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ABSTRACT

This disquisition enters the world of Trinidadian folklore during the period of the 1950's to the 1980's, in the country's era of post-colonial life and newly acquired independence. The focus is the discovery and realization of the importance and relevance of folklore in the Trinidadian society and its people. The heart of this paper is based on the artist, poet, lecturer and religious leader, LeRoy Clarke and his metaphorical utilization of folklore in his artwork. The study intends to assess the definitions and origins of folklore in this country, the manner in which folklore was approached by LeRoy Clarke, and what importance it holds in the 21st century. This specific period allows insight into the way of life was during the post-colonial period and what folklore meant, not only to the main artist of the study, but other creators during the process of de-colonization such as artist and folklorist, Alfredo Codallo. This script captures and expands on the ways in which folklore was implemented in artwork how it was kept alive through this medium.

Keywords: LeRoy Clarke, Trinidadian Folklore, Trinidad and Tobago, Folklore Art, Alfredo Codallo, Trinidadian Artists.

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The art of storytelling has long existed throughout the course of human history as “telling tales” is one of the many things that contribute to our humanity. Here in the little islands of Trinidad and Tobago, one has either told or has been told a story of folkloric origin as it is one of the many traditions that continue to travel in time through generation after generation. Traditions rooted in folklore continue to persist in this location both intentionally and unintentionally as it has been woven into the fabric of life here in this community. Understandably, each has their own perception of these tales, whether positive or not, there are clear influences present to this day. Conducting the research into Trinidadian folklore and its origins, only add to the pre-existing notions of this topic and continues to inform those who are willing to know of its importance of life in this small, but significant part of the world.

Reasons

The aim is to assess and revise how folklore is being kept alive in the 21st century and to combat the misconception that folklore is no longer relevant in today’s world. Aside from that notion, many even seek to cast folkloric tales and characters as demonic, given their presence in conversations that aim to scare or thrill its listeners. Many of these stories are first heard in one’s earlier years, most times intentionally, as they are thought to instil values and teach lessons to those whose minds are still developing. Creatives such as LeRoy Clarke aimed to utilize folklore metaphorically, in order to unravel truths of Trinidadian society using popular folklore character, the Douen. Thesis statement: Folklore is an undeniable and essential part of Trinidadian culture,

and this is expressed through the examination of the origins of folklore, the interpretations of folklore through Trinidadian artist and writer, LeRoy Clarke and the assessment of other folkloric works in comparison to that of Clarke's.

Parameters

The time period chosen was that of the 1950's to the 1980's as this is when most of the work that is being examined was done. This time period also reflects the impacts of colonization that is mentioned in the folkloric works done by the individuals that are being researched. Trinidadian folklore is the heart of this paper and therefore, the focus is mainly on the works produced in Trinidad by Trinidadian artists and authors. Folklore is based both on the people of the place and for them. Thus, the theme of this study would be the social impact that folklore has on Trinidadian society. LeRoy Clarke was selected specifically to be the focal point of the dissertation his work both contributes to folkloric traditions and utilizes the folkloric character in a clever and important way.

Objectives

This dissertation aims to unravel the origins of folklore in Trinidad to provide more insight into its importance and relevance in today's world. This paper aims to conduct research in the artwork and writings of LeRoy Clarke to better examine his metaphorical usage of folkloric characters in his body of work. In addition to this, other works that were done in the field of local mythology would be reviewed in comparison to those of LeRoy Clarke. In today's world, it is a concern that the art of storytelling and the teaching of morals and other essential lessons are losing its impact through mere fable. The results of this study will produce a greater

understanding of the importance of folklore in our society and the thinking it will generate could enable those to value this aspect of Trinidadian culture.

Chapter outline

This study consists of 3 chapters. Chapter 1 presents the literature review where all important and definitive sources are assessed. Chapter 2 introduces and examines the artwork of Trinidadian artist, LeRoy Clarke. Chapter 3 introduces Trinidadian artist and folklorist, Alfredo Codallo, where his artwork is discussed individually and comparatively with the work of LeRoy Clarke.

Methodology

Data Collection

For this paper, primary research was conducted where a review was done of books written by LeRoy Clarke as well as those that discussed folklore, other folklorists and the folkloric traditions of the people of Trinidad. Online interviews of LeRoy Clarke were utilized to further conduct research on this artist and work. The secondary sources came in the form of local and international online articles that would have aimed to discuss the people of interest and contained definitive terms of the focus, folklore. Further secondary sources were articles discussing the artwork and writings of LeRoy Clarke and Alfredo Codallo as they both shared similar themes.

Data Utilization

The approach is qualitative as the materials to be assessed are writings and visual artworks that were of folkloric themes. The assessment of these materials would allow the gathering and determination on whether folklore continues to be relevant in today's world as it would have during the period of 1950 to 1980. The variant of this study is social and cultural as the themes explored are an essential part of local culture and contribute to the way of life in this society.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature Review

In order to conduct this study into the realm of Trinidadian folklore, materials including books, articles, theses and pre-existing, online interviews were utilized in the retrieval of relevant data. The writings of LeRoy Clarke, David Brizan, Jeremy Taylor, Glenda Rose Layne, Neala Luna, Kenwyn Crichlow, Holly Gayadeen and Gerard Besson were analysed to make connections between their literary productions and find the gaps that may exist. Additionally, to further dive into the personal life of LeRoy Clarke and his Douen productions, articles written by Jeremy Taylor, Paula Lindo and Duff W. Mitchell were referred to. Initially, the Trinidadian artist, writer/poet/, lecturer/ institutionalist and religious leader, LeRoy Clarke produced a series of books that belonged to a collection called “Douens” and would have consisted of 5 books overall. Throughout these books, he wrote poems that reflected the harsh climate of the postcolonial, Trinidadian society in which he grew up in and during the period in which he created his content. In these short books were handwritten poems where he would relay a myriad of seemingly dark scenarios, ideas and insights into this world of “douendom” as he captured life in the late 1970’s Trinidad.

Before plunging further into the metaphorical usage of this commonly known folklore character, it is understood that the actual definition of a douen can differ. A publishing that featured the folklore of Trinidad, titled, “The Spirits of Trinidad and Tobago”, described the “Duennes” as a cult that was as a result of a cholera epidemic in Trinidad in the mid-nineteenth century where many of the new-borns succumbed to the disease (Paria Publishing). In another

online article titled “Jumbies of the West Indies” provide for another view of the Douens where they are described to be specifically of Trinidadian origin, without a gender, uses large straw hats to hide their non-existent faces and feet that are turned backwards (Deebrah). Douens are particularly known to reside in forested areas where they prey on unsupervised children, taking them into the depths of the bushy region to never return (Deebrah). However, according to David G. Brizan, “Douens are known to have been the spirits of premature babies who died before religious rites can be performed and as a result would linger in the world of the living”, which is the more commonly accepted definition of a douen in this country (1). Continuing along the lines of the words of David Brizan, an article by this specific writer was sourced to aid in deciphering LeRoy Clarke’s douen series. The excerpt titled, “LEROY CLARKE AND DOUENS”, came from Howard University, Washington D.C, where David Brizan pioneered research into this artist. The author broke down Clarke’s hidden meanings and motivations behind his very large body of work done in the douens. Given the visual characteristics of the douens, this would account for the use of them in LeRoy Clarke’s work as an unprecedented utilization of Trinidad folklore, a frightening reality on canvas (Brizan 1). Other articles on the artist discuss the weight that LeRoy Clarke had and continues to have in Trinidadian society as he is deemed to be one of the master artists in the Country. The seriousness of the ideas explored in LeRoy Clarke’s “Douens” may have expressed fractions of personality as well, as he was described as a very intense individual by his children and colleagues. To further sink one’s teeth into the Douen epidemic, an article titled “LeRoy Clarke: Warrior art”, by Jeremy Taylor was of much interest as his take on this body of artwork was beneficial to this paper. Jeremy Taylor refers to the douens as sad and playful characters of Trinidad and Tobago folklore and he quoted LeRoy’s views of the douens in relation to himself and the people of this country as “giddy and lost

people” (Taylor). Taylor went on to share that the images of douens were powerful and were not the only shadow figures to be reconsidered. He states that this was an extreme way of connecting aged, but familiar concepts and imagery to the tumultuous society in the period of the late 20th century in the Caribbean. (Taylor).

In addition to the work done by master artist, LeRoy Clarke, in the field of folklore, artwork done by another Trinidadian folklorist, Alfredo Codallo was observed. Codallo was also known for creating artwork in the area of folklore in a time not too distant from that of Clarke and it was of much interest to review their works comparatively as they had different ways of approaching this topic. The writings of Holly Gayadeen in the book, “Selected Works of Alfredo Antonio Codallo, Artist and Folklorist: (1913-1971)”, was analysed as it contained some of Codallo’s body of work within. With reference to this information, a relevant article was sourced to relay the author's thoughts on the artist and his work done on the topic of Trinidadian fable. Gerard A. Besson goes on to expand on the contents of the book, which gave insight into the artist’s goals, art style and general aspects of his life. Alfredo Codallo was said to be an artist that captured everyday life, disregarding more popularized European art styles and movements. Aside from the information of the artist, Besson goes into detail on the feelings of oppression during that time due to the previous years of ruling under the colonial government. In addition to this, a critical essay written by Trinidadian artist and educator, Kenwyn Crichlow, was sourced for additional details of the paintings done by Alfredo Codallo. In terms of the artist’s work, Crichlow explains that the painting, “Folklore”, provides a mirroring of the concerns conveyed in Trinidad and Tobago prior to the country’s Independence in 1962. It is also understood that prior is artist’s work, visual representations of these characters ceased to exist and according to Crichlow, “It is to the inventiveness of the artist, Alfred Codallo, that an audience largely

resident in urban Port of Spain was able to formulate thoughts about the deeper attributes of the figures and of the landscape to reflect concerns of the emerging postcolonial 20th century Trinidad and Tobago”.

Moreover, the investigations could not progress without first consulting with critical defining terms and functions of folklore in Trinidad and Tobago as they feed into the importance and relevance these tales and characters hold in the 21st century. Therefore, speaking on the topic of folklore itself, many other articles had to be sourced to uncover the definitions, roles and origins of these folk tales in Trinidad. Folklore can be defined as “a belief system that includes songs, bush medicine, prayers and folktales” (Popova et al 51). This collection of information goes on to explain the representations of folk in the classroom and ties into some of the functions of folklore. In a dissertation written by Glenda-Rose Layne titled “Honouring Caribbean Folk Cultures: A Personal Reflection” goes into detail on the importance and function of folklore in the raising of younger individuals. Layne states that, “throughout the Caribbean, values such as, parental respect, love for the extended family, the care and protection of the elderly and young are significant. Such values and practices encourage strong family bonds and highlight the importance of belonging to a community” (Layne 102). She further elaborates that folklore is the root of these developments in communities, family and society. Trinidad is a society known for its diverse backgrounds stemming from indigenous, African, Indian, Chinese, European and Middle Eastern influences of which the local folklore was born (Luna). In the words of Neala Luna, folklore permitted those in the islands to deal with difficult realities that pervaded the construction of a new life. These legends are often constructed in the form of riddles and proverbs, teaches morals and continues to live on in the more rural communities such as Tobago

(Luna). It should be mentioned, however, that Tobagonian folklore has its differences from that of its sister isle, Trinidad, as a result of different colonial ruling and influences.

Without a doubt, oral history and these ideas it of continue to persist in 21st century Trinidad, as artists, writers and even the average local citizen, continue to keep the stories alive, whether intentionally or not. The interest in this topic has little to do with what is not being done and rather what has been done and lives on to this day due to the absolute thoughtfulness and intelligence of the creatives in this country. Master LeRoy Clarke metaphorically utilized folklore in his work to highlight and provoke change in a society he did not deem fit for him and his people. Whilst another local artist, Alfredo Codallo, saw the beauty in our locally, combined effort that would have constructed visual renditions of these characters, stemming from all the different backgrounds to become something that belonged to the people of this country and that was here to stay. He portrayed folkloric characters realistically, to maintain their image, sharing the value in this nation's culture. Both artists captured folklore but told very different stories in the process. Studying this artist gives some insight into the time period that Clarke would have also created work and some comparative material that would contribute to the application and function of these local legends. As this paper continues to dive into the backgrounds of these artists, the aim is to deliver the usefulness and importance of folklore, perhaps some values that were lost along the way and bring light to misconceptions that managed to prevail, clouding the judgments of today's citizens.

CHAPTER TWO

Master artist, spiritual leader and poet amongst many other roles play by this individual, LeRoy Clarke has made his name as a Trinidadian artist that explores the social ills of third-world country living through his various expressive mediums. Clarke has worked expeditiously to create his work as he dedicated his life to his art and poetry, according to his family and others known to him via an interview done by Ernest Che Rodriguez called, "Fragments of History". This can be seen through the vast bodies of work that he has produced over the years. He was heavily influenced by post-colonial Trinidadian society where the topic of corruption was a central theme in his work. In honour of Clarke's passing, many articles were constructed in light of his craft and himself of a member of society including an article in the Trinidad and Tobago Newsday titled, "Artists pay tribute to LeRoy Clarke", by Paula Lindo. As reiterated by artist and activist, Rubadiri Victor, "LeRoy's devotion to his work was superhuman" and as quoted by famous author, Derek Walcott which suggested that whilst Clarke did in fact have a gift and was very talented, "that person has to dedicate his life to honing that talent", and so he did (Lindo). His body of work, according to Neil Rawlins, the Council of Orisha Elder of TT secretary, spoke of his connection to his community and environment and mentioning that "LeRoy's vast body of work surpassed his humble upbringing, and this brought his success on a global scale" and continued by highlighting the fact that "his documentation of the growth and development of this country, now leaving behind a legacy that carries such authenticity and depth" (Lindo). Many thoughts and views were expressed after the passing of LeRoy Clarke in the year 2021, bringing to light many of the iconic artworks that the artist would have created. One such collection, "Douens", is what inspired this paper as the metaphorical usage of the legendary character was of great fascination. Making its debut in the years 1973-1976, "Douens" was a very popular

collection of works that featured a multitude of paintings, drawings and poetry that “celebrates possibilities” as the artist and poet seeks his new beginnings. The interest lies in the importance of folklore, and even though this collection was introduced in the late 70’s, these works, and the clever way folkloric themes were incorporated to deliver the messages of inciting change were notably essential to the development of this country. This paper intends to discuss the work the artist has produced during this period and its relevance to the 21st century. Clarke’s death brought about a wave of sadness as his life’s work meant a great deal to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but it also brought a lot of attention to his work to the newer generation, introducing and creating a pathway for others to learn about the messages behind his work.

Moreover, “Douens” by LeRoy Clarke was a compilation of all hand-written poems in a single book that included a variety of drawings that featured multiple Trinidadian mythological creatures including the Douens and to a lesser degree, the Moko Jumbies, the Soucouyant and La Jablesse, which are also well-known. To unearth the “hidden” definitions and messages that were encapsulated in Clarke’s work, David Brizan was referred to as he eloquently wrote an article titled, “LE ROY CLARKE AND DOUENS”, on the entire collection in which he gave some insight into the mind of Clarke and the douens. Initially, it is understood that the artist explored the topic of third-world issues through well-known, folkloric personalities. According to Duff W. Mitchell, in an article titled, “LeRoy Clarke---a Known Mystery”, Douendom allowed for folklore taking centre stage and was used to narrate the condition of the African psyche. Brizan describes Clarke’s approach as it was done with “freshness and vigor” as at the time of creation, his work differed from that of other contemporary artists due to his “unprecedented utilization of Trinidad folklore” (Brizan 1). The author noted that Clarke’s poetry words contained socio-

political messages that meshed with the artistic properties of the Douen metaphor (Brizan 1). Essentially, he worked these two together in a way that did not compromise his message nor his artistic goal. Flooded with symbolism, Clarke's words express an undeniable commitment to life and the people of Trinidad even amid all the death and violence uttered throughout the pages of this book. His focus lay in the "egg" and the fertility that his country of origin held, capable of birthing the new beginnings he desperately yearned for. Unlike many others who paved the way for Clarke to continue vouching for societal change, he had a true sense of self and purpose, his understanding of life and which Brizan reveals, lies the total secret of the artist (1). Many of the works in his poems express a relationship where the situation dramatically spiralled into a twisted world of pain and despair, to only be lifted again in a new light and it is understood that this is what the series, and the poet, set out to do. According to the analysis by Dr. Wilfred Cartey, a professor in the Department of Black Studies from The City of University of New York, the poems were a ritual and by the end of the last book, "Mask Bled Rivers", the ritual of Douens was complete (Douens). Cartey also stated, "now, the feet of the Poet are not turned back on themselves, he is coming, resolute, towards El Tucuche---his apocalypse' (Douens). This idea feeds into the point made by Brizan which suggests that the Poet has utilized this body of work for his own self-realizations and El Tucuche, his destination, is known to be one of the highest mountains in Trinidad (2). Additionally, El Tucuche is a subsequent body of work done by the artist, following the Douens series.

The artist is also known for his drawings during the douen series that, like many other of his artwork, represents a more intuitive style. This can stem from the fact that he did not further his education beyond the secondary level, unlike many other revolutionaries in this region. It is suggested by Brizan that perhaps this is what may truly represent truthfulness and honesty in the

work of LeRoy Clarke and his abilities to make work truly inspired by his environment and experiences. Douens become an indictment on those who have destroyed life and they are known for their tendencies to trick children, taking their lives away, leaving them in a state of confusion and twilight (Brizan 2). Clarke mentions the physical characteristics of the douens in his book “Archipelago” where he says, “...And so with backward-turned feet...” (Clarke 4).

Figure 1.0 Douens, By LeRoy Clarke (1975)



Figure 1.1 Douens, By LeRoy Clarke (1975)



Figure 1.2 Douens, By LeRoy Clarke (1975)



Figure 1.3 Douens, By LeRoy Clarke (1975)



Accompanying the poetry in LeRoy's Clarke book of combined poems were a series of very intricate drawings that gave some insight into the artist's words. Clarke is widely known for his massive art pieces, typically done in acrylic paints but this collection, however, were ink drawings done on paper. Many of these drawings featured the use of the distorted human body as the artist utilized many of the elements and principles of art including line, shape, contrast and repetition. With no two drawings alike, each figure required its own, individual dissection as to uncover the relation of the drawings to the themes explored by the artist. In figure 1.0, the human body is recognized immediately from the presence of the arms, outlined breasts and legs that do not continue down to the feet. Atop the shoulders rests the head where the face sports three eyes, a nose and a myriad of smaller compartments utilizing that space. Surrounding the head, circular rings can be noticed moving outwards and growing in size. The short and long line projections that were featured on the perimeter of the individual's body stand straight like hair. The principle of repetition is evident in this drawing as the artist incorporates several shapes and lines to compose his drawings. In comparison to figure 1.0, figure 1.1 features another human-like figure that is noticeably taller as it sports a longer torso region and limbs. It is evident in this drawing that the artist refers to the typical characteristic of the douens as this figure has backwards turned feet, where curiously, only one toe features a pointed toenail. As the gaze moves up the body, the midsection contains various shapes and a spear-like tool piercing through the lower abdomen. Similar to figure 1.0, this drawing also had outlined breasts except smaller and is filled in with curved and straight lines. Finally arriving at the upper body, the armless shoulders merge into the neck and sprout into two heads, appearing to be overlapping. The faces have no defined nose or mouth but do have eyes that consist of swirls and multiple circles. Figure 1.3 illustrates another figure that appears to be holding onto someone in a protective manner. Whilst the protected

individual wears a blank expression, the protector appears to be afraid as the hair-like projections stand straight and travel all the way down their back. Another factor that adds to this notion is the open mouth and alarming facial rendering of the person. The eyes jutting outwards, exaggerating the expression. The back of the head also expands beyond that of a regular skull structure, opening into extending lines which can also be interpreted as hair. Hidden within the head as well, one can notice another pair of eyes, peeping between the mass of intricate lines. This piece gives off a rather maternal atmosphere, that of a mother protecting a child from harm's way. Finally, figure 1.4 is that of an elongated human form as they have long torso and limbs. The small, inward turned hands appear to be holding something resembling a bundle of sticks or even a broom. The breasts are less exaggerated, reduced to circular nipples in comparison to figures 1.0, 1.2 and 1.3. Moving up the long neck, there is a mass that seems to be sticking out of the throat. The head region has noticeable features including the eyes, nose and jaws but also appears to be without skin as the motion of the lines surrounding the facial features appear to be that of veins that exist below the surface.

Furthermore, whilst the drawings had many differences, a lot of similarities can be spotted throughout the early set of them in the book. There is a clear contrast in these drawings that simply go beyond the usage of black ink on white paper. There is an obvious distinction between areas of each drawing that determines which area requires more attention. The bodies of the human-like figures were drawn mostly as an outline while many of the distorted features of the drawings seem to be focused on the heads of the individuals which tend to shift the focus to that region. It is not difficult to recognize these sections of the body as the head, but this is where the drawings seem to become more complex and technical in design. In figures 1.0, 1.3 and 1.4, it is seen that there is an almost explosive effect occurring in and around these heads as the

repeated lines and shapes are seen expanding and moving outwards. With regards to the “douens’ that Clarke speaks of appear to be in a state of dismal twilight, it makes sense that this occurrence would affect the brain and thus the heads of these beings. Many of the illustrations have eyes that contain multiple circular rings which can signify a state of confusion or even hypnosis which further pushes the idea of being in a non-realistic state. As the book continues, many of the drawings take the same shape of more distorted, human-like bodies with sections that are more complex than others. With regards to the style of drawing in relation to their meanings, the creatures were ‘obzocky’ or physically distorted due to the oppression and subjugation over approximately five hundred years which warped both the mind and body (Mitchell).

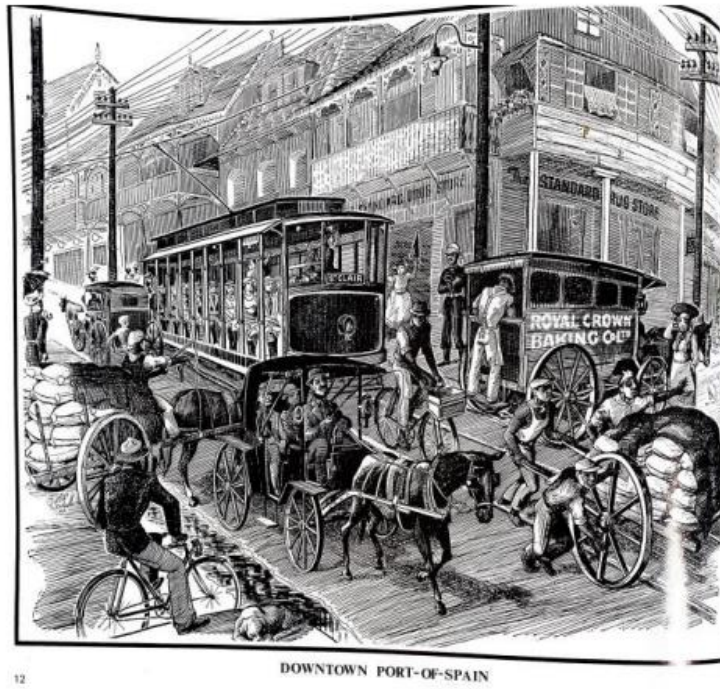
Not only did Clarke highlight the common characters in folklore, but he also utilized Trinidadian lore in a manner that made it more than just a story, more than just a frightening tool. He created this point of view, this relevance that allows the viewer to see how these characters might relate to living in third world countries, especially Trinidad and Tobago. He wrote mainly about what he has experienced in Trinidad but was not limited to this island or even the island of Tobago only. He spoke collectively, he spoke about the African experience, he spoke about the societal wrongs faced and he made art to combat, art to speak and art to highlight all that he found needed attention. His work aimed to inform and incite an urgent degree of change, but Clarke also uses these ideas to work on his own sense of self. According to David Brizan, “the Douen drama transcends it's on reality and becomes a symbolic emotional catalyst for the artist's self-scrutiny and self-revelation” (Brizan 2). The complexity seen within his work further promoted that of the situation itself and the artist's way of thinking.

CHAPTER THREE

In LeRoy Clarke's book, *Douens*, there is a segment of the book titled, "SEE, HOW ALL PASSES...", where the poet opens a discussion about taking great, local literary figures and visual artists for granted as he mentions, "You who have already forgotten LeRoy Calliste, Eric Roach, Alf Codallo and Cecil 'Maestro' Hume..." (Clarke 50). Interestingly, Clarke mentions "Alf Codallo" formally known as Alfredo Antonio Codallo, Trinidadian folklorist, self-taught artist and draughtsman. As an artist that preceded LeRoy Clarke and had an extensive body of work in the field of folklore, it appeared to be of great importance to discuss the work done in the field of folklore as it is relevant to the research. Unable to deny the connection between these artists, it was observed that Clarke actively re-drew the characters that were visually constructed by Alfredo Codallo, implying the birth of the Douen inspiration (Mitchell). Both artists have tackled the topic of folklore in their bodies of work and are seemingly different in their approaches but still share many similarities. Alfredo Antonio Codallo was born and raised in Trinidad and was born of parents descending from East India and Venezuela. According to Holly Gayadeen, the artist was indeed self-taught as an artist as he "educated himself through his own practice and self-criticism". He is particularly known for his interest and extensive research into Trinidadian folklore where he produced a great amount of both ink drawings and watercolour paintings. Codallo's work didn't only capture this country's mystical beings as he also maintained a series of drawings that aimed to capture and document everyday life, trapping them by use of his expressive mediums and were published in the *Sunday Guardian* newspaper. According to Gerard A. Besson who spoke of the artist in an article, "Codallo made artwork of the community and for the community".

Similar to LeRoy Clarke, Alfredo Codallo was brought up in a time period that faced the impacts of British colonial rule. Holly Gayadeen, in his book captured a great deal of the works done by the artist that fits the theme most relevant to this paper, folklore. Codallo denied many trending art styles in his general body of work. His inked artworks feature very detailed scenes of “everyday” life in Trinidad or rather, a casual days with people carrying out their daily duties. He found beauty in the simplicity of their actions, something, according to Gerard Besson, would be read as the “good ole days”. Accompanying his renditions of the “everyday scenes”, Codallo also captured moments of cultural dances, religious practices and individual and combined drawings of the Trinidadian folklore characters. In addition to his ink drawings, Alf Codallo, produced paintings that provided visual representations of mythological characters that are dear to Trinidadian culture. Whilst Codallo did not conform to one specific art style, he stated that his intention was to create artwork that articulated his intentions clearly and was free of complicated art terminology to convey his national pride (Gayadeen). The artist was described as an individual who created through the experiences of an individual who lived a full life (Gayadeen).

Figure 2.0 "Downtown Port-Of-Spain" By Alfredo Codallo, ink on paper



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Figure 2.1 "The Central Bakery" By Alfredo Codallo, ink on paper



Both figures 2.0 and 2.1 display artworks by Alfredo Codallo that aimed to capture “long-time” Trinidad, as his extremely detailed drawings, managed to extract the time period itself utilizing paper and ink. Many elements and principles of art can be accounted for in these delicate artworks including line, value, space and texture. The artist’s intricate use of line allowed for defined character composure, formation of textured materials and exquisite separation from background, disregarding similar line and value constructs. In figure 2.0, Holly Gayadeen recounts this scene as “a busy area at the crossroads between downtown which is the commercial hub of Port-Of-Spain when the tramcar, horse and buggy were the chief means of transportation”. “The Central Bakery” in figure 2.1, according to Gayadeen, “brings into reality the charged atmosphere at C.V. Chins Baking Company in Port-Of-Spain" (Gayadeen 17). When one thinks of life in the city, one can witness the “charged” energy present there; there is no lack of life or movement, and this is clearly represented in the drawing. The detailed drawings contain very little open spaces, each corner filled with hidden elements to unlock as one’s eyes browse across each drawn in aspect. The artist created a space that allowed viewers to return to the time period present in these drawings and even though he was not necessarily interested in conforming to the popular art movements, his realistic works provided communications in a time where advertisement agencies didn’t even exist yet (Besson).

Figure 2.2 "Folklore" By Alfredo Codallo (1958), watercolour



Figure 2.3 "Soucouyant" By Alfredo Codallo, Ink on paper



Figure 2.4 "Douens" By Alfredo Codallo, Ink on Paper

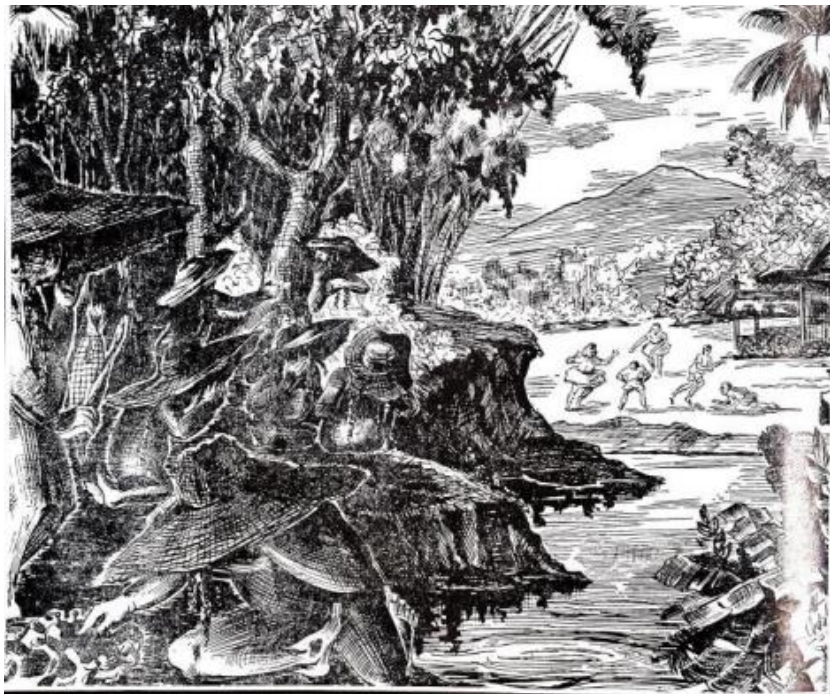


Figure 2.0 represents the watercolour painting done by Alfredo Codallo that portrays a group of bundled together characters that are known solely through oral traditions. Codallo provides visual descriptions of these creatures at the very edge of a gloomy, forested area. In comparison to the previously discussed black and white drawings, the artist can be seen here utilizing bold colours to capture the characters and the mystical landscape he created for them. As described by Trinidadian artist and educator, Kenwyn Crichlow, “They are assembled in this claustrophobic place, a surreal wilderness of twilight juxtaposed to the sublime moonlit hills in the distance”. These specific drawings featured in figures 2.3 and 2.4 were chosen as they were previously mentioned in chapter 2 as characters explored by LeRoy Clarke as well. Most importantly, the douens, as captured by Codallo, provide an insight into the way douens would have looked based on their general descriptions including being short, plump, naked, backwards turned feet and they are especially not without their big, straw hats that covered their faces. The Soucouyant, “the Caribbean’s vampire” according to LeRoy Clarke was also included to provide imagery of what Codallo thought she would look like. Codallo’s realistic art style was beneficial in the case of capturing and documenting these functional personalities. In an analysis of figure 2.2, “Folklore”, Crichlow considers this work to be of a more “pictorial language”. Importantly, prior to this artist’s folklore collection, many visual representations of these folklore characters did not exist (Crichlow). Embarking on this journey of research and creation of folklore characters that were without visual illustrations anywhere other than the minds and words of storytellers, Alf Codallo provided his country with something that would begin making these stories something more than just a tale.

Figure 2.5 "Trinidad Folklore" By Alfredo Codallo



A multitude of known characters in Trinidadian folklore can be seen throughout this intricate painting in figure 2.2 featuring the Douens, Soucouyant, Papa Bois, La Jablesse and Mama Glo to list a few. Figure 2.5 also presents a closer look at the characters, some performing tasks they are usually known for in their own individual stories. In the foreground, the douens are seen idly playing on the river's bed, Papa Bois, standing in the middle ground, holding onto a deer protectively and even the Soucouyant, undressing beneath the cotton tree. Within both these paintings, the artist pays careful attention to detail where there is a noticeable warm glow on the centre of the of the landscape as well as the mythical figures as they are situated in the dark, cool-toned forested area. Not only does this use of colour draw the viewer in, this specific technique also brings life into the painting and therefore life to the characters that were finally

given proper recognition. Often known for being in the dark, hiding in the shadows, these popular personalities were placed in the spotlight, embarking on the journey of cultural pride and strength.

Moreover, Alfredo Codallo and LeRoy Clarke shared many similarities in the works created and are such linked by the process of decolonization in Trinidad and Tobago through the utilization of folklore. Whilst the aim of Codallo was to document the cultural gems on the island by creating images of mythical characters that failed to exist visually before, Clarke headed an artistic revolution whilst utilizing the known aspects of local myths to start a new conversation of societal ills and post-colonial issues. Codallo's work was done in a language understood by all whereas Clarke's work was noted to be inventively metaphoric. Both of their projects held an immeasurable amount of cultural importance and symbolism, providing the 20th Trinidadian society with a sense of assurance and structure. These artists have been the steppingstones to the development of folklore driven thought and thus, its importance. Regardless of the time period in which the work was constructed, the foundation that was laid continues to transcend time and manifests itself in the reality of the Trinidadian society. Notwithstanding the debate that both artists acknowledged the flaws in the systems that surrounded the time periods, it should be mentioned though that LeRoy Clarke undeniably tackled this topic in both his writing and artworks continuously. His vision, however, was not clouded with only the negative aspects as he had hope for his country which is why he used his research to incite change in both himself and his community. Community is another important factor that links these two artists together, it is one of the main driving forces behind the works done. Alfredo Codallo, constructed the lives of everyday people and the visual representation of local mythical characters by means of connecting himself with and to the community in which he resides. Clarke, whilst exposing the

wrongs, always spoke about the better days, the hope that he had and the hope that his country of origin would give birth to. The differences spotted between the bodies of work could be found in the art styles, methods and use of folklore. Codallo, rejecting the norms of European art expressions, created his paintings in a manner that brings to life the non-tangible aspects of our culture. In that case, many of the personalities were recognizable as were the landscapes that they were painted in. Clarke on the other hand, also rejecting the artistic norms, had a very intuitive approach, his artwork becoming more and more complex yet figures of the human body still recognizable. Both artists, however, were self-taught and regardless of their methods, mediums or even portrayal, set out to make their artwork understandable by the target audience, the people of Trinidad and Tobago. In that way they are very similar, the way they connect to their country and create truthfully.

CONCLUSION

Embarking on a journey through time, the revolutionary thinker and creator, LeRoy Clarke and his contributions to folklore in Trinidad and Tobago was extensively explored. From what was unearthed, a much better understanding of the role this artist played in the 20th century was obtained in terms of his themes portrayed. Clarke utilized the well-known fundamentals of folkloric beings, specifically the douens, to produce a body of artwork and literature to make the connection between the people in this society and the state of the country at the time of post-colonialism. Without a doubt, colonialism left behind a series of oppression faced by most locals at the time. LeRoy Clarke was one of those that grew up in said time period and his artwork was deemed revolutionary and true to him as well as his experiences. In addition to this artist, the artwork of Alfredo Codallo was also considered as they were also reflective of that time period. Both artists expressed their themes of social and political injustice, cultural expression and ties to community using folklore. Folklore can take many shapes, a carefully constructed tale or even a cultural dance, regardless, it is what connects people and is the root of their culture. These artists skilfully utilized something recognizable by the people they were representing and thus had a huge impact on the way they live today. As a fine artist, one can look up to these master creatives that have paved the way to deepening the connection to our cultural body in the 21st century. LeRoy Clarke's death opened his ideas to be re-examined once more, to remind the people of this country from where they have come and where they can go. Undeniably though, these artists created in a period that suffered a vast degree of struggles that many born in the 21st century may never have to experience. This then brings to light the burning question, how are

these themes relevant to life in the 21st century? Importantly, one must remember the foundations on which folklore was built. To teach lessons, to guide morally, to entertain and to have something belonging to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. One might even argue that these artists, especially the complexity and creativity of thought and application was furthered by intellectuals such as LeRoy Clarke which not only highlights the often overlooked, but also adds layers to the importance of it. The 21st century is simply another time period facing its own demons, not necessarily through colonialism directly but rather the continued impacts that plague society to this day. These local legends have taught many things including how to be safe, how to respect your elders but most crucially, it has allowed people to express themselves in times of need. LeRoy Clarke has shown the hope and love he has for his community amongst the darkness that may interfere. Alfredo Codallo demonstrated the beauty of everyday life, the true faces of these non-tangible story characters and cultural representation in times where there was the bare minimum. In short, much can be learned from these two individuals, most predominantly, how one can continue to achieve what previous creatives have fought for, through the art and through whichever medium that makes room for cultural expression and appreciation.

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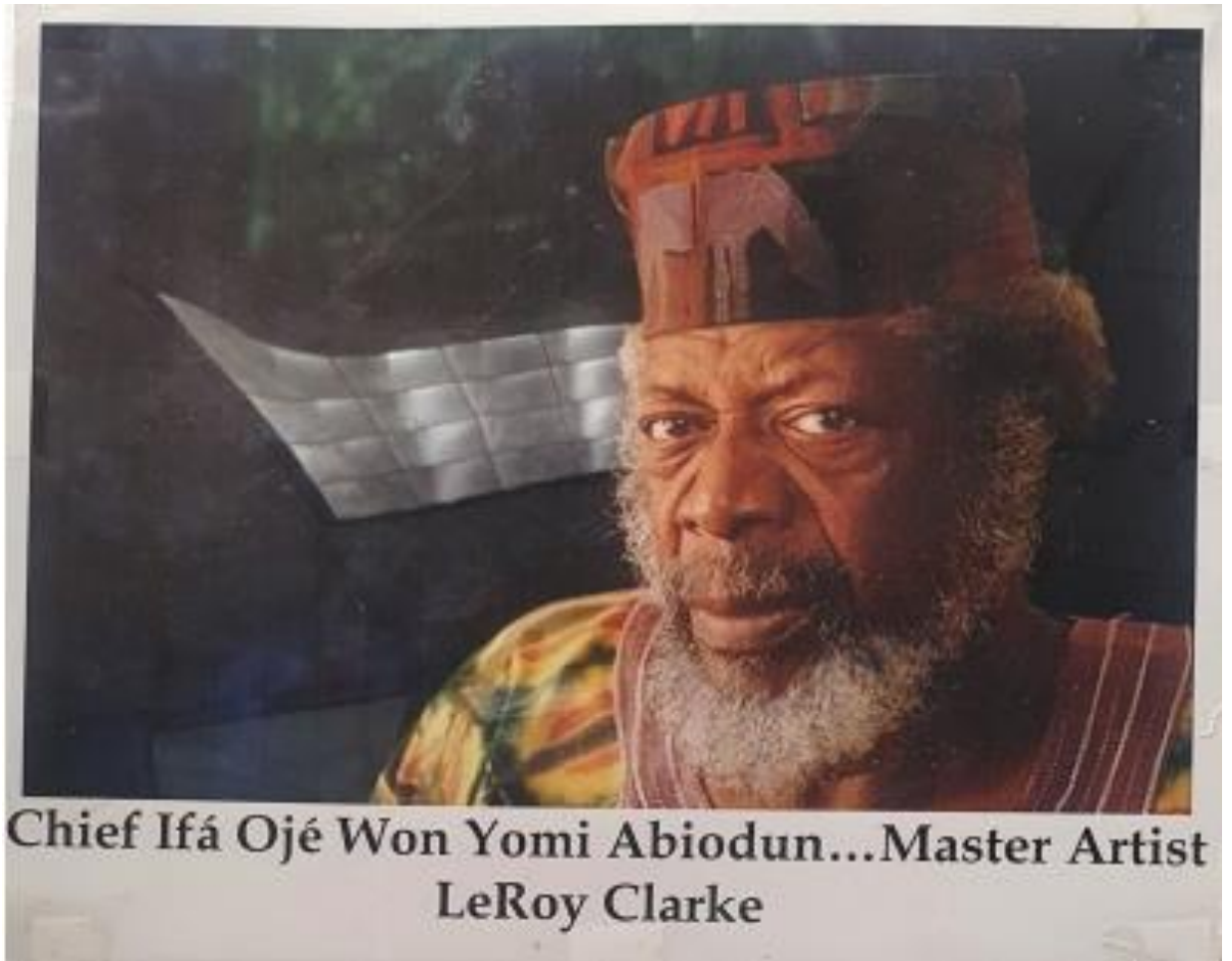
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APPENDIX A



Appendix A: Photo of LeRoy Clarke.

APPENDIX B

Aspects of Douens

By DAVID BRIZAN

MORE than a decade ago this geography opened with a fan of macaw tails, and, in mesmerising moments of magnificent metaphors, took us on a journey through penetrating pain and possibilities. It closed finally into a new opening with no barriers, only the wet tongues of Blanchisseuse awaiting the hermitic ash of the poet.

Primitive, vigorous and revolutionary, LeRoy Clarke's *Douens* built up a corpus of transcendental views no other poet in this country has attempted or envisioned. It was stingingly indicting and deceptively redeeming.

In 1997, when we thought the poet had pointed us away from the douendom, beyond the cries of backward-turned feet, a new generation, suckled in cocaine and confusion, cries along the corridors of our social institutions. Another generation wallows in abandonment where the sirens of a protective service leave our minds at the mercy of the mindless.

Oh! Days of cries without names! Oh!
Long nights of quarrels!

Perhaps it is the continuing pain of surviving an archipelago of crushed ant hill, lost temples, seeking a place where history cannot pretend amnesia.

The poet knows:

My Bones are picked dry of scent

They are now marrowless staves

That corrupt the road to stars...

Who will rechart these ruins? Who will piece it together in its beginning? *Douens* offers:

... a new poet

who claims neither name nor roof

who will sacrifice child or field

... a new poet

who has collected words like nails

*stripped from his own fingers
each a testimony of burning lava.*

Images upon images upon images colliding, carving, and cauldroning into undifferentiated dances out of the immediacy of experience. If you don't understand, just dance. Dance between the "child that leaps in us again" and the real reality of a new dawn that shakes lizards and "let go its caterpillars of marching axes on leaves." Let yourself be confused to the threshold of new possibilities, beyond the "buckets of left-overs."

The pointerman, the "New Poet," the new redeemer lays down horizons of existential and phenomenological creations, inexplicable in paradigms of blame and finger pointing. The pointerman points to the pointlessness of a social morass in which a deadly encirclement of mapipiress leaves us awkward in our comfortableness.

The language in which Clarke speaks to us is freshly and inventively metaphoric. A sense of our history as the history of successive metaphors lets us see the poet as the vanguard of the species. A word settles on the tongue... either the first bud of resolve or another strand in the conspiracy. Resolved in the terror of encircling snakes, our mindlessness in the desolation, the poet points the way: Seek the source of rivers, begin here in your hands, each beginning, new.

If you believe that we not involuntarily being immersed in a douendom, look again. The heart can still "lose its hands by two's and three's in this leprous wind." But this new poet is a strong poet who claims neither roof nor child, is voluntarily abandoned, and continues to mesmerise us with his uncanny ability to generate possibilities through new metaphors.

Get a copy of *Douens*, dance with it, and get mesmerised.

Source
Trinidad Guardian, November 30th, 1997, p. 24

Appendix B: Article by David Brizan