Calypso music : identity and social influence : the Trinidadian experience

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Introduction

Research Question

From its emergence in Trinidad during the latter part of the eighteenth century, calypso music has been the major backdrop to all aspects of daily life there; as recreation, part of ritual, entertainment, form of livelihood, disseminator of news and gossip, and as a traditional forum for social commentary. That it has been contoured by these events is hardly debatable, but the question arises: Has calypso influenced social processes? This question can be further elaborated: Can we consider calypso as an agent in the transformation of Trinidadian culture and society? Subsidiary questions that need to be investigated are: (1) Which aspects of culture and/or society have been affected by calypso? (2) Which elements of calypso have been involved in these transformations? (3) How did calypso effectuate this hypothesized agency. This research question is very broad and has many implications, and it should be obvious that it will be impossible to give a narrowed-down answer pinpointing specific elements in calypso that have affected specific changes in society and culture. As such, although the research question seems simple and easily falsifiable under a modernistic Popperian regime, in reality the situation is quite complex. However, what should be born in mind is that I emphasize an opposition between "music has influenced" social processes, and "music reflects, or has been influenced by" social processes. There is a vast literature that attributes changes in music to changes in society, either partially or wholly. Studies that take the opposite position can be counted on the fingers of two hands, and are generally not taken very seriously (e.g. Scott 1958, Lebrecht 2010, Morgan and Leve 2013) or refer to prehistoric times and as such are highly speculative (Mithen 2016, Cross 1999, Jordania 2011).

In keeping with the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA, Leiden University) conception of PhD research my own experience, growing up and participating in Trinidadian music culture, is at the centre of this study. I will also elucidate that my insight into calypso is informed by indigenous knowledge more than ethnomusicological fieldwork, although the two are not mutually exclusive as I will argue below.

This study, *Calypso, The Trinidadian Experience*, examines how calypso music culture propagated in Trinidad by Afro and Indo-Trinidadians has provided mechanisms by which identity has been constructed and maintained among Trinidadians at home and abroad. Additionally, it specifically investigates the impact of Trinidad's musical and music-related

cultural artifacts (calypso, carnival, soca and its derivatives limbo, feting, wining, playing pan, and playing mas) on merging global communities, particularly those in some European countries. The study therefore focuses on the impact of three processes, colonialism, creolization, and (East-)Indianization that are peculiar to most of the Anglophone Caribbean. Central issues that will be elucidated include: the socio-political history of the island from the colonial period onward; the evolution of calypso music and its related indigenous strains during that time period, and the relatedness of the genre to everyday life and socio-cultural institutions; the rhetoric functions of calypso as a performing art – the notion of social text and the role of situational influences, its alternate patterns of persuasion, the creation of layers of meaning through the symbolic action of performance, and theoretical aspects of identity construction, assertion, and maintenance.

As opposed to some of the literature on the role of music in the making of human society and culture, I am not trying to formulate a general theory that would explain the influence of music on culture and society, but rather focus on Trinidad and calypso specifically. Most importantly, my research question arises from my personal experience of growing up in Trinidad. As such, my knowledge of Trinidadian music, culture and society should be designated by what we now call 'indigenous knowledge' (Semali and Kincheloe 2011 [1999], Johnson 2012).

The relationship between culture and identity has fueled ongoing interdisciplinary discourse among researchers and scholars. For example, ethnomusicologist Stokes (1997) has argued that music is meaningful because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries that separate them:

> Musical performance, as well as the acts of listening, dancing, arguing, discussing, thinking and writing about music, provide the means by which ethnicities and identities are constructed and mobilized. (p. 5)

Regarding calypso music performance from a symbolic interactionist perspective, Patton (1994) has stated that,

> The art of calypso as a musical performance combining lyrics, melody, and the verbal and visual persona of the singer with arrangement, dramatic presentation, and audience engagement in a significant and symbolic cultural context has been a defining element of the culture and identity of Trinidadians for many years. (p. 55)

Contingent contributions pertaining to the concept of social facts by Durkheim (1966 [1938]) which has helped theorists to establish a link between the meaning of folklore on individual

and social levels will also be explored and integrated. In keeping with these developments Patton (1994) has advanced the notion of social text which,

> Immediately introduces the role of situational influences, interaction of the calypso with a specific set of audiences, and the creation of layers of meaning through the symbolic action of the performance. (p. 56)

Literary and rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke (1966, 1968) introduced the term 'identification' whereby language is used in rhetorical process as a means of creating unity and corporation through its interaction in social and rhetorical contexts. He has referred to symbols as "verbal parallels to a pattern of experience" and has suggested that the power of the symbolic act becomes greatest "when the artist's and the reader's [listener's] patterns of experience closely coincide" (p. 152-156).

Consequently, the notions of the calypso genre as 'vox' popular in meting out social commentary and redress, and as disseminator of news and gossip, tackled by Rohlehr, Elder, Liverpool, Gibbons and others are crucial to the arguments advanced.

There has been much discourse about the post-colonial period, in keeping with which Childs and Williams (1997) have posed and answered their own pertinent question "When is the Post-colonial?" as follows:

> A major contention of post-colonial studies is the overlapping developments of the ensemble of European colonial empires…from the sixteenth century onwards (but especially the nineteenth), and their dismantling in the second half of the twentieth century, constitute unprecedented phenomena, and one with global repercussions in the contemporary world, so that one [of the] answer[s] to the question, 'When is the Post-colonial?' is 'Now'. (p. 2)

Upon reflection about their answer to the question, my colleague and close friend Michael Phillips advanced an argument supporting the view that the colonial period has not ended. The basis of his argument is the fact that colonial attitudes and practices still linger, where "resources can be demanded on the threat of a revolt" and where "a military presence is not the only recourse to control people" since "technological carrots and sticks can whip countries/regions into line" (Pers. comm., June, 2011). This is in alignment with Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) who have used the term 'post-colonial' to refer to "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonialism to the present day" (p. 2). The present study is supportive of both viewpoints because the literature reveals a high and continued amount of overlapping between the two periods that encompasses institutionalized colonialism, and the dismantling of its ideology. In Trinidad, the period between the colonial and the post-colonial, i.e. from Emancipation in 1838 to Independence in 1962 can be

considered transitional, although colonial ideology and its accompanying practices extend well beyond both dates.

Childs and Williams (1997, p. 185) have cited and contested Pratt's use of the term 'contact zones' to refer to regions such as those described above as sites of encounters where "previously separated people enter into and establish relations, often antagonistically, [and] usually unequally". Pratt (2008 [1992]) has explained the term in reference to "the space of colonial encounters…in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish on-going relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict…" (p. 8). Pratt has further explained that,

> Contact zone in my discussion…treats the relations among colonizers and colonized…not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices. (ibid)

Childs and Williams (ibid.) have addressed discrepancies they identified in Pratt's statement and have made the following adaptation:

> Pratt wishes to replace narratives of conquest and domination with those of interaction, co-presence, and shared practices. It is a site of compromise and resistance, assertion and imitation, hybridity and adaptation. (p. 185)

It appears however that they have agreed that at such junctures where encounters between the groups have taken place the resultant patterns of behavior exhibited have been reciprocal but often underscored by conflict. Insistence in post-colonialism to displace and repudiate colonial ideology has been manifest in anti-colonial practices, as has been demonstrated by the occurrence of uprisings throughout the Caribbean and the Americas (e.g. the Haitian revolutions; revolt in Barbados and the Virgin Islands; uprisings in Trinidad immediately following Emancipation, and much later on once it had gained independence; resistance to Portuguese domination in the Quilombos of Brazil and to English repression by the Maroons and Rastafarians in Jamaica and by the Carib tribes of the Antilles; and by overt anti-American sentiment in Puerto Rico, Cuba, Venezuela, Africa and the Middle East).

Because of the ethnic diversity and creative abundance extant at 'contact zones' in the Caribbean much importance has been given to cultural manifestations such as music and language. Trinidad is one of those contact zones where there has been a significant amalgam of much of the 'unprecedented phenomena' alluded to above. That site has continued to be important because of its demography and history, the regional importance of its socio-economic and cultural infrastructure; its role as center-stage for the evolution calypso music,

the steel drum and the steel orchestra, and for the development of carnival as a common regional cultural expression.

J. D. Elder (1964) has written about the role of calypso music in relation to repression and resistance in Trinidad referring to as far back as 1839, noting that,

> From that time to the present day, it is possible to trace an almost unbroken succession of clash and conflict of varying seriousness between White rulers and Colored subjects…In the early days when the upper class was identical with the White group, the conflict was no greater than today…music forms for it [the conflict], a subtle background against which the action takes place, or through which the actors play their parts. (p. 128)

This study will examine how the roles of the 'actors' alluded to have been played out through indigenous music. A study of the Trinidad calypso during the colonial and post-colonial periods cannot exclude the socio-cultural activities of the Jamette class of society nor their status and struggle at the bottom of the social structure that had been superimposed upon them by the plantocracy and colonial government. Links between historical events and socialized cultural practices, and contingent social institutions will therefore be pursued in this study by way of post-colonial theory and symbolic interactionist thought.

The 'unprecedented phenomena' and contingent global repercussions referred to previously have been central themes of many authors like Gates (1987), Gilroy (1993), Hall (1991), Fanon (1952, 1965, 1986), Spivak (1999), Nettleford (2003), and others in their discussions about colonization, diaspora, migration, hybridity, ethnicity, culture, repression, resistance, rebellion, identity and nationalism. Nettleford (2003) for example has written about some of the repercussions, which Elder has labeled the 'conflict.' In highlighting the conflict, Nettleford has pinpointed some salient and specific bones of contention and has shed light on the bipolarity extant at zones of contact in the Caribbean:

> There is a revolution apace in Jamaica and the Caribbean…the revolution constitutes a continuing dynamic revolt against external political and economic domination, against internal exploitation reinforced by the aspirations of class/colour differentiation, against the dehumanizing evils of poverty and joblessness, disease and ignorance and in defiance of all that would conspire to perpetuate among us a state of dependency and self-repudiation-in short a process of decolonization of self and society by the conscious demolition of old images and the deliberate explosion of colonial myths about power, status and the production process. The revolution constitutes, at the same time, the constructive act of articulation of the collective self in terms of the variety of experience that is the inheritance of a vibrant, resilient, though still bombarded, people who have had to come to terms with a hostile environment in which they found themselves - a people who have had to take initiatives in giving a dynamic to the agonizing process of shaping a new and serviceable sense of place and a sense of purpose. The two-pronged phenomenon of decolonization and creolization (or indigenization) represents that awesome process actualized in simultaneous acts of negating and affirming, demolishing and constructing, rejecting and reshaping. (p. 138-139)

A main premise of this study is that the function of the calypso genre in Trinidad was not limited to being merely a reflection of the consciousness of the people, but that it was at the center of that revolution. It was part of the machinery that sought to repudiate and dismantle colonial ideology, and it functioned as a tool that resisted and redressed the repressive tentacles of colonialism. Based on that premise, the foregoing references, and other sources of empirical evidence, I will argue that calypso is a constitutive act which provides alternate patterns of persuasion that are capable of exerting social influence. However, in this dissertation the term 'post-colonial' will be used in two contexts. The first, as suggested by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989), refers to regions or zones of contact (as in most parts of the Caribbean), where:

- colonization had once been defined by the implementation of human ownership, forced labor, the superimposition of elitist ideologies (foreign/European as discussed), cultural norms and social structures that had been maintained by social, political, economic and cultural repression;
- the implementation of such practices is being or has been repudiated;
- a physical or military presence, and/or as suggested by Mr. Phillips "technological carrot-sticks" are not prerequisites for maintaining social control;
- the pursuit of autonomy and democracy flourishes, despite any lingering residue of colonial ideology and/or its implementation.

The second context annexes the first but introduces a posit advanced by this study that expands on the idea presented by Pratt (1992) regarding contact zones, and the expansion of that idea offered by Childs and Williams (1997). The posit suggests that the term 'post-colonial' also refers to 'contact zones' in present-day global communities where:

- the flow of cultural influence has been reversed, which is to say that the amalgam of 'unprecedented phenomena' caused by processes of colonization in the sixteenth-century New World is now being assimilated in the new 'contact zones' emergent in several 'ex-sovereign' or 'modern' New World communities of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- the people previously separated are not in opposition to each other;
- their encounters are not underscored by conflict;
- their cultural expressions have not been, nor are being repressed, but have rather become building blocks of the collective global identities of the communities in which they co-exist;
- the existent 'sovereign' identities that have previously defined those 'contact zones' have not been overrun by the emerging 'collective' identities, and;

- the ‘new’ identities being forged, and the cultural artifacts and manifestations being spurned are not manipulated by the dominant (‘host’) culture nor by contingent cultures sharing the same space. They are authentic and autonomous; not constructed as in the Colonial period, on perceptions of themselves formulated by ‘outsiders’, specifically, the ‘colonizer’.

Pratt (1992) has coined the term ‘autoethnographic’ to describe such representations that involve partial collaboration with, and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror.

Significance

The study is important because:

- it shows how and why calypso music, in spite on-going repression that has been leveled against it, has remained one of the strongest identifying forces for Trinidadians at home and abroad, for the peoples of the regional Caribbean basin, and for several other contingent global communities;
- it will elucidate the genre’s role via transmission in transculturation in contemporary world communities and;
- it will provide a body of musical analysis that can be referred to as a framework for identifying change to and perhaps within the calypso genre from its emergence through the post-modern era and beyond.

Methodology

At the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) at Leiden University the artistic experience is paramount. This has important consequences for the methodology, which I shall attempt to outline below.

The subject-object relation between the knower and the known is the basis for knowledge production in western ways of thinking. The most important problem with this knowledge production system is that only westerners are seen as subjects, people who can ‘know’. So people who are part of a different culture “only can be ‘objects’ of knowledge or/and of domination practices” (Quijano 2007, p. 174). Non-westerners can only know if they follow the western rules or system. This way of thinking, which has made impossible the production of a western/non-western hybrid knowledge, is also seen in the university where: “the formation and development of certain disciplines, such as Ethnology and Anthropology, have always shown ‘subject-object’ relations between ‘western’ culture and the rest. By definition, other cultures are the ‘object’ of study” (ibid., p. 174).

Spivak suggests that the core of the problem is that western scholars do not have enough knowledge of the culture they study. This is what Spivak calls ‘sanctioned ignorance’. When analysing an Indian text, a western scholar does not have to know about Indian gender relations, because they can use western gender-theory (Spivak 1999, p. 164). This also relates to De Certeau’s (1997) conception of power structure: not only do western scholars claim knowledge of other cultures, it is also implied that this knowledge, because it is processed, western, academic, is somehow better hierarchically. In both ethnography and literary analysis, the power of knowledge is in the hands of the west.

There have been academics who have stated that this is a problem that is deeply rooted in western modes of thought. For example, Sylvia Wynter (2003) in her essay “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom” tracks the history of the philosophy and reasoning behind colonisation from the colonisation of the Amerindians by the Spaniards until after the 1960’s. Her argument is that Europeans have always been able to justify colonizing other people, because they always rationalized that ‘other’ people were sub-human. This concept of ‘human’ is very important in the argument she makes. Europeans have always set the norm for what it means to be human.

Mignolo observes the two categories humanitas and anthropos and bases them in the same terms Wynter and Quijano use: “humans and humanity were all ‘human beings’ minus the anthropos” (Mignolo 2011, p. 85). According to Mignolo anyone who does not have the “epistemic privilege of hegemonic knowledge” is a part of the anthropos, so this group can be very broad. Anyone who does not fit in with a western-centric worldview can be classified as being part of the anthropos (ibid., p. 85). Mignolo suggests that the point of origin of western ways of knowing is seen as ancient Greece, and from there knowledge could be compiled and progress towards modernity. He calls this “zero-point epistemology” and writes about it: “the zero point is always in the present of time and the centre of space, it hides its own local knowledge universally projected” (ibid., p. 80). In Quijano’s earlier-mentioned critique of anthropology we see that the problem is not only a matter of subject-object relation; it is also that the ‘subject’ becomes invisible. In anthropological terms an outsider has an ‘-etic’, objective point of view, while an insider has an ‘-emic’, subjective point of view. A western academic observing a non-western culture can be seen as a ‘neutral’ or ‘objective’ outsider, while in reality he/she is equally subjective.

Spivak’s ‘sanctioned ignorance’, when she writes that it is problematic that western scholars do not have enough knowledge of the culture they study, specially means that it is

problematic, because the scholars in question do not know that they miss this information. She says that they are blind to their own ignorance. This ignorance is sanctioned precisely because western thought is seen as universal. This means academics can apply their own 'universal' western theories to a different culture without questioning it (Spivak 1999, p. 164). The point of decolonizing is not to reject western epistemic contributions to the world, (Mignolo 2011, p. 82) even if they are colonial. In this study I attempt to use both these disciplines and try to find some way to decolonize them.

Arjun Appadurai, in his article "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination", also starts from the critique that western theory is unjustly seen as universal: "Theory and method were seen as naturally metropolitan, modern and Western. The rest of the world was seen in the idiom of cases, events, examples and test sites in relation to this stable location for the production or revision of theory." (Appadurai 2000, p. 4) According to him using western theory in fact diminishes the value of research for other parts of the world. He suggests changing this is difficult, since scholars are blind to their own research methods, which have "the invisibility of the obvious" (p. 9). Like Spivak, Appadurai contends that scholars are blind to their own shortcomings. He says that western scholars have to move away from this way of doing research: "academics from the privileged institutions of the West (and the North) must be prepared to reconsider…their conventions about world knowledge and about the protocols of inquiry ("research") that they too often take for granted" (p. 18). One way to do this is by allowing basic assumptions about how research is done in the West to be questioned and altered from the outside (p. 14). Another thing he suggests is that the globalizing world should be understood from the local. The local should be used to explain the global, rather than perceived global or universal theory to understand the local. My study of calypso fits in very well with this idea.

The approach I pursue here is very different from an ethnomusicological one. The ethnomusicologist would usually be an outsider and use the methodology that has been derived from anthropology: participant observation and ethnography. The ethnomusicologist typically comes to the research field for a limited period and attempts to record as accurately as possible his/her experiences in the field. This is usually done by taking field notes and recording media such as sound, video and stills. Indigenous knowledge, on the contrary, results from a living experience, growing up with and in the culture, and as such lacks the detail of ethnography. On the other hand, indigenous knowledge is far more wide-ranging, broader, and deeper than the ethnographer's knowledge. The experience of growing up and living in a culture can, in my opinion, not possibly be reproduced within the relatively short

period(s) of a visiting researcher. This does not mean that the 'outsider's' view is incorrect or irrelevant, but it is fundamentally different in nature. Also, the indigenous approach and the ethnographer's method are not neatly and diametrically opposed. Part of the ethnographer's experience will inevitably be intuitive, unarticulated and unrecordable. The ethnographer's experience in the field, during participant observation, simply cannot be recorded in a full and holistic manner.

The ambition of the social sciences, including ethnomusicology, in the third quarter of the twentieth century, to aspire to the status of the natural sciences has become utterly obsolete since then. Perhaps Feyerabend's *Against Method* (1975) has been a turning point, although postmodernism clearly played a major role as well. Indigenous knowledge is not a method, but it is increasingly accepted as a valid form of knowledge. It is this type of knowledge that lies at the basis of this dissertation and in addition I have carried out a survey. As stated above, the Popperian methodological regime is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain in this study; instead I will attempt to make plausible the contention that calypso has influenced Trinidadian culture and society.

As explained above, the basis of this research is what we can call indigenous knowledge which is not quite the same as the old concept of insider knowledge. In indigenous knowledge it is the subaltern that speaks, whereas the 'insider' is a construction of the dominant class. Indigenous knowledge is usually holistic and involved. When we transform indigenous knowledge into structured, systematic, analytic and detached knowledge we stand at the cross-roads of cultural analysis. It should be noted however, in line with Mignolo, that indigenous knowledge does not necessarily eschew the (western academic) ethnomusicological and qualitative methods.

Finally, the research conducted in this study incorporates methods used in psychology, history, post-colonial studies and social and cultural anthropology. The inclusion of these 'non-music-based' disciplines as being relevant to this work is due to the interrelatedness among them pertaining to simultaneous on-going research in music and the common features they share. The literature has revealed that the disciplines referenced incorporate methodologies that focus on social structure and socio-cultural practice. As informed by Yarbrough (2000),

> Cultural anthropology, more specifically ethnography, is the foundation for the two music research methodologies known as ethnomusicology and qualitative research…and ethnography…is based almost entirely on fieldwork requiring complete immersion in the culture and everyday life of the people who are subjects of the study. (p. 129)

In the past, disciplines had employed approaches that were narrow in perspective, methodology and focus. Although recent developments in musicology have stressed performance perspectives, the approach by musicologists has limited analysis since it places emphasis on the interpretation and reconstruction of the written score; in other words it was conducted primarily from the perspective of western art music. Instead, as Béhague (1984) has pointed out, the study of performance practice involves numerous levels of analysis that force us to consider the multi-dimensionality of music, the musical and extra-musical behavior of participants, the consequent social interaction for those participants, and the rules and codes of performance defined by the community are included among those levels (p. 7).

These features are pertinent to calypso performance and will be discussed in chapter 4 in the context of calypso function, and with regard to the shared perspectives of symbolic interactionists Mead (1967 [1934]) and Blumer (1969) that folklore is a collection of significant symbols. Contingent contributions pertaining to the concept of social facts by Durkheim (1966 [1938]), which has helped theorists to establish a link between the meaning of folklore on individual and social levels, will also be explored and integrated.

Decolonization has led to the incorporation of urban anthropology, ethnomusicology and the emerging branch of sociomusicology. These new approaches have narrowed gaps of perception between anthropology and sociology, and musicology and ethnomusicology. The methodology appears to have provided a better perspective of cause and effect, and has enabled scholars to propose theories pertaining to forces of modernization and change. This study shares a significant amount of overlapping and interrelatedness with the disciplines referenced regarding methodology, method, focus and shared features. Also, it is reliant on some of the posits upheld and findings revealed by them. The type of cross-disciplined ethnographic approach incorporated by those disciplines, using narratives to examine and analyze events, is preferred by the author and was therefore adopted as a template in order to facilitate the goals and outcomes of this study.

The dissertation commences with a chronological perusal of the events that have shaped the socio-historical and cultural background of the island nation of Trinidad. This is the topic discussed in chapter 1, and subsequently in chapters 2, 3, and 4. In chapter 5 I have included a brief survey in a further attempt to make the core argument of the thesis more plausible. It should however be pointed out that the survey has limitations:

- The varied perceptions of calypso among participants and the ambiguity caused by the ways in which the genre has been defined. Calypso and calypso-like genres that have

emerged have been defined by era, arena, and by the eyes, ears and cultural orientation of the listener. Perception varies therefore between American servicemen stationed in Trinidad around World War II, West Indians and native Trinidadians, Hollywood producers during the height of the 1930's calypso craze, and European tourists in the regional Caribbean during the 1950's and 1960's. (Definition of the genre is addressed in chapter 2.)

- The exclusion of additional questions that might have further established among participants a broader perception of calypso and soca music and the differences between them.
- Perhaps too few participants, in tandem with the localization of the demographic area where participant selection was made to certain parts of Trinidad only.
- Unavailability of, and lack of access to a larger number of members of the older generation of Trinidadians (practitioners and enthusiasts), who might have been considered 'reliable sources'. Death, illness and inability to recall or communicate coherently were main factors.
- Difficulties in reconnecting with 'random' participants for follow-up.

My Personal Experience

I was born and raised in Trinidad where, during my youth, experimentation with music and musical instruments had been a main pastime among my contemporaries. Informal ethnographic research began during my teenage years by reasons of my continued curiosity and participation in the local music scene. By then I had been performing with several local combos including the aggregation led by the regionally renowned folklorist, songwriter and musician Andre Tanker. Artistic research became more formalized then, at age twenty-one. I gained employment as residing guitarist at the Spectakula Calypso Forum, one of the leading calypso tents in Port of Spain, and shortly after as guitarist with the Mighty Sparrow's Calypso Troubadours. This afforded repeated performance opportunity in most of the countries of the Caribbean, and in the United States. My inquiry about music and identity intensified when I migrated to the U.S., and during the period that I visited and resided in several Caribbean islands, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Upon emigration in 1985 I became immersed in the Trinidad calypso scene once again. The 1986 and 1987 carnival seasons, and numerous visits throughout the past three decades have presented additional opportunities to:

- provide musical accompaniment for many of the leading calypsonians, and perform and participate in recording sessions alongside veteran musicians, thereby acquiring additional first-hand information about calypso music culture,

- participate in inter-island performance thereby gaining opportunities to investigate and compare aspects pertaining to the evolution of calypso music throughout the Caribbean,
- access calypso enthusiasts and practitioners, and audio recordings of calypsos and other related intrinsic music genres, and
- observe the impact of calypso on individual and collective behavioral responses (dance, audience participation, lifestyle) among practitioners and audiences alike.

Research Techniques

I have used typed and hand-written, and voice-recorded notes from the following:

- my own recollection, i.e. things I remembered but had not previously documented in writing;
- fieldwork – ethnographic observation of participants, performers, performances and audiences within the calypso arena, casual and in-depth interviews of informants, practitioners and calypso enthusiasts;
- reviews and in-depth analyses of various music strains including those classified as pseudo calypso, those classified as authentic Trinidadian calypso, those classified as 'Old school', those classified as 'Modern', and various other regionally and ethnically related music forms;
- a review of literature from several disciplines as outlined on pages 18 and 19, that encompasses the following topics: Trinidadian and Caribbean history from the colonial period onward; the evolution of indigenous music and its relationship with external music genres; the evolution and function of carnival, the calypso tent and the steelband movement; identity theory, formation and maintenance, intergroup relations; acculturation, assimilation, and hybridization;
- a survey from which data was generated by a quick questionnaire. The survey was initiated to ascertain whether there was a perception of change to the genre among Trinidadian society, and if so, among which groups the perception was strongest, and to what extent change was perceived.

Academic research encompassed rigorous inquiry into ethnomusicology (performance, production, and so on), musicology, several branches of sociology and psychology, social and cultural anthropology, history, and of course, indigenous knowledge.

Research Tools

The tools used in this study include the following items: a digital camera, photos, camcorder, live video recordings, a voice recorder, a cassette recorder, audio recordings of interviews and live performances, an external hard drive, several jump drives, a computer, a CD player, a record player, audio recordings of a large corpus of live and pre-recorded music (CDs, records, cassettes), a guitar and portable keyboard, manuscript paper, transcriptions and music scores of arrangements, books and other scholarly works (journals, theses, and so on), official documents and newspaper articles.

Finally

This study seeks to ascertain:

- how calypso music has survived cultural repression,
- how and why it has remained one of the strongest identifying forces for Trinidadians and others at home and abroad,
- how it has triggered processes by which social control has been exerted within the society, and
- how it can provide a framework for structural change within the genre.

The points 1 through 3 will be dealt with in a discussion of Caribbean history and the evolution of indigenous music, carnival, the calypso tent, and the steelband. Changes in circumstances (lifestyle, social and cultural interaction, technology, and economics) between the colonial and post-colonial periods will of course be considered as contributing factors. The fourth aspect will be accomplished by musical analysis of a large corpus of calypsos from all the various strains of the genre, and musical transcriptions that reveal melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic features intrinsic to the genre. This will provide a basis from which comparison between older and modern strains can be drawn.