is rarely discussed as being against any biblical tenet. As Williams states, Banton’s ‘Boom Bye-Bye’ ... encountered little if any disapproval from the Church or any other sector of society, despite its obvious support for violence.”⁶¹ Religious reasons were also frequently cited in Dann’s study as reasons for the opposition to homosexuality. One respondent even saw homosexuality as a precursor to the end of the world, “God said in the last days all these things should happen, men shall be lovers of themselves.”⁶² What is interesting is that while many ‘religious’ respondents supported an equal division of work between the male and female spouses in the home, they also often stated that women’s rights could interfere with natural heterosexual relationships. Therefore, the support for an equal division of labour between sexes in the home was often justified as maintaining good familial relations.⁶³ Homosexuality is seen as disrupting the heterosexual family and is therefore seen as deviant.

Other sexual practices that are explicitly condemned in the bible also fail to be legislated against, showing the hypocrisy and selectiveness of this discourse. As

JFLAG states in its *Submissions of the Jamaica Forum For Lesbians All-sexuals and Gays (JFLAG) With Regard to 'An Act to Amend the Constitution of Jamaica To Provide For a Charter of Rights and For Connected Matters*, while it is claimed that Jamaica's widespread homophobia is justified in the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the purity laws of Leviticus,

"...the appropriation by legislatures of the Christian condemnation of homosexuals is a purely arbitrary process, guided largely by individual biases and collective prejudices. In the case of adultery, of which much more mention is made in Biblical texts, Jamaica has no law pertaining to its condemnation or prosecution. The same applies to fornication."⁶⁴

Nowhere in the Caribbean is adultery criminalised. Furthermore, Caribbean nation-states are not theocracies and should therefore not enforce the religious beliefs of one group over others. Adultery and fornication are also valorised as a sign of virility within Dancehall lyrics, and elsewhere. In Dann's study religious attitudes were also used to condemn adultery, however they simultaneously enforced heterosexism, "I am totally against a deputy because I don't believe in coveting, 'cause I believe in this world there is a man for every woman and a woman for every man".⁶⁵ The religious hypocrisy of state-managers and the overall populace can be seen in dancehall, particularly with the 'bun fyah' trope, which justifies violence against homosexuals, although most religious doctrines and texts explicitly condemn acts of violence.

This hypocrisy became clear in Jamaica on August 19, 1997. Commissioner of Corrections Colonel John Prescod stated on a radio programme that condoms would be distributed to prisoners as part of an AIDS prevention programme. This was "A recognition of homosexuality as a fact of life in Jamaican prisons."⁶⁶

In the three days following this statement sixteen prisoners were killed in a riot, in reaction to Prescod's statement. Williams states that "Reports of the incident indicated that there was a concerted effort by the 'men' (heterosexuals) in the prisons, to kill the 'boys'.⁶⁷ The reference to boys vs. men reinforces the idea that homosexuality is a deviance from hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, there was no statement issued concerning the incident from any religious power, despite the bloodshed. The government, like the Church, issued no statement against homophobia. This incident shows the hypocrisy of religious leaders and the complacency of the state in addressing homophobia.

Pledging Allegiance (and pledging more than that): The sexed nation

Homophobia in the Caribbean is also constructed out of a discriminatory nationalism. In the late 1990's popular dancehall artist Bounti Killa released "Can't Believe mi eyes," in which he sings in outrage at the appearance of homosexuality in Jamaica. He sings, "Can't believe seh gunman and battyman a frien" (I can't believe that gunmen and gay men are actually friends!)⁶⁸

Throughout the song Bounti Killa states that he has to do Jamaica proud by condemning homosexuality, reinforcing the heterosexist hegemony of the Caribbean nation-state. Walker's reference to Babylon as well as Bounti's assertion is indicative of the way in which homosexuality is placed outside of the nation. 'Babylon' is a popular reggae and dancehall reference to the (neo) colonising power of the West upon the Caribbean.⁶⁹ Homosexuality is seen, therefore as a Western import that must be rallied against in favour of a homophobic, exclusionary nationalism.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the Cayman Islands in 1998. On December 8, 1998 the Minister of Tourism and Transport for the Cayman Islands Government, Honourable Thomas C. Jefferson, notified Norwegian Tourlines it

would be denied landing rights at Grand Cayman Island on February 1, 1998. The reason, the cruise ship would be carrying 900 gay passengers.⁷⁰ Richard Campbell of Atlantis tours, who organises tours for the gay community stated that "It's amazing that they would go to such lengths to keep us out. We're not talking about 900 gay men moving to the Cayman Islands; we're talking about a seven hour visit..."⁷¹ Jefferson stated that "...careful research and experience has led us to conclude that we cannot count on this group to uphold the standards of appropriate behaviour expected of visitors to the Cayman Islands."⁷² What is interesting is Jefferson's categorisation of "appropriate behaviour" of the nation, which is defined based on heterosexual norms. Again, this locates homosexuality outside of the nation, as a Western import, enforcing the Caribbean nation-state as a heterosexist hegemony. Ironically, the present constitution of the Cayman Islands, 'provides for the government of the Cayman Islands as a colony under the sovereignty of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North Ireland.'⁷³ The idea of keeping homosexuals out as a means of protecting national interests from first world mores, is a strange and hypocritical statement coming from a country under British dominion.

Furthermore, it implies that there are no homosexuals within the state, continuing their long silence. This 'Western imposition' argument also seeks to mask real neocolonising powers which Caribbean State managers are often complicit in and reinforcing of. As Alexander states, "Since independence, the state has colluded in adopting strategies that have locked these nations into a world economic and political system, the effect of which is re-colonisation."⁷⁴ However, Caribbean state managers redraw these boundaries and "sound the danger of cultural contamination from the 'West' which they depict simultaneously as sexual intemperance, the importation of AIDS and the importation of feminism (read lesbianism)."⁷⁵ Ironically the privileging of heterosexist norms and the patriarchal family by the nation-state has its roots not in any indigenous school of thought, but rather in colonial values.

In *Preparing for the New Millenium: Cayman Islands 1998: Annual Report and Official Handbook*, the government of the Cayman Islands states that the ideal vision for 2008, ... is of a Cayman having traditional Christian and family values; a caring community, characterised by open dialogue, social harmony and freedom from crime."⁷⁶ Obviously social harmony does not include being in harmony with those who do not posit 'traditional Christian family values.' Further on in the *Cayman Vision 2008* it states 'The future was also visualised as having a vibrant, diversified economy, making optimal use of modern technology, managing growth yet maintaining prosperity'.⁷⁷ Imbued within this statement, and throughout the report is the promotion of greater amounts of foreign-based technology and other forms of international capital. The nation-state trumpets traditional heterosexist values as 'culture' while simultaneously attempting to make their citizens into international consumers, in a highly unequal global relationship.

Furthermore, while nation-states like the Cayman Islands ban gay visitors, Caribbean nation-states rely upon women's (hetero) sexed bodies to sell the nation. Travel brochures for the Caribbean are chocked full of overly (hetero) sexualised women in scantily clad bathing suits, on untouched beaches. The women are usually young, lending credence to the virgin land and woman trope, both of which the tourist is being invited to penetrate.⁷⁸ As Alexander states,

These are a complicated set of psycho-sexual gestures converging in this (hetero) sexual playground; this arena which Caribbean state managers see as the economy of the future; where Black masculinity manages phantasmic constructions of Black femininity, satisfying white European desire for restless adventure, satisfying white European longing for what is 'rare' and intangible.⁷⁹

Jefferson's actions reinforced a heterosexist construction of nation-state, which sexualises women's bodies in order to produce for the nation, while simultaneously calling homosexuality 'Western imposition.' As Alexander states, "The erosion of heterosexual conjugal monogamy is a perennial source of worry for state managers and so it is invoked and deployed particularly at moments when it is threatened with extinction."⁸⁰ The state relentlessly attempts to allow nothing to infiltrate its hegemonic domain, thereby showing both its commitment to heterosexism and its insecurity.

Ironically, nowhere was the use of women's (hetero) sexed bodies more evident than at Trinidad and Tobago's 2000 Carnival, deemed 'A Tribute to Women.' In *Greater protection for women mass-players* in the January 9, 2000 issue of the *Trinidad Guardian*, Carnival Band Association chairman Richard Afong said of sexual harassment at Carnival, "...no one wants to admit to the problem because of the tourism implications...But it is a real problem affecting real people and they are people who provide this country with the images that we put up to the world."⁸¹ It is precisely these images, of half-naked (hetero) sexed women in exotic costumes that use women's bodies to sell the nation. These images create an environment in which the harassment and objectification of women is also sold. Throughout the article women's safety from harassment is defined in terms of the ability of the nation to continue to reproduce this neo-colonial, heterosexed fantasy.⁸² Keep the women safe so they will not complain, so we can continue to use their bodies as selling points for the nation's Carnival.

Ironically, as Kevin Yelvington discusses in *Producing Power*, and Carol Allen discusses in *Caribbean Bodies Representation and Practice*, every Carnival there is public outcry at women's indecent sexual behaviour at Carnival⁸³ As one enraged citizen writes in a letter to the *Trinidad Guardian*, "Mothers who keep telling their daughters to dress decently are seen in the most revealing outfits 'wining and grining' in public on Carnival days"⁸⁴ The paradox lies between the control of women's sexuality, and the selling of it for national gains. However, within the heterosexist, patriarchal, capitalist paradigm this makes

perfect sense. Women's sexualities are not their own, as unproductive sexualities are not permitted.

Women's (hetero) sexed bodies are used to reproduce and sell the nation, thereby denying them any agency in their own sexual pleasure. Within the heterosexist paradigm, women's rights become reconstructed as 'protection rights', which place more emphasis on the protection of national interests in both images for tourism, and the heterosexual family. Women's bodies are sexed and (mis) used over and over.

(II) legal bodies and (In)visible Ideology: The implied sexuality of law

Legislation in the Commonwealth Caribbean is also imbued with heterosexist ideology. Under the 1986 Trinidad and Tobago Sexual Offences Act, sex between men is punishable by up to ten years imprisonment. Sex between women is punishable by five. Consensual homosexual sex is not differentiated from rape, both are criminalised.⁸⁵ Under The Bahamas Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1989 both male and female homosexuality is punishable by up to twenty years imprisonment.⁸⁶ Similar laws can be found throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean. To date, Bermuda is the only country within the Anglophone Caribbean, which does not criminalise homosexual sex between consenting individuals over the age of sixteen.⁸⁷ What is interesting, and of great importance to this work, is that under both these acts domestic violence and rape laws prove insufficient.

As Tracy Robinson states in *Fictions of Citizenship: Bodies without Sex and Effacement of Gender in Law*, The Sexual Offences Bill in Trinidad and Tobago was the first attempt in the Commonwealth Caribbean to criminalise non-consensual intercourse by a husband with his wife. Controversy surrounded Clause 4 of the bill, which stated that a husband found guilty could face up to

fifteen years in prison, and could be charged with sexual assault whether or not the couple was living together at the time of the assault. Due to opposition, the clause was originally removed.⁸⁸ However as Robinson states, "Women mobilised throughout the country and lobbied ardently for its reinstatement."⁸⁹ Within section 5 of the 1986 Sexual Offences Act a watered down version of Clause 4 appeared. It states that a husband can be convicted of sexual assault if he has sex with his wife without her consent through either force or fear.⁹⁰ However, this is only considered an offence where there "is a decree nisi of divorce, a decree of judicial separation, a separation agreement, or an order for the husband not to molest his wife or have intercourse with her."⁹¹ The offence can also occur where notice of proceedings have been served by one of the parties against the other under the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act for judicial separation, nullity or dissolution of marriage or in cases where the husband and wife are living separately within the meaning of section 4(5) of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act.⁹²

Many Trinidadian feminists saw the enactment of section 5 as a victory. However as Robinson states, on closer examination the supposed victory seems suspect. Section 5 creates the crime of sexual assault of which the penalty is fifteen years, as opposed to the crime of rape, punishable by life imprisonment.⁹³ No proceedings can occur without the authorisation of the Director of Public Prosecutions and most importantly for my purposes, "Rather than affirming women's bodily and sexual autonomy, husbands are treated as having proprietary rights in women's bodies. Women can only refuse if there is some legally recognised disruption in the marriage."⁹⁴ Like laws that criminalise homosexuality, the marital rape laws of Trinidad and Tobago seek to preserve the heterosexual patriarchal family, and the heterosexist matrix of gender relations in which a husband possesses his wife's sexuality. Along this heterosexist continuum, a man cannot rape his wife because she is his property, while homosexuality is ironically termed indecent.

What is remarkable about the *Bahamas Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 1989*, is that nowhere in the act is there a definition of domestic violence. Alexander states that "...the majority of the provisions focus upon the disposition of private property..."⁹⁵

Like the Trinidadian example, this is not what the Bahamian Women's movement fought for. After five years of public rallies it became clear that "...even in the face of violent disruptions in marriage, conjugal heterosexuality is most concerned with the patriarchal linear transfer of private property."⁹⁶ ⁷ The heterosexual family is maintained, at all costs, as a site of capitalist patriarchal control and maintenance of property, women and children included. Therefore within the domestic violence act "Conjugal heterosexuality is frozen within a very specific and narrow set of class relations between 'husband' and 'wife' in 'marriage'."⁹⁷ This focus on private property in the Bahamas legislation offers little to no protection for working class women who do not own property and are beaten by men with whom they may live with outside of marriage. Domestic violence is redrawn as violence against the middle-class heterosexual, patriarchal family, rather than against the woman.⁹⁸ As homosexuality exists outside of the heterosexual family, the state inscribes laws that criminalise it. 'Non-productive' heterosex in the form of "...the prostitute with an irresponsible, 'non-productive' sexuality and ...the young women whom the state defines as girls requiring its protection..."⁹⁹ are also marked by law. From the point of view of the state these sexualities have to be "... disciplined and regulated in order that it might become economically productive."¹⁰⁰ It is clear from both the Trinidadian and Bahamian legislation, that the criminalisation of homosexuality and the policing of women's bodies fall under the same fictions of the 'superior', 'respectable' nuclear family, around which these nations have been constructed.

Even in its most violent expression (i.e. rape, abuse) the heterosexual family is not interrogated. It is only when this abuse interferes with the site of reproduction and capitalist production that it becomes criminal. The failure to criminalise

heterosexuality is constructed in dialectic with the criminalising of homosexuality. As Alexander states,

"Heterosexual sex, even while dysfunctional (as in rape in marriage, domestic violence and incest), assumes the power of natural law ... only in its power to designate as unnatural those practices which disrupt marriage and certain dominant notions of conjugal family."¹⁰¹

Within a binary construction of hetero and homosexuality, violent disruptions within the heterosexual home are beyond legislation, while consensual homosexual sex is not differentiated from same-sex rape, as all are perversions. As Robinson states, "In this heterosexist paradigm, the sexual violation men experience by other men ranks no different from consensual sex between men—they are both categorised as perversion—and therefore the former does not feature as a serious social issue, and rape by men as a distinctive feature of women's lives is slowly neutered."¹⁰²

What is often used to justify the criminalisation of homosexuality is the public/private dichotomy. As Lawson Williams states "The issue of sexual orientation, it is argued by many straight and gay people, is purely a private matter and has no place in the public domain of one's life."¹⁰³ It has been a common tenet of patriarchal legislation and lawmakers to say that 'the law has no business in people's bedrooms.' This view is supported by the tired cliché; 'A man's home is his castle.' This public/private dichotomy has been used to depoliticise the violence, rape, and unpaid labour of women in the home. As Frances Olsen points out in *Constitutional Law: Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Distinction*, "The movement against sexual violence against women and against sexual abuse more generally pointed out how the asserted "privacy" of things sexual resulted in very limited protection for women against sex crimes."¹⁰⁴ If the law does not have any business in people's bedrooms, it should not police the

sexual lives of homosexuals. If the law can and does make sexuality its business, why has the sacredness of the 'private' been called upon time and time again when women challenge their sexual subordination? Again, objectivity is myth.

The categorisation of homosexuality as 'private' and therefore out of the realm of public discussion is highly contradictory, considering that the criminalisation of homosexual practices interferes with this supposed privacy. This contradiction is highlighted when one examines the way in which heterosexuality, even in its most misogynistic forms of rape and violence, is often left uncriminalised in the private domain. Male heterosexual power is the only sexuality that remains truly discrete. As Olsen states, "Privacy is related to manhood; 'private parts' are sexual; and the classical liberal individual is not an asexual 'person' but the male head of a family."¹⁰⁵ There is privacy, meaning the right to engage in behaviour without fear of state sanction, for the heterosexual male in the patriarchal family. There is no privacy for the homosexual, whose sex is turned into crime, who's right to marry, and raise children are legislated against. And for the heterosexual woman, the only privacy comes with the private treatment as property by her partner. For the heterosexual woman who foregoes her reproductive duty as wife and mother, who takes money for sexual services, who wants an abortion, her sexuality all of a sudden becomes a matter of national concern.

This is clear in the context of the Commonwealth Caribbean where abortion is illegal in all but two countries, Barbados and Guyana. As the Guyana Act states, the act exists to make provisions for "... termination of certain pregnancies"¹⁰⁶ and therefore inscribes laws onto certain bodies. Under Guyanese legislation, women who are pregnant as a result of rape or incest may have an abortion.¹⁰⁷ Under both the Barbados and Guyana Acts, if a pregnancy risks the life of, or could cause grave injury to, the woman, an abortion may be permitted.¹⁰⁸ Finally, if there is sufficient proof that the child will be born with "such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped"¹⁰⁹ an abortion may be permitted. In all of these cases the same 'nationalist woman' previously

discussed appears, with her fully (hetero) sexed body. The woman who is raped did not choose to have sex outside of the context of the heterosexual family, if she had, the state would have the right to legislate against her body. The ill woman would reproduce the nation, if only her body would let her. And the woman who may have a 'handicapped' child would produce a new citizen for the nation, if that citizen were a 'normal', healthy citizen. As Alexander states "...we can read state practices as attempts to propagate fictions of feminine identity, to reconfigure women's desire and subjectivity and to link the terms of the nations survival to women's sexual organs."¹¹⁰ When a husband does not inscribe his law on her body, the state fills in. Therefore, the public/private dichotomy, like the law, like dancehall lyrics, simultaneously renders homosexuality perverse, and women as victims, and if they misbehave, whores. Perversions of the heterosexist matrix are hung out to dry, while the power imbued in heterosexism remains silent, discrete, everywhere, and yet still private.

Conclusion: Old myths and New feminisms

The Caribbean nation-state is sexed in heterosexist, hegemonic terms based on constructions of masculinity and femininity that subordinate women and exclude and persecute homosexuals. Homophobia and heterosexism in the Caribbean are also based on a religious hypocrisy, which cites homosexuals as perverse, while leaving many forms of violence and abusive heterosexuality unquestioned. Homophobia and heterosexism in the region have their roots in colonialism yet ironically, homosexuality is defined by state-managers as a form of 'Western imposition'. This disguises the actions of state managers who endorse patriarchal neo-colonial policy. Such behaviour is evinced by Caribbean leaders' condemnation of homosexuality and simultaneous use of women's (hetero) sexed bodies to promote tourism. The psychic residue of colonialism is transmitted through the neo-colonial, on the basis of supposedly natural, superior sexuality. Popular culture and law offer a space from which to locate

discourses of homophobia, heterosexism, sexism, nationalism, and (neo) colonialism as existing within highly connected and dependant relationships.

While I expected to find that sexism produced heterosexism and homophobia, from my research, I have found this relationship is one of mutual dependence. One of the great deficiencies of many women's movements and anti (neo)colonial movements in the Caribbean has been a failure to problematise sexuality as a political construct. As Alexander states,

“...ironically one of the reasons the state can at least be partially successful in mobilising heterosexuality, is the persistence of the belief in naturalised heterosexuality, the belief that it lies outside of the sphere of political and economic influence and therefore state influence.”

As Caribbean feminists fight for economic de-colonisation from the metropole, from the patriarchy, I fear that homosexuality is left in the periphery. Feminists must position themselves within a space that questions the compulsory heterosexuality promoted by Church and nation-state which undermines economic and social gains women have made.

We must question the extent to which gains that women have made exist within a heterosexist matrix in which women's sexed bodies are used and reused. Finally, we must ask whether the fight should be for equality between genders, or for a destruction of sexual and gender categories all together.

The women's movement in the Caribbean must question whether or not the rights that they hold so dear are rights that actually maintain and reinforce colonial constructions of woman and man. To talk of the sexual international division of labour, the World Bank and the IMF and their exploitation of labour is hollow if one does not examine how these sexual divisions get taken for granted

as natural divisions, and how the feminist movement often purports this ideology by keeping silent about sexuality. As Jaqui Alexander states, "The work of decolonisation consists as well in the decolonisation of the body."

¹ Lawson Williams, 2000. Homophobia and gay rights activism in Jamaica, unpublished article., JFLAG, 3. Williams states that when the Jamaica Forum of Lesbians All-sexuals and Gays (JFLAG) was launched in December of 1998 they received a death threat.

² Patrick D. Hopkins, 1992. Gender treachery: Homophobia, masculinity, and threatened identities, In *Rethinking masculinity*, ed. Larry May and Robert Strikweda. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 115.

³ *Ibid* at 115-116

⁴ *Ibid* at 116

⁵ *Ibid* at 116

⁶ *Ibid* at 116

⁷ *Ibid* at 116

⁸ Carol Smart, 1994. Law, Feminism and Sexuality: From Essence to Ethics? *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 9(1): 15-38.

⁹ Tracy Robinson, *Fictions of citizenship: Bodies without sex and the effacement of gender in law*. Unpublished article, Barbados, 2000. 9-10

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10

¹¹ *Ibid.*, at 22

¹² Judith Butler, 1990. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge, 151.

¹³ Judith Butler, 1991. *Imitation and gender insubordination, inside/out: lesbian theories, gay theories*. New York: Routledge. 13-31.

¹⁴ Hopkins, 114. Hopkins defines a gender traitor as "anyone who violates the 'rules' of gender identity/performance, i.e., someone who rejects or appears to reject the criteria by which the genders are differentiated

¹⁵ Hopkins, 123

¹⁶ Gayle Rubin, 1975. *The traffic in women: Notes on the 'Political economy of sex, Toward an anthropology of women*. New York: Monthly Review, 157-210.

¹⁷ Ngaire Naffine, 1994. Possession: Erotic love in the law of rape, *The Modern Law Review* 57: 10-37. On pages 10-11 Naffine states that in the Western view 'Erotic love' 'is the love between a woman and a man, a heterosexual couple, within which there are particular and different roles anticipated for the woman and for the man.' Man is the possessor, and woman the possessed. Furthermore, she states that within this view, there are only two immutable types: 'woman' and 'man', both of whom appear fully sexed.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 124-125

²¹ Bennett I. Capers, 1991. Sex(ual orientation) and Title VII. *Columbia Law Review*. 91

²² Ibid, 1162

²³ Ibid, 1163-1164

²⁴ Ibid, 1164

²⁵ Ibid, 1165

²⁶ Ibid, 1167

²⁷ Butler, Imitation and Gender Insubordination, 14-15.

²⁸ M. Jaqui Alexander, 1994. Not just (any) body can be a citizen: The politics of law, sexuality and postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas. *Feminist Review*. 48: 11-12

²⁹ Ibid, 12

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 12-14

³⁴ Ibid, 13

³⁵ Ibid, 13

³⁶ Ibid, 13

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Williams, 3

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Anthony Pantin, Church condemns homosexual acts, *The Trinidad Guardian* [Port of Spain] 8 Jan. 2000: 20. 21

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Dub: keep the rhythm, lose the lyrics, editorial, *The Barbados Advocate*. 7 March. 2000: 8. This editorial is part of a wide rhetoric, which states that dub artists are "destroying the fabric of society by dehumanising a generation, and by corrupting our youth"(8). I feel that this discourse has little to do with the sexism and homophobia imbued in dancehall and reggae lyrics, and more to do with preserving the middle class respectability discussed earlier. In many ways as will be discussed later in this work, the same values in the lyrics of dancehall can be found in legislation. The difference is that in the music it is blunt, while in the legislation, a conservative silence attempts to overshadow the ideological message. Therefore, the call to ban dub lyrics in many instances seems to be about keeping these issues locked safely in silence, rather than challenging any of the sexual norms within the music.

⁴³ Adrienne Rich, *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*. 62-91. 23

⁴⁴ -Flag, Submissions of the Jamaica Forum For Lesbians All-Sexuals and Gays (J-Flag) With Regard to 'An Act to Amend the Constitution of Jamaica to Provide For A Charter of Rights and For Connected Matters, unpublished article. 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bathroom Graffiti #1, Women's Washroom Humanities Quadroon. University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados. February 10, 2000

⁴⁷ Bathroom Graffiti #2, Women's Washroom Humanities Quadroon. University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados. February 10, 2000

⁴⁸ Peter Noel, Batty boys in Babylon: Can gay West Indians survive the 'Boom Bye Bye Posses?' *Village Voice*. January 12 1993. 29-36

⁴⁹ Williams, 1

⁵⁰ Cited in Noel, 31

⁵¹ Noel, 29

⁵² Graham Dann, 1987. *The Barbadian male: Sexual attitudes and practice*. London: MacMillan. 27

⁵³ Cited in Noel, 29

⁵⁴ Linden Lewis. 1994. Constructing the masculine in the context of the Caribbean, 19th Annual Caribbean Studies Conference, Merida, Mexico, 23-28 March. 1994.

⁵⁵ Capers, 1166

⁵⁶ Dann, 64

⁵⁷ Cited in Paulette Belvett, 1997. *Freedom of expression and obscene lyrics: the right vs. the harm*, LLB Thesis, 24. Faculty of Law Library, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 27

⁵⁹ Cited in Dub: keep the rhythm, lose the lyrics, 8.

⁶⁰ Noel, 31

⁶¹ Williams, 1

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Dann, 55-61

⁶⁴ J-FLAG, 3

⁶⁵ Dann, 79

⁶⁶ Williams, 2

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Williams, 1

⁶⁹ Noel, 27

⁷⁰ Cayman Islands deny landing rights for gay charter. *USA Today*. January 7, 1998. http://nz.com/Queer/OUT/new___199801/19980111.html. Online. Internet. 1 February 2000.

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Government of the Cayman Islands, Cayman Islands Annual Report and Official Handbook. Georgetown: Government of the Cayman Islands.

⁷⁴ Alexander, 15

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Government of the Cayman Islands, 25

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See Graham Dann, 1996. *The language of tourism*. Wallingford: CAB International.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Cited in: Terry Joseph, Greater protection for women mas-players. *Sunday Express*. 9 January 2000. 9

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Kevin Yelvington, 1995. *Producing power*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. See Chapter 5, Gender At Work. 156-15. Caroline F. Allen, 1998. Caribbean Bodies: Representation and Practice. In *Caribbean Portraits*. Ed. Christine Barrow. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers. 276-293.

⁸⁴ Yelvington, 156-157

⁸⁵ 86 Trinidad and Tobago Sexual Offences Act (1986). (Port of Spain: Government Printing Office). Currently under review is An Act to Amend the Sexual Offences Act, 1986. This would raise the penalty from 10 to 25 years imprisonment for male and female homosexuality. It would also make it possible for a police officer to arrest gays and lesbians without a warrant. What is interesting is that many of the other amendments, such as those also increasing the penalties for rape and incest could be seen as a feminist victory. And yet, they reinforce the idea that deviant heterosex and consensual homosex can be equated. Furthermore, under the new (1999) Equal Opportunities Bill for Trinidad and Tobago, designed to protect persons from discrimination at places of employment, and other institutions, it is explicitly stated that 'sexual orientation' is not one of the grounds on which discrimination is prohibited. Therefore, the bill allows for discrimination against lesbians and gays within the workforce, and within other institutions, such as schools.

⁸⁶ The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act (1991). (Parliament of Bahamas).

⁸⁷ See Herbert Wells, 1996. The status of non-traditional unions in the Commonwealth Caribbean. LLB. Thesis. Barbados: Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.

⁸⁸ Robinson, 20-22

⁸⁹ Ibid, 21

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Alexander, 9

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 10

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 14

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 9-10

¹⁰² Robinson, 15

¹⁰³ Williams, 5

¹⁰⁴ Frances Olsen, 1993. Constitutional law: Feminist critiques of the public/private distinction. *Constitutional Commentary*. 10:311: 323.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 325

¹⁰⁶ Guyana, 3

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., See Section 5(3)(a)

¹⁰⁸ See Barbados Act, Section 4(a) and Guyana Act, Section 6(4).

¹⁰⁹ See Barbados Act, Section 4(b). Also see Guyana Act, Section 7(b). Under the Guyana Act it is also interesting to note Section 5(3) (b) in which it states that a woman who has been proven to be HIV positive can also have an abortion. Section 5(4) is also interesting. It states that if there is evidence to show that the abortion resulted in spite of the use of contraceptives by either of the parties, one may be eligible to have an abortion.

¹¹⁰ Alexander, 10

References

- Alexander, M.Jaqui. 1994. Not just (any) body can be a citizen: The politics of law, sexuality and postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and The Bahamas. *Feminist Review*. 48: 5-23.
- Allen, Caroline F. 1998. Caribbean bodies: Representation and practice. In *Caribbean Portraits*. Ed. Christine Barrow. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers. 276-293.
- Belvett, Paulette. 1997. *Freedom of expression and obscene lyrics: the right vs. the harm*. LLB Thesis. Barbados: Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that matter*. New York: Routledge.
- Capers, I. Bennet. 1991. Sexual orientation and Title VII. *Columbia Law Review*. 91(5): 1158- 1187.
- Cayman Island deny landing rights for gay charter. *USA Today*. January 7, 1998.
- <http://nz.com/Queer/OUT/new199801/19980111.html>. Online. Internet. 1 February 2000.
- Dann, Graham. 1987. *The Barbadian male: Sexual attitudes and practice*. London: Macmillan Caribbean.
- Dann, Graham. 1996. *The language of tourism: A sociolinguistic perspective*. Wallingford: CAB International, 57.
- Dub: keep the rhythm, lose the lyrics. Editorial. *The Barbados Advocate* 7 March 2000, 8.
- Fitzpatrick v. Sterling Housing Association Ltd. Court of Appeal. Waite, Roch and Ward LJJ. 23 July 1997.
- Foucault, Michael. 1978 *The history of sexuality: An introduction*. New York: Random House.
- Fuss, Diana, (ed.) 1991. *Inside/out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*. New York: Routledge.
- J-FLAG. 1999. *Submissions of the Jamaica Forum For Lesbians, All-sexuals and Gays (JFLAG) with regards to 'An Act to Amend the Constitution of Jamaica to Provide for a Charter of Rights and for Connected Matters*. Legal and Constitutional Reform Committee. Kingston: J-FLAG.
- Joseph, Terry. Greater protection for women mas-players. *Sunday Express*. 9 January 2000: 9.
- Lewis, Linden. Constructing the masculine in the context of the Caribbean. Paper presented to the 19th Annual Caribbean Studies Conference, held in Merida, Mexico, May 23-28, 1994.
- May, Larry and Robert Strikwerda, (ed.) 1992. *Rethinking masculinity: Philosophical explorations in light of feminism*. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, (ed.) 1991. *Third World women and the politics of feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Naffine, Ngaire. 1994. Possession: Erotic live in the law of rape. *Modern Law Review*. 57: 10-37.
- Noel, Peter. 1993. Batty boys in Babylon: Can gay West Indians survive the 'Boom Bye Bye' posses? *Village Voice*. January 12 1993.

- Olsen, Frances. 1993. Constitutional law: Feminist critiques of the public/private distinction. *Constitutional Commentary*. 10(2): 319-327.
- Pantin, Archbishop Anthony. 2000. Church condemns *Trinidad Guardian*. 8 Jan. 2000, 20.
- Parliament of Barbados. 1983-1984. Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act. 58.
- Parliament Republic of Guyana. 1996. Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.
- Parliament of the Bahamas. 1991. The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act. Nassau.
- Parliament Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. 1999. An Act to Amend the Sexual Offences Act, 1986. 2-17.
- Parliament Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. 1999. Equal Opportunity Bill. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus: Hugh Wooding Law School, 1998.
- Parliament Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. 1998. Domestic Violence Act.
- Sexual Orientation and the Law. 1989. *Harvard Law Review*. 102: 1511-1590.
- Smart, Carol. 1994. Law, feminism and sexuality: From essence to ethics? *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*. 9: 15-37.
- Wells, Herbert. 1991. The status of non-traditional unions in Commonwealth Caribbean family law. Dissertation. The University of the West Indies, Faculty of Law.
- Williams, Lawson. 2000. *Homophobia and Gay Rights Activism in Jamaica*. Unpublished article. J-FLAG.
- Yelvington, Kevin. 1995. *Producing power*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 59.



<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>



Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean

CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Working Paper No. 14, March 2008

Alissa Trotz

Associate Professor, New College, University of Toronto,
Now

Associate Professor in Women and Gender Studies and
Director of the Undergraduate Caribbean Studies Program
New College, University of Toronto

ISBN: 978-976-621-157-4

Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS)
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper Series

Editorial Committee

Prof. Eudine Barriteau, Head, CGDS, NBU, UWI, Cave Hill Campus; Editor, CRGS

Prof. Patricia Mohammed, CGDS, The UWI, St. Augustine

Dr. Letnie Rock, Head and Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Government, Sociology and Social Work, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Ms Sheila Stuart, Social Affairs Officer – Gender, ECLAC

Dr. Keith Nurse, Director, Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade, Law, Policy and Services, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Dr. Jessica Byron, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Government, Sociology and Social Work, UWI, Mona

Editorial Assistant

Ms Carmen Hutchinson, CGDS, NBU, UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Keywords: Caribbean gender relations, migration, Caribbean development, globalisation, regional integration, Caribbean diaspora

How to cite

Trotz, Alissa. 2015. "Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean."
Caribbean Review of Gender Studies issue 9, 327- 372

Editor's Note

Working Paper No.14 is based on a lecture delivered by Dr. Alissa Trotz, Associate Professor, New College University of Toronto, USA. Dr. Trotz delivered the 13th lecture in the series, *Caribbean Women: Catalysts for Change* on November 16th 2007; this series is dedicated to honouring the memory of Dame Nita Barrow, Governor General of Barbados 1990-1995, and the first subject of the research project, *Caribbean Women: Catalysts for Change*.

As a Caribbean feminist and scholar, Dr. Trotz mines the intersecting sites of diaspora, identities and constantly shifting Caribbean political economy. In the process she offers a searing assessment of a creeping social fragmentation in the region facilitated by the politics of polarization and division. While maintaining that we need to move past defensiveness and to engage each other, she proffers a different future and concludes with the gift of sociality. It is a social blue print from the indigenous Wai Wai of Guyana on how we can remain each other's keepers. She uses three dimensions of Dame Nita's public life to organize her lecture on the theme "Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean." These themes are the Social Geography of a Pan-Caribbean Identity, Caribbean Movement and Political Conflict, and Social Justice and Gender Equality.

Examining the operations of gender in each of these themes, Trotz explores how a collective social amnesia has worked to effect the marginalization of Caribbean peoples by deploying the politics of polarization and division. She also suggests ways in which Caribbean peoples might rework narratives of exclusion through a preliminary discussion of counter-memories embedded in practices that do not follow the logic of borders internally or externally implied.

Alissa Trotz's analysis is insightful, rich and compelling. She presents a rarity in the academic community because while she sojourns in the academic community,

she traverses the terrains of Caribbean communities whether diasporic or state defined. As a scholar activist her voice and vision are clear and compelling. In the process she reveals the multiple and shifting realities of Caribbean women. Trotz uses these complex realities to question our understanding of migration, working class communities, regional integration and Caribbean development, and the place of gender in all of these sites.

Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean¹

Introduction

My paternal grandmother died in 2003 at the age of 95. Some years earlier, she had begun to lose her short-term memory, although this did not diminish her ability to recall events in (what was for me) the distant past, complete with time of day, what she was wearing and doing, in absolutely astonishing and minute detail. There is a medical diagnosis for this condition, but in the context of what I want to offer, I sometimes wonder whether my grandmother's selective forgetting metaphorically indexed a deeper sense that, in the dusk of her life, there was little that was memorable in the contemporary Caribbean.

This is a provocatively harsh opening, one that a glance at any Human Development Report – which notes that the Caribbean experience is one of political stability and relatively high social indicators - will challenge, but for Caribbean women and men like myself who came of age or were born in the decade of the 1980s and after, I say this deliberately in order to register that there is little of the anticipation and excitement that animated the pre-independence era. There is little sense of how popular discontent with the emerging political order's refusal to effect a radical break from the colonial past was channeled collectively, and of the energy that infused a number of social and political experiments in the decade of the 1970s, culminating in the Grenadian revolution in 1979.

A vibrant women's movement came into its own during these years, drawing on the creative energies of those who had been nurtured by the promise of citizenship, only to find that the place of women in an independent Caribbean was anything but equal.² This was the period that produced Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), which included women from

Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, as well as calls, led by the Global South, for a New International Economic Order.

These times, which in different ways appeared to offer rich and radical hope of transformation for all across the region, seem lost now from the vantage point of a present caught up in the singular logic of neoliberal globalization.³ In these times democracy is linked to the free market, where commodification and consumerism extend into more and more aspects of our lives, where purchasing power is increasingly the criteria for citizenship, where a US-led war of terror is carried out in the name of protecting these so-called freedoms, a war that has touched down in the Caribbean in holding pens in Guantanamo Bay.

In the Caribbean, more than two decades after the introduction of structural adjustment programmes,⁴ the region's future seems more than ever mortgaged to the interests of international capital. What do we have to show for it? The region's dependence on single and primary crops, (the Caribbean remains wedded to an unsustainable agricultural model (Weis 2007) and services (particularly tourism) has not shifted. This underlines the vulnerability of our overall position even for the more developed economies among us that have not, for example, been affected by the steady erosion of preferential arrangements under the WTO vis-à-vis sugar and banana regimes.

In broad terms, we face an extremely high rate of HIV infection, by some counts the second highest infection rates in the world. There are growing income inequalities in many countries; alarmingly high levels of violence, which has been described by economist Norman Girvan (2007) as poor-on-poor, poor-on-not-so-poor, state-on-poor, community-on-community. Levels of functional illiteracy are increasing, accompanied by limited job opportunities and unsustainable out-migration rates. A recent study found that between 76% and 83% of the highly skilled workforces of Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago migrated to OECD countries.⁵

Notwithstanding some feminist successes and claims of male marginalization (a most misplaced accusation which has been effectively challenged by Eudine Barriteau (1997) and Linden Lewis (2003) among others, but which according to Gabrielle Jamela Hosein (2007) has greatly complicated women's organizing) women continue to lag behind men in political representation and experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty. This is especially so among female-headed households, even as domestic and sexual violence continue to be a daily feature of women's lives in the region.

Unlike the momentous shifts that we have witnessed in Latin American politics in recent years, in which candidates (one of them indigenous, two of them women) have been elected on platforms that – to varying degrees, from Venezuela to Argentina – openly challenge the impact of neoliberal reforms, there is no sense of a sea change on the political horizons of the Caribbean⁶. With rare exceptions the difference between parties is one of degree and not substance. While the logic of the Washington Consensus is not the subject of fundamental critical appraisal in public debate, its *fait accompli* status is never challenged. I am no pollster, but judging from my conversations with friends and colleagues and observations of the state of play in countries like Guyana, there appears to be widespread disaffection with the political status quo, and an overriding sense that the more things change, the more they damned well remain the same.

Outside of the formal political process, the regenerative potential of civil society has been dulled by what I would call NGO-speak. This has transformed the NGO movement into a sanitized, depoliticized space dominated by the language of 'stakeholders' looking for 'good governance'. Even the transgressive promise of the women's movement has been blunted by the discovery, mainstreaming and neutralization of gender by the very same institutions that prop up

economic and social policies that require the continued sacrifice of women's labour.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Gabrielle Jamela Hosein comments wryly that in some ways the limited successes of feminism in crossing some institutional barriers has led to greater ideological conservatism among a younger generation of women who shy away from identifying themselves as feminist⁷. She also notes that young women seem to draw on an individualistic language of self-respect and do not make sustained links between their experiences and the wider landscape in which such inequalities are embedded (Hosein, 2007). This is in a country that is home to the regional Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA)! We might well ask whether neo-liberal emphases on the self are being manifested in the ways in which responses to discontent are increasingly individualized and privatized.

These are the challenges that face activists today as we engage a new generation. I want to begin to think about this by suggesting that the status quo in the region is enabled by a deadening and deadly social amnesia which short-circuits the possibility of thinking otherwise. This is not to say there is no history in the present. Instead it is to question what we have come to accept as a legitimate narrative of how we arrived at this point, where the only change that we are told matters is the five year cycle when the votes are mobilised, the speeches and promises are made, a 'new' government is elected, the flag is raised, and business continues, more or less as usual. What we have in stock offers us this present we currently inhabit as our eternal future, and calls it independence.

But this is the opening of my conversation, not its dismal conclusion! Therefore, let us rewind, wheel and turn again as the Jamaicans would say. To start again with my grandmother, might there be another way of reading her short-term forgetfulness, in which we learn to listen to the early recounting of an ordinary

woman's everyday life? She worked as a domestic for thirteen years and was a single parent with one child, whom her brother helped to raise. In her later years she worked with her husband on the farm he managed on the Essequibo coast. It is a life that gets missed by the history books and officially managed narratives of the past, but which offers us a glimpse into another present, another future, lurking in the shadows. I suggest that there is a more hopeful and capacious angle of vision to be apprehended here.

It is a real honour to be speaking in a series named for Dame Nita Barrow, a woman with a truly regional outlook. I draw on three dimensions of her life to organize my reflections this evening, and as a way of participating in a process of remembering her⁸. She might not have agreed with everything I will say, but paying homage should always be in the interest of extending a conversation while recognizing its various origins. Otherwise there would never be anything to say.

The first is that the social geography of Dame Nita's personal and professional life gesture towards a Pan-Caribbean identity. In addition to Barbados, I am told that her family connections embraced St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tobago and St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and she is described as having worked in almost every Caribbean territory (including, given our migration rates to the US, New York!). Secondly, she was a member (and the only woman) of a seven person Commonwealth team that visited South Africa in 1985 to witness the conditions faced by the Black majority and to offer recommendations for dialogue between the Botha regime and leaders of the anti-apartheid resistance. Thirdly, in 1985 she was convenor of the NGO Forum for the Decade of Women in Nairobi, Kenya. If the first two suggest themes – Caribbean movement and political conflict - to be taken up here, the third highlights Dame Nita's commitment to social justice and gender equality, and a sense that the terrain of politics requires expansion beyond a focus on state power, to include the myriad other domains in which the business of living is carried out, and where women can be found. Thus my lecture will explore, through a discussion

of xenophobia occasioned by migration and the politics of polarization and division, how a collective social amnesia has worked to effect the marginalization of Caribbean peoples. Looking at the operation of gender in each of these examples, I hope to suggest ways in which we might rework narratives of exclusion, through a preliminary discussion of counter-memories embedded in practices that do not follow the logic of borders, internally or externally imposed.

The Social Geography of a Pan Caribbean Identity

Let me begin with recent Guyanese media coverage of trade and business links with Barbados. Reports of an official Barbadian delegation's successful visit to the trade and investment exhibition GUYEXPO were followed by the Government of Guyana's invitation to Barbadians to lease land at a reduced rate. This overture prompted a letter to the Guyanese newspapers which noted, "I also have not seen reciprocity; of course we have a big heart and a bench at Grantley Adams International."⁹ (Stabroek Daily News, October 24th, 2007).

The reference nudged an uncomfortable memory out of its hiding place. On July 19, 2005, I was at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Guyana with my two daughters, waiting to return to Toronto via Trinidad and Tobago. There was also a flight leaving for Barbados, and I recognized a few passengers. A few days later I learned that most of those individuals had never made it past what is dubbed "the Guyanese bench" at Grantley Adams airport. I believe over two score were deported in one day. Thinking about this event in preparation for this lecture, I realized I had no idea how the mass deportation was dealt with in the Barbadian public sphere. Curious, I decided to search the online national newspaper archives. Two hours later I had filled sixty pages with columns, letters and editorials, dating back over two years (the internet blogs are another matter altogether).

While the importance of a constructive and open dialogue can never be underestimated, I was stunned by the vitriol against Guyanese in much of what I was reading. Words like flood and swamp suggested that Barbados was vulnerable and open to invading hordes (the gendered dimension is clear here) who threatened the country's social equilibrium, notwithstanding statements by the Barbadian government that the numbers of Guyanese in the country could not support such a conclusion.

In letters to the press, images emerged of squatting and overcrowding (the dirty, anti-social Guyanese), of illegal access to scarce social services and free medical care (the duplicitous and greedy Guyanese), of threats to law and order (the criminal Guyanese), of a political imbalance, with at least one opposition politician speculating that the voters' list could be artificially inflated (the cheating Guyanese), of immigrants accepting lower wages and undercutting Barbadian labour (the Guyanese scab). Indian-Guyanese were singled out and racialised as particularly incapable of integrating, and of threatening to import Guyana's 'ethnic' problem into the island.

Anxieties around borders also turned crucially on questions of sexuality. In some of the online blogs, women were singled out as preying on unsuspecting Barbadian men in order to get themselves legalised (the immoral and sexually loose Guyanese). The Barbadian prostitute was even momentarily 'rehabilitated' in order to make the argument that she was put out of business near the garrison by Guyanese women willing to do more for less. Given what we know throughout the region about the general association in the public imagination between prostitution and moral decay - even as sex workers are integral to the tourist industry and therefore to regional economies (Kempadoo, 1999).

This calling up of the local prostitute to defend the Barbadian nation perfectly illustrates the feminist point that women are the grounds on which claims to community are made which ultimately displace them, which is to say at the end of the day it is not really about women and the inequalities they experience at all. That sexuality is one of the fulcra on which this controversial conversation has pivoted should not surprise us. Concerns about immigration are always simultaneously concerns around reproduction, and one can point to numerous other examples in the region and beyond of this kind of policing of the allegedly pure national body from contamination or penetration by the Other. Many Haitian children born in the Dominican Republic to Haitian parents are ineligible for public services (including education) because they are not entitled to identity papers; nor does having one Dominican parent necessarily guarantee such security. In this case we see how state regulations attempt to circumscribe and reorder people's lives in the name of something called 'Dominican national identity'.

By denying or refusing to recognize the myriad unscripted ways in which people chance upon, live and love each other, different categories of belonging are created, rendering some families less normal or less valued. This is similar, by the way, to how we tend to think of households headed by women as secondary to the nuclear/male breadwinner family, despite the fact that they represent the family experience of over 40 per cent of children in the region, or the laws that outlaw lesbian and gay sex and make criminals and non-citizens out of all of us whose desires refuse to be strai(gh)tjacketed (Alexander, 1997; Robinson, 2006).

My kids have come to Barbados on several occasions (my father made this his home between 1997 and 2004), and I am fortunate to be able to take them to Guyana each year to instil in them an understanding of their rich heritage. And yet, wading through this material, I could not help feeling that this belonging was somehow precarious, that the Caribbean I was claiming could also impose its own cruel exclusions. And I wonder, had we been on the plane to Barbados that day, how would my children have made sense of the interminably long lines and the distress that must have been on the faces of many Guyanese?

Given the contemporary economic disparities between Barbados and Guyana, the direction of the traffic is predictable. At the same time, I want to suggest that in several of the press reports, the spotlight on Guyanese appeared to obscure a disquiet and displace another conversation about the internal distribution of resources. That is to say, Bajans may have been represented in this discourse as the haves and Guyanese as the have-nots who threaten the real citizens' high standard of living, but this projected image of a unified national community cannot always paper over the inequalities that generate divisions among Barbadians, for which immigrants should not be scapegoated and cannot be asked to answer.

I have begun with Barbados because this is where we are this evening, and not because there is anything peculiarly Barbadian about this pattern. We need to move past defensiveness and address the wider context, in order to engage each other. Across the region, one can point to numerous other cases, like the widely documented brutal treatment of Haitian sugar workers in the Dominican Republic. If we cast our net even wider, we begin to see that what takes place in the region is not so different from what Caribbean people – in different ways – face 'up North', 'in foreign'. Research has shown how movement is regulated at various points to respond to the differently gendered needs and demands of global capitalism. Take for example the domestic, seasonal hotel and temporary farm worker programmes that recruit Caribbean women and men as workers to Canada and the United States, all of which are based on a presumption that while the workers' labour is required to produce value, their own lives are treated as worthless, and their families and the costs of social reproduction must remain as far as possible outside the borders of the host country. These jobs are gendered, with women doing the feminised (hotel and maid) and men the masculinised (agricultural) work. This is in a context in which both kinds of jobs have little status and have become associated with immigrants, non-citizens, and people of colour¹⁰.

These types of policies and societal attitudes send the message that we can treat some people differently because they are not one of us, notwithstanding the reality that it is the largely invisible and exploited labour of these so-called 'others' that creates and maintains the scaffolding of the destination economies, a point that was beautifully made in relation to the Barbados-Guyana saga by Prime Minister Owen Arthur.¹¹ Instead of seeing the immigrant as the problem, we might usefully ask ourselves how immigrant labour, and particularly female immigrant labour, serves an economy geared so heavily to the tourist industry, and the benefit their tenuous legal status provides to employers. This is the integral underbelly of capitalist development-what is popularly called globalization today. Moreover, I am sure that anyone in the Caribbean could recount a story of a family member or friend enduring humiliating treatment at ports of entry in Miami, New York, London or Toronto. When we look at how we handle our own affairs in relation to visitors and workers from other Caribbean countries, should the similarities not give us pause? There should be nothing comfortable in such familiarity.

In an interview, literary scholar Gordon Rohlehr offers the opinion that nationalism necessarily requires and offers little sympathy to the stranger, and that in the aftermath of the collapse of the West Indies Federation, in each country that went its separate – national – way, "the Other became the other Caribbean person" (Puri 2003: 253). With CARICOM discussions over freedom of movement and the Single Market and Economy, what do these popular anxieties over borders tell us about the tensions between the local and the global, the regional and the resolutely, at times xenophobically, national?

The stories we tell ourselves are based on a kind of collective amnesia. It suits us today, for instance, to see Haiti not as the country that gave the world the promise of Black sovereignty over two centuries ago, but as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. It suits us today to see Guyana as lowest on the totem pole of the Anglophone Caribbean, notwithstanding the fact that at one point it was seen as the breadbasket of the Caribbean and potentially still has

that capacity. Guyana represents also our gateway to deeper relations with our Latin American neighbours and a broader regional vision. Caribbean people would do well to challenge this selective forgetting.

For starters, we forget that the movement of people between countries ebbs and flows and changes direction. In a presentation to the Association of Caribbean Historians 9th Annual Conference, held thirty years ago at Cave Hill, Walter Rodney (1977) reminded us of a reverse wave in the late nineteenth century, when Barbadians, facing what many saw as limited opportunities on the island, headed to Guyana to seek their futures¹². In a newspaper article, Deputy Prime Minister Mia Mottley¹³ noted that the exodus was perceived to be so great that the Barbadian House of Assembly debated whether restrictions should be placed on those seeking to leave (Barbados Nation News, August 9, 2006).

Historicizing current anti-immigrant sentiment is also necessary to short-circuit an unhelpful Guyanese moral triumphalism or self-righteous indignation (at one point we helped you, and this is how you repay us). We see, with some humility, how we are all potentially complicit, how Guyanese have been equally capable of the behaviour we complain about today (in fact, there are similar rumblings of disquiet today in Guyana about the increasing numbers of Brazilians in the country). The impulse to make common political cause through the shared exploitation faced by local Blacks, indentured Indians, and Barbadian estate labourers was often tempered by anti-immigrant feelings, which came to the fore in times of economic distress.

In one report, Barbadians were being threatened “because [they] work more and at a lower rate than [the Creoles] do” (Royal Gazette 1868, cited in Rodney 1977). And Reverend Bronkhurst observed in 1883 that “...Every Hindu, every Badian, every islander is an abomination unto the Creole blacks of the Colony” (Bronkhurst 1883, cited in Rodney 1977). Here we see how an

immigration system designed to thwart the aspirations and cripple the bargaining power of the Afro-Guyanese working-classes in the post-slavery period would pit those who occupied the most marginal positions in Guyanese society against each other.

If we extend this analysis to the contemporary situation in Barbados, we might want to think about how those on the margins of Barbadian society – both citizens and immigrants from other Caribbean countries – come up against each other, while a larger social and economic arrangement that has produced the kinds of privations that generate inequalities, as well as the actors who benefit from these hierarchies – “unscrupulous employers, landlords, service providers” – are let off the hook, and remain unaccountable (CAFRA 2006).

Gordon Rohlehr, describing the Caribbean as “a society of immigrants” (Puri 2003: 248), notes the presence of Grenadians, Vincentians and Barbadians in Trinidad and Tobago from the late nineteenth century. Anti-immigrant sentiment – again this peaked under conditions of economic hardship - expressed itself through the popular medium of calypso; one of the songs in the early 1940s was titled ‘Small Island, Go Back Where you Really Come From’. Stereotypes also cohered around the Barbadian as mean, smart and a trickster, with the accent definitively branding the small islander as a permanent outsider. Rohlehr cites a calypso sung by Blakey in the 1950s, *Send Them Back*, in which the Grenadians’ inability to pronounce ‘box’ the ‘Trini’ way, gives them away to the authorities.

This business of language and enunciation denotes social status and sets the boundaries of difference, sometimes in exceedingly violent ways. Across the same Caribbean Sea, tens of thousands of Haitian women, men and children were massacred and evicted from the Dominican Republic in 1937 under the Trujillo regime. In *Farming of the Bones*, novelist Edwidge Danticat recalls the ritual use of the herb parsley, folded seamlessly into the cycle of collective Haitian life:

We used pesi, perejil, parsley, the damp summer morningness of it, the mingled sprigs, bristly and coarse, gentle and docile all at once, tasteless and bitter when chewed, a sweetened wind inside the mouth, the leaves a different taste than the talk, all this we savored for our food, our teas, our baths, to cleanse our insides as well as our outsides of old aches and griefs, to shed a passing year's dust as a new one dawned, to wash a new infant's hair for the first time and – along with boiled orange leaves – a corpse's remains one final time. (Danticat 1998: 62).

This reassuring depth is brutally eviscerated when parsley threatens to betray Haitian-ness. In the final section of the novel, which addresses the massacre, whether one was killed or left to live turned on one's ability to pronounce parsley with a Dominican Spanish accent (as opposed to one contaminated by Haitian Kreyol), in which the attackers listened for “the trill of the r or the precision of the j” as signs of the authentic native speaker, fluent in the mother tongue (Danticat 1998: 193).

One wonders whether it is ever really possible to definitively identify, expel and obliterate the Haitian. Or is the categorical violence of such acts required to erase and deny the interwoven complexities of Haitian-Dominican relations on the ground? Moreover, it is the Haitian whose multilingual competence (in at least Spanish and Kreyol) offers a tentative promise of neighbourliness, but this matters little when the need to find the stranger among us is so deeply compelling. These are disturbing reminders, more troubling still because they continue to resonate across place and time.¹⁴

In her recently published memoir, *Brother, I'm Dying* (2007), Danticat's eighty year old, sick Haitian uncle, with a valid US tourist visa, is held at the Krome Detention Centre in Miami, where he eventually collapses and later dies. His

earthly remains were interred in New York, making him “part of the soil of a country that had not wanted him” (Danticat 2007: 251). Distressed, Danticat's dying father observes, in a comment that encapsulates the tragedy of Haiti, a country that gave the world an early lesson in freedom from racial intolerance and where Black people today continue to pay the price for that courage, “He shouldn't be here...If our country were ever given a chance and allowed to be a country like any other, none of us would live or die here” (Danticat 2007: 251).

Caribbean Movements and Political Conflict

While remembering can enable us to historicize contemporary exclusions and recognize our own ‘implicatedness,’ it can also serve a more hopeful purpose. If we start with the gendered lives and survival strategies of women and men, their uneven circulation and mobility stitch the Caribbean together in ways that make it impossible to insist on separability over connection. The fact that earlier migration patterns tended to be heavily male¹⁵ should not distract us from thinking about where the women went and what they did. For while many remained to take care of those left behind when their menfolk departed (bringing to mind the folk song, ‘brown skin gal, stay home and mind baby, I goin’ away on a sailin’ boat an’ if ah don’t come back, throw ‘way de damn baby’), women also extended their lives into new geographies.

In some cases they were responding to official labour schemes like the domestic worker programmes in Canada, while in other instances they travelled as individuals and in staggered form as members of wider family units. Cuban filmmaker Gloria Rolando's documentary, *My Footsteps in Baragua*, captures the importance of women to organizing and reproducing community in these destinations. The oldest migrant is a Barbadian octogenarian, fluent in Spanish and at home in Baragua. Despite having left Barbados more than sixty years ago, she says wistfully and with clear Bajan intonations, “I would like to go home

yes". It is a community, moreover, in which gendered intimacies blur national differences, for every family featured in the film contains members who can track their ancestry to different islands – Barbados, Trinidad, Grenada and so on. Food (peas and rice, coo coo, ackee and saltfish), the preparation of which remains women's work, also emerges as a key element of cultural memory and inter-generational transmission.

It would be folly to assume a straightforward gendered divide in which women's contributions related to cultural transmission and the space of the household, while men's occupied what is often rendered as the more encompassing space of the political. There is also a problem in not seeing the work that women do in the family as political, or relegating it somehow – and usually as afterthought – to the secondarily political, a point we shall return to later. We know something of migrant men's activism in such destinations as Panama and Costa Rica, and there is interest in tracking whether and how this shaped later labour struggles as they returned to the Anglophone Caribbean.

As Merle Collins writes in *Tout Moun ka Pléwé (Everybody Bawling)*, a beautiful meditation that ties the cycles of tropical storms and hurricanes to Grenada's political history:

...hurricane forming right inside Grenada self, hurricane coming back from other Caribbean country too, from Aruba, from Trinidad, from America, from England, from all the places Grenadian people go to get a little pankwai (a little something) when things get rough. Is not now Grenadians, and in fact, all Caribbean people, going out and coming back (Collins 2007: 5).

Labour leaders and activists in the different islands also frequently originated from somewhere else (one well-known female example that we know about is Elma Francois, originally from St. Vincent, in Trinidad (Reddock 1988)).

And the diasporic turn in the academy has unearthed for us the myriad roles played by Caribbean men in all kinds of struggles, from the Garveyite movement to Pan-Africanism. We need more work like this that refuses to be disciplined by a narrowly nationalist frame, but we would also do well to extend and recast what does exist by asking different questions of the material. For instance, what kinds of community did these men envision, and how did the terms of belonging address differences of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation?¹⁶ We should also explore the ways in which women emerge as complex political actors in their own right.

There are some examples that point us in this direction: Women in the Garveyite movement, some of whom had relocated to the Caribbean from the United States; Francophone Caribbean women's participation in Pan-Africanism in Paris (Edwards 2003); Claudia Jones, feminist, communist and Black internationalist with an articulate critique of how race, class and sex intersected under capitalism and who was firmly committed to putting Blacks and women on the agenda of the communist party. She migrated to the United States from Trinidad and Tobago at age nine, never returning to the region (one account of her life suggests a Barbadian paternal lineage), and was deported (she used the term exiled) to England for her communist affiliations, where she launched the *West Indian Gazette* and *Afro-Asian Caribbean News* and also helped create what we know today as London's Notting Hill Carnival.

She was part of a generation of West Indians in diaspora committed to a truly independent Caribbean, and whose insistent presence (the Caribbean as witness, we might call it) testified to the ways in which the contours of British identity were fundamentally shaped by empire (Boyce-Davies 2003). As one text

suggests, "...to be West Indian, in this sense, was a strategy to live with the dislocations imposed by migration" (Schwarz 2003: 16). Dying prematurely at age 49, her grave sits beside and fittingly, as a soon to be published book points out, to the left of Karl Marx in Highgate cemetery, with the inscription, "valiant fighter against racism and imperialism who dedicated her life to the progress of socialism and the liberation of her own Black people" (Boyce-Davies 2008).

Naturally Caribbean: Movement not Borders

Surely the lesson here is that it is a futile exercise to think of each country as separate if we were to take these trajectories seriously. Instead, what we see are social, economic, political and cultural transnational encounters that connect and go beyond the region as well as give each country its unique stamp. In her challenge to traditional push-pull frameworks, geographer Elizabeth Thomas-Hope describes Caribbean migration as having 'generated its own dynamic with its own element of freedom' (Thomas-Hope 1992: 165).

It is an inescapable part of our sensibilities, of who we are. It seems to me, then, that it is movement and not borders which is naturally Caribbean, by which I mean it is a continuously defining element of our collective historical experience and memory. We are caught between nationalist preoccupations that require the design and management of policies regulating the flow of people across the region, and another plane of reality that confounds this logic on a daily basis, that illustrates how "...particular historical and structural conditions have produced cultural predispositions toward imagining community in global terms and enabled a matching cultural circuitry for building translocal images" (Carnegie 2002: 80).

This is of course most obvious today in the unofficial intra-regional 'people' networks, perhaps best embodied in the trader, whose symbolic red, white and

blue striped bag at the airport counter has become an instantly recognizable accessory. Mainly in response to the food bans imposed with no consultation and little preparation in the 1980s in the name of growing and buying local under co-operative socialism in Guyana, it was women who, with men and ahead of men, trekked in and out of the country by plane, boat and overland, who endured numerous hassles at border points as well as harassment and even imprisonment for trading in what were deemed contraband goods.

These women bargained with their bodies and whatever else they had, and contributed to an informal economy that kept households fed and going in the lean years. As one opposition news-sheet at the time noted, "What we are seeing in the small traders' struggle is the most effective civil disobedience campaign ever carried out for such a long period in Guyana" (Open Word, 15, No. 41, 1982). Carla Freeman (2000) paints a picture of Barbadian women in the data-processing export sector who supplement their income by making short trips to Miami and Puerto Rico for items that they mark up and sell at home.

Charles Carnegie draws our attention to the central role played by women in inter-regional agricultural trade. He urges a starting point that would reckon with these itinerant, everyday activities that transgress national boundaries as a matter of course, commenting that "...women's transborder activities are institutionalized and routine – very much part of settled island life" (Carnegie 2002: 84). From Guyana to Suriname, St. Lucia to Martinique and Guadeloupe, Barbados to Puerto Rico, there is a way in which we can also read these actions as a form of popular regionalism not circumscribed by linguistic divisions.

I find it ironic¹⁷ that so much of the pronouncements emanating from CARICOM on freedom of movement under the CSME have emphasized 'skilled labour.' This is a definition that surely excluded these women while misrecognising not only the skill involved, but the centrality of their work in sustaining regional economies. One study concludes that targeting skilled workers results in an

“elitist common market” that “effectively alienates the majority of persons living in this region from what should perhaps be a fundamental right within an economic community” (Wickham et al. 2004).

It is also important to think about the ways in which gender and class intersect in relation to these provisions. Given the high percentage of female graduates from UWI since the late 1980s, they potentially benefited from the freeing up of skilled labour. Notably, however, teachers, nurses, domestic and hospitality workers, higglers and artisans were not among the first categories approved for freedom of movement. This is so even though they represent precisely those women who, as Guyanese activist Andaiye has contended, have long made the Caribbean a single economic space¹⁸; as Norman Girvan notes, the practice is another matter entirely.¹⁹

There is much press given these days to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, and of course we hope that some genuine semblance of this will occur more than three decades after the establishment of the regional movement. But ask any woman who trades regularly and informally what the CSME means to her, and I am sure we will get a sense of the distance between the decisions taken by trade ministers in closed rooms and those who continue to face the hassles of making livelihoods at the grassroots. Norman Girvan (2007) aptly comments that “integration has become a matter of economics, more correctly of business, and a matter for ministers, officials and businessmen. Political involvement, popular involvement, is missing”.²⁰ At a meeting I attended in early November 2007 in Barbados, Ruth Blackman, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Transformation and Gender Affairs in Barbados, observed that there has been little attention to, and popular discussion of, the social implications/ramifications of the CSME, and specifically, of the freedom of movement provisions.

Geographies of Desire and Belonging

As we know, the antecedents to these contemporary border crossers are the Caribbean higgler/hucksters/traders (rechristened in the academy and policy circles as informal commercial importers), whose innovative practices can be traced to early desires for autonomy in relation to the slave plantation economy. This wellspring of tradition continues to be drawn upon and renewed, even in ways that are connected to, but located outside of, the Caribbean proper. Consider this example, for which the traveling bus is both a literal dimension of experience as well as an apt metaphor of Caribbean itineraries: It is a brisk Fall evening. Buses pull up at a strip mall in Toronto, Canada. Groups of predominantly women and some children mill around; as one draws closer one hears the unmistakable cadence of island talk, island accents. Welcome to international travel, Caribbean style. These chartered 'tours', advertised by word of mouth and weekly advertisements in community newspapers, are mainly organized by Caribbean women. For half the price of the official services which leave from the downtown Dundas Street terminal, you can catch a bus from Toronto and its suburbs which leaves on Friday night, deposits weary Caribbean travelers eleven hours later on the pavements of Church Avenue, Brooklyn, and returns them on Monday in time for the rhythms of a busy Toronto workweek. These travellers have a foot in *at least* three localities (Toronto, New York and the Caribbean).

Their frame of reference is multilayered, with different temporalities and seasons jostling for attention: Canadian and American holidays that fall on a long weekend; significant Caribbean events like the Labor Day carnival in New York; popular weekend day excursions to flea markets and shopping malls in upstate New York, Detroit and Pennsylvania. They travel to visit family and friends, attend celebrations, bury loved ones, patronize Caribbean businesses, hunt for bargains, engage in buying and selling (this is the Caribbean higgler reinvented across a North American borderland), 'take a break', in short to make lives for themselves as Caribbeans 'up North' (Trotz 2006).

It should come as no surprise that this informal cross-border traffic is female-dominated. Women tend to be the ones most involved in maintaining active kinship networks, as observed by literary theorist Carole Boyce Davies' description of her mother, which resonates with my own mother's life these days: 'She also lives in that in-between space that is neither here nor there, locating herself in the communities where her children, grandchildren, family and friends reside' (Boyce Davies 1994: 1). Years ago – and before it became a fashionable adjective – I came across an essay by Rosina Wiltshire Brodber on the transnational family in the Caribbean.

The fact that there continues to be such a strong association between the household and women's caring labour that maintains it, accounts partly for the dynamism of the bus charter operation. As one woman I spoke to pointed out, "Let me tell you why mostly women travel. Men...don't want to think women are very strategic with money. Women are. Because women know how to plan. Women know when to buy. Women know the deals and the quality. So women are more able, especially women who have families and children."

What we are faced with is a transnational support strategy for households stretched across at least three locations (international financial institutions have belatedly recognized the significance of remittances in undergirding economies ravaged by structural adjustment programmes). An IFAD²¹¹ study released in October 2007 revealed that Caribbean migrants sent home over US\$8 billion in remittances 2006, (2007: 14). Their response appears to be to figure out ways of using people's popular responses to crisis²² to further entrench neo-liberal policies. But that is another matter. One woman I know brought goods back for her home and to sell within her Toronto network. She also sets aside some for the barrel occupying a prominent and permanent place in her kitchen, and which, when full, would be sealed and dispatched to her family in the Caribbean, with another immediately taking its place.

I want to suggest that these women - the entrepreneurs who run the service as well as their clientele - present us with a familiar instance of lives that are sustained and nourished through the dynamics of crossing. They reference an incredible vibrancy that not only refuses to be confined to/in a single place, but that insists on inventing complex new geographies of desire and belonging. For a variety of reasons we could infer that the women do not return to the Caribbean (and indeed many have not taken a flight back to the region in years, or since they left), but such a conclusion depends on seeing the Caribbean narrowly as fixed co-ordinates on a map that correspond to territory and ocean. Again, borders loom, threatening to cut us off from each other, denying the lesson these women's journeys promise.

I want to suggest that these regularized trips, to Caribbean people in places other than the Caribbean and to Caribbean places outside of the region, are in fact a form of return, of weekly homage, to an idea of the Caribbean to which our travellers remain faithful. It is these women, unnoticed by most - except perhaps the border patrols, and do they not follow the same logic, whether they are in Buffalo, Port-of-Spain, Nassau, Miami? – who renew memory by extending a rich historical legacy into new terrain, and who continue to offer us a more expansive, connected and less jealously guarded map of this region that is our shared inheritance. As one woman said to me, “in my sleep, I dream in more than one place. Sometimes when I wake up, for a minute I don't know whether I in Toronto or Trinidad.”

Silencing the Past

I want to shift register now, and mention some work that is just getting off the ground in Guyana by a women's group, Red Thread, of which I am a member, and which is organized in the first instance around gathering oral histories and other material relating to the racial disturbances that tore the country apart in

1964. We believe that the contemporary manifestations of inter-racial suspicion and fear which have intensified in the years following the return to electoral democracy in 1992²³, can only be understood and addressed in the context of a deeper, historical rupture in Guyanese society that followed the dissolution, after 133 days in office, of the multi-racial, anti-colonial coalition that came to power in 1953 under the premiership of Dr. Cheddi Jagan. External intervention and covert destabilization by the British and Americans helped split the nationalist movement along racialised lines and would eventually result in the PPP's defeat by a coalition government in December 1964, an election that followed years of strikes, riots, and culminated in the explosion of brutal violence between African and Indian Guyanese on the coastal belt.

Little is said about this period these days, and what is uttered is cynically manipulated in the interest of one or the other of the two dominant political parties. One of the few novels that deals with this period, Grace Nichols' lyrical *Whole of a Morning Sky*²⁴ puts it thus,

No one knew how the beatings and killings started or who really started them first. The Indians blamed the black people. The black people blamed the Indians. And years later, when it was all over, both races liked to pretend it had never happened, or that it was some kind of dream ghost, best laid to peace and forgotten forever (Nichols 1986: 137).

There seems to be an overall investment in silencing the past. But the traces of 1964 are everywhere, infiltrating the interstices of everyday life and imprisoning our imaginations. The ghosts of that period do not merely haunt us, they overwhelm us. It is estimated that over 200 persons lost their lives, while thousands of families were displaced by the disturbances, forced to leave multi-ethnic communities, homes and friends they had grown up with, to seek refuge and rebuild shattered lives in neighbouring villages with others who they often

did not know, but were presumed to, simply because they 'looked like them'. Many left the country altogether, an outflow of people that has become a hemorrhage today. Division has been the legacy bequeathed to a post-1964 generation of Guyanese, and it is a division shorn of memory.

In interviews Red Thread has done so far, retellings detail collective terror: (the bombing of a launch on the Demerara river at Hurudaia, killing 43 African women, men and children, or the brutal assaults that led an entire Indian community to flee the mining town of Linden) as well as individual horror (an Indian child forced at gunpoint to kill his African foster mother who had cared for him since he was a child, or a family barely escaping with their lives from a predominantly African community they had resided in for years because the man's wife was Indian). Inter-racial violence was a productive act, by which I mean to say it was required to obliterate anything that contradicted the sense of African and Indian Guyanese as irrevocably different and separate. In one telling scene in Grace Nichol's novel, a dougla — someone of Black and Indian heritage — is attacked in the streets of Georgetown by two young men determined to "beat the coolie out ah yuh dougla rass" (Nichols 1986: 139).

This eruption of violence in the midst of dense networks of interdependence is not an unfamiliar theme when put in the context of political crises and their legacies elsewhere in the post-colonial Caribbean. The narrator in *Paint the Town Red*, Brian Meeks' fictional account of the political violence in 1980 that claimed some 800 lives in Jamaica, observes that, "so many webs had been intricately woven only to be casually torn apart" (Meeks 2003: 10).

In *Tout Moun ka Pléwé (Everybody Bawling)*, Merle Collins says of events leading up to the collapse of the Grenadian Revolution "...brother quarrelling with sister, with mother, friend quarrelling with friend, with father, country divided like we might think it was never divided before. Nobody say the word, not out loud in public, but was Civil War that creep up and establish itself. And that is why it so

hard to heal" (Collins 2007: 13). And in Haiti, fratricidal violence continues to claim lives on a daily basis, even as the mainstream media would have us believe that the removal of Aristide, orchestrated by the Canadians, French and Americans in 2004, making a mockery of the 200th anniversary of Haitian independence, has brought peace and stability to the country.

These intimacies make the violence somehow more unspeakable, perhaps because it is difficult to comprehend how the distance between neighbour and stranger could be so easy to traverse, how neighbours could become others in the blink of an eye. They also raise the issue of how women were affected. Most feminist work on violence in the Caribbean (in addition to organizing around the structural violence of adjustment programmes and their impact on women as domestic shock absorbers) has tended to revolve around domestic violence.

These analyses offer, as Tracy Robinson (n.d.) observes, an important, and in many ways, straightforward platform around which women could readily mobilise. We have not paid enough attention to the gendering of political crises and violence across the region. This with the exception of Haiti, where we have Beverley Bell's (2001) collection of testimonies from survivors and witnesses, not victims (this is no semantic distinction), gathered shortly after the restoration of elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1994.

We also have as well as Human Rights and other reports that have clearly established how sexual assault is extensively used as a political weapon against Haitian women and girls.

In the case of Guyana, both in the scholarly literature as well as in popular discourse, there has been virtually no discussion of how women and men differentially experienced the racial disturbances of 1964. Part of this, of course, has to do with a conceptual/political frame that does not foreground questions of gender, but it should be key, given that whole communities and families were

reconfigured. One of the issues we must contend with is whether and how women were sexually assaulted because this was construed as an attack on the communities with which they are identified, as well as a direct affront to the masculinity of those presumed to protect them from harm.

Silence and denial, however, can also be shame's legacy. It can be difficult to find out or talk about sexualized inter-racial assaults because it is the woman whose reputation is at stake, even (or especially) more than 40 years following the horrific events of 1964. The pressure to be silent comes from within and without. Merle Collins' poem *Shame Bush* captures this poignantly '...touch shame bush/ see how it curl inside itself/ Watch shame bush/ see how it close to defend itself/ Study shame bush, if you really do that reading/ you will understand the silence people keeping' (Scott 2007).

Silence, however, is not akin to forgetting. There is no wiping of the slate clean here. In the absence of a ritual cleansing, the events and their diffuse aftermath can be neither legislated nor wished away. As Collins reminds us,

Dust don't disappear when you sweep it behind bed/ People stay quiet but all the questions in their head/ Is true time could heal and bad times could change people mind/ But we have to figure how to talk, leave the hurt behind/' (Merle Collins *Shame Bush*).

There have been recent discussions of how to break the awful grip of a deafening silence, or when it is occasionally interrupted, of renderings of the past that intensify internecine resentments and divides.

Brian Meeks (2007) calls for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in relation to the political battles between the PNP and JLP in Jamaica in 1980 which primarily took the lives of poor people in urban garrison communities, but

if we look at the examples of Grenada (where a TRC was established in 2001, (Scott 2007) and Haiti (where a National Truth and Justice Commission was set up in December 1994), we see that these commissions have, for different reasons, resolved little.

The Antidote to Silencing

How, then, to inaugurate a necessary conversation? For visionary poet Martin Carter, forgetting is an impossibility, but remembering is not straightforward and can be harnessed to new beginnings or dangerous ends:

It remains possible to glimpse morning/
Before the sun;/
Possible to see too early/
Where sunset might stain anticipated/
Night. So sudden, and so hurting/
Is the bitten tongue of memory (Martin Carter, *In the When Time*: 1977).

In the case of Guyana, if domestic violence was an issue around which women could easily organise, here we are confronted with the ways in which women identify as members of ethnic communities, deeply invested in narrative frames filtered through the contemporary racial impasse such that 'the other side' is always the aggressor. There is no automatic solidarity – if ever there was – of women *qua* women here in the face of violence. Not surprisingly, this is in keeping with the position of the two main political parties implicated in the 1964 events, with their exclusive roll call of martyrs, and where the only thing they share is a tiresome investment in victimhood that would place the blame entirely on the other. In a region that has experienced Amerindian exploitation, slavery

and indentureship, how is it that we have acquiesced so willingly to this ownership and division of the dead by an opportunistic political class?

I remember when I was a child, my father told me that in his trips to the interior, he had learned from Amerindian communities that quite often the antidote to a poisonous plant would be growing right next to it. You just had to know where to look. In the interviews we have done so far, and without exception, next to each story of tragic separation there have been glimpses of something else: the intense fear felt on both sides of the created divide; individual accounts of cross-racial solidarity; families sheltering families; women sharing news and food with each other as mothers and as caregivers; children refusing to segregate themselves from their playmates; elderly women and men emotionally expressing a desire and longing for the homes they were evicted from, and for the networks of interdependence that were so brutally torn apart more than 40 years ago.

In *Whole of a Morning Sky*, women organize an entire yard – predominantly Black residents - in a low-income community to keep vigil following the news that the home of the single Indian family who lives among them will be the site of an arson attack (Nichols 1986). As one woman notes, “I bet you if men used to bring children into this world, they would have more respect for human life” (Nichols 1986: 139). I read this not as a statement of women’s innate propensity for peace as mothers, but rather as a call for recognition of the implicitly political and potentially transformative dimensions of the caring work that is the foundation of all our societies, but which is unequally apportioned and not recognized.

Along similar lines, and drawing on her research with one community in downtown Kingston, Jamaica, Faye Harrison (1997) suggests that even as political polarization was deepening, from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, one could find efforts by local women and men to draw on woman-centred

practices that created safe zones of yard and community, challenged representations of militarized masculinity valorized in the gunman culture, and foregrounded the structural violence of poverty and marginalization that framed the lives of grassroots women and men.

These openings raise a number of questions. In the case of Guyana, in 1898 a Royal Commission of Inquiry concluded of Afro-and Indo-Guyanese: "They are totally different people; they do not intermix. That is, of course, one of our great safeties in the colony when there has been any rioting."²⁵ This assumption of a ready-made difference completely erased the role of the colonial state in organizing and creating divisions among the working population in the interest of maintaining acceptable levels of sugar production in the post-emancipation period. The continuities of colonialist modes of thinking, expressed today in a widespread acceptance that Guyanese are irrevocably racially divided, are deeply troubling. What are the contemporary political stakes of keeping counter-memories submerged? Why is it that some stories are more easily forgotten than others, and who benefits from their continued disappearance?

As we see it in *Red Thread*, the challenge for Guyanese (and by extension other parts of the Caribbean that are struggling with their pasts in this way) is to bear witness while recognizing that the victim and the oppressor jostle for space inside each of us. Only when we arrive at a place where we can properly mourn and recognize those touched by the tragic events of 1964 in Guyana, 1980 in Jamaica (and we can add to this list), not as mine or yours, but as *our* collective responsibility, can we hope to defeat the narrow divide and rule logic that has for the most part resulted in an inability to collectively challenge the ongoing marginalization of the majority of our people.

Anthropologist George Mentore, who has worked for over 25 years with the Wai Wai community in Southern Guyana near the Brazilian border, recently wrote a column for the Guyanese *Stabroek* newspaper (Mentore 2007). Reflecting on

the growing numbers of homeless people on the streets of the capital city, he observed that homelessness does not exist in Amerindian society because there is no ethic or value that could result in “the distress of loneliness”. What he was saying, in effect, was that the answer – he prefers to call it the gift of sociality - to this most visible face of poverty and marginality is already here, awaiting our recognition and acceptance.

Migration and political violence, the themes I have addressed, represent two instances in which, through our practices, we have created the stranger at the doorstep and in our midst. We might think that the stranger helps to reinforce a sense of who ‘we’ are, but if we continue to go down this road, it will not be too long before the stranger takes up permanent residence inside each of us.

Conclusion

Caribbean Community and the Gift of Sociality

The Wai Wai offer us a most instructive lesson with which I want to begin to draw these reflections to a close. They show us that there are a few places in the Caribbean where we remain each other's keepers, where there is no homelessness, no loneliness, only the company of neighbours. As The Mighty Gabby says,

Brother Stalin it's so nice to see/
Trini-Bajan-Guyanese unity/
We love for this region is so strong
From Jamaica come all the way down/
Every man from the islands me brother/
Every girl from the islands me sister/

And I am sure forever it will remain this way/

Sans Humanite. Mighty Gabby and Black Stalin *Santimanite*
1994.

That is the tentative promise of faith, love and possibility in the midst of a difficult, what many might say is a most impossible, situation.

Indian historian Urvashi Butalia points out that “the exploration of memory can never be separated from the ethics of such an exploration” (Butalia 2000: 289). She notes that, “In any such exploration of the past, the aspects we choose to illuminate are determined not only by the present we live in, but the future we wish to work towards” (Butalia 2000: 278). These are never neutral exercises. There is another lesson here if we are to nurture the capacity among our young people to put together alternative maps of the past that can speak to our present predicament, and generate sovereign and connected futures.

That the Wai Wai constitute a group that continues to be made invisible by Guyanese coastal anxieties and preoccupations does not render them insignificant. The fact that *they* are the ones who hold the gift of sociality suggests that it is we who need to unlearn particular ways of seeing, and to think of the answers that are present among us, indigenous in the sense that they have been created out of the terrain of multiple histories and struggles and answer to a Caribbean rhythm. It is not only to believe that there is always something that can be done, but that we must begin by looking to see what people are already doing. This is the ongoing work that exists, but which remains largely invisible and under-valued. Undoing this is key and has implications for how we might see ourselves in relation to others, and define our political goals.

For instance, as a tertiary educated, professional woman holding both Guyanese and Canadian citizenship, I can move pretty freely throughout the Caribbean. Most women, however, cannot take travel so easily for granted

despite the fact that they have consistently and against the odds knitted the region together through their informal cross-border economic activities. How does starting with their lives throw into relief the ways in which class works as privilege and also as a mode of differentiation between women? What does it demand of me as a feminist, and how might it recast the priorities of something I might want to call a women's organization or women's movement? What does it mean to be accountable and relevant to the present?

Beginning with the lives of grassroots women is, I would contend, a political imperative, and not because one has some romantic notion that this vantage point offers transparent or unmediated access to the real. We saw this most clearly in the second example of political violence where women identify as members of racialised groups or political parties in ways that make them complicit with the exclusions and acts of violence that are executed in their name.

A couple of points follow from this observation. Firstly, that gender (how we come to an understanding of ourselves as women and men) cannot be divorced from the other relations of race, class, sexuality, nation, ability, age etc., through which we organize and apprehend our lives. Secondly, interdependencies among us do not translate into egalitarian relationships. We have to work on that. Thirdly, in an age of neo-liberalism, where freedom has been narrowed to valorize the disconnected individual, it is important to remember that it has been collective struggles (such as the labour riots of the 1930s) that have helped to secure democratic spaces and rights for Caribbean peoples (Bolland 1995; Reddock 1994). Identifying possibilities that draw on other kinds of popular histories, as I have tried to do in this analysis, is not enough. It will take ongoing work to name and build on counter-narratives, memories, and daily practices that invisibly sustain us, to multiply them in order to expand the space of the political into a vision for peace and economic and social justice in the Caribbean and beyond.²⁶

In his Nobel prize acceptance speech, Derek Walcott affirms the transformative power of the everyday, where resides

“... the beginnings of poetry, the grace of effort. In the hard mahogany of woodcutters: faces, resinous men, charcoal burners; in a man with a cutlass cradled across his forearm, who stands on the verge with the usual anonymous khaki dog; in the extra clothes he put on this morning, when it was cold when he rose in the thinning dark to go and make his garden in the heights - the heights, the garden, being miles away from his house, but that is where he has his land - not to mention the fishermen, the footmen on trucks... (Walcott 1992).²⁷

It is a compelling but partial vision, for it ultimately cannot encompass women. Barbadian novelist George Lamming tells us that

...labour and the social relations experienced in the process of labour constitute the foundations of culture...the way we see, the way we hear, our nurtured sense of touch and smell, the whole complex of feelings which we call sensibility, is influenced by the particular features of the landscape which has been humanized by our work... (Lamming 2004: 33).

Women's caring labour has been central to this process, and to the making of what we identify as Caribbean culture today.

I want to end, therefore, with a poem by Honor Ford-Smith (1996), *Aux-Leon Women*, written following a Women and Development workshop with a squatting community on the backlands of a banana estate in (Walcott's) St.

Lucia. This is no feminist invocation of the extraordinary; in fact, in a later poem by Ford-Smith, *A message from Ni* (Nanny, Maroon leader, rebel woman from Jamaica), the idea of the individual heroic female figure, unswerving in her purpose, is dispensed with:

How I prayed to be freed from what drove/ me on: they never
mention that, or/ how close courage is to fear./ It was terror of
terror that drove me on/ till it was all over and I heard/ I was Ni
eye of change/ leadress pathfinder healer of the breach.²⁸

Aux-Leon Women was written for a different time, and at one level can be read as a celebratory evocation of an easy solidarity.

Taken today, however, in these uncertain times, and in conjunction with the more faltering, ambivalent and at times stuttering tone of *Ni*, represented here not as singular leader but more as channel of her community's aspirations, I prefer to read it as offering to a new generation of feminists a lesson in accountable memory and a caution against assumptions of automatic affiliation. It is a testament to the business of living for women, which maps the circuits of global capitalism, registers the situated inequalities that underpin our lives, and recognizes not just the need for collectivities of practitioners, but the work (this is no romanticized vision), the difficult yet imperative labour it entails to practice engagement, to sustain commitment, to build alliances, to create alternative spaces of hope beyond the narrow and individuated horizons of the neo-liberal present, for a Caribbean that is big enough and compassionate enough to hold all of our differences, all of our desires, all of our dreams. I end with a poem, that anthem to the imagination and archive of memories, for as Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison (1990) reminds us, the difference is not between fact and fiction, but between fact and truth.

Aux Leon Women

Before the sunlight
splits the dry rock
their eyes open
on coarse board walls and
guttered
government
land
mind set begins
with stumbling over
a sleeping child
an animal immobile.

“catch up the fire/ scrape and grate the cassava/ carry the water
(uphill)/ boil the tea/ the tolooma/ beat the castor oil seeds/ wash
clothes/ nurse baby/ soothe old lady/ weed garden/
chop banana/ load banana/ carry it down the stony road/
un cadeau pour Monsieur Geest.”

la lin coowee, coowee
la solei joo baway
(the moon runs
it runs
till the sun
catches it)

“how much are the bananas today”?/ the housewife said
unbuttoning her coat/ laying down her string bag in the
Islington shop/ hurry up there/ don’t have all day/ she added
himself will be home soon and the tea not ready/ nothing
changes/ only the prices rise/ Gimme a dozen a them/ bruised

lot you got here today"
la lin coowee, coowee
la soleil joo baway
(the moon runs
it runs
till the sun
catches it)
scrape/boil/beat
"sleep baby sleep
father working far away
he give me something I take it
he give me nothing.....I take it"
Aux Leon women
This morning
when the sunlight strikes
the rock
Let us sweep that old yard clean.
Let us beat our quarrels into one voice
with the rhythm of the hardwood pestle.
Let us light our fires on this hillside
so all the islands will see
this labour is not free.
Let us burn the sweet wood
for its scent will fill the nostrils
of the blind and deaf.
listen
(La solei coowee coowee
la lin joo baway)

The stroke of a cutlass in water has no meaning

(La solei coowee coowee

la lin joo baway)

Listen, a song –

a song is beginning

right here

among us.

Honor Ford-Smith, Aux Leon Women 1996

¹ I would like to thank Eudine Barriteau and members of the Women Catalysts for Change Planning Committee, particularly Deborah Deane, for extending the invitation to me to give the 2007 lecture, and for their efficiency and gracious hospitality in Barbados. I am indebted to Geoffrey Dunn for calypso references and for the conversations that helped shape the direction this extended reflection has taken, and to several others for generously directing me to their work or sharing their writings and other material as I prepared my thoughts: Sara Abraham, Andaiye, Horace Campbell, Harold Drayton, Honor Ford-Smith, Norman Girvan, Gabrielle Jamela Hosein, Aaron Kamugisha, Linden Lewis, Patsy Lewis-Meeks, Brian Meeks, Tracy Robinson, Nigel Westmaas. After writing this paper, I came across George Lamming's wonderful essay, *Coming, Coming, Coming Home* (2000) which resonates so strongly with the sentiments expressed here, and which helped me refine my arguments. This essay is for my grandmothers: Alice Rohee (1894 – 1997), Classie Trotz (1908-2003), Eileen Forte-Leung (1918 -), and for the generous and unconditional love for others that I was privileged to experience from them.

² Feminist M. Jacqui Alexander refers to this as the betrayal of the promise which found expression in her Trinidad in the lines 'Every creed and race finds an equal place'.

³ What several observers refer to as a new moment of global empire.

⁴ In the 1980s, the women's movement was one of the few places where there was an organized campaign against the impact of economic liberalization on households and women, see Barriteau 1996, Reddock 1988.

⁵ For further information see, Jean-Christophe Dumont and Geroges Lamaitre: *Counting immigrants and expatriates in countries: A new perspective*. Paris: OECD, 2005.

⁶ I read Caribbean newspapers online regularly, and am constantly amazed by how little coverage there is of what is going on right at our backdoor. We seem to really lack a hemispheric consciousness.

⁷ Personal correspondence, November 7, 2007. 6.

⁸ And also recognizing the debt I owe to a generation of women, many of whom continue their work in and out of the region to this day.

⁹ Editor's note. Grantley Adams International is in Barbados.

¹⁰ See Agnes Calliste (1989), M. Chancy (1997) Makeda Silvera (1989), and Deborah Thomas (2005). For a discussion of extra-regional emigration of teachers and nurses, see Linden Lewis (2003).

¹¹ Editor's note. Prime Minister Owen Arthur then leader of the Barbados Labour Party and the government, lost the general elections in Barbados on January 15th 2008. The new Prime Minister of Barbados is David Thompson leader of the Democratic Labour Party, and the new government administration.

¹² My grandmother's husband, for instance, was Kenneth Sobers, a common Barbadian surname if there ever was one!

¹³ Editor's note. Mia Mottley is now Leader of the Opposition. The Barbados Labour Party she now heads lost the January 15th 2008 general elections to the Democratic Labour Party.

¹⁴ There have since been several *en masse* deportations of Haitians from the Dominican Republic.

¹⁵ In contrast to today, where women equal and at times even outnumber men in migration statistics, especially to the UK and North America.

¹⁶ See for instance Michelle Stephens (2005).

¹⁷ But sadly not surprising, because again it confirms the ways in which women's work remains largely invisible and undervalued, even though on paper there has been official recognition as far back as the UN Conference on Women in 1985 to recognize and measure the significance of women's unpaid labour.

¹⁸ And although in principle self-employed service providers, domestic workers, teachers and nurses are now free to move in principle.

¹⁹ Personal correspondence, November 9th, 2007.

²⁰ This verse from the extempo calypso *Santimanite*, by the Mighty Gabby and Black Stalin (1994), captures this best: Caribbean massive now is de time/ To show dem leaders what is on your mind/ It is time dat dey come up wid a plan/ How to unite de whole Caribbean/ Year after year is de same ole ting/ Dey keepin' meeting after meeting/ Tell dem we want unity and we want it right away/ Sans Humanite (Thanks to Admiral Nelson of 94.7 FM radio in Barbados for the wonderful reference).

²¹ International Fund for Agricultural Development.

²² And we should be clear remittances are, by and large, a grassroots response.

²³ And which have been accompanied by violence following the 1997 and 2001 elections.

²⁴ Taken from a Martin Carter poem.

²⁵ P.P. 1898, L (C. 8656), Royal Commission, Appendix C, Vol. I, evidence of M.J.E. Tinne, 4 January 1897, q. 1082.

²⁶ Cecilia Green (2001: 68) puts this best: "We need to understand not only the commanding heights of the economy and its hegemonic force but also the nooks, crannies and living networks of the popular and domestic economy and its creative potential. I am not suggesting that with such understanding something magical will occur; politics (and a different kind of politics, in different arenas) has to be built, devised, strategised, organized according to its own logic, not just inferred. However, it is only on the basis of this understanding and the infrastructure it reveals that a politics of empowerment can be sturdily built". For an example of a life lived on the basis of such an understanding, see Rhoda Reddock's (2007) tribute to Clotil Walcott, one of the founders of the National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) of Trinidad and Tobago. Also see Reddock (1988) on Elma Francois.

²⁷ For an excellent discussion of traditions of resistance and the reputation-respectability debate in Caribbean cultural studies, and the elaboration of an argument that foregrounds the quiet power of the everyday, drawing on intersections between the work of dub poets Jean 'Binta Breeze (ordinary mawnin' _ and Mikey Smith, see Puri (2003).

²⁸ See Richard Drayton (2004).

References

- Alexander, M. Jacqui. 2006. *Pedagogies of crossing: Meditations on feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Alexander, M. Jacqui. 1997. Erotic autonomy as a politics of decolonization: An anatomy of feminist and state practice in the Bahamas tourist economy", In: *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures*, M.J. Alexander & C. Mohanty (eds), 63-100. New York: Routledge.
- Barriteau, Eudine. 1997. *Are Caribbean women taking over? Contradictions for women in Caribbean society*, Inaugural Dame Nita Barrow Lecture, University of Toronto.
- Barriteau, Eudine. 1996. Structural adjustment policies in the Caribbean. *NWSA Journal*, 8(1): 143-156.
- Bell, Beverley. 2001. *Walking on fire: Haitian women's stories of survival and resistance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Bolland, N. 1995. *On the march: Labour rebellions in the British Caribbean, 1934-39*. Bloomington, Ind.: James Currey Publishers.
- Boyce Davies, Carole. 2003. Claudia Jones, anti-imperialist, Black feminist politics. In: *Decolonizing the academy: African diaspora studies*, Carole Boyce Davies et al. (eds.) 45-60. NJ: Africa World Press.
- Boyce Davies, Carole. 1994. *Black women, writing and identity: Migrations of the subject*. London: Routledge.
- Boyce Davies, Carole. 2008. *Left of Karl Marx: The political life of black communist Claudia Jones*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Butalia, Urvashi. 2000. *The other side of silence: Voices from the partition of India*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- CAFRA. 2006. *Gender implications of the CARICOM Single Market*. Trinidad.
- Calliste, Agnes. 1989. Canada's immigration policy and domestics from the Caribbean: The second domestic scheme. In: *Race, class and gender: Bonds and barriers*, H. Vorst et al. Toronto: Between the Lines Press.
- Carnegie, Charles V. 2002. *Postnationalism prefigured: Caribbean borderlands*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press: 51
- Carr, Robert and Lewis, R. Anthony. 2007. Disposable populations: The CSME, HIV and AIDS. *Race and Class*, 49(2): 85-90.
- Carter, Martin. 1977. *Poems of succession*, London: New Beacon Books.
- Chancy, M. 1997. Good enough to work, good enough to stay: M. Nourbese Philip, Dionne Brand, and Makeda Silvera and women's dignity in Canadian exile. In: *Searching for safe spaces: Afro-Caribbean women writers in exile*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press: 78-122
- Collins, Merle. 2007. Tout Moun ka Ple'we'. *Small Axe*, 22: 1-16.
- Danticat, Edwidge. 2007. *Brother, I'm dying*, New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Danticat, Edwidge. 1998. *The farming of bones*, New York: Penguin.

- Drayton, Richard. 2004. *The problem of the hero(ine) in Caribbean History*, 21st Elsa Goveia Lecture, Barbados.
- Dumont, Jean Christopher and Georges Lemaitre. 2005. *Counting immigrants and expatriates in countries: A new perspective*. Paris: OECD.
- Edwards, Brent Hayes. 2003. Feminism and l'internationalisme noir: Paulette Nardal. In: *The practice of diaspora: literature, translation, and the rise of black internationalism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ford-Smith, Honor. 1996. *My mother's last dance*, Toronto: Sister Vision Press.
- Freeman, Carla. 2000. *High tech and high heels: Women, work and pink collar identities in the Caribbean*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Girvan, Norman. 2007. Four Questions for Regional Integration. Conference on Economic Growth and Transformation in Honour of Professor Al Francis, Mona, September 2007: 28-30.
- Green, Cecilia. 2001. Caribbean dependency theory of the 1970s: A historical- materialist-feminist revision." In: *New Caribbean thought: A reader*. Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl (eds) Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.
- Gregory, Steven. 2007. *The devil behind the mirror: Globalization and politics in the Dominican Republic*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harrison, Faye V. 1997. The gendered politics and violence of structural adjustment. In: *Situated lives: Gender and culture in everyday life*. Louise Lamphere et al. (eds), New York: Routledge.
- Hosein, Gabrielle Jamela. 2007. Survival stories: Challenges facing youth in Trinidad and Tobago." *Race and Class*, 49 (2): 125-130.
- International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Sending money home: Worldwide remittance flows to developing countries*. IFAD, 2007.
- Kempadoo, K. (ed). 1999. *Sun, sex, and gold: Tourism and sex work in the Caribbean*. NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lamming, George. 2004. *The sovereignty of the imagination*, Kingston, Jamaica: Arawak Publications.
- Lamming, George. 2000. *Coming, Coming, Coming Home: Conversations II*, St. Martin: House of Nehusi Publishers.
- Lewis, Linden. 2003. Men and masculinities in the contemporary Caribbean. Barbados: *Working Paper No. 12*. University of the West Indies, Centre for Gender and Development Studies.
- Lewis, Patsy. 2003. Training Jamaicans for export: A viable development strategy? Paper presented at the Association of Caribbean Economists, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, 2003.
- Meeks, Brian. 2007. *Envisioning Caribbean Futures: Jamaican Perspectives*, Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.
- Meeks, Brian. 2003. *Paint the town red*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press.
- Mentore, George. 2007. The Perfect Gift. *Stabroek Daily News*, August 3rd 2007.
- Toni Morrison. 1990. Site of memory. In *Out there: Marginalization and contemporary cultures*. Russell Ferguson et al. (eds). New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press.

- Nichols, Grace. 1986. *Whole of a morning sky*. London: Virago Press.
- Puri, Shalini. 2003. This thing called a nation: An interview with Gordon Rohlehr. In *Marginal migrations: The circulation of cultures within the Caribbean*. Shalini Puri. (ed.) Oxford: Macmillan Publications.
- Puri, Shalini. 2003. Beyond Resistance: Notes Towards a New Caribbean Cultural Studies. *Small Axe*. 14: 23-38.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 2007. Clotel Walcott (1925-2007) and the Struggle of the Working-Class Woman: A Tribute.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1994. *Women, labour and politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A history*, London: Zed Books.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1988. *Elma Francois: The NWSCA and workers' struggle for change in the Caribbean*, London: New Beacon Books.
- Reddock, Rhoda. 1998. Women's organisations and movements in the Commonwealth Caribbean: The response to the global economic crisis of the 1980s." *Feminist Review*. 59: 57-73.
- Robinson, Tracy. 2006. Taxonomies of conjugality, *Global Law Working Paper*. 11/06. Hauser Global Law School Program. NYU.
- Robinson, Tracy, *Our imagined lives*, unpublished paper. (n.d). 58
- Rodney, Walter. 1977. Barbadian immigration into British Guiana 1863-1924,' presented at the Ninth Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados, April 3-7, 1977.
- Schwarz, Bill. (ed). 2003. *West Indian intellectuals in Britain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Scott, David. 2007. Preface: The silence people keeping." *Small Axe*. 22: v-x.
- Silvera, Makeda. 1989. *Silenced: Talks with working class Caribbean women about their lives and struggles as domestic workers in Canada*, Toronto: Sister Vision Press.
- Stephens, Michelle. 2005. *Black Empire: The masculine global imaginary of Caribbean intellectuals in the United States, 1914-1962*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Thomas, Deborah A. 2005. 'Katrina' and related ideological tricks: Jamaican hotel works in Michigan." *Symposium on Gendering Diaspora and Race-ing the Transnational*, Duke University, November, 17-19.
- Thomas-Hope, Elizabeth. 1992. *Explanation in Caribbean migration*. London: Macmillan.
- Trotz, D. Alissa. 2006. Rethinking Caribbean transnational connections: Conceptual Itineraries. *Global Networks*. 6(1): 41-59.
- Walcott, Derek. 1992. *The Antilles: Fragments of epic memory*, Nobel Prize Lecture.
- Weis, Tony. 2007. Small farming and radical imaginations in the Caribbean today. *Race and Class*. 49 (2): 112-117.
- Wickham, Peter et al. 2004. Freedom of movement: The cornerstone of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy,' presented at the *SALISES Conference*, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, 2004.



In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia

IGDS, Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Special publication commemorating International Women's Day
March 2010

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Professor of Gender and Public Policy
and Deputy Principal, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

ISBN: 976 8083 07 5

Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS)
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Working Paper Series

Editorial Committee

Dr Eudine Barriteau, Director, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Elizabeth Best, Part-time Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Alan Cobley, Head, Department of History, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Neville Duncan, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Government, Sociology and Social Work, The UWI, Cave Hill
Ms Maxine McClean, Lecturer, Dept. of Management Studies, The UWI, Cave Hill
Dr Judith Soares, Tutor and Coordinator, Women and Development Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill
Ms Gemma Tang Nain, Deputy Programme Manager, Caribbean Community Development and Women's Affairs, CARICOM

Editorial Assistant

Ms Rhonda Walcott - Research Assistant, CGDS, The UWI, Cave Hill

Keywords: Kathleen Bibiana Drayton, feminism, Caribbean feminist, womanhood, women in academia, women's movement, IGDS

How to cite

Barriteau, V. Eudine. 2015. "A Call to Freedom and Justice: Honouring Kathleen Bibiana Drayton." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* issue 9, 373–410

Editor's Note

This is a special publication by the Institute of Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit to honour Kathleen Bibiana Drayton, one of the stalwarts of the Women's movement in academia in the Caribbean.

Since 1992 an intensive summer course in Gender and Development has been offered by the Cave Hill Campus which brings together individuals from academia, NGOs, and other interested persons to expose them to an analysis of development from a gender perspective. As part of one of the activities during the summer course, a Caribbean woman who has contributed with her academic, political, and activist work to improving the life of Caribbean women is honoured. Honorees include Dr. Lucille Marthurin Mair, Dr. Peggy Antrobus, Dr. Joycelyn Massiah, Mrs. Mazie Barker-Welch, Mrs. Hermione McKenzie, and Mrs. Kathleen Drayton.

On July 3, 2009 as the honouree of the 8th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development, Kathleen in the opening ceremony delivered a speech that took the listener on a journey through not only her life but also to the socio-economic and racial realities of Caribbean people, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, during the Crown Colony period of the British colonial rule. She captured the interest of those who were listening, and motivated the younger audience to become interested in the realities of the women of her time.

Sadly, Kathleen died two days later. To mark her sterling contribution to the women's movement in the Caribbean, the Institute considers it fitting to make available this special publication on International Women's Day. The issues of women's concerns and her broader call for justice have characterised much of her academic and personal life.

In this publication the reader will enjoy both the remarks given by Professor Eudine Barriteau, Deputy Principal and former Head of IGDS: NBU, at the ceremony as well as Kathleen's final public address as delivered that night. In addition, the publication includes forewords by one of her close friends, Professor Christine Barrow, and from her surrogate son Mr. Carlyle Best.

Foreword

Christine Barrow

It is a pleasure and privilege to write this Foreword and to support the thoughtful initiative by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit at the Cave Hill Campus to keep our memories of Kathleen alive in a very special way; that is by publishing her *"Lessons from My Life"*. Kathleen's presentation, reproduced here in her own words, gives us an intimate insight into the experiences and guiding principles of her life in a way no academic publication or official eulogy could ever do.

Kathleen chose to share her life as activist, teacher and scholar. Her social and feminist consciousness took root in early childhood – as she grew up within a social network of aunts and grandmothers, midwives and washerwomen, who fought to safeguard their personal autonomy and resist economic dependence on men; and of silent, barefoot marchers, men and women, who struggled with "cutlasses and paling staves" against hunger, malnutrition and disease.

The young spirit, imbued in the 1930s with images of poverty, racism and violence, became the woman who championed for social equality, gender justice, and the human rights for all, women, and the elderly in particular. Hers is the oral history of a pan-Caribbean activist, a story told with humility, humour and a vivid recall of the defining moments in her life – her active participation in protest meetings and marches for the rights of the dispossessed; her

commitment to the reform of educational ideology and practice for girls; her pioneering role in the establishment of women's studies on Campus and her research on the lives and experiences of Caribbean women; her promotion of popular culture and theatre arts; her experiences of rustication from Mona and of confronting colonialist patriarchal penalties for women who married and bore children.

The central themes of Kathleen's lessons of life explore the tensions, contradictions and social injustices of class, race and gender in the Caribbean and beyond. She spoke with passion of the power of language in the discovery of self, in the assertion of cultural identity and in the release from "mental slavery", rather than as a hegemonic tool for stigma and social exclusion. She promoted the role of the elderly as guardians and conveyors of culture and history for generations to come. For Kathleen, social justice could never be a gift from the so-called benevolent; it was a right that had to be fought for with hard work and vigilance. For her, knowledge and action were twin pillars in the struggle for equality, justice and rights.

Personally and professionally, Kathleen touched and inspired the lives of many who feel her loss deeply. Ever the teacher, mentor and guide, Kathleen ended her final public performance by motivating her audience with her code for life. She mandated us all to "engage in constructing the new knowledge which will set us all free".

Foreword

Carlyle Best

Had not for the honour bestowed on Kathleen Drayton by the Institute Gender and Development Studies just days prior to her death, many would not have

been aware of her contribution to the growth and development of the Institute. However, to the more informed the nexus would not have been an accident. For there were some things about which Kathleen was deeply passionate. The role and the treatment of women was one such passion. And it may have been her desire to ensure that women receive their just rewards that would have led her in this direction. In fact, a scrutiny of her close friends, or those persons who were frequent visitors to her home, would reveal that they were women who shared and discussed like concerns.

Indeed, long before there was such a Department on Campus to which Kathleen would have given such energy, she was a firm defender and advocate of the rights of women, and domestic violence in any form would never be tolerated. One day Kathleen arrived home with a passenger in the car. The lady was emotional, relying on the comfort and counsel offered by Kathleen. I later learnt that Kathleen had passed this lady – a stranger on the streets, observed she was in distress, and stopped to offer some assistance. The lady was raped by her spouse and was walking away from her home. The proclivity to assist those in need was a constant feature of Kathleen's life.

Her frequent utterances often confirmed the kind of person she was. For instance, one recalls that as she gave her daughter, Alison's hand in marriage, Kathleen began her speech by alluding to some negatives on the subject of marriage, concluding however, that she was still prepared to offer her daughter 's hand in marriage. Again, this writer was preparing a book review in which she had expressed some interest and requested that I discuss the work with her for she contended that any writer worthy of his reputation dare not write without seriously considering the contribution of women. I disagreed and spurned her offer. This was in the early 1990s. She simply breathed and lived for the equality of women, yet she was by no women's liber. Her passion was for the recognition of women as equal partners - persons who owned a soul and voice, and to this she dedicated much of her research and writing.

This publication will surely assist the reader in understanding why Kathleen saw things the way she did, and worked so untiringly to aid her in the battle for equality.

A Call to Freedom and Justice

Honouring Kathleen Bibiana Drayton

8th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development Studies, July 3, 2009

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Are you going to be in a place called fear? Or in a place called love? Where are you? And where are you coming from as you encounter life? For you were called to freedom.

Galatians 5. Vs. 13.

I encountered these two readings this morning in my daily meditations and I thought how apt, how appropriate, how just, because I knew that this evening I would deliver a tribute as part of the Nita Barrow Unit ongoing commitment to honour outstanding Caribbean women whose work has been transformative and visionary in creating a programme of women and Gender studies at the University of the West Indies.

Very early in her life, Kathleen Bibiana Drayton decided that she was called to freedom and as you will see, throughout her personal and professional life she answered the call. In answering the call to freedom, a call available to all of us, Kathleen made certain choices, again choices available to all of us. Very early in her life, Kathleen also decided she is dwelling in a place called love. Kathleen decided that she had no time, no space in her head nor in her life to reside in a dwelling place called fear. The powerful combination of answering a call to

freedom, and ignoring a place called fear, gives us a woman who has been, and who continues to be a force in the academy and within the wider society through a love of service, and a deep commitment to issues of equality and justice. I will present you with just a profile of Kathleen Drayton since to explore her considerable contributions we will need a separate event.

Kathleen Drayton's *curriculum vitae* reveals a Caribbean woman who is a distinguished educational scholar and practitioner with a seasoned track record in teacher education and gender issues in education. Kathleen is an activist, a lobbyist versed in pressure group politics. Kathleen is unafraid to take on the establishment, whether the Establishment happens to be archaic regulations of the University of the West Indies, or government administrations initially unaware of the significant influential power of organised retired persons. Along with the scholar-activist role, Kathleen is an intellectual worker who deploys her analytical and organizational resources and skills to improve services, processes and lives wherever she is involved. Kathleen is a Caribbean woman deeply invested in promoting and nurturing Caribbean culture, specifically theatre arts. Kathleen is a visionary, and as part of a dedicated, organised, formidable group of University women laid the foundation for the emergence of Centre for Gender and Development studies.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Kathleen Drayton is a Caribbean citizen who has lived and worked in so many Caribbean countries, as well as Ghana and Scotland. In 1963, she accompanied her husband to British Guiana to assist with the setting up of the University of Guyana, which was launched in the same year. While there Kathleen lectured first in English and English Methods at the Government Training College. This was followed by periods of lecturing in English and Education at the University of Guyana. This start of academic work in 1963 began a long and distinctive career in tertiary education which culminated in the 1990s. Throughout Kathleen occupied a place called love, love of service, love of high standards, love of plain speaking, but more importantly, love of justice.

Fortuitously, Kathleen came to Cave Hill in 1973 and became a pioneer in the Faculty of Education. She helped to establish the Diploma in Education programmes and functioned in several senior administrative capacities in the Faculty including several periods as Acting Dean. However while at the Cave Hill Campus it is Kathleen's involvement in establishing a programme of Women and Development Studies (WDS) at The University of the West Indies that I want you to reflect on. She worked as part of a team that included Joycelin Massiah, Peggy Antrobus, and Christine Barrow and several others at Cave Hill. Collectively they designed, lobbied and strategised to create what would eventually become the Centre and now, Institute for Gender and Development Studies.

The Women's Studies Programme was preceded by the Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP). This is the first regional research project to centre research on Caribbean women and it ran from 1979 to 1982 under the leadership of Joycelin Massiah. Kathleen Drayton was a critical member of the project and one of its influential researchers. She wrote the Introduction to the volume on Women and Education, Volume 5 of phase one of the publication series. However Kathleen's academic output spans conference papers, journal articles, expert reports, and consultancies to governments and international institutions, and chapters in books.

A sampling reveals *A Review of the Major Issues in Education and of Relevant Caribbean Studies*" prepared at the request of Ministers of Education of OECS countries; *Caribbean Women in 1990: Background Paper to the First European Women's Conference* in Berlin; *The Role of English Speaking Caribbean Women in Politics*; *Racism in Barbados*; *Culture and its Impact on Development*; *Bajan Men*; *Themes in the Poetry of Bruce St. John*, and three of my favourites, *A West Indian Feminist Consciousness*, a chapter in the Centre's book on Ruth Nita Barrow edited by Eudine Barriteau and Alan Cobley; *White Man's Knowledge: Sex, Race and Class in Caribbean English Language Textbooks*; another chapter in a book edited by Elsa Leo Rhynie and Alan Cobley, and the *Making of the*

Colonial Mind: An Analysis of textbooks used in Barbadian Elementary Schools 1838 - 1960. Answering the call to freedom, ignoring a dwelling place called fear.

Finally I want to give you a sense of Kathleen's work in the establishment of the Women and Development studies Group at the University of the West Indies. Following the successful conclusion of the WICP project, efforts began in earnest to create an academic programme of women studies. Kathleen is a co-founder of the WDS groups across the three campuses. She served on the Regional Steering Committee and was the first coordinator of the WDS at Cave Hill serving in that capacity 1983 to 1992 and in fact started the teaching and research programme administered by the Group.

As Coordinator, Kathleen introduced many unique initiatives. She collaborated with Stage One theatre Group to produce the drama, *Lights, a Sex and Gender Seminar* at a time when gender was not on the agenda. When Dame Nita Barrow was appointed as the only woman on the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa, Kathleen organised an evening of tributes to honour Dame Nita's selection, dwelling in a place called love. With Women and Development (WAND), Kathleen co-hosted the lecture and discussion in the Steel Shed by prominent African American scholar and activist, Angela Davis. Answering the call to freedom.

As a member of the Regional Steering Committee that maintained oversight of the formal introduction of a programme of Women Studies, Kathleen was one of the team that lobbied for the institutionalisation and creation of the appropriate academic, administrative and support staffing and structure for the programme. Kathleen was also an integral member of the Regional Steering Committee that negotiated the change of name to the Centre for Gender and Development Studies.

I want to share with you some highlights of Kathleen's contributions as sent to me by Professor Joycelin Massiah. She states Kathleen:

1. Upheld the political character of Women\Gender Studies
2. Stressed the importance of integrating research teaching and action leading to policy changes
3. Emphasised the critical value of networking within and outside of academia
4. Always valued and practised collaborative ways of working
5. Insisted on maintaining vigilance, hard work, and constant struggle to preserve gains
6. Believed that the highest quality of leadership had to be maintained at the Campus and regional level

Ladies and gentlemen, to all I have said Mrs Kathleen Drayton is one of nine co-founders of the Barbados Association of Retired Persons in 1995. Today the Association has over 21,000 financial members, and Kathleen is currently its president. I argue it is the most powerful NGO in Barbados, BARP ensures its members enjoy a wide variety of services and benefits.

Always answering a call to freedom, always ignoring a dwelling place called Fear.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to ask you to join me in saluting Mrs Kathleen Bibiana Drayton.

Thank you

Eudine Barriteau

Kathleen's Speech

3 July 2009

Lessons from my life

I left academe for different shores about 15 years ago so I am not going to attempt to give you a scholarly address. Fifteen years ago I found myself learning about ageing both practically and theoretically! One of the things I have learned is that it is important for older people, who are the guardians of the culture and of the society's past, to pass on to younger generations their experiences and knowledge. I agree with the Prime Minister who said much the same thing during his press conference in Guyana last Wednesday. Knowledge of the past is essential for an understanding of the present and for the building of the future. Thus I embark, in your company, on what may be regarded as one woman's self-indulgent journey into the past.

I was born at the end of 1930 in the British crown colony of Trinidad, in Belmont, a suburb of Port-of-Spain. In the hills of Belmont the Shango drums used to be played almost every night. In those days babies were delivered by midwives in the homes of the mothers. I was delivered by the same midwife who had delivered my father some 24 years before and who delivered all my sisters, my brother and several cousins!

I was among the privileged because my mother had a home in which to give birth to her babies! At this time it was not uncommon for women, who did not have homes, to deliver their babies, unaided, on pavements or outside somewhere, although there are records of kind women in nearby houses, taking women in to their homes for the birth. (St. Michael Vestry Reports)

A few houses down on the other side of the road from my home lived Miss Gilkes, the washerwoman. Miss Gilkes told me she had come from Barbados.

She laundered clothes and household items for which people paid by the piece. A shirt was one piece. A sheet was two pieces. On day one the sheet and clothes were washed and put out on the stone to bleach for two days, then they were rinsed and starched and hung out to dry. On ironing day they were sprinkled, ironed and folded. Four days work was required to launder sheets and clothes. The price of washing, bleaching, starching and ironing one piece was four or five cents. For laundering 10 sheets you could earn one dollar. I was only four or five years old but I could see a difference between the way Miss Gilkes' lived and the way my family and my friends lived. I learned that Miss Gilkes had come from a different country and was poor!

Poverty and Protest

I was born into and grew up in a colonial society at a time of a world depression. I saw at first hand, the poverty, racism and terror of a British colonial society. Two important documents attesting to the grinding poverty in our societies were the 1882 Report of the Royal Commission and the West India Commission Report (the Moyne Report) of 1939/1945.

My most enduring early childhood memory is of the 1937 Riots in Trinidad. Hearing a noise one day, I rushed with two cousins, with whom I was spending the day, to the corner of Industry Lane and Belmont Circular Road. The noise we had heard was the sound of the "slapping down" of bare feet on the road. Hundreds of barefooted men and women were marching in silence, literally the only sound they made was when their feet hit the road. They were holding in their hands cutlasses and paling staves they had pulled out of fences.

Later in the day when I went home, my parents explained that many people were so poor that they had nothing to eat and that they could not afford to buy shoes and that they were protesting about this. They said that what I had seen

was a “hunger march.” They told me about the riots and protests which had erupted all over Trinidad.

They explained the causes of the riots in the oilfields in Fyzabad (South Trinidad) and about the white South African Managers that Trinidad Leaseholds had brought in to manage the oilfield workers. I heard about the Grenadian, Tubal Uriah “Buzz” Butler (a great supporter of the British Empire) who was organising workers in the South. We heard too about the burning to death in Fyzabad of Charlie King, an unpopular policeman, for which women were later charged and tried (Reddock 1994). Rhoda Reddock has done important work in showing the huge involvement of women in political action and in the 1937 riots in Trinidad. I have not seen comparable work for any other West Indian territory.

Following the 1937 Riots the West India Royal Commission (The Moyne Commission) reported that the economic outlook of the West India colonies was “depressing” (p. 27) and noted that “the poorer quarters of towns, Kingston, Port of Spain and Bridgetown show all the obvious consequences of hunger, disease, ignorance and crime.” (p.34)

I recently read *On the Pastures of Belvedere*, a fascinating biography of L. C. Didier of Dominica by his son, Clayton Didier. This book tells the story of the writer’s brother nearly dying of a broken foot because there was no way to transport him from his country home to a place where medical treatment was available. There was no road and the sea was too rough for any boat to embark.

Poverty meant hunger and severe malnutrition (witness kwashiorkor in Jamaica), and slum housing with rickety and insanitary pit latrines. It meant no education, poor or no roads and little health care. Poverty also meant the unavailability of a pure water supply and therefore many disease epidemics, for example, cholera. As late as 1991, I was part of a group evaluating the Caribbean

Development Bank's (CDB) Basic Needs Trust Fund Project in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. In all these islands with the exception of St. Kitts, I saw terrible pockets of poverty and in the countryside a majority of houses with pit latrines which dripped sewage down hillsides for dogs, pigs and chickens to eat.

We take clean running water for granted either in homes or from the standpipe in some places. I have already mentioned the phenomenon of poor women giving birth to babies by the roadside. Infant mortality rates were naturally high in the region ranging from 117 to 217 per thousand. (Moyne p.135, 137) Maternal mortality rates in the West Indies were among the highest in the British Empire. (Moyne Report)

This poverty was the rationale for West Indian migration to Panama and among the WI Islands from the end of the 18th century until the 1940s; and in the 1950s to England and the USA, and, at this time, for Guyanese to Barbados! I remember vividly the migration of the 1950s. I saw people leaving for England with their "grips" in their hands and dressed in their best clothing with no warm garments and very little money! The migrants have been immortalised in the novels of Sam Selvon and George Lamming. Migrants colonised England changing the English way of life in many ways!

From very young I had been witness to the kind of action workers had to take for the right to living wages, for protection from unfair dismissal and so on. Later in Jamaica and in Britain this understanding was crystallized, so to speak, when I took part in many protest meetings and marches first in Jamaica, still a colony, against the British and American cold war policies which banned people from entering Jamaica, banned publications and interfered with the employment of individuals; then in Britain against the British invasion of Suez (a demonstration where I ran into my beloved teacher, Elsa Goveia), against the French invasion of Algeria; the 1953 suspension of the constitution in Guyana and against the

Russian invasion of Hungary. Relative to this latter, under the banner of *The Edinburgh Branch of the Movement for Colonial Freedom* I organised a massive meeting in Edinburgh where I was living at the time. It had the support of all the major trade unions which Mrs. Thatcher later did her best to destroy, the Miners' Union, the Electrical Workers' Union. Edinburgh University Students came and so did members of all the political parties except, of course, for the Communist Party!

From the struggles of colonial peoples for independence and self government; of workers for decent wages and living conditions; of black people for the same rights as white people and of women for equality, I learned that social justice had to be fought for and was not the gift of kind and generous people.

The quality of life and the rights we enjoy today were created by the hard work and struggle of our predecessors. A lesson I learned, which I want to pass on to you is that if you want something you must be prepared to work hard and to struggle for what you want. Struggle takes different forms. It is not always done with a picket in hand.

What was woman's place in this society I have described?

Women's Place

Women lived in a male-dominated power structure which was unchallenged, even by women. Attitudes to women and beliefs about what women could and could not do shaped our lives. Women could not vote or sit in our legislatures, they were brought up to believe that one of their main roles in life was to please men. This was taught in many ways as these simple examples from my life will illustrate. My grandmother who attended St. Joseph's Convent in Trinidad was taught along with the classics, mathematic, languages, poetry and sewing,

about wines in her last year at school. It was explained to her that she needed to know about wine so that she could entertain for her husband. I attended Bishop's Anstey High School (BAHS) where the first compulsory game we were required to learn to play was cricket. I later asked the Headmistress why cricket and not hockey and netball and she (who was unmarried) replied that we needed to be able to talk intelligently to our husbands who would all be interested in cricket!

The official purpose for educating girls, stated in many education reports, up to the 1950s was to make them "good wives and mothers!" Sex education was not however part of the equation! Training in household skills, and the "Duties of a Good Woman" were what was taught! All girls and women were socialised to accept a secondary "woman's" place to men. More serious was the legal right of husbands to own any property owned by their wives before marriage. This oppressive construction of "Women's Place" ignored reality. As I pointed out earlier, women were involved in political activities.

A "Division of Labour" prescribed women's work and men's work. Women were not supposed to be strong enough to do men's work yet working class women worked as labourers on the plantations and women stonebreakers were a common sight, women in the hot sun breaking rocks for roads. These have been immortalised in the Jamaican, George Campbell's famous poem, "Women stone breakers, hammers and rocks// tired child makers, pregnant frocks." Women also had the unpaid responsibility for household and children. Some women, paid pittances, worked as shop assistants. Unmarried middle class women could go into teaching for smaller salaries than men and had to resign their jobs as soon as they got pregnant. This was an imported British "rule" which I learned in Edinburgh when I was told that my resignation from my teaching post would become effective on the date and time of the birth of my first child. Middle class men felt disgraced if their wives went out to work even when the family needed the second income! Men worked outside and earned wages or

salaries and had the freedom to do whatever they chose. The village ram was acceptable but the “immoral” slut was a disgrace!

Education

Limited access to education was another social restriction on women. Primary schools had been set up to provide religious education for the poor. Initially, fees of one penny, two cents, a week were charged for each child which many parents could not afford. In the beginning the curriculum and teachers were big problems. An 1853, Report on British Guiana states of UK as well as local teachers, “ The schoolmaster in this colony is too frequently a man who has resorted to this mode of gaining a living when other ones have failed. “The school is the dernier-resort, the refuge for the destitute.”

Girls however filled primary schools.

There was minimal provision for Girls’ secondary education. In 1937, the year before I entered BAHS, Reddock reports that there was a total of 922 girls enrolled in secondary education in all of Trinidad and Tobago (p.52). I remember when the first science laboratory was set up in Bishop’s Anstey High School. It was equipped with the Bunsen burners and the beakers thrown out by the boys’ school, QRC, whose laboratories were being re-equipped. Our parents sacrificed to pay school fees for us. If the fees were not paid you could not go to school.

So far I have been talking about the material deprivations suffered by people in a colonial society. Now I want to address something more serious, the deliberate use of church and school to shape our minds and our psyches, our ideology, with the aim of making us loyal and respectful subjects of the mother country, her language, her customs and values and even her ideals of beauty.

An influential 1847 Circular Despatch from the Colonial Office to all the colonies set the following guidelines for colonial primary education:

“Diffuse a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilisation for the coloured population of the colonies.”

“Lesson books of the colonial schools should also teach the mutual interests of the mother-country and her dependencies; the rational basis of their connection and the social duties of the coloured races.”

“These lesson books should also set forth the relations of wages and capital, labour...”

From the nineteenth century until the 1950s, the same text books were used in all the British colonies — West Indies, Hong Kong, India, Africa, Canada and so on — a most powerful form of brain washing. In another life, when I was still an academic I decided to analyse the textbooks used in our schools to identify the gender messages they contained. What I found was that gender attitudes and beliefs were being transmitted as part of a complex system of knowledge which shaped everything we believed and which in turn shaped our behaviours. The first paper, *“The Making of the Colonial Mind: An Analysis of Textbooks used in Barbadian Elementary Schools, 1838- 1960”* examined all the primary school text books. The second paper which examined English Language textbooks used at secondary level, I entitled *“White Man’s Knowledge”*. The concluding sentence reads, “The colour of the knowledge of the textbooks is white and their sex bias is male.”

The entire system and structure of knowledge transmitted to us is European knowledge – events, beliefs, interpreted from a European point of view. I will

illustrate this in a simple way with a recent experience. I was listening to the radio about two weeks ago when I heard the DJ ask a most ignorant question and he was offering a prize for the answer. The question was, "Who discovered America?" The correct answer according to the young man, later, was "Columbus." I was very disturbed because every West Indian should know that Columbus did not discover America.

Shadow (Winston Bailey) deals with the myth of Columbus "discovering America" in *Columbus Lie*. In this calypso he attacks the European view of the world which holds that Columbus discovered America. Shadow asks how Columbus could discover a country that had already been discovered and populated and he makes fun of Columbus "having to run from Apaches". He looks at how today every country protects itself with visas, passports and the like. He points out the consequences of Columbus' entry to the new world with most powerful imagery.

"His authority was a cork hat and his passport was violence". We recognise the *cork hat* as the symbol, of the overseer on the plantation or sugar estate. And the *passport* of violence symbolises the considerable terror and violence of the European colonial systems which followed Columbus. Columbus "discovered" America for European exploitation and terror.

What this illustrates is that we must analyse our received knowledge carefully and, secondly, that we ignore the popular culture at our peril. I have consistently recommended that teachers use calypso lyrics and folk songs in poetry classes.

Work on our native realities exists but it stays within universities. It does not reach the schools or the mass media which is the most powerful education tool in modern society.

The work that has and is being done in Women's Studies and Gender Studies is in fact a critique of the received knowledge constructed for the most part by

external scholars. You understand that material things, cell phones, computers, ipods for example are made and constructed by people. You have to get used to the idea that knowledge too is made and constructed by people. People interpret experiences in the light of information they have. The reason why Gender Studies sometimes seems complex to students is that it requires a serious questioning of many long held and often unexamined beliefs and assumptions, transmitted to us from a foreign culture what Bob Marley described as our mental slavery. This course is designed to help you release yourself from mental slavery, to teach you to look at the knowledge you already have in a critical way.

I want to read to you a short statement of the need to analyse seriously the knowledge you take for granted. It is by one of our leading Feminist scholars, Professor Eudine Barriteau:

I was dissatisfied with imported theoretical constructs that did not contain critiques of epistemologies, methodologies and practices...I argued that unless this received knowledge was deconstructed, dominating relations of gender would continue to permeate feminist research and scholarship in the Caribbean...I recognised that a distinguishing power of women's lives is an absence of power...one of the shortcomings of the existing discourses on gender in the Caribbean is our failure to confront the raw power dynamics impinging...(on) women's multiple experience of material and ideological subordination. (2003:3)

Gender/Women's Studies is one of the more revolutionary forms of new knowledge coming out of Universities.

Language is the medium in which, for the most part, knowledge is transmitted. Language was another effective and powerful colonising tool. For the most part language is used not only to construct knowledge but to transmit knowledge and it shapes perception and belief. It is the basis of human culture. The story of how the English used school and language to fight the French in Trinidad is a fascinating tale. I have already read you the Colonial Office Directive, "teach grammatical English" as "the most important means of civilisation of the coloured races." When I was a child, Trinidad spoke French and Spanish and English and a French Patois or Creole, like what is spoken today in St. Lucia and Dominica and to some extent Grenada, and similar to what is spoken in Martinique and Guadeloupe and Haiti. Much of our vocabulary was not English. I was grown up and in the UK before I realised that a bird I knew as "a cobo" (corbeau) was in fact an English crow!

Trinidad was ceded to the British in the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, but the majority of the ruling European population were of French or Spanish extract and the main language was not English. Although she was born in Trinidad and lived almost her entire life there, my own grandmother's first language was French and she spoke English with a French accent all her life.

The English policy in Trinidad effectively took about half a century to turn Trinidad into a so-called English Language speaking territory. The British colonial government started the Queen's Collegiate Schools, later Queen's Royal College (QRC) in 1859 to provide an English education on the lines of the famous English public schools. In 1863, the Cambridge local exams were introduced in the school and four scholarships to British Universities were offered to those who got first or second class honours in the exam. St. Mary's College students were ineligible for these scholarships.

By 1870, the principals of both St. Mary's College and the girls' school, St. Joseph Convent decided to affiliate their schools to QRC and to introduce the "English

Education" so that their students would not be disadvantaged! Although most of the teachers in these schools spoke French, gradually teaching in English was introduced. There was great criticism in Trinidad of the English school curriculum as being irrelevant to the colony's needs and as having no connection with primary education, but, irrelevant or not, then English education provided students with the chance of a tertiary education in one of the famous British universities.

Language is basic to our sense of self and of cultural identity. Colonial education taught that the most important language was English and those who could not use it skilfully were inferior. We still stigmatise people who cannot use grammatical English. We laugh at their green verbs, at their pronunciation of the "th" sound and at those who speak Creole alone. Colonial Language policy seriously affected the psyche of people. This is why, in my view, the most important contribution to Caribbean identity in the 20th century is the late Dr. Richard Allsopp's *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*.

Racism was part of the colonial system and social structure as it still is. When I was a child in Trinidad people with fair complexions were said to have "Nature's Passport" and the words "nigger" and "coolie" were widely used as descriptive terms and, as forms of abuse. People had good hair and bad hair or "cheveux tac tac". I remember one lady saying, "when you pass your hand over your husband's head you don't want it to scrape your fingers!" The ideal of beauty was not black or East Indian! The people in charge who believed themselves to be superior were "white!" What was even more serious is that everybody was taught to believe that this group was superior. Colonial society taught self-contempt.

You know about slavery and its violence but do you recognise that after slavery violence continued to be used as a means of social control. Beating and flogging were parts of the judicial and the school systems. Rape was common

on the plantation both during and after slavery. A popular calypso recommended domestic violence: "Every now and then lick them down// they'll love you long and they'll love you strong."

Earlier, I mentioned that the Church, as well as schools, was used as a means of control and I have not said much about the Church. The Christian churches came with the conquerors. The Spanish historian, Las Casas, wrote about Spanish colonisers, "First they fell upon their knees and then they fell upon the Aborigines." (Commager). The Church taught that the belief systems of the indigenous peoples, and later of Africans, were inferior to Christianity. Indeed the rationale for teaching slaves to read was so that they could read the Bible. The early primary school system was controlled by the Churches. The Church instilled patriarchal beliefs. It held women to be inferior and, of course, it is only recently that some churches have allowed women to do more than fix the flowers or clean the church! The church was very much a part of the control over women's reproductive rights. Its doctrine of sin was used to keep women under control.

It taught that to bear a child out of wedlock was a sin, thereby immediately turning the majority of the West Indian population into sinners. Children called "bastards" were rejected by secondary schools. Here in Barbados both Harrison College and the Lodge School refused to admit children they called "illegitimate". At York Castle School in Jamaica the Headmaster, Mr. Kessen expelled two boys who were "illegitimate" because their mother had a third "illegitimate child. In 1877, the York Castle General Committee met and reversed the decision stating that "illegitimacy should not by itself be considered a bar to admission" to the school. Trinidad used "illegitimacy" to deny children access to secondary schools. I learned recently that the Anglican Church Mother's Union only permits membership to married mothers. The Church tried to define the family in the West Indies with no recognition of our reality. Our reality is a large number of female-headed households and visiting relationships and children in the same family with different fathers. These cruel and irrational rules which de

facto deemed some children to be illegal, damaged, and hurt women and children creating low self-esteem.

Reproductive Rights involves your right to control your own sexuality, to determine how many children you want and so on. The Church held that there should be no sex before marriage and if you were a Roman Catholic – no birth control! Mind you the only forms of birth control were condoms and coitus interruptus. The Roman Catholic Church permitted coitus interruptus, which is unreliable, but not condoms! Abortion was not mentioned except as a form of scandalous and illegal behaviour! Abortion remains to this day illegal in Jamaica.

Let me give you an example of the iniquitous way in which this control of reproductive rights worked. When I was a student at Mona, way back in the 1950s, I spent a night off campus with my boyfriend, another student. It was discovered. My boyfriend was sent down or expelled and told he was corrupting me! (Here you see then perception that women were subordinate, hence the man is responsible for the woman's behaviour!) I was rusticated. In those days it was a requirement that all students live on campus. Rustication meant that you were sent down temporarily from university. I was sent to live off campus in a working girls' hostel run by nuns and locked up in a room. Nuns escorted me to and from my room for ablutions and meals. I was literally a prisoner! Fortunately, I became friends with the other girls and when they came home in the evenings they would "steal" the key and let me out when I would climb through the hedge to meet friends!

Can you imagine that for spending a night off campus without permission, a 19 years old woman was virtually imprisoned by a university administration and a 20 year old man's career was virtually brought to an end? The whole saga was covered by newspapers in Jamaica and Trinidad. It later became a joke in my family as my young brother and sisters described to me how every morning

large parts of the newspapers were inked out by our parents before the rest of the family was allowed to see them.

It was also against UCWI rules to get married. I applied for permission to marry and it was refused, I was told by the Principal Dr. Taylor (Dr. T) that if I proceeded to marry, my Trinidad scholarship would be taken away. This turned out to be a lie, which I only discovered later. One of my uncles was very high up in the colonial secretary's office in Trinidad and he later showed me correspondence between Dr. T and the Trinidad government. I am happy to report that the T&T government supported my right to marry and wrote Dr. T. to say that I had won a competitive scholarship and it could not be taken away from me for the reasons he had stated.

I want you to understand that the Principal genuinely believed he had the right to use his power to try to control me "for my own good!" This is actually an example of patriarchy in action.

I was fortunate to learn a great deal about women's lives from my elders – my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother, my aunts and great aunts. They talked to their daughters and granddaughters about their lives. My mother and one aunt were married but the others, when I knew them, were widows or single women. They had all been influenced by ideas from the 1920s women's movement. They were all very poor, as I subsequently learned, but they were extremely independent and all these elder women in my life not only continuously preached but lived the doctrine of independence – the need for women to be financially independent of men and the need for women to stand up for themselves. These lessons have remained with me to this day. My grandmother, well into her 80s, earned her living sewing shirts, pyjamas and mosquito nets for the "stores" for a pittance. There were no garment factories at that time.

When we started talking about Women's Studies in this University, we did not have a lot of theory but we had a lot of experience of male power and of social injustice which we could analyse. We lived and understood male power and women's unequal status. We knew that women had done and were doing a great deal, although according to the books, men had done it all! History books still ignore women's roles in the development of their societies. The knowledge transmitted is that men did it all!

I have tried to give you a picture of a poor society with little technology; of a world which, according to popular belief, had been created by men in which men exercised power in society and power over women. I have tried to show how our ways of thinking, of looking at our reality and beliefs were shaped to make us accept a status quo which enshrined injustice, and the necessity therefore to examine and challenge the beliefs which guide behaviour. I have also recommended that you recognise and respect what is good in our popular culture.

Above all I am concerned that you engage in constructing the new knowledge which will set us all free.

Thank you.

KD

Kathleen Drayton in Photographs

8th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development, 2009
Mrs. Kathleen Drayton, Honouree



Mrs. Kathleen Drayton before the opening ceremony, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, July 2009.

Violet Eudine Barriteau: In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia



Kathleen, Ms Marva Alleyne and Mrs Maizie Barker-Welch



Ms. Joan Cuffie, Ms Carmen Hutchinson Miller, Prof Eudine Barriteau, Mrs. Mara Thompson and Kathleen Drayton



At the beginning of the evenings proceedings, standing for the Barbados national anthem.



At the head table. Prof. Eudine Bariteau, Ms. Joan Cuffie, Kathleen , Ayana Young Marshall (Cave Hill lecturer)and Dwayne Lovell

Violet Eudine Barriteau: In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia



Delivering her public address.



Receiving a gift as Honouree, from Ms Dianne Cummins

7th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development, 2007

IGDS Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Dr. Peggy Antrobus, Kathleen Drayton and Mrs Hermione McKenzie, Honoree of 7th Institute, 2007



Part of the audience at the opening ceremony of the Institute, 2007



Ms. Verna St Rose, Prof. Eudine Barriteau, Kathleen Drayton, Ms. Margaret Gill, Mrs. Hermione Mc Kenzie, and Dr. Peggy Antrobus

Renaming of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Cave Hill Unit, to the Nita Barrow Unit, 2006

The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, November 2006



Kathleen Drayton in foreground.

Opening of the Nita Barrow Collection

Main Library, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, November 2006



Dr. Joycelyn Massiah, Mrs. Jeniepher Carnegie, Prof. Eudine Barribeau, Mrs. Kathleen Drayton, Prof Alan Cobby and Sir Hilary Beckles

GEND 1103, Theoretical Concepts and Sources of Knowledge, November 2006



Kathleen Drayton, Guest Lecturer
IGDS Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Summer Institute, 2005



Curriculum review committee, 2005: Mrs Kathleen Drayton, Ms Undene Wittaker , Prof Eudine Barriteau, and Mrs Deborah Deane



Phase three Summer Institute, 2005, Ms Keturah Babb, Mrs Paulette Broomes, and Mrs. Kathleen Drayton

Summer Institute, 2003



Curriculum review committee, 2003: Ms Dianne Cummins, Mrs. Kathleen Drayton and Mrs. Paulette Broomes



Some of the tutors for Summer Institute, 2003



Biographies

[Tara L. Atluri](#) is an assistant professor at York University, Canada, specializing in women's studies. She completed a PhD in sociology at York University, Toronto and postdoctoral studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science. As a student and research assistant at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus (now the Nita Barrow Unit), she developed an interest in gender and sexuality in the Caribbean. It was there that she published her first scholarly piece, an undergraduate paper entitled, "When the Closet is a Nation? Heterosexism, Homophobia and Nationalism in the Caribbean" included in Issue 9, CRGS. Her research interests include race, gender, sexuality, psychoanalysis, and popular and visual cultures.

[Barbara Bailey](#) was the first regional coordinator of the Institute (formerly Centre) for Gender and Development Studies, The UWI between 1995 and 2010. Prior to that she was the Specialist Lecturer in Curriculum Studies in the School of Education, Mona. Her teaching and research focused on gender and education, with particular emphasis on gender issues in education and the relationship of educational outputs to outcomes in the economic, social and political spheres for either sex. She has published a number of articles addressing various issues related to this topic including a monograph in a series put out by UNESCO as part of the 'Education for All in the Caribbean Assessment 2000' titled *Gender and education in Jamaica: What about the boys?* She has been part of the international women's movement since the 1980's. She was a

member of the Government of Jamaica's delegation to the 3rd World Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, the 1995 4th World Conference in Beijing, China and the 2000 Beijing +5 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Over the period 2000 to 2003 Professor Bailey was the Government of Jamaica's representative on the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Consultative Committee. She is the recipient of several awards including the Order of Jamaica (2008) and the ninth CARICOM Triennial Award for Women (2008). In 2008 she was appointed as the Jamaica's representative to the CEDAW Committee to 2012.

[Violet Eudine Barriteau](#) is Professor of Gender and Public Policy. She is a Caribbean feminist, scholar and activist with considerable experience in research, administration and development. Her research interests encompass feminist theorizing, gender and public policy and investigations of the Caribbean political economy from the perspective of gender. Her publications include: *The Political Economy of Gender in the Twentieth Century Caribbean* (Palgrave International) and co-edited *Confronting Power Theorizing Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in the Caribbean* (winner The UWI inaugural best selling text book prize). She is currently President Elect of the International Association for Feminist Economics. On The UWI Cave Hill Campus, she served as: the first Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Nita Barrow Unit; Campus Coordinator, School for Graduate Studies and Research; Deputy Principal at the Cave Hill Campus; and Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus. In 2015, she assumed the position of Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus.

[Leith Dunn](#) is Senior Lecturer and Head of the IGDS, Mona Unit. Her academic and professional career spans over 25 years of teaching, research, publishing and programming on a wide range of human development issues with gender as a cross-cutting theme. She has worked in areas including gender and

development, sexual and reproductive health, gender and HIV/AIDS and gender and governance. She has also done research in labour, trade and social policy. Dr. Dunn previously worked with several regional and international development agencies including the United Nations, and has served the Commonwealth as an Advisor and Monitor for Tripartite Elections in Zimbabwe (2002) and Zambia (2006). She achieved her BA (honours) in languages and social sciences and her MA in sociology and social psychology at The UWI and then her Ph.D. at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

[Marlene Hamilton](#) was Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration and Special Initiatives, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. She was the first woman to be appointed at this level, her initial appointment being made in 1991. Her University-wide responsibilities covered administration and special initiatives, although she held a number of other portfolios and also served as Deputy Principal of the Mona Campus between 1991 and 1996. She is a graduate of The UWI, joining it's staff in 1973 as a Lecturer attached to the Faculty of Education. At various times, she served as Head of the Department of Educational Studies and Dean of the Faculty. Her research interests include educational and social psychology, science education and gender studies. She has published widely in these areas. She supervised over 35 students at the masters and doctoral levels. Professor Hamilton was a member of several professional bodies and served on a number of public service committees, including the Government of Jamaica's Public Services Commission. She was also the Caribbean's representative on the board of the Commonwealth of Learning. She was awarded the Order of Distinction (Commander Class) for service in the field of tertiary education by the Jamaica Government in 2002. She retired from The UWI in 2007 and was awarded the honour of Professor Emerita.

[Aldrie Henry-Lee](#) is a senior research fellow at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at The UWI, Mona. She is a sociologist by profession and has been involved in teaching and research in the areas of health, deviance, social protection and poverty in the Caribbean. Dr Henry-Lee has examined poverty in Jamaica, St Lucia, Grenada and Belize, focussing on the issues of measurement of poverty and evaluation of social protection programmes. In spite of her fascination with research, her first love is teaching. She has taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels at The UWI, linking her research work with her teaching. She is the recipient of the The UWI/Guardian Life Award for excellence in teaching, Mona Campus, Jamaica, 2010.

[Elsa Leo-Rhynie](#) has devoted her life's work to service and research in the fields of education, gender issues and training. She was appointed Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Educational Psychology at the School of Education at The UWI, Mona Campus (1977–1987) and served as Executive Director of the Institute of Management and Production (1987–1992). She was Regional Coordinator of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (1992–1996) and is recognized as the first female to become both Deputy Principal (1996–2002) and Principal (2006–2007) at The UWI. She became Pro-Vice Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Undergraduate Studies (2002); served as a member of the Council of the University of Technology; was named chair of the Dudley Grant Memorial Trust (which focuses on improving early childhood education); was appointed a Director of the GraceKennedy Foundation (1999); was appointed co-chair of the National Preparatory Commission (1993–1994) (responsible for producing Jamaica's Report on the Status of Women for the 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, China); was appointed to the Privy Council of Jamaica (1996). Professor Leo-Rhynie was awarded the national honour of Commander of the Order of Distinction in 2000 and named Professor Emerita by The UWI following retirement in 2007.

[Amina Mama](#) is a professor and member of the Faculty in the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program at the University of California, Davis. Her main areas of focus have been post-colonial, militarist and gender issues. She has lived and worked in Nigeria, South Africa, Britain, the Netherlands and the USA working to build relationships between feminist intellectuals across the globe. She spent 10 years (1999-2009) leading the establishment of the University of Cape Town's African Gender Institute as a continental resource dedicated to developing transformative scholarship, bringing feminist theory and activism together. She is the founding editor of the continental journal of gender studies, *Feminist Africa*. Her publications include *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity* (Routledge 1995), *Women's Studies and Studies of Women in Africa* (CODESRIA 1996), *Engendering African Social Sciences* (co-edited, CODESRIA 1997) and numerous book chapters and journal articles. Committed to strengthening activism and activist research in African contexts, her research interests include culture and subjectivity, politics and policy, women's movements and militarism. She and Yaba Badoe co-produced the 50-minute documentary film *The Witches of Gambaga* 2010.

[Patricia Mohammed](#) is Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies at The UWI, St. Augustine Campus. She was granted a Commonwealth Secretariat Fellowship to work at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex (1984). There she worked with Professor Kate Young as co-director of an international women and development studies course. She went on to achieve her PhD at the Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands (1998), funded by the Netherlands Government through the Women and Development Studies Group (WDSG), The UWI. This allowed the time to develop theoretical strengths and incorporate the discipline of history into her research portfolio. She was recognised as Caribbean Advocate by the Third World Association of Students at Brown University, Rhode Island (2001), signalling that her work reached out to the youthful diasporic Caribbean population and by her peers at The UWI with

the title of full Professor in 2005. She held a visiting professorship at the State University of New York at Albany (2007). This was valuable for teaching and seeing the Caribbean from a US-based perspective leading to new research insights into the study of Caribbean iconography in art, photography and increasingly film. She incorporates a visual lens onto an existing textually based one in examining the subject of culture and identity.

[Hilary Nicholson](#) is a gender trainer and advocate. She has spent more than 30 years educating and empowering others to see the world through a gender lens, and to work towards "a kinder, peaceful, more caring society, which both men and women can enjoy". She has been involved in the Sistren Theatre Collective from its inception and was a founding member of WMW Jamaica (formerly Women's Media Watch). Both groups focus on advancing women's rights, Sistren through the arts, and WMW Jamaica through advocacy, training and research. She has not only witnessed the advancement of the women's movement in Jamaica, but has been an active participant and a leader in the field. She came into activism and women's empowerment through her involvement in the Sistren Theatre Collective in the early '70s as a theatre student at the Edna Manley School of Drama. Since that time, she has become an expert in gender analysis. She has trained thousands of persons in gender advocacy. Even though she doesn't consider herself to be "an academic", she has inspired many to pursue work in academia. At the grassroots levels she has inspired others to advance the women's movement in Jamaica, and to teach others how to see life through a gender lens.

[Anthony Perry](#) is a senior Programme Officer in the Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies, Administrative Centre, The UWI, Mona Campus, Jamaica. He co-authored the book *The brain drain: Quality higher education and Caribbean development* (Board for Undergraduate Studies, UWI, Mona, 2002) with professor Hilary Beckles. He achieved his Bachelor in Education and

Certificate from The UWI, Mona and holds two Masters of Arts, one from the University of Toronto, Canada and the other from The UWI, Mona. He has written numerous articles on issues around gender and education for journals, including : [Gender gap at UWI: A widening chasm?](#); [Perspectives on information technology in teaching and learning: A challenge for The University of the West Indies](#); [Changes in higher education: A global glance](#); [Sports tourism: Collaboration or competition: Extra-regional higher education institutions in the English-speaking Caribbean](#); [Education and globalisation: A new twist](#).

[Warren Thompson](#) is a PhD candidate at the IGDS, Mona Campus, Jamaica, where he was awarded a 2009-2011 Graduate Research Scholarship. His research focuses on the experiences of female voluntary community leaders and of leadership in inner city communities in Kingston Jamaica. Mr. Thompson has a background in social work, having worked in the field of development as programme manager, coordinator, and director in local and international non-governmental organisations in Jamaica. In 2011, he was awarded a scholarship to do a part of his research at the Harriett Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migration of African People's at York University, Toronto, Canada, under the Emerging Leaders of the Americas Programme (2011 Canada DFAIT ELAP). He has also studied music and is currently a teacher at the Port Antonio High School in Jamaica, where he was recently appointed Head of the Eurhythmics Department.

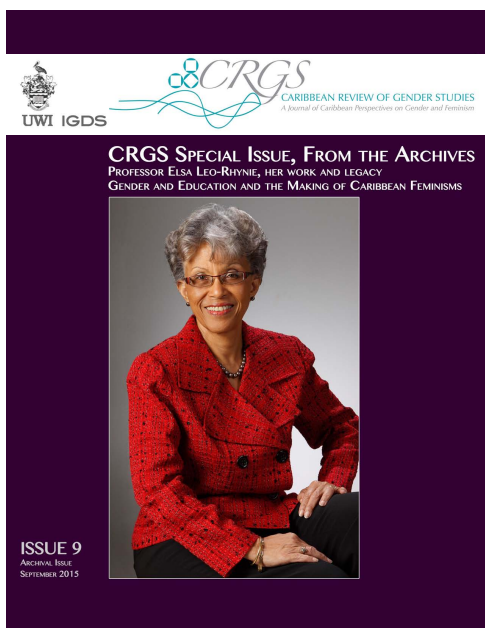
[Alissa Trotz](#) is an associate professor in Women and Gender Studies, and director of the undergraduate Caribbean Studies Program at New College. Her research interests draw on the Caribbean and its diasporas as a point of departure for exploring the wider resonance of questions that emerge from the incredibly complex site of colonial encounter that comprises this region. She also edits a weekly column, [In the Diaspora](#), in a Guyanese daily The Stabroek News. She is currently working on two projects: violence and security in the

contemporary Caribbean and a SSHRC-funded grant on history, memory and violence in colonial Guyana. Her essays have appeared in a number of journals, on such topics as transnational feminism and the Caribbean (*Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*), Caribbean migration and diaspora (*Global Networks; Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*); historicizing the Caribbean family (*Social and Economic Studies; New West Indian Guide*); gender, coloniality and violence (*Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*) and the gendered politics of neoliberalism, social reproduction and women's activism (*Interventions: Journal of Postcolonial Studies*). She guest-edited, with Aaron Kamugisha, a special issue of [Race and Class](#) to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade (2007); with Kate Quinn, a special issue of [Macomère](#) on women and national political struggles in the Caribbean (Fall 2010) and is currently editing, with Deborah Thomas, a special issue of *Social and Economic Studies* on feminist epistemologies of violence in the Caribbean. She is a member of [Red Thread Women's Organization in Guyana](#).



UWI
ST. AUGUSTINE
CAMPUS

IGDS
INSTITUTE FOR GENDER AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



**Caribbean Review of Gender Studies
(CRGS) Issue 9
Archival Issue**

Open access online journal:
<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>

Flipbook format
<http://issuu.com/igdssau>

Academia.edu
<https://independent.academia.edu/IGDSStAugustineUnit>

Institute for Gender and Development Studies
St. Augustine Campus
Trinidad and Tobago
West Indies
<http://sta.uwi.edu/igds/>
Email: igds@sta.uwi.edu
Phone: 1-868-662-2002
Ext 83573/83577

CRGS Special Issue, From the Archives Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach; Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie's work and legacy

Editors:

[Leith Dunn](#) is Senior Lecturer and Head of the IGDS, Mona Unit. Her academic and professional career spans over 25 years of teaching, research, publishing and programming on a wide range of human development issues with gender as a cross-cutting theme. She has worked in areas including gender and development, sexual and reproductive health, gender and HIV/AIDS and gender and governance. She has also done research in labour, trade and social policy.

[Barbara Bailey](#) was the first regional coordinator of the Institute (formerly Centre) for Gender and Development Studies, The UWI between 1995 and 2010. Prior to that she was the Specialist Lecturer in Curriculum Studies in the School of Education, Mona. Her teaching and research focused on gender and education, with particular emphasis on gender issues in education and the relationship of educational outputs to outcomes in the economic, social and political spheres for either sex.

About Issue 9

Unlike the majority of our journal issues, this special issue is both commemorative and archival. It contains a selection of papers, keynote speeches and working papers presented over two decades by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), now, Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), that are brought together in one volume for easy recall and retrieval by scholars and students. In this issue, we highlight in particular, papers from the CGDS 15th Anniversary Conference which honoured Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie, the first Professor appointed in the field of Women and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies. The issue is valuable in its own way as a recognition that, important as contemporary scholarship is, access to the unfolding history of the institution is key in understanding the intellectual tradition in Caribbean feminism and a critical component of Caribbean feminist discourse. As an open access online journal, the Caribbean Review of Gender Studies seeks to play a role both in producing contemporary research, as we have done in past issues, and in also making available to scholars the long tradition of research produced by the IGDS that may otherwise not be available to the increasing range of users who draw on the internet for their resources.

Key words: Making of Caribbean Feminisms, gender and education, Elsa Leo-Rhynie, child rights, masculinities, gender relations, higher education, Caribbean, Kathleen Bibiana Drayton

EXECUTIVE EDITORIAL

1 – 2: Executive Editor's Introduction to Special Archival Issue, **Patricia Mohammed**

SECTION ONE — SELECTED PAPERS: Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium and CGDS 15th Anniversary Conference November 2008, from the IGDS Mona, Jamaica Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach

EDITORIAL

3 – 12: Gender Perspectives in Education: Caribbean Impact, Global Reach, Selected papers from the 2008 Elsa Leo-Rhynie Symposium

Leith Dunn and **Barbara Bailey**

13 – 34: "Moving From The Periphery": Elsa Leo-Rhynie's Contribution to Gender Studies and Beyond, Keynote Address Day One, **Marlene Hamilton**

35 – 48: Beyond the Frontiers: Feminist Activism in the 'Global' Academy
Keynote Address Day Two, **Amina Mama**

49 – 76: Gender and Child Rights in Jamaica: A Gender Perspective, **Aldrie Henry-Lee**

77 – 94: 'You sure aren't a Real Man!' - Space, Power, and Possibilities for Men in Social Care and Gender Studies, **Warren Thompson**

95 – 106: The Elsa Leo Rhynie Legacy, **Anthony M. Perry**

SECTION TWO — DOCUMENTARY FILM

107 – 110: Becoming Elsa, Commissioned 2009, **Patricia Mohammed** and **Hilary Nicholson**

SECTION THREE — ANNIVERSARY KEYNOTE ADDRESSES from the IGDS SAU

111 – 142: Stories in Caribbean Feminism: Reflections on the Twentieth Century, CGDS 5th Anniversary Keynote Address, 1998 (paper), **Patricia Mohammed**

143 – 170: Gender Studies: Crossing Boundaries, Charting New Directions
CRGS 10th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2003 (paper), **Elsa Leo Rhynie**

171 – 174: Making of Caribbean Feminisms and the WDSG, CRGS 15th Anniversary
Opening Keynote Address, 2008 (video), **Patricia Mohammed**

175 – 178: "What's Love Got to Do With It? Sexuality, Work and Power in Caribbean
Gender Relations, CRGS 15th Anniversary Closing Keynote Address, 2009 (video, **Violet
Eudine Barriteau**

179 – 194: Inescapable Entanglements: Notes on Caribbean Feminist Engagement,
IGDS 20th Anniversary Keynote Address, 2013 (paper and video), **Alissa Trotz**

SECTION FOUR — WORKING PAPERS, from the IGDS NBU, Barbados

195 – 244: Engendering Local Government in the Commonwealth Caribbean, **Violet
Eudine Barriteau**

245 – 286: Women and Higher Education in the Commonwealth Caribbean:
UWI: A Progressive Institution for Women?, **Marlene Hamilton**

287 – 326: When the Closet is a Region: Homophobia, Heterosexism and Nationalism in
the Commonwealth Caribbean, **Tara L. Atluri**

327 – 372: Gender, Generation and Memory: Remembering a Future Caribbean,
Alissa Trotz

SECTION FIVE — SPECIAL PUBLICATION, from the IGDS NBU, Barbados

373 – 410: In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers
of the Women's Movement in Academia, Special Publication, International Women's
Day, March 2010, **Violet Eudine Barriteau**

BIOGRAPHIES

411 – 418: Biographies of contributors

Open access online journal:
<http://sta.uwi.edu/crgs/index.asp>

Flipbook format
<http://issuu.com/igdssau>

Academia.edu
[https://independent.academia.edu/
IGDSSStAugustineUnit](https://independent.academia.edu/IGDSSStAugustineUnit)

Institute for Gender and Development
Studies
St. Augustine Campus
Trinidad and Tobago
West Indies
<http://sta.uwi.edu/igds/>
Email: igds@sta.uwi.edu
Phone: 1-868-662-2002
Ext 83573/83577