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We navel-string bury here: Landscape history, representation and identity in the Grenada islandscape

Martin, J.A.

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Propositions

1. The biography of the Grenada isandscape over the last five centuries, identified in its palimpsest landscape, provides a detailed picture of how diverse peoples, impact and are impacted by the constantly changing landscape they continuously interact with.
2. The age-old West African practice/memory of burying the umbilical cords/ “navel-string” of newborns in a foreign land allows us to imagine the establishment/ beginning of “roots,” and thus the creation of sense of place and identities in new/unfamiliar spaces.
3. The often forced intercultural interactions between Indigenous, European and African peoples brought about by European invasion, slavery and colonialism in Grenada have produced a contested landscape and contentious identities.
4. Grenada’s specific geography and ecology, combined with a diverse historical chronology has produced its unique *islandness* illustrated in its cultural landscape.
5. The continuous process of creolization has been the primary driving force in landscape change in the Caribbean in the past five centuries, creating new and evolving cultures that shape the ways in which West Indians have identified with their changing landscape.
6. The process of creolization is evidenced in the cultural landscape and can be identified in every facet of Caribbean society, including its languages, religions and folklore that have fused cultural characteristics from the islands’ diverse inhabitants over the last 500 years.
7. The traditional masquerades at annual carnival celebrations and folk spirits seen across the region are illustrative of creolization, having incorporated Indigenous, European, African and other influences to create unique cultural expressions to island communities.
8. Historical Geographical Information Systems is a valuable tool that allows for the study of past landscapes via spatial displays that provide new and interesting perspectives on landscape change.
9. The multidisciplinary approach to the study of landscape change allows for a more holistic view of the relationship between people and the landscape.
10. Narratives on Indigenous heritage as taught in schools need to reflect the last half century of archaeological and other research, and shed their colonial baggage that have defined them as savages and cannibals, and incorporate their contributions to the cultural landscapes.
11. We need to see Caribbean ecologies as “Creole ecologies” much as we do the Creole cultural landscape that has been impacted by centuries of ecological exchanges, beginning with the “Columbian exchange.”