

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND REPRESENTATION IN JAMAICA:  
BROACHING THE DIGITAL AGE

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## Abstract

This thesis discusses Jamaica's cultural heritage management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and questions how the country's cultural heritage is represented in today's digital age. Tracing the development of Jamaica's cultural policies since the late-colonial period (beginning in the late 1930s), I consider the ways in which the state has managed cultural heritage historically and connect the evolution of theoretical understandings of heritage to explore evolving ideologies of policy and management. I then examine three digital cultural heritage projects in Jamaica to question their representation of heritage material to the local population and the wider world. I argue that these presentations of Jamaica's cultural heritage illustrate a 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberal interplay of cultural heritage, nationalism, and economic development. The projects put forward a restricted and exclusive form of heritage knowledge which re-inscribes historical inequalities. I conclude that cultural heritage organizations and policymakers must incorporate participatory methods to leverage digital technologies to ameliorate ongoing issues of hegemonic representation.

## Dedication

For my parents, who gave me everything.

Kemorine and Carl

and

for the land of my birth, Jamaica.

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Completing this thesis would not have been possible without the invaluable support of my family. I unreservedly thank my aunts, Bernice Morgan and Sybil Henry, for their unwavering support throughout my Masters studies.

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Jude 1:24-25

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## Introduction

In the Caribbean context, recognition and management of cultural heritage is always “political, partial and contested” (Bryan and Reid, 2012). At the national level, projects of postcolonial national heritage are fraught with issues of misrepresentation, fragmentation and exclusion. As ‘trans-generational components of cultural identity’ (Boufof-Bastick, 2012), cultural heritage is central to the creation of collective identity and the fostering of cultural autonomy. These processes were historically important to the region’s newly independent nation-states (Bryan and Reid, 2012). Jamaica’s colonial history tended to prescribe a hegemonic version of cultural heritage which largely excluded non-European contributions. Public institutions, such as the Institute of Jamaica, inherited Western imperial museological practices that favoured ‘monumentalist’ approaches which privileged colonial architecture. In the years since Independence, more politically-animated national approaches to cultural heritage management have resulted in different configurations of hegemonic discourses that nonetheless misrepresent the bricolage of Jamaica’s cultural landscape. In other arenas of heritage management, including the private sector, dimensions of cultural heritage have been developed in service to the tourism industry, transmuting goods deemed to have historical and cultural significance into marketable commodities for foreign consumption.

However, Jamaica’s cultural heritage<sup>1</sup> ultimately belongs to the people for whom it holds the most important significance – the Jamaican people themselves. There can be no heritage without representation. To be excluded from participation in the determination of national cultural heritage is to be denied the capacity to develop a heritage in and for the future (Murzyn-

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<sup>1</sup> I use the terms ‘heritage’ and ‘cultural heritage’ interchangeably in light of contemporary trends in heritage studies which have de-materialised our understandings of heritage to include the intangible elements of culture; such as cultural expression, oral traditions, and traditional knowledge.

Kupisz and Dzialek, 2013). Social exclusion from access to heritage goods and reduced capacities to participate in heritage activities are likely to result in misrepresentation; which are significant issues of cultural citizenship and social justice. Heritage is essential to the postcolonial project of foregrounding local experience, forging a collective social identity, and subverting colonial narratives. It is necessary to understand the ways in which the past continues to inform the inequities of current social realities. Cultural heritage is not merely a collection of things or a fossilized inheritance but “a dialogic medium for promoting discussions about social justice and cultural creativity in the present” (Silberman 2012). Public engagement with heritage is integral to the project of giving voice to that which was historically silenced and for coming to grips with a difficult past.

This thesis considers Jamaica’s cultural heritage management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and question how the country’s cultural heritage is (and might be) represented in today’s digital age. What has changed in cultural heritage management over the past 53 years of independent statehood? Do the disjunctures and inequalities of the past persist or do new directions in digital cultural heritage indicate a break away from conventional hegemonic discourses? Finally, what might the future of Jamaica’s cultural heritage look like?

To answer these questions, the thesis traces the development of Jamaica’s cultural policies since the late-colonial or pre-independence period (beginning in the late 1930s) to consider the ways in which the state has managed cultural heritage historically and more recently utilized it in approaches to decolonization. In the course of developing this historical narrative, I use the evolution of theoretical understandings of heritage to explore emerging ideologies of cultural policy and heritage management. I review historical Jamaican cultural policy legislation, the current national cultural policy implemented in 2003, and Vision 2030, a national



development plan implemented in 2009 which puts an emphasis on cultural management to achieve larger development objectives. One key policy document is a 1977 study on Jamaica's cultural policy carried out by the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ) in collaboration with UNESCO which addresses colonial cultural policy in the 1930s, the independence period after 1964 and the emergence of independent state policy. My survey also draws on the work of eminent cultural theorist, Rex Nettleford, who extensively considered cultural politics in Jamaica up until the early 1980s. More contemporary research by anthropologist Deborah Thomas, and Caribbean cultural studies scholar Suzanne Burke is important to address the later periods (late 1970s – early 2000s), and to situate Jamaica's cultural policy historical influences within a global context.

Throughout the country's independent history, Jamaican society's uneasiness with the past – manifest in ambivalent attitudes toward the commemoration and remembrance of certain elements of heritage – have made national representation difficult and the socio-economic pressures of globalization have also stymied meaningful cultural development. Furthermore, the question of what cultural development is and is designed to accomplish has been constantly renegotiated by different government administrations in service of short-term politically expedient ends rather than long-term development goals. Attention to cultural resources has been justified by way of the contributions they might make to other goals, particularly, increasing tourism, contributing to education, and facilitating increases in trade (Burke 2007). As a result, many of the inequalities of the past that remain embedded in public cultural heritage have largely remained entrenched. As Caribbean scholars Patrick Bryan and Basil Reid have recently written, “the search for a Caribbean heritage is in part a challenge to the plantation complex which has morphed but has not disappeared” (Bryan and Reid, 2012: 4).

The thesis then moves into a discussion of the position of Jamaica's cultural heritage today. First I consider its increasing incorporation within socio-economic configurations governed by the neoliberal principles dominant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. I draw on the recent work of anthropologist Philip Scher (2010, 2011, and 2014) considering culture in the neoliberal Caribbean to question how the legacies of colonization have persisted in the post-independence and contemporary contexts through the economisation of heritage resources. Second, I suggest that new technological affordances create new opportunities for Jamaica to transcend this economic straitjacket and enable more democratic participation in heritage futures. Internationally, digital cultural heritage is gaining momentum as institutions and communities bring heritage matters into online space through digitization, the use of virtual reality and interactive multimedia platforms. In Jamaica, digital cultural heritage is in its early stages, with state and private organizations only beginning to seek to expand their operations by making use of digital technologies in their communications efforts.

Finally, I examine three cultural heritage management projects in Jamaica involving the deployment of digital technologies. The Spanish Jamaican Foundation's (SJF) Jamaica Heritage Trail, the Institute of Jamaica's Virtual Museum Project and *XAYMACA Life in Spanish Jamaica: 1494-1655* virtual exhibition, seek to promote curated cultural heritage information through the use of digital media and to encourage Jamaican public engagement with this information in new ways. The IOJ and SJF are, respectively, a state institution and a private organization managed by foreign-owned interests. By considering the structuration of each of the projects' interfaces, as well as the exhibition of digital heritage material, I show how cultural heritage is represented to the Jamaican population, as well as to the wider world, through the use of digital platforms. Do these approaches reveal new attitudes to the management of cultural

heritage? Who do they privilege and who do they silence? Does their treatment of cultural content signal a breakaway from the challenges repeated throughout cultural management in Jamaica or is digital cultural heritage simply an extension of hegemonic discourses? I argue that these presentations of Jamaican digital cultural heritage illustrate the 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberal interplay of cultural heritage, nationalism, and economic development. These projects put forward a limited heritage knowledge which re-inscribes historical inequalities.

This thesis will assess the IOJ and SJF projects according to Müller's elements of digital heritage to enquire after their embedded values and ideologies as well as their impact on the ways in which Jamaicans experience and express their cultural heritage. Klaus Müller (2010) outlines seven elements of digital heritage - space, time, links, storytelling, interactivity, production values, and accessibility - which govern users' interactions with digital heritage material. Information from the IOJ on its Virtual Museum and *Xaymaca* exhibition was accessed through the projects' websites as well as through personal communication with IOJ representatives. For the SJF, the project website also provides some documentation as well as information relevant to the development and future directions of the project.

Finally, I argue that despite the weaknesses of these early efforts to digitally involve Jamaicans in heritage interpretation, digital technologies do have the potential to animate cultural heritage in ways that previous approaches have not been able to achieve. To the extent that digital media may facilitate multi-vocality and public participation, interactive methods can and should encourage critical engagement with cultural heritage in contemporary Caribbean contexts. The development of cultural heritage should be an inclusive social enterprise in which citizens are granted opportunities to participate in processes of deliberation and interpretation. How, I ask, can technology be leveraged to promote public participation in heritage and ameliorate

issues of hegemonic representation? How might we reconceive the work that technology does in contemporary postcolonial cultural conditions? Through the subversion of historical master narratives, participatory heritage interpretation enabled by digital technologies has the potential to advance the work of decolonizing the 'plantation machine' (Benitez-Rojo, 1996) which continues to work upon "the psyches and socio-cultural spaces of the Caribbean" (Pearce, 2006).

## 1. What is Cultural Heritage?

‘Each generation inherits a treasury of knowledge that it did not itself amass... We speak a language we did not create; we use instruments we did not invent; we claim rights we did not establish.’ And we cherish them as essential to our lives. (Durkheim, 1912 in Lowenthal 2011: 165)

It is often taken for granted that the remains of the past are inherently valuable and worthy of our attention. Eminent heritage scholar Laurajane Smith cites the work of David Harvey who argues that the use of the past to construct ideas about individual and group identities is immanent to the human condition and a practice repeated throughout history (Harvey 2001 in Smith 2006). As geographer David Lowenthal so eloquently puts it, “Heritage underpins and enriches continuities with those who came before and those who will come after us” (2011: 159). Heritage facilitates a process of “conscious purposeful remembrance” in response to the “political, cultural, and economic needs of those in the present” (Marschall, 2008: 347). The term ‘cultural heritage’ is widely used in reference both to “the physical and intangible artefacts that are bestowed upon future generations and serve as essential elements of place and place-making” (Bonenberger and Harris, 2013: 601) These artefacts may include building structures, historic objects, sites, and landscapes, as well as ‘intangible phenomena’ such as oral traditions and stories, customs and rituals, festivals, dance, and folklore (Bonenberger and Harris, 2013). However, as Laurajane Smith writes in the opening pages of her book *Uses of Heritage* (2006: 11), “There is, really, no such thing as heritage”. Smith is making the point that ‘heritage’ is not a group of things but a *practice* of selecting and valuing particular things as significant to group identity. Conventional definitions of heritage, she suggests, are dominated by a hegemonic discourse that naturalises what are necessarily political conceptions of what heritage is and too

often obscures “the ‘work’ that heritage ‘does’ as a social and cultural practice (Smith, 2002: 11). In other words there is a tendency to reify or fetishize the objects rather than acknowledge the socio-historical processes through which culture becomes valorised as heritage.

Heritage is indeed a social practice constructed discursively through a variety of activities and processes that legitimate and privilege particular cultural goods and forms. Other scholars have noted that heritage refers to a society’s collective attitudes towards and relationships with certain aspects of its past (Walsh, 1992; Harvey, 2001; Smith 2008 in Harrison, 2013) which is “characterised by a reverence and attachment to select objects, places and practices that are thought to connect with or exemplify the past in some way” (Harrison, 2013, 15). Heritage is cultural because it expresses social identity and often ideological to the extent that it suggests a “seamless garment of culture” (Pearce, 2000). Cultural heritage is to be found not in the cultural objects themselves, but in the relations facilitated by such objects between a people and their past. The value of cultural heritage lies in the significance of an object, practice, or expression to the social life of the community for whom it is valorised as cultural heritage; it is that significance on which heritage protection and management policies should be focused, not the object, expression, or practice itself (Coombe and Turcotte, 2014).

There can be no cultural heritage without its representation in social discourse over time. “Cultural heritage requires memory” and its tangible and intangible elements must be recognized and claimed as patrimony in order “to have meaning and potency, the heritage must be active, dynamic, used, and performed, rather than existing inert and static” (Silverman and Ruggles, 2007: 12). Cultural heritage is therefore a social phenomenon experienced as a coalescing of artefact (tangible or intangible) and idea (ideology, knowledge, emotion) experienced by a collective in a particular way.

Heritage knowledge – that which is drawn from these social relations and interactions – constitutes a form of economic and cultural capital (Graham, 2002). Cultural or social capital may be understood as “social networks and the norms of trust and reciprocity that flourish through these networks” (Sander and Lowney, 2006 in Murzyn-Kupisz and Dzialek, 2013: 36). Such networks facilitate the achievement of individual or collective goals by enabling exchange and collaboration between participants (Murzyn-Kupisz and Dzialek, 2013). It is the cultural capital embodied in heritage knowledge that makes possible the transmission of the culture of a people through space and time (Go, Lee, and Russo, 2006). Heritage knowledge is defined within social, political, and cultural contexts (Graham, 2002) and is gathered in ‘different provinces of reality’, including first hand experiences, representations or a combination of both (Waterton and Watson, 2010). The past (embodied in cultural heritage) a) conveys the status of antecedence in its antiquity, and underpins the continuity of social development b) is imbued with cultural status for its ability to connect “present to the past in an unbroken trajectory”, embodying what are seen as timeless values c) provides a sense of termination, delineating then and now, and d) illustrates a sequence, “allowing us to locate our lives in linear narratives that connect the past, present and future” (Graham, 2002: 1008). Cultural heritage represents the beliefs and values regarding self and community that work together to create an overarching structure of social life (Pearce 2000: 59). The heritage of a people is therefore an important component of the social fabric that informs both collective and individual experience.

Implicit to the notion of heritage are issues of ownership and belonging. The genesis of the legal concept of cultural heritage recognized it as “that which can be passed on from one generation to the next...and to which the descendants of the original owner(s) have rights deemed worthy of respect” (Pearce 2000: 59). This conception of heritage privileges tangible objects

which the law recognizes as patrimony and, consequently as capable of being inherited by the collective. The French notion of *patrimoine* connotes an idea of aesthetic grandness bound up in commemoration, conservation, and a distinctly European worldview. In its valuing of the inherent aesthetic and artisanal value of physical objects from the past, patrimony involves a “sense of inheritance [which] promotes the idea that the...duty of the present is to receive and revere what has been passed on and in turn pass this inheritance, untouched, to future generations” (Smith, 2006: 19). This conception of heritage as belonging to the past relies on Western notions of the linearity of time and progress. Generally, it would also appear to exclude individuals whose rights of ownership are not ‘deemed worthy of respect’ – which historically included indigenous peoples, the enslaved, the imprisoned and other marginalized peoples. Couched in Enlightenment philosophy, the privileging of aesthetic value that could be recognized and enjoyed by the educated was a pursuit of the ‘Modern European’ (Smith, 2006).

The discourse of heritage is born out of the processes and experiences of modernity which brought the birth of meta-narratives of nationalism seeking to naturalize territorial identity and state formation (Smith, 2006: 18). Giddens offers the following definition of modernity, in which he submits three central tenets:

[Modernity consists of] (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy...[modernity] is a society – more technically, a complex of institutions – which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past.

(Giddens and Pierson 1998: 94, in Harrison, 2013:23-24)



Modernity's most salient characteristic as it relates to heritage is its definition of the present as existing in opposition to the past. The belief in notions of progress and the linearity of time positions society in a "maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal" (Berman, 1983:15, in Harrison, 2013:24) in which the past is left behind or eliminated, making way for a future pregnant with the promise of 'better'. Therefore, modern perspectives are to some extent ambivalent about the "retention of 'old things'" (Harrison, 2013: 25) and the privileging of an obsolete past. Historically, industrialized societies put the past 'in its place' behind museum glass, emphasizing the distance between 'then' and 'now'. The past is valued in its antiquity and in need of protection from the decay of time and progress (Harrison, 2013).

Elements of cultural heritage were generally employed in naturalising the 'grand-explanatory narrative' of the nation state (Pearce, 2000), to support the "definition, creation, and solidification of a viable collective identity (Geertz, 1973: 238). As nation-states emerged in the wake of Westphalia, the single coherent narrative of the 'national story' (Hall, 2008) functioned as the 'keystone of the modernist mind-set' (Pearce, 2000) to justify and/or naturalise territorial identity and assert the cultural difference of the imagined community. The classification and compartmentalization of heritage is viewed as a response to the experience of disorder considered inherent in modernity (Harrison, 2013), in which heritage was managed through "a process of selection, representation and closure, by which the 'communal national heritage is effectively 'completed' ...at the expense of alternative understandings of heritage" (Waterton and Watson, 2010: 10). Heritage figures into a narrative of 'us' vs. 'them'; for example, British imperialism was justified, according to Pearce (2000) by virtue of the superiority of British cultural heritage which legitimated its civilizing endeavours in the New World.

Born out of the collision of worlds, the Caribbean is a product of early colonialism, globalization and Western modernity (Modest, 2012: 85). Several scholars (Mintz, 1993; Sheller, 2003; Modest; 2012) have recognized the Caribbean as home to the first modern peoples in world history. From the region's genesis, Caribbean people were conscripted to modernity (Scott, 2004) through a history of "enslavement and forced transportation...by the reshuffling, redefinition, and reduction of gender-based roles...by the need to reconstitute and maintain cultural forms of their own under implacable pressure...[and having been] thrust into remarkably industrial settings for their time and for their appearance" (Mintz 1993, in Modest 2012: 85-6). Categories such as history, race, ethnicity, tradition and modernity have become especially nuanced in the Caribbean context, unsettling many established notions of social theory and advancing new concepts of hybridity and Creolization (Modest, 2012: 85).

Narratives of origin and formation are not coterminous with the space in which current negotiations of identity and belonging are based, but are rather located within a colonial formation of disjuncture and loss (Modest, 2012). That is, the Caribbean people are largely divorced from the foreign lands to which the cultural histories of their ancestors are tied. The coming of the African, the European, the Indian, or the Syrian to the new world is couched in a narrative of displacement and disenfranchisement. David Scott has described the region as "neither properly 'primitive' nor 'civilized', neither 'non-Western' according to the conventional criteria nor unambiguously 'Western' (in short, neither fish nor fowl)" (Scott, 2004 cited in Modest, 2012: 86). Conventional understandings of heritage and "traditional museological conceptions of time (often as chronology), space (as belonging), and history/heritage (as past)" (Modest, 2012: 86) fit uncomfortably in Caribbean society.

The Caribbean's emergence between the ancient and not-yet-modern worlds resulted in the region's material culture being largely ignored in favour of its natural history. Colonial history largely promoted a perception of cultural unworthiness (Modest, 2012). "Black Jamaicans were neither primitive enough — like the Tainos — to be part of anthropology nor civilized enough to be a part of history" (Modest, 2012: 90-1). This logic informed what was deemed collectable in the country's historical museological practice. The 1687-1689 Jamaican collection of Sir Hans Sloane is acknowledged to be one of the earliest and "most significant examples of a Caribbean collection...illustrative of the ways in which the West Indies was materially imagined in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a place for the curious and the natural" (Modest, 2012: 87). Sloane was a physician to the second Duke of Albermarle and then Governor of Jamaica, Christopher Monck. Sloane published two volumes on the Caribbean's natural history during his sojourn in the region. The objects in his collection present a material view of the Caribbean at the time and are understood to represent the way in which the region was understood in the metropolitan imagination (Modest, 2012). Items in the 'collection of Jamaican ethnography' included: "'a Barbary Scourge with which the slaves are beaten made [from] a palm tree'; a 'noose made of cane splitt for catching game or hanging runaway negros'(sic)... [and a] manatee strap 'for whipping the Negro Slaves in the Hott W. Indies plantations'" (Delbourgo, 2007 in Modest, 2012: 88). Among other human curios were "the foetus of a negro" and several specimens that related to skin color such as "'the skin of the arm of a black'" (Delbourgo, 2007 in Modest, 2012: 88). However, Modest (2012) notes that the number of these items were negligible amid the large collection of specimens showcasing the flora and fauna of the land.

Sloane's collection provides insight into an emerging narrative according to which Black existence in the Caribbean was understood and made known. This narrative contributed to the

framing of the ‘tropics’ and continues to influence the collection of the material culture of the Tainos – the ‘disappeared’ indigenous people of Jamaica (Modest, 2012). The Tainos were declared to be extinct by the time of English conquest in 1655, having succumbed to genocide at the hands of the Spanish. Taino culture was, and arguably continues to be, something of a curiosity. Objects of material culture were displayed as antiquaries in European collections between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Modest, 2012). Based on a survey conducted in 2009, Modest concluded that the Caribbean collections of British museums “were overwhelmingly drawn from the region’s indigenous past and little else” (2012: 90), a surprising finding, given the presence of large Caribbean populations in the UK over the last forty years.

Indeed, it was from these British traditions that the region’s museums inherited their collecting practices in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Modest, 2012). The IOJ and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) are the primary government agencies charged with cultural resource management. As the nation’s oldest arts and culture organization, the Institute was first established in 1879 by Sir Anthony Musgrave, Jamaica’s Governor under colonial rule. During his time in office, Musgrave appointed a seven-member board of governors, consisting of medical physicians, lawyers, government figures, and church leaders (Stanford, 1893: 219), to preside over the Institute. The libraries of the Museum of the Royal Society of Arts and Agriculture, as well as the defunct House of Assembly and old Legislative Council, were housed together at Date Tree Hall on East Street in Kingston.

The IOJ was originally intended to act as a ‘central clearinghouse’ (Thomas, 2004) for the elite, doing work to promote exhibitions, including the 1891 Jamaica International Exhibition, and organizing scholarships for Jamaican students wishing to study at British universities. It also functioned to some extent as a tourist board and information society. Up to

the time of the establishment of the Jamaica Library Service and the University College of the West Indies in 1948, the IOJ was “the centre of intellectual and artistic life in the country” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977). Restrictive membership criteria, including that members be elected by a board of governors or pay annual subscription fees of five shillings, maintained the Institute’s upper-class sensibilities.

From the outset, the IOJ also worked closely with the British Council, an outgrowth of the British Foreign Office, in carrying out its duties. Intended to foster among Jamaicans an understanding and appreciation for “the British way of life” through advising, and providing financial assistance to ‘deserving societies’ (Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 15), The British Council administered events such as musical appreciation classes, lectures, and lunch-hour programmes across the island. The IOJ maintained this colonial cultural policy, particularly through its History Gallery, which housed 420 portraits of Jamaican (colonial) governors and persons of note, as well as 245 artworks which included landscapes, engravings, and watercolours, many of them depicting military images (Institute of Jamaica, 1977). Robert Edge Pine’s ‘Rodney Aboard the Formidable’, an oil painting which depicted the 1782 Battle of the Saints, and caricatured portraits of Toussaint l’Ouverture, leader of the Haitian Revolution, were often exhibited and amongst its most treasured holdings.

The continuing interest in Taino artefacts and the practice of ‘salvage anthropology’ was outweighed by the IOJ’s significant collection of flora and fauna (Modest 2012). Focus on Taino culture far surpassed any attention paid to Black Jamaicans. ‘Curiosities’ of ethnographic material included “some interesting archaeological relics” including “the bell of the old church at Port Royal, submerged during the earthquake of 1692” and “an old iron cage in which criminals were formerly hung to die of starvation” (Stanford, 1893: 219). Also on display was an array of

the island's economic products, a duplicate of an exhibition originally created for the Jamaica Court at the Imperial Institute in London which showcased the economic and industrial wealth of the British Empire. "A centre for the advancement of British imperial interests" (Bremner, 2003: 50), the Imperial Institute (renamed the Commonwealth Institute), had a mandate to "develop Britain's imperial resources, including education in the arts and sciences as well as the dissemination of knowledge related to the commercial and industrial capacity of the British empire" (Bremner, 2003: 50).

Weekly lectures at the IOJ, inaugurated in 1891, were given on subjects such as Elizabethan Literature, Hygiene, and the Physiography of Jamaica. Premiums were also offered for essays and writings "on certain subjects in connection with the material interests of the island...[including] specimens of salted meats and preserved fishes...[and] essays on the utilization of fibre plants" (Stanford, 1893: 221). While the IOJ's museum, lectures, and library were open to the public, the use of reading rooms and borrowing of reading material were the exclusive right of elected and paying members. The legacy of exclusivity was to continue for many decades. In 1957, the following letter appeared in *The Jamaica Gleaner*:

The Institute may be for the white Jamaica, for the Englishman and the American, all that it is said to be – a cultural centre satisfying to their needs...The black man has a place in the Institute of Jamaica as a slave, as a freed man who is a faithful servant for the economic rulers, as a subordinate to his technical advisers, as a backwards and subservient figure. His culture is presented to him in terms of what those who rule think best for themselves...Here lie the roots of Jamaican culture. In this respect the Institute is a complete failure. (Patterson, cited in Cummins, 2012)

The formal recognition of cultural heritage is an expression of the power of the authorizing body. The symbiotic projects of imperial expansion and scientific exploration determined the configuration of the Caribbean in the colonial imagination and ensured that West Indian museums would be reflections of the imperial metropole (Cummins, 2004). As Benedict Anderson has famously theorised, the museum functioned as a tool of empire “that profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion” (Anderson, 2006: 164). The widespread exclusion of African heritage and influence from public recognition continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The imaginative geographies which frame the region as a natural rather than cultural space continue to be perpetuated even today through tourist imaginaries which invite the European and North American visitor to sojourn in a Caribbean paradise (Modest 2012). Some scholars suggest that the practice of ‘studying’ the Caribbean as a means of asserting dominance has continued both in popular consumer culture and in the practices of ‘area studies’ in Northern academic centres; natural environments, human bodies, and folklife continue to be consumed in various ways (Sheller 2003).

Cultural heritage is clearly shaped through authoritative discourse -- the policies and official practices which govern heritage and shape the ways in which citizens are enabled to engage with it. Cultural policy is a broad concept that includes “government and non-government policies directly governing the domain of cultural practice and production, as well as attention to state and non-state actors that impact cultural outcomes without intending to do so” (Princeton Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, 1999). In recent years, heritage *writ large* has grown into an “omnipresent cultural phenomenon” (Harrison, 2013, 3). Its seemingly universal appeal is reflected in the expansion of its definitions, the increased sophistication of the

mechanisms for its categorisation, cataloguing, and management, and the global industry which has grown up around it (Harrison, 2013).

The discursive construction of heritage takes place in and through the work of an ‘authorised heritage discourse’ (AHD) (Smith, 2006) administered through local governments and national cultural policies, as well as international agencies such as ICOMOS (The International Charter on Museums and Sites) and the United Nations body, UNESCO. AHD “focuses attention on aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations ‘must’ care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their ‘education’, and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past” (2006: 29). Smith argues that the AHD legitimates heritage holdings and determines who is authorized to speak on its behalf; the vague and inscrutable nature of ‘the past’ renders it “subject to the judgement of experts such as archaeologists and historians” who may produce objective and concrete interpretations (2009: 29). Harrison similarly distinguishes between ‘official heritage’, i.e. “professional practices that are authorised by the state and motivated by some form of legislation or written charter” (Harrison, 2013: 15) and ‘unofficial heritage’, which may hold significance for communities or individuals but is not recognized by way of legislative protection (Harrison 2013). Places, objects, and practices may hold both official and unofficial heritage status according to the values and meaning ascribed by individuals with differential degrees of authority. Unofficial heritage is, by definition, excluded from the state’s ‘national story’ and its ideas of patrimony (Harrison, 2014, 16), which may become an issue of contention. The work of mechanisms such as official heritage and the AHD serve to disengage potential active current users of heritage and the affective attachment they might have to it. The ‘glass case display’ mentality (Smith, 2006) divides cultural heritage from its potential publics and



presumes a passive audience. Emphasis on the materiality of heritage (as a site, object, or other discrete structure), which is most amenable to traditional systematic methods of study and recording, also reduces space for conflicts of interpretation among social groups. For Smith, “The past is not abstract; it has material reality as heritage, which in turn has material consequences for community identity and belonging. The past cannot simply be reduced to archaeological data or historical texts – it is someone’s heritage” (2006: 29).

As the largest international heritage governing organization in the world, UNESCO plays a significant role in informing and administering cultural policy at international, regional, and national levels. Over the course of almost 50 years, there have been multiple UNESCO Conventions on cultural heritage, which reflect the organisation’s shifting priorities in response to an evolving understanding of cultural heritage. UNESCO’s working definition of cultural heritage in turn informs many of the ways in which it is globally understood. In the past, the idea of cultural heritage prescribed by the international body assumed the existence of a *singular* heritage – possessed and embraced by all of humankind. This is illustrated in UNESCO’s 1989 definition of cultural heritage:

*The cultural heritage may be defined as the entire corpus of material signs - either artistic or symbolic - handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of humankind. As a constituent part of the affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities, as a legacy belonging to all humankind, the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognizable features and is the storehouse of human experience. (Jokilehto, 2005: 4-5, emphasis mine)*

Under this canonical view of culture (Nielsen, 2011), diverse and at times oppositional cultural identities fit neatly together into a unified, socially cohesive cultural heritage (Boufoy- Bastick,

2012: 31). This idea downplays the dynamic and contested nature of identity negotiation among groups. An object recognized as cultural heritage, might, by virtue of its outstanding value, belong to the whole of humankind rather than remain the exclusive possession of any given people group.

A focus on the tangible elements of built heritage privileged the monumental cultures of Western civilization over the intangible and natural/environmental values held by other societies. The 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage exists to preserve ‘*the* cultural or natural heritage of humanity’. The World Heritage Convention (WHC), as it is more commonly known, emerged as a response to the realities of decay and destruction of valued heritage worldwide, according to the belief that “deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world” (UNESCO, 1972). It is the foremost international policy regarding tangible heritage, with over 191 State Parties agreeing to subscribe to its stipulated heritage values and positions. Intended to work in conjunction with national policies and state action to implement it, it informs and legitimizes conceptions of what constitutes heritage worldwide. The famous World Heritage List (WHL) is a global strategy to raise public awareness about cultural and natural heritage of ‘outstanding universal value’ through the inscription of designated ‘World Heritage Site’ (WHS), of which there are currently 1007 properties in 161 countries. The designation is desired by many governments of developing nations because it carries the promise of economic benefit through tourism that such ‘branding’ almost invariably accomplishes.

In the Caribbean, three bids submitted to the World Heritage Committee by the government of Jamaica have been denied for various reasons. Since Jamaica was elected into

membership onto the Committee in 2013, efforts have been revived to nominate the Blue and John Crow Mountains in eastern Jamaica for designation as a natural heritage site, in hopes of reaping development benefits. Of the 19 identified World Heritage Sites across 10 islands in the Caribbean, 14 are classified under the cultural designation and 5 as natural. Of the cultural sites, 13 are colonial buildings, garrisons, churches, settlements etc. The National History Park in Haiti is the only cultural site which recognizes the contribution of non-Europeans in the region – the independent Black Haitians. The Palace at Sans Souci, the Citadel and Ramiers buildings are “universal symbols of liberty, being the first monuments to be constructed by Black slaves who had gained their freedom” (UNESCO, 2011). It should be noted that the buildings are all constructed in the 17th-18<sup>th</sup> century European style, “the Baroque staircase and the classical terraces, the stepped gardens reminiscent of Potsdam and Vienna, the canals and basins freely inspired by Versailles” (UNESCO, 2011). This is not to deny the significance of these sites as proclamations of independence and markers of national pride. However, the description provided by UNESCO recognizes the magnificence of the structures by way of their adoption of European elements. Nielsen (2011) argues that the 1972 Convention implicitly conveys an “inherent logic . . . that some cultures are better than others. The promotion of some cultures as the right kind of culture is based on conceptions of what is just and best for humankind, and these ideas are founded on a normative western value hierarchy” (2011: 279). Considering World Heritage’s emphasis on architectural value, the WHC’s use of the phrase ‘World Heritage *property*’ is a deliberate one that speaks to a distinctive materiality, a Western legal system, and Cartesian understandings of time and space.

The 2001 UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity did not move away entirely from the position of its precursors, advocating that “Culture should be regarded as *the set* of distinctive

spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group” (UNESCO, 2001 in Nielsen, 2011: 277, emphasis mine). UNESCO has been accused of romanticized conceptions of culture and diversity, “creating an essentially flat cultural map of the world rather than viewing culture as entangled in process, negotiation, and contestation” (Wright 1998 in Meskell, 2013: 484).

The definition of cultural heritage was later expanded to include recognition of cultural landscapes in an attempt to reconcile the separation of nature and culture effected in earlier definitions which had privileged built heritage. A cultural landscape, as recognized under the World Heritage Convention in 1992, encompasses the “combined works of nature and man” (Mitchell, Rössler and Tricaud, 2009). Of the 88 sites included on the World Heritage List as cultural landscapes, two are located in the Caribbean, both in Cuba. One is the Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in the South-East of Cuba, “a cultural landscape illustrating colonial coffee production from the 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries” (UNESCO, 2015) whose universal value is described thus: “The production of coffee in eastern Cuba during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries resulted in the creation of a unique cultural landscape, illustrating a significant stage in the development of this form of agriculture” (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO’s official description of the site makes little mention of the history of slave labour or the Afro-Cuban cultural heritage that emerged in Cuban coffee plantations. Although the cultural landscape category was ostensibly born out of recognition of the Committee’s Eurocentric forms of valuation (Coombe and Turcotte, 2014), this Caribbean example demonstrates the continued emphasis on Western contributions by focusing on the European industrializing presence in the New World.

These instances in Cuba and Haiti are examples of the ways in which AHD is represented within the region and continues to impress itself in the Caribbean context. In the case of Jamaica, the country was to the home to the one of the first formally recognized groups of landowning free Blacks in the Atlantic world<sup>2</sup> (Rodriguez, 1997). I see the country's prolonged absence from the WHL as significant and indicative of UNESCO's administration of cultural heritage as a significant form of power to legitimize or delegitimize cultures (Smith, 2006). On July 2, 2015, the Blue and John Crow Mountains were inscribed to the WHL under the mixed (cultural and natural) designation – the first of its kind in the Caribbean. The inscription was the result of prolonged efforts by a team led by the Jamaican Ministry of Youth and Culture. This is a significant event for Jamaica's cultural heritage landscape and the decisions made in the site's early days as a World Heritage Site will impact the overall direction of cultural development in the country.

The UNESCO Slave Route Project is specifically focused on the cultural heritage of Blacks in the Atlantic World. Officially launched in 1994 in Ouidah, Benin, the intersectoral project is intended to encourage the study of the history and consequences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and slavery throughout the world (UNESCO, 2006). Through contributions to various initiatives internationally - including the production of educational and information materials, the organization of festivals, symposia, and exhibitions, and the collection and identification of slave trade archives - UNESCO seeks to facilitate intercultural dialogue to “break the silence surrounding the slave trade” towards goals of reconciliation, co-operation, and mutual understanding (UNESCO, 2015). The Slave Route Project recognizes its contribution to

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<sup>2</sup> The First Maroon War of 1730-1739 resulted in the British Government's granting of “unprecedented liberty” to 5,000 enslaved Africans in Jamaica and the ceding of land held at the time of the armistice to the Maroons (Rodriguez, 1997: 203). The 1739 Treaty predates the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, which secured Haiti's independence in 1804.

the formal acknowledgement of slavery and the slave trade as a crime against humanity by the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 (UNESCO, 2006). The Slave Route Project demonstrates UNESCO's stated objective to reshape the existing discourse which has to some extent excluded critical reflection on this important element of modern history.

The relations of power within the AHD establish the conceptual frameworks according to which cultural heritage is predominantly understood. Foucault's theories have highlighted the significance of discourse to the production of knowledge such that power, diffused and embodied through discourse and 'regimes of truth', is used as an apparatus or instrument of governance. Foucault's 'apparatus' or 'dispositive' is useful here for recognizing the link between heritage and governmentality. The dispositive may be understood as:

an absolutely heterogeneous assembly which involves discourses, institutions, architectural structures, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific enunciations, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions; in short: as much the said as the un-said, these are the elements of the dispositive. The dispositive is the network which is arranged between these elements... (Michel Foucault quoted in Bussolini, 2010, 91).

The strategic function of the dispositive is to direct, alter, or stifle certain types of knowledge through a recursive process. It is in the multiplicity of the 'relations of force' that power resides within the network. These relations are immanent to and constitutive of the domain in which they operate. They are themselves "the game which by way of continual battles and confrontations transforms them, reinforces them, inverts them" (Foucault, 1976 in Bussolini, 2010, 91).

Heritage knowledge, as it is determined by and through the AHD, is involved in the legitimization of dominant power structures (Graham, 2002). Deleuze's interpretation of Foucault's dispositive highlights its ideological role: "A dispositive acts in part by determining what we can see and say in a certain historical configuration of forces" (Bussolini, 2010: 100). It is therefore necessary to enquire of 'official' interpretations of heritage: 'Who does this privilege and who does this marginalize?', 'Whose interests does this serve?', and 'In what kind of milieu was this conceived and communicated?' (Graham, 2002). As Harrison points out, drawing on Rabinow (2003), Smith (2006), and Agamben (2009), the functioning of various interventions at heritage sites - including methods of conservation and preservation, means of display, infrastructure and the policing of movement in and around a site, as well as associated texts and discourses – serve as instruments of governmentality in their varying capacities to control and regulate behaviour and interaction (Harrison, 2013). The dispositive of heritage enacts a "particular alignment of power" (Bussolini, 2010: 92) as it engages in a process of knowledge formation.

## 2. The Evolution of Cultural Heritage in Jamaica

Long before it became universally mandatory to view ‘culture’ as integral to national development strategies, and certainly before the United Nations felt that the subject deserved a decade, Jamaica strove to give form and purpose to the idea of its people’s creative energies and cultural achievements informing nation-building and the shaping of the new society (Rex Nettleford, 1989).

Historically, the imperializing forces of colonialism in the Caribbean served to marginalize the traditions and creative work of Black and non-white people while abhorring the influence of African cosmologies and seeking to erase their legacies. Fanon described the colonial land as “a world cut in two” (Fanon, 1961:4). The echoes of those divisions have persisted and continue to inform contemporary socio-cultural dynamics in the Caribbean. What culture can be is heavily determined by historical and socio-economic forces animated by the distribution of power throughout a society. In post-colonial societies, the “seizing of self-representation” is critical to the completion of processes of decolonization and the definition of an independent identity; the way in which heritage is managed by society may be seen as a barometer for gauging how “ex-colonizers and ex-colonials assess colonial spaces, artefacts and empire” (Marschall 2008: 347-8). As the above quotation from Nettleford articulates, from the onset of its independent history, Jamaica has at least given lip service to the centrality of culture and creativity to its project of ‘self-fashioning’ and the forging a national identity.

Nonetheless, in Jamaica’s history since independence, cultural policy has never had an independent ministerial portfolio. Rather, public action in relationship to culture has been justified by way of its contribution to other areas of development, particularly tourism,



education, and trade (Burke 2007). Arguably, policies have focused on expedient measures to further immediate political agendas rather than building solid foundations to reap benefits in the long term. This is a practice which has come to characterize the nature of governance in independent Jamaica. Despite differing approaches to culture throughout the nation's history, meaningful cultural development remains elusive. While the challenges to such development are myriad and systemic, one central constraining factor is the presence of a small national market geared primarily to tourism, operating with limited capital, still struggling under the weight of history's injustices.

Suzanne Burke (2007) identifies three phases in the evolution of Jamaica's cultural policy: Creolization (pre-independence/1950s to 60s), the Plural Society Model (mid 1970s), and the Cultural Industry Policy era (1980s to present). Her delineations are useful for understanding the progression of policy development in light of the historical and political contexts which shaped it.

### *Phase 1: Creolization*

The pre-independence era of the 1950s to early 60s was largely concerned with the promotion of cultural confidence for nation-building; rehabilitating the nation by transcending the traumas of colonialism and slavery and creating healthier conceptions of Caribbean identity. This period saw the creation of much of the nation's cultural infrastructure. The early nationalist movement, under the leadership of Norman Manley, foregrounded the importance of the arts and culture to self-government and nation-building (Nettleford, 1978). Deborah Thomas borrows novelist Rachel Manley's paraphrasing of her grandfather's words to explain the work of early nationalists as fashioning a 'hammock of national belonging' that "knotted anticolonial mobilization to middle-class respectability and cultural Creolization... tethered to the

establishment of cultural institutions and the development of a cultural policy that would reflect and support the creole nation-building project” (2004: 29). This was a movement towards a monolithic national culture around which the diverse island could coalesce in the ‘Out of Many, One People’ ethos.

The Labour Riots and working class rebellions of the late 1930s had “provided the impetus for a general cultural protest and a remarkable flowering in art and literature” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 14-5). Voting rights were available only to members of the population who owned property or possessed the income qualifications. The disenfranchised majority was excluded from the political realm which remained under the control of the colonial elite. Poverty and unemployment increased, during the global recession of the 1930s. The middle and working classes protested against the colonial administration in uprisings such as the 1938 rebellion at Frome Sugar Estate. This demand for social reform sparked the birth of the nationalist movement, with the People’s National Party being established that same year. The 1940s had seen the ensuing rise of a cultural consciousness which would continue on the trajectory towards Independence. The Little Theatre Movement, begun in 1942, the Jamaica School of Arts and Crafts in 1950, and the National Arts Festival (under the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare) in 1954, were some of the initiatives born out of a growing desire to distinguish and celebrate a distinctly Jamaican cultural heritage. Nonetheless, the Jamaica Tercentenary Celebrations, marking 300 years of British colonial rule (JAMAICA 300) was recorded as a “magnificent gesture of loyalty to colonial rule” and an “astounding popular salute to the hegemony of British culture in the history and fabric of the island, and Jamaica’s cultural development continues to reverberate with its echoes” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 19). A 1955 newspaper article lauded the event as reflecting “a sense of present achievement and awareness

that the sordidness of the past was being left behind” (*Daily Gleaner*, 1955: in Thomas, 2004, 63). The celebration of colonial rule and British heritage during a period of rising Jamaican national cultural consciousness speaks to the ambivalence with which Jamaicans viewed their own culture.

The government established the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) in 1959, following a proposal for a Jamaican national radio station made by a visiting Chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The Board of Directors was composed of Jamaicans with a former CBC executive serving as general manager (Institute of Jamaica, 1977). The JBC was to “develop a truly Jamaican radio service...reflecting a national culture through a wide range of cultural and entertainment programmes presented by local talent” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 17). While news programming was composed largely of foreign content, including that provided by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the CBC, and American networks, variety shows and entertainment segments drew on local talent and content. Despite being publicly owned, the JBC (like the CBC) adopted an advertising funding model. Perhaps consequentially, Jamaican content remained limited. As one historical report puts it “in spite of the popularity of local entertainment shows, culture and cultural programming remained within the great colonial tradition; the ‘little’ African folk tradition [was] largely ignored or treated as frivolous by the electronic mass medium” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 18).

In 1961, planning began for the staging of the National Arts Festival to be included in the independence celebrations of the following year. Under Chief Minister Norman Manley, an Arts Advisory council was formed within the Ministry of Housing and Social Welfare to promote the development of local talent. These efforts to showcase an indigenous Jamaican culture were part of the wider project undertaken by national elites to promote a unified national spirit and to

legitimize Jamaica as a country 'ready to take its place' in the global community (Thomas, 2004). However, by 1962, the year of independence, the ideology of creole multiracial nationalism was argued to be hegemonic in terms of whom and what should represent the national community. Scholars argued that the prevailing anti-colonial nationalism was "a weakly rooted ideology due to the lack of an 'authentically' local worldview around which the entire population could be mobilized toward self-government" (Thomas, 2004). Creole elites emphasized the image of the 'brown' middle class in a bid to assert their own cultural citizenship and membership within the nation while distancing themselves from the 'African-ness' that their former colonizers saw as primitive:

The idea, then, was to officially give symbolic primacy to historical events and cultural practices deemed relevant to the majority of the population, while at the same time focusing on social modernization defined through "middle-class values"...in order to facilitate Jamaica's economic growth. The message advanced could be summarized as follows: look back, take pride, but move forward (Thomas, 2004: 66).

The belief that social modernization would come through the espousal of bourgeois values served to further entrench prejudices about the 'backwardness' of non-European traditions. The Jamaica Labour Party under the leadership of Alexander Bustamante – which defeated Manley's party to become the country's first Independent administration – asserted in 1963 that preceding efforts in the cultural sphere had served to create a 'narrow nationalism' (Nettleford, 1978) and an 'elusive heritage' (Seaga, 1963) dominated by a cultural elite comprised of the urban, educated middle class. Non-Western traditions were largely excluded and the artistic traditions of Africa treated with ambivalence: "Europe had continued to reign while Africa ruled in denigration" (Nettleford, 1978: 62). The sentiments of this exchange revealed a tension between

issues of race and national belonging that continue to echo in contemporary discussions of culture, heritage, and development *writ large* in Jamaica and in the wider Caribbean region.

Independent Jamaica's first cultural policy was created as part of the 1963-1968 Five Year Independence Development Plan, drafted from a document developed under Norman Manley. It acknowledged the need for a renegotiation of the way in which culture was being managed at the national level. Introducing the plan and its implementation to Parliament in 1963, then Minister of Development and Welfare Edward Seaga declared:

There exist cultural, social and economic problems to which this country must address itself as problems of immediacy and urgency. The accumulation of problems arising out of centuries of neglect has been thrust upon the politically enfranchised people who have been told, now you have your own means of controlling your advance; you can do what you want about your own problems. (Henry, 2012)

New policies aimed to develop the 'folk arts' while placing emphasis on national pride and Creolization. The Arts Advisory Council was renamed the Arts Development Council and given a widened mandate to include 'grass-roots' cultural expression, as well as a focus on 'uncovering talent' (Institute of Jamaica, 1977). As Nettleford wrote of this re-positioning that the sense of belonging which was "achieved in theory by the entire nation through the self-government movement, but in reality enjoyed by only a few, had now to become the universal experience of all Jamaicans" (1978: 63). This period saw the establishment of much cultural infrastructure through the work of government intervention. The Jamaica Festival Commission (which later became the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission) was established in 1968 to act as a central governing body for the Annual National Arts Festival, mandated to be an "annual report on the creativity of the nation — a national stage where Jamaicans from all walks of life would

have the opportunity to create their own brand of artistic expression, reflecting their life history and their lifestyles” (Seaga, 1963 cited in Jamaica Information Service, 2006). Other bodies established included the Craft Development Agency and its retail outlet, Things Jamaica Ltd. Policies sought to encourage community participation through activities conducted in areas outside the capital city.

The government directed new interest to independently established groups that sought to develop elements of African heritage, such as the National Dance Theatre Company. The Folk Music Research Unit, within the Jamaica School of Music was established in what was later regarded as the first attempt “in the history of cultural policy in Jamaica, to develop indigenous culture in a systematic and scientific way” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 20). Afro-Christian religions, folklore, and folk practices were granted recognition and validation. In a 1971 speech at the International Folk Music Council in Kingston, Seaga affirmed that countries have a responsibility to provide “for their libraries all the [folk] material as it occurs, so as to at least leave the tradition in a form where it can be viewed, where it can be read, where it can be shared in its actual experience before it eventually disappears” (Seaga 1971, in Institute of Jamaica, 1977: 21). This period began the repositioning of culture away from the imitation of foreign elements and towards the recognition that national development required the documentation, study and celebration of indigenous (Jamaican) cultural material, albeit with a sense more of nostalgia than the basis for new development.

Early national government understood the attention to culture as fostering a sense of historical consciousness. The Jamaican people’s knowledge of their past would be necessary for the independent nation to move forward. In the 1967 inaugural issue of the *Jamaica Journal* -the

Institute's in-house publication- former Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica Frank Hill pointed to another possibility:

Many volumes have been written about the word "Culture". Its meaning in Jamaica is unfortunately mostly misunderstood: it is neither a dressing up for the 'better' people nor the exclusive acquisition of the intelligentsia. It is simply the way in which people arrange their lives, and in Jamaica we have a culture just like everybody else...To live contented lives requires involvement, response and self-respect. When these are lacking we speak of an erosion of culture - of an impoverishment of life in its fullness of joy and sorrow. Apathy, suspicion and apprehension are the enemies of all attempts to enlarge the context of a people's culture (1967: 2).

Against the background of a newly independent Jamaica, his position signalled a new navigation away from the IOJ's colonial origins and a change in official perspective.

Hill's statement lays out nicely the background against which cultural heritage management in Jamaica continues to develop. The desire to acknowledge and celebrate Jamaican culture 'just like everybody else', hints to the Caribbean experience of self-fashioning to which cultural heritage is central. The ongoing tension between a desire to showcase the 'best we have to offer' and a refusal to 'dress up for the better people' continues to be a point of contention in contemporary Caribbean society as high culture (read European) and popular culture (read African/Non-European) battle for space.

Creolization was seen as necessary for the realization of national unity. The concept of Creolization developed in theorizing the emergence of 'Caribbeaness' as a new identity.

Brathwaite identified the process of Creolization as occurring along a continuum, "involving, at different historical moments, different groups, always in combination, in a society which is a

product of their entanglement” (Hall, 2003: 30). At the heart of the process is the production of a ‘third space’ – an “indigenous vernacular space marked by the fusion of cultural elements drawn from all originating cultures” (Hall, 2003: 30) - which facilitates or makes possible a spectrum of creative cultural expression and practice. Where Creolization achieves fusion or synthesis (Forbes, 2000), disparate constituents, now existing in a state of permanent translation, can no longer be disaggregated or returned to a ‘pure’ state (Hall, 2003). Edouard Glissant theorized that Creolization requires “that heterogeneous elements that are put into contact enhance each other, that there is no degradation or diminishing of the being in the contact and the mixing” (Ianniciello et. al, 2014: 35). However, Creolization is never without inequality in the form of issues of hierarchization, control and resistance, and domination and subalternity (Hall 2003: 31). Stuart Hall understood heritage as a discursive practice through which “the nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory...into a single, coherent, narrative...by selectively binding their chosen high points and memorable achievements into an unfolding ‘national story’ ” (Hall, 2008 cited in Harrison, 2013: 142). Like personal memory, social memory foregrounds and foreshortens, “silences, disavows, forgets and elides many episodes which – from another perspective – could be the start of a different narrative” (Hall, 2008 cited in Harrison, 2013: 142). The discourse of heritage relies upon *consistent* interpretation across society and over time that allows the discourse to be understood not just as authoritative, but as natural and objective (Waterton and Watson, 2010: 41).

National heritage, as the invention of tradition, manufactures and sustains a dynamic of ‘us vs. them’ (Misir, 2006). Imposing “beginnings, middles and ends on the random and contingent” (Hall, 2008, in Harrison, 2013: 142), all heritage is potentially a conflicted resource – ‘difficult’ or ‘dissonant’ – as “the creation of any heritage actively or potentially disinherits or



excludes those who do not subscribe to, or are not embraced within, the terms of meaning attending that heritage” (Graham, 2002: 1005). Harrison explains, “Clearly, any decision to conserve or not to conserve an object, place or practice from the past must be based on an assumption of value” (Harrison, 2013: 145). Dissonance lies in the conflict resulting from the difference of value ascribed to particular heritage by different groups. On the fashioning of Creole nationalism in service of political purposes, Misir argues that the “influence of Creolization in each Caribbean territory express[es] some form of militant cultural nationalism, excluding and subordinating minority cultures...presenting an insular culture posing as national and regional culture; not a national culture as should be practiced, but as is perceived or imagined” (Misir, xxix). As cultural studies scholar, Uffe Juul Jensen wrote, heritage “is not always something already present in a culture. It is, on the contrary, selected, negotiated, and perhaps even *constructed by the heirs*” (Boufof-Bastick, 2012: 31). This is nowhere more true than in the Caribbean. As a great poet of the region expressed it, Caribbean culture is at once ‘something torn and new’ (Brathwaite, 1973). Much postcolonial Caribbean scholarship is concerned with the project of ‘self-fashioning’; an attempt to weave together a fabric of identity, “Caribbean man is involved in a civilization-making process (whether he likes it or not)” (Harris, 1970).

In many ways, newly independent Jamaica was simply a continuation of what it had been under colonial rule. Bustamante sought to secure Jamaica’s security through ingratiation with the United States and a displayed commitment to Western goals. The newly socially mobile (brown) middle class similarly contended with their own anxieties, in what F.S.J. Ledgister (2008) describes as a racial fear of “being mistaken for the uneducated, backward African rather than seen as educated citizens of a modern nation and participants in Western civilization”(82).

Towards the end of the decade, a series of violent uprisings signalled the growing tension between the Jamaican government and the increasingly disillusioned black population. Most notable among the uprisings were the Rodney Riots of 1968 which saw the week-long besiegement of the University campus by police forces, as well as loss of life, and large scale property damage throughout Kingston. The flames of black consciousness had been stoked in the preceding years by the repatriation of the remains of Marcus Garvey in 1965 and the subsequent erection of a monument 'to the father of black nationalism' (Ledgister, 2008) to mark the entombment. The 1966 state visit of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia was an event of immense significance to the Rastafarian community and a watershed moment for the radicalization of many of the country's youth.

As a lecturer of African history at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona, Guyanese-born Walter Rodney was a public intellectual committed to popular education and the development of political consciousness among the urban poor (Thomas, 2004). Rodney's well-known work *The Groundings with My Brothers* spoke out against global white imperialism and implored black West Indians to adopt an ideology of resistance to an oppressive political system:

Now we need to be specific in defining the West Indian scene and our own particular roles in society. You and I have to decide whether we want to think black or to *remain* as a dirty version of white. (Rodney, 1969: 24 in Ledgister, 2008: 88)

Rodney's radical politics in the context of a newly independent Jamaica emerging into a world in the grips of the Cold-war made for an (quite literally) explosive combination. Initially, authorities argued that the Guyanese-born academic was a threat to the tourist industry. His involvement with the Black Power movement and his affirmation of the experiences of

Jamaica's marginalized communities, including the Rastafari, as well as various youth gangs in Kingston, was felt by the authorities to be advancing socialist 'pro-Castro' ideals (West, 2005).

Walter Rodney was declared *persona non grata* on October 14, 1968 and, upon his return from an academic conference in Montreal, was barred from returning to his post at the University. Two days later, a protest march of some 900 students was tear-gassed outside the Prime Minister's residence before it made its way to the Parliamentary building and other government offices in downtown Kingston. After another confrontation with the police, events escalated to a riot as members of the public – in particular, the urban poor – became involved. The uprising went on for three days as rioters burned and looted buildings in the city. Several North-American owned properties were targeted, as well as the property of US Embassy officials seen as markers of Western imperialism and racial oppression. Debates raged in the Parliamentary chamber as the JLP government decried the UWI as a "hotbed of anti-Jamaican organisation" (Lacey, 1977). Such McCarthyist rhetoric was tied to the involvement of American and British intelligence in suppressing faculty radicalism. Opposition MP Maxwell Carey is remembered for his impassioned pronouncement, 'This is intellectual murder!' when he seized the parliamentary mace before being removed from the chambers. Unable to corroborate a charge of treason, the government ultimately banned Walter Rodney on the grounds of consorting with Claudius Henry, leader of the African Reform Church, who had been convicted of treason felony in 1960, and the professor's 'condemnation of the democratic system of government in Jamaica' (Ledgister, 2008: 93). Ledgister describes Rodney's exclusion as an act by a "government fearful that he was bringing to the poor and dispossessed the news that they were poor and dispossessed" (2008: 98).

The impact of the Rodney riots and similar instances of violence carried over into the period to follow as alliances between the intelligentsia and grassroots community leaders were forged. Political groups such as the Abeng movement and the New World Group became involved in the promotion of a “cultural reconstruction of society in the image of blacks” (Thomas, 2004). The coming Manley administration would lift the ban on forbidden writings, and foreground issues of black representation in cultural policy – though Manley did not permit Rodney’s return to Jamaica. Rodney had asserted that a new phase was beginning in the “epochal march forward of the Black Humanity of Jamaica” in the wake of the collapse of the “myth of a harmonious multi-racial society” (Ledgister, 2005: 91). Though the Rodney Riots were short-lived, confined to specific areas in Kingston, and were acknowledged not to have been an attempted revolution or insurrection (Lacey, 1977), the events marked a turning point in the relationship between the government and the black populace and demonstrated the prospect for active struggles of Jamaicans to influence policy outcomes.

### *Phase 2: The Plural Society Model*

Jamaican social anthropologist M.G. Smith identifies the development of a mythology of ‘progress’ which saw the racial differences among the Jamaican population as “irrelevant in personal relations” (Smith, 1974: 162). The spirit of creole nationalism had inhibited critical reflection on the significance of race in structuring relations within the society divided into sections of white, brown, and black. Smith theorises a plural society model in which each section functions according to coexistent institutional alternatives such as kinship and family organisation, experiences of education, and religious affiliation (Smith, 1974). “[P]lural societies are only units in the political sense (Smith, 1974: 14) and their governance must inevitably involve the dominance of one group within the political structure. This framework of cultural

plurality attributes ongoing social friction to the heterogeneity of cultural traditions. The coming period saw a shift towards the enhanced recognition of black cultural forms and traditions as necessarily distinct from those of the brown and white groups.

In the early 1970s, a dramatic change of government brought with it an increasingly grass-roots positioning informed by the People's National Party's socialist sensibilities (the government made an official declaration of democratic socialism in 1974). Building on the approach of the former era, cultural policy sought to increase the availability of resources across social sections and empower the everyman as evinced in Prime Minister Michael Manley's pronouncement, "If the whole society is to develop in an egalitarian way, art must reflect the total social experience and be appreciated by the society as a whole" (Nettleford, 1978).

The belief in the 'cultural mission of the state' was displayed in the commissioning of the 1972 Exploratory Committee on the Arts; a landmark assessment of the country's cultural situation after ten years of independence. Angling toward the goal of developing the nation's human resources, the Committee was given the charge to explore and make recommendations in several areas, including the distribution of existing resources provided by the government and private sector, increased opportunities for greater participation of the majority of society, and finding a means to "bring the country's cultural heritage into perspective bearing in mind the imbalances of history and the contemporary response to this phenomenon especially among the assertive and self-aware youths" (Nettleford, 1978: 64-5). In arts and cultural development, the ensuing Committee report placed the onus on the community rather than on the government. The arts were not to function as "an instrument of propaganda but as an instrument of cultural growth and personality development" (Report of the Exploratory Committee on the Arts, 1972 cited in Nettleford, 1978: 66). Government was to be a catalyst of sorts by "linking cultural development

organically with social and economic development” (Nettleford, 1978). Cultural development was understood as necessary to human resource development – a key objective in national development policy.

The government did not take lightly the findings of the Committee, as evidenced in the 1977 national budget which allotted significant allowances to projects of ‘education, training and cultural development’ which were intended to promote popular interest in culture and stimulate creative expression throughout the wider society (Nettleford, 1978). The most notable investment was the construction of a cultural training complex to house four facilities, namely The Schools of Drama and Dance, School of Music, and The Jamaica School of Art (founded in the 1940s). Today, this ‘complex’ is the Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts – the country’s foremost tertiary-level art school. The Ministry of Education was also advised to introduce measures to “delimit the hegemony of colonial culture” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977, 31) by adjusting school curriculums to include African studies, folklore, Jamaican popular music, dance, West-Indian authors, and the contributions of Indian and Chinese traditions to Jamaican culture. Perhaps most important was the 1975 opening of the National Gallery, “intended to operate less as a museum of decorative national treasures and more as a living dynamic institution to celebrate such national treasures and train the aesthetic sensibilities and cultural awareness of the adult and the massive youth population of Jamaica” (Nettleford, 1978:86).

The 1972 Exploratory Committee recommended to the Institute of Jamaica that it establish its own folklore department to “collect, study, utilize and present various manifestations of Jamaica’s cultural heritage through research projects, archives and exchanges” (Institute of Jamaica, 1977, 29). That same year, the African-Caribbean Institute of Jamaica (ACIJ) was established under the auspices of the IOJ to focus specifically on research into African-

Caribbean heritage and the contributions of West Africa to Jamaican culture. The Jamaica School of Art, then a division of the IOJ, was repositioned as an autonomous body at the Cultural Training Centre. 1978 brought a new IOJ Act that listed the Institute's objectives to research and develop culture, science, and history, as well as the establishment of and maintenance of "other institutions of learning, museums, galleries, halls, or other places" (Institute of Jamaica, 1978). The IOJ's revised vision to preserve Jamaica's natural and cultural heritage through educational programmes and dynamic, cost-effective, and sustainable means continues to be in effect today:

To enhance the awareness of our Jamaican cultural and scientific heritage and ethos: to develop policies and manage programmes for the acquisition, collection, research, preservation, protection, documentation, analysis, display and dissemination of our literature, science, history, material culture and the creative arts and in so doing, to celebrate our heritage. (Institute of Jamaica, 2015)

Several satellite organizations including the National Gallery, Natural History Division, and the Museum of History & Ethnography, were also re-mandated under the new act. The revisions of the 60s and 70s signalled a shifting of priorities in the cultural policy framework of Jamaica. In its commitment to the display and dissemination of history and material culture, the IOJ was to work closely with the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) - the nation's foremost tangible heritage body – re-dedicated to the promotion, preservation and development of Jamaica's material cultural heritage. The Trust holds responsibility for protected heritage sites throughout the country and legally administers the designation of National Monument or Protected National Heritage. Similar adjustments were applied to many other public bodies, including the Jamaica Broadcasting Commission, the Ministry of Mining and Natural Resources,

the Ministry of Justice, and the Jamaica Information Service<sup>3</sup>. The state's new position on cultural heritage management reflected the period's mission of accelerated decolonisation.

Chambers and Airey (2001) describe the 'Socialist Era of 1972-1980' as one marked by the pursuance of 'self-reliance', although that goal was never fully realized. Tourism was becoming an increasingly significant source of foreign currency for the Jamaican economy. The government sought to develop the industry as an 'engine of growth' (Chambers and Airey, 2001) to energize the economy. The 'Jamaicanization' of tourism was promoted as an alternative to the 'sea and sun' outlook and sought to infuse indigenous (Jamaican) cultural values into the ambience of resort areas (Chambers and Airey, 2001). The government purchased several hotels and invested in hotel and hospitality training. New attractions included rafting on the Martha Brae River, several tropical botanical gardens, and new tours to rural areas and historic sites. Public attitudes towards tourism were not generally positive, however, with Jamaican people's affect towards white visitors in particular, ranging from hostility to indifference. Scholars (Chambers and Airey, 2001; Crick, 2003, Nettleford, 1978) have attributed this to the island's history of race relations and black servitude, combined with practices such as the restriction of access by locals to tourist frequented beaches and hotel areas.

In 1972, then Minister of Industry and Tourism, P.J. Patterson, implored the country "to accept as an undisputed fact of life, that...the tourist industry has a key role to play in revitalising our economy and stimulating the possibilities of development" (Chambers and Airey, 2001, 98). Citizen-oriented initiatives by the Jamaica Tourist Board's new Department of Domestic Marketing and Development to familiarize Jamaicans with 'points-of interest' and historic sites

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<sup>3</sup> In the Mining ministry emphasis was placed on development of recreational parks and community facilities. In the Ministry of Justice amendments were made to existing copyright laws affecting works of art and new legislation for folklore materials. The Jamaica Information Service adopted a special public relations drive on arts and cultural development. There was also discussion of the opening of a national film library.



were intended to encourage domestic tourism. Jamaicans were being called to experience their own country in ways that had thus far been popular only with tourists and amongst elites. The ‘Discover Jamaica’ campaign begun in 1975 with the message ‘A Fi Wi Country’ at its centre; encouraging Jamaicans ‘to feel satisfied’ with tourism and to see themselves as central rather than peripheral to the industry (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2014). Nettleford applauded these efforts:

Jamaicans are able to identify rivers and historic locations at a glance which in its own way is a marked improvement over the colonial experience which produced generations of highly literate Jamaicans who knew a great deal about British monuments, coalfields and historical sites from reading but knew little or nothing about their own Jamaican environment (1978: 88)

Of this tumultuous period in Jamaican political history, Nettleford remarked that it served to ‘smadditize’ the nation (1978). The term smaddification (from the Jamaican *smaddy* meaning ‘somebody’) denotes an “affirmation of personhood” (Girvin, 2014), particularly for Black Jamaicans. Where radicalized and popular challenges to creole nationalism had been suppressed in the preceding decade, Manley’s government “recognized, negotiated, and at least symbolically appropriated those cultural and political ideologies emanating from black lower-class communities” (Thomas, 2004: 90).

Ultimately, the government was unable to transform the foundering national economy. Tourism numbers were falling in the wake of the United States’ economic recession. Locally, the rising unrest that would come to a head by the end of the decade also threatened the industry. Growing middle-class concern about the apparent onset of democratic socialism and Manley’s alliance with Castro’s Cuba contributed to a rise in politically-fuelled crime and violence. Large-scale migration of the professional middle-class and the emigration of many business owners

dealt heavy blows to the buckling economy. The PNP was losing ground as many private organisations and leaders cut ties with the party to support the anticommunist position of the JLP. Unable to support its social programmes, the government significantly reduced spending on health, education, housing and employment – the commitments that had brought the administration to power. Political hostility was heightened through international pressures which came in the form of a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) campaign in consort with the JLP's attempts to destabilize the Manley government (Bolles 1996, in Thomas 2004).

The 1980 general election was the most violent in the nation's history – a fever dream of public strikes, political killings, and riots. It is reported that approximately 889 people were killed in the period leading up to the elections (Campbell, 2006). The JLP's win at a margin of 59 to 9 seats holds the record as the largest margin of victory in a Jamaican election since Independence (Campbell, 2006). Today, the delirium of the late 1970s remains a topic that few wish to remember. In my own experience, I find that adults of my parents' generation still hesitate to openly discuss the period. It is a subject that seems always to be spoken about in low tones because many of the politicians and figures involved are still alive and active in society today.

### *Phase 3: Cultural Industry Policy*

In 1980, the JLP administration under Seaga began a process of divestment, ending social programmes and diplomatic relations with Cuba. It is often recounted that within days of his being sworn in as Prime Minister, Seaga expelled the Cuban Ambassador to Jamaica. The PNP's 'self-sufficient' import-substitution economy was forgone in favour of free-market capitalism. Jamaica's integration into the global economy has largely been managed by transnational corporations and multilateral financial institutions (Thomas 2004). Seaga's cooperation with

Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative fostered Jamaica's foreign relations "with the United States and, through that country, toward the IMF and the World Bank...[via]structural adjustment policies designed to make Jamaica hospitable to foreign investment [and] subjected the population more directly to the whims of international capital" (Thomas, 2004, 79). In 1977, the first agreement had been signed between Jamaica and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as the nation's financial situation worsened by way of its disadvantaged position in the face of changing global economic tides. The government took on large external financing from several international lending agencies and began a painful process of structural adjustment under the direction of the World Bank and IMF – a new relationship of dependency that continues to dominate the country's economic situation.

The PNP's cultural mission of the state and its attendant cultural development efforts were curtailed or placed on the state back burner in favour of programs to directly stimulate economic growth in the private sector. Burke summarizes this transition between eras:

...in the end, the imposition of structural adjustment policies, the scarcity of resources, inadequate institutional capacity, the politicization of some aspects of the cultural programming, or perhaps an unholy alliance of all four factors, signaled the demise of this approach by the mid-1980s. For the remainder of the decade, the cultural policy focus shifted from one of cultural democracy to one of conservative management (2007, 173).

The removal of import restrictions and foreign exchange shortages stymied local industries. Manufacturers, farmers, and higglers were now made to compete with lowering prices as cheaper imported goods flooded the local market. In the tourism industry, several government-owned hotels and properties were divested. Tourism had declined in light of the country's negative

international image amid the foreign media's coverage of the June 1976- June 1977 State of Emergency and the period leading up to the 1980 general elections. The industry had sustained an "invaluable loss of market" (Jamaica Tourist Board) and an 18-month recovery period was set as the government sought to maximize the sector's revenue earnings through tax deductions for American firms. The JTB also launched a pro-tourism campaign in efforts to alter public opinion/dissatisfaction with tourism and the marketing of Jamaican culture to a foreign audience. In 1985, legislation was passed to control the harassment of tourists, which had become a significant issue.

The National Commercial Bank, as well as many broadcast outlets were privatized. Large public sector lay-offs were coupled with tax reforms, re-institution of university tuition, and the removal of price controls and food subsidies. Spending stipulations under structural adjustment lessened available social safety nets to the middle and working class.

These policy shifts resulted not only in an escalation of poverty, social and political violence, and migration, but also in a re-establishment of the hegemony of whiteness...The message to the local population was that blackness, nonalignment, and democratic socialism had brought the country to ruin, and the JLP's economic policies helped to restore old class and color hierarchies (Thomas 2004, 79).

As the state's capacity to provide for its citizens declined, the legitimacy of the state's role in cultural leadership and its capacity to shape and contain popular cultural practices and ideologies was called into question (Thomas 2004). Popular music moved away from the politically conscious 'rebel music' of reggae in the 1970s toward dancehall culture's fixation with drugs, guns, gangs, and sexual promiscuity.

The state's de-prioritizing of urban planning precipitated the transformation of the capital city. Deteriorating living conditions resulted in the movement of populations into previously unsettled areas in Kingston. As Gordon, Anderson, and Robotham explain, "New elite enclaves were rapidly constructed and equally rapidly encircled by squatter settlements" (1997: 191). They describe Kingston's urban milieu as one of 'profound contradictions' as the poor and middle class moved together throughout the parish. In downtown Kingston, state housing erected during the 1970s fell into great disrepair as the economic crisis inhibited the state's ability to provide sufficient upkeep. Deregulation in the unsettled labour market saw the lessening of employment opportunities as the position of national markets in the global economy changed. As the urban poor competed for scarce resources, political clientelism proliferated and territorial violence spread like a cancer.

The subsequent re-inscription of colour and class lines precipitated sharp demarcations between 'uptown' and 'downtown' as the popular culture of the working class grew increasingly in conflict with the societal norms of the middle and upper classes. In its assertion of the authority of local experience, dancehall culture staked out a privileged space for the working class Jamaican speaker. The lurid 'slackness' of dancehall was a subversion of societal conventions and standards of decency that challenged realities of social exclusion, disenfranchisement, and marginalization (Cooper, 2004). Lyrics of violence, crime, and sexual promiscuity reflected life in the city's ghettos and poor communities and voiced a long history of trauma sustained by the socially marginalized. Despite its embattled status in Jamaica, dancehall music and its accoutrements gained an international following. Carolyn Cooper considers the dynamics of dancehall and sound system culture to be political ones: "Powerful currents of explicitly political lyrics urgently articulate the struggle of the celebrants in the dance

to reclaim their humanity in circumstances of grave economic hardship that force the animal out of its lair” (Cooper, 2004). As popular culture, dancehall voiced the worsening plight of the working class and their social experience of the economic and political context of the music’s emergence.

This period of social upheaval severely weakened the anti-colonial national narratives of previous eras. As the virtues of self-sufficiency and autonomy fell in the estimations of a disillusioned public, widespread belief in the superiority of the foreign and the inferiority of the local resurged. The introduction of cable television into Jamaican households during the 1980s saw a rise in the consumption of foreign (North American) media that glorified a consumer lifestyle outside of local reach. Scholars have connected this influx of American programming and high levels of foreign media consumption to the existence of a ‘pro-Foreign sentiment’ and the erosion of ‘Jamaican national sentiment’ in the formation of subjectivity among Jamaican youth (Brown 1995 in Campbell, 2006). Values of immediate gratification and conspicuous consumption transmitted via American media (Campbell, 2006) found little fulfilment in the harsh socio-economic realities of post-IMF Jamaica. The racially charged expression ‘anything black nuh good’ still appears commonly in popular culture amid ongoing arguments about the country’s ability to govern itself. The results of a 2011 opinion poll published by the *Jamaica Gleaner* found that 60 percent of Jamaicans felt “the country would be better off today if we had remained under British rule” (Espeut, 2011). Though the poll was controversial, its findings speak to widespread dissatisfaction and weariness with the seemingly Sisyphean project of Jamaica and the impact of this dissatisfaction on Jamaican self-conception.

The Washington Consensus which governed after 1989 and a painful early period of structural adjustment ushered in the age of globalization and a new phase of cultural policy.

Amid the challenges of the late 1970s and 1980s, cultural production that managed to survive did so largely without the support of the government or active and effective policy. Throughout this period of intense privatization, the government shifted from a focus on the ‘arts that cost’ to the ‘arts that pay’ (Burke, 2007). This posture of instrumentalizing culture continues to persist as “cultural policy is employed in the service of resolving the economic dilemma that continues to challenge the region” (Burke, 2007). The 1994 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Cultural Policy was intended to function as “an overall rationale of the significance of culture in development” at the regional level and adopted a similar position advocating culture’s expediency (CARICOM, 1997, 2). The very first of its policy goals under the Culture and Development objective was to “research and create support systems for the economic contributions made by cultural phenomena to national economies” (CARICOM, 1997, 19). Urging governments to normalize cultural considerations as an element of national planning, the Regional Policy insisted that existing mechanisms were insufficient to support the significant economic potential of culture.

It would be misleading, however, to assert a blanket commitment to instrumentalizing culture in regional policy. The first meeting of the region’s culture ministers in 1985 discussed and established terms of reference for the Regional Cultural Committee (RCC). Emerging out of that meeting were several salient issues, including: the need for an official definition and concept of Caribbean culture; the role and significance of culture in the overall development of the region; the need for the rationalization of cultural resources; and the institution of supportive measures for cultural practices and practitioners (CARICOM, 1997). The 1994 policy critically addressed the dynamic between culture and tourism, recommending that governments “encourage measures to ensure that the development of tourism does not impact negatively on

the integrity of our cultural identity in all its manifestations” (CARICOM, 1997, 24). This suggestion indicates some recognition that the use of culture primarily to attract tourists has detrimental effects experienced in many Caribbean islands.

In 1996, the Jamaican PNP government of the 1990s undertook its own ‘Consultations on Cultural Policy’, towards the development of a new national policy on culture. This led to a subsequent shift from the official conception of culture as creative and artistic expression to the more anthropological understanding of ‘the way of life of a people’ (Thomas, 2004) that corresponded with similar reconceptualizations by international agencies, such as the World Bank and UNESCO (Thomas, 2004, 85). Still, culture continued largely to be framed in static ways as a possession and either a positive or negative contribution to the larger project of development (Thomas, 2004, 85). Popular opinion held that Jamaican culture was under attack by the encroachment of foreign influences, leading to the decay of local value systems. Cultural authenticity needed to be protected to promote the ‘positive’ aspects and discourage the undesirable elements of Jamaican culture (Thomas, 2004, 86). Here is another reformulation of the narrative of the contending Jamaicas focused upon the tension between the positive cultural heritage of the elite and the unsavoury heritage of the marginalized. Thomas observes that issues of class and race were broached only by way of this coded language and that:

“[the] idea that culture could be lost or maintained, and the related idea that culture could be divided into aspects designated as either positive or negative, lead to a view that culture itself is both the problem to solve and the recipe to follow” (2004, 87).

The current national cultural policy document, ‘Towards Jamaica, the Cultural Superstate’ (2003), asserts that its objective is “to foster the participation of all in national life and promote investment in national cultural development” (National Cultural Policy, 2003).



Emerging out of the 1996 consultations and workshops at local, regional, and international levels, the policy places emphasis on the need to address systemic social ills. As a “statement of government’s understanding of the reality within which its citizens have lived” (National Cultural Policy, 2003), the policy seeks chiefly to address the existing lack of co-ordination between cultural agencies. Attempts to plug into the existing worldwide popularity of ‘Brand Jamaica’ are reflected in statements about the need to assume a ‘posture of confidence’ in representing global achievements and communicating the colourful ethos of Jamaican culture to the world.

### *Contemporary Cultural Policy*

In her assessment of the nation’s new cultural policy, Thomas argues that Jamaican governments have never assumed a proactive position in relation to cultural development. Rather, successive administrations have capitulated under the pressures of various social forces, and the outcries of public intellectuals and cultural practitioners; responding in ways that have suited their own objectives (2004, 90). Various political leaderships have largely paid lip service to the importance of culture in Jamaican society. Suzanne Burke has attributed the underperformance of cultural policies to disjunctures and differences in perspectives on cultural identity which have largely “abided in the consciousness of the policy makers, as opposed to the ‘lived’ identities of the masses of Caribbean people” (Burke, 2007). For the Jamaican public, *who we are, is not who you say we are.*

While it is true that the trajectory of policy evolution in Jamaica has demonstrated the prioritizing of political expediency, I would argue that legitimate attempts at meaningful cultural development have become prey to the seemingly inescapable repetition of historical forces of racial inequality, economic struggles, and global pressures which reproduce the struggles of the

past in ever new configurations. Throughout the evolution of Jamaica's cultural policy, three significant constitutive obstacles recur that continue to influence the recognition and management of cultural heritage in Jamaica.

The first is disagreement about what constitutes Jamaican culture and who or what is allowed to represent 'Jamaicaness'. Thomas's summarizing statement on the evolution of cultural policy in Jamaica partially explains this:

The difficulty of sustaining a holistic and dynamic concept of culture, then, is also a profound testament to the persistent ideological hegemony positioning the cultural practices of formerly colonized peoples as either irrelevant or inherently inferior, unproductive, retrogressive, and even dangerous....[B]ecause they have not been able to transform more general institutionalized inequalities within their societies...nationalist elites have (sometimes unwittingly) upheld a bifurcated rather than holistic concept of culture (2004: 89).

Monolithic conceptions of culture born out of the 'Out of many, One people' ideal consistently tend toward exclusivity and are manifestly unable to represent the bricolage that is the reality of the Jamaican ethnic landscape in which the majority of the population is black; a topic I believe I have addressed at sufficient length.

The second is an essential ambivalence about whether to commemorate or abandon the 'sordidness' of a violent colonial past. Members of Jamaican society balk at the publicizing of the nation's history of slavery and struggle and would prefer to 'leave history in the past' rather than to remember 'that kind of thing'. The prevailing uneasiness about confronting history speaks to the need for a new way to engage with cultural heritage: "Infamous episodes in the history of a country are not meant to be commemorated, nor are they meant to be forgotten"

(Seaga, 2006). This enigmatic statement made by former Prime Minister of Jamaica Edward Seaga, articulates Jamaican society's ambivalent attitude toward aspects of its heritage and the past that heritage represents. Jamaica's tangible cultural heritage has been described as being in a state of crisis (Siegel and Righter, 2011) as many colonial historical structures, great houses, and statues continue to decay. The problem of Jamaica's crumbling heritage was recently the subject of debate on *Live At 7*, a television program produced by a national broadcaster. The program's panel of guests included heritage experts and scholars who lamented the lack of attention paid to the country's built heritage (Crosskill, 2014).

Describing scholarship on heritage preservation and development efforts in the Caribbean, scholars remark on: "The exasperated and sometimes impassioned voices of the eyewitnesses to national 'patricide'...emphasize the importance of implementing strong heritage legislation *now* to protect the dwindling supplies of these non-renewable vestiges of the Caribbean human past" (Siegel and Righter, 2011). Neither preservation nor development of this colonial history can be agreed upon, which is compounded by (or perhaps explains) a 'lack of understanding of how to organize a framework for sustainable preservation, maintenance, interpretation, and marketing of the island's heritage resources" (Richards and Henriques in Siegel and Righter, 2011). The preservation of heritage faces an emerging tension between the impetus to develop such properties and the potential for their stagnation (Scher, 2014) which may be equally desired.

There are those who see heritage as backward looking and oppose the dredging up of a past they believe to be better forgotten. V.S. Naipaul -- one of the Caribbean's two Nobel Prize Laureates -- has written in his 1979 novel *A Bend in the River*, "We have to learn to trample on the past...the world is in movement, and the past can only cause pain" (Naipaul, 1979: 152-3

cited in Lowenthal, 2011: 161). Naipaul's troublesome neocolonial sensibilities aside, the position that the past is something to be decimated is not alien to Jamaica and its neighbouring countries. Indeed, the unstated belief that a preoccupation with the past will stymie future progress has often informed government activity. However, such a position, while intended to be emancipating, inclusive, and to foster nation building, may sometimes serve to "entrench new hegemonies" and "sanctify new exclusions" (Marschall, 2008: 353). As one participant to the *Live At 7* debate pointed out, the physical heritage of marginalized groups such as the Maroon community, Rastafari, and the Garvey movement have been 'systematically dismantled' and effectively dismissed from the agendas of culture and heritage groups in the country.

The third constitutive obstacle involves the pressures created by continuing forces of economic globalization which have repeatedly undermined attempts at meaningful national development. Today, global neoliberal trends prescribe a niche-market economy which focuses on countries as having distinctive cultural localities. Once again, cultural heritage is co-opted for foreign consumption, in activities which project a singular, prescribed national culture which should be performed by nationals -- e.g. JAMAICA 300 celebrations in 1955 and today's 'Brand Jamaica' project - in which "feelings of pride or national consciousness are generated in and measured by the consumption of national products" that equates culture with commerce" (Scher, 2010: 4-5).

Public policies are necessary for bridging the spaces between 'raw capacity', 'capability' and 'activity' (Pascual, 2013). As *public* policies, they function ostensibly in the service of the public, governing state spending in advancing a larger social good. However, cultural policy is arguably subject to a greater variety of political and financial pressures and constraints than other portfolios (Bell Oakley, 2014: 6). Jamaica's current cultural policy reflects this:

A country's culture is the dynamic reservoir of ways of thinking and doing accumulated over time, which has come to be agreed upon and transmitted across generations in a community. It includes the knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, customs, traditions, distinctive institutions and its ways of making meaning in life...Although it is not quantifiable or tangible, it is central to the definition of the basic unit of economic development – the individual and the human spirit – and the eventual unleashing of creative energies (National Cultural Policy of Jamaica, 2008, 9).

While more in line with contemporary international conceptions of culture, the policy's foregrounding of culture as central to the individual, and the human spirit as the 'basic unit of economic development' both incorporate the market logic central to global neoliberalism. This will become even more apparent through an exploration of the Brand Jamaica strategy.

### 3. Brand Jamaica and Heritage Tourism



Figure 1: A 'Heritage' store at Jamaica's Montego Bay Airport

Brand Jamaica is another major theme of the Vision 2030 National Development Plan completed in 2009 after a two year planning process. To fulfil the Vision 2030 national vision statement: *Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business*, the plan breaks down fifteen national outcomes to be achieved through key strategies. National Outcome #4, 'An Authentic and Transformational Culture', emphasizes specified core values, namely: social cohesion, social capital, cultural capital, sport, and the development of the national brand.

The plan lists the following strategies towards these ends:

- Strengthen the process to indentify, monitor, maintain and promote protected heritage sites
- Strengthen and institutionalize documentation of cultural heritage (tangible and intangible),
- Widen access to repositories of cultural heritage

- Involve the private sector in the development and preservation of culture at the community and national levels
- Implement appropriate measures to protect and preserve cultural expressions
- Promote public awareness of the importance of cultural forms and retention of heritage
- Provide wider access to Jamaican cultural expression locally and internationally

(Vision 2030, 2009: 95)

However, the specific actions to be taken to accomplish these objectives are vague and not outlined in an actionable way. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that a 2012 progress report assessed progress on Outcome #4 as being “off track, [showing] no improvement or worsening from baseline” (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2012). Some stakeholders are of the opinion that the Vision 2030 plan and framework is clumsy and unrealistically ambitious for the targeted year 2030 (Tyson, 2013), and that the necessary foundations for such growth and development are simply not in place.

National Strategy 4-4 foregrounds the promotion of Brand Jamaica, seeking to ‘Integrate Jamaica’s Nation Brand into Developmental Processes’ (Vision 2030, 2009). The aggressive promotion of the ‘Brand Jamaica product’ is in an attempt to tap into the US\$33 -35 billion estimated annual value of Brand Jamaica, of which the country allegedly “misses out on” approximately US\$20 billion each year (Myers Jr., 2014). The ‘Brand Jamaica’ project<sup>4</sup> began in the early 2000s and has been prioritized by both the 2003 National Cultural Policy and the

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<sup>4</sup> Brand Jamaica, as ‘a means of communicating Jamaican culture’, is interpreted and operationalized through four co-ordinated projects:

- a) A collective marketing strategy among producers throughout the creative, leisure, apparel, sport and food and beverage sector sectors
  - b) An intellectual property initiative to protect Jamaican products and services with geographical indications
  - c) A promotional program managed by Jamaica Trade and Invest (JTI)
  - d) The fostering of a broad appreciation of the global “share of mind” enjoyed by Jamaica
- (Culture, Creative Industries and Values Sector Plan, 2009:15)

Vision 2030 National Development Plan. Vision 2030 asserts “unless we know how to sell our culture; others will sell it for us” (Culture, Creative Industries and Values Sector Plan, 2009:15).

In practice, the nation branding effort has consisted largely of two pillars of development. The first is “the propertization of aspects of Jamaican cultural production that offered high added value and low export volume (eg: “niche” products) and which would be readily recognizable by international consumers as properly ‘Jamaican’ (i.e. reggae, rum, sports icons, coffee)” (Aronczyk, 2013: 152). These efforts involved the presentation of a proposal by the combined efforts of the Jamaican and Barbadian delegations to the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs, and Geographic Indications in 2012 that WIPO undertake a study on the protection of country names towards standardizing the approaches by IP offices of member states (WIPO, 2012). Such a system would provide a supporting framework for Brand Jamaica and help address the problem of registered trademarks, products and services bearing the name Jamaica which have no connection to the country.

The second pillar of nation branding involved efforts “to work on the culture of Jamaicans themselves – to manage and modulate the attitudes, values, and beliefs that were seen as antithetical to the competitiveness of the Jamaican economy” (Aronczyk 2013: 152). A ‘culture of indiscipline’ (Tyson, 2013) and low levels of productivity are often referenced as detrimental aspects of the Jamaican culture. In October 2013, Prime Minister Simpson Miller opened a Productivity Awareness Week under the theme ‘Productivity – Pathway to Competitiveness and Growth: Getting From 2013-2030’ in which activities focused on improved customer service and productivity in the workplace (Braham, 2013). In one of her addresses during the week’s activities, Simpson Miller called for a programme of public education, “to



ensure that all Jamaicans understand what productivity is and what increasing productivity means to our survival as a nation” (Braham, 2013). Vision 2030 also addresses ‘the glorification of violence’ (2009, 16) and the breakdown of family structure as deeply damaging to healthy socialization by corroding national confidence and self-esteem (2009:16), suggesting that the branding exercise has acquired moralizing dimensions.

The discourse on Brand Jamaica is tied in closely with the tourism industry in its foregrounding of foreign-facing expressions of Jamaican culture<sup>5</sup>. As ‘a means of communicating Jamaican culture’, a nation brand is essentially an extravagant marketing strategy requiring the sustained involvement of human and non-human elements of the nation. Where the era of cultural industry policies in the Caribbean ushered in an increasing commoditization of cultural heritage in Jamaica and in many small Caribbean societies, culture has increasingly been seen as a valuable resource on which the state can draw (Scher, 2014). As Vision 2030 illustrates, nation branding is touted as a means to reap the economic benefits of the country’s cultural heritage that have proved so elusive in the past. Public and private sector representatives remark upon the untapped potential for marketing Jamaica’s “heritage gold mine” (Tomlinson, 2011) to visitors. The business of culture is of great economic concern in Caribbean societies, where, “in the rhetoric of state agencies, culture literally cannot afford to be lost or changed” (Scher, 2014: 93). Encouraging a static and easily digestible idea of culture, the commodification

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<sup>5</sup> The Ministry of Youth and Culture has responsibility to collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism and its marketing arm, the Jamaica Tourist Board, over areas of ‘specialized tourism’. These areas include sports, heritage, and cultural tourism. The Tourism Product Development Company Limited (TPDCo), a registered private company under the Ministry of Tourism, has also placed special emphasis on cultural heritage tourism and community-based development. TPDCo’s efforts are guided by the recommendations of the 2003 Tourism Master Plan; the objectives of which include product diversification through emphasis on culture, heritage and eco-tourism, as a means to long-term sustainable development. Vision 2030 charges these bodies with the responsibilities of managing and building the nation brand.

of cultural heritage through nation branding has considerable implications for the management of and engagement with cultural heritage by Jamaicans themselves.

As Philip Scher discusses, heritage tourism and nation branding tends to limit community access and participation: “culture ceases being simply a right for people and becomes an adjunct to the aspirations of the state as it promotes its cultural brand globally” (2014: 88). ICOMOS has identified tourism as “among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange” and a “positive force for natural and cultural conservation” (ICOMOS, 1999). International heritage organizations have embraced the position that tourism will enable countries to capitalize on the economic characteristics of heritage while serving as a positive force for natural and cultural conservation (ICOMOS, 1999). For struggling small island economies in the Caribbean, tourism is less of an alternative than a lifeline: “with dwindling options for the generation of revenue, national cultural heritage is seen as a way to diversify primarily the tourism economy. It is a new product to sell” (Scher, 2014: 89). As global neoliberalism reduces Caribbean economies to niche markets defined by locality (Scher, 2010), projects such as nation branding and heritage tourism are increasingly valued as legitimate *economic* strategies.

Nation branding involves “engaging the profit-based marketing techniques of private enterprise to create and communicate a particular version of national identity” (Aronczyk, 2008: 16). In no uncertain terms, nation branding trades “on the creative output of a people” (Scher 2010: 16). Aronczyk (2013) outlines a threefold intent to a) help “the nation-state successfully compete for international capital” (2013: 16); b) “to convey an image of legitimacy and authority in [international] diplomatic arenas” (2013: 16); and c) “to generate positive foreign public opinion that will ‘boomerang’ back home, fostering domestic consensus or approbation of their actions as well as pride and patriotism within the nation’s borders” (2013: 16). The term ‘nation

branding' was coined in 1996 by policy advisor, Simon Anholt who lays out its benefits as follows:

Countries, cities and regions that are lucky or virtuous enough to have a positive reputation find that everything they or their citizens wish to do on the global stage is easier...Places with a reputation for being poor, uncultured, backward, dangerous or corrupt find that everything they or their citizens try to achieve outside their own neighbourhood is harder, and the burden is always on their side to prove that they don't conform to the national stereotype (2010: 4).

Ultimately, however, this logic may reduce complex historical issues to the scope of slogans or aphoristic advertising pitches. Promoting a particular organization of power and knowledge in the articulation of collective identity, nation branding seeks to fit "discussions of the nation into categories that privilege a particular kind of collective representation over diverse expression" (Aronczyk, 2008: 43). Anholt's dogmatic rhetoric aside, the ultimate goal of a nation branding campaign is to manipulate a country's image in public perception; thus managing issues of representation on a fundamental level. By definition, Brand Jamaica "trades on the creative output of the people" (Scher, 2014: 97); "turning Jamaicans' 'natural' propensity to create and innovate into marketable commodities" (Aronczyk, 2013: 152). The appeal to WIPO indicates a desire to police whom or what may carry the Jamaican name in an effort to manage brand value through exclusivity. This is important overall development but it also carries sociopolitical significance in a global digital age where large contingents of Jamaican nationals live outside the country's territorial borders. What does this mean for the creative output of members in the diaspora?

Under such conditions, rationalized forces intervene upon the Jamaican population on individual and collective levels (Rabinow and Rose, 2003: 2). This is biopolitics, as Foucault envisioned it, encompassing “specific strategies and contestations over problematizations of collective human vitality, morbidity and mortality...over the forms of knowledge, regimes of authority, and practices of intervention that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious” (Rabinow and Rose, 2003: 2-3). Scher extends Foucault’s definition to include cultural expression and the work to regulate such expression by the Caribbean tourism industry and its supporting institutions. Through the biopoliticization of culture (Aronczyk, 2008 and Scher, 2014), elements crucial to the public presentation of the cultural self are appropriated for economic purposes. This may result in the actions and behaviours of populations becoming self-consciously ‘cultural’ by way of adherence to specified ideas of what national culture ought to be and government dictates about what should be projected to the world at large. This is an “[e]mphasizing [of the] ‘dual nature’ of Jamaicans as exotic and entrepreneurial, untamed and efficient, spirited and stable, encapsulated in the amorphous label of creativity” (Aronczyk, 2013: 153). This rhetoric echoes historical descriptions of the untamable ‘tropics’ and the indolent but wily negro of colonial Jamaica.

The concerted promotion of ‘recognizable products’ which align with tourists’ expectations of the Caribbean results in a dynamic in which “ what counts as national heritage in the contemporary Caribbean is often that which may convey to the consumer an *appropriate* vision of the region” (Scher, 2010: 27 emphasis mine). The notion of biopower comes in to play as Caribbean people are required to take part in a sort of cultural performance, particularly in heavily touristed areas, which may extend “ultimately to potentially public behaviors of all kinds such as fishing, selling in a market, driving a taxi, dancing in a public place etc. This has lead

governments to pursue strategies of domestic management of public behavior seen as potentially detrimental to the effective sale of the cultural product” (Scher, 2010: 18). Jamaica’s sophisticated internal marketing structure emphasizing the financial benefits of tourism to the general public under the theme ‘tourism is our business’ is “a reminder that the country needs tourism in order to survive” (Crick, 2003: 163). Tourism infusion projects in schools are also intended to foster positive attitudes towards the tourism sector and prepare students for careers in the industry (Crick, 2003).

Less overt strategies involve the sanctioning of deviant behaviour and the suppression or subjugation of cultural heritage elements which do not suitably represent ‘Brand Jamaica’. Heritage sites and their managing organizations capitalize upon a sort of visual manipulation for the entertainment of visitors, often eliding the historical significance of such sites to local residents. The immediacy of the visual can obscure as much as it displays; allowing the visual to function as an instrument of cultural power through the reification and naturalization of social relations (Waterton and Watson, 2010: 13-4). Cultural heritage functions largely on a symbolic level and the monumental visibility of heritage predisposes it to mythic communication. As McLuhan saw it, “myth *is* the instant vision of a complex process that ordinarily extends over a long period. Myth is the contraction or implosion of any process”(1964: 25). The real understanding of the whole must come through further exploration and interpretation. “Representations and visual imagery are thus intimately embedded in the mechanisms that construct and *make real* a range of imagined, historic and/or mythical places”, as well as narratives (Waterton and Watson, 2010:11). For example, Steve Pile’s (2005) analysis of New Orleans’ cultural heritage tourism indicates how “superficial and light-hearted ‘voodoo tours’

ignore and conceal the brutality of slavery” (discussed in Waterton and Watson, 2010: 42) and the complexity of Afro-folk religions as elements of cultural heritage.

A similar scenario may be observed in the treatment of the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica. The prominence of the Rastafarian image and ethos in Brand Jamaica has afforded the group a certain degree of acknowledgement and visibility in Jamaican society today. This prominence is due in part to the international popularity of Reggae music and figures such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. Marley’s image is emblazoned on countless tourist memorabilia, his music is featured in official Jamaica Tourist Board promotions and blares from airport speakers, welcoming visitors to the island and urging them to forget their worries and ‘feel alright’. US President Barak Obama visited the Bob Marley Museum on Hope Road in Kingston during his visit to the island in April 2015. It wasn’t long ago, however, that Rastas were seen as degenerates - ‘*black art men*’ lurking in society’s margins. The use of ganja – an illegal substance – as religious sacrament, the distinctive dreadlock hairstyle, and their posture of political defiance set them at odds with the state. In the realm of cultural heritage management, efforts by the Rastafarian community to have Pinnacle, St. Thomas - the birthplace of Rasta - recognized as a heritage site, have up until now been fruitless. In 2013, Monty Howell, son of Leonard P. Howell the founder of the Rastafarian movement and chair of the Leonard P. Howell Foundation, openly criticized the open ‘invitation’ made by the IOJ for Rastafarian artefacts to be contributed for inclusion in a state exhibition. Howell asserted the Foundation to be the sole possessor of ‘legitimate artefacts of the Rastafarian movement’ and their attendant intellectual property rights; it would not be involved in the presentation of a ‘counterfeit history’ (Howell, 2013).

Jamaican dancehall artist Kartel expressed it well, ‘Why dem fight Rasta inna di (in the) street and [still] use rasta image pon tourist board [?]’ (Modest, 2011). As (white) tourists come to regard the Rastafarian ‘livity’ or way of life with admiration and curiosity, cultural difference is recognized by those in authority as an indisputable asset in the business of tourism. This is the problem of ‘quality control’ in the selling of culture (Scher, 2011) – the weeding out of inappropriate elements. The commodification of Rastafarian cultural symbols as perhaps the most recognizable Jamaican export product (Frank, 2007) attenuates their significance as symbols of rebellion and opposition to ‘Babylon’ - the oppressive reigning social order. One might consider the example of the inane souvenir staple, the knitted tam with fake dreadlocks, a caricature that reduces that iconic mark of Rasta and symbol of their adherence to Holy Scripture (Frank, 2007), to an allegedly ‘humorous’ but socially offensive costume. Indeed, Rastafarians have attempted to claim such insignia as forms of traditional cultural expression as a means to avoid such national branding appropriations.

Caribbean scholars and astute government leaders have repeatedly expressed the desire to distance culture from economics, maintaining that tourism, if left unchecked, can be “harmful to the dignity of our people” (Williams, 1981 in Scher 2010: 28).

“It is the fortune, and the misfortune, of the Caribbean to conjure up the idea of ‘heaven on earth’ or ‘a little bit of paradise’ in the collective European imagination...Not only the place but the people too, are required to conform to the stereotype” (Pattullo 1996: 142 in Sheller, 2006: 6).

Heritage tourism has become something of a buzzword in recent times. In an attempt to wrest the tourist audience from the grip of all-inclusive hotels, the Vision 2030 plan proposes the promotion of community-based tourism ostensibly to “build solidarity within communities and

the independence of our people” (2009: 16). However, many remain wary of any approach which threatens to transmute local cultural heritage into marketable commodities for others, as demonstrated in the renovation of the Historic Town of Falmouth and its port in the western parish of Trelawny. The two hundred and twenty million dollar pier project was a joint venture between the Port Authority of Jamaica and the Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines Company (Titus, 2012). It involved the impressive restoration of Georgian structures and monuments in the town square, and the showcasing of historical artefacts (some dating back to the Pre-Columbian era). It was all cordoned off from the reach of the local community for the exclusive use of the almighty tourist and the cruise line industry. The then Director of Tourism explained, “Our Historic Falmouth Cruise Port was built specifically for the island to have the capacity to receive mega ships, which has resulted in substantial growth in our cruise passenger arrivals” (Newswire, 2012). Residents in the area argue that any purported local benefits remain to be seen. Heritage tourism development often disenfranchises the communities in which monumental, often colonial structures are situated (Waters, 2006). As local residents in Falmouth might agree, commemorization is often a cheat, “something which ruling elites impose on the subaltern classes” (Waters, 2006). In this case, the ‘glass case display’ dynamic disengages the community from any active and critical use or interpretation of these structures. As McCrary very succinctly expresses it:

If the main objective of heritage institutions is to attract consumers of its product and extract from them profits, interpretation can rarely afford to offer the kinds of serious and troubling historical reflections that are likely to drive vacationing visitors away. As a result, all too often the past is being represented like a theme-park, a theme-park where the worries and uncertainties of the present can be cast aside...(McCrary, 2011: 360)



Together, nation branding and cultural heritage tourism seek to promote a ‘viable nationalism’. The absorption of cultural heritage into neoliberal practices of nation branding and the tourist industry excludes members of the Jamaican public from engaging with and participating in the negotiations of the meaning of their own national cultural heritage and choosing places for its commemoration or reflective consideration.

#### 4. Cultural Heritage and Digital Technology

The conditions under which heritage is interacted with such as the technologies of tourism and exhibition (Harrison, 2013:35), have an effect on heritage knowledge itself; that is, the knowledge defined and made available within social, political, and cultural contexts (Graham, 2002). Cultural heritage materials cannot be separated from “the ways in which they are arranged and the affordances of the socio-technical assemblages in which they are caught up” (Harrison, 2013: 35). Assemblage theory places emphasis on plurality and relationality in networks of association. The “assemblage approach demands an empirical focus on how these spatial forms and processes are themselves assembled, are held in place, and work in different ways to open up or close down possibilities” (Anderson et al 2012).

An assemblage is always engaged in the work of continually “forming and sustaining associations between diverse constituents” (Anderson et al, 2012). Manuel De Landa’s work recognizes an assemblage or ‘agencement’ as a product of the exercising of the capacities of individual components. Agency does not rest with any one central node or ‘nervous system’ (Harrison, 2013) but is rather spread throughout the entire assemblage. Heritage is a “strategic socio-technical and/or bio-political assemblage composed of various people, institutions, apparatuses (dispositifs) and the relations between them” (Harrison, 2013: 35). Jamaica’s cultural heritage, the international and national policies which govern it, the market forces and foreign actors that seek to appropriate it, the tourists who consume it, as well as the Jamaican people themselves are all caught up in a complex network of relations in which each is simultaneously acting on and acted upon.

Assemblage theory draws on Foucault’s approach to power, knowledge formation, and the dispositive which governs what can and cannot be accessed and by whom. Access to heritage

and the resulting capacity to participate in heritage deliberations are necessary elements to meaningful cultural citizenship and social justice as well as key cultural rights. Access to these opportunities ought to be the foremost concern for the design, management and operations of heritage spaces. “Heritage buildings, institutions and sites as well as immaterial heritage may be the main theme and inspiration for the creation and enhancing [of] social capital or the physical space where such development takes place” (Murzyn-Kupisz and Dzialek, 2013: 44-5). The Jamaican situation demonstrates the functioning of heritage as simultaneously knowledge, cultural product, and political resource (Graham, 2002: 1007), as well as how each iteration affects issues of social justice. As this section has discussed, the Jamaican public is once again granted access to a narrow heritage knowledge in which cultural heritage is unable to function as a “dynamic social process enhancing cultural and civic identity” (Boufooy-Bastick, 2012: 28). When cultural heritage is watered down and cordoned off from those to whom it is most significant, when it is performed for and consumed by a foreign market, it begs the question ‘to whom does this culture truly belong?’ Is it the property of the state, those able to make the highest bid or investment, or does it belong to the people for whom it comprises the ‘trans-generational components of identity’ (Boufooy-Bastick, 2012)?

In today’s digital age, commerce takes place on a global scale and commerce in cultural heritage follows suit. The global movement of information and images is facilitated by what Appadurai refers to as the technoscape - the global configurations of technology which facilitate global flows across previously impervious boundaries (Appadurai, 1990) - and the mediascape, the “distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information... and the images of the world created by these media” (Appadurai, 1990: 298-9). The inflections of these

images depend on their audiences, the means used to produce them, and the interests of those who own and control them (Appadurai, 1990).

The digital age has seen the rise of prosumer capitalism in which users are involved in both production and consumption activities rather than being bound to one or the other role. Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) outline the shifts in western society's focus from production (from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution), to consumption (beginning in the post-war 1950s to 1960s), to what is now known as prosumption. Under this new arrangement, companies have had to acknowledge the need to accommodate consumers' desires for recognition, freedom and transformative agency (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010: 18) instead of as a homogenous passive bloc to be sold to. The impact of prosumption on the power dynamic is recognized in the increasing "inability to control contemporary prosumers and their greater resistance to the incursions of capitalism" (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010: 22). The active involvement of the public is increasingly required in global spheres of cultural consumption as evidenced by the abundance of user-generated content associated with Web 2.0 technologies (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.). Participatory web cultures have become significant spaces for social and cultural engagement (Beer and Burrowes, 2010) and there is social currency associated with participation in these now valuable cultural brands and established media forms (Beer and Burrowes, 2010).

In the realm of heritage management, many organizations and practitioners have sought to 'keep up with the times' by putting forward plans to digitize holdings and incorporate multimedia elements in exhibition practices. Digital Cultural Heritage is now recognized by several international authorities as a positive change to be embraced to foster cultural rights. The UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage, for example, acknowledges that "resources of information and creative expression are increasingly produced, distributed,

accessed and maintained in digital form, creating a new legacy—the digital heritage” (UNESCO in Cameron and Kenderdine, 2007: 3). Such projects of virtual heritage may include virtual reality, 3D reconstruction, or interactive multimedia.

Digital and virtual heritage continues to grow in popularity worldwide along with a growing body of scholarship exploring various iterations of this practice. The relatively low-costs associated with maintaining digital records afford new possibilities for developing and displaying alternative narratives and interpretations to those offered by modern national institutions. Potentially limitless storage space and the ease of dissemination overcome the barriers of physical space and the prohibitive costs of large scale exhibition faced by traditional practice. Through their novel capacities for encouraging multivocality, the digitization of cultural heritage may enable competing interpretations of history to find new voice and new audiences. Concerns about dissonant or absent heritage may be addressed in the very affordances of new media. In his book, *New Heritage*, Kalay writes, “Not only does such ‘versioning’ eliminate the need to choose one interpretation over another, it also permits students and scholars to compare and contrast the different accounts, teaching them about evolution of the knowledge preservation process itself” (Kalay, 2008: 5). Indeed, we can broaden our definition of digital heritage to encompass “the complexity of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage such as the related social, political and economic issues surrounding the sites, artefacts and aspects of cultural heritage” (Kalay, Kvan, and Affleck, 2008: 11); shifting attention away from uniquely existing objects to the nature of their social significance, to which, arguably, heritage as such should primarily attend.

In recent years, virtual museums have grown in popularity internationally, with the majority of prominent museums operating their own online environments. Herman and Hazan

offer a definition of the virtual museum as “a digital entity that draws on the characteristics of a museum, in order to complement, enhance, or augment the museum experience through personalization, interactivity, and richness of content” (2013: 625). Virtual museums are committed to public access to the knowledge systems that might be embedded in their collections and displays, and to their long-term preservation for future interpretation. Kalay sees this repositioning as a “reaction against past heritage practice... [which was] presented from a single and unquestioned cultural perspective” (Malpas in Kalay et. al., 2008: 15). Where the museum was seen as the source of unquestioned interpretive power in establishing legitimate meanings, the virtual museum may allow visitors/users to engage with cultural content on new terms, outside the confines of the physical museum building and its overweening authority.

Digital cultural heritage is a political concept and practice that changes the way in which cultural content is accessed and in turn, the relationship between observer, expert, and artefact. As McCrary (2011) puts it, “Challenging traditional cultural engagement and proximity in the configuration of new knowledge spaces means a move [away] from that which has become intellectually rarefied to new political spaces for interpretation” (2011: 358). By democratising access, new heritage “diminishes the power of official gatekeepers and opens the floodgates to ‘un-authorized’ evidence and interpretation” (Kalay, 2008: 6). These modes of access work to dismantle Smith’s ‘glass-case display’ syndrome and to reclaim cultural heritage from the exclusive authority of ‘experts’.

It is nonetheless important to remain aware of the fact that the digital media is neither neutral nor unmediated. Digitization is always a form of translation involving a framing and re-presenting of cultural content by way of scanning, modelling, search engine optimizing, or a combination of digital management practices. As Innis taught us, media technologies carry their

own political biases. Technologies are ultimately cultural constructs able to be used and interpreted in service of particular cultural values. Roles and uses of a digital object are part of “an institutionalized culture of practices and ideas that is inherently political, socially and culturally circumscribed, and as such [are] implicated in the cycle of heritage value and consumption” (Cameron, 2007: 50).

How then are we to assess the changing practices of managing and communicating cultural heritage under the influence of new technologies? Klaus Müller (2010) introduces a taxonomy of seven elements which govern the exhibition of cultural content in digital cultural heritage environments which I will deploy as a frame of analysis for two case studies of Jamaican digital cultural heritage. I list them here:

1. Space: The two-dimensional display created in the online space reconfigures social and physical experiences to “the intimate interaction between the user and the monitor [or device].” (Müller, 2010: 27). At the same time, content becomes accessible on a global scale. By removing the referential frame of a traditional museum space, Müller argues, “[v]irtual museum “spaces” can take on any shape they want, but they lack the conventional authority and emotion a museum building evokes” (Müller, 2010: 27).

2. Time: Digital heritage is subject to technological notions of time, counted in seconds and bandwidth. Unlike the scheduled tours of a physical museum or cultural heritage display, digital sites “close only when the server is down” (Müller, 2010: 27). Visitors/Users may dictate their own hours of access specific to individual needs.

3. Links: The online space connects cultural content through networks of information. Seeing the digital realm as “an enervated medium, a cabinet of wonders and curiosities” (2010: 28), the way

in which a visitor/user comes in contact with digital cultural content may be less intentional than the traditional museum or site visit.

4. Storytelling: Cultural content is always presented “as part of a larger story” (2010: 28). Who is speaking to whom? What story is being told, whose story is being left out?

5. Interactivity: Changing the way in which we acquire information, digital platforms have altered visual memory and cultural perception. J.A. Hart (2010) has written on the importance of interactivity in the digital age; content must be engaging to gain the attention of a distracted public. Digital cultural heritage must find ways to facilitate nonlinear, non-hierarchical methods that allow participants to contribute to an ongoing conversation.

6. Production Values: The increased flexibility and “low production costs of online shows make them good tools for small and large museums to re-define and innovate themselves” (Müller, 2010: 28).

7. Accessibility: As Müller points out, accessibility is the “main incentive” for institutions to take on digital heritage programs (2010: 29). A consideration of accessibility is the question of an audience’s access to necessary technological infrastructure. Digital content is bound not only by the technology required to access it, but also necessitates technological literacy or familiarity. In the Jamaican context, while levels of internet connectivity are improving, only a small percentage of the population has unfettered access to the online world.

In light of these considerations, new heritage cannot be ‘an objective reconstruction’ any more than the traditional museum has been; nor should “we risk being blinded by the technology and by the entertainment value of such heritage presentations” (Little and Shackel, 2014: 46). As with its analog counterparts, when considering digital cultural heritage, one must always question ‘who does this representation serve?’ and ‘who does it silence?’



Digital cultural heritage is in its experimental stages in Jamaica. What might Jamaican cultural heritage look like in the digital age? What can digital representations do for unseating or troubling hegemonic notions of the purposes that heritage serves? As Silberman observes, heritage is itself is a virtual reality, “an untouchable phantom”, “a once lived reality that survives only in fragments and can be experienced only in retrospect” (Kalay et. al., 2008: 82). How is the practice of managing and communicating cultural heritage changed through the influence of new technologies? As McCrary notes, digital archiving stands to “activate, engage, and transform” the social capital housed in information and cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, and archives” (2011). Digital spaces functioning as repositories of history stand to become centres of creation, experimentation, and innovation, fostering a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006). Writing on the rise of the participatory model in contemporary society, Henry Jenkins describes participatory culture as one in which there are “relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices” (Jenkins, 2006 cited in Henderson & Delwiche, 2013: 3). Among the benefits of a participatory knowledge culture are the creation of opportunities for diversification of creative expression and more empowered conception of community citizenship (Jenkins, 2006 in Henderson and Delwiche, 2013: 3). Digital technology and the internet have been the catalyzing forces for the realization of this model through their transformation of traditionally hierarchical structures of information dissemination, e.g. mass media outlets such as newspapers and television broadcasting. As Henderson and Delwiche (2013) write, “our world is being transformed by participatory knowledge cultures in which people work together to collectively

classify, organize, and build information” (3). To what extent has Jamaica embraced these possibilities? Three projects will be explored to address this question.

The Jamaica Heritage Trail (JHT) is operated by the Spanish Jamaican Foundation; a non-profit organization that undertakes various projects to facilitate cultural and educational exchange between Jamaica and Spain. In 2009, the IOJ opened the exhibition, *XAYMACA: Life in Spanish Jamaica 1494-1655*. The exhibition was to showcase the legacy of the Spanish in Jamaica through the display of physical artefacts dating back to Spanish rule. *Xaymaca* was controversial however, in its privileging of the colonial perspective with minimal attention paid to the contributions of African and Taino cultures. The exhibition and its virtual component were funded by the Spanish embassy as well as several Spanish-owned companies.

Finally, in 2012, the IOJ began a virtual museum project to “replicate the functions of an actual ‘brick and mortar’ museum” (IOJ, 2012). While the concept originated out of the central IT department responsible for developing and maintaining the organization’s websites, the Virtual Museum (VM) was initially intended to extend the life of costly temporary physical exhibitions. Since its inception, several exhibitions have been digitized and made accessible online. This project has broken new ground in the Jamaican cultural heritage landscape as the first such digital environment to be produced a public heritage body. In the private sector, the Jamaica Heritage Trail project presents cultural heritage material through the utilization of digital technology. These three cases represent potential new directions in cultural heritage management through their employment of digital exhibition platforms. As we shall see, however, the same three constitutive obstacles discussed earlier, continue to plague these efforts.

## 5. Case Studies of Jamaica's Digital Cultural Heritage

### *The Spanish-Jamaican Foundation Jamaica Heritage Trail*

It is perhaps ironic, albeit indicative of neoliberal conditions, that one of the very first instances of digital cultural heritage in Jamaica was instituted by an organization primarily representing foreign interests. Brand Jamaica is not merely a government initiative but one that has been appropriated by foreign interests operating in Jamaica, such as the growing number of Spanish companies and investors who are now themselves key actors in cultural heritage management. Under structural adjustment and neoliberalism, foreign ownership within the tourist industry steadily increased to 60 percent in 2009 (Stupart and Shipley, 2012) as multinational corporations, such as the Bahia Principe, RIU, and Iberostar hotel chain moved into the country. Spanish-owned hotel chains have established a poor reputation for themselves for violating building codes and engaging in activities causing environmental degradation along the island's coastline. Though some maintain that their presence has improved competitiveness within the industry (Williams and Deslandes, 2008), others decry the situation as:

...the second Spanish conquest of Jamaica': "similar to what happened in 1494 when Columbus landed and caused the annihilation of the Tainos... The Spaniards ignore and violate environmental regulations, building codes and permits, bribe public officials and seem to cast a spell on the politicians" (Simon, 2008 cited in Stupart and Shipley, 2012).

The Spanish influence in Jamaica is the result of over 160 years of colonial rule. Columbus landed in Jamaica on May 4, 1494, claiming the island for the Spanish Empire. The colony of Santiago was officially founded in 1509 as the Spanish colonizers sought gold in the New World. Settlements such as New Seville on the northern coast were built by Taino slave

labour, and while the conditions of the Encomienda system are no comparison to the atrocities that would later come under English rule, the Spanish interlopers oversaw the genocide of Xaymaca's (the country's Taino name) indigenous population within 50 years, until they instituted the 16<sup>th</sup> century trans-Atlantic slave trade to replace a depleted labour force.

Maintaining control of the country until defeated by English forces in 1655 at the Battle of Rio Nuevo, Spanish influence can be seen in place names as well as various buildings and structures that have survived on the island.

Jamaicans have vociferously denounced the growing Spanish presence, drawing parallels between the colonial interlopers of old and today's multi-national corporations:

“the Spaniards build hotels, not because they feel remorse over how their ancestors treated your ancestors during the first conquest. Remember, they came in search of gold and they did not find much, so now they come back for their gold in the form of financial windfall from tourism on our golden beaches. These financial windfalls are then repatriated to Spain.” (Salmon, 2008)

Seeking to escape increased competition in Europe, Spanish companies are attracted to the country's lower costs of production, its proximity to the US, and “the pervasiveness of the Jamaican culture on the world stage” (Williams and Deslandes, 2008). These high-density hotels offer significantly lower rates than their local competitors, with profits being exported to foreign metropolises. Organisations such as the Jamaica Environmental Trust bring legal action to seek compensation for irreparable damage caused to the coastline and surrounding environment, while others voice concern about the potential degradation of Jamaica's ‘tourism product’ (Stupart and Shipley, 2012). During construction of the Bahia Principe Hotel in Runaway Bay, one worker was killed and several others injured when a section of the building collapsed. Construction of

the hotel was plagued with labour disputes, and garnered the outrage of environmental groups and local residents. A 2005 internal report prepared by the Planning Institute of Jamaica recommended that the size of the project be reduced to comply with existing development regulations in Runaway Bay (Jamaica Gleaner, 2006), but the impact of these suggestions is unclear.

Still, the General Manager of the Grand Palladium Resort and Spa, owned by the Fiesta Hotel Group, insists: "We are not intruders here; we are partners. The only thing that is Spanish is the owners" (Jamaica Gleaner, 2010). The Spanish Ambassador to Jamaica emphasized investors' commitment to local industry by way of over US\$1.7 billion (spent, invested), and the positive impact the Spanish presence has made on Jamaican tourism sector growth:

"I am very pleased that I can say with confidence that Spanish companies play their part in brand Jamaica and are very much part of the Jamaican experience. They are very Jamaican, they promote Jamaican products and culture within their companies, because they know that is what the tourists come and look for, while at the same time keeping the spirit of the Spanish component of this industry" (Nuno cited in Linton, 2013).

The diplomat's conciliatory efforts seem to have fallen on deaf ears and it is to such ends of more positive publicity that the SJF was established in 2006 to "strengthen partnerships between Spain and Jamaica through sustainable participation in projects focusing on education, cultural, environmental awareness and community development" (2015). It is the de facto cultural and linguistic centre of the Embassy of Spain in Jamaica, receiving support from the Spanish diplomatic mission and various Spanish-owned companies operating in Jamaica.

With the exception of the international airport and the Embassy of Spain, membership of the SJF consists exclusively of Spanish-owned multinational corporations (MNCs). Abertis, a

Spanish-owned company and the majority shareholder in MBJ Airports Ltd, is the major company responsible for the redevelopment and operation of Jamaica's international airport. As the CEO of the airport modernization project expressed the fit: "Jamaica has an interesting culture and I can only say that Spain is all the better for having had the foresight to explore business options here, paving the way for other possibilities that can only serve to boost the country's offering to the rest of the world" (The Jamaica Tourist, 2013).

Other members of the SJF Advisory Board include a range of influential Jamaicans in the private sector, mostly CEOs of large private companies, as well as former Prime Ministers, the Hon. P.J. Patterson and Hon. Edward Seaga. Cultural heritage organisations such as the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT) and the IOJ, as well as UNESCO Jamaica and the Ministries of Health and Education are listed as partners of the SJF. The philanthropic efforts of the SJF supported the restoration of the Seville Great House and the establishment of the Seville Museum and Heritage Park in St. Ann. The foundation also encourages the teaching of Spanish language in schools and awards scholarships to Jamaican students at various education levels and institutions.

One of the projects to 'brand' Jamaica that the SJF has undertaken is the Jamaica Heritage Trail. In partnership with the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) and the JNHT, the SJF spearheaded the erection of signboards at heritage and historically-significant sites across the island. The project, which began in 2006, was intended to highlight the legacy of the Spanish presence in Jamaica as the signboards linked to form a heritage trail across the island. Initially brochures were distributed to various agencies and encouraged for use by JUTA and JUTC<sup>6</sup> tour bus drivers to engage visitors and locals alike. The project was later digitized to

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<sup>6</sup> The Jamaica Union of Travelers Association is an organization of tour bus and taxi drivers working largely within the tourism and hospitality sector. The Jamaica Urban Transit Company is a government-owned bus and transport

form an online interactive map and digital environment. Realizing that ‘Jamaicans aren’t the kind of people to drive around with a map’, representatives from the SJF have explained that the Online Heritage Trail could be created at no ‘real’ cost and would be more accessible than the physical signboards (personal correspondence with SJF representatives, 2014). The relatively simple tool is being utilized through the Ministry of Education in schools across the country. Attendant lesson plans outline methods of integrating the Online Heritage Trail into existing curriculums at primary up to tertiary levels. CDs are also distributed to History and Spanish language teachers at conferences and events. Representatives from the SJF promote the tool’s use through school visits and in-class demonstrations.

The values and motivations of the Foundation’s stakeholders are reflected in the activities of the SJF as a cultural heritage patron, including the Heritage Trail project. The JHT can be accessed via the home page of the foundation’s website, inviting ‘adventure seekers, students and teachers’ to ‘get to know the history of Jamaica’. The JHT opens in a separate window to the introductory section, which provides information on its development and explains how to navigate the interactive map on which there are 19 current entries. Users click on numbered icons overlaid on a map of the island to reveal information about the associated location and its historical significance. Highlighting areas such as New Seville (the island’s first capital under Spanish colonial rule), and Runaway Bay, where it is believed the Spanish fled Jamaica after the arrival of the English, quick facts can be expanded to reveal more detailed information in both the English and Spanish languages. The simple interface is easily navigated, geared as it is to students of a wide range of ages and skill levels.

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service operating in the Kingston Metropolitan region and surrounding areas. JUTC recently announced plans to enter the tour market.

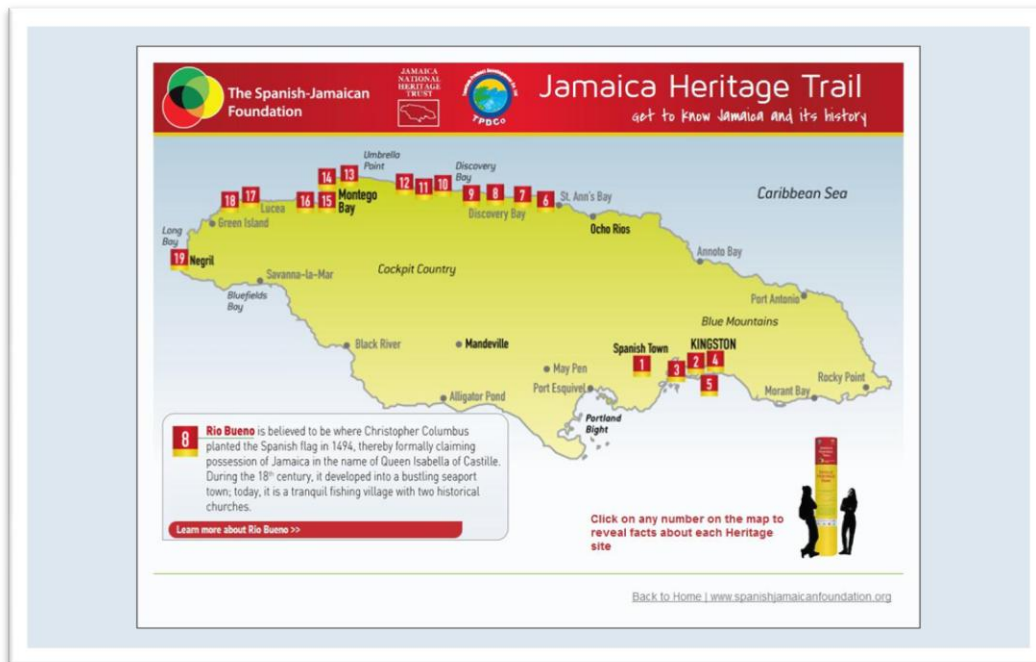


Figure 2: The Jamaica Heritage Trail

While the SJF’s JHT does not explicitly identify itself as a cultural heritage mapping project, its collaboration with the national heritage agency and other government organisations qualifies the project as an official documentation of the country’s cultural heritage resources. Cultural mapping has served as a method for advocacy in cultural development and planning internationally. As recognized by UNESCO: “...the most fundamental goal of cultural mapping is to help communities recognize, celebrate, and support cultural diversity for economic, social and regional development” (UNESCO, 1995). An interactive and inclusive resource map stands to be a tool for understanding culture as it occurs in geographical space; serving a democratizing function through the re-appropriating of historical tools of hegemony. Mapping and knowing, in this context would become a recursive rather than dictatorial process.

The format of an interactive map foregrounds geographical space and the placedness of cultural heritage. To some extent this arrangement eschews divisions of the ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ designations of traditional notions of heritage in its discussions of the cultural



landscapes of each featured location. However, all locations featured have been recognized by the JNHT and reference some sort of physical structure(s) recognized as a heritage site. With the exception of the Palisadoes in Kingston and Oyster Bay in Trelawny, the emphasis is not on the natural environment but on the built contribution of the colonial legacy. It focuses on northern coastal towns which were established as colonial settlements. The land is described in terms of its use for farming, agriculture and ports. For example, the entry on Mammee Bay in St. Ann identifies the area as:

the site of a large village established by Jamaica's indigenous people, the Taino, as early as 650 AD. Over time, the area has been used for growing sugar, indigo, pimento trees, coconuts as well as raising cattle. Today, it is home to several prestigious hotels (Spanish-Jamaican Foundation, 2015).

The tag can be expanded to reveal a more detailed entry, appearing in both Spanish and English languages, which further outlines Mammee Bay's history of ownership, agricultural use, and development, as well as its present situation as a "thriving residential community" and location of the RIU Ocho Rios Hotel.

Despite its links to Spanish contributions to Jamaican history, the map also includes some sites of English colonial influence. For example, Rose Hall and Falmouth, both heavily touristed areas, highlight the towns' colonial histories, their recent designations as Protected National Heritage Sites, and their development as popular tourist attractions. Close by, the Freeport shipping and tourism hub in Montego Bay, St. James seems somewhat out of place in this project because of its much more recent development - built in the 1960s. Home to several international firms and manufacturing businesses, as well as a luxury residential community, it is described as:

a multi-million dollar...hub of development in the western city of Montego Bay...afford[ing] cruise ship passengers a taste of life in Montego Bay, the tourism capital of Jamaica and known locally as ‘the complete resort’ (Spanish-Jamaican Foundation, 2015).

With the exception of Freeport and Gordon House (Jamaica’s parliamentary building), all entries pertain to the colonial influences of Spanish and English forces. There is little if any discernible mention of the African presence in Jamaica. This is particularly striking in the entry on the town of Falmouth in Trelawny which JNHT declared a heritage district in 1996. Although it is identified as the main shipping port for sugar in the West Indies and the world, nothing is said about its role as a major slave port and the dark heritage that the site commemorates. With many plantations operating within the parish, Falmouth was a significant point of entry for enslaved Africans whose descendents make up the majority of Jamaica’s population today. The Tainos are only mentioned in passing reference to their encounters with the Spanish and agricultural use of the land. Most glaring however, is the emptiness of the map on which these edifices sit - a blank space representing the majority of Jamaica’s people and places. While it is true that the digital component of the JHT project corresponds to the physical heritage trail erected by the SJF in conjunction with the JNHT, the user is left with questions about the selection process – ‘why was this site included, and not that one?’ A location’s status as a touristed areas or ‘place of interest’ to foreigners are no doubt what qualifies their presence on the map, as other less known formally recognized heritage sites in close proximity to highlighted locations are not featured on the trail.

In its emphasis on historical linear time, cartography draws on the grand narrative approach to history and heritage. The past is (physically) locatable in the present – as understood by Bhabha (1986 cited in Ianniciello et.al, 2014), Benitez-Rojo (1996), and Gordon (1997). The

chosen framing of the site's content, its wording and presentation reasserts the modern emphasis on materiality and the linearity of time. This representation of spatial knowledge and its connection to history maps Jamaica as a space of both historical and contemporary colonial achievement, excluding (even decimating) non-European legacies and the lived experiences of Jamaican people. The postcolonial tradition recognizes the significance of the map and cartography as tools of empire (Anderson, 2006) in the work of colonizing space and knowledge through the construction of a possessable other. While the format of the digital interactive map could potentially be used to undermine the authority of traditional cartographical practice through re-appropriation of the historically hegemonic tool by the collective, this has not been achieved within the Jamaica Heritage Trail.

Storytelling and remembering take place not only through the visual representation of spatial knowledge. This virtual map is an intersection of different epistemologies, namely modern Cartesian methods and postmodern notions of cultural memory, multivocality and simultaneity. However, the SJF's use of the map format re-inscribes historical hegemonic discourses about Jamaican cultural heritage from a European world-view. The overarching storyline is therefore in no way a revolutionary one but rather a repackaging of old narratives. To the extent that heritage is associated with a set of values society wishes to carry into the future (Harrison, 2013), the values implicit here prescribe the recognition of cultural heritage only insofar as it is of value for stimulating economic growth (which may not be any guarantee of social development), as well as the prioritizing of commercialization, servility, and the subjugation of the indigenous experience.

Interactivity is limited as users can navigate only insofar as they might hover over or click on an icon to expand the information. The map is the digital component of a multi-modal

project. It is intended to complement the erected storyboards that can be found at physical locations. The project does not seem intended to function in a collaborative capacity. Moreover, the JHT stands as an example of the way in which dominant hegemonic narratives and framings of cultural heritage are being adopted up in the space of digital heritage. Serving the interests of the parent organization's corporate sponsors, the JHT outlines a decidedly unchallenging historical narrative of Spanish involvement in Jamaican history. The SJF's projects serve as an outlet for the demonstration of corporate social responsibility by the beleaguered Spanish companies aiming to rebrand themselves as benevolent colonizers cum investing partners and heritage patrons.

Nakamura and Weiss have written on the manipulation of cultural heritage by corporations as "a sort of historical palliative for the comparatively short-term community engagement of the corporation, the corporation's inability to provide long-term employment, and its explicitly extractive agenda" (Nakamura and Weiss, 2012). Certainly the JHT ultimately constructs a narrative of Spain as a benevolent and invested contributor to Jamaica's holistic development. Spain and Jamaica are two countries that have a longstanding relationship – a 'past' as it were – and may now continue on such terms as partners in business. Parallels may be drawn with the De Beers Diamond Route heritage trail across South Africa which is intended to highlight the 'good that diamonds do' as tourists visit several national parks and reserves, as well as the 'Big Hole' mine in the town of Kimberley. It is widely known that the world famous diamond company carries with it a history of involvement in genocide, child slavery, and large-scale poverty within the African continent. Nakamura and Weiss describe this "tourist trail deftly circumventing the abject poverty of the unemployed laborers living in the center of the sprawling local township... [which] reveals the injury performed by the erasure of difficult

histories but, critically, in the process it also manages to weaken the sense of heritage's debt to history, opening up the possibilities for future radical disconnects between actual history and its representation within CSR (corporate social responsibility) inflected heritage projects" (Nakamura and Weiss, 2012).

Functioning according to a neoliberal logic of altruistic social participation (Nakamura and Weiss, 2012), such activities might be understood as the cultural heritage equivalent of 'greenwashing'. One must ask, to whom are these MNCs responsible? Their extra-national status leaves them beholden to neither home (Spain) nor host (Jamaica) country. However, as major players in Jamaica's tourism and hospitality industry, they have a material interest in the success of the Brand Jamaica project, which involves the realm of cultural heritage. The SJF's partnership with the JNHT, serves to authorize the organisation's position to speak on matters of cultural heritage and Brand Jamaica and position the Spanish-owned companies as corporate champions of a cultural heritage that carries forward a whitewashed colonial history (Starr, 2013). Their involvement also cements their authenticity as 'Jamaican' companies – as the Spanish Ambassador has declared.

King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain visited the island in 2009. The royals' visit was attended by all the pomp and pageantry *de rigueur*. The delegation was met with the requisite throngs of cheering, flag-waving school children interspersed with heavy security detail in bullet-proof vests. The two-day state visit involved tours of Spanish Town, the old capital under Spanish rule, as well as the newly built King of Spain wing at the Spanish Town Hospital. The renovation project was financed by Spanish aid. Then Mayor of St. Catherine, Andrew Wheatley, presented the monarchs with the keys to the city. At the ceremony, Wheatley proclaimed, "The city remains a national treasure and the Spanish's contribution will live forever

in this city" (Matthews, 2009). The visit was the official marking of a new chapter of relations between Jamaica and Spain. At an official reception hosted at the Grand Palladium Hotel, King Juan Carlos I spoke to "the deepening of relations and collaboration to the benefit of our peoples" as well as the contribution of Spanish investors to the development of the Jamaican tourism industry and their commitment to "the training of young Jamaicans" working in the tourist market (Jamaica Information Service, 2009). Both the King and Queen were conferred the national honours of the Order of Excellence and an honorary Order of Jamaica award, respectively for their contributions to the country's development.

As the Spanish multinational corporations lay claim to the 'Jamaican experience', they demonstrate an entitlement to a history which is not their own – constructing a heritage rooted in the physical places they now occupy. In a sort of inventing of tradition, the map highlights the historical Spanish presence in areas in which many Spanish companies are now located (such as RIU's Mammee Bay, Grand Palladium's Lucea, and Grand Bahia Principe's Runaway Bay). In as much as a Spanish presence was historically founded here, it is fitting that these companies should re-assert the authorizing presence of their ancestors. Indeed Salmon's phrasing of the 'second conquest of the Spanish' is more pertinent than it appears *prima facie* when one considers the old parallels between the accumulation of money and the accumulation of meaning in the colonial world (Cummins, 2012). Little reference is made to historical wrongs during the island's first encounter with the Spanish. Rather, a celebratory engagement with history adopts a *terra nullius* logic, making minimal reference to the indigenous Taino culture, and conferring legitimacy onto the corporate bodies appropriating the cultural heritage discourse.

As Nakamura and Weiss have pointed out "a corporation is limited to a cultural heritage that is cheerful and which promises fast-tracking upstream development" (2012). This is evident

in the pronunciations made by the Spanish Ambassador to Jamaica, emphasizing the quantifiable investments made by Spanish MNCs. The mobilization of cultural heritage content utilizing digital media is a strategic adoption of emerging trends in cultural heritage practice. Content is readily available internationally and also appears in both English and Spanish as Jamaica seeks to encourage business from tourists in surrounding Spanish-speaking countries. As discussed in a previous section, private sector involvement in matters of cultural heritage involves heritage's incorporation into the logic of neoliberalism. "Rather than actually supporting diverse histories and cultural values, CSR heritage works may instead be most effective at spreading liberal economic values." (Nakamura and Weiss, 2012), blurring the lines between public and private spheres. The de-territorializing effects of globalization are felt through an extra-national organization's appropriation of Jamaica's national heritage as Spanish MNCs successfully capitalize on Jamaica's commodified cultural heritage in the form of Brand Jamaica.

It is important not to deny the mutual benefits of a partnership between cultural heritage organisations and corporate CSR activities. The SJF has supported the under-funded JNHT through financial sponsorship, job creation, and increased media attention. The renovation of the Seville Heritage Park --the location of the JNHT's Annual Emancipation Jubilee -- has seen the transfer of immediate benefits to the local community. Seville is intended to recognize the meeting of the Taino, Spanish, African, and English in Jamaica and exhibits a collection of artefacts from these cultures. This site is frequented not only by tourists, but by schools and educational institutions at various of levels, clubs, and civic societies. Drawing attention to often ignored cultural heritage is necessary to keep it alive in the present. In Jamaica's struggling economy, these benefits should not be taken for granted. However, Jamaica's cultural heritage remains relegated to static and easily digestible ideas marketed to foreigners.

The SJF has developed a useful tool and the project ought not to be written off as antagonistic to meaningful engagement with cultural heritage by the Jamaican public. Rather than giving agency to a colonial narrative, the JHT project should seek to strike a balance between the CSR and marketing motives of the SJF's members and the range of cultural heritage values intrinsic to these places and their interpretation. Digital heritage mapping tools can be powerful ones for recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity towards social and economic development. The involvement of local communities in producing and verifying the information presented through interactive capabilities will enrich the project and its capacity as an educational resource for use in Jamaican schools.

### *Xaymaca Life in Spanish Jamaica: 1494-1655*

It would be a mistake to think that even the eminent Institute of Jamaica has been immune to the influence of the new Spanish interlopers. In February 2009, the exhibition *XAYMACA: Life in Spanish Jamaica 1494-1655* opened at the East Street location in downtown Kingston. *Xaymaca* was to “tell the story of the Spanish experience in Jamaica from the time of Columbus’ arrival in 1494 until the time of the island’s complete conquest by the English in 1660.” (Tortello and Greenland, 2009: 3). Exhibition curators were the husband and wife team, Drs. Rebecca Tortello and Jonathan Greenland; with Dr. Tortello serving as Chairman of the Board of Management of the Museums of History and Ethnography in the IOJ. She is now General Manager of the SJF.

The exhibition and its virtual tour component are accessible from the National Museum Jamaica’s page on the IOJ website. The introduction to the exhibition featured on the *Xaymaca* page outlined the 15<sup>th</sup> century competition among European countries for wealth and power in the New World (Institute of Jamaica.org.jm). Advances in shipbuilding and navigation



technology lead to “the discovery and conquest of lands previously undreamt of” (Institute of Jamaica.org.jm). The curators do at least acknowledge that the Spanish colonial period is:

...a difficult subject because of the sensitive nature of the history; successive historians have tended to highlight the worst aspects of Spanish colonial history: the incompetence or the cruelties of Spanish rule. It is true that there were many examples of these things in the Spanish Caribbean. However, that is a larger story and our focus is on *the small, fledgling colony of Jamaica that lay on the periphery of the huge Spanish Empire* (Tortello and Greenland, 2009: 4, emphasis mine).

The tone of the exhibition is discernibly Eurocentric as evidenced in such verbiage which advances a conquest narrative with only passing mention of the “shatter[ing] of many pre-existing cultures” in the wake of the epic development of the modern world (Tortello and Greenland, 2009: 3). While the Taino presence is marginally felt through the inclusion of some found artefacts, including food preparation tools, *zemis*<sup>7</sup> (religious carvings), and a recreated *bohio* (dwelling made out of thatch), there is precious little to be said on “the very dense Indian population of Jamaica” (Bryan, 2009: 9). It is the absence of the African presence which speaks the loudest, however. The exhibition makes reference to the people from which the majority of Jamaicans are descended as ‘African labour’. As explained by historian Patrick Bryan in the *Xaymaca* exhibition catalogue, “There was no transfer of institutions from the Spanish to the English, except for the Maroons and the institution of slavery” (Bryan, 2009: 18). Despite the fact that African labour likely built much of the works of ‘Spanish Industry’ (Institute of Jamaica.org.jm, 2009) on display, it is clear that these aspects of the historical period are *peripheral* to the interests of the exhibition.

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the original artefacts are located at the British Museum in London. The objects featured at the IOJ appear to be replicates.



Figure 3: *Xaymaca Life in Spanish Jamaica: 1494-1655* Virtual Exhibition



Figure 4: *Xaymaca Life in Spanish Jamaica: 1494-1655* Virtual Exhibition showing interactive elements

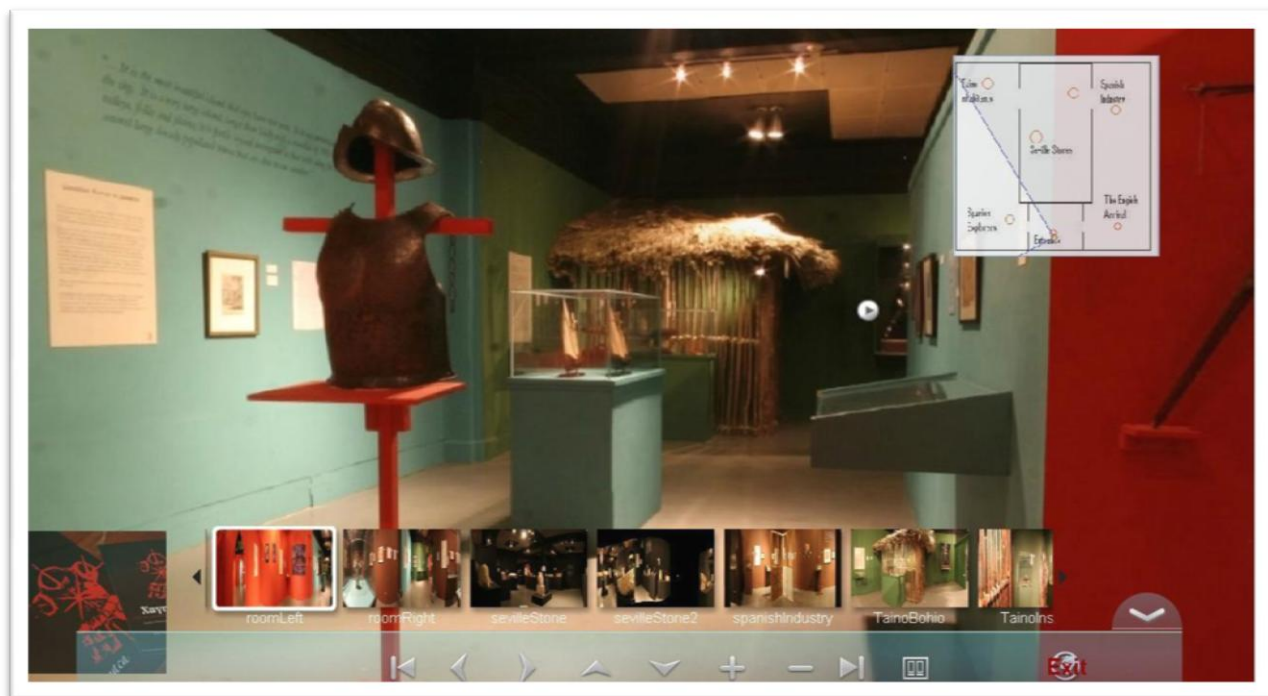


Figure 5: *Xaymaca Life in Spanish Jamaica: 1494-1655* Virtual Exhibition showing artefacts on display

*Xaymaca's* affirmation of colonial experience and imperial perspective was met with nothing short of outrage from some members of the Jamaican cultural heritage community who felt that the IOJ had 'jumped into bed' with the Spaniards (IOJ, personal correspondence, 2015) and was perpetuating a culture of white privilege in matters of representation. Whatever the case may be, such an exhibition was not in keeping with the expected priorities of a postcolonial national museum.

Much of the funds for the exhibition were from foreign sources. The SJF, American Friends of Jamaica (for the virtual exhibition component), and the Spanish Embassy in Jamaica are recognised as donors/sponsors on the IOJ website. The Ministry of Culture in Spain, The Museum of America in Madrid, as well as then Spanish Ambassador to Jamaica Jesus Silva are all credited and duly thanked for their input and assistance (Tortello and Greenland, 2009) in contending with the "paucity of [historical] material remaining in Jamaica" (Tortello and

Greenland, 2009). The organizers do not appear to recognize the irony of the fact of this paucity of physical artefacts in light of the systematic decimation of ancient Taino culture under Spanish rule.

The exhibition's opening came just in time for the official visit of King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain to Jamaica. In keeping with Spain's longstanding involvement in the "modernising and energising [of] the Jamaican economy" (Jamaica Information Service, 2009), *Xaymaca* signalled the IOJ's involvement in an elaborate public relations strategy to reclaim Spain's connection to the island and rebrand itself as a cultural heritage collaborator.

### *The Institute of Jamaica Virtual Museum*

Since 2009, the IOJ and several of its divisions have embarked on a project to digitize holdings in order to better preserve materials and enhance their accessibility to the Jamaican public. The creation of an online virtual museum emerged out of these intentions. The idea for a Virtual Museum of the Institute of Jamaica originated out of the central IT department with responsibility for developing the Institute's websites and communications systems. With an express intention to "replicate the functions of an actual 'brick and mortar' museum" (Virtual Museum, 2012), the Virtual Museum was originally meant to extend the life of costly temporary physical exhibitions. Since its inception in 2012, several exhibitions have been digitized and made accessible online.

The Virtual Museum (VM) is accessed by selecting the exhibitions tab on the home page of the IOJ main website. The Virtual Museum homepage features a slideshow of featured exhibitions as well as a series of tabs users may select to navigate the site. Users may scroll down to the bottom of the page to launch a media player which provides an audio introduction to the virtual museum:

*Explore an actual exhibition from the comfort of your home or school through an interactive virtual tour. Watch videos and explore the main themes of the exhibition with the curator...*

The About page outlines the VM as a “repository of Virtual Exhibitions...digital replicas of temporary physical exhibitions” (Virtual Museum, 2012). The components of the VM are:

1. Virtual Tour: panoramic view of the actual space.
2. Pop-ups (which can comprise of pictures with text, audio or videos)
3. Audio Summaries (mostly for overview of what the visitor will see or experience in specific spaces)
4. Curator’s talk/ narrative on specific artefacts, art work or topics featured in the exhibition
5. Video clips that were included in the actual exhibition.

(Virtual Museum, 2012)

The Help page builds on this explanation of how to navigate the VM, providing an introductory video tour and ‘How To’ audio clip. A search option allows users to run keyword searches for specific objects and information.

From the Exhibitions page, users can launch featured virtual exhibitions. Each exhibition begins with an Introduction page, where users can read the exhibition overview and view the curator’s statement video. Once launched, the virtual tour allows users to navigate a panoramic view of the space - which is created by way of digital manipulation of still images. Clickable icons allow users to move through sections classified thematically. For example, the exhibition entitled *Jamaica 50: Constructing A Nation* is divided into the sections: Entrance, Federation, Gifts, Environs, Art, and Politics. The curator’s statement discusses the rationale behind constructing the exhibition and considerations of representation – what was included/excluded and why. In the introductory video, Curator Shani Roper speaks about the process of developing the exhibition and organizers’ intentions to move away from typical representations of

independence towards a more expansive envisioning of the period. Users can read storyboards and interact with the exhibition through video, audio, and/or a combination of both by clicking on bright green icons which appear on selected objects or artefacts. Exhibitions can be viewed in full-screen or within a smaller window. The zoom option (while not available in all exhibitions) allows users a closer look than would have been permitted in the physical museum setting. The automatic clockwise rotation of the camera provides a 360° view and can be paused and navigated by the user manually. The videos page includes a selection of videos relevant to Jamaican independence and the sovereignty of the nation. Most videos are taken from the collections of the IOJ. Other sources include the Jamaica Tourist Board and the National Library of Jamaica.

It is not the intention of this research to be caught up in the overly-technical specifications of the project. Rather, my focus remains on representation of cultural heritage within the VM and the subtexts implicit in selected methods of display. Overall, the layout is fairly simple; intended for use by a wide demographic. The VMs introductory statement implies that it is intended particularly for the use of students; presumably school-aged children. The Edu-Games feature is another indicator of the identity of the intended audience. Some exhibitions include simple puzzle and quiz-style games based on their content. The VM also includes a discussion forum for user feedback, though it is not active. The first and only entry is dated from January 2012 and announces the launch of the VM.

Space is a significant element of the IOJ virtual museum as virtual tours are digital constructions of temporary physical exhibitions. The camera's right panning motion makes the user aware of a sense of space within a virtual exhibition. As a user 'moves through' an exhibition, the influence of the curator is very heavily felt throughout. Framed by curator

statements, users can explore only insofar as an artefact or display is equipped with interactive features. The majority of objects are not available for closer inspection. Users view the exhibition from a fixed central point around which the space rotates. Zooming in and out can happen only on this axis and users are only able to interact with items that have been equipped with that function. In this respect, virtual exhibitions are more limiting than their physical counterparts.

The VM allows users to enter, exit, and navigate exhibition spaces as they choose. In these respects, Müller's claim may hold true that the virtual museum space lacks the authority and emotion of the physical building. The digital media allows for the creation of an intimate and individualised experience as the role of the individual shifts from visitor to user. Simultaneously, the museum space is opened up on a global scale, as information becomes available wherever the requisite infrastructure is present. Thus the IOJ's VM, as the first of its kind in Jamaica, brings Jamaica's cultural heritage into the digital space as has never before occurred. Rather than simply replication or the creation of an electronic surrogate, a virtual museum is engaged in the opening up of an alternative space with new opportunities for interaction (Hermon and Hazan, 2013). Within this hybrid third space, the traditional museum experience is altered.

Digital heritage is subject to technological notions of time, counted in seconds and bandwidth, which are bound by physical infrastructure (Müller, 2010). The issue of digital time is therefore wrapped up in questions of accessibility. The virtual museum furthers the IOJ's wider objectives and mandate in its functioning as a tool for outreach and education; promotion; and for enhancing accessibility. Speaking with a representative from the IOJ, she explained, "it brings the museum into the home, you don't have to leave home to go to the museum" (personal correspondence with IOJ staff, 2015). In developing the project, the organizers recognized the

need to re-engage the Institute's Jamaican audience, "we wanted to get with the technology" (Henry, 2015). This is very much in keeping with official understandings of the role of digital heritage; consider UNESCO's acknowledgement that digital heritage ought to be "potentially accessible to every person in the world" (UNESCO, 2003). Unlike the scheduled tours of a physical museum or cultural heritage display, digital sites "close only when the server is down" (Müller, 2010). However, the idea that digital heritage is "unlimited by time, geography, culture or format" (UNESCO, 2003) elides the significant barriers to entry that digital technology presents, particularly in the Jamaican context. Who is able to access the VM? Who is using the VM and for what purpose? These are questions that require further research through the monitoring of the site by the IOJ. Ultimately, these exhibitions would no longer exist (in any form) without the preservation of the VM. Nonetheless, the true potential of the VM as a tool of democratization will not be realized until these issues of accessibility are addressed.

The rationale for the development of the VM lay with concerns of preservation and allowing digital versions of exhibitions to extend beyond the lives of their physical counterparts. Digital preservation is a future-oriented activity, ostensibly ensuring the accessibility of heritage information for future generations. In its application of new technologies and concern for future access to material which is fundamentally 'old' and 'outdated', digital cultural heritage practice involves a rethinking of modern notions of the linearity of time with which heritage has been conventionally associated. As mentioned in earlier sections, conventional understandings of heritage and "traditional museological conceptions of time (often as chronology), space (as belonging), and history/heritage (as past)" (Modest, 2012: 86) fit uncomfortably in contemporary Caribbean society. New negotiations can better address the situation as Bhabha saw it, where the past is contingent with and intervening in the present (Ianniciello et.al, 2014). The 're-



membering' and re-engaging with history necessary to make sense of the traumas and inequalities of the present is made possible through this translation and re-presentation of the past.

The *Jamaica 50* exhibition was produced through the collaboration of several divisions of the IOJ, including the National Gallery, Natural History Museum, and the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica. Indeed the subtitle 'Constructing a Nation' is an apt one, describing both the work of the country's nation builders and political figures during the 1960s, as well as the work of the curators in constructing a narrative of Jamaican independence as presented within the exhibition. In the introductory video, curator Shani Roper expresses the team's desire to move away from 'typical' representations of Independence, in favour of a more "expansive representation of the last 50 years" (Virtual Museum, 2012). During the process of conceptualizing the exhibition, the organizing team identified music, sports, and political violence as key issues to be featured in a representation of Jamaica's independent development. Roper explains that this process resulted in a realization of the inadequacy of the collections of the IOJ Museums of History and Ethnography to represent the development of these key issues materially, "We had to rethink how we would represent the last 50 years...using the collection" (vm.ioj.com, 2012). That the holdings of a national museum are unable to effectively present a picture of its country's independent life is significant.



Figure 6: Landing page of the *Jamaica 50: Constructing a Nation* Exhibition featured in the IOJ Virtual Museum

Roper outlines the process of thinking about the 50 years of independence ‘materially’.

The exhibition considers three major thematic areas: Independence celebrations, Jamaica’s natural and ecological landscape, and contributions from the visual and performing arts. Official Independence celebrations and the failure of the West Indies Federation (which led to Jamaica becoming an independent state) are showcased through the incorporation of video and audio elements. Clips from a popular documentary on Independence celebrations in 1962 and symbols of nationhood: national heroes, symbols, anthem and pledge were duly included. Overall, the exhibition espouses a modern notion of nationhood and statehood, focusing primarily on the activities of official pageantry and commemoration. Items on display include the official uniform of the Governor General and gifts to the nation from other countries.



Figure 7: The Governor General's ceremonial uniform featured in the virtual exhibition

Roper also advocates the importance of the recognition of Jamaica's ecology as represented in the Natural History collection. Endemic specimens from the IOJ herbarium and animal specimens of species that have been extinct since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were included in the *Jamaica 50* exhibition. While plant and animal specimens from the herbarium collected over the last 50 years are ostensibly intended to highlight the natural beauty of the island, the connection of these elements to representations of statehood seems tenuous at best. The introduction frames Jamaica's biodiversity as an "essential part of Jamaica's potential economic development" (Virtual Museum, 2012). Although biodiversity is the basis of biotechnology, the connection between flora and fauna in its unaltered state and the achievement of national sovereignty is unclear. The presence of the specimens does however harken to the IOJ's colonial history and the 'cabinet of curiosities' approach.

It is evident that the IOJ's practices of display are based on traditional museological practice. The 'bigger picture' presented here is still in keeping with the wider narratives of the conventional museum. There is little space for users to voice their own interpretations, nor are they given the latitude to seek out more information about the topics with which the exhibition engages. As Müller (2010) has noted, virtual exhibitions and digital museum environments contextualize objects through narratives and links. Though some artefacts are equipped with interactive features, objects and information within the VM are static and unresponsive. The VM has not taken full advantage of the possibilities afforded by its digital nature but rather sticks to short, terse, and ultimately shallow, interpretations about a given object. It is my view that this is a disappointing shortcoming, particularly when an unbound universe of information is only a hyperlink away. Links to the IOJ's own collections, those of the National Library of Jamaica (which have also been digitized) or other suggested sources would enrich the experience and lead users on to discover more. In light of this, one may question whether the 'glass-class display' dynamic is challenged after all. When channels for feedback and exploration are so narrow, how can the VM be considered a space of experimentation, innovation and participation?

The values of the VM mirror those of its parent organisation, the IOJ. As state institutions, public museums are inescapably political. The VM project displays an emphasis on showcasing tangible heritage. The intangible – arguably the strength of Jamaican cultural production – is less represented. Throughout the IOJ's history of elitism, as we have seen, the privileging of the material has resulted in the marginalizing of non-European cultural contributions. In *Jamaica 50*, there is little reference to the dynamics of politics or the dissenting views about the desirability of independence that were voiced in the 1960s. Political issues are instead approached through the use of editorial cartoons. The works of editorial cartoonist Las

May, have been featured in national newspapers for over 25 years. His popular and often controversial cartoons find humour in topical issues and lampoon political leaders, entertainers, and international figures. Roper explains that the use of cartoons is intended to lead the viewer to consider the question ‘have we truly become independent?’.

However, a more apt question after viewing the exhibition may be ‘what is Independence really?’. *Jamaica 50: Constructing a Nation* is an anaemic representation of Jamaica’s ongoing struggle for self-determination. Roper closes her curatorial statement, “Has the exhibition been 100 percent successful?...coming away from it...we have started to think a little more critically about how we represent Jamaica in the last 50 years materially...[and] the areas in the collection that have to be improved”. *Jamaica 50* demonstrates that state cultural heritage management has been out of step with the people of Jamaica for some time. Even as the IOJ enters a new phase of reaching out to the Jamaican public through the adoption of digital technologies, the same difficulties persist. Once again, the disjunctures in conceptions of cultural identity held by policymakers, practitioners, and the people are made apparent - *Who we are, is not who you say we are*. As a cultural centre, the IOJ cannot truly satisfy the needs of the Jamaican publics until these differences are confronted and resolved.

## Conclusion: Future Directions in Jamaican Digital Cultural Heritage

The dynamic of the digital age is a distant descendant of something set into motion on sandy shores many centuries ago. The “disembedding and mobilization of island spaces into global networks and cyberspaces [or imaginaries]” (Sheller, 2007: 23) are not new phenomena but rather ongoing constituting forces of the Caribbean region, itself a product of early globalization. The spectre of “the virtual Caribbean of metropolitan fantasy” (Sheller, 2007: 33) continues to impact the lived experiences of Jamaicans today. The notion of haunting “as a constituent element of modern social life” (Gordon, 1997 :7) describes “how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities” (1997: 8). History’s haunting of the present characterizes the ambivalence and ambiguity of cultural heritage in contemporary Jamaica and points to the ghostly remains of a long history of exclusions and invisibilities. Discussing the legacy of racial slavery in the US, Gordon explains that present social reality is haunted by the ghosts of the past resulting in a “social totality vexed by the phantoms of modernity’s violence” (1997: 16). In like fashion, the past which has not yet emerged or been legitimized as history, to paraphrase Glissant, haunts the Caribbean. The project of neo-colonialism is sustained through the subsuming of cultural heritage into the logic of neoliberalism. Today, the vulgar politics of the nation brand echo the work of the colonizer’s brand which signalled the dispossession of the enslaved from the bodies they inhabited. As the Nobel Prize winning poet, Derek Walcott, has so beautifully put the matter in his poem, *Ruins of a Great House*, “The rot remains with us, the men are gone” (Walcott, 1986).

It is the work of cultural heritage, in its functioning as an active dialogic process, to exorcise these ghosts through the recognition of the impact of history’s exclusions and

invisibilities; that is, through the cultivation of a historical consciousness. Who then is truly responsible for cultural heritage and how can that responsibility be taken up politically? Why is the Jamaican experience open to the interpretation and manipulation of foreigners? As heritage theorist and Caribbeanist Alissandra Cummins observes “the question remains who is authorized to construct (or deconstruct) such a ruptured past, such a fragmented history? How is ‘the soul of the people’ expressed in these manufactured cultural identities? And what is the role of the individual within these frameworks?” (2004: 227). Insofar as heritage involves both economic and cultural capital of a nation, developing it is necessary. However, this development must be done responsibly with measures to circumvent or mitigate the negative consequences of its commodification. Ultimately, the development of cultural heritage should be an inclusive social enterprise in which citizens are granted opportunity to participate in processes of deliberation and interpretation.

As Suzanne Burke has noted, the Jamaican people have repeatedly shown themselves to be creative and resourceful in the face of challenges. As the cases of reggae, dancehall, and the Rastafarian culture have demonstrated, Jamaica’s popular culture has flourished from its position on society’s margins:

One of the most distinctive and consistent characteristics about the Caribbean is the way in which the ordinary folk have always tended to be one step ahead of their leaders in coming to terms with their constantly changing environment. In this regard, the cultural policy architects might consider the efficacy of formalizing the models of cultural and industrial development that have been generated by Caribbean people, without the benefit of much policy support... (Burke, 2007)

If cultural heritage is to be truly in the service of the public then policy must place it in the hands of the people. Digital approaches can make this possible. Though the examples of digital cultural heritage practice in Jamaica studied here have not utilized a participatory model, future projects must seek to improve on their shortcomings.

In order to suitably leverage digital technology to generate equitable exchanges of knowledge among populations, more research is necessary into levels of access to information communication technologies and their use by community members. Research carried out by Horst and Miller (2006) on the use of cellular technology by Jamaicans revealed the existence of strong networks between Jamaicans at home and in the diaspora. The rise of widespread cell phone use not only brought about significant changes in the dynamics of transnational families but facilitated the sending and receiving of remittances from abroad. In 2003, remittances comprised 17.4% of Jamaica's GNP and remain the country's largest source of foreign exchange. Cellular technology became the framework of this vital coping strategy for a large number of Jamaicans in tenuous economic situations (Horst and Miller, 2006).

Digital communication technologies have become *sine qua non* to a postnational age in which the nation and state are no longer coterminous entities. The Caribbean boasts one of, if not the largest, diasporas in relation to its size. Contemporary narratives of transnational citizenship often come into contradiction with national narratives that emerged out of anticolonial thought. The 'viable collective identity' of the modern nation rooted in a sense of territorial belonging is ill-fitting on today's reality of Jamaicans spread across the globe. Consider, for example, the vibrant Jamaican communities in cities such as New York, London, and Toronto, and their sustained connections to 'home'. Evidence of these connections may be seen in current debates over the extension of voting rights to the diaspora (Mullings, 2011) and the ability of Jamaicans



with dual-citizenship status to hold representational office locally. The institutionalization of migration (Burke, 2008) has seen the consistent relocation of the majority of the country's skilled and professional workforce and has given birth to a 'travelling culture' (Gilroy, in Burke, 2008) in which the transterritorial movement of members of Jamaican society fosters a "form of extended kinship over space and time with frequent rather than one-time movements" (Segal, 1996 in Dawson, 2007).

Digital spaces provide arenas for members of the diaspora across the world to express their transnational identities and maintain connections to their country of origin. Thus, as Chatterjee puts it, "the collective experience of electronic media creates the possibility of collective imaginings that are more powerful and far-reaching than the imaginative boundaries of the nation" (1998, 58). Where Anderson's newspapers were able to reflect a singular imaginary back to a diverse people (Miller and Slater, 2000), digital technologies have the capacity for multi-vocality, such that the bricolage of the Caribbean imaginary may be represented in a non-static way that can be at once affirming and challenging of the status quo. This new communicative space affords opportunities for the voices of marginalized groups to be amplified, enabling resistance and assertions of the legitimacy of alternative cultural values and agencies. It may also afford the space for the treatment of conflicting interests around class, colour, gender, religion and other divides as a creative challenge. As Horst and Miller's work illustrates, 'in the hands of a Jamaican' (2006) technology can be leveraged to effect significant social change at the community level both locally and globally.

The greatest challenge to a participatory model is that of access to digital technology by the wider Jamaican population. While the requisite infrastructure and literacy skills are readily available to an elite minority, future policy must prioritize enhanced accessibility to digital

platforms across all levels of society. Cultural policy, Burke seems to suggest, may be most effective by simply facilitating efforts at the community level and affording individuals the opportunity to join the global conversation of cultural consumption.

The power of the digital media rests in its ability to innervate historical information – to make it relevant. As McCrary notes, digital archiving is poised to “activate, engage, and transform” the social capital housed in cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, and archives (2011: 358). Functioning as repositories of history, digital spaces may become centres of creation, experimentation, and innovation. Missing in both the Virtual Museum and Jamaica Heritage Trail is the opportunity for user feedback. In the case of the museum, the adoption of collective participatory approaches invests the institution with “democratic authority to define cultural heritage” (Boufof-Bastick, 2012: 32). As Monty Howell’s (2013) letter to the IOJ intimated, the museum must recognize itself not as the singular authority on matters of interpretation and the representation of national identity but should seek to function as “a conduit through which the often multiple voices of the society are heard” (Cummins, 2012: 383). Therefore, digital cultural heritage must be a space of questioning, giving place to the lived realities and historically marginalized voices of the Jamaican experience.

Even as its authoritative role is arguably diminished in a neoliberal global village, the state must take care to police the use and representation of cultural heritage by private and foreign interests. Sheller (2007) warns local governments against becoming “hollowed-out virtual states” by ceding too much territorial and infrastructural control “to the virtual Caribbean of metropolitan fantasy” (2007: 33). I add to this warning the realm of cultural control in matters of cultural heritage and social identity. If the Jamaican people and the Jamaican diaspora are not active participants in the identification and management of their cultural heritage in today’s

digital age, they will find themselves once again marginalised, with historical racialized inequalities entrenched once more in a tourist plantation economy in which their cultural energies and achievements are once again erased by foreign financial overlords. As a Jamaican, I fear that we will never cease to be anything but that 'small, fledgling colony' on the periphery of a huge global empire.

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