

ABSTRACT

The Redefinition of “The Jamette” by Female Soca Artistes in Trinidad

Kai Barratt

The study characterizes the women who perform soca as *jamettes* because the messages in their lyrics, stage performances, and personal brands constantly negotiate female autonomy. The thesis proposes that Trinidadian female soca artistes through their appropriation of the jamette persona are constructing a discourse on sexuality and empowerment that challenge the traditional patriarchal notions on female sexuality even within the hegemonic constraints of the Carnival. By doing so, they embody *jamette consciousness* that represents the liberation that emerges from the subversion of hegemonic ideas, and which ultimately moves into everyday life. Even with these freedoms, the women find themselves negotiating empowerment and objectification within the popular music and Carnival industry. In this sense, the women’s performance in the soca music cultural space is examined from a perspective that acknowledges the tensions in the discourses about women’s sexual and gender roles within Carnival and non-Carnival life.

Keywords: Kai Barratt; Trinidad; Carnival; soca; jamette; popular music