



The University of the West Indies
St. Augustine Campus
Faculty of Humanities and Education
Caribbean Studies Project
HUMN 3099

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Title of Thesis:

The Contributions of Learning Spanish To Cultural Integration Between Trinidad
and Tobago and Cuba

Word count: _____

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CULTURAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND CUBA

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, relations between the English and Spanish Speaking Caribbean have been minimal. When discussing the relationship between Trinidad and Cuba, one must highlight the lack of knowledge amongst the public of what both islands can offer one another. The purpose of this research is to review, identify and evaluate any past and present initiatives or programs that help in bettering cultural integration and relations between Trinidad and Cuba. It also aims to identify and examine any suggestions or strategies for future integration between islands through qualitative research via interviews with professionals in Cuban and Caribbean studies and Trinidadian - Cuban relations. As a result, it was found that there is a possibility of bettering cultural integration between islands via strategies such as implementing policies, creating regional agreements and cultural spaces as well as by focusing on how to use our most similar cultural aspects of music and carnival to not only build a sense of identity but to improve the lives of citizens. Conducting this research allowed for a look into current Cuban and Trinidadian relations and to pinpoint areas that may be restraining integration and areas that have the potential to push it forward.

Key words: cultural integration, caribbean identity, culture, Hispanophone Caribbean, Anglophone Caribbean, music, cultural initiatives, cultural exchange

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
LIST OF FIGURES.....	3
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	9
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE.....	6
CHAPTER TWO.....	7
CHAPTER THREE.....	8
CONCLUSION.....	9
WORKS CITED.....	10
APPENDIX A.....	1
APPENDIX B.....	1

LIST OF FIGURES



Fig. 1 Cuban Medical Brigade in Trinidad celebrating National Scientific Day



Fig. 2 Cuban Residents in Trinidad and Tobago celebrating the Triumph of the Revolution and the New Year.



Fig. 3 Members of Cuba's El Cobre Steel Band performing in Santiago de Cuba



Fig. 4 Students in UNESCO's TRANSCULTURA program during the start and inauguration of courses in Cuba.



Fig. 5 Tobagonian dancer during the closing of CARIFESTA 14 in Tobago.



Fig. 6 Fábrica del Arte Cubano in Havana, Cuba.

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview Questions for Dr. Jaqueline Laguardia Martinez

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions for Eduardo Vidal

APPENDIX C: Interview with Dr. Jaqueline Laguardia Martinez

APPENDIX D: Interview with Eduardo Vidal

INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE

Whilst the political relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba has been a strong and positive one, the cultural relationship between the English and Spanish speaking islands has yet to be fully explored. The history of Spanish influence in Trinidad and Tobago has existed for centuries and although Trinidadians have had immense respect for Cuban history and the resilience of its people in the past, they do not currently have a deep understanding of Cuban culture within today's society. As such, an adequate cultural relationship between the two islands has not been fostered. If Trinidad were to create a foundation for this relationship, it is my estimation that it can unify not only Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba, but also set a trend for the rest of the English Speaking Caribbean to see the value in relating more closely to the Spanish Speaking Caribbean. It can allow Trinidadians to see the social, cultural and historical similarities between both islands despite the language barrier. In terms of language, fostering this relationship can also create an understanding of the relevance of language learning in today's society. It can give Spanish language learners and the wider community greater opportunities to appreciate the language from a tangible point of view. In summary, conducting research about this subject is a step forward to achieving Caribbean regionalism and to further unify the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean.

THESIS STATEMENT

Integrating cultural exchanges and programs between Trinidad and Cuba into Trinidad's public sector can foster an understanding of Cuba's relevance to the Anglophone Caribbean today and improve the awareness of their regional identity.

OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate the number of current opportunities for cultural exchange between Trinidad and Cuba
- Evaluate the current state of cultural integration between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba
- Examine past initiatives or programs aimed at sharing Trinidadian culture with Cuba.
- Assess the accessibility of cultural exchanges to the general public.
- Identify and outline opportunities for future cultural exchange between Trinidad and Cuba in the areas of art and literature.
- Identify how strategies that support cultural integration can be improved for future cultural exchange.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to highlight areas of development for the establishment of future programs and initiatives in the areas of art and culture. The chosen research approach for this paper is a hypothetical one which uses qualitative data collection. In terms of primary data collection, interviews with the Minister Counsellor of the Cuban Embassy, Eduardo Vidal and a lecturer and coordinator of the University of the West Indies (UWI) International Relations programme, Dr. Jaqueline Laguardia-Martinez in Trinidad will be conducted. An informal discussion with Dr. Lancelot Cowie, the former Ambassador of Trinidad to Cuba and the head of the UWI's Latin American Forum was conducted and will be referenced throughout the body of the work. The data collected from these interviews will be used to identify and outline various opportunities for cultural exchange programs between Trinidad and Cuba in the area of the arts and culture. They will also be used to assess the number of already existing initiatives for cultural exchange between the two islands and their success. In terms of secondary research, a variety of book chapters and articles have been used to assess the current state of Trinidadian-Cuban relations and to assess the interest of cultural exchange among Spanish students and language learners.

PARAMETERS

In order to conduct primary research in this area, particular parameters have been considered and were encountered throughout data collection. The first is that data collection was solely conducted in Trinidad rather than Trinidad, Tobago and Cuba due to a lack of time and funding to physically explore either of the other islands. As a result, the data collected refers to the relationship between Trinidad and Cuba. Finally, only two interviews have been conducted due to time constraints, difficulties in sourcing participants as well as the given word count may not

allow for more than 2 interviews to be conducted, transcribed and subsequently analysed to the best of the researchers ability.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1: History of Cultural Integration in the Caribbean, the Relationship Between Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago and Proposed Initiatives for Integration.

Chapter one aims to introduce the concept of cultural integration and how it has manifested itself between the Spanish and English Speaking Caribbean. It highlights Trinidad's perspective of Cuba in years gone by and ideas of cultural integration. It also gives context to the rest of the discussion of the paper: outlining past and current initiatives for integration between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba, the current interest of Trinidadians in programs that encourage cultural exchange and ideas for future opportunities for cultural exchange.

CHAPTER 2: Reflection On Past Initiatives For Cultural Exchange Between Trinidad And Cuba And The Current State Of Integration Between Both Nations.

Chapter 2 aims to reflect on past programs or initiatives with the end goal of integrating Trinidad and Cuba and their perceived success by professionals that carried them out. It also aims to examine current opportunities for cultural exchange, whether or not Spanish language learners and the general public are interested in participation and whether or not these programs and initiatives are accessible.

CHAPTER 3: Future Opportunities For Cultural Exchange Between Trinidad And Cuba

By evaluating data gathered and based on the discussion fostered in chapter 2, chapter 3 aims to identify potential strategies for initiating future opportunities and initiatives for cultural exchange between both islands. It also aims to propose projects presented by the interviewees that aim to improve integration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the 20th century, the subject of integration in the Caribbean has been a strong theme and has been a vital tool for growth (Lewis, Patsy et al.). However, much of these relations have been limited to islands who share common languages. As a result, interaction with islands that speak different languages are limited if those nations don't have strong relationships. The relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba is an example of this phenomenon even though Trinidadians have shown respect and understanding for the resilience shown by Cubans and Cubans have enjoyed Trinidadian culture (Roberts et al. pp. 35 - 52) and this is especially true when discussing the topic of cultural integration. Based on events and programs developed in the past, such as Trinidad's participation in Cuba's Festival del Fuego ("Trinidad May Miss Own Party."), reasons extend from governments ignoring the importance of culture in Caribbean societies to issues with the planning and execution of cultural exchanges and initiatives. There are multiple areas that support improving the relationship between Trinidad and Cuba like the benefits cultural exchange (Roberts et al. 175), the benefits of sharing culture to the wider region (Girvan) and the evaluation of current areas of integration between Cuba and the rest of the region (Reinosa and Laguardia). These may show that integrating cultural exchanges and programs between Trinidad and Cuba into Trinidad's public sector can foster an understanding of Cuba's relevance to the Anglophone Caribbean today and improve the awareness of their regional identity.

The encouragement of cultural exchange in university level language learning in Trinidad can be one source of integration in the Caribbean. Mideros' chapter, "Spanish Language Learning in the Anglophone Caribbean", comes to this resolution. In his work, Mideros

interviews students of the University of the West Indies (UWI) with the aim of understanding why some Spanish learners are more dedicated to learning the language when others are not. Through his research, he shows that interactions in real life that allow for students to practise the language, particularly cultural exchange, allow them to accurately perceive their level in the language and see language outside of formal assessment. Based on his research, Mideros claims that “initiatives for experiential learning ... should forcefully raise students’ awareness of their regional identity as Caribbean citizens, a region of wide linguistic richness”(Roberts et al. 174). As a result, he points out that “pedagogical and institutional efforts should be put in place to include Cuba in the students’ map of imagined communities for practice” (Roberts et al. 175). If Cuba and Trinidad were to create opportunities for students to engage in cultural exchange this would allow those students to build their awareness of their regional identity, to improve the relationship that they have with the acquired language, in this case Spanish and to open their minds to other cultures.

Our historical and cultural norms also play a substantial role in the importance of integration between the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean. In his work, Girvan shows that the islands of the Caribbean, regardless of differences in language, are bound together by a shared history of struggle, resistance and perseverance. He also highlights that the key to integrating the region is culture as “it is the means by which we develop a consciousness of ourselves as a regional people” (Girvan 25). This is one reason for building a cultural relationship between Trinidad and Cuba. Culture acts as a way of allowing the public to understand their identity in the Caribbean region and once Trinidadians can see the cultural value Cuba holds, they may be able to fully see the role the island plays in the region.

More specifically, Cuba has relations with the rest of the Caribbean in various sectors and

industries. However, culture is seen to be given lesser importance and investment in comparison to other sectors. Reinoso and Laguardia discuss different initiatives and actions towards cultural integration between Cuba and the rest of the region. The most extensive areas of the chapter are that of medicine and education and the least extensive are those of culture and renewable energy. This fact is another reason why cultural integration should be explored. Though it was the least explored, Reinoso and Laguardia mentioned varying initiatives in the realm of culture, “en 2005, Caricom y Cuba firmaron un Acuerdo de Cooperación Cultural en la II Cumbre Cuba-Caricom...Iniciativas de cooperación relevantes en el área son: el Festival del Fuego que se celebra todos los años en Santiago de Cuba y la Muestra Itinerante de Cine del Caribe” (Reinoso y Laguardia 184)¹. These strategies can allow for the public to learn of one another and participate in opportunities for professional and economic growth. If focused on between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba in particular, the natives of both islands can have these benefits as well as the benefit of building a stronger personal relationship.

The work explored highlights why cultural integration between Trinidad and Cuba is a pertinent topic of discussion. It can allow students to build a strong regional identity whilst expanding their understanding of the Spanish language in the Caribbean. Additionally, it allows the public to understand their identity as Caribbean people and gives Cuba the chance to foster relations with the Anglophone Caribbean. In addition to highlighting various initiatives, Reinoso and Laguardia show what relations between CARICOM and Cuba has to offer culturally, it also shows that culture is not as prioritised as other sectors and should be in order to encourage regionalism.

¹ “In 2005, Caricom and Cuba signed an Agreement for Cultural Cooperation in the II Cuba-Caricom Summit...Relevant initiatives for cooperation in the area are: the Fire Festival which is celebrated each year in Santiago de Cuba and the Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase” (Reinoso and Laguardia 184).

CHAPTER ONE

History of Cultural Integration in the Caribbean, the Relationship Between Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago and Proposed Initiatives for Integration

Cultural integration can be defined as the integration of one culture into another without losing the essence of the initial culture. Despite having similar backgrounds in terms of demography and history, the Spanish and English Speaking Caribbean have seen what Eduardo Vidal calls a “wall” in terms of culture. There is a sense of division between both groups despite activities to strengthen ourselves as a community. Estévez and Pascual note the same in their writing, saying that “no es un secreto de cómo, todavía hoy, algunos defensores de los intereses colonialistas o neocolonialistas quieren presentar a cada isla del Caribe como un mundo separado del resto de las mismas” (82). Historically, many influential politicians and freedom fighters in the region have seen the importance of collaboration and group support in order to leave a greater impact on the world. However, this has only been achieved to a minimal degree in areas outside of culture such as in the spheres of politics and the economy.

However, this type of relationship ended where culture began. Whilst Cuban music influenced Trinidad during the 1940s and 1950s, with Cuban rhythms such as the ‘mambo’ and the ‘cha cha cha’ impacting the world of steelpan (Pemberton 32), where cultural integration is concerned, there has been little action. In discussions with Dr. Cowie, he expressed his frustrations with the current state of integration and the lack of effort in developing consistent efforts into sharing culture between both islands. As it refers to the role of Spanish education in integration, Vidal noted that a limit to Spanish learning in the Anglophone Caribbean may not be the reason for this gap, rather, the cultural division, as discussed before, is the main threat. As

such, this chapter aims to give insight into how cultural integration between the English and Spanish Speaking Caribbean came to be, Trinidad and Cuba's perspective of one another and provides context for the rest of the research.

Historically, neither country has had residents or descents from the other join their communities. Although Cuba has seen an influx of immigrants from varying islands from the Eastern and Northern Caribbean during the era of sugar production, many of them struggled to maintain their culture and language and opted to return home after the Cuban Revolution (Estévez and Pascual 66). As a result, little English Caribbean culture has made its way into Cuba's psyche, rather, "en el curso de una generación se integraron finalmente a la nacionalidad cubana" (Estévez and Pascual 66)². Even in the case of Baraguá, the home of anglophone descendents, natives are trying their best to maintain their culture and use of English is disappearing (Rainsford). As such, it is evident that Cuba's relationship with Trinidad, given that we do not have a relationship formed through migration, is even smaller than that of Cuba's relationship with those with shared migratory patterns.

In speaking to the need for integration, Counsellor Vidal presented Norman Girvan's perspectives on integration in the Caribbean and the way in which we should help one another to become major players on the international field. Girvan states that "the bedrock of integration must be a sense, not so much of common identity - because we do not have identical identities - but what could be called a 'community of identities'; identities fashioned in response to a very special historical experience; an experience that we all share in one way or another" (129). Here, Girvan acknowledges that our historical similarities are rooted in colonialism and the sad reality of being 'play-things' for great western powers. Although this is burdensome it can be

² "in the course of a generation, they finally integrated themselves into the Cuban nationality (Estévez and Pascual 66)"

repurposed as a foundation for creating relationships among our islands. It has resulted in the mixture of the varying cultural identities that we hold in the region. As such, his main proposition, echoed by Vidal, is that though economics is important and has been a primary focus for regional organisations such as CARICOM, it can't be our main focus. Rather the "community of identities" (Girvan 129) is our strength and should be recruited more than it is now. In our discussion, Vidal built off of this idea and proposed that the English and Spanish speaking Caribbean should come together and use our commonalities in culture to not only become unified but to make a mark on the world stage. Although we may be relatively small and may have varying issues in terms of establishing an economic mark on the rest of the world, our cultural resources are plentiful and should be recruited.

Given this plethora of cultural resources, one may wonder why historical patriots of Hispanophone and Anglophone islands had not made efforts for integration outside of their respective linguistic groups and why the clear disconnect between both groups still exists in the present day. Vidal explained that whilst visionaries of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic recognized the importance of cooperation and unification both Spanish speaking and English Speaking islands dealt with a more immediate threat of the overarching colonial powers: Cuba was focused on freeing itself from Spain and the English Speaking Caribbean was still under British rule. As such, though the idea of integration has always been present, it had not always been to the forefront of our concerns historically.

In reference to the modern view of Cuba from Trinidad's viewpoint and vice versa, many Cubans and Trinbagonians are not aware of or are invested in fostering a cultural relationship with one another. This lack of knowledge can be attributed to the aforementioned points, in which Cuba and Trinidad have not had direct contact with each other historically. To combat this, the

following chapters explore past and current efforts towards integration whilst establishing why the current state of integration is minimal, offering suggestions for amplifying efforts and the benefits of using such strategies. As Girvan explains, “the construction of the region, in our concrete circumstances, must necessarily take account of the imperative of ethnic cultural and psychological self-emancipation which derives from the peculiar and unique conditions under which Africans, by comparison with other ethnicities, were incorporated into the labour regimes of this hemisphere...” and as a result, we must first understand our cultural and historical context before assessing the best strategies of improving our current relationship for future generations (17).

CHAPTER TWO

Reflection On Past Initiatives For Cultural Exchange Between Trinidad And Cuba And The Current State Of Integration Between Both Nations.

The object of integration has been central to the Caribbean for as many years as each island nation has gained independence. The similarities of Caribbean nations began from the Taíno and Kalinago societies and deepened with colonisation and the coming of European powers, Africans, Asians and other racial groups. However, within recent years, our key source of reliance has stemmed from efforts towards regionalism particularly in growing trade and economy in a push for development. This first came with the West Indian Federation then with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and finally the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) amongst other organisations, aimed at expanding cultural relations beyond the English Speaking Caribbean (Lewis, Patsy, et al. 4). According to Lewis, Patsy, et al., the primary goal of CARICOM at its birth was “integrating the economies of its members, pursuing functional cooperation across a wide range of areas and, in a more limited way, coordinating foreign policy”(3). This, however, has focused more on economic relations rather than cultural ones. In terms of relations between CARICOM and Cuba, Lewis, Patsy et. al. stated that “Cuba’s relationship with CARICOM has run longer and deeper with cooperation in education and health care delivery, including the provision of nurses and doctors, and the construction of health infrastructure” (5).

This is also reflective of Trinidad’s relationship with Cuba, in which our main relations are in healthcare. Cuba has sent brigades of nurses to Trinidad and Tobago on many occasions,

inclusive of during the COVID-19 pandemic (see fig. 1). One such case occurred in June of 2016, where the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian interviewed former health minister Fuad Khan to discuss details surrounding the group's arrival. The article states that, “the group included 14 doctors and 56 nurses. The 14 doctors comprised 11 general practice physicians ... and one ENT specialist, one nephrologist and one paediatrician who would serve within the hospital system” (“Fuad Welcomes New Batch of Cuban Doctors and Nurses.”). Trinidad and Tobago has also contributed to Cuban society in various ways. The nation has also become the home of Cuban migrants throughout the years and has continued to welcome Cuban families (see fig. 2). They have also held a tribute to Fidel Castro to stand in solidarity with the nation on the 7th anniversary of his disappearance (“Tribute to Fidel Is Paid from Trinidad and Tobago.”).

In order to assess the current state of cultural integration between both Trinidad and Cuba, one must first look at initiatives or programs that have been held in the past, their effectiveness and their popularity. Only then will we truly know the best way to move forward. In order to grasp an idea of former efforts at integrating Trinidad and Cuba, Dr. Lancelot Cowie, Trinidad’s former ambassador to Cuba, was able to give insight. In our discussion, Dr. Cowie spoke of his experience working with the embassy and different initiatives, events and programs that were held with the purpose of the interchange of culture. He mentioned a program between Cuba and Trinidad’s National Science Centre in which the island requested English interpretation services from the centre. He also spoke of different workshops and exchanges held with Trinidadian students to perform in Cuba. Another example of exchange developed in the past was when the TT-Cuba Educational and Cultural Exchange programme aided in sending students from Success Laventille Secondary school to play pan in Cuba (Persad). The TTEC continued

this exchange by inviting Cuban dancers from the Havana Compass Dance troupe to Trinidad to perform and hold various workshops and educational forums in 2015 and 2019 (Neaves).

In terms of Trinidad's presence in Cuba, Cuba has shown an interest, although small in the display of Trinidadian culture. One example was the display of Trinidadian culture in Cuba's Festival del Caribe, also known as Festival de Fuego, on two occasions. On the first occasion in 2011, the festival was dedicated to Trinidadian culture ("T&T Culture on Show at Cuban Festival Del Caribe."), however, Trinidad was unable to assemble a delegation in time to have local representation ("Trinidad May Miss Own Party."). On the second occasion in 2018, the steelpan was incorporated into celebrations by a Cuban steelband named El Cobre (see fig. 3). Trinidadian pan arranger Merlin Mill travelled to Santiago de Cuba to see the groups arrangement live and ended up donating two tenor pans with the promise of sending a pan tuner to the island as well as "two more tenors, two pairs of double seconds, two pairs of double guitars and one six-bass" (Williams). This collection of events shows that within the 2010's, notably before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, both Trinidad and Cuba made efforts for integration.

However, after meeting with Dr. Cowie, it came to light that even though there have been strides to integrate both countries in other sectors, such as trade, economy and healthcare as mentioned above, little is currently being done in developing the realm of culture. Other initiatives include Trinidad's donation of books to the José Martí National Library in 2023, for example, but this is one in a few ("The National Library of Trinidad and Tobago Donates Books to the 'José Martí' National Library."). Dr. Cowie expressed his frustration at the current state of cultural integration between both nations which, currently, could be much better. Whilst him, the Trinidadian Embassy in Cuba and other national entities were able to organise events and

programs to share Trinidadian culture with Cuba, he expressed that it was not without its internal struggles. Currently, our main source of integration is the Cuban Medical Brigade, as mentioned earlier, that sends nurses to Trinidad on a regular basis. However, this is one of a few current efforts for integration between both islands. This is backed by the confirmation of Dr. Eduardo Vidal, who noted that there is, unfortunately, a cultural wall between the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean preventing ease of integration.

Based on the secondary research presented above regarding cultural integration now and in the past and points mentioned during primary research, I feel that whilst there is tangible evidence of efforts toward integration, these efforts lack quantity and quality. In particular, there are few cases of exchange and those that are available lack the requisite consistency. Additionally, Dr. Laguardia highlighted a lack of knowledge amongst the public and minimal funding on the part of the government as additional reasons. Dr. Laguardia pointed out that this lack of opportunity may come because the public has a lack of knowledge surrounding possibilities for growth in culture. She gave the example of the Transcultura program funded by UNESCO. This is a scholarship programme dedicated to integrating Cuba, the Caribbean and Europe through the arts by allowing Caribbean entrepreneurs and artisans to attend various courses in relation to the arts and entrepreneurship (TRANSCULTURA SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME 3) (see fig. 4). Given that it is funded by UNESCO, Caribbean governments bear minimal costs, unfortunately, many students are unaware of programs like this and the number of applicants tends to be low. Another pitfall is that both countries dedicate a small amount of their budgets to maintaining and supporting culture and as a result our cultural necessities are normally overlooked.

In terms of consistency and a small quantity of available exchanges, many of the examples above have had only one or two instalments or have simply been discontinued. For example, in the case of the TTEC exchange program, the 2015 and the 2019 instalments are the only ones found during research. This is similar in the case of Trinidad neglecting to select and send a delegation to Cuba for the Festival del Fuego. It is evident that although we do understand that we have to create opportunities to integrate - if we didn't there would be no exchanges available - this lack of consistency and evidence of poor planning shows that we have not yet learnt why cultural integration is important. It also shows that we have not seen the importance of setting the foundation for achieving deep integration. The reason why integration is important is answered through the results of successful examples of integration above: focusing on cultural integration can create links that allow Cubans and Trinidadians to deeper understand one another and can encourage curiosity amongst both groups and this result cannot be achieved without consistent effort. This importance and suggestions for creating consistency and maintaining integration will be addressed in the following chapter.

Cultural integration between Trinidad and the Hispanic world has existed for years and Girvan expresses this possibility in his chapter of the book *Pan Caribbean Integration: Beyond CARICOM*. Girvan recalled the region's joint efforts of resistance that played a part in the construction of West-Indian society as it exists today. He creates the connection between the themes of struggle and culture by illustrating his thoughts during his attendance to Cuba's Festival de Fuego, where he witnessed the interaction of not just Cuban and Trinidadian culture, but the involvement of Jamaican and Martinique as well:

“There is no question in my mind that culture, widely defined, holds the key to wider Caribbean integration. It is the means by which we develop a consciousness of ourselves

as a regional people, and of fostering mutual understanding and respect across the boundaries of language and ethnicity ... I came away with a strong sense of the power of music, dance and spiritualism as the common language of Caribbean people.” (Girvan, pp. 25-26)

This excerpt, in addition to the rest of Girvan’s assertions, shows that given our shared, painful past and our collective desire to establish and build a regional identity, it is imperative that we focus on cultural integration as a means to understand one another and develop Caribbean society as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

Future Opportunities For Cultural Exchange Between Trinidad And Cuba

Understanding the past and current context of cultural integration between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba via the outline in chapter 2 leads the way to highlighting potential strategies for creating consistency and maintaining future opportunities and initiatives. This will be done by explaining, discussing and analysing the information found via primary research. In interviews held with Dr. Vidal and Dr. Laguardia and the discussion with Dr. Cowie, it is established that it is possible to integrate cultural exchanges and programs between both Trinidad and Cuba, however, it would be a difficult feat to achieve without the dedication of both parties involved. This is substantiated by the results of the past and current initiatives and the programs discussed in chapter 2. Though some initiatives explored have been successful and all have been open to the public, they lacked quantity and consistency. As such, using an understanding of the past and current state of cultural integration, the potential strategies and projects proposed by Vidal and Laguardia for improving cultural integration and Cuban-Trinidadian relations will be presented and discussed.

Before analysing and discussing the data collected during the interview process, the results of each interview must be presented. In each interview, respondents were asked about their opinion on cultural integration throughout the Caribbean and between Trinidad and Cuba as well as their ideas on strategies and initiatives for improving integration. In addition to her reasonings about why Trinidad and Cuba may not have explored cultural integration to the degree that we are truly capable of as seen in chapter 2, Dr. Laguardia also offered her recommendations as to how we may be able to build this type of relationship. Her first

recommendations are to create governmental agreements and improve our existing relationship through stronger policies. Vidal's views align with these as well as he also pointed out that if our future interests as nations are not aligned, we will not be able to succeed. As it relates to governmental agreements, LaGuardia proposes that if we are able to create formal commitments and push ourselves to pursue them to completion, we will be able to successfully improve our cultural relationship.

Having governmental agreements also helps to build our relationship in general in terms of policy creation. One example used by Dr. LaGuardia was the creation of policies that support trade; if we export our products to Cuba and import products from Cuba, this allows consumers to become aware of what we can offer to one another. Another suggestion on creating mutual visibility was by having communication between the respective culture and tourism ministries. Having a constant back and forth between these ministries can create new ideas or concepts that can push a cultural product that showcases both cultures to the world.

Dr. LaGuardia also recommended establishing and marketing cultural spaces for the collaboration of entrepreneurs and artists and the engagement of the private sector. LaGuardia's first recommendation for this point was to establish cultural spaces for artists and entrepreneurs. She drew a comparison to that of Festival del Fuego and CARIFESTA Music and Arts Festival. CARIFESTA is a good illustration of this idea as it is a forum for musicians, food vendors, tradesmen and other creators to share their craft throughout the Caribbean (Digital Library of the Caribbean) (see fig. 5). The engagement of the private sector in integration can also help as it introduces another source of trade and economic exchange. Thus, the financial burden of creating and maintaining cultural initiatives is not solely the responsibility of the governments, which do not always have the resources to invest in culture. In this way, establishing cultural

spaces and engaging the private sector helps to reduce the financial burden of investment and also increases visibility of our artists.

Having regional support and engaging the rest of CARICOM in relationship building with Cuba can also allow for the rest of the region to see what investing in culture has to offer. Dr. Laguardia explained that establishing these suggestions can grow sectors such as music, visual arts, drama, theatre and film among others. Improving these industries can help curb brain drain by giving young creatives and entrepreneurs the resources to develop their careers and contribute to the wider region. The Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión (EICTV)³ in Cuba is an example as it allows students from Caribbean member states of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA)⁴ to attend classes on a scholarship (Dominica News Online).

The interview conducted with Eduardo Vidal allowed him to explain why integration between the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean is necessary. He also presented a step by step process he developed for integrating the Cuban and Trinidadian arts industries through the spheres of music, carnival and education. This is a three step process in which these aspects are interconnected and dependent on one another. In terms of music, he noted that this artform may very well be “the most transversal throughout society” and can destroy the perceived cultural wall between the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean. In order to do this, he proposes that local Cuban and Trinidadian artists can work together to develop a new rhythm that equally expresses the features of a Trinidadian and a Cuban music genre, such as calypso and salsa. In this process, respect and importance should be given to the genres but still go into the future intentionally and with a sense of togetherness. Once support is given from more popular artists

³ The International School of Cinema and Television

⁴ The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America

from both countries, it would be possible to create a genre that is relatable and can have international reach.

In addition to music, Vidal also speaks about the benefits of carnival; carnival can act as a way of sharing the new rhythm he discussed in the first part of his model. Cuban carnivals are not as grand as that of the English speaking Caribbean, thus, collaborating with Trinidad can allow for the improvement of Cuban carnival, contributing to their economy. It can also be a good way of bringing Trinidadian artists to Cuba and to introduce the aforementioned rhythm. The final point proposed by Vidal is that of creating a government funded school of the arts in Trinidad and Tobago, based upon Cuba's Fábrica de Arte Cubano, a renovated factory used as a showcase for displaying the work of different Cuban contemporary artists (Fábrica de Arte Cubano) (see fig. 6). This proposed school would offer classes to impoverished youth in different areas in the arts such as music and visual arts, with the goal of producing artistes that can go onto the world stage and compete internationally. According to Dr. Laguardia, Cuba has been involved in a similar project in Jamaica with the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts (EMCVPA) which is dedicated to pushing film, theatre and visual arts in Jamaica.

This presentation and explanation of the data collected gives way to a detailed discussion surrounding the ideas, topics and potential strategies that have been described by both participants. The opinions and recommendations given by both participants come with a plethora of possible benefits not only for Trinidad and Cuba but also for the rest of the Caribbean. The first and most pertinent to this investigation is building a stronger regional identity and contributing to Caribbean regionalism by dividing the barrier between the Anglophone and Hispanophone Caribbean. Dr. Laguardia's contribution confirms that integrating, improving and

adding to the already existing cultural exchanges and programs between Trinidad and Cuba and making them available to the public can foster an understanding of Cuba's relevance to the Anglophone Caribbean today and improve the awareness of their regional identity. An example of her recommendation to create more cultural spaces is seen to be successful in the aforementioned case of the TT-Cuba Educational and Cultural Exchange Program. Here, Trinidadian students exposed Cubans to Trinidadian music and Cuban dancers educated Trinidadians on Cuban dance and culture.

The presentation of Vidal's model for integration between Trinidad and Cuba also brings forth core truths about Caribbean regionalism and the talents that we possess. In fact, an example of Vidal's suggestion to create an equal blend of Cuban and Trinidadian rhythms has been seen in action between Jamaican and Chilean culture through the Chilean reggae musician Quique Neira, who blends reggae music with Chilean beats to give a balanced rhythm that represents the characteristics of the musical heritage of both countries (Quique Neira). Particularly Vidal's use of music and carnival as the key drivers of integration are some of the most useful as both aspects of culture can extend past linguistic ties and can allow us to become a cultural superpower if managed correctly.

The strategies discussed in interviews can also be seen as financially and professionally beneficial for the governments and publics of both nations. Vidal's use of carnival and education as pillars in his model give financial and professional value as artists are able to create employment and to interact with one another. Carnival itself spells a financial benefit for both nations because it is also a major tourist opportunity as well as a cultural one. If Cuba is able to learn from Trinidadian carnival as he proposes, opportunities to fill local hotels and generate business for small local enterprises such as car rentals, restaurants, mas makers, event promoters

and stores will rise and aid in improving the country's economy. A combination of Laguardia and Vidal's recommendations may also help with creating professional benefits. Creating governmental agreements or programs as proposed by Dr. Laguardia can generate interest among Trinidadian entrepreneurs and creators and allow them to go to Cuba to teach them about the intricacies of mas making.

By extension, integrating Trinidadian and Cuban cultures can give youth enough opportunities to reduce both brain drain and delinquency by increasing the viability of careers in the arts. If the public can see the economic and professional highlights in the preceding point, the respect for careers in the arts and local artforms has the potential to increase. Vidal's recommendation for a school of the arts does the same by providing quality education while also giving the opportunity to create employment among at-risk youth.

Now that we have established reasons why integration isn't where it should be, the benefits of getting it to where it should and existing examples of each, a holistic review can show whether or not the proposed suggestions can improve integration and solidify Cuba's Caribbean identity. In order to implement strategies we must review why integration is not currently effective: a lack of consistency, minimal available exchanges, low funding and a lack of public knowledge. As such, although the suggestions offered are optimistic and measurable goals, we must first increase funding for cultural exchanges and learn how to be more consistent in our offerings. Once policies and programs are developed and implemented, they require consistent effort into further marketing, monitoring, evaluating and implementing improvements to the existing system. If we are able to do these 4 steps effectively, we can then invest in and implement a higher number of exchanges and opportunities without worry, such as those suggested during interviews. Consideration must also go into marketing these opportunities: we

cannot see a return on our investment if the public lacks knowledge of the available opportunities. Without any of these things, Cuba cannot fully experience or know about any of the benefits of Trindiadian - Cuban integration on a large scale.

As it relates to the contribution of Spanish to cultural integration, both Dr. Laguardia and Vidal agree that it is not a large barrier. Although the language barrier is one that will always exist and will always have its challenges both professionals maintain that as it relates to culture, it isn't a principal issue. Laguardia explained that many Cubans have knowledge of English and our understanding of Spanish in Trinidad is inevitably rising with the recent introduction of Venezuelan culture into the society and the inclusion of Spanish classes into the secondary school curriculum and select primary schools. Even in cases where language is a barrier, we have access to translation and interpretation services. In my discussion with Dr.Cowie, he posed the question of whether or not people need language to understand different parts of culture, such as visual art, music or dance. Based on this data acquired during collection, I am in agreement with these three professionals. Granted that language will invariably always be a perceived barrier to integration, based on the research conducted and data collected, it is not a very large one. With the growth of globalisation, the language barrier becomes less intimidating with the more connected we become. As echoed by Dr.Cowie, artforms can speak for themselves and people may not necessarily need to understand a language to be able to appreciate different forms of art.

If we fail to understand the true necessity of cultural integration, we put our investments in danger and stop Trinidad-Cuba relations from reaching its true potential. If finances and effort are not put into marketing and maintaining a program, the public cannot enjoy it. Though we have an untapped source of potential in both nations and the combination of the two can be successful, we do not yet have the foundation on which we can build. This is not to say that we

cannot find success, but we must first learn the necessity of fostering a healthy cultural sphere. Additionally, an appreciation of Cuban culture and the role of Cuba in the Caribbean can be reached without necessarily having widespread understanding of the Spanish language; our desire to connect with one another through our art is enough. Thus, my proposal is that we put our focus on understanding the necessity of cultural integration and improving our consistency in offering quality initiatives and exchanges. Once the initiatives proposed throughout this chapter are introduced, they can subsequently be monitored and improved for the benefit of the public. The discussions fostered with Dr. Laguardia and Eduardo Vidal as well as Dr. Cowie's contribution to understanding Trinidad's relations with Cuba all give strong reason to why Trinidad's cultural relationship with Cuba should be nurtured. The proposals presented and analysed throughout this chapter can offer a stepping stone for widening Caribbean regionalism; rather than the Anglo and Hispanophone Caribbean being separate, we can begin to view 'both Caribbeans' as one, as it is geographically and historically.

CONCLUSION

A lack of understanding and respect regarding the importance of culture, rather than language, is the main culprit for why Trinidad and Cuba have made few steps towards creating cultural relations. As it currently stands, the realm of culture is underfunded across the region and many citizens do not see its value. More specifically, whilst Cuba and Trinidad have a relationship, and Trinidadians have expressed a positive view of Cubans in the past, we still have a long way to go. We must learn the best ways of providing consistent and ample exchanges with the requisite marketing so that citizens are aware of the opportunities available and both nations can see a return on their investment.

Based on the research conducted, it is my view that if our goal is to improve the current state of cultural integration and widen our knowledge of Cuba's relevance to the English Speaking Caribbean, we should look at integration as a step by step process. If we first create a foundational understanding of culture as a vital part of the Caribbean identity within the government and among the general public, we can then create initiatives and programs that the government is willing to invest in and be consistent with. In order to do so, it is my suggestion that we invest more in culture ministries. This can allow these ministries to better market existing opportunities and can allow them to maintain and improve these initiatives as time goes on. From there, both nations can focus on creating a Memorandum of Understanding that encourages the creation of policies and legislation which encourage further steps to integration. Doing this allows initiatives and programs to be continued and maintained, rather than being held for a few years at a time and subsequently abandoned. This may also open up greater cooperation in the aforementioned areas of trade and tourism between both nations.

All in all, implementing the suggested strategies and initiatives can foster an understanding of Cuba's relevance to the Anglophone Caribbean today and improve the awareness of their regional identity. Cultural integration is among the best strategies of building relations between islands and building a sense of identity within the Caribbean community. Cuba and Trinidad have more similarities than we realise and though we do not share historical ties and are far apart geographically, we have shared cultural characteristics. Combining them can give us the chance to find new areas of success for Cubans and Trinidadians.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Questions for Dr. Jaqueline Laguardia Martinez

Do you think that today there is a strong relationship between Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago?

Do you think that Cubans and Trinidadians are interested in fostering cultural relations? What do you think would be the best way to achieve this?

Do you think that there are currently enough programs or initiatives for cultural exchanges between Trinidad and Cuba? Why or why not? What do you think are the repercussions of this?

In Cuba, are there cultural programs and initiatives for persons from the Anglophone Caribbean to learn more about Cuban culture?

Do you think that any existing programs or initiatives are adequately accessible by the general public?

What kind of impact do you think programs pushing cultural integration can have on the general public?

Do you think that these types of programs would be beneficial for Spanish learners in Trinidad and Tobago?

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions for Eduardo Vidal

Do you think that there are currently enough programs or initiatives for cultural exchanges between Trinidad and Cuba? Why or why not?

Do you think that any existing programs or initiatives are adequately accessible by the general public?

If new programs or initiatives for cultural exchange between the two islands were introduced or improved, what industries or sectors do you think they would be the most impactful in?

What kind of impact do you think these types of programs can have on the general public?

Do you think that these types of programs would be beneficial for Spanish learners in Trinidad and Tobago?

APPENDIX C: Interview with Dr. Jaqueline Laguardia Martinez

Laguardia: Okay so the first thing I advise you to do is look into CARIFESTA. That's an interesting platform that will allow for cultural exchange especially for artists and cultural entrepreneurs and people working in cultural ministries to know each other to know about the work they do so that could be an interesting space to do so. Another platform that could be used and I know has been used by the Caribbean in the past is our festivals and cultural events that happen in Cuba. For instance, check the Fiesta del Fuego in Santiago de Cuba. It has been usually an event that happens every year and again it engages a lot of Cuban artists and also Caribbean artists as well, so this also a platform that can allow for artists and creators to know each other because how you're going to promote cultural exchange, cultural exchange of what? You need to know what exists to find the interest of each part to see where there can be some kind of complementation, what is new to each other, what they can learn from each other, so that is a good way to do that. First thing is places, events, spaces to get to know each other and to create together. That would be a good one. Another possibility that I believe has been underexplored is to have government to government agreements in the area of culture and this is interesting because we have seen tremendous dynamism in other cooperation areas like health like education so what could be the difficulties trying to promote cultural exchange and trying to promote cultural initiative. I know that in the past Cuba signed a cultural agreement with the OECS countries. Specifically, there is a cultural agreement that it is specifically in the area of handcraft and this type of handmade artistry. But this is a good first step so what do they agree on? what is the agreement for is about allowing Artist and handcraft people to travel to showcase their work to try to make some type of cultural industry type of engagement and we need to know what the agreement is for and if it's interesting maybe Trinidad can check on it and try to replicate that in order to expand that.

Interviewer: But why do you think we haven't, well not that we haven't so far, but why do you think they haven't been much efforts to do that cause I saw we've had 1 or 2 attempts like the Festival del Fuego, I can't remember how many years ago, but I saw that Trinidad, we didn't make many efforts to send our musicians to Cuba.

Laguardia: I believe there could be first, there is not enough knowledge about what art can offer. Maybe there is not enough, again, enough knowledge about the possibilities of each art. I mean to be honest when we talk about the Caribbean in Cuba people can recognize very easily Jamaica but a few people know about Trinidad and Tobago. So I mean an important part to start here has to do with visibility and you'll learn about the other allowing spaces for visibility. While it's true I believe here is that there has not been enough financial support to start doing this, because traveling in the Caribbean is expensive. Going to Cuba from Trinidad is expensive and the other way back is expensive so if there is not some type of mechanism for funding that could be provided partly by government or partly by entrepreneurs or the private sector it could be very difficult to actually have any initiative happening. Maybe it would be interesting to explore mechanisms that could engage the private sector into this type of cultural exchange and there has been a lot of conversation in the Caribbean about cultural industries and the creative economy but so far is a lot of conversation and little has been done because I believe that there is a real interest of the private sector to promote this type of cultural exchange because they understand it could be financially beneficial and there could be more involvement on that but again this is not and this is not something that will just fall out of the tree there has to be a certain knowledge first

for the private sector to assess what are the opportunities in this sector that I believe are huge but I believe they are untapped. So maybe some type of Partnership? Ministeries of cultural and private sector trying to explore options in cultural industries and creatives economies between Trinidad and Tobago could be a first part but it needs people to sit down to see what they can do to do to have a clear strategy to identify places to do so like CARIFESTA, like Festival del Fuego cause otherwise I mean it's not it doesn't happen spontaneously I mean it's not like somebody 1 day at entrepreneur is going to wake up and say oh I can do money by selling artwork from Trinidad in Cuba, it's not going to happen. So I believe that doing one thing is that there is not enough recognition in both countries of the possibilities of this cultural exchange from a cultural perspective but also from an economic perspective. So I believe there is an opportunity in this area. There are also some initiative that I believe has been on underexploited for instance I know that UNESCO now has a huge project that is called TRANSCULTURA but I have not seen many people from Trinidad and Tobago applying it and UNESCO give a lot of funding to it and there are some of the cultural initiatives that actually has been organized and scheduled to happen in Cuba.

Interviewer: Cause I remember in research I came across that but I didn't find very much in details to see...

Laguardia: But I mean the platform there so. I Believe the platform is in english and Spanish so, and it is under support by UNESCO so it means that in terms of the costs they will be covering part of the cost of this initiative of cultural exchange so why don't we see people from Trinidad actually applying for it. It's something that is known about in the cultural and creative community in Trindad? I don't know so I mean there are spaces but they are little known they are little used and I believe that the first thing has to do with recognizing the potential of the cultural exchange and have the political will to promote it and to engage private sector. And I'm not talking about huge enterprises because usually cultural industries happens in the field of small medium businesses and this is something that I believe is important in the Caribbean to promote small medium businesses so why we're not doing that. We're not giving the opportunity to our artist to actually be economically successful. So I think that these are good things to start thinking about.

Interviewer: As well, in terms of the actual public why do you think that Trinidadians and Cubans don't really seem to have much of an interest in one another?

Laguardia: Because they don't know each other. If you talk about Trinidad and Tobago in Cuba a few people will know maybe people that have studied the Caribbean or people that had family in the region but the truth is that even in terms of geographic distance they are pretty much at the very end of the Caribbean. Cuba is pretty much at the top end of the Northeast part and Trinidad is in the Southwest so even in terms of physical distance there is a lot of distance to cover so the basic reason is because they do not know each other enough. There is no in terms of the Caribbean community in Cuba we had in the 20th century a lot of Caribbean people going to Cuba to work in the sugar plantations, during the sugar cane harvest. And we have people mostly from Jamaica and we had people from other of the small Islands from Haiti and so I mean we never had even migration of Trinidad and Tobago going to Cuba in the past so people in Cuba will be more familiar with Haitian with Jamaican culture even with I mean there are communities in people that speak Jamaican creole and Haitian patois because they were people that established themselves there and they brought their culture and they brought their own

traditions but we didn't have that with Trinidad. So there is no recent links in terms of migration patterns, there is a lot of geographic distance and also I believe that both Cuba and Trinidad in terms of culture, and it also has to do with their own economic model, have preferred to establish links with other countries. Because the economic exchange of Trinidad has very little about exporting Cuban goods or or services and same with Cuba. So you still have to know a country and get an interest because of the things you consume and you use in your everyday life. In Cuba you don't see anything that says maybe in Trinidad and Tobago and the same here so how are you going to know each other? Trade is what usually knowledge and cultural exchange but if our trade is quite insignificant how are 2 people are going to know each other. We would need to Find explicit mechanisms to promote this type of move to knowledge that today is quite nonexistent. Cuba understands itself both as Latin-American and Caribbean country is so in terms of cultural proximity and even because of the language we will find easier for us to identify culturally with Latin America in many cases and in the case of Trinidad I believe the people are more comfortable in the English-speaking Caribbean so this is kind of your cultural environment so it will be very difficult to develop a cultural interest of something that is out of your comfort Space so again this is why you have to have a real political will and policy, you've got to promote that because I mean people usually get very difficult to move away from their comfort zone and the cultural comfort zones here are quite different.

Interviewer: Well in that case then language itself wouldn't necessarily be the largest barrier.

Laguardia: I believe it is a barrier it was more a barrier in the past but in today's world most Cubans especially the young generation they understand English and the good thing about culture is that sometimes language is not the main barrier because when you are when you are sharing artistic creation in terms of dance in terms of visual arts there are other kind of languages that is not necessarily the spoken language. We also have mechanisms today, if we want to know the literature of each country, we have translation. Trinidad I believe that the knowledge of language is growing whether you like it or not. So it's not an obstacle I mean it is an obstacle but it's not something that cannot be surmounted if you have the will to do so. It's not English and I English and it's Spanish. It's not English and I don't know, Polish. They are widely spoken languages in today's world.

Interviewer: Do you think that there are enough opportunities for students to take advantage of these things?

Laguardia: If students knew about them yes I believe that for instance in the TRANSCULTURA project and there were initiatives that were targeting young people. I mean the segment between 18 and 35 years old so I believe that if we didn't have more young people joining it's because maybe they didn't know about it and they're also I know that for instance in Cuba we have an international film school and I don't know about Trinidad and Tobago people that study there I mean there are films directors in Trinidad that follow studies in Cuba but in terms of the financial support to do that I don't know if there are enough mechanisms today as they were in the past because usually students are people that is in the University they are gaining training, professional knowledge and that really do not have the financial means to actually travel to one place or the other or even to pay for tuition. I don't see any Cuban students today being able to pay fees in any University in Trinidad. They are not CARICOM nationals, they get 0 benefit of any preferential target so they cannot afford it and if they could afford it they would go to study to somewhere in American University or going to Europe or the US so if we don't have the

mechanisms to attract young people that make them follow some courses or postgraduate studies in the other country it's not going to happen. Because if you have money to study abroad in Trinidad the first thing they would think is about US Canada UK. It's the same in Cuba.

Interviewer: Because even like you said in terms of knowledge I find that in UWI itself even though we do have an international office who has more than 200 agreements most people don't really know about the opportunities that are there or know about the processes and even then it's still a situation of finances.

Laguardia: It is the same in the case of Cuba, so if we don't have a real commitment to make it happen it's not going to emerge out of nothing at the same time I believe that the potential gains culturally speaking and economically speaking are huge, but we just need to make it work.

Interviewer: In Cuba, are there any specific cultural programs not just for Trinidad but for the wider Anglophone Caribbean that could benefit us in any way?

Laguaria: I believe there has been initiative with specific countries. For instance I know about this OECS agreement, I know there has been a long Time project of building an art school, I'm not sure if it's in Jamaica. It is something that has been under discussion for many many years. I believe the name of the school is supposed to be in the Edna Manely school of arts in Jamaica, it is a joint initiative between Cuba and CARICOM but I don't know if that has been finished because, again, of financial constraints. Because and usually when you have to cut money culture is the first thing that gets the cutting, and it's the same here. But I believe there has been efforts, I don't believe all of them they have been successful so I believe we can have opportunities to explore and use more efficiently what we have agreed so far and develop new areas. I don't know if there is any specific agreement between Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba and terms of culture. I believe that there was something that was signed in the last trade fair that we had in Cuba with one Trinidad and Tobago entrepreneur in the area of art. To get more detail on that I suggest you to contact Jude Carrasquero. He is one of Trinidad and Tobago's representatives of export TT in Cuba and I remember he was present in the signing of this document. I don't know if it's an MOU like a memorandum of understanding but there has been some little approaches but to get more knowledge of that the best thing for you is to explore with Jude Carrasquero because since he's the head of the export TT in Cuba he will know what has been done in the last year and he can tell you yes in the area of culture we have had ABCD F, this is what's working, this is not working.

Interviewer: What impact, I know you said there would be a economic impact and what other impact do you think would have that there would be if we were to create strong alliances how many ever years in the future if our alliances were extremely strong, let's say like how we are with Barbados or Jamaica or something like that.

Laguardia: It would be of the benefit of a Caribbean community as a whole because in terms of building a Caribbean spirit of cooperation out of the CARICOM and involving all Caribbean states and I believe that that would be a good initiative to make this Caribbean community to work stronger to know each other better, to understand more about the Caribbean identity or the Caribbean identities. It can have benefits not only in terms of cultural development because artists will benefit, they will learn from each other, they will have the terms of creation in terms of joint creative cooperation. There are efforts terms of modern art that are quite expensive for instance a dance company, that's very expensive, maybe we can do some effort that could be

regionally supported and that will be the less honourous for each of the countries because everyone could bring their own material resources and human resources. we have we have very small Islands the same that we face constraints in terms of material professional and human resources is going to happen in the area of art but there could be initiative that could actually benefit from joint cooperation. For instance like having a strong and solid film industry. This is very expensive maybe there could be opportunities to develop the below Caribbean projects to support film industry and to Have a film industry with certain and with a wider international presence and an international exposure. But how you do that? And again it's not just about the material resources but the professional resources and the human resources. So this type of exchange can allow to enlarge the cultural and creative community and have joint efforts to have creative initiatives. In terms of cultural efforts, you have that you have this professional growing of our artist you have the potential economic benefit you have also the impact on building a stronger Caribbean identity or identities that different but coexist in the Caribbean Community And we can also Give more room for young professionals that might would like to explore opportunities to develop their own artistic interest within the region and not necessarily to leave because they don't find platform they Don't Find finances, they don't find resources, they don't even have the artistic hunger... Even in terms of promoting a different type of tourism, if you Want To project the Caribbean out of the idea of sun and beach you need to provide a strong opportunity for visitors and cultural tourism is a huge part of that but again it doesn't grow out of nothing.If you want a tourists to be interested to come to Trinidad not only because of the carnival but because they understand that they can have the opportunity to enjoy all their cultural options that will that will allow for a sustainability of curiosity that is not only seasonal but it also will attract the interests of people with resources with other types of curiosities, that is the protection of the environment, and there are countries that profit tremendously off of cultural tourism basically Europe live of cultural tourism this is what they do. And when you have huge international film festivals people go there. So this is something we need to promote in the region if we really want to move out of the reduced understanding of tourism and sun and beach and carnival. I mean this is okay but we need to do more to have a sustainable activity and actually earn more without being so aggressive and violence.

Interviewer: And then what other things do you think that we can show it to the wider world?

Laguardia: Our main strength is our unique culture and we have more than you know. The Caribbean culture is quite unique because it's a little bit of everything that has managed to be unique in the Caribbean you can trace influence from everywhere from Africa, from Europe, from Asia and all of that has been melted into a very singular and unique way of expressing culture and art. So we have potential to do that in not only the carnival but dance, even in terms of our cooking traditions and we have so much of that to show but we do it not enough nationally, and less regionally and less bilaterally, so we can do a lot of that but again it does not fall out just because. Most countries that are successful as cultural powers it's because they are clear support of their states to do so. When you have a solid entrepreneurial class able to do so and you can support the artist the state profits.

Interviewer: In January, I worked for Tourism Trinidad Limited with the cruise ships trying to interpret for the visitor guides And a lot of the time what some of them were saying is that's the interests of the tourists tend to go more to shopping and so when they would come off the boat we would direct them, either they would have their own set tours and they would go to like the mall that they would go straight to the beach when they walk out they would want to go

shopping so it sent them Frederick street or something like that but they don't necessarily have desire to go around with Savannah for example and see the magnificent 7 or something like that or you even like tours to the caroni to the Blue sanctuary for example.

Laguardia: We do not offer them the type of shopping that they want to take place. Nobody's coming here for ... if you really want to make a solid cultural industry sector you need to make sure that you give good quality and unique products to artists. You need to have galleries so people coming from the cruise ship they know exactly where to go to find painted from young or recognized painters or to Find some type of a sculpture or to Find something that has been handcrafted with quality. But if you Don't have special Space, where these people are going to get that even in terms of clothing I mean we in the Caribbean with the most tremendous artist that are quite proper for hot climates. In Cuba we have the Guayamera but I know that other cultures in the Caribbean have [it]. It's like a type of piece that they were that is kind of formal but it's not a suit. So we're like we have a lot of of this type of things why don't we have a place so people can go and buy clothes handmade unique that they can not find anywhere else. And it's not that difficult, it's about setting a place to meet our cultural artistic community if you want to sell to tourists, bring your things here I'm sure you'll organize but otherwise tourists aren't going to find a gallery that might be in San Fernando, it is not going to happen, it's not going to happen unless you are a very recognized artist, and you need to facilitate that.

Interviewer: Yes because even speaking to the workers that work because we were stationed on Independence Square, the artisans themselves or the local entrepreneurs themselves that may work in that area don't see the profits of the Cruise ship themselves and even the art galleries we have in town, like you say, they aren't centralized. They are scattered in random places that aren't very accessible to a tourist who's just here for like a week or so.

Laguardia: Exactly so if we don't do that and again it's starting with very low actions with very very easy things to do but if you don't do that it's not going to happen just because. I don't know if you could explore the opportunity for the minister of tourism and the minister of culture to work together. I believe this is a problem we have in all of the Caribbean then there is there is there is not enough of exchange or conversation between these two ministers. And I believe that we don't we cannot have a strong cultural sector especially that can generate profit associated with tourism if there are no joining between these 2 ministries there. Because again, it's not going to happen just because.

APPENDIX D: Interview with Eduardo Vidal

Eduardo Vidal: One point is that in the Caribbean the first step to achieve a broader integration is by starting with cultural integration. The rest could or not follow. In the end we are not a superpower as a region, so we receive the influence from the superpowers in terms of politics and economics. We are also getting the influence of cultural interference or modification or even influence from the cultural powers but it is the easiest way to start. Not that it's going to be easy, but you have to start doing something and this is the work that you are going to present. Once you have distinguished that the easiest one - no - the less difficult one is cultural integration. That's why in the end of the paragraph, the George Lamming quote ... and this is illuminating - you or me can read the paragraph.

Interviewer: I'll read it, I don't mind reading it. "I do not think that there has been anything in human history quite like the meeting of Africa, Asia and Europe in this American archipelago we call the Caribbean. But it is so recent since we assumed responsibility for our own destiny that the antagonistic weight of the past is felt as an inhibiting menace. And that is the most urgent task and the greatest intellectual challenge: how to control the burden of this history and incorporate it into our collective sense of the future."

Vidal: And now I will read, "I do not think there has been anything in human history, human history, in this American archipelago we call the Caribbean". This is true, this is true. You can go anywhere and you won't see this accident of history in which everybody on the planet has come to this archipelago. And this is important but this is a sort of chauvinistic approach. "But it is so recent since we assumed responsibility for our own destiny", meaning the colonial influence of the past practically - because think of it Trinidad, Guyana everybody are recently independent, they haven't reached 100 years. It has reached 60 years. Compared to human history it has been a second, so the way we are thinking right now is a mixture of this burden of the past and two or three things we have been adding to the process. But I think we have assumed this responsibility for our own destiny. This is a very strong political statement, "that the antagonistic weight of the past is felt as an inhibiting menace". All this that we call tradition is a mixture of European interference in our history and then American influence afterwards and then the influence we have brought from Asia and from Africa, which I don't think is an inhibiting menace, but this is what we are reading. That is why there is not anything in human history like the meeting of Asia, Africa and Europe in America but the point here is acknowledging all these influences. Here comes the last part of it which is the core of this thought, which I assume as mine, not only George Lamming or Norman Girvan, who was the one who quoted, but also myself. "And that is the most urgent task", Of the one we call Caribbeans, "and the greatest intellectual challenge", You don't see this on tv often, "how to control the burden of this history", we are not saying that this history is not valid, what we are saying is that we have to control this burden, "and incorporate it into our collective sense of the future", which means we agree with the history of everybody that has come to this place but now we have to incorporate it in a collective - and collective is the only word you can't keep out of the work, you have to keep it - a collective sense of the future. Future is also a key word, so collective sense of the future is the key word, probably the slogan, of every idea of creating a cultural policy in the Caribbean.

Interviewer: That's an interesting idea, especially since I know at least, in the English Speaking Caribbean in Form six which more or less teaches us about regionalism and about how to integrate cultures but mainly from what I've observed, it's mainly for the English Speaking Caribbean. So then, how do you think the Spanish Speaking Caribbean, or Cuba specifically, can come into play in terms of combining both of our cultures?

Vidal: You cannot leave us outside. Otherwise, you won't be speaking about region, not Caribbean. You are making a cultural apartheid there. And that's fine with me, if you are going to make a cultural apartheid that's okay with everybody because that's what's been happening with everybody up 'til now. The problem is that if you want to continue being this, anything in human history quite like the meeting of all those countries, we have to grow, we have to grow. We have to consider that alone we cannot grow in terms of influence. When tourists come to the Caribbean, they can't come to St. Kitts and Nevis alone. They also go to Puerto Rico, Cuba. For the Europeans, the Caribbean is everything, not only the English Speaking countries. Caribbean is a word that physically goes beyond the English Speaking Caribbean, which is, up to now, when you say Caribbean, you are referring to yourself, when a European says Caribbean, he's referring to everybody here. The climate, the beaches, the culture, everything goes beyond the English speaking countries. It's not your fault, I think it's everybody's fault. If you go to Cuba and say 'are you Caribbean?' Some of them will go, 'no no no I am Latin American'. So there is a measure, even in Cuba, of thoughts about how we can be portrayed as a country. Some other moralists say 'no, we are a Caribbean country but we are also a Latin American country' because of our tradition, because of our language, because of our culture...

Interviewer: I think it's interesting to take into consideration the history outside of just the English speaking Caribbean because for me, well [with] my background, in terms of education, we would've learnt mainly about the contributions of our patriots historically but not necessarily that of Spanish Speaking countries. So I think that would be a good base of knowledge to have whilst writing, a good additional piece of knowledge to have while writing so I can at least combine the two and have an understanding not just of the world in which I live or that I know about but as well having a more holistic idea of the Caribbean.

Vidal: Martí, Jose Martí, he didn't consider the English speaking Caribbean in this proposal. Mainly because they were under the management of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands. This was like an unthinkable idea because the first thing they were concentrating their efforts into getting rid of Spain from Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. So the idea of the Antilles in integration started with getting rid of Spain from the three islands and then they didn't write anything else but you can imagine once this objective is achieved it would be normal to extend the region throughout the rest of the Caribbean but at the end the idea of these patriots were erased by the introduction of the United States in the war against Spain and they colonised Puerto Rico and neo-colonized Cuba. So, it was just an idea. But right now we are an independent country and we can think in a collective sense of the future,

Interviewer: I agree, especially since I think, thankfully, within modern times at least we have tried to make efforts for integration not only with the Spanish Speaking Caribbean but as well with Latin America particularly in terms of the shared history. So I think with that we can move on to speaking about integration for the future and how we can try to change this division that

people may have in their minds of the Spanish Speaking Caribbean and the English Speaking Caribbean. So one piece of work that I read in terms of research specifically looked at Spanish students. They listed one factor to people enjoying Spanish was understanding cultural background or being able to connect their personal experiences with that of Spanish Speaking nations. So that's why I mainly wanted to focus on any programs and initiatives specifically for cultural exchange because that seems to be the one way people tend to connect or easily connect both cultures. The external culture, well external 'quote on quote' culture, and their personal, Trinidadian culture as well. So do you think that there are any existing programs or initiatives or anything like that that are accessible and are they well received here or in Cuba?

Vidal: Okay, well, let me tell you, that I have been pushing for some initiatives, the ambassador and myself, but I am in charge of the cultural affairs at the Embassy. I think there are two main projects, or three, two main projects that can go in the way of cultural integration. The first one, which I think is the most important, is musical integration. I think music in the Caribbean is the most transversal throughout society. In the Caribbean, this is the first one. And the second one is the use of Carnival as the framework in which this cultural integration comes into place. There is also another one, which is very complicated, but still. The educational cultural integration, which is to provide to all the countries a good way of detecting, forming and showcasing artists. I will explain this at the end. This is not the first one but this is very important.

So in musical integration, I think that it is possible to find a new rhythm in which the traditions of the Caribbean countries, especially Soca and reggae could merge with the traditional music of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominicana, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Central America. There is a wall, a cultural wall that separates the two Caribbeans. And this wall can go down through music, but in order to do that, you have to create this new sound, in the same way reggaeton was formed. It's a joke because reggaeton is not reggae in any way but they call it reggaeton. Like saying, 'oh yeah yeah, this is Caribbean, this is Bob Marley' they tour the world but at the end the English speaking countries are not favoured in reggaeton in any way. But the idea was to create a new rhythm in which reggae was a part. But in the end, it was only the machinery of the industry of entertainment who created this, I would say scam... But the idea of creating a new rhythm in which Spanish speaking countries and English speaking countries in the Caribbean could go into this new rhythm but not, as George Lamming said, not letting aside the burden of the past. We are not proposing to erase our ancestors' music, but go into the future with this sense of collectivity and create a new thing. By creating a new rhythm, this won't be a menace to our music or even to your music. There will always be persons who sing soca and salsa no matter what - in fact some of them are consuming reggaeton right now. So the human being can come with two or three rhythms. In Cuba, we have created 60 rhythms: Conga, salsa, guaguanco, rumba, danzon, danzonete, there are a lot of rhythms we have created and everybody uses their own rhythm so you might see some sort of [discomfort] adapting to the idea of creating new things out of soca. That is what has been happening over the past centuries and you're here, in the world, and not profiting from outside. That's why I will explain the third point afterwards. If this rhythm is going to triumph, it would be used in the United States, in Europe, in Africa, in Latin American countries and the reach of your artists will go beyond. Right now, you don't have a grammy nominee, not a grammy winner, nominee. So, if you're going to think big, you have to go with us. If you don't want to think big, you'll continue to do the road march and wait for Machel until 2025. By the way, Machel is one of the most clear view of artists and he thinks this is the only way. Also Kes. The only problem is that you have to produce one song, or

two or three with one big Cuban artist or Dominican artist. As I am Cuban, I have spoken to many artists and they also agree. Even Cubans and the rest of the Latin American countries can go and triumph in the world outside of reggaeton. ... So I think this is the key to conquer the world. to have the collective sense of the future like Lamming said. So music, because music is part of the core of the nation of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. They think music is the sacred part of life. So if you want to have the vehicle to do this, you can't do this through books, or through soap operas or through films, the Trojan horse here is music. To go and conquer the world. Also because we are good at music, Trinians and Cubans. We are good at it. But if we do not share interests, objectives, perspectives of the future, we won't be able to succeed. Because there is an industry there with setting the steps and you have to consult them at the very beginning but in the end they will go there and they will have to negotiate with us. They will buy us but at the end although they will buy us it will be good for us. What I am saying here is once Sony music discover a new sound they will go here with a suitcase of cash and they will buy everybody here. Which is not bad ... and then we buy everybody here If it's good or bad and I think it's good because what we need is really that the tourist that the artist, that the industry, that the tourists go beyond our frontiers and go to Africa to Asia to China to Korea to India. My thing is that Caribbean has the potential to become a cultural superpower, not an economic superpower neither political superpower but we can become a cultural superpower by uniting us.

This is the first topic. The second one is that you have to hear in some place. In Cuba, we have discotheques, bars. Even in the private sector they have ... so the music goes there but in the Caribbean you have to wait for the carnival to go to see something special. From time to time you go to a good presentation in NAPA or there in South but not that we could say that the tourists come from abroad to see anything else other than carnival and the beaches of Tobago we have to think also in carnival as a way to expand the music. Cuba doesn't have carnivals like like you do. And we need your help on that so the culture interaction we are proposing also Benefits us. Cuba has 169 cities. Every one of them celebrates carnival so our proposal is to have them go there and perform there and profit from these carnivals. We don't know how to organize them so you have to show us how to do it. Imagine if you have let's say that the 169 cities are not good, let's say 16 have really good carnivals. You have 16 new cities to for Machel to go, Kes, Nailah to go. So this is more or less the idea of incorporating carnival in the cultural interaction. It benefits us and also benefits you. Again we have to get the Caribbean a group and a region which carnivals are every year, , every day of the year so this is very important. On how to conquer Cuba let them show them how to organise carnival. When you have a good and common rhythm everybody's going to listen to Machel in Cuba right now if this is not the case. So people can go to see Machel in Trinidad or in Havana or in Dominican Republic because we have a new sound and new rhythm in which they are going to follow the best artists wherever they are and they will be moving throughout the region. Do you have any idea how to develop this subject of point number 2?

Interviewer: I think the way in which you propose it is the best because I know that a lot of Caribbean artists they like to go-between countries to each others carnival and share the different sound. So for example Barbados, the soca in Barbaados sounds different to that of Trinidad and to that of St Vincent and Grenada and a lot of soca artists to do go to other Islands or they go to other nations. They go to Miami for example to be able to share to be able to share the music so if we were to introduce that to Cuba I think that would in my opinion I think that would that would be successful. Because not only are artists gaining a financial benefit for themselves

which it would be personal for them but as well you do get the cultural aspects and in the sense that Cubans get to learn more about carnival, get to learn more about our music and as you say even the regular person on the streets may get an idea of ‘okay this is how this music sounds maybe we can mix it with what we know’. I think that sounds like it would be successful because one thing we have in common is we all love music in the Caribbean we all love music and we all love to dance and to party. These are 3 things we will have, 1 shared commonality. So I think that would be successful in my opinion.

Vidal: And the third. We have to create more than carnivals. Caribbean culture is not only music and wining. You know what I mean. We have to create new things even for tourists. For example, we have to create ballets. It's going to be super interesting to see a very very black woman with a very very nice figure in the tutus making ballet coppelia or Swan Lake introducing Lucas. You know the most important ballet dancer in London right now is a black Cuban guy. I don't recall the name right now but in the end he established a company and now he's in another city in charge of the ballet there. So who says black people can't dance apart from wining.

Interviewer: And I think that's interesting in doing a literature in form 6, one idea that we explored in terms of talent, but one thing that we recognize is that we recognize as a trend amongst authors. A lot of the time these people have to leave the Caribbean to become successful to become appreciated by Caribbean people which is unfortunate. It would be a lot better if we as Caribbean people would be able to appreciate what we have whilst it's here instead of having to go to some far away land to be able to see it.

Vidal: You have to educate, to show people how to enjoy ballet and then show girls from the poor neighborhoods of Laventille ... going to ballet session and the talented ones are going to perform. As you see I'm not seeing the music of as the salvation method or the salvation process, no no no this is the start of a process in which you are going to attract people and then you are going to show them a plus. And the plus is culture. Synchronic painting, let me tell you perhaps I haven't seen all the paintings here in Trinidad every time I see a parrot in an painting I say ‘what what is this?’ I respect parrots, I have a parrot in my garden but for a guy to paint a parrot in a coconut tree. What I'm saying is that we have to create not only the artist but the taste for the people to say I am not buying any parrot anymore ... Horizons gallery, they are my friends and they are profiting from the Cubans painters but not the first line of painter, the fifth or sixth line of painters in Cuba and are coming here and selling. So something is going on there I don't know what it is going on there. In terms of ballet, practically 0 they don't receive classes of ballet but they don't have the Port of Spain or Baratarian ballet, you see.

Interviewer: Especially because we don't see the value that the arts can bring to preserving and bridging new parts to it. We tend to only see the benefits of prestige occupations I guess in terms of doctors and lawyers.

Vidal: I know this is the way it works but who do you think are these artists that sell these works? They're the farmers, some are farmers, people from the neighborhoods from our ‘Laventilles’ you have to go there and say you won't be able to do whatever you are so dumb that you cannot become a doctor but what can you do? No I play, no I paint, show me what you paint. Okay, you have talent, come to me. So you have to educate but in order to educate in a capitalist

society in which the programs are linked to the negotiations in parliament. Once you have to put money you have to put incentives. So you can't go there through the state. it's silly to think the government, no matter who is in power, they won't be able to have the funds to do this ... no matter what you do society is not prepared to receive this. Because the government has debts and other compromises. I would love to do this in Trinidad because in Cuba we do this but in Trinidad the wisest thing to do, is to create another way and that i've been talking to a couple of friends to create a project we have in cuba. in cuba we have factory of the arts, the initials is FAC... so, we could start a bit smaller and apply it here in the best way possible. This is a guy in cuba his name is X, his daughter, her name is M. X Alfonso is a Grammy winner and has this project which is very important. Everybody in the US comes there when they come to Cuba...what do they do? They have an old building and they have made there several show homes: expositions, lectures, shows, restaurants, architects so they have in every room some kind of art activity. So you're going to pay 5 dollars to enter the fac and once your there, you can move through the building. So this is something I would like to ...

Interviewer: I think that would be a good way. I think the education as well would need to extend to not just the younger generation but the older generations as well. Because a lot of the issue is that younger persons are interested in these things but their parents want them to focus on something that is sure to make money.

Vidal: You are always talking about the middle class. I am not talking about the middle class. I am talking about the gangs, the gang members, the prostitutes, the one who has no future. You have to go there and save them from violence which is because of poverty. Perhaps you don't realize that poverty is the cause of violence.

Interviewer: Would you think that these types of programs would be beneficial for Spanish learners? Do you think that learning Spanish would be beneficial in terms of integrating both cultures?

Vidal: Well, the new rhythm, you will have to sing it in the two languages. Have you heard 'I like it like that' by Cardi B? You know they speak spanish there? So this is the way it is.

[...]

Vidal: Machel Montano School of Arts ...to consider San Fernando as the ideal location of the Machel Montano School of Arts he proposed today for young people and to continue the art and traditions. So this is the way ...

Interviewer: Do you think that different initiatives such as these are pushed enough in terms of persons knowing that they actually exist? Because I do know of other initiatives, smaller initiatives, for example carnival camps that teach younger persons about traditional carnival and music and how to play the pan and things like that. But it doesn't seem, at least in the media that I consume you don't really see that being communicated very much. So do you think that is pushed enough in the public for people to know?

Vidal: No, no, no. Have I told you we have right now a cultural wall, not a linguistic one. The linguistic is not the problem, it's the culture. The tradition we are carrying with us. I refer again to George Lamming this is the most important integration challenge right now.

Interviewer: Like I said before, there are people who are interested in building these connections, for example for me in secondary school, there's a woman who runs an organization for Costa Rica that aims to teach children Spanish, to take them to Costa Rica, to take them to different cultural initiatives that showcase not just CR culture but Latin American culture in general to secondary school students but it's very small.

Vidal: Everybody is not aware of the little things. Think bigger than them. That's why Norman Girvan said that this has to be a task for the governments. That's why I think that this is the main task for the governments. Imagine Girvan said that in 2005 or 2010, I think. It's been more than 10 years and we haven't done much. We haven't been doing much. So this is a first, the government and then if you can't go to the gov go to key people in the society to Montano, to Kes, to Nailah, to Patricia, to Destra, to Iwer George. You see? And in Cuba we have a lot of them... If we do this project of Machel similar to what we do there in Cuba you will form artists, a lot of artists and then you will want to put them there to showcase their works at this Factory of Arts and then you will attract people who will want to come here to Trinidad to buy art and to see the ballet composed by Indian and African descendents and the star is a very, very, very, black woman. Beautiful! Beautiful! Find Acosta, a Cuban ballet dancer in London. He is the most prestigious guy right now from a poor neighbourhood. You have to believe, you have to believe.

Interviewer: I think another example too of what you were saying is Derek Walcott and his plays, I believe he's St. Lucian. He's done a lot of important work and has a Nobel prize as well...

Vidal: Yes but did he write about Puerto Rico. The funny part is that you have to count on us and we have to count on you. The two main important intellectuals in Cuba: Alejo Carpentier, which is our top novelist. The top novel right now in Cuba is the 'siglo De Las Luces'. And this is a work taking place in Martinique. Lam, which is our top painter, friends with Picasso, painted Caribbean girls in a cubistic form, so we use Caribbean because when we are in Europe, Latin Americans, Cubans, sometimes refer to the Caribbean as we, a part of ours. But the we at the end do not think as a population. But in the end the intellectuals recognize the other part. We have to believe.