Volume 9 No. 2

Bim

Arts for the 21st Century

Dedicated To The Memory Of

THE LATE PROFESSOR THE RT. HON.OWEN SEYMOUR ARTHUR – 1949-2020,

PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS, 1994-2008.


Bim

Professor The Rt. Hon. Owen Seymour Arthur
(1949-2020)

Prime Minister of Barbados
(Sept. 6, 1994 – Jan. 15, 2008)

BIM: Arts for the 21st Century VOLUME 9 NO.2

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***BIM*: Arts for the 21st Century**
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***BIM*: Arts for the 21st Century** is edited collaboratively by persons drawn from the literary community, who represent the creative, academic and developmental interests critical for the sustainability of the best Caribbean literature.

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Cover image of former Prime Minister of Barbados, Prof. The Rt. Hon. Owen Seymour Arthur courtesy of the Prime Minister's Office, Government of Barbados.

***BIM*: Arts for the 21st Century** is produced twice each year and publishes creative works, essays and critical expositions that meet the needs of the literary and artistic community. It accepts submissions that focus on literary, artistic and cultural phenomena within the Caribbean and its Diaspora. *BIM* accepts and publishes academic articles that are of high quality, but which are not too heavy with jargon to the exclusion of the wider reading public. *BIM* accepts non-academic contributions of high quality, including book and other reviews, poetry, short fiction, photographs and cartoons. In future issues, it will also accept digital art, electronic sound and digital video files, and critical comments on these. In all cases submissions will be subject to scrutiny by the editorial committee.

Manuscripts should be forwarded in double-spaced format, preferably with an accompanying electronic text file in Microsoft Word format. Endnotes are preferred. Images should, at a minimum, be 300 dpi in quality. Submissions should contain the name of the author and title of the contribution on a separate page, but the author's name should not appear on subsequent pages of the actual manuscript.

Correspondence and submissions to the publication should be sent via email to *eephillips7@hotmail.com* or *esther.phillips777@gmail.com*

Acknowledgements

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Contributors

Hilary McD Beckles

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles was born in Barbados in 1955. He became UWI Vice-Chancellor in 2015. Sir Hilary is an internationally reputed historian and serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals including the 'Journal of Caribbean History', 'Sports in Society', and as an international editor for the 'Journal of American History'. He is also the Chair, Board of Directors of the University of the West Indies Press. Sir Hilary has published over ten academic books, including: 'Liberties Lost: The Native Caribbean and Slave Societies' (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 'Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society'; (James Currey Press); 'The History of Barbados' (Cambridge University Press, 1990); a two-volume work on West Indies cricket, 'The Development of West Indies Cricket: Volume One, The Age of Nationalism' and 'Volume Two, The Age of Globalisation' (Pluto Press 1999); 'Britains Black Debt: Reparations for Slavery and Native Genocide in the Caribbean' (UWI Press 2015): and in 2017 'Cricket without a Cause: The Fall of the Mighty West Indian Cricketers'. Sir Hilary Beckles was awarded Knight of St. Andrew, the highest national honour in Barbados, for his contribution to "Higher Education, the Arts, and Sports" in 2007.

Kerry A Belgrave

Kerry A Belgrave is linguist, researcher and teacher who has been writing poetry seriously for the past twenty four years. He has won the James Millington Award for Music, the Prime Minister's Scholarship for Excellence in Literature (Barbados), the Kamau Brathwaite Award for Poetry on two occasions, and first prize in the Frank Collymore Literary Award on two occasions. He is a fellow of the Cropper Writers' Foundation (UWI, Trinidad) and was a finalist in the 2019 Stephen A DiBiase International Poetry Contest. Kerry served as a former Chairman of the Linguistics Special Committee in the Department of Language, Linguistics and Literature of The UWI Cave Hill. He currently works at the Erdiston Teachers' Training College as Tutor of English Language and Literature and Coordinator of the Literacy Diagnostic Assessment and Early Intervention Centre.

Anthony Bogues

Anthony Bogues is a writer, scholar and curator who has published 9 books in the fields of political thought, Caribbean intellectual history and Caribbean art. His current projects are a book titled *Black Critique*; a sonic project on politics and music in Jamaica during the 1970's; co-editing some of the unpublished writings of Sylvia Wynter. and editing a volume on Haitian Art. He is the Asa Messer professor of Humanities, Professor of Africana Studies and affiliated professor in the department of History of Art and Architecture at Brown University where he is the inaugural director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. He is also a visiting professor and curator at the University of Johannesburg. Currently he convenes two major historical, art and cultural projects, *In Slavery's Wake* with the National African American Museum of History and Culture and the *Imagined New: Black Life After Historical Catastrophe*, in South Africa. He is also a regular columnist for the South African newspaper, *Mail & Guardian*.

Essah Cozett Díaz

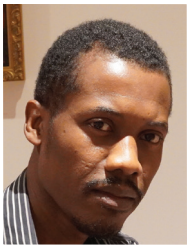
Essah Cozett Díaz is currently a Doctoral student in Caribbean Literature and Languages at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus. Her poems have been published in several print and online publications, including Peepal Tree Press, The Caribbean Writer, PREE Lit, Moko Magazine, Interviewing the Caribbean, Tonguas, and Odradek. Listen to her podcast, Essah's Way, on your favorite streaming service.

Keith Ellis

Keith Ellis is a renowned scholar, translator and critic of Latin American literature. Professor Emeritus of Latin American Literature (University of Toronto), he specializes in poetry and the short story and is a leading authority on the poetry of the Cuban poet, Nicolás Guillén. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, he has received honours from the governments of Cuba, Jamaica and Venezuela.

George Goddard

George Goddard was born in Saint Lucia and is an Industrial Relations Specialist. In 2016 he self-published his first collection, “Interstice”, and is currently working on two other collections. His work has also appeared in BIM: Arts for the 21st Century (2019), Interviewing the Caribbean (2017), the Caribbean Writer (2017), the Missing Slate (2015), ArtsEtc. (2015), Sent Lisi: Poems and Art of Saint Lucia ed. John Robert Lee et al (2014), Tongues of the Ocean (2010 & 2009), Roseau Valley, ed. John Robert Lee et al (2003).



Rénold Laurent

Rénold Laurent, visual artist and poet, was born in Source Bretoux, a village at the foot of the Marbial valley, near Jacmel, Haiti. He made his debut in painting when he was ten years old, under the direction of his father, Maccène Laurent; he has since established his own unique artistic style and perspective. His poetry was effectively already in his abstract paintings when he met the Haitian poet writer and publisher, Christophe Ph. Charles, in 2000—an encounter that sparked his interest in written poetry. He has published several collections of poems with Choucoune Editions.

Mark Mc Watt

is from Guyana and has been publishing poetry for more than three decades. His first book of fiction, a collection of stories entitled ‘Suspended Sentences’, was published by Peepal Tree in 2005 and has won four literary prizes, including the overall Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for best first book, 2006.

Nancy Morejón

Nancy Morejón was born in Central Havana, Cuba and studied Language and French Literature at the University of Havana. Her published works include ‘Mutismos’ (Silences) 1962; ‘Amor, cuidad attribuida’ (Love, Attributed City) 1964 and ‘Richard trajo se flauta’ (Richard Brought His Flute) 1967. Her published works of poetry are ‘Poemas’ (Poems) 1980, ‘Elogia de la Danza’ (In Praise of Dance) 1982 and ‘With Eyes and Soul: Images of Cuba, 2004’. Her critical works include essays on Nicholas Guillen and she has translated the poetry of Jacques Roumain and Aimé Césaire. Her poetry which appears widely in anthologies, has also been translated into various languages. Nancy Morejón is Cuba’s Poet Laureate.

Philip Nanton

Philip Nanton is a scholarly writer and published poet. He is Honorary Research Associate at the University of Birmingham, UK. He has published widely in regional and metropolitan magazines and has performed his work at festivals in the Caribbean and internationally. His biography of Shake Keane - *Riff: The Shake Keane Story* - will be published by Papillote Press in December 2020. Some of his work is on his website www.philipnanton.com

Naín Nómez

Philosophy Teacher from Universidad de Chile and University of Toronto Ph. D. He was a Full Professor and Academic of Excellence in the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. He has published around twenty books of criticism, poetic works and anthologies of Chilean and Latin American poets, besides some one hundred articles of his speciality. The lasted book of poetry it is a new printing of Historias del reino vigilado (2018).

Elizabeth Nunez

Elizabeth Nunez emigrated from Trinidad to the US after secondary school. She is the award-winning author of the memoir Not for Everyday Use as well as nine novels, four of them selected as New York Times Editors Choice. Among her awards are a PEN Oakland Award for Literary Excellence, a Hurston Wright Legacy Award and an American Book Award. Her novels are: Even in Paradise; Boundaries; Anna In-Between; Prospero's Daughter; Bruised Hibiscus; Beyond `the Limbo Silence; Grace; Discretion, and When Rocks Dance. Nunez has served on the jury for national and international literary prizes/awards, including the international Dublin IMPAC Literary prize, the Ernest Gaines Literary prize and the Fulbright Award for Creative Writing. She received a PhD in English Literature from New York University and is currently a Distinguished Professor at Hunter College, the City University of New York.

Esther Phillips

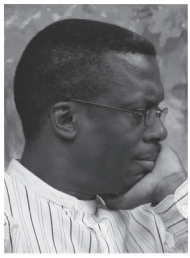
Esther Phillips gained an MFA in Creative Writing in 1999 and won the Alfred Boas Poetry Prize of the Academy of American Poets. Her published works include Chapbook, *La Montee* (1983); *When Ground Doves Fly* (2003); *The Stone Gatherer* (2009); *Leaving Atlantis* (2015.) She is founder and director of Writers Ink Inc. and the Bim Literary Festival & Book Fair. Esther Phillips is editor of BIM: Arts for the 21st Century and producer of radio programme, *What's That You're Reading?* She has also initiated the Bridgetown Literay Tour. Her poetry is published in several anthologies, regionally and internationally and her work has been recorded by the Poetry Archive, U.K. In February, 2018, Esther Phillips was appointed Poet Laureate of Barbados.

Nicolaas Quito

Nicolaas Quito (Aruba), studied Political Science/International Law at the University of Amsterdam. He has written 13 books of poetry, fiction, and essays. His poetry appears in 15 anthologies published in The Netherlands, Albania, Romania, China, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and the USA. Nicolaas is profiled in *The Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography* (2016). His articles on literary developments in the remaining Dutch territories in the Caribbean region have appeared in the *Amigoe di Curagao* newspaper and other publications. He has been a guest poet at the international literature festivals of St. Martin, Mexico, Colombia (Medellin, 2020), and Germany (Berlin, 2020). The latest book by Nicolaas Quito is Argus (2019), a bilingual (Dutch/English) collection of poems.

Amílcar Peter Sanatan

Amílcar Peter Sanatan is a PhD. candidate in Cultural Studies at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. His poetry has appeared in Caribbean and international literary magazines. In 2020, his creative non-fiction was shortlisted for the Johnson and Amoy Achong Prize for Caribbean Writers. For over a decade he has performed spoken word poetry and coordinated open mics in Trinidad and Tobago.



Lasana M. Sekou

Lasana M. Sekou (St. Martin, Caribbean). Books by Sekou, including *Nativity, Brotherhood of the Spurs*, *The Salt Reaper*, and *Corazon de pelicano* have been required reading at Caribbean, North and South American, and European universities. The poetry of this James Michener Fellow has been translated into Spanish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Turkish, and Chinese. Sekou's work is widely reviewed and he has presented papers and recited his poetry throughout the Caribbean, USA, South America, Africa, Europe, and Asia. The latest study of his writings is Caribbean Counterpoint - *The Aesthetics of Salt in Lasana Sekou* by Sara Florian, PhD. Sekou is an advocate for the independence of St. Martin, a territory of France and the Netherlands. *Hurricane Protocol* is his latest book of poems.

Robert Edison Sandiford

Robert Edison Sandiford is the author of several books, among them The Tree of Youth, winner of Barbados' Governor General's Award of Excellence in Literary Arts; *And Sometimes They Fly*, recipient of a BMA "Brands of Barbados" Award; and *Sand for Snow*, shortlisted for the Frank Collymore Literary Award. His erotic graphic novels for NBM Publishing (nbmpub.com) have been called "imaginably simple [yet] also imaginatively complex" by the poet George Elliott Clarke. In 2003, he founded with sister writer Linda M. Deane the Barbadian cultural forum ArtsEtc Inc. (artsetcbarbados.com). He has worked as a journalist, publisher, teacher, and, with Warm Water Productions, producer. His essays and short stories have appeared in numerous journals, magazines and anthologies. Fairfield from DC Books (dcbooks.ca) is his most recent title.

Patrick Sylvain

Sylvain is a poet, writer, social and literary critic. Twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Published in several creative anthologies, journals, and reviews. Sylvain has degrees from the University of Massachusetts (B.A.), Harvard University (Ed.M.), and Boston University (MFA). Sylvain is on faculty at Brown University's Africana Studies. He is also the Shirle Dorothy Robbins Creative Writing Prize Fellow at Brandeis University where he is a PhD candidate (ABD). Sylvain's poetry chapbook, *Underworlds*, is published by Central Square Press (2018). Forthcoming book to be published by Beacon Press: *Education Across Borders: Immigration, Race, and Identity in the Classroom*.

Celia A. Sorhaindo

Celia A. Sorhaindo was born in The Commonwealth of Dominica. She migrated with her family to England when she was 8 years old, returning home in 2005. Her poems have been published in T*he Caribbean Writer*, *Moko Magazine*, *Susumba Book Bag*, Interviewing *The Caribbean journal*, *Anomaly journal*, *New Daughters of Africa Anthology*, and longlisted for the UK National Poetry Competition 2017/18. She is co-compiler of *Home Again: Stories of Migration and Return*, published by Papillote Press and her first poetry pamphlet collection, *Guabancex*, was published in February 2020, also by Papillote Press. Celia is a Cropper Foundation Creative Writers Workshop fellow and a Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop fellow.

Sharma Taylor

A Jamaican living in Barbados, Sharma is the 2020 recipient of the Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Award and the 2019 Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize for emerging writers. She has won gold medals in Barbados' National Independence Festival of Creative Arts Literary Competition and the Best Adult Short Story Writer prize in the 2019 Jamaica Cultural Development Commission's Creative Writing Competition. Her work appears in the Arts Etc NIFCA Winning Words Anthologies 2015/2016 and 2017/2018, Poui: Cave Hill Journal of Creative Writing, The Caribbean Writer, Jamaica Journal and Commonwealth Writers' Adda.

Évelyne Trouillot

Évelyne Trouillot was born in Port-au-Prince, where she resides. Her literary œuvre encompasses novels, short stories, poems, and a play. She has published four story collections, two poetry collections in French, and two in Creole. She has published six novels, *Rosalie l'infâme* (2003; 4th edition in 2019) received the Prix Soroptomist de la Romancière Francophone, *La mémoire aux abois* (2010), was awarded the 2010 Prix Carbet de la Caraïbe et du Tout Monde; recently she published *Désirée Congo* (March 2020). Trouillot's play, *Le Bleu de l'île*, awarded the Prix Beaumarchais, by Etc Caraïbe, was read dramatically at the Théatre du Rond-Point in Paris and performed in Port-au-Prince at the 2009 Festival Quatre Chemins. She has published a book of children's stories with an accompanying CD, *L'ile de Ti Jean* (2004), as well as an essay on the situation of children in Haiti, *Restituer l'enfance*. She has been an invited participant at many academic conferences and has contributed to numerous journals and periodicals in Haiti, France, and North America. Trouillot's work has been translated into English, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Her published English translations include two novels, nine short stories, and various poems.

C. M. Harclyde Walcott

C. M. Harclyde Walcott was born in Bridgetown, Barbados. He was educated at Erdiston Model, then Modern High in Bridgetown, and York University in Toronto, Canada. Mr. Walcott has among other occupations, worked as a Theatre Director, Film-Maker and Photo-Journalist. His creative writing has appeared in "The New Voices", "Arts Review", "Poui", "Calabash", and "Bim".


Bim

Editor's Note

It is a pleasure and honour to welcome to the BIM November issue a contribution by The Right Honourable Mia Amor Mottley M.P; Q.C., our first female Prime Minister of Barbados. Even as we extend this welcome to her, we sadly bid farewell to the late Prime Minister Owen Arthur who was instrumental in reviving this iconic magazine in 2007. We think it fitting that this issue should be dedicated to his memory.

It is inescapably a matter of importance that two Heads of Government have so publicly embraced this literary publication: *BIM: Arts for the 2st Century*. I believe that in so doing, they have affirmed their belief in the legacy of this seventy-eight year old publication; its place in the literary history of Barbados and the wider Caribbean; their faith in the creative expressions of writers of the Caribbean and its diaspora, as well as the recognition that the conversations the islands share among themselves through their stories, poems, essays and other writings are in themselves an invaluable expression of Caribbean integration.

It is certainly a great joy of mine, and a reaffirmation of the purpose and value of *BIM*, to receive submissions from all over the region and its diaspora. For example, the countries represented in this one issue in addition to Barbados, are Trinidad, Haiti, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Jamaica, St. Maarten, Dominica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Aruba, Canada and USA; all with a wide variety of styles and expressions even as they share a common Caribbean identity.

While the *BIM magazine* enjoys a significantly long life, its editorial team ensures that its content is contemporary, reflecting our ever-changing world. Our themes in this issue, Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter reflect this reality.

But something else is new! For the very first time, we are introducing original musical compositions as part of the magazine's content. Readers will be entertained in this issue by a jazzy piece entitled *"Still There,"* its lyrics by Linda M. Deane, a regular contributor to *BIM*. Deane Days Music is the producer.

In a similar innovative vein, we will be inviting submissions of original short films for future issues. *BIM* recognizes that with its online platform, creative expression is limitless. The Caribbean, like the rest of the world, is now virtually without borders.

On behalf of the Board of Management, the Editorial Committee of *BIM: Arts for the 21st Century* and all its contributors, let me welcome again the Right Honourable Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley. We believe that under her patronage, the BIM legacy is assured for future generations of writers and for all citizens of the world.

Esther Phillips - Editor

Tribute: State Funeral of Professor The Rt. Hon. Owen Seymour Arthur

Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, Q.C.; M.P.
Prime Minister of Barbados

St. Peter's Parish Church, Friday, August 14, 2020

There is a refrain from a moving Gladys Knight song that lingers in the back of my mind whenever I think of Owen Arthur:

"If anyone should ever write my life story,
For whatever reason there might be,
You'd be there
Between the lines of pain and glory
Cause you're the best thing that ever happened to me..."

In retrospect, I know in my heart that, in my political life, Owen Arthur was the best thing that ever happened to me. I believe that there are so many others who feel the same way. There's no one who ever met Owen Arthur who could ignore his presence. His intellect was large, his personality complex.

He was fiercely competitive, whether in politics or dominoes or cricket or hearts. This should be no surprise to us for his initial defeat in this parish by one vote was quickly transformed into a victory and the start of a distinguished parliamentary sojourn for 34 years in the House for Assembly. Owen was consumed by politics and policy.

His love of politics was anchored by a strong love of country and a keen sense of duty. His list of achievements was vast, but no single one was perhaps as great, in my view domestically, or as consequential to the average Barbadian, as the leadership he displayed in wrestling unemployment from 25% in this land to under 7%. Early on, as he faced down the United States government in defense of our sovereignty on the now infamous Shiprider Agreement, he demonstrated that he understood and embraced fully the Barbadian tradition of courageous leadership in the international arena. He spoke truth to power. He fought for fairness and he fought for fair treatment and he stood firm on principle. Indeed, his advocacy for our rights and interests extended far beyond Barbados to embrace small states everywhere. This was perhaps best exemplified in the way that he responded head on to the unwarranted OECD challenge to our financial services sector and to our parliamentary sovereignty. Instinctively and strategically, he knew when and where and how loud to raise his voice in those arena. And to this day, his peers in the cause still remember him with admiration for leading the charge on their behalf.

Owen also recognized that any victory against powerful interests was never absolute, and that small states like Barbados could not afford to drop their guard. And that is why, even after his retirement from active politics, he never abandoned this advocacy. It is why he so enthusiastically embraced his last assignment as Chairman of the Global Commission on Trade and Development Options 2020, where he sought to reimagine the concepts of inequality and vulnerability in ways that would find common cause among the community of nations.

I often reflect, and particularly in the last few days, that it was our mutual love of policy and passion for the Caribbean civilization, maybe that we were both Libra- born, that led to our working closely together on so many matters over the years, from the strategic building out of the obligations for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy in 2006, for which he would forever be remembered to the Caribbean Court of Justice being established. Few, and I said so deliberately, can fully appreciate the intricacies involved in the revising of the Treaty of Chaguaramas and in the activating of the provisions to bringing the CSME into force. Few can know the joys and frustrations of this incomplete journey to which Owen devoted so much of his time and energy. His genius was always to see the big picture and to distill the issues with clarity, absolute clarity. In essence, he would set a line of march in the CARICOM meetings that most

would willingly follow. And not simply because they believed in Barbados, but because his views on policy and strategic development were often rooted in sound principles, but also, also and never forget this, in the interests of ordinary Caribbean people.

Now, more than ever, we, his successors in regional leadership, have a solemn duty to the memory of Owen Arthur to build upon and finish the task that he helped to start. Maybe this passion for the Caribbean was best reflected in his love of Jamaica. One only needs to reflect on the statements of former Prime Minister P.J. Patterson and former Minister of Finance Omar Davies, given on his passing. Former Prime Minister Patterson commented on his love for Jamaica that caused them in Jamaica to feel his loss in a particular way. Omar was more graphic, and I quote him, "Owen was a full Jamaican who happened to have been born in Jamaica." And perhaps that was the ... Slip for me, because it is for me to say to Omar today, he may have loved Jamaica bad, but he never forgot where his navel string was buried!

I am reassured that it was this commitment to common causes, buttressed by that keen sense of duty, of which I spoke, that allowed us both to place the interests of our country as our guiding principle in coming back together in recent times to work on these matters of great national and regional importance.

This, my friends, was always our glue. This was always our bridge to reconciliation in the shadow of Nelson Mandela and more appropriately in this church in the shadow of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the New Testament.

During the last year Owen willingly, therefore, undertook assignments on matters of international trade policy, as I said, the preparations for UNCTAD; the design of a new industrial policy framework, as requested by Minister Toppin; his hands-on role in the Jobs and Investment Council for all of us who spent the hours in those meetings seeing the passion that he brought in every intervention; bringing his ideas to the fore as we embarked upon the post-COVID rescue and recovery mission; and then of course, ultimately Chet, the Chairmanship of Liat. And who could forget his forthright and feisty, feisty performance as the head of the Commonwealth Electoral Observer Mission to Guyana in March!

Frequently over the last year, Owen and I resumed long conversations on the state of the country, on the region, on global issues facing small states. And we shared a lot recently talking about the challenges and experiences of governance. We acknowledged the reality, truly, that we are in a relay race. And I remember his abiding words to me often, "Mottley - this is a lonely journey." And he would shake his head.

I recall for you now, examples of that lonely journey for him that displayed utmost courage.

Our success in the HIV programme was a stellar example of Owen Arthur's courage and his willingness to walk that lonely road. Don't judge it from 2020. Look back when he made the decisions.

The stigma associated with HIV and AIDS - the exclusion of persons from not just treatment but from their society, is difficult to imagine in today's world. When others were hiding and when others were failing to take action, Owen Arthur was leading in the full knowledge that it was a lonely road, but a necessary road.

Owen understood that it was only his leadership that would create the platform for national cooperation and success, and to that end, as Jerome would tell you, he brought the Commission into the Prime Minister's Office from the Ministry of Health, not because he did not have confidence in the Ministry of Health, but he understood that it was a national transformation of values and attitudes and the application of support from the Ministry of Finance that would make the defining difference in that battle.

Rising above the smallness and the pettiness that have claimed so many leaders across the world, Owen was able to reach out to appoint the wife of one of his arch political rivals - that was the nature of the man. And it was that decision that drove the success not just locally, because internationally, when Dr. Jacobs became the chair of the U.N. Global Fund for AIDS, we all recognized that we had an opportunity to influence. All noted that when only large countries were contributing to the Global Fund, Owen Arthur broke new ground and insisted that Barbados must pay and contribute to this global struggle - for it was not only our advocacy that mattered, but it was our commitment. For as he would often tell us it takes cash to care. And he and Liz Thompson will forever be remembered for their early and wise decision of providing all pregnant women in this country with AZT to reduce the mother to child transmission of HIV - a feat well ahead of the majority of the nations of the world.

Interestingly enough, as I reflect on those matters in appreciating the need to build bridges, we, Owen and I, he was political leader, I was general secretary - reached out in 1998 to Sir Richard Haynes and the NDP as we prepared to go to the polls in 1999.

It was not lunch on that fateful Sunday when Beverly, Owen and I joined Ritchie and Carol, that laid one of the key foundations for the overwhelming and then historic victory of 26-2 that the people of Barbados gave him and the Barbados Labour Party. As the person who managed more political campaigns for him than anyone else, I know that Owen understood the power of the strategic alliance that we were creating with Richie Haynes and himself. And it was, as we have come to understand the politics of inclusion at its best. Yes - in those days we were all going with Owen.

Owen Arthur taught - those of us who served with him in his Cabinet and those who served as public officials in this land, so many lessons in public policy and in

fiscal discipline. His was a true understanding that you only see real progress when it comes from sound policy. In the Barbados Labour Party, we have all been graduates, therefore, of that Tom Adams/Bernard St. John/Henry Ford School of Governance - the great combination. And Owen fully embraced their love and appreciation for the power of public policy and passed it on to a new generation.

All of his Ministers defended the integrity of Cabinet government and the high office, which he held - not for the sake of himself, but for the preservation of the sanctity of the office, he was very firm on these issues. The unwritten rule that you must protect that office at all costs.

He would readily have admitted, as he did to me two months ago, that he learned so much and ultimately perfected so much about the art of Cabinet government and that much of it he learned from Dame Billie. Billie was his anchor and strength in those early days when it came to government in 1994. She was the only one in his Cabinet who had served throughout the entirety of Tom Adams' Administration.

And when we met early on, he reflected to me that it was his intention, ten months before we even won the government in 1994, that he would wish to see Billie as his deputy and that he would wish to allow her to anchor this new generation of Barbados Labour Party politicians. And it was Billie, the consummate elder statesman, who then quietly steadied Owen Arthur's early administration Cabinet governance and who became that vital bridge for enthusiastic but in the words of

George Bell, green Cabinet Ministers. Owen knew her true worth and the support that she provided in her two terms as his deputy few know, and I share this with you, that she willingly stepped aside into a 2003 to allow him to manage the transition of the Party that he believed was absolutely critical as we moved in to the 21st century.

His insistence on the need for clarity of purpose in the settlement of policy spoke to a tidy and logical mind. His eye for detail and the need for the efficient use of resources in the implementation of policy are valuable lessons needed for any person interested in public life, any part of the world.

For him, politics without policy was the cruelest cut of all -for it flattered to deceive in every respect and threatened to destroy people's faith in public figures and the public space. And how could policy be derived, according to Owen, except through a belief in rigorous research and a keen grasp of history?

For while we knew of his economic prowess and his sharp legal curiosity, I believe Sir David Simmons has referred to him often as "a piece of lawyer" - most do not know about his passion for history. And while Owen opted to go to Jamaica to study and work and not to pursue graduate studies in history for which he had been offered a scholarship in North America, his love of history never left him.

As a young MP and Minister, he introduced me to the importance of political biographies and literature. Yes, "we must never forget the past," he said. He had a passion for language and the use of precise words to describe both nuance and substance of any situation. Every sentence mattered. The lessons of history for him were never more ably and elegantly articulated than by that great English politician and writer, Roy Jenkins. And it was that love and respect for history, that also allowed him to accept the proposal to introduce legislation for the formal recognition of Emancipation Day and National Heroes Day and for the identification of our 10 National Heroes.

And to this I add, and as we walk through Speightstown, the Community Independence Secretariat, so well anchored by him and Glyne Murray.

My friends, that redefinition of identity was a moment of supreme leadership for him, for me, for this was the country that less than 20 years earlier was debating the worthiness of whether we should have emancipation lectures in this country. This was the country that debated whether Bussa should be even recognized in Barbados, far less a National Hero.

He instinctively understood that this was necessary for moving our people to the next stage of national development - the recognition of the need for sacrifice in pursuit of a greater cause, and the preparation and perfection of excellence and all that we do to attain it - as he and I both felt no better exemplify than by our own living National Hero, the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers..

I will tell you, Sir Gary, he never forgot, however, the 6-0 that he and I gave you in Holder's Hill.

Who can forget Owen Arthur's words to thousands of persons and Carlisle Car Park, as he inspired us all by reminding us that Barbados must not settle for the bronze; Barbados must not settle for the silver; Barbados must always, always go for the gold!

As for his own person, Owen eschewed the notion of honours or accolades. It is instructive that the two medals that adorned his body and now it adorn his coffin as he lay here, speak to the liberation struggles of our people and our region. These medals were the Order of Jose Marti (Cuba's highest award), and the Henry Sylvester Williams Award of Excellence from the Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad and Tobago in 2002. Most do not know that it was Henry Sylvester Williams who staged the very first African Congress in 1900, and hence the worthiness of this award was truly, truly touching.

But ultimately we, we the people of Barbados remember Owen for his ability to communicate. He was a storyteller. A true, true storyteller. He was a teacher. This skill was built on a finely crafted dry wit and a natural ability to impart knowledge, seemingly without effort. Anybody who went to a public meeting would know that. It was very

often accompanied by a mischievous smile and a confident tone that underscored a recognition on his part that he had just scored a boundary - whether a four or six, the audience could determine. He made the most complex economic subjects on a political platform seem as simple as ABC. He understood that from shopkeeper to lecturer, the message should be clear. Much of his teaching ultimately, therefore, was done in public through these lectures and through these speeches, which fortunately remain accessible to all and in many instances as irrelevant now, I say regrettably, as the day they were delivered only because of the long arch of development that we of the small states must travel to bring change.

We all know that Owen's tongue was one of the tools of his trade. It could equally be his weapon of choice - and I dare say for some, a weapon of mass destruction. But let us be clear. This extraordinary capacity and Kerrie would appreciate this, first rested upon an abiding love of language and great literature. He was a firm believer in reading outside of your discipline or training while immersing yourself in great literary works to give you context and appreciation of life.

And as for the man! The man we knew! A man of great complexity. But that was what made him such a forceful personality. He had a strong passion for the public causes that he adopted. But yet he loved simplicity and privacy and I ask the people of Barbados to respect that - especially with his final wishes for a closed casket. He required and defended form, pomp, and ceremony as critical elements of nation-building, even though at that personal level he issued publicity. The dignity of the parade this afternoon and the majesty of your voices of this church would have pleased his heart greatly. He loved the countryside. He loved the word bucolic. And he relished being described as "a country boy". And we all knew the country boy loved cooking - from pepperpot and wilt's to sorrel!

But above all else, he believed in his daughter's, Sabrina and Leah - and he spoke of you with great fondness and tremendous pride, always. Sabrina, you with the numbers and Leah, you with the law. He lived I think Leah, moreso vicariously through you because after so many years of diligent practice, he believed that he could finally be in a position to be called to the Bar. And to Isabella, yes you Isabella, you were the apple of his eye. You are too young to know how your grandfather influenced many and transformed the lives of many. And that is why

I wanted to show you on Wednesday where he sat both in times of victory and in times of defeat, for he was well familiar with that twin companion.

And I said to you, you are the same age I was when my grandfather died. And I sat in the church listening to the tributes. And I remember them as if they were yesterday. And I say to you, I hope that these words and this experience will forever anchor you in your life for I know he will be happy watching over you, knowing that that is the case.

As I close - for many who are still wondering - I say simply, Owen Seymour Arthur was a man of his times, shaped by the Caribbean civilization, of which he was a proud citizen, driven by the adversarial nature of Westminster politics. The adrenaline rush of the cut and thrust constantly energized him. But at the end of it all, that cut and thrust, he believed, was not intended to be personal. And because I knew him well, I can say to you today, that for him, often, often it was not personal.

On my own behalf, I say thank you Owen for allowing me to grow. Thank you for challenging me constantly, for pushing me hard, and for toughening me for this journey in these extremely challenging times.

And yes, you, you had the last laugh with me! For I remember how you would scold me each time: "You must prepare and write it down, Mottley. If you don't write it down, people will not take it seriously". And today Owen, you can laugh at the fact that I have finally heeded your advice and on this occasion, I have written it down. I have more or less followed the script. And I can almost hear you laugh or should I say see you smile, since it is that smile that you left with us when you passed on that early Monday morning at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

On behalf of the Government and people of Barbados, we say thank you to Owen Seymour Arthur - for a life of distinction. We say thank you to his family for his service to a grateful nation and to a proud people.

To you, Julie, for your dignity. And to you, Leah, Sabrina, Isabella, Valmay, Richard, all of the family, we extend our deepest condolences on behalf of the people of this nation.

To all who walked on his journey: his former wife, Beverly; his constituents in this Parish of St. Peter; his former colleagues in the Barbados Labour Party; the public servants with whom he worked locally and regionally; to his colleague Heads of Government who have all expressed their desire to be here were it not for COVID; those who are representing us here today; and to those at his Alma mater, The University of the West Indies, which ultimately provided him with that refuge from which he could continue to teach and to advocate his views, we equally know your grief and we equally hold you up in this your time of loss.

My friends, at the appropriate time and after consultation with his family, this government will announce plans to honour Owen Seymour Arthur, posthumously, in a way that he richly deserved but steadfastly refused to accept during his lifetime. We can and we will do so in a manner that respects his wishes, his dignity and his patriotism.

May his soul rest in peace.

Speech by the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur, Prime Minister, Barbados

United Nations General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, 4th Plenary Meeting Wednesday, 14 September, 2005, New York

Today we gather, as a family of nations, to take stock of the progress that has been made in fulfilling the commitment that was given as part of our celebration of the start of a new century, to bring about a dramatic improvement in the human condition everywhere.

It is important that this meeting does not become just a theatre of the absurd, an occasion for expressing anger at what has not been achieved and for giving new commitments that we know we will not honour. It is time that we began to hold some common ground and use it as a beachhead from which to launch our drive for progress.

Almost exactly one year ago, Hurricane Ivan devastated Grenadian society. Today the United States of America is coming to terms with the enormity of the destruction inflicted on its southern states by Hurricane Katrina.

It is therefore highly significant that in a world where we talk about developed and developing, the undiscriminating forces of nature render us all equal and point to our common fragility and humanity.

These recent events have thereby highlighted our interdependence, reinforced the need for sustained and effective international cooperation and have placed before us, forcibly, the need to carry out a programme for global development to stop poor people from being poor, no matter where they live.

They also highlight the unnecessary and unsavoury dilemma that we have imposed on ourselves, because with today's technology, financial resources and accumulated knowledge, humanity has the capacity to overcome extreme deprivation. Yet, the international community allows poverty to destroy lives on a scale before which the impact of all of the world's natural disasters pales into insignificance.

It is unconscionable that we should have to continue to live in a world that consists of a permanent coalition of "unequals" — the fabulously rich and the desperately poor. It is especially unacceptable that the principal agents of international cooperation — trade and aid — should be used as instruments to perpetuate underdevelopment. The world can do better. The issues at the core of global development have nothing to do with means; they have to do with morality. We feel that this occasion should be one not only for recommitment to the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, as narrowly defined, but also for a new commitment to a process of compassionate global development that draws upon the best values known to humanity.

Five years ago, Barbados wholeheartedly adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which gave expression to the substance of the Millennium Declaration. We accepted those goals not as new international tests to be passed, but as an inspiration to reach for higher social and economic heights.

We therefore propose not just to meet the Goals, but to exceed them. To that end, we have woven them into our national strategic plan for the next 20 years. We, however, entertain no illusions about the difficulty we will experience in meeting these Goals.

Though small, our nation has attained a human development index that puts us ahead of countries in the European Union. The price we have had to pay for this is to have access to aid and development finance denied to us at an early stage in our development. We are therefore largely on our own as the financier of our development programmes. At the same time, we can no longer plan our national development on the expectations of enjoying preferential access to the markets of the world.

This double-edged challenge posed by the reduction in our access to financial resources and the demands of trade liberalization has drastically transformed the environment within which our national development takes place. It, however, does not deter us from believing that we can attain full development; rather it causes us to look to new means and devices by which that full development can be attained.

Similarly, we believe that the state of the global society requires us to look to new means by which global economic and social progress can be attained.

In that regard, permit me to suggest that the MDGs will only be achieved if the eighth Millennium Goal of a global partnership for development is fully addressed. Barbados believes that it is vitally important for this High-level Plenary Meeting to be

used by heads of State or Government to reaffirm commitment to the global partnership for development in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This calls for increased and more predictable resources; a comprehensive, sustainable and development-oriented solution to the debt problem; the promotion of a universal, open and fair multilateral trading system and a global governance system that not only allows for the full and effective participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, but also manages world economies in a manner that would distribute more equitably the world's resources. Anything less will find us wanting by 2015.

The Barbados economy is now largely a coastal economy. Like many other small island developing States, Barbados faces a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and other phenomena such as the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

The Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action clearly identifies the key areas that need to be addressed to help such small island developing States respond to these and other sustainable development challenges. The compassionate development of which I spoke earlier requires that our development partners assist small island developing States in getting easier and more effective access to the financial resources and appropriate technologies needed as well as assistance in developing human and institutional capacity.

The Government and the people of Barbados have a vision to transform Barbados into a fully developed country; a model democracy that is prosperous, productive, peaceful, socially just and inclusive; a centre for high-quality services whose standards of excellence are global but at the same time rooted in our best traditions. We have made substantial progress in each of these spheres. Throughout this endeavour we will count on the solidarity of like-minded alliances, and we have the fullest hope in the shared responsibility of multilateralism, of which this Organization, the United Nations, must be the core.

Fellow Travelers

Patrick Sylvain

I am on the other side
of your time, dearest fellow
travelers of the African diaspora.
With my black eyes, like Osiris,
I'm trying to read the burnt,
pitted skins charred by the laws
of the Set of your world
who cuts his kin down
without blinking. Oh Isis,
you're constantly picking up
pieces of bodies! Instead of Osiris,
now, it is Freddie Gray,
Philando Castille,
Breonna Taylor,
Atativia Jefferson,
Stephon Clark,
Botham Jean,
and George Floyd.

Sorry, we've never met
and I'm not trying to disturb you,
but you've wandered down my aisle
with your hearts in your hands
still dazed by the shots
that splintered your dreams.

I am on the other side
of your time and I'm still
breathing the steel blue air
on this flight of frights,
trying to freight my dream
like an endangered parcel.

Indignation (in three parts)

Patrick Sylvain

1- Black lives
shattered
like jackhammered rocks.
Blow by blow
the hammer
of revulsion—
scatters dreams
until
we become
ontological debris.

2- When music of the heart stops,
lights die from mothers' eyes.
Their wails burrow
into folds of skin;
tears turned into oil
when candles of grief
burnt past their wicks.
In a land of dead black people
walking, their indignant souls
are incapable of watching
their own bodily death
like decomposing trolls.

3- The skin on
Jacob Blake's back
was too black to be
considered human.
Seven bullets,
one for each deadly sin.
His body teeters
on the rim of death
as justice seeps
into a stream of sewage
where blackness
gasps for air.

A Magician's Reality

Patrick Sylvain

When you wake up, darling,
know that your dream was not hacked.

The unsmiling man wrapped in the stars
and stripes is a professional magician.
He builds intricate spiderwebs and lobster
traps to shield his future with carcasses.

His trappings are thin webs of neon lights,
dazzling, hypnotic—deadly at the base.

Reality has galloped out of its antebellum
rustic barns into urban streets with burning
hooves and riders, brandishing the magician's
flag like a royal float passing through town.

Babe, ghostly men with white robes
have always occupied the dark corners.

Now, armed with ropes and hacksaws, they have
moved center stage as the magician's helpers
weave more webs, more trappings, as if
time diminishes the hypnotic effects.

Darling, the magician is America's alter ego
ensnaring the heavens with sword-like steeples.

Black Lives Matter and the Moment of the Now

Anthony Bogues

We live in an extraordinary moment. One in which many cross currents tussle for sustained dominance. A moment in which armed white supremacy groups make attempts to take over state legislative offices in states like Michigan. One in which the science of contagion battles with a myopic individualism in which the wearing of a mask for medical protection becomes a signifier for a political symbolic battle around hegemony. All of this occurs in the moment of an historic pandemic, which should make us as a human species reflect on our contemporary ways of life. This pandemic has exposed the structures of the American health system, where race and class determine disproportionately those who will live and those who will die. In the midst of this crisis, in which lockdowns and shelter-in-place have become everyday practices, we have witnessed one of the most significant global protests the world has seen for some time. These protests have upended many commentators, shattered many conventional wisdoms about politics, and for a time at least punctured the everyday normal that many of us had become accustomed to. So, what is at the root of this upsurge? What are its significances? And how might we understand it?

In the epigraph to the first chapter of *Black Reconstruction* (1935), W.E.B. Du Bois writes about how "black men, coming to America…became a central thread to the history of the United States, at once a challenge to its democracy and always an important part of its economic history and social development".[1] That challenge has historically been the touchstone for both American democracy and its civilization.

Racial slavery was a cornerstone of capitalism. It is not that racial slavery laid the foundation for capitalism, rather racial slavery, the plantation slave economy, the African slave trade were themselves practices of capitalism. At the core of the inauguration of capitalism was not the factory system with its wage labor but the slave

plantation, unfree labor and a network of credit and debt arrangements.[2] Within this system emerged various institutions we now associate with capitalism, from bond markets to brokerage houses. This saw the emergence of major companies whose chief functions were linked to the slave trade, financing plantations and other aspects of the European colonial project. Here one speaks about, amongst others, the Dutch West India Company, the French Société de Guinée, and of course, the Royal African Company of England. At the core of what historian Catherine Hall calls this "business of slavery"[3] was the African captive, who became an enslaved person. The late African American theorist Cedric Robinson has called this historical process "racial capitalism".[4]

The enslaved body, as the Caribbean historian Elsa Goveia has said, was "property in person".[5] It was a body that produced commodities while it was itself commodified. The black female body reproduced this commodification process three times over; as a living commodity, while producing commodity, and through a regime of sexual violence, as a reproductive body of enslaved labor. The plantation was thus a generative site for the violence of commodification, as capitalism was inaugurated through the violence of black enslavement, and exploitation established upon a foundation of unfree labor. That is the history of capitalism: not a stages theory of transition from one mode of production to another, but rather a historical process of generative violence enacted upon the bodies of the African enslaved. In such a history the body is not secondary, but the central subject of processes and practices through which the human was turned into an enslaved dehumanized thing. To create such a subject/object, power (and in this case colonial/planter power) needed to create forms of life, ways of thinking and modes of being human that could, for a time at least, guarantee the full reproduction of a society. Or to put this another way: exploitation requires its forms of domination, which in turn require a set of ideas accepted by the majority of a society, manufacturing what Antonio Gramsci calls "common sense", and by which he means a kind of naturalized societal underpinning, an ideational glue that *holds it all together*.[6] In slave and colonial societies, in which might was right, violence was regularized as the technique of rule. However, there was also the need for a set of ideas and practices in which both the native and the enslaved were characterized as non-human.

All nations, we know, are an "imagined community",[7] and so we search for what glues, for what binds this imagined community together. In America that glue is not the fiction of America – as an idea, as the Biblically-inscribed exception of the 'city on the Hill' – but rather it is the binding tack of anti-black racism. What Du Bois (1935) calls the "wages of whiteness" has become the glue that holds and structures the everyday practices of living in America. This glue that is anti-black racism has a long history, founded in the matrices and generative violence of the African slave trade, and elaborated through the complex system of customs and laws that underwrote plantation slavery. All of this was further systematized and codified in systems of

human classification – as promulgated by European natural historians in the 17th century, mapped out by Christian doctrines in which some human beings had souls and others not, and then in the 19th century *re*-codified through phrenology and other pseudo-scientific studies in which black (in)capacity was fixed. And when science debunked the 'evidentiary' basis of this anti-black racism, culture stepped in as the new terrain in which to explain, and re-fix, the supposed inferiority of blackness.

So blackness, as visual marker, produces within the dominant frame of common sense the death of the black person. Black life becomes disposable – is a lack, has no interiority, is locked upon itself. As a visual marker, the black body has no escape. Its public presence is an affront. It must be tamed, put back in its place. It must not be allowed to breathe, because breath is life, and if black bodies have breath then black bodies have life. *Is this America?* Yes, but this is not an American phenomenon. The imperial power of America on the world stage has created the illusion of a special American race problem – from its history of racial slavery to the inauguration of Jim Crow and formal segregation. Of course, all societies have their own historical specificities, but anti-black racism was not an American feature alone. What Du Bois called the "color line"[8] was embedded not only in America but in the world, because racial slavery and colonialism were parts of a global system of rule, at work from the 15th century Columbian voyages and subsequent histories of conquest. The anti-black racism of European colonial powers thus drew from racial theories developed in America, the Caribbean, and the historical encounters between Europe and Africa. In this global circulation, the structures and practices of American Jim Crow informed, to some degree at least, those of South African apartheid. In all of this the black body was the disposable surplus; not the other but the irremediable non-other, that which could not be fully included into the body politic of the given nation. Such an irremediable body, as one always on the outside, challenges the very meaning of democracy itself. This is why struggles around anti-black racism shake society so profoundly, and indeed call Western civilization into question.

If we agree that the historical foundation of the capitalist West was racial slavery and colonialism, and the accompanying genocide and attempted erasure of indigenous populations, then what we are witnessing today are challenges to that foundation. Capitalism is not just an abstract economic system, as Marx made clear long ago when he noted that economic relationships are always between people. To rule, to be able to reproduce itself, any social system creates ways of living, modes of being human. Historically and in the present, anti-black racism and the creation of whiteness, of white supremacy, was both a way of life and a signifier of being human. It is not just an ideological belief but rather a naturalized common sense, which in many ways functions like a fantasy, but one that has material life and consequences. Common sense is also in part constructed by the historical understandings a society maintains about itself.

We are, as humans, historical beings who make sense of ourselves through memories of the past – taking from the past to make the self. But in societies where the past has been a *historical catastrophe,* where regularized violence has operated as "power in the flesh", making the human superfluous, the past becomes a critical way to establish the grounds for inhumane ways of life. America's unwillingness to confront the fact that it was a *slave* society since its founding as a British colony, and that practices of settler colonialism wreaked havoc on indigenous populations, in conjunction with Europe's unwillingness to confront its own history of colonial violence, now provides a dominant common sense which structures the present. As the poet and thinker Aimé Césaire noted in 1955: "Between the colonizer and the colonized there is room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops … no human contact, but relations of domination and submission".[9] This history is elided by European countries. It is a history of erasure, made visible as violence – in pacification campaigns, in the regular amputation of Congolese hands, in the genocide of Herero people in Namibia. It is a history codified through forms of rule creating natives of African subjects and manufacturing tribes out of diverse African social and political formations. But, if history lives in the present, and is continually re-inscribed through a landscape of public monuments, then the present confrontation of the Black Lives Matter Movement with that very history marks a significant counter-symbolic move, a counter symbolic insurgency to both confront and tear down the everyday monumentalization of historical anti-black violence. This happens in America, in South Africa and the United Kingdom. And continental Europe cannot escape the fire this time.

So here we are. For over a month America has seen the largest protests in its history. These protests were ignited by the pubic lynching of George Floyd, who cried out "I can't breathe", before being murdered – dying with the words "Mama" on his lips. In that modern lynching scene, for nearly nine minutes we witnessed the meaning of anti-black racism. Yes, it was the policeman who kneeled on his back and neck. Yes, the American police force were operating like modern day slave catchers. But there was something else at work, and that something else was the casual nonchalance, the non-recognition that Floyd was human. It was the nonchalance that allowed Floyd to be just another disposable black body. The daily confrontation between black men, and increasingly black women, queer and transgender black people, with the police is the nodal point where anti-black racism is most visible. At this nodal point there is no pretence. State authority expresses itself: that might is right, that black life does not matter. And this is so, whether in Brazil, Europe, the Caribbean, America or indeed in parts of Africa. Here, ordinary black life does not matter.

In 2013, after the death of Trayvon Martin, a group of radical black feminist organizers – Patrisse Khan-Cullors, Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi – formed an organization which they called *Black Lives Matter*. Today the name of the organization

has become a political banner, igniting the political imagination on a global scale, of both black and white. There is a rich historical current in which black revolts and uprisings have catalysed political struggles around the world. In the 19th century the dual Haitian revolution inspired Greek anti-colonial figures fighting against the Ottoman Empire, with some of them even writing to the Haitian government requesting arms and political support. We recall how what was then called "Negro Revolt" – the black uprisings of the 1960's – influenced feminist and anti-war movements around the world. In all of this the African American spiritual *We shall overcome* became a clarion call and political message of many movements. So why, might we ask, has Black Lives Matter become at this moment a catalytic political banner? I return to Du Bois.

Racial slavery was the foundation of America and, I would argue, the making of the modern world. As a form of domination its very core was the double and triple commodification process I addressed earlier. It was about making non-human another human being. As a generative historical process, it lasted for centuries. This was a special form of domination which not only required violence, but the creation of another kind of human being, one who would be surplus and disposable. It also created the conditions for black struggle to be catalytic, a point the Caribbean historian and radical thinker C.L.R. James made in 1948, when living underground in the USA. In his seminal 1940s essay, *The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the United States*, he noted how "this independent Negro Movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life of the nation".[10] Black Lives Matter has become a political banner because it challenges racial domination, and its deep rooted legacies and consequences. It says, *we are human*. And as human, it demands that society be transformed to create new ways of living. It therefore not only exposes police brutality, but also calls to order the entire historical foundation on which Western civilization rests. While being part of a historic black liberation tradition, its political organizational methods have also enacted critiques of black masculinity. Given all of this, Black Lives Matter as a political banner is world historic.

And here the reader might pause and wonder why? Let us return to the making of the modern world, and to the ways in which in the afterlives of racial slavery anti-black racism continues to dominate black life, as it has for centuries. So, when there are sustained protests against institutional and everyday forms of anti-black racism, and this happens on the global stage, and under the adverse conditions of a pandemic, is this not world historic? The current global protests are world historic because they confront the racialized edifice that built the modern world. World historic because it posits different methods of political organizing, which break from previous forms of radical black movements. It demands that monuments that invoke a past that undergirds the violent present must fall – a call drawing from the earlier struggles of South African students and the Rhodes Must Fall Movement of 2016 and 2017. It

demands abolition, making the word capacious, creating a new political language – demanding more than just the abolishing of prisons, but demanding the opening of an entirely new space, invoking the radical imagination in a call for new ways of life. It is world historic because, whilst many radical social and political movements have paid attention largely to the state and the economy, as structures of the present, Black Lives Matter is attentive to the history of those structures and their underlying assumptions and common sense.

We are indeed in a new moment. Some say this moment feels different in part because the worldwide protests have been multiracial, as illustrated by the image of a lone white woman sitting on the sidewalk of a rural American town with a sign reading "Black Lives Matter". But perhaps what is most different about this moment is that for the first time in a world governed by neoliberalism – one in which as Stuart Hall and Alan O' Shea put it, there is a neoliberal common sense[11] – we are witnessing an uprising that fundamentally challenges that common sense. A common sense in which anti-black racism has been the glue for the American body politic. This is an uprising of the radical imagination, that demands the abolition of the reproductive structure that has been for centuries making and re-making the modern world. We end where we began, with Du Bois and *Black Reconstruction*. In 1935, Du Bois identified in *Black Reconstruction* a form of politics he called "abolition democracy." It was, he argued, the necessary radical political framework required for transformation to occur in America post the civil war. For Du Bois, abolition democracy, "pushed towards the dictatorship of Labor".[12] Du Bois was by then in the most radical phase of his intellectual and activist life. Eighty-five years later, the black radical imagination has reworked abolition into a demand for new ways of life, dismantling the anti-black structures that inaugurated the modern world, and made it stick. That makes it world historic. Fundamental change may not come, and for sure revolution is not around the corner. But historically, fundamental change requires the work of the radical imagination, of thinking a new form of human life is possible. The global Black Lives Matter protests have opened that space, and that is its remarkable significance for the current moment.

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(Endnotes)

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Príncipe Negro Para George Floyd

Nancy Morejón

Aunque su sueño era lanzarte al Mississippi,
aquel caníbal de uniforme opaco
ha quemado en silencio su rodilla
sobre tu cuello inerte.
El humo de tu carne va subiendo hasta el cielo mojado.
Saltando entre las flores, el aire de tus bronquios
persigue su fantasma hasta morder
el colmillo sangriento del caníbal.
Y tú alientas, indómito, sobre el asfalto húmedo,
bajo la sombra quieta de un manzano
en Minneapolis,
donde colocaremos, para ti,
este brillante, este limpio
príncipe negro nuestro,
a tu memoria.

Havana, 4 de junio, 2020

A Cuban Rose for George Floyd

Nancy Morejón
Translated by Keith Ellis

Though he really wanted to hurl you into the Mississippi,
that cannibal in deceptive uniform
quietly burned his knee
on your dying throat.
The smoke rising from your flesh climbs to the tearful sky.
Skipping between the flowers, the air you exhale
pursues the cannibal's ghost until it bites
his bloody fang.
And, indomitable, you give hope, on the wet asphalt,
under the quiet shade of an apple tree
in Minneapolis,
where we will place, for you,
this bright, this cherished
dark-red rose of ours,
in your memory.

Havana, June 4, 2020

He Called For Momma

Esther Phillips

(in memory of George Floyd, killed in Minnesota, USA,
by a white police officer, May 25, 2020

He called for Momma, and every momma of every race:
black, white, asian, hispanic, native-american,
rose up to answer the call. But one outran them all:
she and her kind were used to running
    from the rabid slave hunter
        vicious dogs
through the underground railway
    from every street where Jim Crow
    deemed them worthless vagabonds.

How many nights in her head had she urged him, "Run, run.
If they catch you they'll kill you. Take the back streets and alleys
and run, run on home."

Today she hears him calling "*Momma*!" and she's confused:
where is his man's voice? What terror could so grip him
that he is a child again?
And she's running, running…

until she reaches the narrow but eternal bridge she cannot cross,
and there he lies, all six foot, six of him, "I… can't… breathe"

Crushed by the very thing they'd run from all their lives:

four hundred years of hate in a white man's knee on the neck
of her son-
    eight minutes
        forty-six seconds … until…
                    he's…still.
She knows this kind of stillness. She's seen it many times.

****

She's holding his hand now, "Come on, son." And as they turn to go,
they hear a sound as of many waters, or a mighty rushing wind:
millions, millions marching around the globe. And the chant
on the wind is beautiful: "*Black lives matter! What's his name? George Floyd!
Justice now!"* And there's hope in their eyes as they turn to each other:
One day soon, one day soon and we're done with running.

Salt-Free Diet

Celia Sorhaindo

Me in the Caribbean, he in a US state,
my son calls home and tries hard to make light
of disturbing current affairs—
tells me things ain't as bad as they seem.

He says, It's just anOther Carnival Mum,
this time folks masquerading fear as hate and
theatrical smoke-and-crazy-funhouse-mirror
news, projecting, distorting not reflecting.

TV and Twitter white-noise distraction
keeping everyone angry and so damn
scared of shadows—
...and us hoping
hashtags will change shit, he laughs.

But I hear the weariness behind his voice and
sense these days his eyes, bloodshot,
are mostly darting back—not so focused
on that bright future he spoke of once.

I say—I love you—take care, and before he hangs
up I quickly add, remember, don't put much salt
in your food—now more than ever you need to be
able to fly high high high into the Celestial Nite.

I Never Heard My Father Called Nigger

Robert Edison Sandiford

It wasn't like in Florida in 76 when the tanned man in pumpkin plaid shirt and brown corduroys (how could I ever forget?) looked straight past Dad toward the door while Dad looked straight at him. His shoulder-length hair was neat and thinning. He had sharply etched red-to-white mutton chops. He smelled of aftershave like Roman Brio, *the scent that conquered Rome*, **and motel-soap clean. Only his eyes were clouded, and his lips were sour. He kept repeating, word for toneless word, as if on rewind, that he never told Dad over the phone that he had any vacancies—and he was the only one at the desk. "All night. All morning, too." He shook his head. As if sorry, a vestigial habit he would've checked if he had realized. To the left above him on the wall was a clock containing the images of a wildly grinning black Mickey Mouse in waistcoat and conductor's cap (Mortimer Mouse, from** *Steamboat Willie*, **was black?), shining the shoes of a monocled, dapper, top-hatted pink Goofy. The exaggerated images and the manager's unfriendliness scared me. I was eight. I held Dad's hand tighter and drew close to his right hip. He gazed down at me, his jaw hard and eyes cruel—then the fire was gone, masked from me or swallowed. Dad looked up at the man again and told him, "You have a nice day, too."**

This time, we weren't in the US. We were in Canada, *at home*. Dad couldn't tell me, "Stay in the car," at the next motel. It wasn't like with his principal, either, a man with a few foreign degrees who dressed in G-man type suits and thin modish ties, who said to the board that he *preferred* Geoffrey to Dad. The emphasis was his. Dad was better liked, better qualified, better suited for the job of deputy principal at the high school than Geoffrey was. According to Mom, men like the principal felt entitled to their preferences then, still do today. But Dad couldn't dismiss me from that scene, because I wasn't there.

In that moment, in that store where it happened, I was there, and there was no time or reason for me to be somewhere else.

*

I'm always careful to make sure Ria has a clear view of where I stand and where her family come from. It's easy to blow up a situation with what we say and, as it turns out, don't say. My views on race find their footing in the multicultural streets of Canada. In neo-colonial "return" trips to Barbados as a boy who was never born here. In the homes of well-meaning white people, some of them my friends'. In the gathering of family and friends who behave, sound and think much like me. I don't deny any of this.

Although I was called it several times in at least two languages growing up—by strangers, teachers, friends and wanna-be friends—I never heard Dad called nigger—by black or white—not *directly*. Mom and Dad told stories about when they were kids; about places in Barbados they either weren't allowed to go (the Yacht Club), weren't expected to be seen (Belleville, Strathclyde), or would only be admitted through backdoor service entrances for the hired help (Grand Barbados hotel). Some of the barriers may have fallen a generation or two after their departure, but not the mentality that built them. Not in Barbados, or the States or Canada.

"Always take the high road," Dad warned us. Casual advice that was meant to serve as timely reminder whenever going into battle. But Dad didn't so much hold others to higher standards of right thought and action, to notions of what was honourable. He held his own feet to the fire first.

Two instances of racism involving him I can't shake. Or maybe I hold on to them. The one he told me about his former principal was as an illustration to a point: there were many ways for whitepeople to call a body nigger without using the word—and think that they were getting away with it.

The other instance I witnessed.

Dad and I were in Canadian Tire. At that time, it was located off Dollard, not far from the Dairy Queen and Parc Lefebvre—everything in LaSalle was closer to us back then. Dad was searching for a particular bit for our drill. We were standing side by side in the aisle. I was fifteen, which would've made him fifty-eight. I was short like Dad, and had his lean build, but we weren't dressed alike, or in anything like store colours. He wore a T-shirt, straight-leg slacks and brown sandals. I was in jeans, a blue windbreaker and T-shirt, and white, blue-stripped Adidas running shoes, my favourites. But this heavy middle-aged French Quebecer, bald and pale, came barreling down the aisle toward us, crying, "Garçon, garçon! Travailles-tu?"

Dad at first seemed to not hear or understand the man. Right away, this was strange to me: Dad read and spoke French fluently. Then when the man came to enter our space—I was standing no more than a foot from Dad, braced for impact—Dad looked at him deliberately, slowly. As if the man did not really exist. As if, to Dad's mind, the man was an oddity or a curiosity, a not entirely unexpected nuisance, like a mosquito or

troublesome child. And the man stopped sudden, like he hit a Plexiglas wall. It was at Dad's reaction, that was clear, maybe anticipating a next response. But Dad turned back to the shelves. He continued to look for what we wanted, ignoring the man, who stood there huffing, puffing, three, four feet away from us. He started to turn a splotchy pink around his forehead and red from the neck up. Dad let him stand there, waiting for an answer that I soon realized would not come. The man—or insect—or child—grew pinker and redder until I thought he would explode but instead, he buzzed off.

Dad and I never talked about what happened. Again, very strange for Dad, a true believer in the teachable moment. Not when we got into the car, not when we were back home, not years later. I know I would have talked about it with Ria, if something like that happened to us. Right afterward, during the car ride home, later that night with her mother. I couldn't stop Ria from asking questions, either. At twelve, why people did the evil they did to each other was still this bizarre mystery to her.

So many options — there are always so many options, when it comes to dealing with these situations, with or without your child in the room, right beside you. The French guy was loud; Mom would've said he had hog-features. He was not addressing me. I was sure others in the store heard him call Dad "boy." *Twice*. Dad was still clear back then, and sharp. And he didn't cuff him. He didn't cuss him. Instead, he cut the man, cut him down to nothing, then dismissed what was left. As if he were a school boy in short pants not worth the attention.

Dad and his "high road." It was exhausting just to be by his side. All the tension in my bones seemed transferred or absorbed from his. Up close, I saw the damage done to the other guy. I still think of that encounter as the most *violent* I'd ever seen Dad. Up to that point. Thirty-odd years later. I wanted to kick the French guy for what he did…but it would've been for what he'd failed to do, and Dad always said you shouldn't even kick a dog. (Mom always agreed, nodding.) Maybe not the only thing Dad could've done, there was a rightness to it I can't explain. How did he know which tack to take, which would work, this time? And how should I react when my time comes with Ria? That's not even a maybe. Dad simply shut the man down. Without raising a hand or fist. Without raising his voice. Without even *speaking*. It wasn't at all like in Florida, a decade before, with those twisted Disney images looking down on us, and him covering me. This time, there was no outing of fires. It was more like watching Brer Rabbit stuff dynamite in Mickey's ears—no!—*Porky Pig's*—all without him noticing, then silently striking the match.

Not to blow him up. Dad wanted the spluttering idiot to implode.

Black Americas

Amilcar Sanatan

Pizarro yawned with a poison tongue
lifting the sails of boats around him.
Beaten into us, the rhythm of chains,

arched backs through *el modo de producción esclavista*.
America's black children, fugitives of the night
running through geographies widened in sleep.

Each nigger torn from a history
each history robbed of an afternoon
each afternoon filled with bitterness and death.

They would have us think slavery had befallen
our lives, and our poverty something sweet
enough to sing along to, simplified.

When were we more than great books
written over seas, indignant diaries of priests,
man's gift to queens grown tired of jewels

and cruel desires turned
sugar and pearl countries?

Columbus Square

Amilcar Sanatan

Embassies of Spain still press
lands of the New World
to utter the name of their god.

The Admiral stands tall in the capital city.
Colonial myth looking on
poverty's timelessness.

As I write,
babies battle with congested lungs
in the ghetto.

So, all this talk of freedom
was meant to free
whose chest?

I have seen the hungry
rise with the unchained,
street dogs

scavenging bones
thrown to the roadside
near the fountain of barbarity.

I have watched
none of it pause
in the half-promise of independence

steeped in the romance of
discoveries,
conquistadors.

Minneapolis and Morvant

Amilcar Sanatan

youth marched through the streets
until the hills were full of light
until lungs were full of breath

the riot was magnificent and rage consumed
when they poked their guns and knives
to the rib of the city:

the plantations of capital and greed
the long yards of poverty and foreclosure
the selected prose of the national sacrifice

such difficult geographies
where hearts turned to flint
ready to strike

it was the first time i saw
so many smiles
fires and fists
    reaching for the infinite

Orpheus

Nicolaas Quito

Opgedragen aan de gemeenschap van San Nicolas.

Verontwaardigde blikken, in beroering zonder een dag van reflectie echter
niet stil gezeten straten werden wakker geschud.
Ze hebben je verlaten, Orpheus verhuisd, gelovend in betere tijden
het weeskind bleef achter, verlaten de tijdstilte inademend.
Zoveel beloofd om doof van te worden vruchtbare grond verandert in as
anderen beschikken over het geluk.
Bijna de rug toegekeerd.

Orpheus

Nicolaas Quito

Dedicated to the community of San Nicolas

Such anger, turmoil,
not a day of reflection;
streets that were quiet once
are shaken now.

They left you, Orpheus,
moved,
believing
in better times;
the orphan stayed behind,
abandoned, breathing in
the silence time brings.
So much promised
but only fertile soil
turned into ashes.
Orpheus, you almost
turned back.

How To Plan Your Funeral

Sharma Taylor

I hear you husband say in him testimony at church two Sundays ago that doctor just diagnose you with cancer of the pancreas. Stage 4. That is well serious. The Bible say you must cast your cares on Jesus for He cares for you.

Remember: the good Lord not taking you where you not supposed to go. My sister-in-Christ, I pray you live. Me and the other prayer warriors gather 'round Herbert that morning and pray 'til some of we get slain in the spirit and flatten out on the ground like dead fish. Even now, I get on mi knees for you to live but, Missus, if you going dead, you better prepare. You soul already going to Glory but who going plan you funeral good but you?

You and Herbert have no brother or sister. You parents dead. Unno never have no pickney and you know Herbert couldn't even plan how to get the gizzada and grater cake to sell at the church BBQ, which you and me know is the easiest job. Him can't plan you funeral. Herbert is a good man. You must know that, after all, unno married for over 20 years. But you also know him going fall apart when you dead, so the planning of this fall to you.

Lucky for you, Jehovah know why the Holy Spirit move me to talk to you this morning. 'Cause I preparing for mi earthly departure now and if you can benefit from what mi do already, mi heart would glad.

The first thing you must do is make up you mind 'bout who you do *not* want to come to you funeral. As for me, me already know who not going be at my funeral. You know mi now as Deaconness Smith, but mi did wild when mi young. You would find mi at every dance, wining with a man behind mi. I don't want none of dem ole skettel from that life to come sit in the good-good church pews and shame mi. Dem loose women going come in sequin dress with the back out, no brassiere, jeweled high heel boot, fishnet stockings and feather boas. And dem going cry like is last night dem see mi. Now and then, when the spirit take me, I will go to a oldies party and skank but is really to

evangelise. Mi soul-case tired to invite dem to church to change dem life. Well, I pass a message to Inez that if dem hear me dead, keep far or me goin' haunt dem.

At my funeral, under no circumstances do I want to see dry-head Mavis, who walk 'round and fas' inna people business. You know the insect you see sometime on you clothesline on the sheet and towel that name "Grudgeful"? The same one that eat down you plants and brown when it young but green when it adult and smell bad when you crush it? Dem worse than chink. Well, that is Mavis.

But most of all, I don't want Inspector Gladstone to come to my funeral. Mi rather the dutty gyal dem show up, than *him* pass the threshold of the church. The casket would start to shake and roll. Mi duppy would rise up and box him.

For the funeral home, you should use Grantley's Funeral Services. Although dem is not the cheapest, Leonard Grantley is we church brother, so support him. Is a nasty lie that the night before him wife funeral somebody catch him dress up in him dead wife's clothes, waltzing with her body in the funeral home. People just love spread rumour. Ask Leonard for a plain wooden casket. Not the fancy white or glass one them have these days. Do a closed casket. Mi nuh like the idea of people looking at mi and mi can't stare back. Plus, is better they remember how you face did look when you was alive. Even though some days you can't stand to see you own face in the mirror.

As for food, this is important: don't let the hungry-belly people nyaam out poor Herbert. I will make a big pot of chicken foot soup and one pot of mannish water and some curry chicken and plenty white rice. This will stretch. If mi had money my funeral would have a doubles man, like the one mi did see in Trinidad when the church went there for convention last year. Mi want dem to make the doubles fresh, right there at the doubles stand. I want the barrah thick and crispy. I want him dump on the channa, shadon beni and tamarind chutney. The doubles man did show me the right way to eat it: right there at the stand when it piping hot…you fold the barrah in half and scoop up the channa wid it…Mi want people to leave my funeral satisfied and full, like dem just eat 5 doubles. And we all need something to satisfy we, when life so bitter. But for your funeral, curry chicken will do.

When it comes to the funeral program, you have the choice of a black and white one with just the order of service or one with coloured pictures of you from you young until now in special moments with you friends and relatives. Take the black and white. Herbert going have to pay and you don't need to get fancy in you death.

Make sure that on the program dem put you date of birth, down to the year. Some people leave it out so you don't know how old dem really is. But at our age, we age is we badge of honour. You program is you permanent record. It official, like passport. All who used to lie 'bout dem age, is here you confess that you actually 5 years older than what you used to tell everybody.

The venue for you funeral is, of course, our church, with the date to be determined. Just make sure is not a Saturday when dem using the church bus for the beach trip to the North Coast, or else little bit of people will come to you burial site. People want a ride from the church to the graveyard and back. As you know, taxi don't like to run up dem parts here and the people too cheap to reach inna dem pocket anyhow.

Don't bother with a eulogy or long tributes. Pastor sermon going long enough. Nuh make the people wish dem was in the casket with you. Take an offering for the church building fund.

In you program, have a special message to you loved ones. Mine going say:

"Telford, mi shoulda married you when you ask mi."

"My one grandson Andrew, mi know you can't be here. Mi sorry about what mi do to you. I love you so much, mi can't bear it up."

I meet Telford at a dance when mi was 20. Telford had moves, you see! Him was the only one who could match me on the dance floor. Him had big dreams. Him tell me him want to work on a cruise ship and travel the world. Him don't like him job as janitor in a hotel.

One thing lead to another and we start go 'round together. Telford did want us to married, but mi hesitate 'cause mi did young. Then him mother in the US file for him and then *boops!* Just so, Telford gone out of we life. Is after him gone, I realise mi pregnant and we had a girl-chile, Daphne, who mi raise on mi own. I don't trust stepfather so mi never expose mi little girl to them. And honestly, having her change me. After a while, mi never need no man.

Daphne had her father same wandering spirit. She went up to America on a visitor visa and never come back. But Daphne left mi with her son, Andrew. Andrew soon turn 15 and is a quiet boy. Big imagination. Him could draw any and every thing and say him was going to be artist and architect. Him best friend was a Haitian named Jean. Jean was a good boy. Him want to be doctor. Jean and him brother did wash up like Sargassum seaweed on a beach on the coast. Dem was fleeing Haiti. At first them did disappointed it wasn't Miami but them adjust. The Jamaican Government agree to keep the refugees and place them in housing and send the pickney dem to school.

Jean's big brother, Philipe, was the devil though. I couldn't put mi finger on it but I knew him was up to no good. Him stop go school and yet him neck full off of gold chain and him finger full of big ring.

"Easy nuh, granny!" Andrew would say when mi tell stay away from Philipe. After a while, I notice I seeing Jean at my house less and less. I start to see Andrew and Philipe together.

Philipe have a dark brown birthmark the shape of Jamaica on the side of his face. "I was meant to come here," him say. From a distance, it look like Philipe's right eye smaller than the left. When you get closer you see that is a dry eye socket. Something dig it out when him was a child, him say. A rat or cat when him family was sleeping on the streets. Who can a one eye man lead but the blind? When I tell Andrew that him laugh.

"Yuh want fi end up in prison?" I say.

"For what?"

"Don't follow bad company! It will kill yuh!" and I start to sing the hymn "When Peace Like a River", which was my signal the argument was over and I didn't want to hear no more.

In terms of funeral hymns, you can't go wrong with "What A Friend We Have In Jesus", "And Can It Be", "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" and "Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory". Ask the choirmaster Elder James what songs him recommend. He know what the choir can sing so dem don't sound like dem drowning puss inna plastic bag. In school, mi music teacher used to call me "She with the Golden Voice" and the pickney dem say me name "Golden Throat." Is just true badmind why I don't join the church choir. At my funeral, I going have Chupa sing Ken Boothe "Everything I Own" and Doris Day "It's Magic." Them was Telford's favourites. Mi going also dedicate Beres Hammond "Can't Stop A Man" to him.

***

Do, missus, tell people to turn off them cellphone during you funeral service. That way, people cell phone going start ring wid dem fancy ringtone and all kinda music. And if you don't mind sharp, dem going try open the casket and take you picture. Bright and feisty! People too outta order. The young people is the worst.

Is a cell phone put Andrew in problem. Mi start hear that some Haitians involved in smuggling guns and drugs in and out of Jamaica. It didn't rest well in mi spirit. All the boys in the area now following 'round Philipe like puppy. Andrew's grades start drop.

I call his mother in New York out of desperation.

"So whaddaya expect me to do, mom?" Daphne sey in her Jamerican accent.

"Come fi yuh pickney or carry him up."

"You know I'm not straight here. I barely make enough cleaning houses to support myself, much less another mouth. Look, I gotta go." The click on the other end tell mi that the argument done.

I decide to do some investigation on mi own. I search Andrew *Spiderman* backpack that him mother send for him. I seeing the textbooks he leave to go school with in the mornings but I not seeing nothing written in his exercise books.

Then I find the cell phone. I know I never give him and him mother don't send him money directly, so how him get it? I take it away and hide it.

***

Make sure you put the Bible verses you want people to read at you funeral.

It was a night I come home from Bible study at church that I find Philipe and Andrew huddle around mi dining table. I knew something was wrong. There was a strong marijuana scent in the air.

Philipe couldn't miss the look on my face, so him say:

"Sa pral byen Granma, pa enkyete."

Then Andrew translate it for me:

"It's going to be okay, Grandma, don't worry."

Philipe grunt: "bon." Andrew reply "wi." And dem laugh. Not no boy-laugh but deep and throaty like two big man.

"We don't have to suffer forever," Andrew say and I tell him that working hard cleaning the primary school wasn't suffering and it was honest bread.

He hiss his teeth and say him tired to come from a family that just clean people filth and I box him.

Him stagger back and I tell him and Philipe to get the hell out of mi house. Mi couldn't sleep that night.

***

You may have to arrange for the police to do crowd control at you funeral, depending on how many mourners you expecting to show up. Whatever you do, don't call the one Inspector Gladstone.

After I put out Andrew and Philipe, the next day mi call Inspector Gladstone. His mother and I were neighbours. I give him the cellphone and is like it burning mi hand.

"You doing the right thing," Inspector Gladstone say, writing down everything in him notebook. Him tall and dark and take up almost mi whole living room.

"We have intelligence that something going down at the beach tonight. Philipe is a person of interest." He looked at me long and hard when him say: "Andrew is a good boy. If he cooperates, I can protect him."

I did just want Andrew to turn around him life. Him so bright and have big things ahead for him. Him can do better than clean up people dirty place.

Oh! Mi nearly forget; make sure to ask sister Doris to clean the church before your funeral. She is the only one who take her time when she clean. She will dust off the windows and bench, and mop and sweep the floors good until them shine.

Mi hope that the ignorant young boy dem in the village, who love rub out weed in dem hand-middle, don't bother wid no gun salute at the gravesite. That will give the old people heart attack and who knows where a stray bullet can end up.

The night after Inspector Gladstone leave mi house, the news say that there was a shoot out on the beach. A boat carrying guns from Haiti in exchange for Jamaican marijuana get pounce on by cops that was waiting fi dem. But the smugglers act quick.

Inspector Gladstone get shot in him bottom and another cop shot in the foot, and when they done round up everybody, Philipe dead and dem hold Andrew.

Police say they find a .40 Smith and Wesson and eight .40 cartridges of ammunition on Andrew. I know is plant dem plant it. Andrew father did get shot by a gunman when Andrew was a baby so Andrew don't like gun. Andrew father used to be a side-man on a garbage truck and dem kill him Christmas Eve.

The police get all the information they need from the cell phone I give them. This put more nail in Andrew coffin. And did Inspector protect Andrew? Not a backside! Inspector get big write up in the newspaper and congratulations from the Commissioner of Police and the Prime Minister for cracking what them call "a major smuggling ring."

The prosecutor say although Andrew is a minor, dem have to lock him up fi 3 years in a juvenile detention facility til him turn 18.

Then, busybody Mavis start to walk and tell people that Andrew is a criminal and that dem was also smuggling people. Foolishness!

Sister, mi just walk you through the valley of mi pain. Mi planning mi funeral 'cause mi is afflicted with something worse than cancer. And most days the guilt tear through mi belly. So you see why mi not long for this world. I don't know how much more this heart can take.

Mi know you going be wondering how Herbert going manage after you funeral. But as fi Herbert, let not you heart be troubled.

He will be lonely but only for a time. Plenty good woman in the church him can remarry. Don't worry. Mi help him with that too.

Petition

Essah Cozett

Pass each bead of lead
through your fingertips
release, one by one
until flesh falls like wax.

On your thirtieth birthday
before you breathe
remember to say their names.
Each exhale exiles you from your skin

knowing that they will never live
beyond three decades, but infinity
awaits those ones who depart prematurely.

Breonna Taylor will never
Korryn Gaimes will never
Sandra Bland will never

see what becomes of this revolution.

More Than One

Essah Cozett

Silence stirs around
sister soldiers sailing
too soon to the spirit world.

In this city, gods have no power.
In this battle, another mother will lose
her son or her daughter to the shadows.

Tonight a Black woman will leave her flesh
folded by the window seal—she roams
streets shouting in tongues

searching for righteousness or revenge.
After scattering blood around the town
she'll put back on her skin and read palms.

Follow each line and recount each soul
that departed early. How many hands
have played a part in murder without just cause?

Searching

Essah Cozett

I only have tears to bring
to this rising revolution.
Maybe one day I will
be strong enough
telling mountains to move
by the pain of my voice
but today, I can barely
shake the seeds from dry fruit.

my sweet land, come to me, #borderless

Lasana M. Sekou

the time to kill us is coming
the bitch of bloodlust is in the heat of its kind
to proof mark the territory line, to soak it fresh
[if it must be]:
red with out tearing blood
white with our ramming bones
blue black with our searing skin
this is a rule of invaders[dem all behave so]
to teach us a lesson
to sanitize its dividing line
to frighten us[like ethnic cleansing
of any kind is never far off, for rulers dem all behave so]
to push us back&turn us around, from passing free
in any which way to&from our living succession,
even when undeclared as we are
in our very own state of ways.

i mussa been stuttering foolishness all along,
courting 'in the castle of your skin'
calling out our gale name&full claim
but what do i know 'bout dis&how 't wuk—
while the beast of ways
assailing the borders of our fraternity,
since the partition signed us up
as property to be shared&breed with blows,
is getting hungry&hungrier for the sacrifice?
what 'good trouble' could come of this if it is bound
to keep up? to come from whenever,
from which ever side, from now on?

what to do
in these last few days of pandemic&protest where i find
myself in dread ... ?
what if my son-of-enough, refuses to yield under the eave
of Diamond Estate?
what if that spitfire-giol daughter-ah-moine ram ‘cross
the road?
ahl yo’ look meh chil’ren nah ... nailed&shredded&thorn
pieces at the border, mined with historical intent&intently
occupied.

it is in these last few days i turn back from the outlandish
frontier of losing myself, from where i would not be in dread
of praying the old prayers:
“Functionnaire ouv’ve baye pou’ moin passe!”
(“jGuardia abre la verja y dejame entrar!”)
(“Guard, open the gate for me to enter!”) my sweet land,
come to me #borderless

from north to south i see no full compliment
no one-clasp of hands forming the fist of fusion
of all my voted emissaries; they’re not parting the pretext sea
with the science of the world
and the reason we have lived here
seasoned by this land of salt.
i see people gathering though, always in a trickle first some
marchers, fifteen doctors, a teacher or two, a mother, always
a mother because a mother is woman, children crying to go
school, a citizen journalist who is a father, because a father is
a man, a unionist who wears his boots just cause in case, a
pregnant poet wailing against walls the unity flag flying up
the other day winking in the wind like the charles borromeo
poem)
‘causin when you raise a flag like tha’ one you want your
land outta another man hand #borderless

we are left alone by we oan self.

who we voted in are not permitted to speak out.
not ever for us as one, not ever in the colonial keep.
and they are not all vetted to this battle of the bigger bram
but across the frontier divide,
under where our full name&navel string abide
a prickle of people take to hill trails
the shush of a child disturbs the bush that had been
beaten to a jumbie sleep by slave and smuggler)
so what else can we do?
stand shoulder-to-shoulder?
like a gum tree-line of sound silence soldering from cole bay to st. james?
[what if all we want is to pass in peace?]
how many will muster in fellowship now
to hold the line, open it each time ‘t come
when dem close it down our bawlin’ throat, again&again
to choke us off once&for all?

what else to do
as the pale pretext thing mounting how ‘t be mounting
since when the partition is a division? from south to
north, look how long ‘t mounting? as long a lingeh time
as we stay frayed&fretting, staying under the hand of
dem man dem who rule the borderlines[from near&far]
and we are forbidden to pass free any which way to be
left to we own one self

and the bitch of bloodlust
is in the heat of its kind
its gun-cock poking us
the compact is signed, unto its kind ...

The West Indian Novel: What is a Classic?

Elizabeth Nunez

Let me begin by addressing the elephant in the room. I have used the term West Indian instead of the more inclusive and historically correct term Caribbean. I will explain why.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, my siblings (there are eleven of us) had a group chat. The appropriateness of the term West Indian to describe our cultural identity was passionately debated. Some argued West Indian was a convenient term to direct postal deliveries. After all, there are other places called Trinidad. If we did not add West Indies to our address, our mail might land up in Texas or Mexico, for example. Some saw no reason to change a designation that had been used for centuries to suit the modern demands for political correctness. Then there were others who blamed the ignorance of Christopher Columbus. Heading west and believing his route would lead him to India, Columbus decided that the chain of islands he so-called "discovered" must be the West Indies. When the English won the wars with Spain, the term was already firmly established so it seemed inconvenient to correct Columbus's error. But some of my siblings were vehement in their objection to the name. It has all the historical resonance of the brutality of slavery inflicted on us by the English colonizers, they said. There were concessions: The name is simply a marker to identify our place as the English-speaking group in the chain of Caribbean islands. I suppose I fall partly into the latter group. I use the term West Indian novel in this essay to distinguish the novels written by writers from the English-speaking Caribbean islands.

So what is a classic, more specifically, how do we determine that a West Indian novel is a classic?

My question is borrowed from the very question JM Coetzee asked in his lecture entitled "What is a Classic?" published in his book *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays* (Viking, 2001). And Coetzee borrowed his question from the similarly entitled lecture, "What is a Classic?" given by TS Eliot in 1944 at the Virgil Society in London. For Coetzee, three criteria are essential for determining a classic. Referring to the music of Bach, Coetzee writes that in sense one, the classic is that "which is not time bound, which retains meaning for succeeding ages, which 'lives'" (10). Secondly, again with reference to Bach, he says a classic belongs to a "canon that is still widely played, if not particularly often or before particularly large audiences". And third, like the music of Bach, a classic does not follow popular trends or seek to belong to "romanticized" revivals; it is rooted in the historical past (10).

Convenience is not my only reason for using Coetzee's criteria to frame my discussion on why certain West Indian novels can be considered classics. Coetzee, as well as Eliot, had to grapple with the similar difficulties I encountered in attempting to define an English-language classic that strictly speaking is outside of the English literary tradition. Eliot's solution was to sort of disown his American homeland for England, a decision which Coetzee attributes to "a certain embarrassment about American barbarousness" (3). For his part, Coetzee acknowledges the complication of "inheriting" a tradition that did not arise from his culture.

With reference, then, to Coetzee's first criteria, no one would contest the contention that a classic is a work that transcends time and place, that continues to be played (in the instance of music) and read (in the instance of fiction) throughout the generations. The question is why do some works succeed in escaping the vicissitudes of the ages and others do not. Coetzee points out that in spite of its brilliance, the music of Bach was not widely played in his lifetime and thus would not have been considered a classic. He credits Felix Mendelssohn for rescuing Bach from oblivion. It was Mendelssohn, he claims, who resurrected Bach from eighty years of obscurity when he directed Bach's *St. Matthews Passion* in Berlin in 1829 (12).

Is there then a Felix Mendelsohn for the West Indian novel? Do West Indian novelists have a godparent who can bring their works to the attention of the public, especially works, which, though extraordinary, have fallen out of the public eye? Is there someone or some organization that can ensure the survival of a brilliant West Indian novel so that it becomes a classic?

It seems to me that Caribbean literary festivals have taken on this role of godparents for the West Indian novel. In the last decade they have mushroomed on almost all the Caribbean islands, the largest and most influential being the Calabash Literary festival in Jamaica and the Bocas festival in Trinidad, and, in the US, the recent Brooklyn Caribbean Literary Festival in New York These festivals garner not merely local

audiences, but also large international audiences, and, more significantly, members of the influential foreign publishing industry who take their cues from these festivals as to which West Indian writers to promote and market and which new writers to publish. The decisions made by the organizers of these festivals as to which writers they invite to serve on panels, to read from their work, or to be awarded prizes, strongly influence the choices publishers make. The organizers of these festivals do not shy away from their influence. New writers and even writers with a long record of works recognize the power of participating in these festivals. Indeed, part of the marketing of these festivals is their boast of the publication and sales record of the writers they invite.

But in what sense are these festivals godparents for the promotion and recognition of the West Indian novel? What part do they play (can they play?) in giving visibility to an extraordinary novel that is otherwise ignored, thus assuring the novel's place as a classic in the Caribbean literary canon?

I have attended or participated in many Caribbean literary festivals. What struck me most about the festivals held on the islands was the clamor of local writers to get recognition on the stage of these festivals. I understand the need and hope of these local writers; perhaps they think they will get the opportunity to be heard by someone from the foreign publishing industry; perhaps they will get the chance for their work to get a wide reading audience. Too often, however, they are disappointed for the headliners at most, if not all, of these festivals are Caribbean writers promoted and marketed by foreign publishers, who understand that though the talent may be in the Caribbean, the market is not.

The publishing industry is a business, which, like all businesses, is dependent on the market. And, unfortunately, the market for fiction by West Indian writers is reliant on readers abroad. There are publishers on the islands, but without a sufficiently large market, the publishing industry in the Caribbean is relegated to a sort of boutique, dependent on a small enthusiastic group of readers, that is to say, readers who are not only readers, but buyers willing to pay money for the work of writers.

Not much has not changed since the years that West Indian writers in the 1950s and 60s realized that they must leave their homelands if they wished to find outlets for their work. Even today, there are more Caribbean writers who live outside of the Caribbean than are in the Caribbean. A writer needs space; a writer needs time to give the imagination free rein unencumbered by the pressures to seek the means to sustain their livelihood. Foreign universities play the role of patrons for many of these writers; they employ them, that is, they give them income so that the writers can put a roof over their heads, and food in their stomach while they take the necessary time to write. Foreign publishers also help to sustain the Caribbean writer. A mere cursory look at the spines of almost all novels by Caribbean writers will confirm the dependence of

Caribbean writers on foreign publishers, particularly in the US, Canada and the UK.

If Caribbean literary festivals simply mirror decisions already made by foreign publishers, then who, or what institutions, can play the role of "discoverer," bringing to light works that have floundered in the shadows?

Coetzee credits the musical profession for keeping the music of Bach alive. "The musical profession," he says, "has ways of keeping what it values alive that are qualitatively different from the ways in which institutions of literature keep submerged but valued writers alive" (14). He points to the music training and apprenticeships that are necessary for the would-be musician which require practice and memorization of the works of the masters. Respectfully, however, I do not agree that there is such a qualitative difference between the two institutions. Writers also need training and apprenticeships. One can argue that that is the function of creative writing programs which have sprung up in the last couple of decades. It would seem that in these programs, the novice writer would cut her teeth by studying the master works of our great writers not merely for their ideas and literary artistry, but also for their craft. Such study of the master writers would seem essential for learning to create stories that can become classics, transcending cultures, time and place. Regretfully, the popularity of too many creative writing programs is built on the promise (if not made directly, but certainly implied by the students who compete vigorously to get into them), that there is money to be made from writing fiction. So these students study bestsellers, that is, popular novels that have made lots of money. They keep their ears pinned to popular discourse so that the subject matter of these novels often regurgitate the headlines of current newspapers. Coetzee observes that the music of Bach was propelled to the status of classic for this very reason: his work responded to a "cause" of the time. The Germans needed something to boast about to counteract the influence of Napoleon. Bach fit the bill to restore German cultural pride (11). But certainly "cause" or the topicality of a work does not define a classic. It is not popularity, but rather the quality of a work that sustains its existence through the inevitable march of time and changing literary tastes. "Cause" may have brought the music of Bach to the attention of the public, but "cause" could not sustain its longevity in the hearts and minds of the people. As valuable as many of these creative writing programs can be, too often they produce writers whose work is easily recognizable, work that follows the same trajectory, with the same focus on current news, the same attention-getting impact at beginning, middle and end. The characters are predictable, the conflict predictable, the ending reassuring. The novels sell, but that is the point.

I believe that there are institutions of literature that can function for the West Indian writer the way music institutions function for the musician. Literature degree programs in the university offer this opportunity. They keep works alive that may be forgotten or disregarded by requiring them on their syllabi, teaching them semester after semester,

year after year, to generations of students. So just in the same way the music student is required to study the masterworks of music composers, literature students are required to study the masterworks of writers, thus advancing the creation of a canon, works, consistent with Coetzee's criteria for the definition of a classic, that continue to be read and studied, even if not by large audiences. What are those works? A cursory review of the syllabi of Caribbean literature courses would generally include most of these specific works of fiction by the following writers from the English-speaking Caribbean, listed here in alphabetical order:

Alfrey, Phyllis Shand, *Orchid House*	Dominica
Brodber, Erna, *Louisiana*	Jamaica
Cliff, Michelle, *Abeng*	Jamaica
Edgell, Zee, *Beka Lamb*	Belize
Harris, Wilson, *In the Palace of the Peacock*	Guiana
Hodge, Merle, *Crick, Crack Monkey*	Trinidad and Tobago
Hopkinson, Nalo, *Midnight Robber*	Jamaica
Kincaid, Jamaica, *Annie John*	Antigua
Lamming, George, *In the Castle of My Skin*	Barbados
*Levy, Andrea, *Small Island*	Jamaica/England
*Marshall, Paule, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*	Barbados/USA
Naipaul, VS, *A House for Mr. Biswas*	Trinidad and Tobago
Nourbese, M. Philip, *Harriet's Daughter*	Trinidad and Tobago
Nunez, Elizabeth, *Prospero's Daughter*	Trinidad and Tobago
Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea*	Dominica
Selvon, Samuel, *Lonely Londoners*	Trinidad and Tobago
Senior, Olive, *The Pain Tree*	Jamaica
Wynter, Sylvia, *The Hills of Hebron*	Jamaica

**Writers born abroad but raised by West Indian immigrant parents.*

Obviously, I have left out a number of West Indian writers, but in attempting to answer the question I posed from the beginning, I am using Coetzee's criteria that a classic work of literature is one that continues to be kept alive even if not in the popular reading of the public. It is here then that we see the role of the academy where the

works listed above are taught, thus forcing the hands of publishers to reprint them.

There is another role that the academy can play, and does, though not often enough, in defining a classic. It is the role of the scholar, the literary critic. Unfortunately, I have only my memory to document Toni Morrison's dismay and regret that there is too little literary criticism of the works of black writers. In a lecture I cannot trace, she impressed on me the need for critical analysis that interrogates and highlights the artistic merits of a literary work by a black writer. On this point, Coetzee says that "the classic…is what emerges intact from [the] process of day-by-day testing." He goes further to add that "criticism is that which is duty-bound to interrogate the classic." The classic then, he says "defines itself by surviving" (15).

I am heartened that graduate school departments now accept, even encourage, theses on some of the works mentioned in my list above. Many years ago, when I was working on a dissertation querying whether criteria used for evaluating the great works of English literature were appropriate for analyzing the novels of VS Naipaul and George Lamming, there was no one in the English Department at New York University knowledgeable enough about Caribbean literature who could direct my dissertation. Eventually, the department had to rely on two professors from Columbia University. Thankfully, since those days, there have been many academic papers written on the works of Naipaul and Lamming, sufficient that we can deem their works classics, part of the West Indian literary canon.

There is a third sense that Coetzee mentions in which we can define a work as a classic. It is that the work is rooted in a tradition. This begs the question whether there is a West Indian literary tradition, a historical past of West Indian writing. After all, colonization for most of the English-speaking islands did not end until the 1960s. The literary tradition we had, or were taught, was the English literary tradition. In his collection of essays *The Overcrowded Barracoon*, Naipaul bemoans the consequence. He admits that though every writer is, in the long run, on his own, "it helps, in the most practical way, to have a tradition." The English language he says, "was mine; the tradition was not" (25). He had in fact inherited a tradition that in the early years of his writing life "did not give [him] the courage to do a simple thing like mentioning the name of a Port-of-Spain Street" (25).

Yet, though there has not been sufficient historical time nor a body of work by West Indian writers to claim in the strictest sense of the word a West Indian literary tradition, in many ways the English literary tradition is also the West Indian literary tradition. After my father's death, one of my brothers, the most radical among us, one who railed against racial injustice and was a staunch advocate for the assertion of the rights of black people, told me that he sought to assuage his grief by reading ten plays by Shakespeare. Ten!!! And by an English playwright who lived in the late 16th and early 17th

century England! But my brother had simply assumed Shakespeare belonged to him, inherited or not. Shakespeare was part of *his* literary tradition.

And what to make of my Afro-Caribbean neighbours in Brooklyn who hosted a well-attended formal evening event for other Afro-Caribbeans celebrating the British soap opera *Downton Abbey*? Guests came costumed like the lords and ladies of late 19th-early 20th century England. No satire intended.

I think too of how I have dealt with periods of anxiety when I needed to calm my nerves and restore my faith in a world where goodness triumphs. Inevitably I turn to the novels of Jane Austen. I picked up her novels again during the COVID19 pandemic, reading many of them for the fourth, and, in the case of *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice*, for more times than that. Austen is part of my literary tradition. I am not unaware of her relative silence about the slave trade of Africans perpetrated by her people at the time she was penning her novels. She makes slight reference to this crime against humanity in *Persuasion, Emma,* and more directly in *Mansfield Park*, where Fanny Price's innocent question to Sir Thomas Bertram about his work in Antigua is met with "dead silence". But I side with Austen's criticism of the unfair treatment of women, for I recognize the same frustrations women suffered in my homeland in Trinidad. And I laugh at Austen's portrayals of the absurdities of pompous men and women, for I have known such people too in Trinidad, the island having inherited the prejudices of the English class system. Most of all, Austen's stories allow me to relive my West Indian childhood with reminders of the comforts of family and close relations with neighbors.

I was not surprised to read that both Merle Hodge and Jamaica Kincaid create characters, who, though they become highly aware of the pernicious consequences of British colonialism, also turn to works in the English literary canon for comfort in times of distress. Offended by her Aunt Beatrice's capitulation to British classism, Tee, the main character in Hodge's *Crick Crack Monkey*, nevertheless finds solace in books from "Abroad" and invents her "double," an English girl, who "spent the summer holidays at the sea-side with her aunt and uncle who had a delightful orchard with apple trees and pear trees…." (61). Annie John in Kincaid's eponymously titled novel gets in trouble for ridiculing a picture of Columbus in chains in her schoolbook, but, in a period of depression, she also seeks respite in *Jane Eyre*, her "favorite novel," inventing for herself a friend in Belgium because she learned that Charlotte *Brontë* had spent a year or so in Belgium (92).

The West Indian cultural heritage is complex, as Derek Walcott famously acknowledged in his long poem "The Schooner Flight":

> I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
> I had a sound colonial education,
> I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
> And either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.

Years later, in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory," Walcott would embrace the complexity of writing in a language that diminishes, as Naipaul implies, the Caribbean way of seeing. Evoking the analogy of a broken vase that has been repaired with glue, Walcott asserts that the paradox of Caribbean identity is the perfection and wholeness arrived out of contradiction and fragmentation. He states: "I am only one-eighth the writer I might have been had I contained all the fragmented languages of Trinidad" (9). In *Tradition, the Writer and Society*, Wilson Harris admits that such a perspective does not yield "to consolidation of character" (28). The Caribbean writer faces the problem of writing out of a tradition where the broken parts of an enormous heritage "appear very often like a grotesque series of adventure, volcanic in its precipitate effects as well as human in its vulnerable settlement" (31). Like Walcott, however, he concludes that this *sancoche* soup, the gluing and joining of the disparate parts of West Indian identity, is what is "remarkable about West Indian personality in depth" (28).

Finally, there is another way that meritorious works by West Indian writers in danger of obscurity can be saved to take their place deservedly as part the West Indian literary canon and thus acknowledged as West Indian literary classics. I am referring to an apparent practice among English writers of mentioning the names and works of English writers as part of the plots for their fiction. One cannot read Austen, for example, without being reminded of Shelley, Scott, Cowper, Byron, Shakespeare, Pope, and many others. I notice that Coetzee, though a South African, asserts his claim to the English literary tradition, albeit inherited, by doing the same in his novels. In his famous novel *Disgrace*, for example, the reader is treated to explications of Wordsworth and Byron, whose works are not incidental to the main themes of the novel. In my own work, I am conscious of the importance of weaving into my narratives the works of West Indian writers. I consciously mention writers such as Lamming, Walcott, Naipaul, Kincaid, Hodge, Cliff, Harris, whose novels I have listed as classics earlier in this essay.

The West Indian novel is relatively new, and it may seem audacious to speak of a classic in the traditional sense of that word. Still, based on the criteria I have outlined in this essay, there are certainly works, indeed many more than I have indicated, that could make that claim. Hopefully, scholars inside and outside of the academy will continue to do the critical work necessary to bring to the attention of the public works of literary merit so that they remain meaningful to generations across time and changes in social tastes, and thus can rightly be called classics of West Indian fiction. Fiction writers can do the same, following the practice of English writers, with references in their works to West Indian writers.

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Cut(ting) Act(ion)

Celia Sorhaindo

dedicated to Shivanee N. Ramlochan

Spirited bard, wiry, pale, was invited home.
Father bowed, honoured by this presence.
We scraped a meagre but honest welcome
together. We put on a show, our offerings.

Young sister lyriced Africa. My coarse hair
raised in time with her fist. But our guest
was not impressed; told us to stop poet-ing;
put the dot of us squarely in our place. Firm

bottoms pinched, we open mouthed, silence,
not knowing what else to do; sat too long
respectful on edge of hard seats. Eyes turned
up to our father, confused, we waited for him

to save us; sat wordless and took poet's point-
ed word splinters; drew them down to bosom.
I did not stand that day; no hand, head, voice
of mine raised to remove the barb; silent—still.

Home was never the same after that. Hung
with shame, stung; we had missed some red
bullseye; judged, black-mark slapped by sharp
haloed guest. Why, I could not understand.

This is what happens when I politely leave
pricks alone; they infect, peck away at flesh
lips; keep me quiet for years. Parents, do sons
and daughters need saving by, or from, poets…

or priests? Which you think still; keep them dead
holy or wholly alive, hopeful? Neither? What use
are musings on muses if not words de-ciphered
by me, us? I'm careful who I'm told to worship

now, just due to some words; I cut the spell words
from the actors who bound them down, then I act.
Look me, trying to stand, speak up now in poems.
Too late you say to hear from poet—father, priest?

Go on, tell me off. Tell me I should hush, flush
my mouth again. Why should I be scared of one
more sacred dead hungry haunted ghost? Chupes!
Shivanee wrote Everyone Knows I Am a Haunting;

no fear, we are all aghast, haunting; bared, barbed—
pointing, appointed. Are you not hating hurting?
Leave me let me seek/speak this ghost; wind it
in, blow it out; serve it up in verse. Welcome,
welcome—
well come!

Moun pa flè

Évelyne Trouillot
French Creole

Mwen pa konnen pouki
kap pitit vwazen an
koke sou on pye zanmann
pouki ti kadav la blayi
sou beton an
je louvri

Mwen pa konprann
pouki lapli pa janm sispann
jwe kipègay ak lavalas
pouki larivyè krache fyèl li
sou do tèt kay

Pèsonn pa sonje
koulè machin ki vòltije
senk timoun
yon mèkredi maten
Kafou Maren

M pap chache konprann
Pa di m lavi ak lanmò mache
ansanm
mwen pa enterese konnen
konkòdaj malè trase
ak zetwal nan syèl
ki kontra yo siyen

Ale filozofi vouzan

Sèl sa m konnen
lanmè pa vin pi bèl
plis zwazo pap vole nan syèl
pase yon sanzave yo rele kansè
ap blayi lapenn nan kwen kay.

Mwen gen atrit nan kè
pa gen tretman pou sa
Pa di m koze pwenti
lespri m pa pran presyon
Mwen p ap chache konprann sa k fè
latè fè laviwonn jis tèt nou pati

Sèl sa m konnen
se pa yon sèl maten tigason donnen
se pa solèy ak lapli ki fè tifi grandi
pèsonn pa ka di m manti
lè m di
moun pa flè

People are not flowers

Évelyne Trouillot
English translation from French Creole

I don't know why
my neighbor's son's kite
got stuck on an almond tree
why his little corpse is lying
flat on the concrete
eyes open

I don't understand
why the rain never stops
playing silly games with deluges;
why rivers spit up death
on people's roofs

Nobody remembers
the color of the car that clipped
five young kids
in Carrefour Marin
one Wednesday morning

I am not eager to know
why
don't tell me life and death walk abreast
I am not eager to know
of any compromise between ugliness
and stars in the sky

Philosophers, please let me be.

All I know is that
the sea is not more beautiful
more birds are not flying in the sky
just because a fierce devil called corona
is spreading despair.

Don't tell me any lies
don't try to blow my mind
I don't wish to understand
why the earth is spinning until our heads bleed

All I know
young boys do not grow in just one morning
little girls do not flourish from the rain
No one can say I lie
when I say
People are not flowers

an offering

C.M.Harclyde Walcott

he called her blessed, to himself, when they first met
even though he knew she had a more modern name: shenequia
but he claimed he did not have an ear for modern names
and his mouth, obeying his ear, refused to form the word
as her face eased into a modest smile

he had met her during the state of emergency
he called the number, given by a friend
when he could not move about because of the new sickness
she had answered and later arrived to deliver
the vegetables and the fruit that he had ordered.

she had backed her rusting truck into the little shade of the tree
under which he sat and as she stepped out he became a teenaged boy again
rising awkwardly, at his age, to offer her an apple
she politely accepted, stuck it in her apron pocket
and got down to the carting in of the crates

he chattered on then
and she knew, as any discerning woman would

that was ages ago,
now they sit under that same tree that offers so little shade
and recall the day she first came and all that has happened since
and marvel how sweet are the pomme-cytheres still.

Archipelago

Kerry Belgrave

skin has this… edge.

only a smidge more precise
than the shores hemming these
floating flecks of coral
and cooled ash,
sentenced by tides to recline in the light
atomized and imprisoning.

What harsher colonizer of the mind
than distance?
What crueller slash than brothers made
into far-flung islands,
or love sarcasticized by lips
thinned to blades?

There is a lie repeated in the idyllic-ness of dusk
and a yawn of solemn understanding
that follows with the night.

Along the plainly marked truth of these separate worlds,

the lone islander toes exhaling waves
and stares for what seems an eternity
into an inner sea.

What else can be fished from such unfathomable depths,
but a glimpse of that cutting aloneness
DNAed to islands?

World Turn

Kerry Belgrave

Just past the smog of some ZR
horking up and spitting
one drop riddim to Silver Sands,
our grimacing lunatic leans in and
rechristens me “B” as in
“B, fuh real. *Check this thing.* fuh real…”

Opting to wait
like me - “ B ” - for any comfortable ride to self,
he drops words on a voice
as powerful and as altering
as a pinch of sea salt.

So for Christ’s sake,
I start checking these ‘brations.
How in two thousand and fifteen,
in this arm-holed winter season,
if you catch a bus or van
running through Oistins,
your overstuffed computer bag and sweaty palms
can photoshop the tourises pink smiles to lines,
flattening their faces to
“thy kingdom come...”

"Is dem sorta scenes de worl movin' pun now.
Just rememba dat, B.
Guidance… "

Then out of nowhere
truth sends you this friend request,
and you accept to find sense
ticking in your head,
swelling louder until the myth
that you're so safe
finally blows apart –
streamed live in the violence of whole cities
kalashnikoved to dust –
and human flesh, still quivering,
splattered against the insides of your
conscience,
forming a vile cosmos of instagramed terrors
expanding at the very speed of night;
ebola opening shop in the district of a testicle,
school shootings, beheadings,
and this worrying waterlessness besieging the
heart of man,
inevitably rendering us all
moon-eyed refugees.

voyage dans le confinement

Rénold Laurent

c’est toujours comme ça à chaque fois
le jour et la nuit viennent se confiner ensemble
dans ma mémoire en ébullition
lorsque ma claustration se transforme
en une saison engloutissante

un autre grand voyage
dans un voyage ordinaire
où les mots se battent
se heurtent violemment
dans les nuages des idées

certains tombent se relèvent désarmés angoissés
m’apportent les modalités du sacrifice des vies
des cris des murmures étranges des détenus
enfermés emprisonnés dans l’angoisse
la peur des décomptes des dépouilles

je me souviens de ces heures
heures de solitude accablantes
silence absolu tranquillité des rues
devenus terrifiants
je me sentais franchir les lisières du réel

des moments de sérénité de souveraineté
lorsque le confinement m’apportait mon enfance
tous les autres temps du passé
qui a commencé loin avant moi
dans la mémoire des autres

chants des coqs coassements de grenouilles
concerts rythmés criquets cigales
des paroles prisonnières des images des illusions
mêlés au temps espoirs
désespoirs des autres

je remonte le passé comme on escalade un escalier
pour retrouver cette terre ferme
qui tarde d'avoir un beau printemps
ce grand voyage m'emmène sur les pistes
des souvenirs les plus émouvants de ma vie

voyage in confinement

Rénold Laurent

it's always like this every time
day and night are confined together
in my boiling memory
when my confinement turns
into an engulfing season

another great voyage
in an ordinary voyage
where the words that fight
collide violently
in the clouds of ideas

some fall get up disarmed anguished
bringing me the modalities of sacrificing lives
cries strange whispers from inmates
locked up imprisoned in anguish
and fear of counting the remains

I remember those hours
hours of overwhelming loneliness
absolute silence tranquility of the streets
becoming terrifying
I felt myself crossing the edges of reality

moments of serenity sovereignty
when confinement brought me my childhood;
all the other times of the past
which started long before me
in the memory of others

roosters crowing frogs croaking
rhythmic concerts locusts cicadas
imprisoned words images illusions
mixed up with time hopes
despairs of others

I go back to the past like one climbs a staircase
to find this solid ground
that longs for a beautiful spring
this great journey takes me on the track
of my most moving memories

donne-moi une raison

Rénold Laurent

donne-moi une raison
pour que mon corps ne soit plus souverain
plus ce lieu inviolable
pourquoi des changements de fréquence de mon souffle
contrôle du rythme
battements de cœur
de paupières

on a souillé mon corps
je ressens parcourir mes veines
la brillance de minuscules cristaux
semi-conducteurs
qui réfléchissent et brillent
sous la lumière du jour
un tatouage invisible

des motifs sous ma peau
de micro-aiguilles solubles
nouvelle identité
numérique portative
d'un mélange de polymères
de sucre de stockage de données
bio-détection

ces métaux m'enlèvent le droit de vivre
l'intimité de mon être
mon histoire
me suit partout
jour et nuit
mes voyages mon lit
mes repas ma parole

toujours dans l'angoisse et la peur
menaçante ma respiration
les points quantiques de mon corps
provoqueront de tragiques destructions
de mes organes vitaux
donne-moi une raison de vivre
dans ce monde étrange

give me a reason

Rénold Laurent

give me a reason
so that my body is no longer sovereign
no longer this inviolable place
why changes in the frequency of my breath
rhythm control
heartbeats
eyelids

one has tarnished my body
I feel it run through my veins:
the shine of tiny crystals
semi-conductors
that reflect and shine
under the light of day,
an invisible tattoo

patterns under my skin
soluble micro-needles
new identity
digital portable
of a mixture of polymers
sugar data storage
bio-detection

these metals take away my right to live
the privacy of my being
my story
follows me everywhere
day and night
my travels my bed
my meals my words

always in anguish and fear
threatening my breathing
the quantum points of my body
will cause tragic destruction
of my vital organs.
give me a reason to live
in this strange world

The Last Gig

Philip Nanton

He eats like a bird now. His back aches and so does his belly. He can recite a catalogue of established pains working up from his wobbly knees all the way to the dull ache in his mouth from the blasted dentures that grin at him each night from the bedside glass table. What's new?

What's new is the endless argument that they rehearse perhaps a thousand times after Erik's call from Norway. They go over it so often in the following days they're both sick of it. Call and response. Him saying over and over: "he's my friend, it's an obligation I have to fulfill. Story done." Margaret saying: "you too old, Shake, too sick for this long distance traveling shit. Norway is too far for you to go just for a few more gigs. Leave it out". And then she adds, almost in despair because she knows they're wasted words: "but you going do as you wish, anyway." It isn't *what* she says that catches him off guard. It's the slight tremor in her voice. Her mouth turned down at the edges. *That* is unusual. Invariably her voice is strong, deep or sometimes it can be science flat, evidence based, beyond denial. The last time they argued about the gig her voice rose almost an octave, close to a plea. Call and response.

He didn't answer. He could have said that, apart from her, it was only Erik who was keeping him together, paying the regular medical bills, like for the painful dentures. And it was Erik, more than anyone else recently, who kept the faith with his playing. And, yes, it was a long way to go, but what to do? He didn't say anything like that. Instead, long after the arguing, it's the look of exasperation on Margaret's face that comes to him again as he sits at the back of the aircraft, staring at the nothing clouds, begging silently that the seven or more hours to Oslo might pass quickly.

He doesn't sleep much that last night in their Bedford-Stuyvesant apartment. The room's dark, silent, except for her heavy breathing and the occasional rustle of bedclothes. At night in the city some rooms dance with shadows to the incidental music of car tyre hisses, the buzz of on/off ghostly neon lights, squealing sirens. Their bedroom at the back of the brownstone is silent, fuggy; almost a morgue. After a couple of hours restless sleep he reaches automatically for the phone, not sure who he's going to call this time. The bedside clock says "Forget it. You'll need your strength for New York's early morning November cold."

Then standing at the airport stop stamping his feet, waiting endlessly for the bus to appear, a few people in dark hooded cloaks hurrying past, leaning into the scything wind, he shudders involuntarily, cradling his horn in its case. He has no idea how he makes it through all the passport and immigration checks. He's done it many times, facing these obstacles has become automatic. But it's some relief finally to sit in the plane. He can't eat anything so all he can do is accept the obligatory duty free drinks and hope that the alcohol will work its numbing magic.

It does at first. Thoughts of St. Vincent and Erik float up. They appear together because on every visit to Norway Erik brings up the topic of St.Vincent, says they must make a visit together. It's his fault, not Erik's. He remembers often sitting at their family dinner table telling Erik all about the clapboard houses in Lower Middle Street where he grew up; who lived where in the street and what jobs they did; about Kingstown's hard, unforgiving face that you have to learn to accept, if not love; the Botanical Gardens; country picnics beside Three Rivers; the active volcano. Oh, he talked about it all right. And it's a compliment from Erik that he wants to see it all for himself, he knows that too. But how to say in reply to all that desire that it's a closed book? That his one-sided love affair with the island is over. So he says: "sure, let's go to the Caribbean, but I don't think we should go to St. Vincent". And to reinforce the point he tells Erik "when I die throw my body in the sea, here in Norway". And Erik, sensing a wound, drops the subject, and they have another drink and move on.

Then he remembers for no reason at all how he misses the old London. The London that was his. He remembers the last time that he walked those Soho streets with the camera man shooting from across the street and Linton feeding him lines for reminiscing as they rumbled down Portobello Road. It was London where Coleridge helped him discover the flugelhorn and gave him, Christiane and the kids, a roof over their heads; and he remembers those Sunday afternoons in the packed Coleherne pub with Russ and the boys, blowing hell out of 'Jean and Dinah'. And there was the London below ground where as 'star sideman' he went chasing or challenging Joe and the guys as each one in the quintet answered the rainbow arc of the free form mood that Joe had created as they rolled from one club gig to another. It couldn't last, of course, and didn't. For the rest, playing the nightclubs, cutting the easy listening records, even the reggae that he ended up playing, it became routine, a kind of bearable despair.

Slowly, he comes out of the reverie. An hour or so has passed. He becomes increasingly aware of his bog standard, semi uncomfortable, designated airline seat. Nowhere to stretch his long legs. He now realizes that the journey from apartment to airport and airport to plane has taken its toll. He breathes heavily, pulling at the rim of his collar. He notices for the first time with some surprise that it's way too wide for his neck. His suit, shoes, even the fez that he wears always now, they all seem to press

down and into him, almost to swallow him. He tries to relax into the seat but his two old companions, back pain and belly ache, who were distracted for a while, start their noise once again: “don’t forget we’re here” and “we need some undivided attention too”. He winces, puts his head back and hopes desperately that he can fall asleep for the rest of the journey. But more pain courses through him in slow waves, saying, in a deep grumble, over and over: “some chance.”

Soon after the flight touches down at Oslo Gardermoen airport the plane’s gangway quickly clears of other passengers. A stewardess approaches him: “Can I help you sir”? He can barely speak for the pain in his gut. Two stewardesses, one either side, help him to the door of the aircraft, then down the steps and very gently they lower him, like a baby, into a waiting wheel-chair. He knows for sure that he’ll never make the gig.

Enbas La Terre II

George Goddard

The jour ouvert, the mardi gras, the numbing dance that does not end
this careless costume, its sinews drenched in dew
in glitter of sweat, in tatters of flesh will fall away and
like your forebears you'll philosophise «enbas la terre pas ni plaisir», you
will think to do it here and now. And after all why not?
Don't say "love" or "truth" – you do not need to
You would admit you search. White aigrettes take phantasmal flight
you chip chip chip to sound of pan. Vaval and ash and feigned regret.

Lines at Cas-En-Bas

George Goddard

Do it in this clear-eyed light
now that you know that your back's against
imponderable walls,
do it in the day-breaking light of
these times because you can no longer
retreat under rocks,
do it where the water washes
the shore that assuges your feet
where the sacred offerings of Ancestors lie
and the ground exudes this ethos – who we are,
whom they have denied that we be.
Just do it. And reclaim this space.

Or else the night falls unapologetically
the haze, so mystifyingly comforting now,
becomes a shroud, a nightmare impossible
to run from because your limbs turn to stone
as in a child's bad dream – an inundating
fear of unexplainable motionlessness.

Do it in the soft lumière of this dawn
where we remove the passe-droit of our shoes
in reverence, and let memory return.
Do it like so much more than a prayer:
a whispering above the roar of breakers
is a whimper, a rolling-over, a surrender
of our story – these bones must be more
than fossils, these living shards more than
an ancient potter's fingers on the past.
Do it while the clay's still wet in our hands
or there will be nothing for the children.
Only a smudged memory of holocaust.

Blue Butterflies and Covid-19

Mark McWatt

Blue Morpho Butterfly

When Jairo Mackenzie was little more than a toddler, his parents lived in Mabaruma, in Guyana's North-West district, where his father was a government district officer. They lived in a large wooden house in the government compound, and for Jairo and his two brothers it was a perfect life. Jairo was five and a half years old and his two brothers –the twins—were almost four. The boys wandered at will around the small government compound—around and under the houses and other government buildings and, especially, among the fruit trees that grew behind the buildings and at the edge of the forest. They plundered mangoes and guavas and golden apples and whatever other fruit were in season. Adult relatives of the family who visited from time to time were put out by the fact that the youngsters were allowed to wander around freely on their own; but any children who visited thought it was wonderful and were happy to join the boys' adventures.

When the boys' Uncle Bertie came to visit for the first time, he woke early on the first morning and came down for breakfast, expecting to see the boys, who had gone to bed hours before him the night before, but there was no one there except their Mum, in the kitchen, brewing coffee and preparing breakfast.

--"Where are the boys?" Uncle Bertie asked, "Don't tell me they're still asleep!"

--"Oh no, they're wandering around somewhere outside…they'll soon be here for breakfast"—and when she glanced up and saw the look of surprise and apprehension on Bertie's face, she added "Don't let it worry you Bertie dear, they do this every morning: it's quite safe in the backyards and among the fruit trees—and besides, there are probably a few older boys with them: there's usually quite a gang of youngsters wandering around on mornings."

Uncle Bertie was not sure that he felt entirely comfortable with this picture of his young nephews, but he helped his sister-in-law with the preparation of breakfast. Sure

enough, at around ten to seven, the boys came noisily up the back stairs, shouting goodbye to other members of their morning gang. They entered the kitchen, arguing about who had the biggest mamie-apple, their shirts and faces yellow from the juice of mangoes. Uncle Bertie was happy to see them and to hear all about their morning adventures—although he did not quite understand all their references…such as Jairo's complaint about Mrs Ramacindo's noisy fowl-cock, who kept following them around ("like if we had chicken-feed in we pockets!).

--"So what did you do?" Uncle Bertie asked.

--"Well Alex throw—"

--"No it was Andy—"

--"OK Andy throw a rotten guava and hit the fowl-cock…and he make a lot of noise, but stop following we around."

--"But", Uncle Bertie asked, "aren't you all afraid that some dangerous animal might come wandering out of the forest and attack you?

--" Oh they know not to go close to the forest" their mum said, "but to stay on this side of the fruit trees…"

--"Talking 'bout that", Jairo said with a grin , "Attie Solomon was telling me: 'Chase da noisy foul-cock over the other side—let some wild-boar or something come out and eat he rass!' "

--" Behave yourselves, all of you", Mum said, as the twins began to laugh with their big brother—and even Uncle Bertie flashed a smile.

Shortly after that, the children's dad came down and they all had breakfast, chatting about the creatures of the forest and the fruit trees. At one point Jairo said: "And don' forget, Uncle Bertie, that I have a weapon"—and he waved a sturdy sling-shot before taking a stone from his pocket and shooting it through the open dining-room window and onto the roof of the iron shed behind the house…"If any wild boar was to come near me—"

--"That's quite enough Jairo", his father said sternly; "I've told you before not to shoot that thing in the house: you could have missed the open window and shattered one of the glass panes!"

--:Sorry, Dad, I forgot"

--"Don't do it again."

Shortly after all this the boys' father said goodbye and walked over to his office in the building next door. Alex, one of the twins, then said: "come with us, Uncle Bertie, and we'll show you the fruit trees and the places we go to in the mornings."

--"Yes, come, Uncle Bertie" Andy, the other twin said, we'll show you everything".

And that's what happened: they showed Uncle Bertie all the best fruit trees and identified for him all the bird-songs and other noises that they heard coming from the edge of the forest. Uncle Bertie thoroughly enjoyed it all; but the fruit tree that interested him the most was an avocado tree which had several large pears ready to be picked. His enthusiasm, as he collected three of them, was as great as that of the boys when they were picking ripe mangoes or guavas. The boys were happy to see him enjoying himself, although Jairo said: "I guess pears are OK, but they not sweet like mangoes or oranges or mamie-apples.

Uncle Bertie was also introduced to a bunch of older boys who were his nephews' regular accomplices as they participated in the morning plunder of ripe fruit: there was Zack and Morris and Attie Solomon who was probably, at ten years old, the eldest of them all. Uncle Bertie thanked them for fruit-hunting with his nephews in the early mornings and asked them to make sure that the young ones kept safe and didn't get into any trouble. Uncle Bertie and the boys had many more such morning adventures over the next couple of weeks.

Then there was 'steamer day', when the passenger steamer arrived from Georgetown—and Uncle Bertie was due to leave the following day on its return trip to the city. For Jairo and the twins steamer day was no different from the others: they were gone on their fruit-hunting ramble before six that morning—although Uncle Bertie didn't accompany them this time as he was preparing for his trip home the next day.

It wasn't yet seven o'clock when the boys could be heard coming up the back stairs—and from the sounds they made both their mum and Bertie sensed that there was something wrong. The twins burst into the kitchen, followed by Attie Solomon—but there was no sign of Jairo.

--"What's going on? Where's your big brother? Young Solomon, isn't it? She continued, what's happened to Jairo?"

The twins burst into tears and shouted "Oh Mum—he's lost!"—and that seemed to be the signal for everyone to start talking at once...It was just at that point that the children's father came into the room: he managed to settle everyone down and asked Attie to tell what happened. The ten-year-old explained that, as they were all picking ripe guavas, they suddenly saw Jairo pull out of his pocket a small butterfly net and was shouting: :A blue Morpho! A blue Morpho! And he took off behind the butterfly.

As the story unfolded, it became clear that the large blue butterfly (which has always fascinated the young Jairo) had fluttered into the forest, with Jairo in hot pursuit—despite the shouts and warnings of his brothers and the three older boys who were with them at the time. "I followed him into the bush", Attie said, "but it hard to

see anything inside there, and although I keep calling out his name, he never answer… He mussee gone in real deep…I din want there to be two boys lost in the bush, so before I went in too far I just stan up and holler 'Jairo! Jairo! A few times, and when I ent hear no reply I run back out and we hurried back here to tell you all"

"Come and show us where he went into the bush, the boys' dad said, and soon there was a large search party at the edge of the forest.

"Now, lets not all rush wildly into bush, or there will be more people lost!" Let us spread out here along the edge of the forest and each make our way in slowly calling Jairo's name and looking for signs such as broken branches, etc. And don't spread out too far—we have to be in shouting distance of each other."

It was Attie who found him, and whose shouting voice was heard by all the others: "I find him! I find Jairo! I find him!" They all hurried to the source of the shouting and saw Jairo sitting on a rock and trying to smile through his tears. It turned out he had actually caught the butterfly in his net, but that was the beginning of his troubles because he had no clue where he was nor how to get out of the forest. He wandered around for a while, shouting at the top of his voice but when there was no response, he sat on a rock and cried… until he heard Attie in the distance.

Everyone in Mabaruma—and beyond—heard the story of Jairo's adventure: he became famous as 'the boy who loss away in the bush wid a butterfly'; and indeed the blue morpho butterfly was his prize although it was already half-dead. He knew it would not live long in captivity, so he was resigned to having it mounted and enclosed in glass—as it turned out he ended up with two blue morpho butterflies mounted, because old Mr Hernandez who had a shop down by the steamer stelling, heard the story and gave Jairo another blue butterfly that he had had mounted some time ago. The child was overjoyed and has ever since identified himself with and by the two blue Morpho butterflies.

You can conclude from all of this that Uncle Bertie was able to pack that evening and take the steamer safely back to town on the next day. As for the boys? They carried on as usual: hunting ripe fruit every morning. Jairo and the twins became great friends with—and indeed inseparable from Attie and Zack and Morris for the rest of their childhoods….

The story resumes fifty-four years later, In Guyana…

Screaming Piha trail at Iwokrama

Jairo is pushing sixty and finds himself back in his native Guyana. He left to attend the University of Toronto when he was eighteen and, apart from a few brief visits over the years, has not lived in Guyana since. After Graduation he moved to Florida and got married and raised his two children there. He kept in sporadic touch with Attie Solomon, who remained a loyal friend over the years. Jairo's two children are now grown-up and have families of their own.

This has been a bleak and tragic year for all of them: the Corona Virus arrived and they all hated having to stay home. Jairo's wife, Louise, came down with the virus and died horribly, hooked up to a machine that breathed for her in a hospital in Florida. Around the same time Jairo learned that Alex, one of his two twin brothers who lived in New York, also succumbed to the virus. All this affected Jairo deeply, but he was the kind of person who kept it all bottled up inside and put on a brave face. Now retired from his job, he would have been happy to help with his grand-children, but they too were all adults now and coping with their strangely cramped lives—given the raging pandemic.

Thus Jairo was alone and found it hard to cope without wife and family and became careless about the Covid 19 pandemic—perhaps hoping to catch it and be gone from a strange and unfriendly world. He decided that, if he was going to die, he'd prefer to do so in his native Guyana, so he wrote his Friend Attie and told him about his plans to return "home". Attie encouraged him and told him that he must come up to Iwokrama, the forest station in which he worked as a guide, though his age directed that he should retire later in the year.

Thus it was that Jairo found himself at Iwokrama, staying in one of the cabins facing the Essequibo river. It was serene and wonderful, and since there were very few others staying there at the time,, it was very casual and easy-going. Attie, in his role as guide, took Jairo all over the river, into creeks and up to a mountain-top overlooking the Essequibo. He also took him several miles by road up to an impressive "Forest Canopy Walk", built some years ago by the Canadians. Jairo was able to relax and enjoy the company of his friend from childhood.

Then they began to get news about people in Georgetown and along the Guyana coast who had succumbed to the Corona Virus: many of them had died. As the reported number of deaths crept up towards 50, Jairo became uncomfortable and moody, although Attie tried to calm him down. He began to wish once more that the virus would claim his life, for he would be happy to die in the forests of his homeland.

Meanwhile a small party of guests from Europe had arrived at Iwokrama, and, much as Attie would have preferred to stay at the forest station and comfort his friend, he

had to take these newcomers on the various tours. When the party returned at night from a trip to the canopy walk, Attie could see no light on in Jairo's hut and concludrd that he must be sleeping. Next morning there was still no sign of Jairo, and when he enquired, Attie was told by one of the gardeners that Jairo had been seen taking walks in and around the property, and had probably gone on an early morning exploration of one of the paths into the forest. Attie didn't like the sound of this but was busy with the tourists all day and again came home late that night to find Jairo's cabin dark and there was no response when he knocked on the door.

Next day, when he returned around noon from a river tour with the European visitors, he was handed a letter which was found on the pillow in Jairo's hut. The unopened envelope said "Please give this to Attie Solomon" and was signed by Jairo and dated three days before. As soon as he could, Attie sat in his room and, with a certain amount of dread, he opened the envelope. Inside was a letter;

Dear Attie,

I still can't get over renewing our friendship after all the years! I'm sure you will remember that incident from Mabaruma in the old days, when I got lost chasing a blue morpho butterfly and you and the others eventually found me—in tears—and with the butterfly almost dead in a little net. I was only five at the time, but I remember it mainly because of you: it was you who first found me—and you who, a year later, told about it to our whole Mabaruma school, when it was your turn to stand on the stage and tell a story to the whole school.

Anyway, I'm writing this because I don't want you wasting your time all these years later searching for me again—this time in the forests around Iwokrama. I say this because if you are reading this letter, it means that I have "disappeared" again. This time I am not chasing blue butterflies, and you won't find me in tears sitting on a rock—in fact you just won't find me, because I don't want to be found. The other evening, when we were catching up on each other's life-stories, I told you when we chatted how happy I was to be back in my country Guyana, especially after my wife and brother had died…what I didn't tell you is how much I hate this fucking Covid 19 Virus that has taken over my—and everyone else's—world

Ironically it seems to have completely ignored me: God knows I have tried to catch it and die like the others—but no, it will not come to me! So now I intend to die somewhere in the forests of my beloved Guyana, leaving no debts nor burdens for anyone. So…see you on the other side—whenever it is your time to come. I thank you for everything.

I love you,

Jairo

Attie wiped the tears from his eyes and felt so glad that he was retiring in a month's time. He knew it would be a month of sorrow and mourning and he hoped that visitors to Iwokrama would keep him busy until then. However there were no visitors that day nor the next. On the third day after he had read the letter there were shouts in the yard and people calling his name. He walked outside to see a grimy, wet and dishevelled Jairo walking towards the building, trailed by several curious workers. Attie was overjoyed.

--"Oh God, Jairo, I so glad to see that you ent kill yourself in the bush after all: The first time you run in the bush after blue butterflies—you get lost and you kill the butterfly. This time you run in the bush looking to die, and you find your way out alive! Your letter had me so sad! Wha' make you change you mind?

--"Boy Attie, it aint that easy to die, hear. It especially not easy to die in peace in this forest. Wha mek me change my mind was those fucking Screaming Pihas! They scream their terrible screams all day—and don't let you think 'bout anything else! That Piha is the worst creature God ever create!"

Attie hugged him and laughed. "If you had stayed and lived in Guyana you would have got accustomed to them—to the point where you don't really hear them no more!… But I so glad they screamed some sense into your head. I just want you to know that I love you, Jairo, you are my best friend and when I retire from here in a month's time, I want you to come and live with me for as long as you want. I have a nice, comfortable little house on the river—not far from the Mabaruma of our childhood. So say "Yes", you'll come".

Jairo put his arm around Attie's neck and they walked back to the main building…

Baldío

Naín Nómez

"Nunca hubiera creído que la muerte se llevara a tantos"
T. S. Eliot

Cuando despertó la pandemia todavía seguía ahí
y recordó el cuento de Monterroso
con algo de ironía con algo de pavor
Durante los días anteriores tuvo varias pesadillas
pero ninguna comparada con ésta
Como toda persona letrada
rememoró *La peste* de Camus *El año de la peste* de Dafoe
y *En las montañas de la locura* de Lovecraft
en la versión cinematográfica de Carpenter
o los films directamente virales como *Contagio* de Soderbergh
o *Pandemia* nuestra antesala al infierno
aunque por alguna razón
le resonaba con mucha fuerza
El hundimiento del Titanic de Hans Magnus Enzensberger
esa metáfora de la modernidad ostentosa
un barco monstruoso
petrificado en el fondo de los mares

A su juicio la proliferación del virus
expandiéndose por el mundillo de la especie humana
dejando su marca afiebrada en tarjetas monedas mejillas
administrando la vida y la muerte en los hospitales
fuera de la biovigilancia y el control
era solo un aviso de lo que vendría
cuando la utopía de la comunidad inmune
fantaseada por el nuevo sujeto del tecno patriarcado
se convirtiera en el reality show más espectacular de las últimas décadas
un desfile de fantasmas con mascarilla
sin manos sin labios sin lengua sin rostro casi sin piel
los nuevos intocables de una secta invisible

que dejan mensajes en aparatos que nadie escucha
sin cuerpo apenas una prótesis cibernética
apenas una máscara entre otras máscaras
un tapabocas que te obliga a callar
con diferentes diseños para mantener la desigualdad social
más allá de las imágenes cinematográficas
del zorro el jinete enmascarado o el enmascarado de plata
del dúo dinámico batman y robin
fuera del imperio fuera de la performance teatral
apenas un código una casilla en la nube una sombra
no se reúnen con nadie no tienen carne
su domicilio es amazon facebook instagram
una partícula de ser humano consumiéndose a si mismo
en la soledad de un estado de excepción permanente
de cuerpos abducidos atemorizados encapsulados

¿Para siempre?

Cuando despertó pensando en el monstruo
pero también imaginando otro lugar ciudad
otro planeta donde fuéramos todos inmunes
sin cuerpos abyectos y extraños ni fronteras ni muros
si dio cuenta y por el resto de sus días
que el pensamiento no le servía para despertar
fuera de su casa del miedo (al) ajeno
para salir del encierro de su dormitorio
de la segunda dermis con sus guantes esterilizados
el temor a hacernos virales
si tocamos la puerta la basura la bolsa del pan
la saliva que sale de los labios amados
sonidos partículas vivas ventosas que se adhieren
a nuestros pulmones el temor
flotando de una garganta a otra sobrepasando
las barreras migratorias la vigilancia
digital y el flujo del capital
¿O es sólo la metáfora de otro texto mayor?
¿A quiénes dejaremos morir?
¿A los más pobres?

¿A los viejos con sus enfermedades primarias?
¿A las mujeres golpeadas maltratadas asesinadas?
¿A los aborígenes exiliados de todas la tierras?
¿A los inmigrantes hacinados en barrios de la periferia?
¿A los marginales escondidos en sus carpas de cartòn?
¿A los nuevos zombies sin rumbo vagando por las calles solitarias
de las ciudades del mundo?

Despertó y se dio cuenta del espectáculo
de la dramaturgia de la muerte
los caídos ya no pueden ser felices o infelices
ni siquiera tienen ataúd o ceremonia del adiós

se quedan casi sin despedirse en medio de la calle
en medio de las cloacas de los mercados semivacíos
ateridos de frío o sudando por la canícula implacable
bajo el hervor creciente de un sol moribundo
multitudes de cuerpos frotándose unos con otros
de carnes podridas y verduras disecadas
exiliados de pueblos y casas sin hogar ni alimento
espectadores sin ojos de su propia doble agonía
probablemente sorprendidos
por esta oscuridad por este desencuentro
no querido ni anhelado
por este pétalo negro de locura
ya inscrito en los libros sagrados
como un recuerdo de los dioses olvidados
o un tic nervioso de la ciencia
la mesurada y correcta tabla de salvación
de la tragedia planetaria

Despertó y se dijo -en eso estamos ahora-
confinados controlados segmentados vigilados
en fin “normalizados” en la micro república de una habitación
en el umbral del afuera y el adentro
en la prisión blanda del metro y medio de distancia
en los tentáculos acomodaticios pero encubiertos del telecontrol
custodiados desde el ciberespacio

para que sigamos siendo los consumidores dóciles
que soñaron que fuéramos
tele alimentados todos

Estamos
en la batalla de Chile la batalla de Santiago
la batalla del Universo “estamos en una guerra señores”
y hay que ganarla aunque perdamos
varios millones de ¨clientes¨ desbancados del mapa global
invisibilizados en la televisión y los celulares
donde los muertos como antes los desaparecidos
no tienen consistencia
para el espectáculo aséptico de todos los días
somos un número una cantidad una ficha escamoteada
de la vista de parientes y amigos
a perpetuidad
aunque él piensa
no hay ninguna batalla que ganar o perder

el virus es un dinosaurio una pesadilla un sueño
una verdad que siempre estuvo allí
y no tiene la culpa
de nuestra insoportable levedad de existir
de nuestra pretenciosa manera de mirarnos
sin vernos la cara
y de encerrarnos en la pesadez del miedo
para vigilar prohibir castigar
lucha donde Tanatos desplazó a Eros
hasta nuevo aviso

Así es como la tierra se convirtió en una gran cárcel
algunos nos encerramos en los rincones de casas o pernoctamos
en otros lugares donde murallas y techos reducen nuestra mirada
anclados a un presente interminable
mientras una multitud de seres extraños sale de las alcantarillas
y vaga por las calles sin rumbo como mutantes exiliados
de las redes las pantallas los medios de comunicación
como residuos en tránsito virus del virus

también eliminados del porvenir
que no está disponible que no les pertenece

¿Qué nos espera?
¿Cuándo será la próxima pandemia?
¿un planeta sin agua ni alimentos el baldío irreversible?
¿la radiación la guerra? ¿el frío y el calor recargado?
¿el fin de todas las predicciones
el auto exterminio total?

¿Mutaremos?

Mientras tanto
el día venidero se nos escapa y desaparece
en nuestra sociedad sin orificios
en medio de nuestra disposición al aburrimiento
(midiendo los pasos rumiando el desempleo
acallando los gritos destemplados temiendo el sonido del timbre)
Yo tú nosotros ellas en la jaula invisible monstruos todos
saliendo de la pesadilla convertidos ahora en lo espeluznante
"apretando nuestros ojos sin párpados esperando que llamen a la puerta"
las ovejas negras abandonadas en la cuneta
de la autopista de la globalización
el tumor que se expande el tejido podrido

que se filtra de la tierra una y otra vez
invadiendo los campos y las ciudades
para desandar
el camino de la especie

(12 de mayo 2020)

Waste Land

Naín Nómez
Translation by Keith Ellis

"I had not thought death had undone so many."
T. S. Eliot

When he woke up, the pandemic was still there,
and he remembered Monterroso's short story
somewhat ironically, somewhat terror struck.
In previous days he had suffered several nightmares,
but none compared to this one.
Like all learned people
he recalled Camus' *The Plague*, Defoe's *The Plague Years*
and Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness;*
Carpenter's cinematografic version
or virus-centred films like Soderbergh's *Contagion*
or *Pandemic,* our ante-room to hell;
even though, for some reason,
he heard resounding powerfully
Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *The Sinking of the Titanic,*
that metaphor of ostentatious modernity;
a monstruos boat
petrified at the bottom of the seas.

In his view the proliferation of the virus
expanding thoughout the little world of the human species
leaving its fevered stamp on business cards, coins, cheeks,
administering life and death in hospitals
apart from the biovigilance and the control,
this was only a warning of what would come
when the utopia of an immune community
dreamed up by the new character from the tecno patriarchy
would become the most spectacular reality show of recent decades:
a parade of masked ghosts
with neither hands nor lips nor tongue nor face, almost without skin;

the new untouchables of an invisible sect
who leave messages on machines to which no one listens;
almost disembodied like a cybernetic prosthesis,
barely a mask among other masks,
a face shield that forces you to be quiet,
with different designs to maintain social inequality,
beyond the film clips
of the fox as the masked jockey, or the silver masks
of the dynamic duo Batman and Robin
outside of the empire, outside of the theatrical performance—
barely a barcode, a cloud address, a shadow.
They do not meet with anyone, they have no flesh,
their real home is amazon facebook instagram
a particle of human being consuming itself
in the solitude of a state of permanent exception;
of encapsulated frightened abducted bodies.

Forever?

When he woke up thinking of the monster
but also imagining a different place, city,
a different planet where we would all be immune
without abject and strange bodies, or frontiers, or walls,
he realized and knew for the rest of his days
that thinking was not helping him to awaken
outside of his house not fearful of strangers;
to leave the enclosure of his bedroom,
his second skin with its sterilized gloves,
the fear of becoming infected with the virus
if we touch the door, the garbage, the bread bag,
the saliva that drips from loved lips,
live sounds, airborne particles that stick
to our lungs; fear
floating from one throat to another passing
the migratory barriers, the digital
vigilance and the flow of capital.
Or is it only the metaphor for another, larger text?

Whom will we let die?
The poorest?
The oldest with their underlying illnesses?
The beaten ill-treated murdered women?
The indigenous peoples exiled from everywhere?
The immigrants stacked together in outlying districts?
The marginal ones hidden in their cardboard tents?
The new aimless zombies wandering the solitary streets
of the world's cities?

He woke up and became aware
of the spectacle of the drama of death.
The fallen ones can no longer be happy or unhappy.
They can't have a coffin or a farewell ceremony.
They lie there almost without saying goodbye in the middle of the street,
in the middle of the sewers of the half-empty markets,
stiff with cold or sweating through the implacable dog days,
under the intensifying cauldron of a dying sun;
multitudes of corpses rubbing against each other
with rotted meat and dessicated greens
exiled from villages and houses with neither hearth nor food;
spectators blind to their own double agony
surprised by this darkness, this loss of familiarity,
undesired and unlonged for;
by this black petal of madness
already inscribed in the sacred books
like a recollection of forgotten gods.
or a nervous tic of science;
the measured and precise last resort
of the planetary tragedy.

He woke up and said to himself - that's where we are now:
Confined, controlled, segmented, surveilled;
in fact "normalized" in the micro republic of an apartment,
on the threshold of being outside and inside
in the soft prison of a meter and a half of distancing
accommodative in its tentacles, but concealed from telecontrol

watched over from cyberspace
so that we might keep on being the docile consumers
who are dreaming that we might be
tele fed, all of us.

We are
in the battle of Chile the battle of Santiago
the battle of the Universe “Gentlemen we are in a war”
and we must win it even though we lose
several million “clients” busted from the global map,
made invisible on television and on cellular phones,
where the dead, who were previously disappeared,
have no substance
for the asceptic spectacle of all our days.
We are a number, a quantity, a code snatched away
from the sight of relatives and friends
in perpetuity.
Although he thinks
there is no battle to win or lose,
the virus is a dinosaur, a nightmare, a dream,
a truth that was always there
and is not to be blamed
for our unbearable levity toward living,
for our pretentious way of viewing ourselves
without seeing our faces,
and for isolating ourselves within the heavy weight of fear
in order to keep watch, prohibit, punish:
a struggle in which Thanatos displaces Eros
until further notice.

That is how planet earth became a huge prison:
some of us locked ourselves into the corners of houses, or we stayed overnight
in other places where walls and roofs reduce our view,
anchored to an interminable present
while a multitude of strange beings emerge from the sewers
and wander the directionless streets like mutants
exiled from the networks, the screens, the means of communication,

like residues in transit viruses of the virus
also eliminated from the future
that is not available, that does not belong to them.

What now awaits us?
When can we expect the next pandemic?
a planet without water or food, the irreversible waste land?
the radiation, the war? cold and heat out of balance?
the end of all predictions?
total self extermination?

Will we mutate?

Meanwhile
the coming day slips away from us and disappears
in our society that has no orífices
in the midst of our disposition to boredom
(measuring our footsteps contemplating unemployment
quieting out-of-pitch shouts fearing the sound of the bell)
I you we they in the invisible cage, all of us monsters
coming out of the nightmare changed now into something ghastly,
"squeezing our eyelidless eyes waiting for someone to knock on the door,"
the black sheep abandoned on the shoulder
of globalization's highway,
the rotted tissue, the tumor that expands,

that is filtered from the earth time and again
invading fields and cities
to retrace the footsteps of our species

(May 12, 2020)

Two Chileans Who Made Literature Creative in Canada

Keith Ellis

I write the following brief lines having been witness to a process by which literary theory achieves growth, evolution and function. The initial gesture that attracted my attention was an invitation from a group of Latin Americans resident in Toronto and linked to the Casa Salvador Allende to help them to organize an international short story contest in honour of their late Chilean compatriot, Professor Juan Carlos García Vera. Noting the insistence with which they made the request and having a high regard for Juan Carlos who had passed away in the previous year, I added this task to the many in which I was involved.

My most important early duty was to announce the contest, mainly in Spanish-speaking countries, giving my description of it the seriousness that would attract the high level of talent and dedication to be expected of contestants in this special event. The evocative quality of names such as Salvador Allende, Juan Rulfo and Augusto Monterroso imbued the launch of the project, including the formation of the small but certain-to-be hardworking jury, with a revolutionary spirit. Everyone involved was well prepared to stimulate the effort to uphold and improve the possibilities for this versatile genre to prosper, this genre of intensity and brevity – so beloved in Latin America and the Caribbean – that nevertheless may very comfortably accommodate any appropriate proportion of the epic, the dramatic and the lyric.

The response to our call to writers to participate in the contest was astonishingly positive. From some thirty-six countries we received slightly more than a thousand short stories. This no doubt would have pleased Juan Carlos, a principled counsellor of peace, harmony and productivity and by whom the concept and practice of rancour was intensely disliked. In the face of this unexpected avalanche of kind creations the small but resolute jury made no appeals but continued in the revolutionary spirit.

Coinciding with the date scheduled for the prize-giving, a date now made unuseable by the need to resist COVID-19, a few friends and associates in Toronto of Juan Carlos and of Naín Nómez received email copies of Naín's poem "Baldío" [Waste Land] shortly after its composition, May 12, 2020. The poem was clearly not intended for the Short Story Contest. Its arrival was seen rather as the happy coincidental appearance of a symbol of the strong bonds of friendship between Juan Carlos and Naín and of the exceptionally high quality of their literary production. I was thrilled to know such an amazing poem, and I shared it with several friends in different parts of the world who were equally moved by it. I saw it as helping to sustain the high spirits of those who had been working so hard on the Contest.

The poem's title and its epigraph link it closely to T.S. Eliot, and through him to Dante; but Eliot is established immediately as the primary companion, challenge or target. When later in the text Naín speaks of being on the threshold of the outside and the inside, he is alluding to the role of paratextual markers and specifically to the definition that Gérard Genette gives of the epigraph in its relationship to the text. So the outer comparisons with which the poem begins soon give way to a viewing of the inner world of this "Waste Land," a land whose diminishing population is being ravished by the virus. Naín goes on to display knowledge from a wide range of fields of contemporary civilization in the rest of the poem as he reveals a deep concern for the survival of this world, wanting to see it freed from its glaring inequities. He even wonders about a next pandemic that would mean the total collapse of the environment. But Naín, the poet of "Waste Land," does not give up. He is alert to a battle that is being waged but with undermining handicaps which are subsumable under the great flaw of social inequality; and he is insisting that this flaw should be corrected and is hopeful that it will be.

Eliot, on the other hand is almost youthfully gleeful, when in his poem "The Hollow Men" three years after "The Waste Land" (1922), he enlivens his poetic discourse with unusual rhythm as his characters celebrate the world ending "not with a bang but a whimper." The Spanish Civil War would break out in 1936, with a Fascist uprising, both Spanish (led by Francisco Franco) and German, against the Republican government. It escalated rapidly, with the military advantage going to the Franco forces, to such an extent that the killing started to reach people of Eliot's own vocation, well-known poets such as Federico García Lorca, and sent others, repulsed by the widespread slaughter, fleeing for their lives: poets, such as Rafael Alberti and Antonio Machado, foreign poets, journalists and other artists, such as Pablo Neruda, Nicolás Guillén, Langston Hughes, among them. In spite of this Eliot continued to counsel neutrality.

Whereas the relationship between the author of "Waste Land" and Eliot reveals differences that imply or even compel the assumption of different stances in the course

of the poem – companion, challenge, target – , Naín builds a steady partnership with his fellow Latin American, the Honduran, Augusto Monterroso. On the face of it, the achievement of such a frictionless cross-generic relationship may seem paradoxical; but in fact literary theorists should find the achievement to be purely instructive because Naín has made not just the short story, but the shortest short story, function dynamically by creating the brilliant work that is "Waste Land." On writing his poem, Naín Nómez, a Chilean with gentle posture and great dreams for humanity, succeeds in achieving something new; he demonstrates a further, previously unheralded, capacity of the short story genre, one based on its surprising quality of being mobile within a text while it maintains its structural integrity and its intensity: its quality of being short, durable and intense. The intensity is often enhanced due in great part to usages that derive, paradoxically, from the unwillingness of the author to indulge in sensationalism, to exploit, stressing them, the generally known circumstantial or background effects of the long days and nights, months and years, of terror that had been unleashed on the Chilean people by the U.S.-backed Pinochet regime.

Chilean writers of this period have been finding ways of presenting indirectly or reluctantly their harrowing and persistent experiences. For example, Juan Carlos produces this description of the brutal effects on a close friend of his who had been detained by the Fascist Pinochet forces. Juan Carlos says a great deal with just a few words, economy being essential for the art of the short story. The descriptive sentence is:

> Era, sin duda, él.
> *[It was, without doubt, him.]*

That is to say, the friend was so disfigured by the beatings carried out by the police that even his close friends had to examine him carefuly before they could reach the conclusion, not without an ironic sense of relief, that he was really the intimate friend that they had known. These techniques of the art of the short story were so frequent in the work of Juan Carlos that they came to reflect his personality, his propensity to understate ironically, especially with regard to acts of cruelty. It is in this sense that Naín has the genial alleviative recourse to Monterroso's story, giving it an ancient mission of parable and, in a more contemporary and still enduring sense, the role of metaphor. In his poetry Naín indicates in a different way a reticence to report suffering, a way that eludes or mitigates its full weight. He does this impressively by employing catachresis in his use of the adjective "exiled," as if to express painful empathy and at the same time not fully reveal his own painful experience and that of his compatriots who are forced to spend a long time away from their native Chile. Thus he speaks of the indigenous "exiled from everywhere."

The full text of the story is as follows:

> Cuando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estaba allí.
> *[When he awoke, the dinosaur was still there.]*

That this story, published in 1959, is the shortest short story ever told, is a declaration by Monterroso. And whereas grown men and women have been repeatedly counting its syllables, his declaration is not a proven fact. Monterroso is known for statements that may seem to be extravagant. For example, when Mario Vargas Llosa, the Nobel prize-winning novelist of uncertain national identity (he left Peru to live in Spain shortly after winning the Nobel Prize) and a frequent supporter of U.S. foreign policy, invited him to be one of the novelists who would write about dictators, assigning to him Anastasio Somoza Debayle (Nicaragua's notorious dictator), he rejected the invitation furiously, saying that he would not write about Somoza, that what he would like to do is shoot Somoza. But what Naín the artist does is create an ingenious poem that takes "The Waste Land" of T.S. Eliot as a reference to the paradox that, on the one hand, presents the sad, desperate human condition together with a disagreeable social state and, on the other hand, offers magnificence with regard to the sounds of the words and an ordered succession of images, forming a beautiful artistic creation. During his days here in Toronto as a graduate student, we talked in seminars about the mixture of genres in literary creations, about the epic within the lyric in Pablo Neruda, for instance. Gérard Genette, the French theorist, came into the picture with his Introduction á l'Architexte (1979). I later wrote about Genette and the defect in his theory of the paratext that was caused principally by his keen focus on Europe and North America, by what the Egyptian Samir Amin would call Eurocentrism. My arguments were sustained by the theory contained in the poetry of Cuba's Nicolás Guillén and revealed chiefly by my contextual analyses of the great Cuban's epigraphs.

It is now clear that Naín Nómez, by his radical use of the short story genre within his poetry, is making a new and stupendous contribution to literary theory. Thanks to Juan Carlos, Naín's compatriot, who endured with him the pain and the pleasures of exile in Canada and who has made literary history by extending the attributes of the short story: its brevity and intensity, the practitioners of the literary arts have at their disposal greater fields of action, practitioners such as the many who participated in the 2020 Concurso Internacional del Cuento en honor a Juan Carlos García Vera, headed by the Mexican Noemí Ulloa Lona.

My Goings With Owen

Hilary Beckles

_for the late Owen Seymour Arthur,
Prime Minister of Barbados Sept. 6, 1994 to Jan. 15, 2008

In the land of wood, water and levity,
we roamed, as young men do, but separately.
I joined him after Michael's defeat in 1980.

We came home in fear and doubt, to face
a fractured fraternity, a weight of uncertainty:
how to chart the course of our prized university?

But Owen, the Seer, with steadfast will,
imagined a Beacon on top of the Hill.

No academic backwater, no wading
in the shallows. Time to launch out, to make bold:
university graduates in every household!
Use the land, spread our borders,
bring our brothers and our sisters
from all across the Caribbean sea.
Make the top of the Hill a CSME!

What a Captain, what a journey
as I partnered with him,
where his vision for his people never grew dim!

But then came the darkness,
the sting of rejection, the loosening hold
on the dreams he'd held dear.
Weary and wounded, hounded and hunted,
he came to his Hill and found refuge there.

Professor of practice, leader of renown,
you have been called to a higher home.
And I, who was there for part of the journey,
was there for you in the end, my friend.

Speech by the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur, Prime Minister, Barbados

United Nations General Assembly
38th Plenary Meeting
Monday, 23 October, 1995

The adoption of the Charter, by consensus, at the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco in 1945, represents one of the great moments of history. Today we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which embodied the hopes and aspirations of a world devastated by war. The vision of global cooperation enshrined in the new world Organization blossomed and matured into an extensive network of institutions — the United Nations system — whose service to humanity has touched the daily lives of people in every corner of the world.

The United Nations has built a proud record of accomplishments. It has become our best hope for promoting global peace and security, even as it fashions a body of international law that enables global interdependence, cooperation and communications.

This Organization, particularly through its specialized agencies, has coordinated international efforts against disease, hunger and suffering. It has promoted democracy and economic and social justice, and, to this end, has provided a universal mechanism for charting international economic and social policy.

And within the process of decolonization, the United Nations has not only secured the dismantling of apartheid, but has also played a significant role in ensuring that

more than 60 countries — many of which, like Barbados, are small and vulnerable — have achieved their independence.

Barbados salutes the leadership provided by the distinguished Secretaries-General and the dedicated staff who have served with distinction the noble mission of the United Nations.

These accomplishments must not blur the real difficulties or complexity of the tasks that have confronted, and continue to confront, this Organization. Many setbacks have occurred along the way. In moments of frustration and disappointment, we have even wondered, often aloud, if the United Nations has failed us, perhaps forgetting that our United Nations represents no more and no less than the collective will of our Governments, which it serves.

Looking ahead, the United Nations of the next 50 years must embark on its unfinished journey, reformed and re-energized, to meet the challenges of a world of tumultuous global change. Barbados reaffirms its commitment to the ideals of the Charter, which will guide us on this journey.

The reformed United Nations must construct a new system of security along the lines contained in "An Agenda for Peace", to reflect the changed nature of today's conflicts, conflicts mainly within nations rather than between nations. It must accelerate and intensify its development mission. In particular, it must respond with dispatch to the cry and suffering of the world's poor, whose plight weighs heavily on the conscience of the international community. It must implement the wide-ranging Programmes of Action created by the continuum of United Nations conferences, from Rio to Beijing; and, of special significance, the Bridgetown Declaration on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Should it do so, we can contemplate a happier future, in which nations live in peace, diverse cultures flourish in harmony, and all people enjoy freedom and material well-being.

The United Nations remains a special place for small island developing States. Often buffeted by both natural and man-made disasters and by the economic dislocations of globalization, they look to the United Nations for protection and support. For Barbados, this United Nations — even though less than perfect — is still our greatest hope for peace, development and social justice.

Speech by the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur, Prime Minister, Barbados

United Nations General Assembly Fifty-Eighth Session, 3rd Plenary Meeting, Monday 22 September, 2003

It is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, as a son of the Caribbean, on your historic election to preside over the General Assembly at its fifty-eight session.

We are currently in the throes of a historic transition in humankind's affairs. On a scale never before contemplated nor experienced, the energies and the resources of a significant portion of the international global community are increasingly being deployed to fight the terrorist threat to global security.

As such, the great goals of global development — the eradication of poverty and relief from hunger — are hardly being achieved and appear to be less than urgently addressed.

There is, however, an enduring moral agenda from which we dare not withdraw. For it is indeed a sobering thought that, over and above the social havoc that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has wrought, it offers itself as a greater threat to global economic stability and development than market failures and policy disturbances. There is now, therefore, a moral obligation for all of us to declare and to treat the HIV/AIDS pandemic as what it is — the single greatest threat to human security.

We must also now dare to think of the health of the whole human race as a realizable objective. For he who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything.

I am here today to reaffirm Barbados' pledge to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted at the General Assembly's twenty-sixth special session, in 2001. As a founding member of the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS, we wish to renew our commitment to work in harmony with our neighbours to relieve our region of a threat to stability and security which is exceeded only by that faced by sub-Saharan Africa. My presence here today also signals in the strongest possible way the resolve of an entire nation and people to spare no effort in countering our nation's single greatest threat.

My country's experience points to the fact that with the requisite effort the war against HIV/AIDS can be won. Early in 2001 my Government initiated an expanded, multi-sectoral response to the pandemic. It included investing the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for giving strategic direction to our national programme and for overseeing the implementation of initiatives at the ministerial level. We have also forged new creative partnerships across all our civil society, geared to achieving the goals of a 50 per cent reduction in mortality by 2004 and a 50 per cent reduction in incidence by 2006.

We are providing highly active antiretroviral therapy free of cost to all our eligible citizens living with HIV/AIDS. After the first year of this expanded national programme, I am pleased to report that the deaths from AIDS in Barbados have been reduced by 43 per cent. We have also achieved a six-fold reduction in mother-to-child transmission, maintaining levels of less than 6 per cent transmission over five years. We recognize, however, that we have much still to accomplish.

Having made great strides at the level of treatment, we must now strengthen our programme of prevention, putting our emphasis on activities to induce behaviour change. For, ultimately, the only successful way by which to win wars is to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

My Government also proclaims its dedication to the creation and enforcement of supportive laws, full empowerment of the HIV/AIDS community and the eradication of AIDS-related stigma and discrimination.

We are resolutely committed to the global fight against HIV/AIDS, and we urge the replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. As a mark of that commitment, my Government therefore today pledges to contribute $100,000 to the Global Fund.

Let us go forward together in this battle, fortified by the conviction that those who labour in the service of a great and good cause will never fail. I am obliged to you.

Eulogy for Professor, The Rt. Hon. Owen Seymour Arthur

Dr. Elliot Douglin (Cousin of the late PM)

A plethora of tributes and accolades have already been written and spoken on the wonderful achievements and the amazingly meteoric rise to National and Regional greatness of this outstanding Barbadian and Caribbean Statesman, Professor, The Right Honourable Owen Seymour Arthur. The family expresses sincere thanks to every single person who has already given tribute by voice or pen.

In accordance with directives he gave, well before his last illness, he wanted his funeral service to be held here in St Peter, his home parish and the parish he represented in Parliament for 34 years, and the Eulogy to focus primarily on the family life that laid the foundation for his development from being born the son of poor parentage to becoming one of the great Prime Ministers of Barbados and a champion of Caribbean Integration. He also requested that I, one of his many first cousins, should give the Eulogy/Reflection, though it is an honor to do so, I am indeed humbled by his request.

Owen Seymour Arthur was born on October 17, 1949, in Rose Hill in this great Parish of St Peter. He was the second child and first son of my uncle Frank Arthur, and Iretha Leota Roach, known affectionately as Doll. Their first child was Valmay and the filial bond between Valmay and Owen would be unbreakably enduring,(so much so that in his retirement he spent quality time with her).

Doll, Owen's mother, was one of 5 daughters of Thomas Stanford, a well-known bookkeeper from Ashton Hall St. Peter. She was an agricultural worker and a devout Pentecostal Christian. Although Uncle Frank and Doll eventually had 7 children between them (Valmay, Owen, Judy, Margaret, Arlette, Richard, and Jacqueline) Owen was undoubtedly his mother's favourite. She taught him to cook, to be hard working, to be

honest and caring, and to be the best that he could be. He attended church with her and even sang in the choir (most likely base). He also attended All Saints Anglican Church with maternal grandmother Donzilla Roach. Uncle Frank had another daughter named Patricia also well loved by Owen ; she, Valmay and Richard are the only surviving siblings.

From Owen's mother's lineage the Stanfords, Roaches and Benns were all related. Haynesley Benn, a maternal cousin, would later muster the courage to contest the St Peter seat against Owen, but that never diminished the family unity or family love, all it did was to make Haynesley Benn better known for his audacity and daring spirit.

Owen's father Frank Arthur was my mother's half- brother, both having as their father Mr. Harold Bowen, a white Bajan Planter, better known as Harry Kite, who was actually more prolific at getting children from many concubines than he was at growing crops. Harry Kite produced two sons from Vie Arthur, one of his concubines, these were uncle Frank and uncle Aubrey, Frank died at age 86, uncle Aubrey is still alive in the UK, he is 90. Owen's grandmother Vie Arthur, was very protective and caring of him, but was a no-nonsense disciplinarian.

Uncle Frank was an excellent carpenter and joiner but maintained his entrepreneurial independence refusing even to be employed by a famous businessman named Mr. Alleyne Ebworth. Indeed uncle Frank was a man of stubborn determination and was never afraid to tell you his mind on any matter. But beneath that austere exterior, Frank was fair and kind and whenever he gave Valmay any gift he commanded her to include all the siblings and share equally, his favourite phrase was equitable distribution and include every one. He later built and operated a butcher's shop on to his house. Those paternal characteristics made an indelible impact on Owen's young mind and would be especially manifested later in his politics of inclusion,and like uncle Frank, once Owen's mind was made up on a matter, that was it.

Frank loved cricket and would take the young Owen and Valmay to Pie Corner to stay at Aunt Elsie while he played cricket on a nearby cricket field. In Pie Corner, Valmay and Owen became acquainted with the Harry Kite side of the family and got to know their other cousins, Aunt Elsie's children: Mary, Maurice, June, Marita, Mervyn and Jeffrey Mahon, as well as uncle Allan Bowen's children Shurla (who later married fast bowler Wes Hall), Sybil, David, Sandra. In fact most of the Harry Kite grand children loved spending time at the peaceful home of Aunt Elsie in Pie Corner. Owen and Valmay felt a sense of calm and heritage. Harry Kite had so many children and therefore grandchildren, that we are still getting to discover others even today.

With such strong personalities surrounding him, the little Owen developed character qualities of hard work, honesty, and a quiet but indomitable spirit to excel. He, like all of us, his many cousins, though born in poverty and what would be called

the lower socioeconomic class, never focused on poverty or class but on educational and holistic progress, not merely for the sake of self but especially so as to be equipped to serve and help others and to contribute to nation building. Valmay recounts that at age 3 Owen was so determined to own livestock that he tied a rope onto a rock which he called his cow and would carry it out on the pasture to graze during the day and bring it home at night.

Owen started Primary School in 1955, walking to and from school every day. But who would have thought that the quiet little boy walking from his father's humble dwelling in Rose Hill up the hill to All Saint's Primary was a Prime Minister in the making ? Owen's academic ability improved progressively each year at primary school and in 1960 he passed for and entered the Coleridge and Parry secondary school. He also walked to Coleridge and Parry every school day,and there he excelled. He loved history and Latin and was intrigued with the work of the great Roman historian and politician Publius Cornelius TACITUS. As a result he was nicknamed Tacitus by his classmates, but that was soon shortened to "Tac". He actually informally tutored quite a few classmates and was highly respected for his quiet academic profundity.

On passing all his Oxford and Cambridge O level subjects, he transferred, in 1966, to Harrison College sixth form, in fact Modern Sixth, to do his Advanced level subjects, including English,and history. Youngest brother Richard remembers that the very same day Owen started Harrison College he walked him up to start his stint at All Saints Primary School. In 1966 to 1968,Harrison College was transitioning from the era of Colonial Headmasters to that of Barbadian Principals, a transition that was a motivation for us to strive even harder for excellence.

In sixth form Owen met one of his former Coleridge and Parry teachers, who was by then teaching at Harrison College, Lloyd Erskine Sandiford (later to become Sir Lloyd). As he sat under Mr Lloyd Erskine Sandiford's tutelage in 1966, neither one could have imagined that they were to make history 28 years later when the student would snatch the prime ministership from the teacher by a no- confidence vote.

As a teenager, Owen was also one of the village barbers, cutting the other boys' hair under a bajan ackee (guinep) tree that never bore an ackee, as Owen would say; that tree was certainly not a Harry Kite tree.

Growing up in the 1950's and the 1960's was for the young Owen Arthur both challenging and instructive. The political landscape was dominated by the great Sir Grantley Adams in the 1950's. Owen, in the tender age range of 5 to 7 years old, would be taken to political meetings to hear Grantley Adams and Mencea Cox. Then in the 1960's another great political giant dominated the political landscape, non other than His Excellency Errol Walton Barrow, and we grew up as beneficiaries of free secondary education, which was one of Barrow's greatest achievements that impacted positively

upon thousands of poor Barbadians. So young minds, like that of Owen Seymour, would have been influenced by those great leaders on either side of the political divide.

Another important reality in that era was the collapse of the political experiment of West Indies Federation contrasted with the success of the unity of a West Indies Cricket Federal team. Owen had a passion for cricket, He was a good batsman, not easily dismissed by the village bowlers. Later when His Excellency The Right Hon Errol Barrow was preparing the island for Independence from the colonial masters, three great victorious test series (1963, 1965), culminating in the 1966 three- one trouncing of England showed what Caribbean unity could do. (In the fourth test match of that series we listened intently as Sir Garfield Sobers scored 174, and Seymour Nurse, 135)

With the history of the 1950's and 60's behind him and love for West Indian Unity and West Indian cricket in his heart, and with the aim to uplift his village, his parish and his country, Owen Arthur, entered the Cave Hill Campus of the UWI in 1968 to read for a Bachelor's degree in Economics, history and Management. He excelled in his studies, gained his degree in 1971,won a postgraduate Scholarship and took off for the Mona Campus, in Jamaica, to read for his MSc in Economics. I met him when I returned to Jamaica from England and welcomed him to Mona with congratulations. Owen made many good friends at Mona, I remember two for sure: Robert Downes, now a OBG-GYN consultant in Trinidad and Tobago, and Douglas Corbin (Dougie) who later became Principal of Ellerslie School. They would passionately discuss cricket and Caribbean politics.

After completing his Masters in Economics he stayed on in Jamaica for 10 years. He was employed, first of all, in what was then known as the Jamaica National Planning Agency where he worked with two brilliant Jamaicans, Dr. Omar Davies and Dr. Norman Girvan. Owen later became an Economic Director of the Jamaica Bauxite Institute. He also worked closely with the PNP under the Honourable PJ Patterson.

In Jamaica he broadened his economic expertise and further developed his taste for politics, he also met and married his first wife, Beverley in 1978. Owen loved the beautiful island of Jamaica, in fact, Dr Omar Davies called him a Jamaican born in Barbados.

Owen was an avid reader particularly of history, economics, law, politics, geography, global trade, mathematics and even physics. He possessed a sharp analytical intellect and a quick memory for detail.

In 1981 Owen Arthur returned to Barbados and began working in the Ministry of Economics and Finance under the then Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the Right Hon. Tom Adams who became very impressed with his skill as an economist,(especially after Owen did a critique of a paper that Tom wrote). Soon thereafter he was

appointed to the Senate and by 1984 emerged winner in the repeat St Peter by election. The untimely death of Prime Minister Tom Adams in 1985 coupled with the financial proposals of Dr Richard Haynes (later to become Sir Richard), contributed to the BLP defeat in the 1986 general election but Owen was again victorious in St Peter.

Thereafter, however, a rapid sequence of events, reminiscent of the Biblical story of Mordecai in the Book of Esther, catapulted Owen into the Leadership of the Opposition. Then came the famous no- confidence motion. Owen Arthur had the utmost respect for Prime Minister Sandiford, as his former teacher and as PM, and I well remember the words that prefaced the no confidence motion: " Mr Speaker, Sir, on this particular matter it is extremely difficult for me to speak but it is impossible for me to remain silent" then came the successful no-confidence motion. A General Election was called by Prime Minister Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, the BLP won the election and Owen Seymour Arthur became Prime Minister of Barbados in September 1994. That was the beginning of 14 years of excellence in the economic and political history of Barbados under his tenure as Prime Minister. He practiced the politics of inclusion, was decisive under pressure, never forgot his St Peter village grass roots, was always down to earth, would sit down with the fellows and play dominoes while discussing any subject. He always sought to serve and uplift his constituency, his country and young economists and politicians. The election promise of 30,000 jobs became a reality and the chorus "we goin' with Owen" reverberated across the country! He exhibited very creative management of the economy, was an astute politician and an unapologetic Caribbean integrationist.

He was just as devoted to his family. His first marriage having ended, he met and fell in love with a beautiful young lady, Julie, in the late 1990's, they got married in 2005. (he had the Harry Kite eye for beauty).I remember speaking on his behalf on that joyous occasion and never thought I would have to speak at his funeral service.

Julie Arthur enjoyed the privileges and challenges of being First Lady. She remembers Owen as the Chef. Julie said he never believed she, his wife, or anyone else could cook better than he could. His emphasis was always on taste. I remember once telling him that as important as taste was,cooking healthy was just as important, to which he replied, in his usual erudite style, "Elliot if I have give up my sweet food to eat like you just to add 5 years to my life, I prefer my sweet food".

Julie also remembers Owen the gardener. On passing his house on mornings returning from my morning walk and shouting him out, he would show off his excellent work as a gardener and would tell me that that was his daily exercise. He grew almost every tropical herb and freely gave away his produce. Julie told me he secretly fought to keep one particular plant, which belonged to his mother, alive, for the sake of her memory.

Julie also remembers Owen, the husband, she said that not withstanding his ultra-demanding schedule he would remember her birthdays, anniversaries, and consult her on what to wear. Like uncle Frank, his father, there was a gentler side beneath the austere political exterior. She remembers his Love of family, country, and the region. And she especially wishes to express thanks to the QEH doctors and nurses who did the best they could in his final illness. We were glad to visit and pray for him in his final illness and the QEH staff was very cooperative.

Leah, his second daughter, like her mother Julie, remembers her father as a loving dad who adored her. She loved going on long drives picking fruit in the country side from over hanging branches of any tree private or public. At Queen's College, being the Prime Minister's daughter had its challenges. She didn't want it to be even suggested that her Dad was helping her with her assignments. So when Owen asked: in typical Bajan parlance, "Leah let me see what yuh write nuh?", she said no daddy. Once however she gave in and he read her Assignment and said Leah you are a bit too rough in your conclusion, ease off; to which she would reply: "But Dad I got that style of concluding arguments from you !" You sure bet, because I remember him as Prime Minister ending his victorious debates against the opposition using the phrase of his Anglican tradition and telling the then Leader of the Opposition: "And may your soul like the souls of the dearly departed rest in peace".

Sabrina his eldest daughter was born in 1994. She exclaimed that the only thing her Dad loved more than serving his country was his family, he loved her and Leah with utter devotion. And when grand daughter, Isabelle, came along Owen was ecstatic! Sabrina remembers his great cooking and gardening, loving support, and doting love his granddaughter

The Right Honourable Owen Seymour Arthur was, up to the present, the longest serving Prime Minister in our history. He had 34 unbroken years as Member of Parliament for St. Peter. Owen was a close friend of many politicians both in his Party and in the Opposition. Sir David Simmons was a close political ally during Owen Arthur's 14 year tenure as Prime Minister, and Glyne Murray became a life long friend.

Owen Arthur was especially impactful on the political and career development of many younger and older politicians and economists; time allows me to name just two, The Present Prime Minister the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley and Dame Billie Miller. On behalf of the family, this Eulogy/Reflection extends sincere thanks to Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley for her gracious empathy, kind support and overall magnanimity to the family and to Owen in his final illness. Thank you Hon. Prime Minister.

From humble beginnings in Rose Hill, St Peter, Owen Seymour Arthur rose by dint of hard work and God's providence to make outstandingly excellent contributions as

one of Barbados's great Prime Ministers, a colossus and titan for regional integration and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and a champion for the development of Small Island Developing States. He was a strong supporter of our UWI, a strong advocate for government-paid free tertiary education for the development of poor working class people. He was also a strong advocate for health policies, one example in point, was his establishment of the National HIV/AIDS Commission in the Prime Minister's Office and securing a World Bank loan for the fight against HIV, inducing other regional Leaders to follow his example.

Even in his retirement he continued to serve as economic adviser to the government, as UWI Professor of Economic Practice, and regional consultant in varied disciplines, while still being committed to family.

We are very thankful for his years of yeoman service to his Parish, St Peter, his country, the Caribbean, the Commonwealth and to his family. His legacy will continue to inspire other leaders to serve selflessly and with pride and industry.

FAREWELL PROFESSOR THE RIGHT HONOURABLE OWEN SEYMOUR ARTHUR:

SON, BROTHER, COUSIN, HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER, ECONOMIST, POLITICIAN,

GREAT PRIME MINISTER, CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION CHAMPION;

REST IN PEACE .

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Antonio Miller

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Images courtesy of The UWI

Courtesy of The UWI

1 At the 2006 ceremony where The UWI formally accepted land from Government at Black Rock (also known as the Lazaretto Lands). Prime Minister Owen Arthur deemed the vesting of the 33 acres to the university a critical forward step in the development of society. "There is an obligation on the part of our generation to build upon the tremendous legacy of over a century of trying to transform the Barbadian society on the strength of social capital, but especially so on the strength of the country's human resources". He added, "There was no society that had been well-educated that had remained poor, and there was no society that had been illiterate that became prosperous." (Chill News)

2 Lazaretto Lands ceremony, 2006 - L–R : Senator John Williams, PM Owen Arthur, Min. of Housing Elizabeth Thompson and Prof. Hilary Beckles.

3 PM Owen Arthur 2005, laying the symbolic cornerstone of The UWI multi-million-dollar creative arts centre - Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination (EBCCI). Robert Le Hunte, Managing Director, Barbados National Bank looks on.

4 PM Owen Arthur at the UWI 3Ws Oval with Stephen Alleyne, Chief Executive Officer of World Cup Barbados Inc. (the Local Organising Committee for the Barbados leg of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007). In his opening message in the publication *Barbados Small Island, Big Dreams, Chronicle of the World Cup Barbados Journey,* PM Arthur remarks "Leadership of a country such as Barbados calls for vision to see the possibilities, and courage to seize the moments that can bring transformation to the society and the economy to impact positively upon the lives of ordinary Barbadians. ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 was one such moment. The opportunity to host a premier international event brought together a number of legacy benefits that could act as a booster thrust to Barbados' endeavour to raise the quality of life in the country and move closer to developed status."

5 PM Owen Arthur at the 2006 ceremonial opening of the EBCCI. The building houses a theatre, small cinema, dance studio, music rooms and a visual art and pedagogical centre.

6 Former PM Owen Arthur, 2008 - first day at his UWI office - his aim was to make a greater contribution to Caribbean development and to stimulate intellectual capital in an renewed association with The UWI.

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