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Chapter 4

Calypso's Function in Trinidadian Society

In this chapter, the potential of calypso music and its associated institutions to construct and maintain identity, and to instigate social reform will be discussed. I will argue that affiliation with those institutions and participation in their related activities, many of which have already been outlined, have fostered the development and transmission of an ingrained tradition. I will also attempt to show that the ingrained tradition has been part of an independent arm of the rigid socio-cultural, socio-psychological and socio-political machinery that rose up to repudiate and deconstruct colonial ideology. In order to accomplish these goals, functions of calypso music within Trinidadian, West Indian and global communities at home and abroad will be examined and correlated to concepts upheld by identity theory, and with posits about social influence explored in the previous chapter. Such examination and correlation will be supported by the following paradigms or models for identity construction and social influence. These paradigms have been reiterated in the works of several scholars who posit within the realm of cultural and social identity:

- Socialization processes;
- The notion of social text;
- Positioning through performer and audience relationships;
- Cultural practice and performance as part of ritual; and
- Globalization.

Processes of Socialization

Empirical evidence to support claims that calypso music has contributed to social change may well be generated from historical accounts and from the fact that the structuralist proposition that “performance simply reflects ‘underlying’ cultural patterns and social structures is no longer plausible among ethnomusicologists and anthropologists” (Stokes, 1994, p. 4). He has cited A. Cohen who has reminded us that,

The view that any event or process or structure somehow replicates the essence of a society's culture has now...been properly discredited. (Cited by Stokes, 1994, p. 3)

Stokes (1994) has additionally reiterated that,

The musical event, from collective dances to the act of putting a cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. The places, constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary. They also organize hierarchies of a moral and political order. Social performance, following writers such as Bourdieu (1977) and De Certeau (1984), is instead seen as a practice in which meanings are generated, manipulated, even ionized, within certain limitations. Music and dance... do not simply 'reflect'. Rather they provide the means by which the hierarchies of place are negotiated and transformed. (p. 3-4)

The term 'habitus' initially introduced by Marcel Mauss and later re-elaborated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, has been expanded upon by Bourdieu. Mauss had described habitus as those aspects of culture that are anchored in the body or daily practices of individuals, groups, societies and nations. In outlining his theory of performance practice Bourdieu has advanced posits about 'habitus.' Bourdieu (1991) has explained its dependency on history and human memory. According to him, a certain behavior or belief becomes part of a society "when the original purpose of that behavior or belief can no longer be recalled and becomes socialized into individuals of that culture". Bourdieu sees 'habitus' as being composed of systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures, predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.

In other words, the concept habitus encompasses all acquired habits, skills, tastes and knowledge that may be performed habitually as spontaneous responses by a specific group on a daily and on-going basis. These responses become the defining parameters of a specific culture. In order to demonstrate this as axiom I present the following argument: An outsider to a specific culture, especially one that is unfamiliar with the dance style of that culture, will initially respond to the accompanying music by exhibiting dance movements from his or her own repertoire of learned and ingrained dance movements (habitus). The initial response is usually spontaneous and therefore precedes observation of the nuances of dance belonging to the new culture being participated in. However, upon observation of certain aspects such as dance steps, bodily mannerisms, and facial expressions the outsider begins to recognize and mimic what he or she interprets as the intrinsic features of that particular style. Over time and with a significant degree of immersion in that culture the 'outsider' responses to the music become spontaneous and some degree of transformation into 'insider' begins to take place.

The socializing process is similar to that of the practitioner born into that culture; visual and aural symbols are recognized, meaning is extracted subliminally and responded to spontaneously.

Over time a repertoire of responses to the music is collected that become the identifiers of the particular dance style and lead observers to the conclusion that practitioners exhibiting the particular style with a convincing degree of proficiency belong to the culture from which the style and music derived. This outlines how identity meanings are verified.

In keeping with the literature then, practitioners of a particular culture exhibit traits that are inherent to them as members of that particular culture, traits that are observable markers of that culture. As an example pertinent to this discussion, ‘wining’ (displaying sexually explicit gyrations of the pelvic region while dancing) in response to calypso and soca music is one such trait that Trinidadians exhibit. Dances such as the waltz and polka on the other hand, are characterized by dainty, puritan and stately movements, markers of a quite different heritage from those exhibited among calypso and soca cultures. Both behavioral expressions have become socialized and therefore unique among practitioners of those respective cultures. Another example of socialized behavior among Trinidadians is the display of mutual acquaintance without formal introduction. Upon visual or verbal interaction with others a person becomes ‘known’. The following anecdote should clarify this statement:

Several strangers commuting together by public transport (bus or route taxi) become engaged in a conversation about a random event, after which they go their separate ways. Upon a chance meeting several weeks or months later any two of them automatically acknowledge each other by a pointing gesture of the hand, an upward nodding motion accompanied by a smile, or by a verbal greeting such as “Aaye” or “All right” because they now ‘know’ each other. The discussion engaged in during their first encounter enabled social bonding and although future verbal exchanges between them may be limited to a cursory greeting, acknowledgement of each other continues on an on-going basis. This aspect of socialized behavior will be revisited in the context of performer/audience relationship in a subsequent chapter.

Yet another example of bonding behavior that has been socialized in Trinidadian society is a form of heckling, known in local jargon as ‘fatigue’. This feature has been translated into song as ‘picong’, the calypso’s piquant lashing and ridicule, a local tradition associated with stick fighting and dating back to the practice of the calinda or dueling song. Picong had not

been limited to being leveled at the authorities or upper class alone. No social class or ethnic group has escaped its ridicule and satire. As mentioned earlier the mid and upper-class French Creoles had been targets of rebuttal, and so were the Portuguese, who had been perceived as dark-skinned Catholic peasants, and the Irish who were perceived as the Catholic sons of indentured workers. However, the Chinese, Indians and ironically ‘Small-Islanders’ (arrivals from the smaller and less economically developed Caribbean islands), also perceived as ‘out-groups’ within mainstream culture, were more susceptible to being singled out and had remained constant targets of negative stereotyping of the severest nature.

The Chinese posed no political threat and so the satire directed towards them retained a jocular mildness. Calypsos leveled at them include the Mighty Terror’s *Chinese Children*, the Mighty Killer’s *Romantic Chinaman*, and Viking’s *Chinese Cricket Match*. Other calypsos indicated by Rohlehr that allude to the idiosyncrasies of ‘out-groups’ include: The Mighty Killer’s *Indian Dinner*; King Fighter’s *Indian Party* and *Indian Wedding*; Spoiler’s *Barbadian Carnival*; Lord Kitchener’s *Lai Fung Lee*; Lord Melody’s *Chinese Scandal* and *Chinese Burial*, and Pharaoh’s *Portuguese Dance*.

The word ‘ironically’ was used above in order to remind the reader and to emphasize the point that the Jamette sector in Trinidad was comprised of a significant number of ‘Small Islanders’. That many early calypsonians were from that contingent highlights another salient feature of the calypso: its ability to mask thereby affording the presenter a dual identity and opportunities to laugh at himself/herself. Rohlehr has pointed out that,

The very act of including melodies of the ‘out-group’ in the chorus of a calypso, tended to extend the Calypso form and to provide a grotesque identification for an alternative sound existing in the Trinidad community. (Rohlehr, 1990, p. 494)

While the incorporation of such themes as the ones above and their associated lyrics and snippets of ‘foreign’ melodies by Afro-Trinidadians helped to identify and integrate cultural elements such as the food, dress, jargon and mannerisms of the ‘out-groups’, Rohlehr has reminded us that,

There is evidence that out-groups resented being (a) regarded as out-groups rather than as ethnic entities, consistent within themselves, different but equal and (b) reduced to a caricature and forced to conform to anyone else’s image of who they were supposed to be. (Rohlehr, 1990, p. 495)

Resentment expressed by East Indian clerics, organizations and members of Parliament became most vocal toward the close of the twentieth century and the first decade of the

twenty-first century during the successive terms of prime ministers Basdeo Panday and Kamla Persad Bissessar, both of East Indian ethnicity and leaders of the UNC political party predominantly comprised of East Indians. Rohlehr has further elaborated on the enigma stating that,

The treatment of “out-groups” is virtually the same in all cases. The calypsonian employs caricature. There is mockery of the accents of members of the out-groups; their inability to pronounce “English” in the accepted dialect of the in-group. (Rohlehr, 1990, p.494)

Other calypsos in the pantheon of heckling calypsos leveled at the ‘out-groups’ include Lord Blakie’s *Vincentian Calypso King* and *Send Them Back*, the Mighty Killer’s *In a Calabash*, the Mighty Sparrow’s *Barbadians*, and the anonymously penned *Bajan Girls*. Calypso satire has remained and has retained a bone of contention between the two most prominent ethnic groups the Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians, who have been caught up in a struggle for socio-political power since Emancipation. As an example of the mockery of the Indo-Trinidadian’s accent, Rohlehr has cited the following stanza from *Grinding Massala*:

Grinding Massala

Thousand Amellican landed in Paart ah Spain

Some come by battle ship, some come by yaroplane

The Mighty Killer

It has been shown that in the context of social commentary the calypso has provoked resentment and protest especially among Indo-Trinidadians, but has at the same time woven some of the most salient elements of their culture into the fabric of indigenous mainstream culture, thereby giving them visibility. The genre has also provided them with leverage and momentum which has in turn enabled them to assert themselves as different but equal.

Solidarity among Indo-Trinidadians had always been extant, but due to the rapid urbanization process that occurred during the 1950s they realized their long awaited ascendancy to ‘new’ status. The mobility and momentum that Indo-Trinidadians gained during the early and mid-1950s had coalesced into the 1958 defeat of the People’s National Movement with its predominantly Afro-Trinidadian membership. Some of the most significant ‘race’ calypsos that chronicle that period have been identified by Rohlehr; they include: the Mighty Terror’s *Civilized Indians* (1950), the Mighty Killer’s *Indians Adopting Creole Names* (1950/51), Cobra’s *The Changes of the Indians* (1954), Eisenhower’s *Creolized Indians* (1955), King Fighter’s *Indian Party* (1958), and Striker’s *The United Indian* (1959) whose text applauds the solidarity the calypsonian attributes to the outcome of the 1958 election.

The titles of some of the calypsos above make reference to the ‘creolization’ of Indo-Trinidadians (socialization in the direction towards Afro/Franco culture), part of a twofold process of socialization (‘Indianization’ and ‘Creolization’) that had already been on-going among every ethnic group on the island. ‘Indianization’ can be defined as the movement of other ethnic groups toward Indian cultural expression and tastes as is evidenced by the assimilation of culinary, linguistic, musical and ritualistic features. For example, by the relish for curry, chutney, roti and other spicy delicacies; the incorporation of Hindi words into popular song and everyday speech; and by participation in Indian festivities. An example of religious assimilation is the incorporation of Hindu elements into the Orisha belief system whereby incense, assorted Indian brass receptacles and representations of Hindu deities are typically displayed in a small area devoted to the Indian deity at an Orisha shrine.

Assimilation of Indo-Trinidadian culture among a broader cross-section of the general population has found representation in Hosay (spelled Hussay in Trinidad and in Jamaica). Hosay is a Shia Muslim street procession that is accompanied by mock stick fights and constant drumming and dancing. The procession is undertaken in commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn (Hussein), the grandson of Muhammad. Hosay is elaborated upon here not only because its musical features (performance, street parading and dancing) resemble those displayed during carnival celebrations, but also because of the significance of its impact on the psyche of the underprivileged among Trinidadian society. The following account should clarify this latter statement and point to the degree of solidarity among Afro-Trinidadians for Indo-Trinidadians.

The first observation of Hosay dates back to 1854. In 1884, however, the festivities were halted by a ban that was put into effect to curtail public gatherings. Akin to the events leading to the Camboulay Riots four years earlier, appeals had been ignored and the procession was disallowed by the authorities. Following tradition, thousands of celebrants took to the streets in defiance on October 30th and were attacked by police with guns. Some were killed and many were injured. These insurrections engulfed several districts and are referred to as the Hosay Riots. The procession has been socialized on both cultural and psychosocial levels and the drumming and dancing that mark its culmination have remained yearly features that are participated in and enjoyed by a large cross section of society. The socio-cultural interplay between Indo and Afro-Trinidadians was and has been crucial to the acceptance and assimilation of aspects of each other’s culture. It has led to the embeddedness of the calypso and East Indian instrumentation, musical tradition and material in the tapestry of mainstream

national culture. In an arena where the spirit of nationalism permeated society, the calypsonian through his music was allowed to penetrate the perhaps otherwise impervious shell of the 'in-group' as well as the 'out-groups'. Music became, and has remained one of the main unifying cultural mechanisms bridging the gaps between all groups. Socialization and identification via calypso music has enabled feelings of tolerance, homogeneity, attraction and cohesion, mechanisms that provide the basis for group solidarity, group centered social control, and the construction and maintenance of social identity.

Another song type that has exerted a significant degree of social influence, and that has impacted the construction and maintenance of a collective social identity in Trinidad falls under the category loosely labeled 'folksongs' by Trinidadians. These songs are of two varieties; those used as oral tradition in the transmission of folklore by depicting scenes and narrating stories relevant to daily folk life (some narrative calypsos belong to this category), and those employed in song games. Like many calypsos, both types of folksong fulfill the general superficial requirements that qualify them as 'casual entertainment' and favorite mundane 'pastime' activities. At a deeper level however, they embody the building blocks of societal mores and provide instances for social interaction that result in group membership and affiliation. In support of this claim I cite the following observations of John Blacking (1977):

The linking of musical experience and performance to daily life among children was a way of establishing personal identity and acceptance... Later the learning and memorization of words, melodies, rhythms, playing of certain instruments, use of jargon and mannerisms etc. prepared them for participation in major musical activities of adults. The above activities share common group identity and fellow-feeling which transcends normal sociability, self-expression and exhibition. (p. 36)

Blacking's observations above about the transmission of customs were in reference to the Venda people of South Africa but they are also applicable to the process of transmission among the people of Trinidad and Tobago, a claim that can be substantiated by my own testimony and by generally accepted research results.

I recall that during my pre-teens and adolescence music performance and participation in music-related events were two of the favorite pastime activities among adults and children alike. We whistled, sang, played, danced and listened to music daily. Instrumental performance among my boyhood contemporaries was informal and included instruments such as the 'mouth organ' (harmonica), any portable and sonorous receptacle that could provide rhythm, the xylophone and its counterpart the 'panophone,' our own innovation

simulating both the steel drum and the xylophone. The musical instrument was constructed from a collection of eight or twelve tin cans that had been discarded. Trinidad and Tobago orange and grapefruit juice cans and Nestlé's condensed milk cans had been among the most sonorous and most easily tuned cans. The cans were arranged diatonically, each representing a single pitch, and beaten with pencils or short pieces of bamboo wrapped at one end with pieces of inner-tubing from bicycles. We mainly played the catchiest, sweetest and most memorable and challenging melodies, and those were more often than not from the repertoire of the Mighty Sparrow and Lord Kitchener. Participation in such cultural encounters that mimicked the behaviors of steelbandmen from our neighborhood and calypsonians is evidence that cultural transmission had been taking place, and as well served as a rite of passage. By our early teens we had already been profoundly impacted by local music practice and activities that would prepare us for roles as pan makers and tuners, arrangers, singers, instrumentalists and enthusiasts later on.

Cultural transmission via calypso music was not limited solely to instrumental performance. The texts of many of the calypsos we had been exposed to then served the purpose of introducing philosophies, reinforcing societal guidelines, increasing awareness about our social and physical environment, and educating us about our cultural heritage. Included among calypsos with texts of that persuasion are the Mighty Sparrow's *School Days*, *Education*, and *Parables*, Commander's *Lizard and Crapaud*, the Growling Tiger's *Shango*, Lord Kitchener's *Bad Talking People* and Lord Melody's *Street Vendor*.

Citing Espinet and Pitts, Herskovits and Herskovits (1964 [1947]) have made reference to the function of calypso texts:

Despite the lightness of the vehicle, the calypso usually contains philosophies of simple things in everyday life, the words displaying a deepness of thought...one would least expect from the singer and the surroundings in which it is sung. (Cited by Herskovits and Herskovits, 1964, p. 284-285)

The second vehicle for cultural transmission was the song games in which children participated. Elder (1965) has provided a valuable repository in his book *Song Games from Trinidad and Tobago* which provides detailed descriptions of games, along with their classification, their related function and accompanying songs. The songs are especially peculiar to the Negro population and include games in which both children and adults have participated. Elder (1965) has elaborated on the function of song games:

The song-games give children opportunity to make personal and intellectual examination of, and to preview, the mode of life which they will be required in adult life to defend, to love and to understand. (p. 28)

He has additionally cited a supporting statement by Hammond:

In this study I regard the song-games as devices which indoctrinate children and new-comers into the cultural mores of the community. They are the means through which, in the earlier stages of their development, individuals may begin to share in what Kroeber has called the 'nuclear character structure' or the 'social character,' the functioning of which is essential to the functioning of the whole culture as a going concern. Games in this context are fundamental in child-training - the key - mechanism of transmission of social necessities into character-traits. (Cited by Elder, 1965, p. 28)

Since many songs in the volume are borrowed from the English tradition their relevance has been questioned. This is easily explained by a perusal of the processes of syncretism involved during the establishment of Trinidadian society. Music and dance have always been central to cultural development of Trinidadian society, and the performance style of the songs definitely betrays the rhythmic and iambic pulse intrinsic to the folk of Trinidad and Tobago.

The modes by which skills are honed and traits developed by local children (oral tradition, role play, collective singing, ritual etc.) indicate retentions of earlier folk traditions. It is premised that the songs augment feelings of playfulness and effervescence necessary to the activities. Elder (1965) has explained that of importance to the inclusion of song games as societal mores is their diffusion between age-groups, sexes, classes and geographic regions, as this accounts for variation in interpretation and performance from one group to the other. He has further elaborated stating that,

Many of the song-games played at dead-wakes have ritual and symbolic implications explicable only in terms of adult experience. For instance, the game called *Z' he' b non-tout come plat* (come all grasses and plait) suggests the need for the intermixture of all sexes and social groups in the community when death occurs in the village. One textual line - *We don't care ah who* - refers to the temporary breakdown of all sex and class barriers, and the suspension of avoidance taboos, in order to facilitate cooperation in this ritual dance. Such a game most definitely loses its significance upon children who undertake it merely for the physical acrobatics involved in throwing alternate legs high upon the shoulder of the partner facing across the line. (p. 14)

The song lyric, as the citation has pointed out, refers to the temporary breakdown of all sex and class barriers, and the suspension of avoidance taboos. These features have been consistent in the relationships between the calypso genre and its host institutions in the context of the carnival ritual.

The foregoing processes discussed are rationalized by the identity theories that have been outlined in chapter 3 of this paper, and by acculturation processes that will be discussed later in this chapter in the context of globalization.

Calypso as Social Text

Liverpool (1990) has commented that,

prior to World War II, in the absence of radio and television, and with a public in Trinidad and Tobago who, because of the educational limitations, did not fully discover the value of daily newspaper reading, the Calypsonian was...a commentator, the harbinger of the news, and his commentaries not only helped to educate the public, but at times even swayed their thinking. (p. 22)

As has been generally accepted, classical rhetoric is argument with intent to persuade. It examines how meaning is conveyed by the initiator and by the argument advanced, taking into account the emotional impact of the idiom or language used. It has also been generally accepted that both music and rhetorical arguments as isolated events have the power to influence behavior. When combined, and presented in the characteristic ways manifested in calypso performance, they have been shown to have a profound impact on the behavior and attitudes of audiences. Texts intended as redress are therefore rhetorical arguments cleverly articulated in song, thereby further enhancing their communicative and transformative power. Patton (1994) has advanced the following viewpoint:

The art of calypso as a musical performance combining melody, and verbal and visual *persona* of the singer with the 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. From the beginning calypso has been a repository of oral traditions and has helped shape the thinking and feeling of diverse Caribbean audiences over many different periods. (p. 55)

In a February 2007 interview Dr. Liverpool, who uses the sobriquet the Mighty Chalkdust, stated that the calypso has created a forum for expressing disapproval of political shortcomings and, through its commentaries, operates as a measure of social control.

He further revealed that his compositions are constructed so as to address inconsistencies, arouse public awareness, and bring about reform. The extent to which the Mighty Chalkdust's arsenal of calypsos has been reformative has not been fully assessed in this study. His calypsos are generally presented as a chronicle of local socio-political incidents accompanied by profound and witty commentary, implications for the future and resolutions to problems within Trinidadian society. They do accomplish the other functions he has

claimed, that is: “They cause my audiences to reflect upon current issues of importance, people’s needs, and social injustice” (ibid.). In other words, his calypsos have been performative. In linguistics and in the philosophy of language, statements which have performative functions in language and communication are called speech acts and are distinguished by the different aspects of the speaker’s intention.

Speech acts uttered with the intention to persuade, convince, scare, enlighten, inspire, or make someone do or realize something are called perlocutionary speech acts. They are designed to illicit some behavioral response from the listener. Perlocutionary speech acts are one of the three forms of speech acts central to Austin’s development of performative utterances and his theory of speech acts formulated in 1962. Taken in this context, the arguments advanced in the texts of rhetorical calypsos have to be considered as perlocutionary since conventionally, they have been intentionally employed by the calypsonian in order to provoke a desired response.

Patton’s (1994) observation and analysis of the 1993 Trinidad Carnival performances is in alignment with the intent and results attained by the calypso rhetoric of the Mighty Chalkdust. He has generated the following statement that “rhetoric functions are artfully manifested in the major performances of leading calypsonians.” The rhetoric functions he alludes to include: the ability of performance to articulate and symbolize the thoughts and values of a specific audience; the dynamics of defining and redefining issues of central importance to the shared cultural world of the performer and audience; and the development of critical cultural self-awareness and understanding that resonates after the immediate act of the performer has passed. Patton concluded that those functions,

Were especially evident in the dramatic verbal, visual, and aural images...This transformative quality is characteristic of the way rhetorical arguments and symbols influence audiences, frequently allowing participants to see themselves in new ways by redefining their understandings of self and cultural issues. (Patton, 1994, p. 55-59)

Liverpool (1990) has cited Raymond Quevedo’s commentary, which appeared in the paper “The Growth and Improvement of Calypso” (1947). Quevedo writes,

One song actually causing a public outburst at the alleged brutality of a member of the constabulary, which, eventually in its repercussion, caused investigations to be instituted, and the alleged murderer brought to trial. He was subsequently found not guilty and was discharged. (Cited by Liverpool, 1990, p. 22-23)

Lawyers of the Bar

Lawyers of the Bar, we must form a deputation

*Jurors of the land, not to acquit Holder,
 We must try him for murder.
 If he escapes the rope, he must die in Carrera
 Perry waiting with the rope
 To break his manima.*

Anonymous

The calypso was anonymously penned and its text, as pointed out by Michael Philips (2007), relates to a domestic affair and not to mere police brutality as might be construed from the quote. The perpetrator in the calypso, Holder a policeman, “bayoneted his former girlfriend who was at the time carrying a child for another.” The song might not have shaped public opinion at all, but rather reflected it. However, by having reinforced public consensus, having exposed the atrocity, and having exerted moral influence, the calypso did accomplish at least one of the goals of rhetoric. Another calypso that demonstrates the transformative quality of rhetorical calypsos is the classic Stafford Incident by the Growling Tiger, who in 1958, according to Gibbons “was still using the kaiso to police public morals. By Gibbons’ (1994) account,

This was a function the kaiso served not only by being critical, but in the fact that its mode makes public and memorable what its victims would prefer concealed and forgotten. This capacity to interlocute with and on behalf of the people has always the particular power and privilege of the form, and even the ‘people’ themselves have been the victims. (p. 82)

An excerpt from that calypso reads,

Stafford Incident

*With the West Indies Federation
 We got to block all these crooks from the foreign land
 I imagine Stafford, a jail breaker
 Landed in this place like a governor
 We have to block them on the sea
 Before they land illegally
 To commit murder and grand larceny
 He landed from England dressed as a sport
 But in his pocket he was carrying a false passport
 Lodged in the best hotels of Port of Spain
 Laughing and rocking under false name
 Join the elite of society
 He was made the director of a company
 Drinking whiskey quite freely with the girls romantically
 And promising matrimony*

The Growling Tiger

The calypso criticized the acceptance and preferred aristocratic treatment of an English criminal by the local elite. Gibbons writes,

Tiger refused to allow the incident to pass unmentioned: In '*Stafford Incident*' (1958) he records this escapade and shows up the gullibility that goes with prejudice. (1994, p. 81-82)

Gibbons added that, in 1958 Tiger was still using the kaiso to police public morals.

Rohlehr (1990), commenting on West African retentions in calypso music has referred to Trinidad calypso tents as places “where political calypsos annually perform a cathartic function similar to what must have been obtained in the satirical songs of various West African societies” (p. 2). The art of storytelling through music is not unique to people of African ancestry but this type of presentation articulated through musical performance was possible and effective in Trinidadian society in which oral tradition had been the chief mode of dissemination. Calypso music had been an integral part of daily life during an era when the masses were concerned with escaping the grip of repression and rising out of the abyss of poverty. *Cipriani*, sung by King Radio during the first representative election in 1925, sought to arouse public awareness and sentiment, mobilize national identity and illicit unified action.

Liverpool (1990), this time citing Brown (1947, p. 251) has noted the following:

That the calypso was extremely influential in swaying Crown Colony Government, and removing some of the social inequalities in the system can be seen from the fact that prominent citizens such as Canon Farquhar, Albert Gomes and Lennox Pierre rose to its defense. Albert Gomes, though a leading politician at the time, and one who in 1950 could have been considered the Chief Minister in the constitutional arrangement then, exclaimed:

The calypso is the most effective political weapon in Trinidad...the fact that the tents are so sedulously supervised by the police reveals the extent to which the calypso singers influence political thought. (Cited by Liverpool, 1990, p. 47)

Cipriani

Gal who you voting for, Cipriani

We doh want Major Rust to make bassa-bassa here Cipriani

We doh want no Englishman

We is Trinidadian Cipriani

Mentor

In the words of St. John (1996) the calypso “points to the struggle for freedom from the bonds of colonialism as the calypsonian articulates the cry of the masses for a Trinidadian leader” (p. 61).

Gibbons (1994, p. 41) has informed us that during 1934-1936, poverty had been widespread among the general public and that agitation was high among sugar workers and oil workers so that the following two calypsos offered by the Growling Tiger, *Money is King* and *Workers' Appeal* had been relevant then. According to Gibbons,

Workers' Appeal less well known, dramatizes with bitter sarcasm the conditions that would lead to the Butler Riots... Converted to action, this 'appeal' sung in 1936 would be met with British bullets one year later. Tiger was using his voice to express both the tone and thinking of the unheard man. In our age of democracy and mass communication such a function may be taken for granted. But fifty years ago when radio was yet a rarity, when the term 'colonised' defined one's relationship with political power, when virtually no interest group in the colony showed any concern for the workers' situation, the importance of the kaiso as a medium of popular expression cannot be over-emphasised. (ibid., p. 42-43)

Liverpool (1990) has corroborated the preceding claims made in regard to the confrontational role that the genre has played in Trinidadian society and has offered the following statements which point to some specific instances when that role had been assumed.

That the calypso has a political and social impact on the authorities and persons enjoying political power can be seen from the many examples of state intervention and censorship. Firstly, as part of the carnival celebrations, all the many instances where the authorities sought to curtail carnival such as in 1810, 1853, 1868 and 1884 involved the calypso.

Atilla claimed that prior to 1930 after criticizing Kenneth Vincent Brown, then a city magistrate, calypso tents were promptly closed at 10 p.m. by the police. In 1934, white and foreign police officers were placed in authority to grant licenses to tent promoters following the Theatre and Dance Hall Ordinance. Atilla was charged in 1949 under the said ordinance for allowing Tiger to sing a calypso against Captain Daniel, the then Assistant Director of Education, who was said to have been driving under the influence of alcohol. The amendment to the Theatre and Dance Hall Ordinance of 1951, vested the power to grant a license to run a calypso tent in a magistrate.

Around the time of the Butler Riots of 1937, when Trinidad was characterized by poverty, exploitation and discrimination, a strict censorship was exercised against political calypsos. The press too, even up to the mid 1950's is filled with opinions of mainly upper class people calling for a ban on many calypsos. Many political calypsos of the 1960's and 70's have been taken off the State-controlled radio for reasons best known to the State. In 1979 for example Short Pants' *The Law Is an Ass* was refused air play. (Liverpool 1990, p. 51-52)

Liverpool has additionally informed that in protest Brian Honore (Lord Commentor) sent a letter, from which the excerpt below is quoted, to the Programme Director of Radio 610.

Is it because the Kaiso is attempting to put people on guard against any further encroachment on their democratic rights and freedoms by politicians whose own track record shows them to be undemocratic, repressive and fascist? (Cited by Liverpool, 1990, p. 53)

Rohlehr (2001) has stated that,

The calypsonian's impulse to unmask the politician as a "mocking pretender" is essentially the same as the impulse of the ancestral chantwel, Midnight Robber, batonnier or Indian chief felt to reveal and demolish any rival who had invaded his space. It is the ancient declaration of territorial rights, the age-old assertion of power-in-discourse projected through the medium of contemporary calypso (p. 21)

Additionally, Rohlehr (1984, p. 17) addressing those 'freedoms' previously referred to has stated that the calypso, "keeps open one area of freedom - freedom of expression by the vigorous exercise of this freedom," and that from 1970 to the present "freedom has been a consistent theme in the political calypso, and the invisibility of the various freedoms has been recognized.

The literature reviewed has repeatedly shown that the subversive nature of rhetorical calypso has always been a threat to the authorities and that,

- On numerous occasions restrictions have been imposed on its text, its production, and its performance;
- On-going confrontation between the curators of calypso (the socially repressed Jamette sector) and the authorities (British Colonial and other successive governments) had been extant;
- Outcomes that were favorable to the repressed and by proxy, to the general population would eventually be realized;
- Its performance had helped to agitate retaliation and confrontation, and had been partially responsible for initiating changes in perception that led to reform;
- It had helped to reinforce public sentiment and agitate the authorities into attempting to suppress its voice and intent;
- It had influenced the authorities to utilize it as a tool of persuasion.

These outcomes are crucial to the goals of this study and will be expanded upon in the concluding arguments. In the meantime, discussion about the period between the post-war 1940's and the 1970's can be commenced.

It was a prolific era in regard to the impact of rhetoric on society. It had coincided with a wave of events that would eventually re-sculpture the socio-political landscape of the West Indies, and re-define collective identities. Dr. Rohlehr communicated to me that the abounding spirit of nationalism that permeated Afro-Trinidadian society in the 1950s had attached itself to the 1940s resurgence of Africanism, in search of a sense of Black pride, achievement and leadership (Pers. comm. 2007).

Beginner's 1945 calypso *Sons and Daughters of Africa* and Atilla's *Britain, Give Us Our Freedom* are examples of text soliciting regional unity and national and ethnic consciousness.

Calypsos like these had provided crucial patterns of persuasion and had rekindled a sense of ethnic affinity which played a decisive role in redefining identities:

Sons and Daughters of Africa

*Sons of Africa now I'm asking you
For your future lives know what you're going to do,
Your fathers have fought in the different wars
Now you fighting this one for a common cause
Get more consideration
For your rising coloured generation
Get more consideration
For your rising coloured generation*

*It's a struggle that is always everybody's war
Whether black or white or whether rich or poor
When there's peace and laughter and there's unity
I think your government will treat you with impunity
Educate your children as they should be
That they should have the honour, pride and dignity
So get more consideration
For your rising coloured generation*

Lord Beginner

The following calypso had coincided with the 'end' of British Crown Colony rule:

Britain, Give Us Our Freedom

*In England the people live happily
They get doctor, medicine and dentist free
While down here three quarters of the population
Dying out of disease and malnutrition
I'm warning Great Britain; don't leave us for too long
Or they'll wake up in the morning and find these islands gone
If they won't help us in our difficulties
Why don't they give up the West Indies*

Atilla the Hun

During the early and mid-1950's, the period leading up to the end of British Crown Colony rule, the two most important figures in Trinidad folk culture were Dr. Eric Williams, and Francisco Slinger (The Mighty Sparrow). Both men, Afro-Trinidadians, dominated their fields and 'ascended their respective thrones' in 1956. Dr. Williams became the first Prime Minister and the Mighty Sparrow was crowned Calypso Monarch. Dr. Williams would retain political leadership for a subsequent thirty-one years until his death. Gibbons (1994) has commented on Dr. Williams' status as a folk hero:

He represented the pinnacle of black achievement to a people deprived of idols. His color represented their past, his scholarship their achievement, his leadership their hope. In articulating his people's aspirations... Williams', leader of the Peoples' National Movement (PNM), had become as popular an interlocutor as any calypsonian (p. 83)

Gibbons additionally stated that Sparrow, the leading voice in the kaiso of nationalism that year, "lashed out against all who had dared to criticize the people's idol" (ibid.).

Many political calypsos of this era celebrated the rise of Dr. Williams and his party the People's National Movement (PNM), supported their 'Buy Local Campaign,' and attempted and often managed to sway public opinion. The Mighty Striker's *Don't Blame the PNM* and Sparrow's *Leave the Damn Doctor* (1960) even sought absolution for indiscretions perpetrated by the regime. Some popular melodies, for example, the chorus of Atilla's *Five Year Plan* and Lord Inventor's *Run Your Run* were refitted with new lyrics and adopted as bolstering songs. *Run Your Run* had been sung in support of the British response to German aggression under the leadership of Kaiser William during World War I, and by Lord Beginner as *Run Your Run Adolf Hitler* during World War II. The melody of this chorus was later partially refitted with lyrics that supported the PNM and its leader Dr. Eric Williams, and rejected the opposing Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and its leader Capildeo during pre-election rallies. The names of the German antagonists were replaced by Capildeo, and the refrain, accompanied by an ensemble of miscellaneous percussive utensils, would be chanted by bands of PNM supporters parading in carnivalesque style through the streets of Port of Spain and other districts around the time of governmental elections during the 1950's and 1960's.

During an interview Dr. Rohlehr conveyed to me that not all political calypsos have supported a ruling party. He explained that,

It is quite natural, for a social and political singer to criticize the regime in power because it is the regime in power that does or doesn't 'do' who performs or doesn't perform. If you want to see change you've got to look to the regime in power... When Panday gets into power he becomes the person in control so the guns begin to be trained against him... In other words the calypsonians were doing what they had done to Robinson, what they had done to Williams, what they had done in the Chambers regime, and they were now doing it to Panday's regime... Calypso has always attacked the ruling regime. (Pers. comm., 2007)

Rohlehr referenced some calypsos of that persuasion including among them Cro Cro's *Ish*, which referred to the sound made by the feigned sneezing antics of Minister Kwai Tung when confronted with questions regarding his regime's (the UNC-United National Congress) shortcomings and misappropriations, and Short Pants' more blatant *The Law is an Ass*. The

latter calypso had castigated the justice system of a former regime and was refused airplay during the live broadcast of the semi-finals of the 1979 Calypso Monarch competition.

“The most aggressive calypsos” Rohlehr (2007) observed, “were against the ruling party.” He further cited examples such as Sugar Aloes’ *Attack with Full Force*, Watchman’s *Positive Vibration*, which recommended the assassination of a previous Prime Minister A.N.R. Robinson, leader of NAR (National Reliance for Reconstruction), and Deple’s *Vote Them Out*, to which he referred as follows:

...a powerful calypso that was even sung at fetes...this calypso re-sparked the use of calypsos in political campaigns...That calypso was, I think, one of the best propaganda calypsos, one of the best campaign calypsos...It brought together societal complaints...the PNM lost in that year...Calypsonians would be paid to boost a party’s chances at winning election by criticizing the regime in power consistently...The calypsonian’s voice is but one of the voices which try to persuade the society in one direction or the other...Around election time ... on the radio they would then use bits and pieces of calypsos, like calypso parodies...The calypso was a part of a mechanism of persuasion... Kaiso became one of the devices to get to the public...it was used to as full an extent as was possible, so they would then pay calypsonians to compose songs boosting up the party, mocking at the next one (Pers. comm., 2007)

Rohlehr’s statements indicate that the symbolic power and persuasive potential of the art form was recognized by the state. He demonstrated this by drawing attention to instances of deliberate attempts by the ruling UNC party to neutralize that power and manipulate the content of political calypsos during their term in office between 1995 and 2000.

Other political analysts, as well as pedestrian observers with whom I discussed the topic have corroborated these claims. Lashley (1998) for example has given the following account relating to Osuna, the calypsonian who uses the sobriquet Sugar Aloes.

Sugar Aloes further claims that in 1998 he was approached by a government official who asked him to take out certain lyrics from his calypso; in return, he would be guaranteed to win the Calypso Monarch contest.

Lashley additionally informs that in 1999, the National Calypso Competition committee excluded Sugar Aloes from the annual contest on the grounds that his presence “harbored the possibility of embarrassment to dignitaries in the audience”, and that in 2000 the Minister of Culture laid down certain criteria for acceptable lyrics, and threatened to withhold funding from TUCO, the national calypsonians organization, if he, (Sugar Aloes) were allowed to compete.

Specific control strategies employed by that regime are outlined in Lashley’s (1998) *Intimidation of Calypsonians by the UNC Government of Trinidad & Tobago*. The UNC

regime went a step further in 2000 by proposing a bill which was perceived by ‘certain’ calypsonians as an attempt to muzzle them, and which was viewed by many as a subtle means of controlling freedom of speech. According to Lashley (ibid.), Clause 7 of that bill was reminiscent of the Theatre and Dance Halls Ordinance of 1934-1935. The document, dated Oct. 27, 2000, can be accessed for perusal in the *Trinidad and Tobago Gazette*.

Lashley (1998) has analyzed such ploys as “attempts by that regime to deflect attention away from the real issues and problems of society”. “What we see here” Lashley writes, “is the UNC government distorting a traditional art form, labeling calypso as racist, because the lyrics offended Panday and UNC officials” (ibid). The UNC as well as its supporters were predominantly East Indian and so they adopted the stance that calypso criticism leveled against them had been racist.

Sometimes quoting Joseph (2000), Lashley has shed light on a paradox by informing us that the UNC government had begun to use calypsos in their political campaign for the then upcoming elections of 2000. They had commissioned two calypsonians, Gregory “GB” Ballantyne, and M’ba, both of African-descent, to come up with campaign calypsos. GB’s calypso *Double or Nothing* praised the performance of the UNC and advocated re-election, and M’ba’s *Put We Back* was used as a theme song at political meetings and in radio advertisements (ibid). Significantly, the UNC was temporarily returned to power for a second term because of a ballot deadlock. But amidst claims of voter padding and other allegations, some of which have since been validated, the President replaced that regime by the PNM who have since been closely monitored by the vigilant eye of the calypsonian.

Another calypso of similar persuasion advocating support for the ruling party, but not commissioned by that agency was Lord Kitchener’s *Not a Damn Seat for Them*.

The preceding accounts and those from other reliable sources have led to the realization that the calypso, by way of rhetoric, has chronicled and exposed instances of state corruption thereby increasing public awareness. By the employment of its own forum for redress the genre has: agitated retaliation in the form of state criticism and censorship; forced the authorities to acknowledge its subversive potential and influenced them to incorporate that potential as part of their arsenal of combative strategies; manipulated them into adopting bribery and coercion in order to achieve their goals, and in doing so, has: exposed their tendency toward implementation of devious practices. By Rohlehr’s account,

The calypsonian's impulse to unmask the politician as a "mocking pretender" is essentially the same as the impulse of the ancestral chantwel, Midnight Robber, batonnier or Indian chief felt to reveal and demolish any rival who had invaded his space. It is the ancient declaration of territorial rights, the age-old assertion of power-in-discourse projected through the medium of contemporary calypso (2001, p. 21)

Authors (Slobin 1976, p. 1; Blacking 1977, p. 7; Lomax 1959, p. 929) have suggested that rhetoric performance shapes and defines cultural identity for its audiences by providing aural and visual symbols. Aural symbols generate patterns of meaning through content and as well through the sound of the language itself.

Patton (1994) has stated that,

The notion of social text immediately introduces the role of situational influences, the interaction of the calypso with a specific set of audiences, and the creation of layers of meaning through the symbolic action of the performance of calypso...the symbolic power of language and music as they react with audiences and situational factors create patterns of persuasion and social influence. (p. 56)

This is in keeping with recent developments in ethnomusicology that stress performance perspectives, which have been explored by Béhague (1984).

The observations of Patton (1994, p. 60) that:

- the oral nature of calypso is precisely that which gives it power as a rhetoric form,
- the bond between the artist and the audience is enabled by the performance itself,
- audiences accustomed to oral traditions listen and respond to the sound of language in significant ways, and
- the expectations they hold are mutually influential in shaping the message and style of verbal artists,

are in keeping with the notion contended by symbolic interactionists that communication is the product of the interactants sharing and creating meaning. Patterns generated by way of colloquialism, double *entendre*, context and by nuances such as inflexion and intonation pertaining to pronunciation, can mask meaning from, and limit comprehension by 'outsiders' to the culture thereby excluding them from the dialogue.

Prosody is a function of speech pertaining to the designation of inflection of the voice by the palate. It can be defined as a study of the elements of language, especially meter, which contribute to rhythmic and acoustic effects in poetry (for example stress and intonation). Along with effects such as rhyme, alliteration and resonance it can influence meaning. The relevance of this issue when discussing calypso singing, is based on the fact that "the calypso singing style developed in Trinidad and local vernacular patterns are almost identical, and

often, stress is ‘MIS-placed on the wrong syl-LAB-le for em-pha SIS in words such as carni-VAL and para-DISE’” (Lamson, 1957, p. 61). Lamson has noted that,

The accentuation is quite similar to West Indian speech with its undulating tonal patterns and non-standard stress. In most instances context and meaning would be lost to the listener who is not familiar with the prosodic idiosyncrasies of the non-standard English-based vernacular, which, between the performer and a local audience, creates a bond. (ibid)

This is reminiscent of specific nuances pertaining to pulse and resonance that become defining characteristic of various music genres. For example, the percussive ‘scratch’ of the rhythm guitar on the backbeat (the second and fourth beats) in reggae music, the sound of the lowered seventh in the blues, or the sound and playing style of the banjo in country music. These nuances have become defining characteristics of their respective cultures and conjure up specific meanings for respondents, especially the respondents native to those cultures. Following the same reasoning, the natural incorporation of local vernacular and prosodic speech patterns by calypsonians is yet another way in which the calypso has provided mechanisms that have enabled identification among Trinidadians.

Kamau Brathwaite (1984) has identified the calypso as “the original voice of the people, linguistically, psychically, and socially as an alternate to the iambic pentameter model of poetry and literature” (p. 17).

Performer and Audience Relationship

Symbolic performance and the symbols created which provide shared meaning to participants, as well as the resultant bonding processes that take place between artist and audience and among participants, are rationalized by identity theory and accomplish the goals of rhetoric function previously outlined on page 144. In examining the ways in which calypso creates common bonds and intensely shared levels of understanding and feeling between calypsonians, their ideas and values, and the audiences, reference is made to Patton’s (1994, p. 56) citation of rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke (1968, p.152-56). Burke introduced the term *identification*’ to refer to the rhetoric process wherein language is used to create unity and corporation through its interaction in social and rhetoric contexts. He has referred to the symbols that are created as verbal parallels to patterns of experience and has suggested that in verbal performance, “the power of the symbolic act becomes greatest when the artist’s and the reader’s [listener’s] patterns of experience closely coincide. It is the performance itself, the interaction between the artist and the audience that creates common bonds and layers of meaning.” This is verified when one visits a calypso tent or competition around carnival time.

The artist is perceived as a representation of the thoughts, opinions and values of the audience, and both the performer and the audience become curators of social meaning.

John Blacking (1977) has stated: “The function of music is to reinforce, or relate people more closely to, certain experiences which have come to have meaning in their social life”.

Additionally, he has expanded on this idea and has written that,

Music can express social attitudes and cognitive processes, but it is useful and effective only when it is heard by the prepared and receptive ears of people who have shared or can share in some way, the culture and individual experiences of its creators. To someone who has been immersed in the culture of the composer, the sounds used and the contrasts made between them can be heart-rending and poignant...the music is able to invoke specific emotions or behavior because it is heard and performed in the context of the specific culture and of the musical system that is intricately related to that culture. When and how specific nuances are introduced or present in a performance determines the expressive power of the music; and this depends on the commitment of those present and the quality of the shared experience among the performers, and between the performers and the audience. If music serves as a sign or symbol of different kinds of human experience, its performance may help to channel the feelings of listeners in certain directions (p. 59-72)

The reciprocal behavior exhibited by audiences in response to music, such as dancing, expressions of joy, agreement or approval, and the beating of makeshift percussion instruments inspire the performer to more intense levels of expression. Resultantly the bond between performer and audience is reinforced. Turner (1987) has described performance as a “reciprocal” and “reflective” series of actions built upon a sense of mutuality that emerges from the nature of the performance. “The performance,” he has stated, “is often a critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of; an evaluation (with lively possibilities of rejection) of the way society handles history” (Turner, 1987, p. 22).

The responsibility of the performer to the audience and the reciprocal evaluation of the performer by the audience has been paralleled by the identity theory and itemized as the initiator / recipient model. The artist’s ‘idiosyncrasy credit’, accounts for the degree of credibility and acceptance that the audience ascribes to the performer and to the performance.

In reference to the responsibility and communicative competence that works in tandem with the artist’s credibility, Baumann (1975) has stated that,

Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. The competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in sociably appropriate ways. Performance involves on the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the

performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's competence. (p. 293)

Patton's analysis of the Mighty Chalkdust's 1993 performances highlights the calypsonian's ability to intensify what audiences want to believe about themselves. He stated that,

The reinforcement process is seen in his performances of "Acid Test," "Kaiso in Hospital," and "Misconceptions," each of which skillfully engaged audiences in a successive fashion building toward a total frame of mutuality. As the various audiences became progressively reinforced, they in turn saw Chalkdust as the most complete representation of their own reflection. In fact, the performance of "Acid Test" did more than acknowledge the audience; it identified and affirmed the very powers that gave that particular audience its identity and legitimation. Moreover, in the way in which the calypso was performed, Chalkie was able to solidify a deep bond between himself as authentic voice and the people as authentic participants in the creation of social meaning. In precisely this way the calypso carries out the constitutive function described earlier. Looked at from this perspective, the lyric of "Acid Test," reveals an intricate pattern of interconnectedness between the voice of the calypsonian and the audience. As with all effective calypso performances the chorus is a crisp summary of the main ideas put forth and skillfully repeated at regular intervals. In "Acid Test" this is especially effective as it allows Chalkie to actually become the voice of the audience addressing the rival calypsonians. "Kaiso in Hospital," a stinging rebuke to the modern trends of reggae, *soca*, and to some extent rap. Emphasis on a return to traditional values, a kind of inner purity of calypso, received great applause. "Misconceptions" focuses on the origin and development of the steel drum, giving his audience a strong sense of tradition and identity. (1994, p. 61-62)

The foregoing citation of Patton, and the previous citation, that of Baumann's account of the art of oral performance have been presented in order to expand on the performer/audience relationship, and to corroborate Patton's perspective that the act of verbal performance is in the moment of its expression, a "constitutive" act.

During ethnological field research in 2007 I assumed the position of 'silent observer' but during the 1986 and 1987 carnival seasons I had had the opportunity to observe the calypso scene from both 'within' and 'without', both as observer and as practitioner, sometimes simultaneously. Employment as guitarist of the house band at the Spectakula Forum, a popular calypso tent in Port of Spain afforded me that opportunity. That stint along with prior and subsequent performances; in calypso shows; at fêtes; during numerous performances on the 'road' during carnival parades; and participation in festivities during my boyhood and adolescence had given me a bird's eye view and provided me with opportunities to gather firsthand information. My involvement on those levels has also given me license to corroborate many of the claims surrounding the artist /audience relationship that have been presented in this section.

One of the observations made is that a certain degree of affinity between performer and audience is fundamental to the success of the performance and is established over time by familiarity. From my own account, reinforcement and bonding actually begins off-stage before the performance has even begun. This happens because the calypsonian customarily mingles publically and is accessible to fans. He or she resultantly becomes '*known*' and is perceived as '*one of the crowd*'. This is accredited to the previously discussed trait common among Trinidadians, which allows people to acknowledge each other without formal introduction. The process continues even during the performance thereby creating an intimate setting.

Calypso in Ritual Context

The quintessential expressions of calypso music in its ritual context have been its carnivalesque responses. The calypso *Play Ball* presented below is a good example of the utilization of the genre to elicit such responses as it encompasses three of the five functions of calypso discussed in this chapter: it rallies collective support among supporters; it ignites the fighting spirit among rivals; and it incites wild and reckless abandon.

The text of the calypso, which refers to the annual national intercollegiate football (soccer) competition, was penned by Pat Castagne and performed by the Mighty Christo. The calypso was traditionally sung in carnivalesque style to the accompaniment of miscellaneous percussive utensils at competition venues before and during each encounter, and during the street parades after each game. Opposing supporters and spectators alike participated during these events. The chorus of the song has melodic origins in Atilla's *Five Year Plan* and the lyric of the verses in reference to the degree of widespread euphoria is not an exaggeration:

Play Ball (Football Fever) (The Intercol Song)

*Once a year in October
Fete for so in Queen's Park Savannah
Only once a year in October
Fete for so in Queen's Park Savannah,
Carnival out of season
Every man know the reason
Colleges in the city
Fighting for football supremacy, and they shouting
Ragga! Ragga! Ragga! Ragga! Ting poon pa!
St. Mary's! St. Mary's! Rah! Rah! Rah!
No, no, no [Fatima] no, (Repeat)
No, no, no, [Fatima] (Repeat)
No [Fatima], no [Fatima], no.
[QRC], we want a goal! (Repeat)*

*Young and old catch the fever
 A day you bound to remember
 Plenty cheering and singing
 For weeks your ears go be ringing,
 Juju drum and zombie pan
 Even girls by the thousand
 Excitement for so in Port of Spain
 At the annual Intercol game, they shouting,
 No, no, no Fatima no, (Not a goal)
 No, no, no Fatima no,
 But of all the cries you hear
 This is the one from year to year
 QRC, we want a goal!
 QRC, we want a goal!*

*When you see the match over
 Fete for so around the savannah
 All the boys get together
 To jump with the school of the winner,
 Thousands dancing in the street
 Steelband beating very sweet
 Police try to stop the noise
 But end up jumping up with the boys shouting
 Ragga! Ragga! Ragga! Ragga! Ting poon pa!
 [St. Mary's! St. Mary's!] Rah! Rah! Rah!
 No, no, no [Fatima] no, (Repeat)
 No, no, no, [Fatima] (Repeat)
 No [Fatima], no [Fatima], no.
 [QRC], we want a goal! (Repeat)*

Pat Castagne

The music moment and atmosphere used to be so euphoric, that it was impossible to not participate even though one's team had lost. The behavior had become socialized among Trinidadians. This is what De Certeau was referring to when he elaborated on 'habitus' which he described as that perfunctory and spontaneous expression by the practitioner in response to the overwhelming visual, aural, oral and emotive stimuli bombarding him/her. The collective space has been entered, everyone has been equalized, and the responses to the musical moment have become socialized ritualistic behavior that is repeated time and time again since culture tends to replicate itself.

The construction and perpetuation of stereotypes is another way in which behaviors are socialized. Carnavalesque features such as fantasy, metaphor, masking and self-mockery have been incorporated in gender stereotypes socialized through calypso music. Gender stereotypes are therefore discussed in this chapter in the context of ritual. Rohlehr (2004) has

reminded us that, “All the stereotypical notions and roles of gender are there, sometimes openly enacted and illustrated, at other times subtly encoded and masked in thousands of calypso fictions” (p. 198).

In contrast to its performance in St. Lucia, calypso singing in Trinidad had been an almost exclusively male dominated event whose podium was used in part to assert and maintain the ‘sexually dominant male’ stereotype. Audiences familiar with ‘Trini’ jargon are capable of interpreting the cryptic message conveyed by the song titles alone. The texts of the Mighty Sparrow’s *Village Ram* and *Too Much Wood in the Fire* exemplify this feature. The chorus is presented here first so as to establish the stereotype in the reader’s mind and the verses that follow relentlessly reiterate the sexual prowess of the stereotype by their candid display of bravado, machismo and chauvinism, the main characteristics of the stereotype. *Village Ram* incorporates straightforwardness, metaphor, and as well, double *entendre*. Some parts of the text convey total and sadistic male domination closely resembling rape, and are reflective of an era when there had been a general lack of respect for women among men; when the male ego was so inflated that women were perceived as subordinate; when the arbitrary beating of women into submission was somewhat tolerated. Calypsos of this nature were enjoyed, encouraged, and applauded as a legitimate form of comedic entertainment because both stereotypes and their accompanying behavioral traits had been socialized among Trinidadian society.

Village Ram

*Not a woman ever complain yet with me
I ent boasting but I got durability
And if a woman ever say that I
Ever left her dissatisfied
She lie, she lie, she lie*

Verse

*Is me the village ram
I don’t give a damn,
Is me the village ram
I don’t give a damn,
Ah cutting down black is white
Man Ah wucking day and night
If you have a job to be done see me
I ent making fun*

Verse

*Beware when Ah drinking rum
I ent like to done
And Ah bad like a cobra snake
doh try to escape
When Ah put you in the clinch*

*Doh care how you bite and pinch
And Ah got meh hand on yuh mouth
The way Ah does lock yuh neck yuh cyar shout.*

Verse

*The girls that they have in town
They so big and strong
And Lord, look at confusion
They ent fraid no man, so
In case of emergency
If you ent able with she
And you find yourself in a jam
Ah tell yuh send for the village ram*

Verse

*I'm the champion without a doubt
Ah never lose a bout
And Ah fight them in any class
Doh ask who come last
All meh bouts is fifteen rounds
If you ent in shape doh come
Anytime this champion connect
The power of the punch always get respect*
The Mighty Sparrow

Too Much Wood in the Fire

Verse

*Talk to me (male chorus)
I am not a beast honey (Chantwel)
Talk to me...
Tell me you love me sincerely
Talk to me...
Something good or something bad
Talk to me...
Long as you talk to me Ah glad
(Scatting by male chorus)
When you talk you does turn me on
I could carry on from now till dawn
Once Ah hear yuh sexy conversation*

Chorus

*Tell me you think Ah sweeter than honey
Tell me if Ah ever leave you you'll kill me
Scratch up meh back, bite off meh ears
When Ah ask, "What's the matter?"
Tell me, "Too much wood in the fire"*
The Mighty Sparrow

Both Rohlehr and St. John have commented on, and have forwarded explanations for the presence of the trait among Trinidadian men, of boasting sexual prowess. Rohlehr (2004) has

offered the following anthropological insight into the construction of masculinity among pastoral and urban folk in Trinidad:

Masculinity was associated with a notion of kingship and attendant notions of controlled territory, turf or province. Kingship was not inherited, but won, asserted and maintained through the skill, courage and dominance necessary to the challenging worlds of 'stick' and 'fight'... The stickman's **bois** or **puoi** constituted his primary medium for illustrating skill, self-assertion and dominance within the community of males. Metaphorically, the stick represented the phallus. It was the batonnier's rod, staff and scepter of dominance, the ultimate symbol of kingship... **woman** [was] a central part of his territory of conquest, control and dominance. **Woman** was the greatest ornament in the realm of the stickman /warrior/king. Often, as the stickfighting legends disclose, **woman** was the prize for whom the champions fought... this connection between masculinity and the complex of warriorhood, conquest, control of territory and acquisition of woman became such a prominent feature in the formation of Trinidad for the first six decades after Emancipation that it was carried over into the twentieth century as a deeply inscribed and virtually immutable pattern. (p. 199)

He additionally explained the relationship between the metaphor and the music as follows:

Such metaphorical linkages would generate in the Calypso a consistent tendency to represent sexual and general intercourse between males and females as forms of martial rather than marital encounter in which all of the ritualistic elements of the stickfight are reflected. Such elements include the rhetorical boasting and exalted self-celebration common to male heroic traditions worldwide, the glorification of the bois, reduced in the Calypso; to the penis; (or the glorification of the penis exalted to the size, potency and durability of the bois); the representation of the sexual act as a stiff battle between male and female sexualities. (p. 200)

Zandolie's *Stickman* probably best exemplifies the 'stick' or 'bois' metaphor. Rohlehr (2004) has analyzed *Stickman* in the context of a martial contest between two opponents of opposing sexes. The battle is fought in three phases; the protagonist's hasty attack which results in premature ejaculation, mocking and shame; the retreat in which the protagonist finds a solution to the problem by borrowing the wood of a legendary stickman; and his renewed attack which results in conquest, the applause and respect of the audience, and the vanquished foe, the woman (ibid.):

Stickman

*...Well we carry down in the back ah the ally
Only me and she
I fell on meh knees and I charge she the first bois
Under she belly
She break the bois and she back back
Watch me fixed in meh eye and laugh
I get delirious and I charge she three in succession
Meh wood break in half*

*You could imagine how Ah feeling shame
 To see Zando los he fame
 Now the wood break in the center
 and she laughing kya, kya, kya now if you see how Zandolie crawling
 on meh knees and perspiring
 but Ah pick up a piece of string in the drain
 so Ah tie up meh wood and carry again...*

*It was getting late in the evening
 And people start gathering
 So a stickman called Joe Pringay
 Lend me a stick to play*

*Now I charging like if ah crazy
 And she only backing from me
 She say "I don't know you could play stick so
 Oh meh Lard oh, beg pardon Zando."*

Zandolie

The honor and supremacy of the protagonist were restored by the fictionalized outcome of the conquest because the behavior that led to the conquest and the stereotype that exhibited that behavior had long since become socialized into the psyche of the people. Fictionalization too had been a main characteristic of the calypso genre and of Trinidad folklore in general.

St. John (1996), writing along psychological lines, has offered a somewhat different explanation as to the trait among male calypsonians of boasting sexual prowess. She wrote,

Black men, victims of the emasculation of slavery, are reportedly always seeking to restore their self-esteem. Calypso, with its projections into the fantasy of insatiable appetites and innumerable conquests, offers the ideal avenue by which manhood can be restored. (p. 25)

From an extensive list of phallogentric calypsos a few entries have been listed for the benefit of the reader; the Mighty Sparrow's *Mr. Herbert, Jook for Jook* and *Pogo Stick*; Lord Kitchener's *Handyman* and *Dr. Kitch*; the Mighty Terror's *Callaloo* and *Female Woodcutter*; Puppet Master's *The Greatest Love*; Spitfire's *Roast Corn for Rosie* and the Mighty Duke's *Thunder*.

In constructing the 'sexually superior male' stereotype that was consistent with the stickman, the calypsonian had simultaneously constructed an 'inferior female' stereotype which also became socialized in Trinidadian society. *Learn to Cook* below elucidates the stereotype.

Learn to Cook

*All you concerned about is the way you look
 Pretty up like a doll in a story book
 But you doh know one thing bout cooking and you won't learn*

The last time you made some Jello it burn

From now on honey bunch this is your duty

Buy a cookbook and learn every recipe

Otherwise is outside the window for all dem clothes

You have one week to learn to cook or is blows

The Mighty Sparrow

The calypso informs about the socialization of the subordinate and physically abused female stereotype, and the expected role of women and the consequences for non-compliance that had been perpetuated in calypsos. *Learn to Cook* also provides comedic entertainment.

The stereotype assumed roles of subservience, infidelity and frivolity, and was extant in an era when promiscuity among women was ‘outwardly’ frowned upon by society in general, especially by ‘respectable’ society and a somewhat ‘blind eye’ had been turned on domestic abuse. The tendency in Trinidadian society to engage in self-mockery that had allowed both stereotypes to be perpetuated also sanctioned deflation of phallogentric masculinity and the construction of the ‘impotent or sexually inadequate male’ stereotype by male calypsonians. Calypsos such as the Crazy’s *The Cock Can’t Stand Up* and the Mighty Sparrow’s *Willie Dead* and *Man Like to Feel*, are included among this strain of unmasking calypsos. The persona has been perpetuated by female calypsonians as well. *Mr. Johnny* by Lady Excellence is one example. In the 1960s the entry of female calypsonians into the calypso arena began in earnest. Pioneered by Calypso Rose, they appropriated emasculated male stereotypes in their counter attack against the phallogentric male and attacked negative aspects of the male stereotype that had been socialized, in an attempt to challenge and deconstruct the sexually superior male stereotype. In the tradition of Lady Iere’s *Leave Me or Love Me* and *Cat O Nine Tail* of several decades earlier, their themes tackled men’s overindulgence in alcohol and the accompanying sexual incompetence syndrome.

Calypso Rose utilized the ‘loose and vulgar woman’ stereotype and the ‘sexually inadequate male’ stereotype that had already been socialized by male calypsonians, to construct an independent and equally promiscuous ‘sexually aggressive female’ counterpart to the ‘stickman’. Lady Shabba’s calypso *Hold Him and Wuk Him* and *We Jamming, Horn Your Man* by Calypso Princess and Natalie Yorke’s *Do What You Want* and Dextra’s *I Dare You* celebrate female sexual empowerment and blatantly challenge the ‘sexually superior male’ stereotype. The sexually promiscuous superior female stereotype had now been born and eventually became socialized as a folk heroine alongside her male counterpart.

In instances when female calypsonians have celebrated the penis, the celebration has been secondary to the ascendancy of the ‘sexually aggressive female’ stereotype and fellatio perceived as a means by which the woman subdues the man. In other words, in these renditions the phallus is enjoyed for its ability to pleasure the woman but has been reduced by the onslaught of the gynocentric female, at times to the point of derision. Calypso Rose, the pioneer of this previously not so traversed terrain, has spurned several calypsos of that milieu including *The Sweet Nest*, whose title and lyrics establish the ascendancy of the vagina over the phallus by conjuring imagery of the intense degree of allure, desire and seduction to which the penis succumbs; *You must Come Back to Rose* in which the female protagonist resorts to ‘necromancy’ (black magic) in order to capture and conquer her prey; and *The Wrestler* in which she delights in ‘squeezing’ the life out of her male rival thereby winning the sexual contest. Intercourse continues to be viewed in the context of competition between the sexes.

You must Come Back to Rose

*When Ah take a piece of meh clothes
And boil it up in spice and clove
And Ah pass the scent by yuh nose
You bound to come back to rose
Calypso Rose*

The Wrestler

*If you strong like a lion and I hold you
You bound to ball (shout/moan aloud)
You could be strong like a concrete wall
You got to fall*

Calypso Rose

Although considered taboo publicly, oral sex had always been a popular theme in calypsos. However, whereas calypsos such as the Mighty Terror’s *Dora Fat Pork*, the Mighty Sparrow’s *Congo Man*, *Number 69*, *May May* and *Sixty Million Frenchmen* had bolstered the male stereotype, Calypso Rose’s *Pudding* and *Palet* incorporated the ‘eating’ metaphor as a vehicle for male feminization. Female calypsonians continued to incorporate such themes in order to unmask male sexual inadequacy, deflate the male ego and celebrate victory in the sexual battle. Cunnilingus has been incorporated not as a primary means by which the woman is satisfied by the man, but rather as a maneuver that men resort to in order to disguise impotency, and as a substitute for virility. Its counterpart fellatio has been incorporated by the

‘female sexual heroine’ stereotype to subdue the male sexual ego and achieve conquest, and as well to punish as it were her rival.

The Mighty Duke’s *Woop Wap* is an example of a calypso sung by a male phallogocentric, but, in the words of Gordon Rohlehr (2004), it “mocks at the absurdly unequal contest of inadequate male and insatiable female sexualities” (p. 234). Along with *Woop Wap*, calypsos such as David Rudder’s *Carnival Oman*, Beckett’s *Teaser* and Penguin’s *Soft Man*, represent the male calypsonian’s recognition of the arrival and legitimacy of the independent and sexually liberated woman and the socialization of the stickman’s female counterpart in Trinidadian society.

During pre-emancipated times Trinidadian women had sung in defiance of social repression and in rebellion to colonial ordinances. In the twentieth century female calypsonians such as Singing Sandra, Singing Francine and others have continued in that tradition and have broadened the scope of the feminist struggle by attacking hegemonic oppression. Singing Sandra’s *No More Hard Work* and *Enough is Enough* in 2003 addressed infidelity, physical, mental and sexual abuse and gender disparity. *Pressure* by Carol Jacobs in similar fashion qualifies since it rebelliously itemizes stressful aspects of the overwhelmed housewife’s daily struggle to cope with the fulfillment of roles expected of her, aspects which, once overcome demonstrate the resourcefulness of the ‘woman’. Calypsos such as those referred to above broke away from the tradition of applauding the sexually dominant male stereotype. Along with the timely entrance of a Caucasian female, Denise Plummer, into the calypso arena, the calypsos that were being sung by female calypsonians at the time helped to empower the Trinidadian woman, reveal a new persona and bring about new awareness that had previously remained repressed by social patriarchy. She was initially heckled and booed because she was different but her perseverance, the quality of her performances, relevance of her rhetoric and her difference won her public acclaim. In the male-heroic carnivalesque society of Trinidad, caught between conflicting poles of morality and tradition, we see both an acceptance and a denial of the foregoing stereotypes and behaviors: for example, the ‘Saga Boy’ (Casanova), steelbandmen (‘pan men’) and the calypsonian are applauded but our daughters and sisters are forbidden to associate with them; infidelity and promiscuity are tolerated as long as womenfolk not related to us are not involved; and lewd and lascivious behavior (wining and grinding) displayed publicly, especially by women, is constrained except of course during carnivalesque activities. The statement below, made by Gibbons, alludes to these double standards in regard to the rhetorical calypso and the calypsonian.

Calypso(e)s aimed at prostitutes or foreign crooks were alright. Once the victims were closer home...there was a great hue and cry and the invoking of censorship laws. One is never allowed to forget that the Kaisonian inhabited a kind of moral degenerate world which, without the restraints and sanctions of the law always appeared likely to contaminate 'decent' society. (1994, p. 74)

Ambivalence toward the calypsonian and calypso music is no different from ambivalence toward the sexual stereotypes previously discussed, toward other Afro-centric practices or toward steelbandmen and the steel drum. It had been initiated by upper class repression of grass roots practices; was peculiar to the grass roots masses; and it became extant among society at large once the avoidance of 'tabooed' practices had become socialized as behavioral norms within 'certain' other factions of society. A tendency toward selective hypocrisy and denial that was not confined to the upper class majority therefore became formalized in Trinidadian society.

Errol Hill (1972) has reported that in an attempt to avert prejudice, Canon Farquhar, chairman of the first government-appointed committee to investigate the steelband phenomenon wrote,

Educationally they have been denied everything...Socially they are condemned to conditions in which home life, as understood by their critics, does not exist...They are normally shunned as the unwanted and undesirable and subjected to taunts and reproaches. Thus ostracized and estranged from the circumstances and the people who alone could help them, they are driven out like lepers of old into the wilderness and waste places of society...Instead of surrendering to sullen despair or violent retribution, they turn to the escapism of music and roam our streets. (Cited in Hill, 1972, p. 50)

Both repression and selective hypocrisy aimed at calypsonians and steelbandmen were addressed by the Mighty Sparrow's social commentary *Outcast* referred to earlier on page 34.

Calypso music, as the study has shown, has helped to construct, maintain and legitimize stereotypes and behaviors that had once been criticized and ostracized, weaving them into the folkloric tapestry of mainstream culture. Those behaviors and stereotypes find freedom of expression in the symbolic and ritualized social drama, carnival, whose main ingredients, masking and calypso music function so as to equalize people and synchronize events.

The news media, including the radio and television networks and the local newspapers, are also part of the ritual network since they are disseminators by which the 'entire' population becomes initiated in national ritual.

My first line of support is found in the opening statement of G.S. Métraux's editorial, *Of Feasts and Carnival* which outlines the basic patterns of festivals:

Traditional feasts and festivals constitute, symbolically, a renewal of the past in the present, a way of recalling the origins-whether mythical or historical-of a community of men; they are occasions when cultural and national identity can be re-asserted and feelings of self-awareness and participation in common experiences reaffirmed. (1976, p. 7)

In keeping with the nature of feasts and festivals, the Trinidad carnival ritual has allowed respondents the opportunity to re-enact mythical and historical events, by engaging in related events such as masquerade, costume design and fabrication, composition and performance of special music and dance performance. The ritual is all-encompassing and has continuously engaged society along several parameters. The images and symbols that the carnival drama offers, referred to by Béhague (1994) as “the musical occasion” (p. 8) and the symbols alluded to in respective citations of Burke (p. 7) and Patton (p. 8) can be of a verbal, visual, aural, physical, spiritual or emotional nature. The Trinidad Carnival has been an omnipotent symbol to the people of Trinidad, a symbol that during the pre-Emancipation era, had represented the quest for temporary escape from class status and permanent freedom from slavery.

It must be remembered that pre-Emancipation carnival festivities on the island of Trinidad had coincided with the Christmas and New Year holidays, during which time the occurrence of outbreaks had been common. From Hill’s (1972) report we have learned that since the authorities had always been on the alert against insurrection by slaves, martial law was customarily proclaimed in British colonies around that time of year. We have also learned from the report that beginning on December 24 with gunfire and continuing with mock military exercises during the weeks prior to carnival, the British government customarily displayed a show of military force (p. 13).

The implication is clear, and serves as a basis for the reasoning that post-Emancipation carnival had become symbolic of freedom for the people of Trinidad. Hill (1972) has offered one of the most profound analyses of the symbolic relationship between carnival celebrations and Trinidadians during the decades immediately following Emancipation. He wrote,

Carnival in Trinidad had become a symbol of freedom for the broad mass of the population and not merely a season for frivolous enjoyment. It had a ritualistic significance, rooted in the experience of slavery and in the celebration of freedom from slavery. In this sense, carnival was no longer a European-inspired nature festival. Adopted by the Trinidad people it became a deeply meaningful anniversary of deliverance from the most hateful form of human bondage. The people would not be intimidated; they would observe carnival in the manner they deemed most appropriate. A theatre that draws inspiration from a movement so deeply rooted in the culture of the people cannot but reflect the national spirit or fail to win a large measure of popular support. (p. 21)

Since calypsos have reflected the social consciousness of the people, the text of calypsos of the pre and post-Emancipation eras would have reflected jubilation not only on a level of frivolous enjoyment and festive tradition, but as well on levels of ritualistic, historical and philosophical significance. Calypsos therefore, have become artifacts in celebration of solidarity, triumph and freedom, expressions of festive laughter and beacons of an inherent potential towards resistance and rebellion. I cite Rohlehr (1984) in support: referring to Bakhtin's description of carnival as a social institution, he writes,

...if "freedom" in the street songs of Carnival took the form of class aggression performed in a style of scurrility and bawdy picong that deliberately unmasked the real disrespect that the never truly humble underclass felt for the social overlords, responsibility, as defined by the aggrieved elite, would require the rigorous policing of such freedom and include the censorship of street songs...Such censorship proved to be impossible because the songs were, apart from their choruses, improvised by the chantwel and were part of what the intellectual Mikhail Bakhtin, in his seminal study *Rabelais and His World*, termed "festive laughter."

Carnival laughter, festive laughter is, according to Bakhtin, whose analysis was based on the carnivals of medieval Europe, not an individual reaction to some isolated "comic" event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its drool aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival. (p. 4)

My second line of support is grounded in Durkheim's (1938) statement that collective activities generate feelings of elation or effervescence that affirm actors' membership in a group, and are important sources of solidarity. This posit has been supported by Collins (2014), who has successfully argued that a common focus and common mood in social interaction fosters a sense of something larger, i.e., a common group membership or affiliation.

The notion of "collective effervescence" forwarded by Durkheim from his analysis of festivals, and further advanced by Marcel Mauss, is reported by Jean Duvignaud (1976), to have influenced the various schools of sociology and anthropology. Duvignaud wrote,

Mauss characterized this "dynamic totality" and its creative "effervescence" as "the whole social body...vibrating to the same chord". In the momentum of intense participation "individuals melt away. They become, so to speak...the spokes of a single wheel whose magical gyrations, dancing and singing would appear to constitute a perfect image". The creativity of the festival stems from the group's realizing in common an experience that lies outside of it. (p. 14)

From the standpoints of 'initiator', in this case, as musician, and as 'respondent', I offer my own account of the feeling of "melting away" during the momentum of intense participation.

At precise moments during performance of carnival music (i.e. calypso), and in response to it, an emotional highpoint or ‘state’ is reached and the music assumes a power that ‘carries away’ revelers, performers and spectators alike. It is reminiscent of the type of invocation that initiates of a religious cult experience. Here are a few observations I should make about the ‘state’ — feeling of being ‘carried away’ or rapture. It is often induced by the text, but more generally, by the music and its performance whether the respondents are performing, watching and listening or dancing; the rapture experienced by those in attendance is simultaneous and collective; performance is perlocutionary, that is, it is designed to provoke a response. In some instances, the response is manipulated by the musical arrangement to occur at precise or predetermined moments and at other times it is spontaneous, although the stimuli that trigger the responses are always present.

There is a repertoire of learned responses among revelers during rapture, these include shouting, jumping, falling down, rolling on the ground, throwing both arms in the air while extending the forefingers or all fingers of both hands as if in ecstatic surrender, and ‘wining’ (gyrating of the waist in simulation of the sex act), in tandem with, or without a partner. Graphic facial expressions portraying bliss and total abandon add the final touch to the visual emotive display commonly referred to by Trinidadians as ‘madness’ or ‘sweetness’. Performing, dancing or listening to calypso music under the influence of environments such as pan yards and calypso tents can be a highly intoxicating and, in the case of dancing at fêtes or in the streets on carnival day, a graphically erotic experience.

The following account of spirit-possession during performance, as relayed by Rohlehr (2004, p. 240-241), was given by Calypso Rose in an interview in the *Trinidad Express*,

When I get on that stage and I hear the bass-pedal drumming and the bass drumming, I does just start to move. I tell yuh I find myself doing some steps on the stage that I swear I know nothing about. The music just takes over mih body and Rosie on the move. (Calypso Rose, February 27, 1977)

The rapture is often heightened or encouraged by the (excessive) consumption of alcohol although it is not a requirement. The following slew of local phrases is used to refer to the intoxicating feeling of total abandon described: “De ting take she”, “When de ting fly up in she head so”, “Dey get away”, “Dey leggo”, “She gorn wild”, “Dey getting orn bad,” “He ketch ah vaps boy” etc. Viewed in the context outlined, carnival has been perceived as a ritualized social drama presented as a lascivious dance wherein calypso and soca music are the vehicles by which revelers escape from their permanent reality to the fantasy of a

temporary reality. Patton (1994, p. 58) has cited Stern and Henderson (1993) wherein they call attention to Turner's concept of ritual performance as social drama:

During the liminal period of the ritual, the individual escapes the normal social order and its constraints, entering a phase in which social status is temporarily laid aside and the participants mingle as social equals, bonding in a spirit of *communitas* which affirms universal characteristics of humanity and the individual's worth. (Stern and Henderson, p. 123)

Duvignaud (1976) has observed that "... commercial and sexual relations are intensified during the 'festival'", and that "the classes, or rather the segregations which divide groups disappear, and the prohibitions scoffed" (p. 15). He has referred to this state as a process of "symbolic hallucination" which "corresponds to a wish for imposing a mystical, symbolic order which is at odds with social reality" in that "it represents an imaginary space in which man is freed from the constraints of economic and social hierarchies" (p. 20).

However, as pointed out by Peter Weidkuhn (1976), the evidence gathered by Nathalie Zemon Davis convincingly shows that rather than being a mere 'safety-valve', deflecting attention from social reality, festive life can on the one hand perpetuate certain values of a community, even guarantee its survival, and on the other hand, criticize political order (p. 36).

It has been observed and generally agreed upon that the 'festival' entails a departure from collective social order. This temporary escape from social order serves as a sort of social equalizer, a model which Stern has described as involving the ritual stages of breach of social norms, crisis characterized by a series of arguments and debates, redress involving the use of a variety of means to restore balance, order, and identity within a culture. These latter observations bring us full circle to the process of institutionalized socialization and its role in identity construction, one of the discussions embarked upon previously. As has been shown during the review of the different aspects of its relationship with carnival, calypso music has been catalytic or integral to several processes of socialization in Trinidad. The rowdy atmosphere associated with post-Emancipation Jamette carnival, the violence attributed to steelband rivalry, the calypsonian's ridicule of the upper and middle classes, and the inability of factions of these two groups to abolish carnival were all factors that had sustained the prolonged withdrawal of the upper and middle classes of Trinidadian society from participation in carnival. The transitions of the upper classes beginning with their withdrawal from street parading, their retreat to the seclusion of exclusive indoor masquerade balls, followed by their renewed participation in street masquerading was undertaken gradually and

cautiously. At first, instead of parading in the streets alongside the other masqueraders they had isolated themselves within the safety of decorated vehicles and, after a while, on floats pulled by trucks. These are indications that conflict between grass roots and upper-class masqueraders had still been extant and that grass roots cultural ascendancy was not far from being completely realized.

Meanwhile, between 1925 and 1945 the steel drum, from its evolution as an addition (the Bermudez biscuit tin and the cement drum) to bamboo bands, had displaced the very same bamboo, becoming the preferred provider of carnival music for the grass roots masses. Numerous historical accounts substantiate the predilection for dancing to steelband music, not only on the streets during carnival but also at fêtes. Calypso music became a major source of the dance repertoire and steelbands offered an inexpensive source of entertainment for private functions during the lean years. The reliance upon steelband music and its repertoire of calypso music was crucial to the socialization of both the calypso and the steel drum movement, and catalytic to the establishment of collective socio-cultural identity.

The study will now look at the history of carnivals in comparison to the nature of rebellion from the standpoint of role reversal. Weidkuhn (1976, p. 36-37) has discovered correlations between behavioral patterns exhibited at carnivals and has offered the following observations from analysis of the elementary units of rebellious behavior which indicate that:

- Rebellion is a *social* phenomenon. The boundaries of its social locus are definable: the rebellious group is made up of members of a certain class;
- Rebellion is a *psychic* phenomenon. It is irrationally motivated by the indignation at a fundamental contradiction that is inherent in society;
- Rebellion develops a peculiar *technology*. It is realized by a typical set of material means, the most outstanding of which are aggression and sexual license;
- Rebellion is a *religious* phenomenon; it is characterized by the rebel's unilaterally open identity, i.e., by their relying on an idea which transcends society. Civilized rebels fight for freedom, equality and fraternity, [whereas] savages - in the structural sense - wear masks; they dissemble their voices...they represent ghosts, the dead, and the like.
- Rebellion is a *political* phenomenon. It aims at the reversal of social time, status, and roles;
- There is an important difference between rebellion (revolt) and revolution. A rebellion has a festive character; after its end the reversal is revoked, and the normal social life continues its course for a period of time...it is a *play* of reversal. It is not the social structure which is changed by rebellion; it is only the tenants of structural positions that are replaced during the festival. *Revolution*, on the other hand, is an irreversible process

that transforms the basic social structure...It thus marks the point of no return of historic processes.

These observations have proven to be consistent with the Trinidad carnival. The fact that during pre-Emancipation carnival processions upper class masqueraders stereotyped aspects of slave life and behavior, and that the slaves in turn, satirized the upper class by perpetrating the *Dame Lorraine* character, substantiate claims of role reversal. The scandalous *Dame Lorraine* character and its associated dance styles are still a feature of the current annual burlesque.

Together with the calypso *Congo Bara* they both represent a form of passive resistance, and are two examples of the early attempts at satire perpetrated by lower class citizens against the upper class. The play on reversal of social time and status has taken on a more documentary role over the years, as can be seen from themes such as the 2007 portrayal, *The French Revolution*. The 1881 Canboulay Riots on the other hand, was an instance of direct, deliberate and open confrontation instigated in retaliation to the unjust forms of repression and harsh measures of social control that had been exercised by the elitist faction of society.

The following newspaper editorial was referenced by Hill (1976, p. 80), and had foreshadowed the events leading up to the Canboulay Riots by two decades.

Why then are the people so molested? Is it because the aristocracy of the island do not enjoy and confederate in the amusement, as they were wont to do, or is it because opportunity is sought to provoke the people to rebel, so as to blacken their good name? (*The Trinidad Sentinel*, Mar. 10, 1859)

Hill's (1976) account of the state of affairs leading up to the riots seeks to establish the rebellion as a response to the pressures of social control.

The authorities directed their main opposition against the Canboulay procession which derived from slave experiences and included the much-feared stickfighting sport, as well as against Negro drum music and the carnival songs. It is clear however, that such hostility by upper-class whites served only to bind together the common people of different racial backgrounds who viewed the carnival as a symbol of freedom, however transitory, and who violently resisted efforts to abolish the festival. (p. 80)

The intragroup solidarity outlined above in Hill's account is reminiscent of the solidarity that had existed between Indo and Afro-Trinidadians four years earlier in spite of the bones of contention that had been extant between the two contingents. The actual event of 1881 and its annual re-enactment during contemporary annual Emancipation Day and carnival celebrations represents a reversal of social time and status too. By virtue of the distinction

made by Weidkuhn's observation on the preceding page, the Canboulay Riots can be perceived as having fulfilled functions of both rebellion and revolution. The correlations outlined by Weidkuhn are also consistent with the functions of the calypso both as an independent arm of rebellion, and as a tool of several social institutions at the center of socio-cultural rebellion in Trinidad.

Gibbons (1994) has commented on the rebellious nature of calypso music. He wrote, "If kaiso sustained a tradition of black protest with all its nuances and ramifications, press commentary on the kaiso was always a reminder of the need for such protest" (p. 74). He has additionally reported about the calypso as part of the arsenal of resistance to colonialism.

Culture, as the countless rebellions have proved, was fundamental to the African's arsenal of resistance. Even the concept of returning to Africa after death functioned in this way. The resistance of the African was targeted not only against the physical brutality of plantation slavery but against the entire gestalt which needed to define him as sub-human. Surviving that devastating and irreversible trauma demanded of the African strategies both confrontational and creative. He had to adapt, but he did not give up Africa. Survival languages (kweyol), a multi-masked Xtianity (Orixa), the coding of social commentary (dance-languages, masquerade, music) were creative weapons against the annihilating pressure of slavery. Genetically the kaiso is a 'picanny' of this tradition. (p. 4)

Dick Spottswood's liner notes to the LP *Calypsos from Trinidad: Politics, Intrigue & Violence in the 1930's* is a commentary on the tone of belligerence and defiance in calypsos of the era,

Kalenda and tamboo-bamboo represented the defiant and sometimes violent extremity of black Creole society that did not conform with colonial ideals of decorum. Another aspect of symbolic defiance in these songs is the use of French - Creole for the lyrics. Throughout the nineteenth century, this served as a semi - secret dialect in opposition to English, the language of political control in Trinidad. Like the stickmen before them; calypsonians took powerful names as symbols of their ability. Their lyrics present a continuous and inventive three-way stream of boasts of (stick) band or individual prowess, and threats. Such dialogues are in the manner of old-time verbal contests between two Pierrots, or pays rois - gorgeously dressed Kings of Carnival stickbands or, individual territories whose Carnival competitions ended in violence and were constrained by official license from 1892. Although contests between groups of stickfighters were banished from carnival in the 1910s, their symbolic role as an antithesis of colonial ideals of propriety was taken over by territorial-based bands of tamboo-bamboo players. (Spottswood, 1991)

The album has been reissued as CD 700401, and can be accessed via Arhoolie/Folklyric, El Cerrito, Ca., 1991.

Globalization

Although most of the discussion so far has been localized to Trinidad the relationships that have been outlined have implications for Trinidadians living abroad, and for global

populations of non-Trinidadians, for whom the symbols portrayed by carnival, calypso and soca music, and their related carnivalesque activities has meaning. This latter contingent is comprised of two groups, persons for whom carnival and calypso music is part of their cultural heritage, and those who have undergone some degree of acculturation.

The tendency of immigrant groups in multi-cultural environments to cling to their traditional music is a means of maintaining group identity and is explained by the 'ethnic identity' hypothesis (Allen and Groce, 1988, p. 4).

Ethnic identity stems from social identity theory which was previously outlined in chapter 2 as advanced by Tajfel and Turner (1986), and which places emphasis on the individual's need for positive self-esteem and group identification. The ethnic identity theory therefore places emphasis on identification with, and salience of ethnic group membership(s) and proposes that affirmation to ethnicity is more salient among groups that have faced greater discrimination in order to maintain self-esteem.

Toloyan (1996) has shown that diasporic communities attempt to maintain (real and/or imagined) connections and commitments to their homeland and reorganize themselves and act as a collective community. In doing so, they contribute to a global cultural mosaic, a global community with a culture of its own (p. 3-35). For example, Razo has pointed to the Cahuita community in the Limon region of Costa Rica, noting that the calypso has been "a vehicle by which Afro-Trinidadian and Afro-Caribbean culture has been preserved" (2010, p. 1). Citing two sources she has informed that those cultural artifacts had been transported there by migrating Afro-Caribbean employees of the railroad and the fruit processing industry, and developed as a music form that expressed Afro-Costa Rican culture and a strong identifying factor of Costa Rica. However, the calypso never became mainstream because the Cahuita community was marginalized by the predominantly white society that identified with Europe (Razo, *ibid.*). Further citing Monestal, Razo has additionally informed us that the calypso rhythm is a foundation for several modern Costa Rican genres such as the chicky chicky, a hybridization of cumbia and calypso that had been popular in the 1980s (*ibid.*).

There is consensus across disciplines between studies pertaining to diaspora, identity, culture and acculturation, that identities are constructed through the intermingling, mixing and moving of cultures. Hermans and Kemper (1998) have described examples and have argued that equating culture with the geographic space of the nation does not fully capture the

complex relationship between global cultures and the construction of self. They reasoned that within a world where the local and the global are merging and creating new ‘contact zones’, the hybridization of cultural practices and meanings often leads to the creation of multiple identities (p. 1117).

Hall (1992) has corroborated by pointing out that, contemporary movements and globalization impulses force us to abandon conceptions of similarities between national cultures in favor of hybridized, ‘diasporized’, and heterogeneous notions of culture (p. 356).

Petillo (2008) has stated that,

In spite of the ethnic and cultural plurality that has been extant in the Caribbean, the African presence informs the core of the region and gives shape to its innermost identity. Since the majority of Caribbean people have an African ancestry, the survivals of West African linguistic, cultural, artistic and religious elements are still evident across the Caribbean... The calypso [and soca] represents a significant aspect of this continuum between Africa and the New World. (p. 1)

Now, due to migration from the previous contact zones of the colonial period, these elements are constantly being transported and assimilated among communities within post-Colonial contact zones. Calypso and soca have an added advantage over many of the other music genres that are having global impact since they are the main engine of the visual spectacular, carnival.

As reported by Patton (1994), Hall (1992, p. 20-236) has defined identity in terms of production and not as an accomplished historical fact, noting that one aspect of thinking about cultural identity was the idea of a shared culture, a true self inside the other artificial selves that surround it. “Hall,” Patton stated, “views cultural identity as, a matter of becoming as well as being, not so much the recovery of the past as a positioning by and within existing narratives.” Hall’s views may have provided clues to the polarization of the calypso genre from being once rejected by certain factions of society to being embraced by all factions of society. Bhatia and Ram (2001) have stated that,

Post-colonial and diaspora theories force us to think beyond fixed national and cultural boundaries and rather think more in terms of moving cultures where here and there, past and present, homeland and host land, self and other are constantly being negotiated.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989, p. 21) have reminded us that post-colonialism is a continuous process of resistance and reconstruction (p. 21). Other post-colonial theorists such as Said (2004 [1978]) and Bhabha (1994) maintain that the notion of self is constituted by historical, political and social forces. The dynamics peculiar to the socialization processes

extant at 'contact zones' within multi-cultural communities are rationalized by the Berry's proposed fourfold classification model of acculturation strategies:

- Assimilation (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 297)
- Integration (Berry, 1998, p. 119)
- Separation (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 297)
- Marginalization (Berry, 1998, p. 119) which has been influential in cross-cultural psychology in studies pertaining to acculturation.

Behavioral shifts are among the psychological processes experienced by individuals and groups undergoing acculturation. Group identity, as noted before, is displayed as symbols in both the physical and socio-cognitive realms. The music (calypso and soca), and the types of music behavior associated with West Indian carnivals - dancing, masquerading, performing and listening - provide aspects in both symbolic realms. The symbolic representations provide a means of transformation for both the participant and the spectator.

The behaviors exhibited by respondents have been, and are in the process of being socialized in several global communities. This is revealed by the multi-ethnic turnout but more so by the observable assimilated behavioral responses exhibited by non-Trinidadians and non-West Indians at annual carnival celebrations in Europe (Notting Hill and Rotterdam) and in North America (Brooklyn, Miami, Orlando, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Toronto) where calypso and soca music function as the engine of the festivities.

Recent additions to the list of venues include Japan, Dubai and China. The following lyrical excerpts from Mighty Sparrow's *Mas in Brooklyn* and *Toronto Mas* had alluded to the socialization of Trinidadian culture in North America and Canada respectively some six decades ago.

Mas in Brooklyn

*Let me tell you something
 'Bout Labor Day in Brooklyn
 Everybody jumping
 Labor Day in Brooklyn
 Every West Indian jumping up like mad
 Just like on Carnival Day in Trinidad
 Yankee and all listening to the steelband beat
 Rolling in canal just like in Charlotte Street*

*You could be from St. Clair or John John
 In New York all dat done
 It ain't have no who is who
 New York equalize you*

*Bajan, Grenadian, Jamaican, "toute moun"
 Drinking dey rum beating dey bottle and spoon
 Nobody can't watch me and honestly say
 They don't like to be in Brooklyn on Labor Day*

Chorus

*And if you hear them with Mas' Play Mas'
 Mas' in you Mas' Play Mas'
 Even though ah feeling homesick
 Even though ah tired roam
 Just give me meh calypso music
 Brooklyn is meh home*

The Mighty Sparrow

Toronto Mas

*Every year Toronto putting on a big show
 Carnival they call Caribana
 Jigging to a sweet tune, sweating in dey costume
 Playing dey Mas' in Canada
 See them how dey jumping up and down
 Fighting to do we thing
 Shaking up dey bomsie out of time
 Chipping with an awkward swing*

*See them how they bumping thicker than a dumpling
 Woman in the place like lanty peas
 Talking like Barbadian, talking like Jamaican
 Telling you dey from the West Indies
 A little bit of sunshine get them red
 So they staggering in the band
 And when the liquor fly up in dey head
 They tackling any man*

Chorus

*They wild,
 Toronto gone wild
 Playing Mas'
 Trinidadian style
 Steelband beat,
 Music sweet
 And all them white woman
 Go be in the street*

The Mighty Sparrow

In keeping with the foregoing literature referenced earlier in this chapter, both calypsos bring into focus the tendency among migrant minority groups to maintain and demonstrate their intrinsic and assimilated identities by establishing and converging upon selected venues in

order to participate as a 'unified' group. The calypsos also comment on the reciprocal assimilation and socialization of cultural norms by contingent groups once those cultural norms have become established and maintained by their curators and recognized by the contingent groups. The repetition of the associated activities effect establishment, maintenance, and recognition of the identities and behaviors that are being integrated and assimilated.

Once again the study has shown that calypso and soca music have continued to be mechanisms, and occupy central roles as part of several mechanisms that have been responsible for establishing socialized behaviors, establishing and maintaining identity, and effecting attitudinal change and cultural transmission globally.

In the next chapter recent waves of syncretism will be discussed in the context of change. The study will examine how change has altered the calypso genre, how it has impacted past and present generations of Trinidadians; and explore implications that the findings of such inquiry may hold for future generations of Trinidadians at home and abroad, and for contingent global communities.

