THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA REVIEW OF BOOKS

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Lewis Gordon on Charles Ephraim

Paget Henry on Charles Ephraim

Natasha Lightfoot on Joanne Hillhouse

Adlai Murdoch on Paget Henry

Edith Oladele on her poems

Corey Walker on Charles Ephraim

Bernadette Farquhar on Emily Spencer Knight

Joanne Hillhouse on Short Shirt

Tennyson Joseph on Paget Henry

And Much More.....

THE **ANTIGUA** AND **BARBUDA REVIEW** OF **BOOKS**

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The Antigua and Barbuda Studies Association was founded in 2006 with the goal of raising local intellectual awareness by creating a field of Antigua and Barbuda Studies as an integral part of the larger field of Caribbean Studies. The idea for such an interdisciplinary field grew out of earlier "island conferences" that had been organized by the University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Education, in conjunction with the Political Culture Society of Antigua and Barbuda. *The Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books* is an integral part of this effort to raise local and regional intellectual awareness by generating conversations about the neglected literary traditions of Antigua and Barbuda through reviews of its texts.

Manuscripts: the manuscripts of this publication must be in the form of short reviews of books or works of art dealing with Antigua and Barbuda. Thus reviews of works by writers and artists from Antigua and Barbuda such as Peregrine Pickle, Mary Prince, Tim Hector, Ashley Bryan, Novelle Richards, Gregson Davis, Jamaica Kincaid, Edgar Lake, Althea Prince, Keithlyn Smith, Adlai Murdoch and others will be particularly welcome. We will also welcome commentaries on reviews we have published. Reviews should be no longer than six double-spaced pages, with minimal if any footnotes. Submit reviews to Paget Henry, editor, as word documents at Paget_Henry@Brown.edu for consideration.

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Table of Contents

Editor's Introduction

Welcome once again, dear reader. Welcome to the fourth issue of *The Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books.* As a single volume, I am very pleased with the way in which it furthers our central project of reconstructing the neglected literary tradition of Antigua and Barbuda. Much more than the three previous issues, this volume really helps to make clear the philosophical foundations and thematic concerns of this literary tradition. Indeed, this is the issue that is going to make you ask: "wait, ah so much philosophy we have here in Antigua and Barbuda?"

However, before getting into these rich and controversial philosophical issues, once again we have a fallen intellectual hero to recognize. Indeed, it is our philosophical hero that we must take some time out here to remember and to honor. In the summer of last year, we were all deeply saddened by the passing of Prof. Charles Ephraim, our first professional philosopher. It is primarily due to his work that this issue of our *Review* is so rich in content about philosophy in Antigua and Barbuda, and the larger black world. This is very important, as according to the old geography of reason the black world, including Antigua and Barbuda, was supposed to be devoid of reason and thus incapable of producing philosophy. Ephraim's work has made a major contribution toward the mapping of a new geography of reason. On this new map of reason, there is now a definite place for the philosophy produced by the black world, including Antigua and Barbuda. To mark his passing and to honor the important legacy that he has left us, we have decided to dedicate this issue of *The Review* to Antigua and Barbuda's first major representative in the republic of reason, our beloved philosopher, Charles Ephraim.

Prof. Ephraim received his Ph.D in philosophy from Yale University in 1979, specializing in the sub-field of existential phenomenology. For many years he taught philosophy at Mercy College in New York, and also at the Antigua State College. He was also the host of a talk show on the radio station ZDK. On the air and in the classroom, he was passionate about philosophy and its importance for our full humanization. Prof. Ephraim was the author of two books: *How To Become Your Own Person: An ABC of Effective Reasoning*, and his masterpiece, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism: The Burden and Responsibilities of Being Black*. We will certainly miss his engaging presence at the same time that must continue to draw inspiration from the works of his creative and insightful mind.

This issue of our *Review* opens with a short tribute to Prof. Ephraim by his niece, Prof. Natasha Lightfoot. Prof. Lightfoot's tribute is followed by three extended reviews of Prof. Ephraim's major work, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism*. These reviews were done by Prof. Lewis Gordon, Prof. Corey Walker and I. Prof. Gordon introduces and situates Ephraim's work in relation to the larger field of existential phenomenology and also to currents in Afro-Caribbean philosophical thought. Prof. Walker situates Ephraim's thought in relation to the rise of Black Studies in America and the larger field of Africana philosophy. In my review essay, I also introduce the reader to Ephraim's thought and situate it in relation to philosophical thought in Antigua and Barbuda. Together, these four contributions constitute our attempt at a proper honoring of our now silent but not forgotten philosopher.

After this tribute, we have two aesthetic essays for your reading enjoyment. The first is by our poet Edith Oladele, who has written about the process behind the birth of her African poems. This is a powerful sharing that you don't want to miss. The second essay is by our well-known novelist, Joanne Hillhouse. She has written an exquisite appreciation of that classic calypso album by King Short Shirt, *Ghetto Vibes*.

These two wonderful essays are followed by our book reviews. We have reviews of quaint and nostalgic books on village life in Antigua and Barbuda. These artfully written reviews were done by Bernadette Farquhar, Natasha Lightfoot, and Susan Lowes. Closing out our review section is an extended discussion of my book, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda*, which focuses on the life and work of V.C. Bird. It includes Prof. Anthony Bogues' interview with me about the book, five engaging and challenging reviews of it by five distinguished scholars – Professors George Danns, Adlai Murdoch, Patrick Lewis, Tennyson Joseph and Paul Buhle – and of course my spirited but judicious responses to these fine gentlemen. As you will see, the exchanges between us opened up for a second time many of the philosophical issues raised and addressed in the discussion of Prof. Ephraim's book. Hence the feeling of closing of a rich philosophical circle that marks this particular issue of our *Review*. Enjoy!

Paget Henry

A TRIBUTE

To Dr. Charles Ephraim, my family and I were deeply saddened to hear of your passing, as we all felt it seemed much too soon. You were a brilliant scholar. In your invaluable capacity at Antigua State College, the surface of your vast knowledge was barely scratched. As a scholar and as an extended member of my family, you served as a great example, and always encouraged my scholarly development. You were especially proud when I chose Yale University, your alma mater, as my own college. You meant so much to my sister and me, as you were the godchild of our grandmother, and in a fitting continuity between the generations, you then became our godfather. Godfather Charlie, for all of your love and support personally and professionally, I honor your memory.

May your soul rest in peace

Natasha Lightfoot

Review Essay:
Charles Wm. Ephraim's *Pathology of Eurocentrism*

Lewis R. Gordon,
Temple University

In 1958, in Monroe, North Carolina, two brothers, ages 9 and 7, made the mistake of playing with white children in the white neighborhood. One of the white boys dared one of the white girls to kiss the black boys on the cheek. She did. The black boys thought nothing of it and went home. The girl told her parents, however, and soon a group of white men were rounded up, armed with weapons in search of the boys. The police arrested the two boys on charges of rape, took them to the police station where they beat the handcuffed boys and held them without counsel for several weeks. The boys were convicted of rape and sentenced to being in juvenile prison till the age of 21 with recommendation of psychological counseling. The "psychologist" to whom they were assigned berated them repeatedly with his conviction that the boys should be "castrated." After a reporter was able to leak the story with pictures of the boys, through efforts from activist attorney Robert F. Williams, an international outcry eventually led to the boys' release. This bizarre story, one of many similar such events in American history, is known as "The Kissing Case of 1958."[1]

Ridiculous though this ugly episode in American history may seem today, acknowledgment of its typicality is one of the dividing points between the worlds of black and white. For as many in the white world will prefer a more sublime image of the nation, one in which such episodes are more exceptions than rule, what many, perhaps most, black Americans know is that it was more rule than exception. Worse, what is required to make "the national image" at stake see itself in such exceptional terms is one of an erased racial plurality, where the "real" nation is, in the end, white.

The United States of America is sick, argues Charles Ephraim.[2] Its ailment? Building on observations from the Danish Christian existentialist Søren Kierkegaard, the German existential philologist Friedrich Nietzsche, and the German Jewish turned Catholic philosopher Max Scheler—internal critics of European societies—Ephraim offers the diagnosis of *ressentiment*. This phenomenon involves aggrandizement of the self to the point of waging war on any aspect of reality that challenges such an inflated portrait. Its subsidiaries include egocentrism, narcissism, arrogance, xenophobia, racism, and, ultimately, misanthropy. Antiblack racism, then, is symptomatic of *ressentiment*. The United States, as a nation whose history is replete with racism and genocide, is a consequence of *ressentiment.*

Ephraim traces ressentiment back to the philosophy of Plato. That philosophy advances the subordination of reality to rationality, where the "really real" becomes formal and the essential dimension of man becomes his rational nature. This rationalist portrait makes the body, and by extension the erotic, suspect, and similar correlates between form and matter. The Platonic forms, for instance, rendered the sensory world, the world of appearance, a world from which to escape, a prison, as is well known in Plato's Allegory of the Cave. It also made the world of contingency, the world of practice, a problem to be overcome by the force of absolute knowledge. Thus, Plato in effect introduced the subjugation of ethical life in a moral philosophy of the subordination of the polis and hence the political. The philosopher king, for instance, prioritizes the epistemological over the ethical, which results in a conception of justice where other aspects of life and the soul are subordinated not only to rationality but also its supposed concrete form. Since not everyone could be successful with such a task, a hierarchy from man to beast emerges: "Man's project, on Plato's view, is to maintain his distance *qua* human as far as possible from the dumb beasts. He must thus be ever watchful that the throne of reason is not usurped by the other two functioning agencies [emotions and appetite or desire]" (p. 59). Now although this is a caricature of Plato, which Ephraim admits on p. 60, it took form in what could be called the emergence of European man as the thesis that "*Homo sapiens* could emerge only with a possible extirpation of man's Lower Self. By logical extension carried to the extreme, we have arrived at the European ideal of man as a paradoxical, de-eroticized creature: a caricature of the human person" (*ibid*). The path was set, then, for a de-humanized model of the human being, with its obvious contradictions, and the forms of investment in the production of the higher self through articulating alien exemplars of its lower elements. As some men became supposedly *more men*, others were being forced to assume, ever increasingly, the role of beasts.

In European civilization, two significant consequences are Ephraim's focus. The first is the self-aggrandizement of European civilization or Eurocentrism. The second is the degradation of erotic life as anathematic to European identity. The former leads to the suppression of other civilizations, with African ones representing the antipode of Europe. The latter makes black bodies, and especially black male bodies, sites of erotic conquest.

Eurocentrism is the value system that asserts, simply, that European civilization is not only better than all others but also that it *is civilization*. To be civilized, in other words, is to be European. Second, Eurocentrism adds the additional value of dessert: That European societies are the only ones *worthy* of representing civilization. It thus collapses into a self-presumed meritocracy. Ephraim examines and offers a critique of the many consequences of this view. History becomes the tale of European superiority. Thus, the achievements of blacks—worse, the necessary role of blacks in the building of the United States—are erased both in scholarly and popular cultural work. One could think of the heroic white man who conquers nature, supposedly inferior people, and any threat to the women who await his protective arms. At political levels, imperialism presents white supremacy as a civilizing mission. In more recent American politics, the degeneration of the debate over affirmative action is an example of presumed white merit and black disqualification. What is suppressed in all this, however, is what Ephraim calls the black burden. Blacks have contributed, without acknowledgment, to much of the originality of American civilization. Whether in the realms of technological development, labor, or cultural creativity (such as language, music, dance, and foods), the evidence points to the well-known adage in the black world: to receive the ordinary expectations of American society, blacks had be twice as good—at times, even four times so. What the plethora of attacks on blacks conceals in American society is the ongoing reality of white America as a tale of ongoing rewarded mediocrity.

This is not to say that there aren't whites who reach heights of excellence. It's simply that the logic of recognition is skewed. Thus, each white achieves as white and fails as an individual. Blacks, however, fail as black and achieve as an exception. The result is the invisibility of black achievement.

Building on Sigmund Freud's analysis of the reproductive function of eros, presented as "the historical model" (p. 214), Ephraim argues that white *ressentiment* is the dehistoricizing of reproduction into the thesis that only whites should reproduce. "I want to suggest, too," he writes, "that it is precisely in this light that we must understand Jefferson's humanely moving proposition that 'All men are created equal'—*except* Blacks, who were construed in the context of the United States Constitution as each a fraction of a person, each as three-fifths of a man. The Eurocentric paradigm of man excluded *a priori* the human reality of Africans and African-derived 'sub-humans'" (pp. 214–215). The result is a "neurotic fantasy-wish" (p. 216) for the extinction of blacks.

Blacks offer the threat of mixing with whites and, tautologically, making whites less white. This threat leads to special fears toward black women and black men. Black women are supposedly insatiable and full of desire. They are creatures of want, which makes the issue for white men one of resisting them. This means, in effect, that white men supposedly cannot rape black women because black women are incapable of refusing them. Black men, on the other hand, as beasts of desire armed with a penis become quintessential creatures of rape, since the argument is that white women supposedly do not desire them, which eliminates consent. But even if white women desired black men, the concern against mixing would render the liaison illicit. Ephraim goes further, however, and explores another dimension of this problematic schema. In the construction of whites as the paragon of rationality with neurotic investments in subordinating erotic life, a neurotic development emerges in relations between white men and white women: the white woman, *qua white* woman, must not be affected by her erotic life, and the white man must also seem the same, which makes the white man appear, in sexual terms, impotent. The black man thus becomes an expression of the white man's rage over his own (imagined) impotence. His potency becomes the many ways in which he can act—politically, economically, violently—on black men and black women.

The effect of this *ressentiment* on blacks and other people of color is to convince many of the supposed truth of the system of values that follow. It is, as W.E.B. Du Bois has shown, a form of double consciousness in which they see themselves only through the eyes of white *ressentiment*. After recounting the many ways in which many blacks in particular wage war on each other through adopting this problematic view of the self, Ephraim counsels the realization of the black burden of fighting for an accurate portrait of history and reality. Knowing, for instance, what Africans, the people who became black people, were really like and the importance of African history for the history of human kind are starting points. This path, which could be called critical double consciousness, involves chipping away at the contradictions of Eurocentrism and antiblack racism *without collapsing into ressentiment*. This crucial addition involves not substituting one system of anti-human values with another one of the same. For this task, Ephraim appeals to Nietzsche's famous critique of nihilism. He reminds us that "For Nietzsche, the highest values are any and all those that *enhance* life" (p. 323). Nihilism, however, involves the highest values devaluing themselves, which means that what becomes most prized is that which ultimately diminishes or rejects life. The black burden becomes, then, as a struggle against *ressentiment*, the revaluation of values,

the revaluation of life. The affirmation of the African dimensions of the story of humankind becomes more than a question of truth. It becomes, also, an ethical necessity.

The Pathology of Eurocentrism is a major of work of Africana existential philosophy and Black existentialism. Africana existential philosophy is an area of African Diasporic philosophy that explores problems of existence as raised by the lived-reality of the African Diaspora. It is a modern philosophy to the extent that the African Diaspora is a modern phenomenon. The same applies to Black existentialism. That black people are a consequence of the modern world makes the study of problems raised by their emergence a modern one. The close engagements with the thought of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are indications of the existential scholarship informing the work. Ephraim is not exclusively indebted to European existentialists, however, since the work is also informed by the thought of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Frantz Fanon. Through engaging the work of these thinkers (and their nemesis, such as Booker T. Washington in the case of Du Bois), Ephraim is able to bring to the fore central problems of black existence such as the interpretation of black suffering, the meaning and importance of fighting for freedom, the search for meaning in a world premised upon one's eradication (what Abdul JanMohamed has described as the struggle with death-bound subjectivity), the importance of a historical critique of false history, the realization of responsibility even for what one is at first not responsible, and the value of values in the face of nihilism—namely, the blues.

More germane to Africana philosophy, as well, are the themes through which he offers his diagnosis of American society: he articulates its philosophical anthropology, offers a critique of its impediments to the furthering of freedom/life, and critically examines the presumptions of reason by which each is forged. In *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (Cambridge UP, 2008), I have argued that these are the three fundamental themes of Africana philosophy—namely, philosophical anthropology, freedom, and the metacritique of reason. These themes all come to the fore in various ways in this dense, profoundly detailed work.

There are also some striking additional features of the work, linked, in a way, to its own critique. Charles Ephraim was, after all, Antiguan, but save for references to such Caribbeans as Frantz Fanon, Marcus Garvey, and Stokley Carmichael/Kwame Ture, the text is through-and-through located in the United States with responses sought in Africa. There is an

intellectual reason for this—namely, that the U.S. is the prevailing super power and the main representative of white supremacy and Eurocentrism today, oddly even with being headed by a black man several years after the publication of Ephraim's text. I mention this not to demand some demonstration of contextual authenticity from Ephraim but to raise an important consideration, which is that the Caribbean Philosophical Association (CPA) was founded in Jamaica during the year of the publication of *The Pathology of Eurocentrism*. Moreover, the CPA grew out of meetings held at the Institute for Caribbean Thought, which had organized meetings on George Lamming and Sylvia Wynter, both of which led to demand for more concerted reflections on Caribbean contributions to the world of ideas. Even earlier, in 2001, was the meeting on philosophy at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, which led to the increased focus on African philosophy and Caribbean philosophy and the annual meeting on philosophy in Cave Hill. And, perhaps prophetically, the first international meeting of the CPA was held at the Accra Hotel in Barbados. And more, Paget Henry, the late Tim Hector, Charles Mills, Rowan Ricardo Phillips, and I had participated in a hotly debated and lively panel discussion on Caribbean philosophy at the 1998 Caribbean Studies Association international meeting, which took place in Antigua.

Ephraim's work emerged, however, as if in isolation. There is no reference to the burgeoning ideas from the Caribbean or even African America throughout the 1990s up to 2003, the year of the books' publication, although the preface and acknowledgments mark the completion of the work in 1998. An obvious companion text to *The Pathology of Eurocentrism*, for instance, is my *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* (Humanities Books, 1995), which argued that antiblack racism is an attempt to evade human reality through flights of misanthropy and other forms of bad faith such as the spirit of seriousness and sadistic attitudes toward embodiment, which Ephraim has identified as *ressentiment*. More unfortunate, Ephraim and I had a lost opportunity in additional ways since we achieved our doctorates through study in the Yale University philosophy department separated by fourteen years. As my first book was an expansion of my thesis, so, too, was his. The differences in our work emerge, however, from this problem of interlocutors. I had the good fortune to have M. Shawn Copeland on my doctoral committee, a specialist in Black Theology and existential philosophy, and Maurice Natanson, my main advisor, was a great admirer of Fanon. My first American Philosophical Association meeting did not prove to be a traumatic encounter as it tended to be for many scholars of color attending for the

first time because of the active role of the Committee on the Status of Blacks in Philosophy, which was headed over the years by such luminaries as Lucius T. Outlaw, Howard McGary, Tommy Lott, Robert Gooding-Williams, and Judith Greene. I also benefited, while I was a graduate student, from meeting Paget Henry at Brown in 1992, ironically, in relation to Ephraim, an Antiguan scholar who immediately became one of my primary interlocutors and over the years, along with Jane Anna Gordon, with whom I discuss ideas most. Henry and I had become colleagues at Brown from 1996 till 2004, during which we co-founded the Department of Africana Studies and developed our areas of Africana philosophy. Our work with our students, who include Nelson Maldonado-Torres (Puerto Rican and now President of the Caribbean Philosophical Association), led to the building of a variety of institutions for the production of ideas. Although not his intent, Ephraim's way of producing his work manifested the isolated, individual-rationalist model his argument rejected. The result, unfortunately, has been the slow recognition of his work by the primary community that would have seen its immediate value.

Another consideration of the work is the stark contrast between its use of Nietzsche and the prevailing scholarship of the time of its publication. The influence of Michel Foucault, for instance, led to the appropriation of Nietzsche, a conservative critic of modernity, by poststructuralists and postmodernists, especially in their valorization of his genealogical treatment of values. Yet, had the postmodernist and poststructuralist readers of Nietzsche paid attention to his critique of nihilism as symptomatic of decadence, where decay, we should remember, is the decline of life, they would have to contend, as does Ephraim, with the existential significance of his thought and the critical relationship it would have with postmodernism and poststructuralism. This quotation from Ephraim's reading of Nietzsche could easily be read as a critique of postmodernism and poststructuralism, especially among those who have waged a seeming outright war against nature in the name of the social construction of almost everything:

> But the modern Europeans, precisely because of their *ressentiment* condition, have refused the inevitable encounter with the natural world; and, insofar as they could, they have denied its naturalness, and its brute unclarity. To bypass the inevitable, they have masked what they perceived as the "ugliness" of the natural, and have proceeded to pamper themselves with the illusion that the world is as they desire it to be. They have thus become anti-natural, from which it follows that they have become anti-life as well (pp. 323–324).

The impact of cultural studies, an approach to the human sciences dominated by postmodern poststructuralism, on the Caribbean academy is such that these remarks by Ephraim should occasion much reflection. The valorization of processed bodies, packaged thought, and commodified sexuality (versus the erotic) are but instances of what could benefit from a concerted critique of *ressentiment*. Reading *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* offers important resources for this task. Bridging its gaps and building on its important insights is a stage that awaits generations to come, and, perhaps more pointedly and poignantly, among one of the resources organized in 2005 by his fellow Antiguan Paget Henry, *The Antigua and Barbuda Review*.

[1] For a recent portrait of this case, see the National Public Radio broadcast, "The Kissing Case and the Lives It Shattered":http://www.npr.org/2011/04/29/135815465/the-kissing-case-and-the-lives-it-shattered

[2] Charles Wm. Ephraim, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism: The Burden and Responsibilities of Being Black* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003). All parenthetical references are to this text.

Beyond the Man of *Ressentiment:* Charles Ephraim and the Reconstruction of Africana Philosophy

Corey D. B. Walker
Brown University

"Supposing Nietzsche to be black – but who has the will to concern himself or herself with such

a questionable conjecture? Surely for that we require a new species of philosopher (some of them black no doubt, for philosophers begin to entertain such conjectures just when black faces appear amongst them), imaginative, dare I say 'original' thinkers who bridge the rift in academia between Nietzsche and black studies."

Robert Gooding-Williams, *Critical Affinities: Nietzsche and African American Thought*

"I should constantly remind myself that the real leap consists in introducing invention into

existence. In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself."

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Mask*

"The revolt of the slaves in morals begins in the very principle of ressentiment becoming creative and giving birth to values. . . . While every aristocratic morality springs from a triumphant affirmation of its own demands, the slave morality says 'no' from the very onset to what is 'outside itself,' 'different from itself,' and 'not itself': and this 'no' is its creative deed."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

In her recent study of the philosophical novelist Charles Johnson, Linda Selzer makes this most prescient statement regarding the theoretical architecture of Johnson's literary practice:

[T]he factors that have forged a relationship between philosophy and African American literature historically – the reliance by black thinkers on nonacademic forms of writing; the need to recuperate perspectives that have been habitually repressed; the continuing efforts of black philosophers to infuse abstract arguments with narratological, phenomenological, and social immediacy – provide important critical contexts for understanding Charles Johnson's fiction.[1]

Selzer acutely highlights the complex relationship between Johnson's philosophical and literary commitments in attempting to craft an intellectual practice that responds to the depth and dynamism of the new world African experience. In many ways, Johnson's polyglot performance that troubles the boundaries of philosophy proper opens up a critical space for the exploration of black life and thought by excavating and reclaiming a critical black intellectual practice.[2] Such a critical black intellectual practice seeks to disrupt the dominating protocols of the academic disciplines that discipline and distort so much of black life and black thought.[3] With respect to the discipline of academic philosophy, William R. Jones astutely delineates the nature of this situation in his report to the American Philosophical Association, "Crisis in Philosophy: The Black Presence," when he asserts, "Philosophy has not addressed in a focused way the issues that blacks find relevant or stimulating. . . . Admission into the philosophical community, especially its inner sanctum, appears to require the adoption of the particular philosophical orientation controlled by the white majority."[4] Thus, Charles Johnson's philosophical commitments are uniquely expressed in and through the medium of literature in a critical detour that does not evade philosophy, but rather, reconstructs it through an/other means.

While Johnson's artistic and technical achievement is exemplary, he is nevertheless part of a tradition of philosophers and philosophically inclined thinkers who have sought to disrupt the imperial confines of philosophy in particular and, more generally, the very project of thought in the modern world. Indeed, Johnson is part of a generation of black philosophers who "in the process of legitimating their philosophical interests in the 1960s and 1970s, . . . investigated old philosophical questions from a new perspective, raised new questions, and sought to reform the practice of philosophy itself."[5] This generation of philosophers responded to the social, political, and cultural upheavals of the global black freedom struggle and the need for a requisite intellectual transformation that would give theoretical expression and clarity to another freedom. Theirs was not a simple restatement of the dominant philosophical tradition in black, rather, as Leonard Harris so rightly points out:

The tradition is formed, not by repletion of a body of codified ideas which individuals intentionally or unintentionally repeated with unique variations, but by showing the sense in which they participated in addressing situations similar to those of their predecessors of the same discipline. It is a construction. It is an adversarial construction, i.e., it is intended to

give voice to concerns that have been, within the western tradition of philosophy, considered illegitimate sources of truth because they referenced individuals and situations that call into question the legitimacy, universality, and meaning of the western tradition.[6]

The crucible of such a tradition helped to form and shape Charles Johnson as well as forge a generation of philosophers who blazed new paths for critical thinking about the very nature of society and human being and belonging in the world. Through this understanding, we come to see philosophy as a context of struggle and part and parcel of "the expansion of the continuing history-making struggles of African and African-descended peoples in this country (and elsewhere) to achieve progressively liberated existence as conceived in various ways."[7]

It is this background that provides us with the necessary coordinates to critically engage the overlooked and underappreciated *The Pathology of Eurocentrism: The Burden and Responsibilities of Being Black* by the late Charles W. Ephraim (1943-2010).[8] The Antiguan-born, Yale-trained philosopher was very much a part of that tradition of black philosophers in the 1960s and 1970s who, as Lucius Outlaw writes, were "working to define a place for ourselves within the philosophy profession, socially and intellectually, on terms that took into account and expressed our consciousness of being *black*."[9] But "the challenge of blackness" – to appropriate the critical concept and program articulated by Lerone Bennett Jr. in his bracing 1969 speech at the Institute of the Black World – taken up in philosophical circles was formally and forcefully placed on the academic intellectual agenda by the Black Studies/Black University debates of the 1960s.[10] At Yale, the question of blackness erupted on the intellectual scene with the likes of Armstead Robinson and the black studies movement which crystallized in that memorable conference of 1968 and re/presented in the extraordinary book *Black Studies in the University: A Symposium*.[11] It was this foundational challenge to the protocols of the academy and the dictates of disciplinary knowledge that fueled this intellectual insurgency and propelled the innovative theoretical feats of those scholars who embraced this event. Indeed, what was at stake in these debates was nothing less than "the integrity of knowledge's organization according to a profound commitment to the History of Thought and to culture" and it brought into the open the "mostly latent and only occasionally exposed differences in the university between the attitude that holds 'politics' and 'learning' to be wholly separate, and that which knows them to be in an uneasy symbiosis."[12]

The event of Black Studies galvanized the thought of black philosophers as they sought to philosophically explore what was termed "the black experience" and give conceptual and methodological expression to black philosophy. With such publications as the summer 1971 issue of the *Southern Journal of Philosophy* which carried the papers of a 1970 symposium on the topic of "Philosophy and Black Studies" to the now classic 1977-1978 collection of essays "Philosophy and the Black Experience" edited by philosopher and former director of the Brown University program in Afro-American Studies Jesse McDade and Carl Lesnor, black philosophers forged a veritable philosophy of the revolution.[13] In many ways, it is this sentiment that Henry Louis Gates Jr. captures in his effusive remembrance of the towering figure of Kenneth Ian Leighton Mills at Yale:

Mills, a Trinidad-born, Oxford-trained analytic philospher, who stood six feet six, wore a blue jean suit, had a harelip, drove a TR-6 and sported a conical-shaped Afro. He was the voice of the Revolution itself, Marx and Marcuse in black face; pulling quotes from Hegel and Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Fanon, Gramsci and *Mad*, out of thin air like Svengali, in a classical Oxbridge accent that the Anglophile wannabees on the Yale faculty could only envy. Ken Mills was bad, if ever bad there was, as bad as he wanted to be, and on the white boy's own terms![14]

Charles Ephraim thus became part of a stream of black philosophers who confronted the challenge of blackness in advancing a program of critical thinking that recognized the distortions and limitations of philosophy proper in pursuing multiple and varied historically attuned and politically informed projects.

Charles Ephraim's 1979 Yale doctoral dissertation, "*Ressentiment*, Neurosis, and the Black Experience," is a critical rehearsal of what would eventually become *The Pathology of Eurocentrism: The Burden and Responsibility of Being Black*.[15] The dissertation weaves together Ephraim's critical exploration of the concept of *ressentiment* in the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Scheler in formulating a psychological *and* political response to the configurations of power in a society defined by a systemic anti-black racism. Ephraim's work lies very much within the tradition of Yale's graduate philosophy program under George Schrader who "invigorated at Yale what became known as 'Continental philosophy' – those post-Hegelian figures, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger – who were barely recognized in the Kantian-empirical traditions taught in American Universities."[16] Indeed, after acknowledging David Carr's gradu-

ate seminar on "Phenomenology and Social Theory" as the site where "the seeds of the present work were planted," Ephraim goes on to signal the pivotal influence of George Schrader on his thought and work:

To George A. Schrader I owe a profound debt of gratitude, the many aspects of which, if catalogued, would constitute an embarrassing litany. Minimally, I should like to thank him for the many enormously fertile discussions he has had with me, and for his painstaking supervision of my studies; for his sensitivity to the contentious character of the issues with which I grappled, and for the full-blooded though sympathetic criticisms that gave final form to this essay.[17]

Ephraim's intellectual membership in the "humanist" camp of Yale's philosophy department did not serve as the absolute context of his intellectual vision however.[18] With Nietzsche and Scheler, Ephraim combines the theoretical and political work of Stokeley Carmichael and Frantz Fanon, among others, in positing the provocative claim that these thinkers "are urging a political program akin to Nietzsche's largely individual-psychological enterprise."[19] Thus, the theoretical and political emergence of blackness becomes the very condition of possibility for another world – "This new-found consciousness of Blacks, because it is critical of the self and the world, is the gateway to authentic, free-spirited existence. It provides a new vision of reality worthy of adopting. Their new freedom, and hence their new way of living in the world of me, will necessarily cause a stir and a change in the consciousness of white America."[20]

The final sentence of Ephraim's dissertation – "And the first step toward cure, as we have seen, lies in the region of a radical self-critique with a view toward self-definition" – can be read as the link between the dissertation and the book *The Pathology of Eurocentrism: The Burden and Responsibilities of Being Black*.[21] The intervening two decades that separates these two texts enabled Ephraim to fundamentally think through the categorical implications of *ressentiment* in light of the rise of a virulent conservatism in the North Atlantic world and the eclipse of the black liberation politics. This rethinking deepened the project, akin to the process detailed by famed artist and philosopher Adrian Piper concerning the relationship between her art and her criticism:

In the late 1960s my work was abstract, general, systematic, and formalistic. The more my habits of *thought* about my work, my situation, and the art context inclined in this direction (as the result of my increasing

involvement with analytic philosophy), the more concrete, political and confrontational *the work itself* became, and the more it issued from an understanding of my own sociopolitical position.[22]

Whereas Ephraim's doctoral dissertation ends with a penultimate section titled "The Pathology of Blackness" which aims to reject the dominant and widespread portrayal of African Americans as deviant, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* rejects out of hand the "Negro Question" or the "Negro Problem" as the proper beginning for an analysis of the organization of the modern world and posits "*the fundamental problem of the modern world is the white man* as he is constituted psychologically at present."[23] Ephraim thus foregrounds the psychological and political implications of the operations of global white supremacy as the critical ground for explicating the geopolitics of power and knowledge. The distortions caused by *ressentiment* – the roots of which "are traceable to a metaphysical mistake in Plato's philosophical system" – require nothing less than a radical and foundational disruption of reality and human being, the very possibility of which is signaled by the revolution in black consciousness (*TPE*, 41). Blackness thus becomes, if you will, the very precondition of another freedom and another form of being human in the world – "the new black man's emergent consciousness of universal human freedom" (*TPE* 129). In displacing deceptions masked in the politics and power of whiteness and its conceptual analogue "the Negro," blackness exposes the ontological insecurity in the exercise of global white supremacy that manifests itself in a systemic program of lack of integrity, moral corruption, and fundamental self deception.

For Charles Ephraim, Friedrich Nietzsche occasions a critical rethinking of the theoretical and political dimensions of a world and a worldview in which "the man of *ressentiment* acts as if the world is no different from the way he *imagines* it to be" (TPE, 70). Ephraim's turn to Nietzsche can be understood as a response to an intellectual situation within the dominant regimes of philosophy proper whereby "blacks look in vain for some hint of the importance and significance of their history and perspective in the recipe of Western philosophy . . . and that blacks do not resonate to the dominant and imperious voice of analytic philosophy and its preoccupation with meta-concerns that drown out other approaches and ways of philosophizing – ways that have their own lineage in Western philosophy."[24] Ephraim pursues Nietzsche's conceptualization of *ressentiment* which enables a powerful cognitive misrecognition that manifests itself in the spiritual malaise of European civilization and the pronounced need for the creation of an axiological schema that places European civilization at the apex of human

thought and development. That is, for Nietzsche's man of *ressentiment* there is a "deep need for self-aggrandizement, for strength to overcome his felt impotence . . . [and] project himself as dominant when in fact, he is still weak and impotent" *TPE*, 70). Nietzsche scholar Bernard Reginster rightly argues – against those who would deem objectionable and thereby blunt the force of Nietzsche's critique because of its psychological origin – "Nietzsche's psychological critique of value judgments is ultimately not fallacious because it concerns not the value judgments themselves but the psychological state of the agent whose value judgments are born out of *ressentiment*."[25] This is Ephraim's point when he mobilizes and deploys the notion of *ressentiment* with respect to the terrain of concerns relative to the black experience. In so doing, Ephraim facilitates the recognition of the necessity of rethinking the conditions that sustain the values orienting and organizing the modern world as well as reconceptualizing the black past and positing radically alternative futures. It is here where *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* performs an untimely thinking of Nietzsche in producing what Robert Gooding-Williams desires in a "black new Nietzsche [who] inspires new thoughts about black thought and black studies."[26] Thus, Nietzsche, or rather, this "black new Nietzsche," occasions a thinking of the new because "the new, or more precisely, the creation of new values is [Nietzsche's] central philosophical concern." But such a newness is not identical with Nietzsche proper for "what is most at stake for Nietzsche is nothing less than the possibility of a new beginning, the possibility of a recreation of *European* humanity in the face of the death of God."[27] Ephraim's identification and explication of *ressentiment* as a conceptual key for unraveling the neurosis of Eurocentrism afflicting modern civilization facilitates the articulation of an authentic newness because it critically pursues blackness not as pathology but as condition of possibility.

In as much as Friedrich Nietzsche opens a space for Charles Ephraim's critical project, it would be a mistake to read his work and thought as "Nietzschean." That is, to think *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* requires one to move beyond the coordinates of the philosophy of Nietzsche proper in order to properly construe the essential task of the text itself. In this regard, Ephraim's project requires us to go beyond traditional conceptualizations of philosophy proper in a manner analogous to what Lewis Gordon argues:

Different problems emerge in the course of philosophy as we begin to take the risk of going beyond philosophy for philosophy's sake. In some of my recent writings I have called this the teleological suspension of philosophy. And what that means is that there is a certain point in which a

philosopher is constrained by the conception of philosophy in his or her time. So in the interest of truth the philosopher is willing to give up philosophy as understood within his or her time, which is paradoxical because philosophy is the pursuit of truth. And that person ends up creating a new philosophy.[28]

The process Gordon highlights challenges scholars to press the limits of philosophy in an effort to better formulate the conditions for an original thinking. Interestingly enough, there are no guarantees that the end result will be understood as properly belonging to the category of philosophy. Indeed, Ephraim's wide ranging philosophical conversation – traversing the fields of axiology, epistemology, ethics, moral psychology, and philosophy of history – risks misrecognition because the conversational partners – Stokely Carmichael, John Henrik Clarke, Harold Cruse, W.E.B. Du Bois, Cheikh Anta Diop, Frantz Fanon, George G. M. James, John O. Killens, Oginga Odinga, Robert F. Williams, and others – are not traditionally and formally considered philosophers. But it is precisely this risk in and through which Ephraim is able to delineate the categorical effects of *ressentiment* and thereby reconstruct Africana philosophy beyond the thought, image, and materiality of the "man of *ressentiment*" in opening up the creation of a world and world-view "centered on the *human person*" (*TPE*, 444).

The Pathology of Eurocentrism explores *and* explodes the depths of blackness as the critical terrain for the staging of another experience of human being owing largely to an exemplary moment animated by the black world's revolutionary politics, robust theoretical innovation, and remarkable artistic creation. Sylvia Wynter has argued that this conjecture "led, for a brief hiatus, to the explosive psychic *cum* political emancipation not only of blacks but of many other non-white peoples and other groups suffering from discrimination, yet also, on the other hand, to their ultimate failure, in the wake of their politically activist phase, to complete intellectually that emancipation."[29] Ephraim's project charts a path for the "futures" of this emancipatory explosion by exploiting the epistemological and political opportunity caused by the recognition of the workings of *ressentiment* on the formation and evolution of the modern world. This critical and constructive project argues for a deliberate intellectual practice in confronting the generalized malaise which afflicts whites *and* blacks. In so doing, he raises necessary questions that inaugurate a probing of the terrain of conditions, categories, and conceptualizations in facilitating the comprehension of the concrete conditions that have congealed around "the

Negro." In pursuing this project, Ephraim thinks through the prevailing regimes of politics and thought that reinstitute an identitarian logic that is the image and imaginary of Eurocentrism. In Ephraim's words, the task is to "reiterate that the emergence of a new world order centered philosophically on Man and the significance of the human spirit, requires a new mode of thought, a paradigm shift from a life-denying Eurocentrism to a life-affirming philosophy of redemption" (*TPE*, 442). Ephraim's recourse to a redemptive philosophy amplifies that of Theodor Adorno who in the years immediately following World War II argued:

> The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. To gain such perspectives without velleity or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects – this alone is the task of thought.[30]

In contradistinction to the standpoint despair that issues forth Adorno's call, it is from the standpoint of hope as evidenced by the explosion of black thought and liberation where Ephraim moves the horizon of thought to contemplate the possibilities of existence that does not conform to a formalist geometry of the given. It is a critical examination and analysis of the philosophical dimensions of the black experience that offers up new frames of referencing and categories of thinking in elaborating the conditions of existence for humanity "beyond the man of *ressentiment*."

References

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[3] On this issue see Lewis R. Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006).

[4] William R. Jones, "Crisis in Philosophy: The Black Presence," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47 (1973-1974), 121.

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[6] Leonard Harris, "The Horror of Tradition or How to Burn Babylon and Build Benin While Reading A Preface to a Twenty-Volume Suicide Note," in John P. Pittman, ed., *African-American Perspectives and Philosophical Traditions* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 112.

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[15] Charlesworth Wm. Ephraim, "*Ressentiment*, Neurosis, and the Black Experience," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979).

[16] Bruce Kuklick, "Philosophy at Yale in the Century after Darwin," 330.

[17] Charlesworth Wm. Ephraim, "*Ressentiment*, Neurosis, and the Black Experience," v.

[18] For more on the "humanist/positivist" split in the Yale department, see Bruce Kuklick, "Philosophy at Yale in the Century after Darwin."

[19] Charlesworth Wm. Ephraim, "*Ressentiment*, Neurosis, and the Black Experience," 207.

[20] Ibid, 215.

[21] Ibid, 226.

[22] Adrian Piper, *Out of Order, Out of Sight, Volume II: Selected Writings in Art Criticism, 1967-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), xxvii, emphasis in text.

[23] Charles Wm. Ephraim, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism: The Burden and Responsibilities of Being Black* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), xv, emphasis in text. Further references to this text will be cited parenthetically as *TPE*.

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Charles Ephraim, Black Redemption and Existential Philosophy: A Review Essay

Paget Henry

> *The ultimate success for man is the attainment of human personhood. That is to say, to become authentically human against all odds is the mightiest challenge for man.*
>
> Charles Ephraim

This review essay is both a celebration of the life of my good friend Prof. Charles Ephraim, and also an examination of his magnum opus, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism*: *The Burden and Responsibilities of Being Black*. This work together with his earlier book, *How To Become Your Own Person: An ABC of Effective Reasoning*, established Ephraim as one of our leading, but under-recognized philosophers. If he had been a poet or a novelist, he would have been better recognized for what he did. His under-recognition has a lot to do with the under-recognition in Antigua and Barbuda of his chosen field of endeavor, philosophy. Before getting into a systematic review of Ephraim's important treatise, I must pen some words in celebration of the life of our philosopher.

A Short Appreciation

As a young boy growing up, Charles Ephraim was known to us, his friends, as "Charlie". My earliest recollections of Charlie are those I have of him on Tanner Street, in the heart of St. Johns. Being four years my senior, I was never really in his league as in those days the age gap made him "a big man" compared to me. However, we all participated in the ludic or playful aspects of Antiguan and Barbudan culture, which were, and still are, so important to identity formation among young boys and girls. This ludic aspect of our culture included playing mas at Christmas or during carnival, playing sports – swimming, cricket, football, rounders and athletics. This culture of play also included spinning tops, flying kites, nicknaming, and lots of old-talking on street corners or under someone's gallery. Complementing, these playful activities were the more serious endeavors of school and church.

More often than not, one of the earliest social identities that a young boy or girl will acquire would come from his or her performances in one or more of these fields of playful activity. Further, they were often the con-

texts in which one got stuck with a nickname. Thus from playing cricket, one may develop a reputation as a great bowler as was the case with Pat Martin. In the case of Wesley Challenger, it was for goalkeeping in the game of football. Jim Arindell was known to us for his swimming. Then, there was the legendary "Bennet". When we thought of mathematics, we thought of Bennet. I can recall one day, after my class with Bennet, saying to my friend Sylvester Watkins: "boy, he good bad!" In the case of the equally legendary Tim Hector, it was literature and the quoting of it. There were also the wonder boys, Gregson Davis and Patrick Perry, who were at Harvard and Caltech for their feats in classics and physics respectively. During the course of one of our many sessions of old-talking, Sylvester Watkins dubbed me "the philosopher" long before I had any serious thoughts about philosophy. Also, because I was over six feet in height before I was age fourteen, many of my friends started calling me "tall boy". Such was the ludic mode of constructing social identities in the youth culture that shaped most of my generation.

It was within the frameworks and performative values of this youth culture that I first came to know Charlie and he came to know me. Indeed, in spite of all our academic achievements and all the other things that have transpired in our lives, it was within the categories and horizons of this culture that we continued to see each other. He remained Charlie for me, and I remained "tall boy" for him. Playing mas at carnival and old-talking on street corners were the two primary contexts in which our paths crossed as boys. However, Charlie's primary identity within our youth culture was established outside of these two contexts. In particular, it was the very unique way in which he combined the ludic and the serious aspects of our youth culture that really made him stand out. Charlie's game was cricket, my game was table tennis. That is why our paths did not cross in the field of sports. He could both bat and bowl. But Charlie was also an avid reader. Indeed, he had quite early developed a reputation for excellence in languages, particularly Latin and French. As this avid reader, Charlie was seldom without a book. Thus if there was a spontaneous organizing of a game of cricket, Charlie would then have to do something with his book. And that something was to put it in the back pocket of his pants with the top of the book peeping out. Thus the image of him taking strike at the wicket with the top of his book visible in his back pocket became one of those enduring images of Charlie to emerge from the ludic strategies of identity construction in our youth culture.

I came to know Charlie outside the framework of this culture only after we both moved to New York. There I would run into him at some jumping house party "looking all fly". We would old-talk about particular persons, or news from Antigua and Barbuda. He would also share some of his experiences of being in the military and talk about his plans for going to university when he got out. On these occasions he expressed a strong desire to study psychology, never philosophy. I talked about my studies in sociology and we exchanged ideas on the similarities and differences between sociology and psychology. After such more serious exchanges, it was back to the old-talking.

Throughout his years of graduate training at Yale, I was out of touch with Charlie. I just assumed that he was studying psychology. In fact he was studying philosophy and received his Ph.D in 1979, with a dissertation entitled, "Ressentiment, Neurosis, and the Black Experience". Not knowing all of this, I was quite surprised when I heard that he was a professor of philosophy at Mercy College in New York and taking students down to Antigua and Barbuda. I first had the pleasure of extended conversations with Prof. Ephraim (of course after old-talking with Charlie) in the mid-1990s in Antigua and Barbuda when he was working on his first book, *How To Become Your Own Person: An ABC of Effective Reasoning*. These were wonderful conversations about philosophy and the humanizing powers of reason, which often included Mali Olatunji, who interviewed Prof. Ephraim more than once on his radio program, "Moulding Young Minds". I can only conclude this tribute by confessing that nothing in our old-talking, nothing in our conversations in New York or even our philosophical conversations in Antigua and Barbuda prepared me for the reading of his masterpiece, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism*. I turn now to the pleasant task of reviewing this 460 page philosophical treatise, which is clearly major transformation of the dissertation he wrote at Yale.

The Review

Charles Ephraim's *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* is a profound and moving set philosophical reflections on the phenomenon of white racism and the historic burden that it has placed on Africans and people of African descent. It is a major contribution to the fields of Africana philosophy, Afro-Caribbean philosophy, existential philosophy, and a founding text of Antiguan and Barbudan philosophy. As a contribution to Africana philosophy, this important text moves in the tradition of Africana existential phenomenology, and thus calls to mind the works of WEB Du Bois, Frantz

Fanon and Lewis Gordon. It makes its central focus, the problem of being human in spite of the racialization and de-humanization that stereotyped African people as "blacks", "negroes", and "niggers" during the colonial period. These themes of the de-humanizing consequences of negrification run through the works of Du Bois, Fanon and Gordon, and are taken up in very original and innovative ways by Ephraim. It is these novel departures in the field of Africana phenomenology that will guarantee this comprehensive treatise a permanent place in the history of Africana, Caribbean, and Antiguan and Barbudan philosophy.

As a contribution to Caribbean and Antiguan and Barbudan philosophy, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* falls into the category of works about America written by Caribbean people who have lived there for extended periods of time. At the same time that they address the racial situation in the U.S., these books also reflect important aspects of thinking in the Caribbean region. Located in this category of books, Ephraim's work makes us think of immediately of the chain of books that extends from Michel Maxwell-Phillips' *Emmanuel Appodocca*, through Edward Blyden's *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, CLR James' *American Civilization*, and all the way down to Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and Lewis Gordon's, *Bad Faith and Anti-black Racism*. This chain also includes the American essays of writers like Hubert Harrison, Marcus Garvey and Claudia Jones. As a contribution to this tradition of Afro-Caribbean scholars writing American society, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* is indeed a major work that is sure to give greater visibility to this Caribbean tradition of writing. A review that is just waiting to be done is one that compares Kincaid's *Lucy* and with Ephraim's *Pathology*, to examine the accounts of living in U.S. produced by these two major Antiguan and Barbudan writers.

Charles Ephraim and Africana Phenomenology

Philosophy often moves from the very concrete to the highly abstract. Phenomenology is among the more abstract practices of philosophy. But this was the tradition of philosophy in which Ephraim was trained at Yale, so we will have to put on our abstract thinking caps and journey through some rarely traveled seas of thought. Phenomenology is first and foremost a self-reflective as opposed to a purely logical way of thinking. It is a process of reflecting on the self with the aim of discovering and disclosing the pre-conscious or always presupposed foundations of our thinking and also of our existence as a self. The examining and disclosing of the already pre-supposed but not necessarily recognized foundations of thought is an exercise

in what is called transcendental phenomenology. The philosophies Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel, and Edmund Husserl all fall into this category. The examining and disclosing of the already pre-supposed but often not recognized foundations of our existence as a self is an exercise in what is called existential phenomenology. The philosophies of Frederick Nietzsche, Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Jean Paul Sartre all fall into this category. As we will see, so does the philosophy of Charles Ephraim.

More specifically, Ephraim's philosophy belongs in the category of Africana existential philosophy. African existential phenomenology can be define as the self-reflective discourse that examines and discloses the already presupposed but often not recognized foundations of the negrified consciousness of colonized people of African descent. Getting at the foundations of any human self is always a very difficult and incomplete process given the complexity of our nature. This complexity includes strong capacities for denial, resistance, repression, and projecting outward what is in fact inside. Consequently in getting to the philosophical foundations of the human self, we will require some technique that is capable of disturbing and de-centering our normal sense of self, and is also capable of recognizing offensive and defensive moves such as projection or repression. In religious self-reflection this technique of de-centering the self is often some form of prayer or meditation. In psychoanalytic self-reflection it is dream analysis. In philosophy it is the phenomenological reduction. This is the specific technique that philosophers have used to explore the hidden foundations of the human self or ego.

Trained in phenomenology at Yale by the well-known Husserl scholar, David Carr, Ephraim is a master of the phenomenological reduction. His philosophical thinking takes place within the framework of this reduction and derives a lot of its power from this ego de-centering technique. It is interesting here to point out some parallels between the training of Ephraim and Lewis Gordon, the Caribbean's leading phenomenologist. Gordon was also trained at Yale a few years behind Ephraim but studied with a different but equally well-known Husserl scholar, Maurice Natanson. As in the case of Fanon, Gordon, in his phenomenological work, makes extensive use of the bad faith elements that Sartre added to Husserl's articulation of the phenomenological reduction. The uniqueness and originality of Ephraim's *The Pathology of Eurocentrism*, particularly for Africana phenomenology, derives in part from its use of the concept of *ressentiment*, as developed by Nietzsche and Max Scheler, to craft his version of the phenomenological reduction. This Nietzsche-inflected version

of the phenomenological reduction is the tool that Ephraim will use to get at the racialized foundations of the white ego and also of the negrified ego of colonized people of African descent.

As a work that focuses primarily on the negrification of the African American self, Ephraim opens his comprehensive treatise with a question that has a very long history in the U.S.: is the African American assimilable into American society? Is he/she capable of becoming sufficiently Anglo-Saxon to make this integration possible? Ephraim poses this question because he wants to know and examine the white existential realities that presented African Americans with such a self- and culture-negating challenge in order to become full American citizens. In other words, why would they have to whiten and to de-Africanize themselves in order to be American citizens? For Ephraim, this peculiar challenge could not be understood without a careful examination of the existential foundations of the white self, and its corresponding needs for black inferiority.

This compulsion to niggerize, inferiorize, bestialize and exploit Africans, Ephraim links very directly to "an obsessive need for self-aggrandizement", which has very deep roots in the white psyche. It is a compensatory drive for supremacy over others, and in particular, over non-white others. The need for this type of self-aggrandizement is the potentiated libidinal drive that motivates and sustains practices of white supremacy, white racism and African negrification. In other words, white racism is one of the symptomatic or indirect ways in which the above need for self-aggrandizement manifests itself. As such a symptom, white racism, in Ephraim's view, is a cover for this more deeply hidden need that in most whites is unable to grasp or name its source and thus bring it under ethical control. It will be Ephraim's primary task to show that the sources of this need for self-aggrandizement are to be found in the feelings of *ressentiment* against the world that constitute some of the deepest founding layers of the European self. In the form of white racism, *ressentiment* and self-aggrandizement created the context for Ephraim's opening question regarding whether or not Africans could become European enough to assimilate into American society.

In Ephraim's view, given the present constitution of American society the answer to this difficult conundrum is clearly, "no". The answer could only be "yes" if the existential foundations of racism and their institutional manifestations were uprooted and overthrown. But this undertaking will not be an easy task as white racism is only a symptom or surface manifestation of the deeper existential realities of self-aggrandizement and

ressentiment. In other words, getting rid of white racism and its impossible demand that Africans become white Europeans in order to become full citizens, will require the removal of a three-tiered existential structure: 1) the surface manifestation of white racism; 2) the underlying need for self-aggrandizement that powers and sustains practices of racism; and 3) the unnamed power behind this drive for self-aggrandizement that Ephraim very effectively reveals to be *ressentiment.*

Ressentiment **as the Existential Foundation of White Racism**

In developing his comprehensive portrait of white subjectivity, Ephraim draws extensively on Nietzsche's phenomenological reflections on the foundations of the European self. From his writings, it is clear that Nietzsche was not very happy with the rising trends in modern European society. He experienced these modernizing trends as being motivated by passions that were deeply negative rather than affirmative. This negative passion was a compulsive urge to dominate and conquer the world, or what Nietzsche called "the will to power". Subjecting this European compulsion to a very subtle phenomenological analysis, Nietzsche came to the conclusion that this will to power was an offensive strategy that was compensating for experiences that had left the European subject feeling weak and impotent in the face of an overpowering world. These historic ego- and image-shattering experiences that left the European subject feeling exposed and helpless then became the source of intense feeling of *ressentiment* against existence itself. In vengeful response, this *ressentiment* has employed its inherent creativity in imagining and projecting itself as strong and capable of overcoming and conquering the world.

In Western literature, this *ressentiment*-driven desire to conquer nature and the world has been personified in the character of Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's famous novel, *Moby Dick*. In Western politics, Hitler really embodies this *ressentiment*, and also the imperial practices France, England Portugal, Holland and the U.S. To the extent that such compensatory projections of vengeance against existence eased the anxieties of the European subject, the more the latter relied on them. This reliance eventually resulted in these imaginary projections of strength becoming what Ephraim calls "existentially necessary defenses against reality" (68). Thus the compulsive nature of the European will to power, to overcome and take revenge on nature derives from the need to erase unendurable feelings of weakness in its encounters with the world. In short, behind the drive for self-aggrandizement, which frames and directs the practice of white racism,

is a deep resentment against existence for exposing the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the European subject. The creativity inherent in European *ressentiment* imaginatively transformed the pain of these weaknesses into a will to power and a project of vengeful conquest of the world. It is against this background that our philosopher defines white racism as "the fundamental ontological strategy by white people to fill the emptiness of their inner lives" (411).

The discursive dimensions of the will to power projected by the inherent creativity of European *ressentiment*, Ephraim suggests, included vital contributions from European philosophy. Indeed our author sees very clearly the marks and impress of *ressentiment* on the metaphysical foundations of European philosophy – particularly in the cases of Plato and Hegel. If ontology is our theory of being, of what is ultimately real, then metaphysics is the closely related discourse in which we specify the nature and identity of the dimension of being that we think is most real or foundational, and its commanding relations over the other aspects and dimensions of existence. Although we may not be able to make it articulate, it should be clear that most people do elevate a particular dimension of reality to this founding position, and thus have at least an implicit metaphysics. For example, in a religious metaphysics, God or Spirit is identified as the foundational presence with all other aspects of reality hierarchically arranged below this supreme agency. In a materialist metaphysics, matter or some fundamental part of it is posited as the founding reality upon which the worlds of biology, culture and spirit are erected. These foundational priorities and their justifications will influence how we prioritize and arrange thins in other areas of our lives. This is the way in which the often abstract and elusive discourses of metaphysics routinely influence everyday affairs.

In the case of Plato's metaphysics, Ephraim points out that the founding reality is the world of ideas, "a heaven of indestructible ideas or concepts" (43). Opposed and subordinate to this world of ideas were the natural and historical worlds in which we live. Unlike the eternal world of ideas, these worlds are ever changing and thus in constant flux. Because of this impermanence, Plato considered these worlds as unreal, illusory.

Ephraim goes on to suggest that this division between the world of ideas and our everyday world became the basis for a corresponding division in Plato's and the West's conception of the human being. This division was between a higher self of reason that understands ideas and a lower self of the senses that is largely impervious to them. In other words, "reason, rep-

resentative of the human in man, should control the senses, representative of the animal in man as the human animal" (45). It is in this context of a metaphysics infected by ressentiment that our author takes up the issues of race, gender and sexuality. He argues that the bestial readings of black sexuality by whites have been framed by the above Platonic division within the white self between reason and the senses. Thus a weighty part of the burden of being black in a white world derives from the fact that this world "has chosen to view pre-Europeanized black men and women, not as human persons, but as animals fit to be tamed" (327).

As white *ressentiment*-driven fantasies of greatness began to develop, Europeans began to see themselves as the perfect embodiments of reason and the only creators of great civilizations. At the same time, Africans were seen as gross embodiments of the senses and thus could be bestialized, negrified, enslaved and exploited. This conceit led to what Ephraim has called "the metaphysical mistake" at the heart of the Eurocentric view of the world. This is not just an historical or empirical mistake. It is an existential distortion with deep philosophical or more precisely metaphysical roots. These metaphysical roots are planted in the deeply hidden soils of *ressentiment* and in turn help to provide discursive support and legitimacy for its compensatory projects of imperial conquests of nature and non-white "primitive" societies. In short, for Ephraim there is a very strong underground link between European *ressentiment*, self-aggrandizement, and white racism on the one hand, and the metaphysical hierarchies of its philosophical tradition on the other.

This in brief is the metaphysically grounded three-tiered existential economy of the white psyche that is disclosed by Ephraim's Nietzsche-inflected phenomenological analysis of the European subject. It suggests that *ressentiment*, along with its many self-aggrandizing and racist projections, is a "disease" from which Europeans suffer intensely and from which they urgently need to be cured. This is the deep-rooted but diseased existential structure that has to be unearthed and overthrown for white racism to experience a real death. Only with such a death will the question of African American assimilation into American social life disappear or be posed in less Eurocentric and genocidal terms. This is the central existential argument of this very impressive treatise on Eurocentrism and the burden it has placed on the lives of people of African descent. In another of his powerful Christian references, our philosopher described this burden as "bearing the cross" that precedes "the crown" of redemption (422).

Ephraim and Antiguan and Barbudan Philosophy

Although *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* is focused primarily on the case of the U.S., there are consistent references in the text to suggest that the author intended its scope to reach beyond the confines of American society. Thus Ephraim makes many references to "Africans and people of African descent" (39), the Africaness of all Black people" (21), or to "Black people in the generality" (39). It is by focusing on these broader references that we can locate Ephraim's text within the larger literary tradition of Antigua and Barbuda that we have been trying to unearth in the pages of this *Review of Books*.

Ephraim's place in the emerging Antigua and Barbuda literary tradition is clearly one that straddles the dividing line between its existential concerns with the recovery of the black self and its search for a political philosophy of liberation and postcolonial social reconstruction. In other words, his work engages both sides of the twin philosophy that has dominated our tradition of writing for some time now. This two-part philosophy I have called poeticism/historicism. Further, given the many strong Christian references in the text – Ephraim calls his political philosophy, a philosophy of black redemption – our philosopher's work also engages the Afro-Christian contributions to this literary tradition that were dominant before the rise of historicism/poeticism. This black redemptionist political philosophy is the ethical/practical counterpart to Ephraim's existential phenomenological analysis of white racism. In other words, it is his answer to the famous question: what is to be done? This ethical/practical project follows directly from Ephraim's activist conception of philosophy. At its best, this active nature of philosophy "points to the oughtness of the world with respect to the possibility of universal human improvement" (417).

The connections of the *Pathology of Eurocentrism* to the above three aspects of the literary tradition of Antigua and Barbuda emerge quite clearly when Ephraim, after outlining his *ressentiment*-based theory white racism, proceeds to consider what we can and must do to throw off the burden that this racism has placed on black people, including Antiguans and Barbudans. The place of his black redemptionist philosophy within the history of political philosophy in Antigua and Barbuda becomes quite visible as soon as Ephraim begins to tell us what practical steps we must take in throwing off the burdens of white racism. He tells us that "the first blow" in our fight for freedom is "effective organization, a united front" (158).

He then goes on to point out that effective organization "requires responsible black leadership" (158). It is Ephraim's extensive discussion of responsible black leadership that establishes his place in the Africana, Afro-Caribbean and Antiguan and Barbudan traditions of political philosophy. In his discussion of black leadership, our philosopher invokes and contrasts the models of leadership provided by Booker T. Washington and WEB Du Bois. The former represents a classic case of irresponsible leadership, while the latter is seen as the model of what black leadership should be. As CLR James was the dominant influence on the political philosophy of Tim Hector, Du Bois was the dominant influence on Ephraim's, who described Du Bois as "the quintessential Africanist" (285).

By responsible black leadership, Ephraim means leadership "that is essentially and not merely coincidentally connected with the aims of the masses" (158). More concretely, effective black leadership must be responsible to the masses, never to the oppressor, however friendly (158). Within the framework of these two crucial claims, Ephraim undertook an extensive and intensive examination of the political philosophies, practices and leadership styles of Booker T Washington and WEB Du Bois. In spite of their shared goals of racial uplift, Ephraim paid very close attention to the differences in their models of black leadership and the consequences for those they would lead. Ephraim objected strongly to Washington's conciliatory style of leadership, particularly his conceding of black political rights, as one that was not in the interest of African Americans. In contrast, he embraced very strongly Du Bois' style of leadership. What appealed to him about Du Bois' leadership style was his ability to see the existing challenges from the point of view of the needs of black self-recovery. For example, Du Bois' insistence on political rights for blacks all over the world, Ephraim links directly to the recovery by black humanity of a "sense of somebodiness, so crucial to the recognition of one's self as ontologically whole, integrated, free" (253). In short it is from his examination of the figure of Du Bois that we get the clearest statement of Ephraim's vision of the kind of political organization and leadership that would realize his black redemptionist philosophy. It is this organizational and leadership component of the practical side of his existential philosophy that links Ephraim to the tradition of political philosophy in Antigua and Barbuda.

As the heated discussions in some of the later reviews will make clear, I recently discussed this tradition of political philosophy in my book, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird*. In this text, my focus was primarily on the political philosophy of Bird. I divided the devel-

opment of his philosophy into four basis phases: ethical bad mindedness, black democratic socialism, black laborism, and partyism. In spite of these changing positions in Bird's political philosophy, from a metaphysical standpoint they could all, except for the first, be located within the tradition of Afro-Caribbean historicism. As such, they attempted to address the problems of black working class liberation and postcolonial reconstruction. In addition, these philosophies of V.C. Bird helped to provide the organization and leadership that Ephraim thinks is so crucial. Certainly within the innocence of the performative criteria of our youth culture the organizational and leadership skills of Bird made him a hero to Charlie and to most of us. Even though we cannot pursue it here, it would be very instructive to compare the concept of ethical bad mindedness in Bird and the concept of *ressentiment* in Ephraim. I think *ressentiment* can be viewed as a form of bad mindedness, which would explain the many convergences in Bird's and Ephraim's views of white people. Indeed, it would make a very interesting philosophical paper.

In my essay, "Philosophy and Antigua/Barbudan Political Culture", I sketched in broader and more inclusive terms the larger historical contours of this tradition of political philosophy of which Bird was a part. Going beyond Bird and his political party, I extended this outline to include within the historicist school the Jamesian Marxism of Tim Hector, Conrod Luke, Ellerton Jeffers and others in the ACLM, and also the black laborism of George Walter, Keithlyn Smith and other members of the PLM. Towards the end of the essay, I examined what I called "the crisis of black laborism" (2007:258). This crisis was the result of the black laborism of both Bird and Walter degenerating into philosophies of partyism, ALPism and PLMism. This trend towards partyism would soon engulf the UPP, the party that replaced the PLM. In all three of these political philosophies, the party was ontologized and lifted above all other aspects of black laborism including labor. By engaging in this conceit, all three form of partyism have equated its party's specific conditions for gaining state power with the fulfillment of black laborism. This is another example of what our philosopher has called "a metaphysical mistake". This is the mistake behind the triple degeneration of black laborism into opposing forms of partyism, and thus constitutes the philosophical dimension of the current crisis of party politics in Antigua and Barbuda.

Although he remained above the fray of partisan politics in Antigua and Barbuda, the Du Boisian models of organization and leadership that informed Ephraim's black redemptionist philosophy clearly placed him at

odds with the partyist trends that have come to dominate our politics. Further, his political philosophy differed significantly from Tim Hector's Jamesian Marxism, the earlier phases of Bird's philosophy and the black laborism of both the PLM and the UPP. The above partyist tendencies have now increased to the point where the leadership is no longer "essentially" connected with the aims of the masses. Party leaders now have too many aims that are in conflict with those of the masses to meet Ephraim's Du Boisian inflected standards responsible leadership. However, in spite of obvious tensions such as these, Ephraim never translated them into a systematic Du Boisian critique of the mode of party politics in Antigua and Barbuda or the philosophy of partyism that has helped to sustain it.

Much more systematically thematized in Ephraim's political philosophy of black redemption are his practical suggestions for the healing and recovery of the black self from its long night of negrification, which did not end with the gaining of formal independence or the passage of the Civil Rights Act in the U.S. He argues that it did not end for two basic reasons: first is the long-lasting impact of white racism on black subjectivity; the second is that the removing of the institutional manifestations of white racism is not enough to upend its existential roots in the soils of *ressentiment*. In the case of the U.S. Ephraim insists that "racism is still needed in white America for crucial psycho-ontological reasons as well" (411). In other words, the task of becoming fully human, in spite of our long exposure to the pathology of Eurocentrism, is still very much on the agenda. More than any other problem, this is the one that Ephraim really addresses and particularly in relation to Antiguans and Barbudans.

As the quotation that opens this review essay makes clear, the task of becoming fully human was for Ephraim "the mightiest challenge" that we as human beings could ever undertake. More important than increasing the annual GDP or one's annual income was the challenge of becoming your own person. This was Ephraim's special message to Antiguans and Barbudans. It was the central theme of his radio programs and his lectures. As our discussions of his views on organization and leadership made clear, Ephraim acknowledged poverty and the need for economic development as major challenges confronting black people. We also saw that, in his view, black economic development could not be separated from the regaining of full political rights, as both were necessary for the recovery of "black humanhood". However, the most important component of Ephraim's political philosophy for full humanization was not the regaining of political rights or the achieving of "economic emancipation" by blacks; rather,

these were important foundations and aids to our most difficult challenge of resurrecting black humanity after its near death on the cross of white ressentiment. This entrapment of the black self in white *ressentiment* is for Ephraim the biggest obstacle in the way of blacks engaging our mightiest challenge of becoming who we really are. Recognizing this obstacle, "black people have no alternative but to reclaim themselves, to wrestle free from the bondage of the *ressentiment* spirit that animates white life" (407).

In undertaking this challenge of becoming fully human, Ephraim argues very convincingly for a "commitment to self-knowledge" within an enlightening program of education. However, he continues, "self-knowledge is impossible without a full understanding of our heritage, a sense of where we have been" (407). Ephraim underscores the importance of self-knowledge by noting that from it "alone can come wholehearted self-appreciation" (407). This self-knowledge must be the foundation upon which practices of leadership, organization, and economic development must rest. To be without this self-knowledge is to be without the necessary foundation for real practices of redemption.

Given this importance of self-knowledge in Ephraim political philosophy, we can understand why the educational program he suggested must have at least four crucial aims. First, this program would have to raise the consciousness of black people; second, it would help them to see that the cause of their racial degradation was not in themselves but in the racism of the white mind; third, this educational program would aid blacks in understanding the nature of European *ressentiment* and its pathological need for self-aggrandizement that sustains the practice of white racism. Fourth and finally, it would have to provide blacks with the "truth about their history as a highly civilized and intelligent people belonging, properly, at the forefront of the march of civilizations" (413).

This last point in his educational program is very important for our author. We have already seen that there was a deeply rooted discursive dimension to the self-aggrandizing projects of European *ressentiment*. Indeed, we also saw that Ephraim linked this discursive dimension to the metaphysical foundations of European philosophy, as established by figures such as Plato and Hegel. As this discursive side of the compensatory projects of European *ressentiment* was further elaborated, this development produced what Ephraim has called a "cosmology of illusions". A crucial component of this *ressentiment*-driven cosmology of illusions was "a life-and-death struggle of Eurocentric historians to negate the importance of

Africa and Africans" (397). This struggle has produced major distortions in the history and culture of Africa and African diasporic people that must be corrected if we are to have a full understanding of our heritage. Having learned this foundational truth about themselves, black people "must then – with the earnestness of an existentially binding obligation – teach it just as thoroughly to their children and to all succeeding generations until the truth becomes known and accepted and respected universally" (413).

This educational component of Ephraim's political philosophy, which addresses so directly the problem of full humanization after negrification, connects him very substantively to the poeticist side of the literary tradition of Antigua and Barbuda. This tradition of writing has consistently emphasized the problem of humanization, and placed it, not in opposition to economic and political development, but above them in a manner similar to Ephraim. Thus our author insists that "the proposition that the social redemption of Blacks is dependent on their economic emancipation is notoriously problematic in its implications" (261). This is an insistent claim that has deep roots in Ephraim's humanist metaphysics. This metaphysics is the subterranean connection between him and the poeticist school. In both cases, this philosophical discourse produces an elevating of the problem of being fully human to the center of knowledge production around which all other aspects of the challenge of postcolonial transformation are arranged.

This underlying humanist connection with the poeticists is particularly clear in relation to the works of Antiguan and Barbudan writers such as Jamaica Kincaid, Edgar Lake, Dorbrene O'Marde, and Althea Prince. As I noted in *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda*, Kincaid's character, Xuela, from *The Autobiography of My Mother*, and Edgar Lake's unnamed character who identifies with the dead Harsh Ryder, from *The Devil's Bridge*, are quintessential portraits of ethical bad mindedness. However, if as I suggested earlier, *ressentiment* can be grasped as a form of ethical bad mindedness, then it raises important questions about elements of *ressentiment* in Antiguan and Barbudan bad mindedness, and also about their differing proportions from the larger elements found in the European character. These would all be important points of exchange between Ephraim and Antiguan and Barbudan poeticists. The above list of poeticists could easily be extended across the region to include writers such as Wilson Harris, George Lamming, Sylvia Wynter, and Rex Nettleford. However, it is important to note that Ephraim approaches this problem of "black humanhood" with the art and skills of an existential philosopher rather than those of an artist or a poeticist.

To grasp the totality of Ephraim's political philosophy of black redemption, we must bring together this educational component and the organizational/leadership component examined earlier. Together, they must be seen as our author's overall response to the degradation of black subjectivity produced by *ressentiment*-based practices of white racism. This project of black redemption from white *ressentiment* "should thus be the song in everyone's heart, the lyrics on everyone's mind, the *lived philosophy* of every black man, woman, and child" (421). Ephraim's emphasis here on a *lived philosophy* is extremely important as philosophy for him must be active and transformative. He is convinced that "when black people will have attained self-knowledge by way of the New Philosophy of Redemption, they will be able to move with self-directedness towards their own liberation" (415). As such a lived political philosophy, black redemptionism is for Ephraim "philosophy at work" (417). This is indeed the Christian note of redemption upon which our author ends his major treatise.

A Short Critique

Because *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* is such a carefully crafted text, I had this strong impulse to just leave it alone in its completeness, to not disturb its impressive symmetry – in short, to just experience the pleasure of this text. But alas, if I did that I would be failing in my task as a reviewer, which includes pointing to some of the major problems of this work. In this short critique, I will raise four basic issues. The first concerns the existential phenomenological aspects of the text; the second, will address the educational component of Ephraim's philosophy of black redemption; and the last two will engage the leadership and organizational dimensions of that philosophy.

In his discussion of the existential foundations of white racism, Ephraim paid more than adequate attention to the works other Africana phenomenologists, particularly Du Bois and Fanon. The references to their work and how they related to his work are all extremely well done. However, there is a major omission from this list of other Africana phenomenologists that he engages. That omission is clearly Lewis Gordon. Before Ephraim's book, Gordon's, *Bad Faith and Anti-black Racism* was the text that brought forward the tradition of Africana phenomenology established by Du Bois and Fanon. In this work, Gordon emphasized the existential foundations of white racism, in practices of bad faith, over its institutional foundations in a manner similar to Ephraim. However, Gordon rooted his phenomenological theorizing of whiteness in the existential dynamics of evading

freedom (in the Sartrean sense) through falling into bad faith. Thus he defines the racist as "a figure who hides from himself by taking false or evasive attitudes toward people of another race. The anti-black racist, is a person who holds these attitudes towards black people" (1995:94). It would have been good to read Ephraim's responses to Gordon's use of the concept of evading the nausea that accompanies existential freedom to explain white racism as opposed to the concept of ressentiment. In short, the existential foundations of *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* would definitely have been enriched by an extensive engagement with the work of Lewis Gordon.

My second critical point brings me to the educational component of Ephraim's philosophical interventions in the interest of re-humanization after negrification in the grip of white *ressentiment*. This program of inner or subjective transformation, although articulated with such passion and elegance, needed to be spelled out in greater detail. What exactly are the difficulties that make becoming fully human "the mightiest challenge for man"? These obstacles were not identified. What were some of the reasons why individuals and societies have failed to meet this challenge in the past? These too were not identified in the interest of making sure that we would avoid them this time around. In further specifying these difficulties in becoming fully human, Ephraim could have turned more directly to the Caribbean poeticist tradition. Its members have wrestled long and hard with this problem. Given the strong Christian references in his text, the novels and essays of Wilson Harris in particular would have been a major help in making more concrete the challenges of becoming fully human after our long night of negrification. Here we can recognize an interesting overlap between existential phenomenological approaches to the self and those of our poeticists.

My third ctitical point will engage the organizational and leadership component of Ephraim's political philosophy of black redemption. As noted earlier, he approaches these problems through the opposing figures of Booker T. Washington and WEB Du Bois. The major problem created by this approach is one that forces Ephraim to look at the present period in race relations through the lens of the period from the 1890s to the 1960s. As a result, that particular era becomes the paradigmatic period for the analysis of black leadership. This move in turn makes it difficult for Ephraim to grasp adequately the specificities of race in the post-1980s period. These specificities and dynamics of so-called "color blind" racism in the post-segregation period often get lost in the issues and concerns of the

1890s-1960s period. Here again the work of Lewis Gordon would have been helpful as it reflects so well the specificities of race in the post civil rights era. In short, the book needs to grasp the present period more directly and more on its own terms.

My fourth and final point brings me to the place of economic development in Ephraim's political philosophy. As noted before, it occupies a third-tier position in Ephraim's ethical/practical project for postcolonial transformation. This project placed at its center education and self-knowledge for full humanization, then the recovery of black political rights, and finally black economic development. This particular ordering of the components of his transformative project left me feeling a little uncomfortable. Examining my discomfort, I recognized there an old metaphysical difference with our philosopher, which Ephraim and I had spoken about when he was writing, *How to Become Your Own Person*.

In the terms of the metaphysical foundations of the Antigua and Barbuda literary tradition, I definitely came to intellectual maturity within its historicist wing, after letting the Methodism of my youth lapse. In that new discursive space, I developed a neo-Jamesian position that combined Caribbean dependency economics with James' theories of state capitalism and socialism. Clearly within the parameters of this new position the place of economic development was central. Next in the ordering of the components of my transformative project was political power for the working class, and finally re-humanization after negrification. At that time I really did not have an existential theory of the negrified self of African peoples, and no doubt underestimated the difficulties in its transformation. Ephraim and I had several conversations about this issue. Over the years I came to appreciated more fully the difficult challenges involved in becoming fully human. After reading, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda*, Sylvia Wynter recently said to me, "you have become a poeticist". She was pointing to my attempts at straddling the dividing line of our literary tradition. However, I cannot say for sure how much I was able to influence Ephraim on the issue of economic development.

Put a little differently, Ephraim and I had started out from opposing ends of our literary tradition, he on the poeticist side while I was firmly planted on the historicist side. Thus the metaphysical ordering of things that grounded our political philosophies was quite different. Recognizing these deep roots of my discomfort with Ephraim's placing of economic development, I decided to just appreciate this metaphysical difference

with an old friend. So I will refrain from splitting metaphysical hairs and priorities with our philosopher, and just note my disagreement with him on this issue.

These are the major problems that I see with this text. If they had been addressed, it is my view that they would have made this book even stronger. However, their remaining unaddressed has not really damaged or undermined the basic existential and political theses of this fine work.

Conclusion

From all that I have said about this book, it should be clear that *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* is a magisterial, visionary and elegantly written work of philosophy. It is profoundly existential, brilliantly phenomenological and astutely political. It bears these discursive features in such a way that it substantively reflects and engages Caribbean traditions of historicism and poeticism, while reaching back to bring forward important echoes from our Afro-Christian heritage. Out of these different streams of thought, the text articulates and delivers a powerful philosophy of black redemption. This philosophy will change how you see yourself and your world. I recommend this book without any reservations whatsoever and a thousand times over. It should definitely be on your bookshelf whether you are black or white, African, African American, European, Caribbean or Antiguan and Barbudan. Philosophy seldom gets better than this.

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BIRTHING MY AFRICAN POEMS

Edith Oladele

My name is Edith Oladele nee' Tomlinson. My father, Arthur was the second son of Gershom and SusannaTomlinson, he was born in Bolans village on July 17, 1918. My grand-father "Pappy" was from Seatons and was among the first African descendants to join the British Police force; "Mama Suzie" was born in Bolans; her family name was Christian. One of my great- great-grandfathers was William Tomlinson of Sussex in England, he came to Antigua as a Methodist missionary and worked at Nelson's Dockyard as a wheelwright. He married Abigail, the daughter of emancipated Africans who had been married on the back steps of the Gilbert Estate and at Emancipation had been given lands at Newfield.

William and Abigail had twelve children, nine boys and three girls. One of their sons, Nathaniel "Papa Natty, named after Nathaniel Gilbert) was my great-grandfather; my grandfather Gershom, was his son by Frances of Seatons village; "Mama Suzie" was born to John Christian, a leading fisherman and elder in Bolans village and his wife who was the grand daughter of Elvira(I am yet to know her name). Suzie was the village belle and she and Gershom, a young policeman based at the Bolans station were married at Our Lady of the Valley Anglican Church on August 17, 1917; it was a big village affair. On Mama Suzie's side, her great-great grandmother Elvira was one year old according to the Slave Census of 1831. She and her older sisters Eleanor and Elsie are listed in the Codrington Papers at the National Archives, as 'coloured'; their mother is believed to have been Jane-Ann and their father was a Dutch man named Ashterman, an estate manager at Brecknocks Estate. Eleanor was the great-grandmother of Dame Bridgette Harris, and Elsie, the great-great grandmother of the Stevens' of Cedar Grove. Eleanor and Elsie were seven and five years old in 1831.

Like most descendants of African descent I have no idea of the names of my African grandfathers on my father's side, and that leaves a sort of vacuum deep within me. However, I know that on the side of my mother, Gladys Perry, her grand-father by her mother, was Charles Mills a full African who was emancipated in 1834. All my other grand and great grandfathers were Europeans. However, at nine years old after seeing that my father and his relatives who looked like the men who played the African music I loved to hear at Christmas and who I learned were 'Africans', I just I quite naturally, on the inside grew into an African identity.

People are often amazed that I write with such passion about Africa. I can only say that a kind of 'soul trance' comes over me and thoughts and words begin to flow through my pen and fly across the paper until the poem is emptied from my soul.

It was a hot, dusty humid afternoon in Douala. The team had been in Cameroon only a few days and was finding it difficult to adjust to the dense tropical atmosphere. The big strapping Antiguan men lay draped across the chairs in the living room sapped of their strength.

I went into the cool of the air conditioned bedroom to rest; as soon as my body hit the bed, I felt 'it' churn and rise from deep within the pit of my stomach, like a gush of water springing up from my belly it came accompanied by an overwhelming sense of loss and longing for wholeness, I was crying within and the cry took form beneath my pen on the paper before me.

O AFRICA, THE CRY OF MY HEART
March 27, 2005 Douala

O, Africa, the cry of my heart is you!
I love you,
I am proud of you
So unique and beautiful you are.

I hear your name and wonder from where did my parents come?
On Africa land where did their soles last drag their native earth.
Whose foot first touched this strange Antiguan soil?

O Africa, I cry for you, I cry for you with longing.
Where are our navel strings buried?
Somewhere Africa, somewhere in you.
What songs did our mothers sing?
To what rhythm did they dance in the dust
What language spoken in our ears to comfort youthful tears.

O Africa, the cry of my heart is you!
The bottomless cry of my heart is you!
Would you know my love?
Would you know my pain?
Would you care that I longed for you and wondered why you never came?

Would you know how I looked longingly across the lonely Atlantic
Knowing that you are there Africa my land, and
Wonder if you look across towards me
Not knowing where I your lost child could be?

Woi, Africa, the lonesome cry of my heart is you!
Silently I sit and wait to be enwrapped in you
I want to be loved by you
As a daughter accepted, as a friend returned.

Show me your love,
O! Show me your love my mother
My Africa, for the cry of my heart is you!
Hear my cry and call me back
Africa, to your mountains, so vast and green;
To your rivers, so calm and broad;
To your soil the colours of the earth so rich;
To your people my own.
O Africa, call me back with the longing that you love me too
That you long to embrace and shelter me
And let the wounded cry of my heart be silenced in you.

Desires and emotions hitherto unknown and unexpressed poured through my fingers; sadness, longing, wanting, questioning and hoping for an embrace and acceptance by the Motherland was frightening me.

On my return to Antigua, that experience caused me to enquire of many other Antiguans how they felt about Africa; to my surprise, the cry of my heart was expressed by all except one lady who said it was just always too painful for her to contemplate; other sisters said with pathos "I've always wanted to know where my parents came from." "I only just want to put my big toe on African soil and I'll be happy." When I read Kortright Davis' book, "*Emancipation Still Comin'*" I realized that I was not the only one who looked longingly across the Atlantic towards our ancestral homeland with a painful longing for a tangible reconnection.

In 1976 like so many persons across the globe, I was captivated by Alex Haley's book "Roots"; he showed the possibility of finding our families in West Africa. I almost died with grief when I realized that the book was recounting the horrible experiences of countless African women who had their loved ones snatched from them never to be seen again. Heart-broken

I wept bitterly and tossed the book on the floor, I felt I couldn't stand any more of the pain that it brought to read that dreadful account. When my soul quieted, I made two vows: I would return to Africa for all my ancestors who were never able to return and second; A white man would never touch my body.

I encouraged my father to read "roots". He was mesmerized and afterwards told me about an old uncle who was enslaved on Mercer's Creek Estate and who would dare to walk all the way to the far west of the island to Hatton Estate to speak to a fellow countryman who spoke the language of their village, then return to Mercer's Creek before dawn to begin the work day without being discovered. Daddy had no idea what that language was and I recall his lament so well: "If only we had one word like Haley did, we could have found out where we came from."

In 2004, I was invited to return to Cameroon as part of a reconciliation mission. A group of 38, 20 African Americans and 18 West Indians from five islands were going in the footsteps of Rev. Joseph Merrick, an ex-slave and a missionary with the British Baptist Mission based in Jamaica. He landed at Bimbia in 1843 among the Isubu people, set up a printing press, translated the Bible into Isubu, and built a school and a church named Jubilee Baptist Church. The foundation of Jubilee still exists. The coming of the Christians changed the lives of the villagers at Bimbia forever. Relations between some of the village elders who were idol worshipers and the missionaries grew steadily tense until eventually Rev. Merrick did what Jesus said a missionary should do when he was not welcomed in any town – he shook the dust of Bimbia off his feet and left. In fear at the Christian sign, the Isubu villagers fled en mass to Ambas Bay the village below which eventually became Victoria or Limbe as it is known today. From a population of almost 20,000in 1843, today fewer than 100 persons inhabit the deserted villages today and the place remains undeveloped.

Through "Cameroon 2004" I learned for the first time that Africans had a part in the trafficking of fellow Africans. I was brought face-to-face with the descendants of slave traders. On the beach at Bimbia where all captured Africans from the interior were taken to be transported to the West, Chief Samuel Epupa Ekum, whose great grandfather was keeper of the port, admitted the wrongs of their grandfather's against ours and asked with tears in his eyes for us to forgive them for their ignorance and greed. We pledged together to work in rebuilding Africa after slavery and colonial exploitation had robbed her of her people, her dignity, her land and her honour.

The day before we left to return to the Americas, a touching symbolic ritual of reconciliation was held; Pastors from families who had been engaged in the traffic, individually and formally apologized to each island group and America for the part their grandparents played in selling our grandfathers.

One young pastor, Dika Akwa, a descendant of the great King Akwa said that each time he thought of what his grandfather had done he felt ashamed. With this simple ceremony, witnessed by hundreds, years of pain and shame were expiated. And then, someone asked all Christians present to lift their hands in blessing over the 38 returnees and pray. They thanked God for returning to their shores and our homeland the children of those whom they had sold away. As this was going on I felt a settling take place within myself and I knew right then that my vow taken 28 years before had borne its fruit – I had returned for my ancestors and they were at peace in their homeland once more. They had returned in me.

This experience changed the whole concept I held of myself as an African person; it had become very clear to me: I was Antiguan born but Africa is my homeland and that was where I my heart lived. I began to look at the African experience in Antigua from a completely different perspective and began to perceive many things, among them:

One, the majority of Antiguans of African descent were visible because of the colour of our skins but we were treated as invisible.

Two, although ninety eight percent of the Antiguan population was of African descent our history was unrecorded and unmentioned as though slavery made us expendable.

Three, we are still an exploited people, making the sons of the former plantation owners wealthy and comfortable while we get paid meagerly for doing all the 'service' work.

Four, an inherited lust for money and a western lifestyle was costing us the loss of our rich traditions, values and heritage and even to the detriment of our own souls and those of our progeny.

Five, while we remained impassive and ignorant of our own history of enslavement and allowed the exploitation of our labour, our future generations were doomed to further assimilation and invisibility as a distinct people.

Six, that we, the descendants of enslaved Africans on this little island remained trapped here by an island mentality when the largest and wealthiest of continents, Africa, our ancestral homeland, bade us to return home and participate in her strengthening.

And so, one disturbing and frightening day our ancestors spoke to me solemnly and with great gravity. They spoke in strong and fearsome voices full of wisdom and warning. These voices spoke from the land, and as I wrote the blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors, which mingled with the dark Antiguan earth, rose and called for attention from this generation of their children. We had forgotten our ancestors and the consequences were there for those who had eyes to see.

NO LONGER FORGET
February 26, 2007

O, African Children gathered,
Be warned!
No longer forget
That the blood, sweat and tears of your African fathers
Soaked the hard earth of the
Sugarcane fields
Then disappeared.

No longer forget
That cries of agony
Burst from parched lips
As soft black skins were torn raw
Empowered by whips in hatred and vengeance.

No longer can you forget
That African fathers
Humiliated
Manhood and dignity ripped away
Watched their womenfolk violated
And in powerless helplessness
Could only avert their dry eyed faces in shame.

Can you any longer forget
That though blood, sweat and tears
Have disappeared into cane pieces
Across this little land
It yet cries to be remembered?

Our ancestors blood that runs in our veins!
Our ancestor's sweat, it salts our brows!
Our ancestor's tears which still lie bitter on our lips!
Our grandfather's cries still echoing hauntingly within!
Can we forget how whips tore their backs
And irons greedily devoured their festering flesh?

Must you continue to forget
Your grandmother's groans
As men
Not their own
Invaded their wombs?

That children brought forth
Through no fault of their own
Were ever present reminders of
Their shame
Of cruelty and savagery
Domination and control?

That those men so proud in their thinking
That backra gave superiority
And that ours dark and smooth
Made us savage and inferior?

That in our becoming
Yet another way was sought to weaken
The minds of African men, our fathers, brothers
To bring them
Into submission?

How can you any longer forget
Though the blood, the sweat, the tears
Of our African fathers
Have disappeared
Absorbed, unseen into the harsh cane lands
Now covered with structures which becloud our memories
That today yet within they are whispering "Remember me!"

How can you forget my African children
My blood
My sweat

My tears
My pain and humiliation
My longings for freedom
For Africa, my home?

How can you forget my children
When unceasingly in my gravity
I remembered you
Afar off though you were
And prayed that your lot
Would be far better than mine?

Forget not, my African children!
For when you forget
That man will come again
With silent, invisible chains
Once more to violate to dominate and control
His cruelty and savagery in a different guise
To make you dependent
To hold you in his gross grip
All the while bedazzling your mind
Awakening a sleeping greed within.

Forget not my African children
That trinkets were offered
Awakening the covetous
That truncheons couched in velvet and lace
Paved the way
Which brought us to these island hells
And held us bound four hundred years.

No longer can we afford to forget!
Consciously, you must remember our story and pass it on
Not as fable nor folklore,
Not for literary interest nor packaged for entertainment,
But to impress young minds
That their African grandfathers blood, sweat and tears
Soaked this island home and
Seeing you endangered
Shout loudly, in whispers
"Remember me once more!

For bedazzled, endangered, you have forgotten
That your African fathers blood, sweat and tears
Soaked this beautiful land and turned it to hell for us!
Look across it now remember, forever
That the awful spirit which brought us here has never left
But lingers,
Lurking, ever seeking to satisfy its lust to crush and control.

Our African Children
Your African fathers
Warn you in tones both somber and true
From across the years,
From the lands, the fields, the rivers, the sea
"Remember us, no longer forget!
No longer forget!"

Three years of living in the heart of Africa in Cameroon exposed me to their thinking and the many ways Africans are rebuilding after the dastardly acts of slavery. In fact, slavery was hardly ever mentioned until the coming of the 38 in 2004; that was when most Cameroonians knew that it was such an integral part of their history, even though like us, they had lost millions of their own family members, it was not spoken of and not taught in the schools. Further, they knew absolutely nothing about us here in the West Indies which was strange to me.

For a few months I resided in Limbe, the main town of South West Province, situated just seven miles from the former slave port at Bimbia in the Bight of Biafra. I also spent two years working in West Province, the Bamileke Region where the chiefs were known to have been heavily involved in the trafficking of their own villagers. There, a group of chiefs and elders, artists, musicians, business persons and the media formed "Memoire d'Afrique" the "Story of Africa" and I was asked to be the Secretary of the organization. The chiefs were anxious to reconcile with the descendants of those whom their grand-fathers had sold into slavery; they offered reparations in the form of lands to any African descendant who wished to return; they asked for help to rebuild their ravished villages and restore their broken families still grieving about their lost loved ones.

I was privileged to meet with high government officials, regional administrators, powerful traditional chiefs, ministers of government, big business persons, the rich and wealthy, the poor and lowly in the markets, on the bikes, in the churches, on the buses. I listened to the news, read the papers, bought the African magazines and learned that Africa was much different to what the media in the West told us or what we were led to believe.

On that side of the world one sees a vibrant Africa, despite its setbacks, rising from within, always striving and making strides in spite of the political lies intended to keep the African psyche believing that they are so poor and never to rise without the help of its former oppressors. The Western media has made a habit of neglecting to put forward a true picture of the continent and through its backhanded dealings have painted a backward image so often believed by many of us in the West Indian Diaspora.

I say, don't believe the lies; like every other place African peoples have their problems; don't let these deter you; recent history has shown that no nation, however advanced, is without its stories of corruption; but Africa is policing herself and cleaning up herself by herself and doing very well. Search for yourself, read, ask questions, travel home, meet and reconcile, partner with our brethren, share your skills and knowledge, find a place to fit in among your own people, there is a welcome for you; and best of all, you will be pleasing your ancestors, for each of us who does that thousands of our ancestor's spirits will be put at peace and Africa will continue by our concerted mutual efforts to go from strength to strength.

With great exuberance and hopefulness the spirits of our African ancestors and those of our Diasporan fathers look again across the vast ocean over which we travelled and where the bones of numerous of our family members litter the ocean bed and cry for home and vengeance. On both sides of the Atlantic the cry is rising as Africa stirs within her own, her young, her men and her women at home and abroad……"Africa is rising, join the chorus!"

And so, the stirring stirred in me and so it bounced forth, a joyful strain to stir all our hearts.

THERE'S A STIRRING

May 2008

There's a stirring deep in the belly of Africa
Broad as the minds of black men;
Movements in the North
Rumblings in the South and East
Rollings in the West and Central
Stirrings in the Region of the Sixth
The Diaspora with it's eyes on the Motherland!
Sense it!
Feel it!
See it with your African eye!
Africa is moving, stirring,
Meeting, Planning
Talking,
Writing about
Reconciliations
Reparations
Reunifications
Reconnections
Redevelopments
Reestablishments
Rebuilding
Recovering
Regenerating

There's a stirring!
I say, there's a stirring
A strong stirring
A deep stirring
A globe wide stirring
A rolling, rolling, deep in the belly of Africa.
Wherever she is
The giant is stirring!
Arising!
Coming alive!
Africa is being reborn in the minds of black men
Black women, young boys and girls,
All with a stirring
Deep in our African hearts.

Dreams long dormant live again
Reconciliation
Repatriation
Rebirth
Renaissance
Renewal
Rediscovery
Return
Rememory

It's a stirring as far flung as the Diaspora
As expansive as the minds of black men.
The - African Union!
The - United States of Africa!
Remembering Abolition
Emancipation
Post Emancipation
History - Our story
Coming alive!
Stirring in the minds and hearts of black men
Ushering the times spoken of long ago
When the only hope was the hope in the hearts and minds of
Strong black men and strong black women
With their African eyes
Prince Klass
Christophe
Douglas
Love
Weston, Nanny
Daaga and King Jaja
Bassa and Bussa
King Lenye and Manga Bell
Marcus Mosiah Garvey
Blyden, James and Padmore
Rodney and ourTim.
And countless Unnamed Others
Who took up the fight
Through generations and generations to come.

Our African Mothers
Our African Fathers

Who dreamt and wished and wept
Who hoped and fought
Resisting
Recouping
Rejoining
Revoluting
Repatriating

In the never ending fight to make Africa strong again.
The stirrings in the hearts of
Strong black men and women.....
Our ancestors.....
Is stirring once more!
Rumbling!
Moving!
Rolling!
In us
Their children
The belly of Africa is stirring
Making it known
"Africa arises to be strong once more!"

FEELING THE GHETTO VIBES

"I am going to start with a song from what should be named the GREATEST CALYPSO ALBUM ever, GHETTO VIBES by Sir McClean Emmanuel – King Short Shirt. The song asks questions that humanity doesn't have the answers for as yet. WHEN. He should have been named one of the top 5 calypsonians of the 20th century." – Poster with the moniker CaribArts in a 2010 thread (OECS SOCA CLASH: VINCYLAND (WINDWARD) vs. ANTIGUA (LEEWARD)) at http://www.islandmix.com

By Joanne C. Hillhouse

Short Shirt's **GHETTO VIBES** is one of my favourite albums of all time; not one of my favourite Calypso albums, not one of my favourite Antiguan albums, just one of my top five favourites, period.

Incidentally, it came out in 1976 as a record on vinyl; before cassettes, CDs, downloadable music. I would have been all of three years old at the time, so obviously I couldn't have had a first-hand experience of it; except it feels like I did, because I grew up singing, dancing to, and dramatizing Short Shirt calypsos – *MY PLEDGE, PRESS ON, LAMENTATIONS, STAR BLACK* – and felt them deep in my soul long before the lyrics would begin to unravel themselves for me. That unraveling is still taking place. I didn't purchase **GHETTO VIBES** until its re-issue on CD in the 00's. By then, I'd purchased the Monarch's **SOCIAL COMMENTARIES** CD which included many of my favourites, several of which – *POWER AND AUTHORITY, INSPITE OF ALL, WHEN* – can be found on the **GHETTO VIBES** CD. But a single download or even a Greatest Hits CD by the best of the best – think Bob, Aretha, Prince, Sparrow – can't compare with a complete and artfully conceptualized full album, CD, whatever you want to call it – think **THE MISEDUCATION OF LAURYN HILL**, Alannis Morisette's **JAGGED LITTLE PILL**, Tanya Stephens' **GANGSTA BLUES**, or my favourite soundtrack, **THE HARDER THEY COME.** Though I would have appreciated the inclusion of comprehensive liner notes complete with album credits – the lack of which is a shortcoming of many local, often independently produced, albums – owning the actual **GHETTO VIBES** CD remains a unique and mind blowing experience.

Did I mention I love this CD? Let me count the ways.

There's the infectious joy of *TOURIST LEGGO* where the storyteller engages in that time worn Caribbean pastime of watching white people dancing, dancing badly. Sure, 'tourist' is not synonymous with 'white people', but let's be honest that's exactly what this "pretty little yankee tourist…from Halifax" is. And if we're being honest, we've watched other 'yankee' tourists mangle the *w'ine*, all the while wondering if they're dancing to the rhythm or the words. In *TOURIST LEGGO*, we find one such,

"…jumping without timing… in the steelband, dancing in the sun,"

with determined abandon.

"She blood run cold every time she hear a pan roll,
dang-dang-di-dang-di-dang-di-dang…"

'Cold' is 'Hot' here in the way that 'bad' is 'good' and 'sick' is 'delightful' and 'wicked' is 'so, so good'. So snicker if you want, but she's having a better time than you, wall flower. Of course, you could join in, as the storyteller has, his 'mockery' all in good fun. The song, tonally, then doesn't feel mean-spirited. Rather, it emerges as a celebration of the Carnival spirit, the spirit of the *J'ouvert*, which if you've ever been – to the *J'ouvert*, or Last Lap, or a Burning Flames Lions jam – is as seductive as the song suggests, bringing people – whatever race or cultural origin – together for the most fun this side of sex.

"…the girl said to me, 'Shorty, what a glorious symphony
The music seems to fill you with rage
And make you feel like you on a stage.'"

It's a strong opener, *TOURIST LEGGO*.

The music, from the first note, is joyful and buoyant and Short Shirt's pre-emptive bellow lays the foundation for a rousing good time, while the superior ability of the lyricist is reflected in the tightly woven storytelling amidst the bacchanal.

The first few lines set the scene like the opening frames of a film:

"Carnival.

J'ouvert Morning.
Just as the band start parading.
Ah in Scot's Row, jamming tight with a Leggo."

Setting, place, time, characters in a few deceptively simple opening bars; and it bubbles over from there: "*the place well hot and the music sweet"* – leading to *"insane"* behavior – including, on occasion, a little "*romance with a man".* Sorry, I had to go there; because isn't one of the beauties of especially vintage calypso the little tease, the way they edge right up to the line? And isn't *TOURIST LEGGO* one of the best examples of that?

The bellow that portends *VIVIAN RICHARDS*, meanwhile, sounds more like a lion's roar accompanied, as it is, by the aggressive beat, exuberance, and boastful stance that suffuses this song, echoing the spirit, reinforcing the larger than life mythology of its title subject. It's very hip hop in that sense, and with respect to the name checking. And the chorus is a sing-a-long worthy of any cricket fan:

"No bowler holds a terror for Vivian Richards!"

It captures well the excitement of the game and of Richards' technical ability, as well as the David v. Goliath rivalry between England and her former colonies – David armed this time around with more than a little *caterpuller.*

"England, here they come
This hunk of a man
This classical player and his fellow Antiguan
Andy Roberts wreaking havoc once again in your country
Vivian Richards wrecking bowlers boundary after boundary
Watch the score board ticking on
When Vivian batting, the machine must run
And people applauding for runs like bread
And another splendid Richards century again

Aiie!"

Barbadian historian Hilary Beckles wrote in **SPIRIT OF DOMINANCE**, "Viv did not walk onto the cricket field in search of himself. Neither did he discover his consciousness within the context of sporting contests. He was sent in to do battle by villagers, not only those in Antigua, but all those from little places in this diaspora; people who have been hurling missiles at the Columbus project since it crashed into their history five hundred years and ten million lives ago…he was determined to tilt the scales, even if marginally and temporarily, in favour of those whose view of the world is from the bottom up."

I'd argued in an original draft of this article that the song, focused on the particulars of the game, only hinted at the larger socio-historical impact of those runs and Richards' role in the decolonization process. I've felt compelled to rethink that point in light of my first reader's comment that having been there, caught up in the experiences that the song chronicles, the glory of all it suggested was deeply felt. She would have been 15 when this album came out. So perhaps age is a hindrance here with respect to my original critical assessment, and the larger meaning was in fact well communicated and deeply understood without having to be sledge-hammered home like a Tyler Perry film. Simply put, he who feels it knows it, and they knew it.

For those of us who came after, it is fiery, anthemic and enjoyable, and a record of the exploits of both Richards and compatriot Andy Roberts on the pitch at a time when it was rare to see a Leeward Islander on the Windies team – especially two with so many tools in their arsenal. In that, it serves one of calypsos functions in speaking for its times and celebrating the heroes of the folk – not unlike the third song, the syncopated ("who/tell you/to/mess with Harmo") *HANDS OFF HARMONITES* in which the Point resident goes to bat for the area steel band, no doubt reflecting the sentiments of the people of that area, that Harmonites was robbed in the '75 Panorama finals.

"…something went wrong with the judging
Harmonites wouldn't place so bad
Halcyon was first
Supa Stars second
Rising Sun was third
And Hell's Gate fourth, I heard
But when it came to Harmonites,
they couldn't find a place that night
slip them right down the ladder
second to last…"

A seemingly personal (and community) gripe, the song is significant as a chronicle of the lives, and particularly the injustices felt, by the people; not unlike Ivena's *OLD ROAD FIGHT* in the 00's which I've always felt is the best record, better than the news coverage even, of the uproar surrounding the controversial Carlisle Bay development project. Like *TOURIST LEGGO, HANDS OFF HARMONITES* is also significant in capturing the spirit of Carnival; in this case in particular, the "pan rhapsody, flow, de tempo, and rhythm" of the only musical invention of the 20th century, the steel pan.

Interestingly, this pan ditty proves a natural segue to the CD's larger issues, the concern reflected in the title, **GHETTO VIBES**, and perhaps the second biggest reason – after the quality of the lyricism – that I love it so much. See, as a child of Ottos, I, too, am a child of the ghetto and deeply aware of its concerns over victimization whether driven by class, economics, or politics. And in this song about the steel pan, vilified in its youth, the concerns of working class Antiguans begin to be spelled out.

"Just because they wouldn't stand the exploitation
That you dishing out to the pan man
You want to stifle the sweetest band in the land
…
It seems the policy
Of those in authority
Is to crush anyone
Who dare to oppose their might."

Man against the (political) machine, a battle understood all too well by those in life's ghetto who experience firsthand the victimization and, conversely, the defiance of spirit in the face of it, that begin to take centre stage on the CD.

But it's up to songs like *POWER AND AUTHORITY* and *NOBODY GO RUN ME* – easily my favourites on the album, especially the latter – to really drive those issues home.

Before we get to them though, there's one more seemingly lighter topic – after *J'ouvert*, cricket, steel band music – and that is 'love' in the 'boy lusts after girl' track *NO PROMISES*.

The recurring sub-theme of 'madness' of the spirit – "I walk de whole ah de beach and I search like a crazy man but the only thing I found was shell and sand" – is there, lust/love proving just as maddening as the infectious music (in *TOURIST LEGGO*), and certainly as much a part of life in the ghetto, as anywhere.

While not dealing overtly with the concerns of the ghetto, the song does interweave the experience of the economic immigrant (the kinds of indignities chronicled in H. Akia Gore's **GARROTE: THE ILLUSION OF SOCIAL EQUALITY AND POLITICAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**):

"You catch me in St. Thomas
Darling, that was really mas
You and you Cruzan man
Had me dodging Immigration
For two whole weeks a cool off
Sleeping in boxes and trash cans all about…"

But this song, frankly, doesn't hypodermic its way into my blood like *NOBODY GO RUN ME*, which I still feel in my heart and soul on my worst days, and which I've said before I see as the other side of the coin of a favoured literary classic – Sam Selvon's **Lonely Londoners** – the latter dealing with the experiences of those who left, Short Shirt (and his writers) dealing with the sorrows of those who stayed.

"Night and day ah catching hell
People think I doing well
Just because I sing a few calypso
But that is my misery
Calypso don't make money
And most of them don't know
That I have my axe to grind
Just like any other man
Existing in poverty
And this giant ghetto land
But I intend to hang on
Tell them, tell them for me
No dice
I ain't gonna eat lice
I ain't gonna grow old sitting in the cold
Not me…"

Sorry for the extensive quote – but I relate to those lines on a deep in my belly level – and not just because I'm a walking around definition of struggling writer, twin to the struggling calypsonian, but because like the calypsonian I readily acknowledge that life is far from easy on this 108 square mile rock where my navel string is buried, but it is home. In that sense, it's as much a love letter to Antigua as it is a lament about the fortunes of the poor and underrepresented.

"Tell them I say
I was born in this land
I go die in this land
Nobody go run me
From where me come from".

Of course, the counterpoint to that, as the very tone of the song suggests, is the people of the ghetto may come from here but here routinely rubs them the wrong way – denying them the opportunity to progress, to own, to dream; limiting them…and yet, they hang on.

"Me mumma must nyam
Me puppa must nyam
Me woman must nyam
Me picknee must nyam."

The unspoken intimation is that the struggle for them to "nyam" (eat) of the fruits of Antigua's bounty is just that, a struggle; making this a sentiment as much heartbreaking as it is inspiring and defiant. When I sing this though, the defiance is what dominates; long and short of it, this song inspires and delights me – and not just because of the snippet of his trademark "brrr" that Short Shirt throws in for his fans.

As for *POWER AND AUTHORITY*, which precedes *NOBODY GO RUN ME* on the CD, I've often complained that too many of today's calypsos feel like an essay – dry and prosaic; but that's probably an insult to essays, because I've read some very stirring ones, rich with poetry and pathos. Part of the genius of Short Shirt and his collaborators – including the masterful Shelly Tobitt – was how elegantly they strung meaningful words and ideas together all to a moving backbeat. *POWER AND AUTHORITY* is a good example of this.

It asserts – borrowing a bit from British historian Lord Acton circa 1887 – its thesis upfront:

"Power rules the world today
And power corrupts they say
And absolute power corrupts you absolutely"

Then it provides its premise:

"It can change a man who has a heart of gold
Make him cruel wicked
Self centred and cold"

Then it supports that premise with specific examples:

"They prostituting the island
To all and sundry
They peddling my people's rights
Exploiting, oppressing, less freedom, more suffering…"

And as he chronicles the hardships, the narrative voice – never omniscient and distant – once again aligns himself with the ghetto people:

"…coal we can't even buy
Murder the price too high
Malnutrition killing the children
While we the adults starving
Yet the price is rising without control
Young man begging bread by the side of the road
And the Chamber of Commerce in this land
I tell you they don't give one damn
The more we try to economize the more cost o' living rise."

The personalization and specificity work well here to make this tale at once unique and universal, time specific and timeless, relatable still, so that the hook –

"…when they have power and authority, they don't give a damn about you or me…"

– could readily be taken up by sufferers in any impoverished community in the world at any time in history. Just ask the people feeling the brunt of the current down economy while politicians have their pissing contests and businesses guard their cash register passing on every cost to the consumer. The song clearly draws a line in the sand between the haves – who prosper no matter what, and the have-nots – who can't seem to catch a break; not from the business class, not from the judges who lock them up for seeking a little herbal relief *"while the social rich are free"*, a reminder that economic deprivation is not the only hurdle for children of the ghetto.

And as he sings – stepping out on behalf of the people, speaking truth to power in a way calypso does so well –

"…think it over, my friend, think if over, again; think it over, don't vex with me Shorty, I just singing as a see…"

– the 'essay' wraps up its argument.

WHEN two songs down from *NOBODY GO RUN ME* and perhaps ideally switched in the track order with *INSPITE OF ALL* (I'll explain why later) is perhaps the most universal of these songs; not generic, mind, but approaching the theme of discord in the world in a much broader fashion, using repetition, rhetoric and alternating rhyming lines as its main recurring devices.

"When, when will we learn to live together?
When, when will we learn to love each other?
When, when will we learn to trust our brother?
When, when will we live one for another?
…
When, when will mankind turn from their evil?
When, when will the children rise and shine?
When, when will crime violence and corruption?
When, when will they leave the hearts of mankind?
…
When, when will our dreams become utopia?
When, when will our sorrows cease to be?
When, when will the poor no longer hunger?
When, when will mankind be truly free?"

Contextually, the song works as a prayer, reminding this Catholic lifer vaguely of the structure of the prayers of intercession; so that punctuating this questioning we have the soul baring introspective direct plea to the Lord, a plea that emerges as a primal *"screeeaam!"* – an acknowledgment that the pain is almost too much to bear. In God's presence, there is freedom finally to admit one's weakness, how overwhelmed one is by circumstances.

And yet, the people of the ghetto, don't live on their knees.

And this is one reason I think *WHEN* could easily be reversed in the order with *INSPITE OF ALL* – the latter, a shift away from the woe to *"just a glimpse, just a glimmer, just a gleam"* of hope. It's a weird kind of hope; a hope born of common circumstances and common purpose:

"The oppression we bear will forge us as one
Yet in spite of our hardship and misery
And poor economic condition
We must struggle on."

It is a hope that comes with the reminder that *"we, the people, ourselves"* are more than the sum of our material condition, that *"we, the people, ourselves"* – not the politicians or big world forces – must choose our own destiny. Perhaps now more than ever we need the calypsonian to remind us of this. Because here the calypsonian assumes another persona – shifting from 'mere' storyteller to fellow sufferer to truth teller to, finally, prophet moving ahead of the pack and shining a path. He assumes the Moses like persona which defined politicians of the era and the time preceding it – Bird, Bustamante et al. And as he does so, it's not hard to understand why politicians/the establishment feared calypsonians enough to ban, overtly or by exclusion, their very powerful voices. As **GHETTO VIBES** proves – or perhaps merely reinforces – these are not mere court jesters; they are Martin Luther King/Malcolm X, or so they seemed in moments like this, dreaming a dream and daring to speak it out loud.

"Rise, rise, rise, rise
People open up your eyes!"

An awake and alert electorate; is there anything more scary to a politician determined to keep his followers bathed in a sea of blue or red, and swallowing the pork whole? Well, for the time, perhaps the song's anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, socialist undertones ran a close second.

But the calypsonian speaks directly to his people, talking past and around the politicians, as he issues the reminder that the politics of division is as self-defeating as the 'divide and conquer' policy that pitted 'field slaves' against 'house slaves' – never mind that they're both slaves. Caribbean people – especially Caribbean working class people – live by their folk proverbs and the calypsonian borrows from one of these to drive home his message:

"The same stick licking the wild goat
The same stick licking the tame
Everybody drifting in the same boat
We all sinking just the same…"

Effectively, he's telling them to forget the politicians and work in the interest of Antigua and Barbuda – and speaking of timeless, isn't that message still relevant?

Book ending the well executed CD are two Carnival tunes, shifting the tone closer to what it was in the beginning, though, for the listener, with a greater sense of what this seeming revelry represents in the lives of the people; escape, freedom, expression…the intangibles of life so often denied them, reinforcing once and for all that they are souled beings with purpose and beauty, pride and hope. For there in the Carnival, in the *Fantasy*, they can elevate themselves and *"dance dance dance dance"* assured that with a little hug up and a little music *"everything go be alright";* at least, for the moment.

It is this sense of journeying through the highs and lows, passions and circumstance, the vibrations (or **VIBES**) of ghetto life – its inner and outer rhythms – that make this CD so enduring. Well, that and Short Shirt's assured and impassioned delivery track to track, and the relatable tenor of the writing – which borrows liberally from the local vernacular while demonstrating Shelley-like command of verse.

I've often said that with the limited exposure to Caribbean books in my youth, I learned a lot about writing from calypso. Well, **GHETTO VIBES** is a superior 'text', cover to cover, and I remain an eager student, turning the pages.

Hillhouse, Joanne. *The Boy From Willow Bend*. Hertford, UK: Hansib Publications, 2002. 95pp.
Natasha Lightfoot

Joanne Hillhouse's novel, *The Boy From Willow Bend*, offers the heart-warming coming of age story of Vere Carmino, a precocious and sensitive Antigan youngster from a place called Dead End Alley. As she relates Vere's boyhood journey, Hillhouse seamlessly incorporates a number of themes endemic to Antiguan and Caribbean experiences of the mid-to-late twentieth century. For its thoughtful rendering of complex issues such as gender, class, migration and death, for the swiftness of Hillhouse's prose, and especially for the captivating personality with which she endows the title character, readers will be instantly drawn to this narrative.

Readers first meet Vere at the tender age of eight enjoying a seemingly idyllic existence as a boy playing about the Alley. He tells scary tales to his Alley compatriots which are interrupted by the calls of Tanty, his Dominican-born caretaker, who in true Caribbean fashion, admonishes him to come inside as its after dark: "You best haul your tail inside 'fore I get vex" (Hillhouse, 9). With this scene Hillhouse introduces us to the world of Vere, which is marked by the daily joys of a playful childhood, but is also punctuated by the pain underlining his family relationships. Vere's home life in Dead End Alley occupies two extremes. Hillhouse juxtaposes the nurture and protection provided by Tanty, his gentle and wise surrogate mother, against the abuse and fear wrought by his angry, alcoholic grandfather, the retired policeman Franklyn.

Unsurprisingly, the relationship between Tanty and Franklyn is as tortured if not more than one between Vere and Franklyn. Franklyn's philandering ways over the years of their marriage produced a stream of "outside" children whom Tanty has been forced to accept and raise, Vere's mother included, while suffering the pain of being barren herself. We learn about this tense state of affairs as another of Franklyn's illegitimate children enters the household, the strong-willed teenager June, Vere's biological aunt and his companion around the Alley for a brief time. During June's stint in the house, she bears the brunt of Franklyn's anger, enduring chilling physical abuse, including an instance where he stabs her arm with a fork. Hillhouse constructs Franklyn's character as a quintessential Caribbean *paterfamilias*, cold and unaffectionate, who rules his household with a loud mouth and a swift hand. Most of the women in Franklyn's life harbor anger toward him, even Tanty despite her enduring love for him. Hillhouse uses

this relationship to demonstrate the complexity of gender roles in Antiguan society and beyond. Men like Franklyn wield forceful control in the home, yet women like Tanty exude a quiet strength without which the household could not be maintained, a fact that becomes especially clear after her passing. Franklyn's caustic and controlling nature partly explains why Vere's mother fled this household without any intention of returning.

We learn of Vere's mother's absence through the sporadic remittances she sends which are barely able to keep Vere in private school. Vere experiences a painful longing for his mother, who has lived in the United States for most of his life. Furthermore, Hillhouse, in an allusion to the history of American servicemen in Antigua who had fleeting dalliances with local women, endows Vere with an absentee father as well: an American soldier from the local base, with whom Vere never had a relationship. America thus looms largely in the background of Vere's Antiguan existence, as a land not only of opportunity, but of broken family ties. In a saddening episode in the plot, his handmade Mother's Day comes back in the mail returned to sender as his mother has moved in the States without sharing her new address. The returned card and Vere's resulting anguish symbolize the way that migration mimics death for those left behind, and robs our title character of a typical family life.

Tanty's illness and subsequent death pushes the plot into a more distressing direction for Vere, as he must adjust to life without the only mother he has ever known, and suffer the continued rage of his estranged grandfather that is now compounded with the ache of grief. June returns to the Alley temporarily around the time of Tanty's death but is also soon gone for good. After June's wayward path in Antigua, her mother, who had long since migrated to Chicago, finally sends for her. America has taken from Vere yet another strong female figure.

At this point, we see the resourceful Vere learning to fend for himself as these losses force him to mature in many ways. He continues to excel in school despite so many disruptions at home, and thus heads to high school a year early. As a high schooler, Vere quickly learns how class operates in Antigua, as he recognizes the direct connections between his lowly status in school and his impoverished background. Hillhouse delivers memorable lines as she conveys Vere's class anxiety: "But mostly he was just shy about trying to mix it up with the society types who went to the school… They weren't of his world and he wasn't from theirs. Even with his little bad-boy clique, he'd still feel like the country cousin who came dressed all wrong for the town wedding" (Hillhouse, 60).

Vere also starts to discover girls at this phase in his life. He enjoys his first romantic exchange with Makeba, a member of a Rastafarian commune beyond the pond at Dead End Alley. The commune's leader, Djimon, teaches Vere the guitar and exposes the bias in his colonial education. But Makeba, Djimon's girlfriend, awakens a spark in Vere during their chats about life and love. They eventually share a kiss that is unforgettable for Vere, before the commune is forced out of the Alley. His next love interest, Elizabeth, attended his high school's sister school. In Vere's words, despite being upper class, Elizabeth "…wasn't nuff, and that kept him from feeling too awkward around her" (Hillhouse, 80). They too exchange kisses, but soon we see him recoil from Elizabeth's forwardness. Hillhouse thoughtfully reminds us that despite his rushed maturity, Vere still retains much of his childlike innocence throughout the text.

Franklyn's illness toward the end of the novel offers another interesting development in the plot. In a foil to an earlier episode, where a younger Vere refuses to accept Tanty's oncoming death, the more mature Vere faces his antagonistic grandfather bravely in this moment. Reluctantly Vere opens communication with him and learns that beneath his angry surface, Franklyn did feel love and respect for his grandson. These exchanges allow for a bond to develop between them at last, and for Vere to acknowledge that he too loved his grandfather all along.

Hillhouse closes the novel by establishing that Vere, for all intents, has grown into a man. He has learned so much, particularly from the strong women who made their mark on his character over the years. He also learned hard lessons from the aching absences of others. Furthermore, Vere gained much strength and intelligence along the way from his own discoveries. Ultimately, Hillhouse leaves us assured that he will enter adulthood with a firm head on his shoulders. Readers cannot help but to root for Vere throughout, and the cathartic ending during which Dead End Alley is rechristened Willow Bend is a fitting close to a touching tale. Hillhouse has crafted a story that adult and young readers alike can enjoy, that truly captures the spirit of Antigua's recent past.

Emily Spencer Knight, Growing Up in All Saints Village, Antigua: the 1940s – the Late 1960s, Xlibris Corporation: wwwXlibris.com (2009)
Bernadette Farquhar

Growing Up in All Saints Village, Antigua can be described as history written in a personal style. It relates the history of the village of All Saints, Antigua, of the Anglican church located there, of village and island life and the author's family.

Emily Vanessa Spencer Knight, the writer, is a retired librarian of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. It is therefore not surprising that the publication benefits from painstaking documentation and research supported by photographs of such elements as old Antiguan cooking utensils, All Saints Church in 1960 and 2006 and church events which took place in the author's childhood and adolescence. Photographs of her family also grace the book, and in reflection of her interest in music —- she plays the piano and organ —- so do reproductions of the music in *Alternative Tunes to Twelve Hymns Ancient and Modern*, a collection composed by Canon C.M. Howell, a rector of St. Paul's Church.

Since growing up is the main theme of the book, the family is inevitably very central to it, the background against which history unfolds. Readers receive the image of a closely knit family with the complicated relationships that the loose unions of the period produced. "Well, they give me eight of them" patriarch Spencer nonchalantly answers when asked about the number of children he has fathered. The author makes very little attempt to pass judgment on this or other social issues mentioned in the book, leaving it up to the reader to recognize what were the mores of the period. In addition to a high rate of illegitimacy among the disadvantaged classes, they include the preference for a light skin-colour, draconian standards in the raising of girls, belief in excessive flogging and indifference to the abuse of women. If the first of these issues has come full circle, so that having children out of wedlock is now quite general even in developed countries and among the glitterati, the last two still shock. According to the ethos of the day, one of the author's classmates could be "flogged several times in one day for not putting enough emphasis on the portion 'Faustus must be damned!' in Christopher Marlowe's play *Dr. Faustus* and deliberating on a case of domestic abuse, Magistrate Lauckland Athill informs a woman: "if the man never bang you (never beats you), that man doan love you."

A better image of the period is projected in the love and the solidarity that bind family members despite a complicated tapestry of relationships. Strands of that tapestry extend to Trinidad, Barbados, Guadeloupe, Tortola, and beyond. Reading about them, the reader is reminded of the ease with which West Indians travelled between Trinidad and Jamaica, in contrast to the tension travel creates in our time as a result of flags, national anthems and crime.

Another instance of nostalgia occurs in the author's detailed description of Christmases of the period under study. She regrets some of the changes the festival has undergone and concludes that "change is necessary, but it should be to enhance that which has created the change, and not to cheapen it." Antiguan and Barbudan readers will nod their head in assent, recalling with her the John Bulls and highlanders, the very colourful crepe paper flowers that adorned the sidewalks of the capital in December, (flower making and embroidery, where have those arts gone?) everything that contributed to the merriment of that time of the year against the background of midnight services, caroling and endless hours of the preparation of special dishes.

Not surprisingly, the growing of food and the preparation of food receive much attention in the book. Eating, after all, is a communal activity and special dishes are associated with the festivals that punctuate the calendar. While the authors' family never wanted for food, readers will be impressed by the resourcefulness of housewives like her mother, in an era in which very many households lived in difficult financial circumstances. But while not much money was available for frills, the families in All Saints managed to lead a good existence: "The people ate well; they grew what they ate and ate what they grew." The same resourcefulness meant that they "also dressed well, male and female."

Stylistically, two criticisms can be made about this book, which provides absorbing reading. There are a few lapses in syntax and spelling which more careful editing would have detected. They include an obvious error in a short biographical note by a Winston R. Johnson, some of whose poems appear at the end of the book. In addition, certain Antiguanisms may mislead the non-Antiguan reader. There is a glossary at the end which contains terms that are adequately explained in the body of the book and the meaning of some local sayings can be inferred from context: "the food was sweet and tasty"; sleeping on grass-stuffed beds was "sweet". There is a reference to "chocolate tea", but the term appears later in quotation marks,

an indication that the usage is colloquial. On the other hand, one other local term without a gloss misinforms totally. Non-Antiguan readers need to know that in Antigua and Barbuda, rice pudding is black pudding stuffed with rice, not a dessert bearing the same name in the rest of the English-speaking world.

Mrs. Spencer Knight is careful to point out that her book should be regarded as recollections of All Saints, not a complete history of it. Nevertheless, this small publication contributes significantly not only to our knowledge of the good and bad that characterized life in that village from the 1940s to the 1960s, but also to our knowledge of the history of Antigua and Barbuda.

ANTIGUA HISTORY AS SEEN FROM THE VILLAGES

Susan Lowes

Leon H. Matthias, *The Boy from Popeshead* (Self-published, 1995).

Theodore Archibald, *The Winding Path to America* (Lima, OH: Fairway Press, 1996).

Hewlester A. Samuel, Sr., *The Birth of the Village of Liberta, Antigua* (Coral Springs, FL: Llumina Press, 2007).

Joy Lawrence, *Bethesda and Chirstian Hill: Our History and Culture* (St. John's, Antigua: Siboney Publications, 2008).

The publication of *To Shoot Hard Labor: The Life and Times of Samuel Smith, an Antiguan Workingman, 1872-1982,* in 1968, was the first in what has become a genre of local history in Antigua, including the four books that will be discussed here. *To Shoot Hard Labor* set out the framework or format that subsequent books followed. Each begins with a few pages that cover the general history of Antigua from slavery onward and then turns to their real focus, which is local—the place in which the author grew up. For two of the books, the local is the northeast (Popeshead/Cedar Grove and the area in and around what was then the U.S. base) during the 1940s and 1950s; for the other two, the local is the southeast (Liberta and Bethesda/Christian Hill) and the timeframe less narrow, but with a focus on practices of the 1960s and 1970s. The goal for all of these authors is to capture and preserve the past, and in doing that, they have provided a wealth of information about the people, places, and cultural practices of each time and place, as lived and remembered by the authors. Matthias and Archibald's books are full of vivid anecdotes from their own lives, while Samuel and Lawrence make you want to visit their villages, books in hand, so that you can see what they see—and you have missed.[1]

The four authors exemplify two different approaches to writing local history, and these differences are important for understanding the genre as it is developing in Antigua and Barbuda. One approach is biographical, writing history by telling one's own story. Thus for both Matthias and Archibald, the narrative thread is their descriptions of what it was like to grow up in a village. The other approach is geographical, writing history by writing about place. Thus Samuel and Lawrence tell the story of the villages in which they grew up, but with very little about themselves.

These two approaches make these books valuable to the general reader and the historian alike, but in different ways. Matthias and Archibald are valuable because they are very specifically about a particular place in a particular period, while Samuel and Lawrence are valuable because they examine their villages' histories by examining the village itself, including its inhabitants, its buildings, and its cultural practices. Samuel's book is more clearly geographical, with separate chapters on each section or area within the larger village. Lawrence's is organized topically, with sections that range from descriptions of places to chapters on cultural events, sports, estate life, etc. Three of the books thus include many lists and descriptions, either of people (Matthias lists the names of individuals, while Lawrence provides short biographies), of estates (Samuel), of churches (Samuel and Lawrence), of places and landmarks (Samuel and Lawrence), of village athletes (Lawrence), and so on. For Matthias and Archibald, it is their personal stories that make the books fascinating reads. For Samuel and Lawrence, it is the cumulative impact of the detailed information that both authors have painstakingly researched and pulled together in one place.

Despite their differences, what these books have in common is their anecdotal approach to the histories they tell. Archibald tells the history of the U.S. base in short vivid chapters that detail events that happened to him over the years, including many about sometimes tense relationships between Antiguans and Americans on and around the base. Matthias writes equally vividly but about specific activities and events he experienced, from crab torching to singing meetings to hurricanes. Samuel's book on Liberta and Lawrence's book on Bethesda are less personal, cover much longer time spans, and include references to, and quotations from, many documents that are the result of their own research, but they are also anecdotal in the sense that they make no attempt to analyze what they have found. Samuel is particularly interested in the role of the Moravians and Methodists and has mined the Moravian archives in Pennsylvania, quoting liberally from original sources and cumulating the results into a kind of real estate "history," estate by estate, that is fascinating in and of itself but from which it is hard to draw any larger lessons or conclusions. Lawrence is also geographical rather than biographical but more all-encompassing in terms of topics covered, with sections on everything from place names and landmarks to church histories, to stories of memorable individuals, to social conditions, and so on. There is no clear order, but together the stories provide a vibrant picture of the village over time.

All these books are somewhat nostalgic—childhood was idyllic, village life was harmonious—but despite this, the stories and descriptions and lists provide a goldmine for those who want to learn about the culture and cultural practices of each period. This was equally true for Sammy Smith's *To Shoot Hard Labor*. Where these books are weakest is when the authors stray from what they know most immediately and try to interpret and present broader histories of Antigua. Nevertheless, whether you are a general reader or an academic researcher, Leon Matthias, Theodore Archibald, Hewlester Samuel, and Joy Lawrence each provide you with a window into village life, and into particular into ways of living and working and playing that have either been transformed almost beyond recognition or disappeared altogether and that, without their books, would be lost to memory forever.

[1] In his review in the *Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books,* vol. 2, no. 1 (Summer 2009), Max Hurst focused on the larger historical forces outlined by Lawrence (slavery, emancipation, migration) that affected the village. This review focuses on the local aspect of the book.

Paget Henry & Anthony Bogues in Conversation on
Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of VC Bird (Hansib: 2009)

AB: Professor Henry, can you say what led you to write this political biography?

PH: Well it was something I thought about doing for a long time. Because I realized that the last years of Bird's life really misrepresented the totality of his life. Further, because he ruled so long, the current generation of Antiguans and Barbudans know only the latter part of his life. The side of VC that I knew when I was growing up has just about disappeared from the scene. So that was the factor that on a deeper level motivated me to write this biography. But the more immediate push was Bird's approaching 100th birthday and the request from Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer to mark the occasion with a book about his life and work.

AB: Before we explore your first reason because let's pull back a bit. Rupert Lewis, the Jamaican scholar, who wrote the book on Walter Rodney, writes in the introduction that he wrote the book because he felt that there was a the generation of students to whom he was teaching Caribbean political thought at the University of the West Indies, who had lost all memory of Walter Rodney. He also felt that as he was teaching these courses he needed to have a text which dealt with Rodney's life and times. Did you have the same sentiment? Is there a way in which the work in this book is about historical recovery for another generation of West Indians?

PH: Oh, absolutely. That was definitely one of the major sentiments that sustained the writing of this work. Further, in the cases of the smaller islands of the region, where there are no major universities, the lapses of memory are even greater, you know. So yes, I see this factor of historical recovery as very much a motivating force in my work.

AB: What difficulties did you have writing this biography?

PH: Sources. I mean I'm not a historian by training, so I was not already familiar with the major archives in which materials on Antigua and Barbuda were stored. This was the most extensive archival project I have ever undertaken in my life. I used the archives in St. John's, the Schomburg Library in New York, and the National Archives of the UK in Kew Gardens. It was a new and challenging experience for me. I thought that I had to make myself into a historian to do this book properly; and hence I was a little nervous at first but I ended up enjoying it; the novelty of it.

AB: You seem to enjoy making yourself do different things. You are formally trained as a sociologist but one of your most important books, *Caliban's Reason*, is a book on Caribbean Philosophy and now you are writing a political historical biography. What is it that makes you take on these seemingly different fields of inquiry, something which also is a practice of the Caribbean intellectual tradition?

PH: Well, one is the pressure of circumstances and the real needs growing out of these situations. I mean, in addition to a genuine interest in the field, my work in philosophy has grown out of the sense of shock that I experienced when I really began to look at the situation of black philosophers in the American academy. At the time that I got involved the overwhelming majority of blacks with PhD's in Philosophy (around 95%) were teaching in Religious Studies Departments. That to me was just unsatisfactory and unacceptable. As I noted earlier, I have always had philosophical inclinations that extend as far back as my years in high school. In college and in my professional life, I remained engaged with philosophy to the extent that it helped me to come to terms with some of the major methodological and theoretical issues in the discipline of sociology. Philosophy was therefore always familiar terrain to me. So, I just thought, here's a group of black scholars who genuinely need support and I just followed the impulse to sort of throw my lot in with them. That's essentially how this strong turn to philosophy happened. And here too, as in the case of the Bird biography I just felt this vacuum, this real distortion in the intellectual life of the Caribbean region that needed to be corrected and so I just sort of retrained and reoriented myself to try and do the job.

AB: Let me turn to the book itself. When we think of Antigua today and its politics over decade or so we tend to think of Lester Bird and then we do an historical check, we see that there has been a political dynasty of the Bird family something which has happened in few Caribbean nations. And one of the things that come to mind is a kind of political corruption and general corruption. How would you respond to this line of argument?

PH: But I would say many other administrations in the region are just as or even more corrupt than Bird's regime. The decline this regime suffered in its later years was a phenomenon that could be observed in other territories of the region. That said, the corruption in the later years of Bird's rule did indeed get very bad. Most foul were the cases of the Space Research/South Africa scandal, the airport resurfacing scandal, and the arms for the Medellin Drug Cartel scandal. These dealings really shocked

and disturbed the vast majority of Antiguans and Barbudans. We all watched in horror the televised proceedings of the investigation into the last of these three scandals. I don't think Bird ever really recovered from their revelations; indeed, they permanently tarnished his image. The dynastic tendencies that developed around the succession issue were very real. They polarized and severely weakened the ethical and democratic foundations of life within the Antigua Labor Party by reinforcing the oligarchic patterns that had emerged earlier. But these dynastic tendencies are now passing and as they recede are bringing new problems to light, such as the lack of a 21st century vision for Antigua and Barbuda and the political will to carry it out.

AB: So, how would you assess Bird Sr. in Caribbean political history? There is a point in the book in which you argue that he is a working class intellectual. That he is not Norman Manley, Eric Williams, Grantley Adams. He is not the kind of intellectual and anti-colonial figure who were educated aboard during the colonial period; but that he is something else and it is this something else that I want you to speak a little bit about.

PH: Well, I was very impressed with the way in which he handled himself intellectually and politically after having attended just the St. John's Boys School, which at the time went only to the seventh standard. I thought that what he did with that seventh standard foundation was truly remarkable. He was able to grasp the big social and political currents of his time and to articulate their significance for the lives of the Antiguan and Barbudan working class. One could clearly feel something creative and visionary at work in him. In other words, you felt there was an active and bold working class imagination at work in him that was capable of grasping the significance of the international workers movement that was developing all around him. This was one of the major differences between Bird and the older Harold Wilson, who was a newspaper man and leader of the Antigua Working Men's Association. So I wouldn't say great genius but definitely a man that stood a significant cut above the normal.

AB: But you call him a political genius in the book?

PH: Yeah, I did. When I wrote in detail about Bird's "political genius" it was to get at that element of exceptionality that he had clearly displayed, particularly in the earlier years. At the time I was growing up, when I knew him as a politician I definitely felt that this was a man of vision. He spoke like a working class man but not like any other that I had heard. He was

definitely saying something new and progressive about the capabilities and future of the working class in Antigua and Barbuda, and also across the Caribbean region. I knew that he was not a scholar but at the same time I felt in him a growing vision that was developing over time, that he was in fact using it to guide and lead others, and was therefore filling a very important leadership vacuum in Antiguan and Barbudan society.

So in that section of the book on Bird's political genius I was really searching for the origins of that vision. Where did this come from? From what deep well was it springing? I knew I couldn't say, you know, he was educated at Oxford or Cambridge and while there began developing this political vision. So I had to look elsewhere to see where his political vision was coming from. What was he reading? Who was he talking to? What were the major influences on him? Even though it was difficult to flesh it out, I think I was able to get enough documentation to show that he was an avid reader of certain newspapers including labor papers from Britain. Some of the papers I didn't even know existed, such as the *Voice of Ethiopia*. This and other papers that Bird was reading were publications that the colonial government in fact banned. So that it was clear that there was this underground current and that he was definitely very much a part of it. Further, early in his life he was a Salvation Army leader and studied at the Training Center in Trinidad in the 1920s. This exposure to working class events and currents in Trinidad as well as the formal training that he got there were also important in Bird's formation, as it was the only place that went after leaving the St. John's Boy's School. It was out of these different streams of reading, together with his own life-shaping working class experiences that he fashioned and attempted to implement what I've called his black democratic socialist vision.

AB: Which I will come to in a minute. But I want to continue with this point for a moment .When you read the book there emerges a clear relationship between his training in the Salvation Army and going to Trinidad and then returning to Antigua and Barbuda. I want you to talk a little bit about how you think that particular religious formation was important for him and other political people.

PH: Well, clearly the time he spent in Trinidad was important for his formation as a leader. It was his primary education after leaving the St. John's Boys' School. I think that it was there that his ability to speak, his sense of being a working class leader really crystallized. Of course the solutions he was then offering to problems of the poor were religious ones. But

they would not last for long and would soon become political ones. But the earliest sense of himself as a leader, as a man with a transformative mission, this I think is what the Salvation Army gave him. Thus his life as a religious leader was the mould in which his life as a political leader was originally cast. You must remember here that he began as an Anglican and at the age of 15 converted to the more working class oriented Salvation Army. However, he himself never really spoke about his internal religious life or the importance of his conversion to the Salvation Army. This is somewhat surprising because, as you know, he was always welcoming Bishops, Archbishops and other big religious figures to Antigua and Barbuda. This was sort of atypical of him not to embrace opportunities like these to go personal. So he really kept his religious life hidden but it definitely shaped his perception of himself as a leader.

AB: Why do you think that he was so quiet about this part of his life?

PH: I really don't know why he was so quiet about his religious life. I don't know if it was because as a public figure he felt that the Salvation Army was the religion of the poor and thus not quite appropriate for matters of state. For example, quite often when there was need for a major public religious ceremony he tended to go with the Anglican Church as opposed to his own Salvation Army tradition. Thus, even though he had broken with the Anglican Church, one could make a case that in his mind he was still connected to this Church.

AB: I want to probe this because I'm trying to get a better handle on Bird, Sr as a complex figure and what that meant for his politics, if , as you correctly stated, the Anglican Church is seen as the high church and the Salvation Army is seen as the church of the **poor** black person.

PH: The lowest of the low

AB: Yes the lowest of the low. Then what you are talking about is that time when a person gets to a certain position and status, and then he or she has to balance his or her religious convictions with the actual functions and relationships between the Church and the state. What I am trying to figure is this; there is a way in the book in which you trace some of the contradictions in Bird Sr. I am trying to see whether or not or how those contradictions also played out in religion. Let me put it another way, whether or not his silence on his own religious experiences was not just a

personal thing, but was actually part of the conflicts that he certainly had to go through and can be understood as part of the set of social contradictions that shaped his politics? .

PH: I must confess, I never really thought about that. I have to really give that some thought before I can give you more than just basic information. It's a very good question. The way in which I defined his conservatism in that chapter it really is not a conservatism that's ideologically driven. Rather, it is a conservatism of preservation. Bird wanted to preserve the order that he had established. The state capitalist order rather than the socialist one that he had established was threatened, as I indicated, on two fronts. On the left front you had the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM), led by Tim Hector who was demanding real socialism, and from the right, you had the IMF, the World Bank, and the whole neo-liberal thing. The latter, Bird instinctively rejected. It just rubbed him the wrong way. The left wing he had broken with and had lost his earlier sympathy for a socialist Antigua and Barbuda. And so, the conservative years were not so much driven by a positive vision, but by the need to do what he had to in order to preserve the state capitalist order that had emerged from his compromises with foreign capital. And it was the urge to preserve that socio-economic reality that dominated his last years. To what extent it was driven by religious concerns, it is difficult to say.

AB: You mentioned Tim Hector and the question is about the radical left and the period of black power in the Caribbean. The ideas of Black Power were pushed by a generation within the Caribbean who had come of age on the cusp of the moment of formal constitutional decolonization but for whom political independence did not yield any fundamental social and economic transformation. So what was the relationship between Bird Sr. and this left?

PH: Well, I would say very much a complicated relationship. Because basically what is happening at that time was the emerging of a new left that saw itself as young and very different from the left that Bird once represented. This new left crystallized around Tim Hector and the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM) and it had very strong positions on popular democracy and workers control of the economy. This new left movement in Antigua and Barbuda was part of a larger trend moving through the region, and it was influenced by authors such as CLR James and Walter Rodney and groups such as Abeng in Jamaica and New Beginning in Trinidad. It was at this moment that VC had settled into his

compromises with foreign capitalists in the tourist industry, and thus felt the needed to tone down the black/white conflict, and to subordinate the race question to the class question. Further, it was around this time that he finally gave up on the idea of workers controlling their time and their own productive labor. So this was the widening gap between old and new left that led to Bird's tense and difficult relationship with the Antiguan and Barbudan left that you are more familiar with. There were a number of incidents around the race question which brought old and new left together, but they did not produce any lasting solidarity

Because of this growing divergence, a conversation between old left and new left, between older black democratic socialists and young revolutionary socialists that really should have taken place never occurred. In this conversation the old left would explain to the new left why it was making these compromises in the direction of a white capitalism. Or, as leftists, both sides could have discussed honestly the economic difficulties of building a socialist order. Those, for example, were the kinds of conversations that would have been good for Tim and the ACLM to have had with VC. In a context of left solidarity someone should have asked VC: why did you abandon the powerful statement that you made in your minority report to the Soulbury Commission? All of those efforts at getting the peasants to plant arrowroot, and to start an arrowroot factory, what went wrong? What do you see now as the major obstacle to these attempts? There was never really that kind of a conversation. Between old and new left the situation was far too polarized. The old left saw the new primarily as a threat, and the new left took it as given that VC was then just betraying the workers and his earlier socialist cause; that out of some bad motive he was just abandoning and capitulating to the capitalists. In short, there wasn't any real attempt to try to understand, what were the difficulties that Bird was then beginning to feel were insurmountable in the building of a socialist order, and how would Tim and the new left respond differently. As young leftist, we were just confident that we could do it without that kind of input from the old left. In fact it turned out to be much harder than we thought. So these were some of the complications in Bird's relationship with the Antiguan and Barbudan left. Bird's case becomes all the more instructive when we look at the general turn towards state capitalism that has overtaken so many of the socialist experiments across the world. The recent set of reforms announced by Raul Castro in Cuba is the latest instance of this. This broader state capitalist trend points to powerful capitalist forces at work in our world – forces that were very well theorized by CLR James in the 1940s when Bird was at his most radical point.

AB: One thing that strikes me about VC – I'll make a statement and then you tell me if it is an accurate one – it is that he, unlike Eric Williams, NW Manley and Grantley Adams, had a chance to implement, I think, a certain form of politics which displaced the planter class. NW Manley was not able to do it in part because of the nature of the Jamaican political system. However one gets a sense that VC Bird sticks to his guns in trying to dismantle the planters and the plantation system. Is that a pretty accurate statement?

PH: Yes, I think a very accurate statement. But then again I think it was easier for him to carryout out a more radical assault on the planters of Antigua and Barbuda because he was not under the kind of American pressure that these leaders were. During the 40s and 50s, and most of the 60s, the Americans weren't really taking close notice of him. He was just not on their radar screen. This may sound surprising given the presence of two U.S. military bases on the island of Antigua – bases that were the result of the now infamous 1941 bases for battleships agreement between the U.S. and Britain. It was as though they had decided to leave this matter in the hands of the British. Consequently, Bird could just focus on fighting the planters and playing that game with the colonial governors to get them on his side, and as you can see, he had a definite strategy for that undertaking. To me, this strategy for defeating the planters was the most brilliant thing about VC. He had an island-wide strategy for control. Thus he had a very clear conception of how he was going to take the island from the planters. He knew he had to get the colonial governors on his side and once he did that he knew he could get rid of the planters. On this score, he definitely came closer to completely expelling the planters than Manley, Williams or Grantley Adams. This is why the new left in Antigua and Barbuda continued to hold him responsible for the return to dominance of a white foreign capitalist class. In a sense when the entire plantation system fell into his hands, this was a time when the government of Antigua and Barbuda literally owned the entire island. Consequently, when you look at what has happened since – the re-alienating of this land that has resulted in today's levels of foreign ownership – you would never have known that Antigua and Barbuda's pattern of land ownership had been significantly different from other islands.

AB: You see there is something Professor Henry that I think is important that we try and think about: it is the meanings of political independence in the Caribbean. If NW Manley had to fight the planters he also had to fight colonial power and yes I agree he did have the cold

war as one of things he had to deal with. The expulsion of the radical left from the PNP in 1952 demonstrates this. But there was a way in which VC was able to confront the entire historical legacy of Caribbean society which is the plantation system that none of the others did where the planter class existed.

PH: Absolutely! That is certainly one of the distinctive marks of VC's leadership and one of his major achievements as a political organizer.

AB: Why do you think that was so?

PH: I think it had a lot to do with the grass roots nature of his political vision and the deeply felt antagonism toward the planters that it legitimated. This antagonism was a very strong impulse that Bird shared with the working class members of the trade union that he led, the Antigua Trades and Labor Union (ATLU). Further, I think that while Williams, Manley and other future leaders were being educated abroad they came to accept certain norms of etiquette and decency in political behavior. Well, having not gone through that socializing experience, VC quite often just made up his own rules of political behavior. So in the opening chapter of the book where I'm trying to give an overview of him has a political leader, you see the difficulty I am having. It is difficult, because here's a leader with many faces and tactical strategies of his own making, all of which stopped just short of a violent or armed confrontation with the colonial order. Bird knew that he was not a military tactician and thus never took his deep antagonisms towards the planters in that direction. Yet on many occasions when he saw the workers getting uncontrollably violent he just closed his eyes or winked. He knew what they were going to do and that he could not stop them. In such violent moments when his rank and file members were at odds with him he would let them take the lead but disassociate himself publicly from the specific actions taken. The ability to unleash, however indirectly, this level of hostility towards the planters was probably not there in the case of Eric Williams. There is no evidence I know of him kind of doing this kind of stuff. So, one definitely gets the sense that Bird felt completely justified in opposing the planters and in openly displaying his aim of throwing them out. I don't think Manley's anti-planter sentiments were as absolute as Bird's. Manley's feelings did not have that strong dose of working class resentment that was clearly there in the case of Bird.

AB: I get the feeling then that what VC Bird did and what we don't know in the rest of Caribbean is that he confronted the historical legacies of Caribbean society in way that perhaps none of the other anti-colonial leaders did during the period?

PH: Right, right. I agree with that. It was indeed a very significant challenge that opened up new political possibilities including socialist ones. And so to me it was just very unfortunate that when the new left became active that we could not have had that conversation with him about how to deal differently with the economic difficulties of a socialist alternative. I think we too did not fully realize the uniqueness and scope Bird's challenge to the planters. Our new left of the 1960s, much to our chagrin, is now the old left; and before we exit the historical stage we have a responsibility to leave to the left of the future a clear accounting of our stewardship. It is a complex and tattered record that definitely needs explaining and should be set in relation to the record of the old left of the 1940s. This of course brings us back to the issue of historical recovery that you raised earlier. By providing clear accounts of our thoughts and deeds we will make such recovery easier for future generations. What are the common problems that both old and new left failed to resolve? What were the problems that they solved that we did not? What were the problems that we solved that they did not? Greater clarity on questions like these would help to clarify the issue of the uniqueness of Bird's struggle with the planters and also the problem of historical recovery for future generations.

This problem of historical recovery becomes all the more important as we are now at the end of the era of Western capitalism that gave rise to both the old left of the 1940s and our new left of the 1960s. The financial crisis of 2008 marked the end of that era and also the end of the 20th century. This crisis has also framed the opening of the 21st century. In the decades ahead, China, Brazil and India will very likely be new centers of an informatic global economy. These countries will very likely bring measures of state capitalism to this virtually integrated global economy that the liberal and neo-liberal economies of the West did not. Further this new global economy will have to grow within the limits of an increasing number of urgent ecological constraints such as global warming, the melting of permafrost lands and also the polar ice caps. As we think about the increasing pressure coming form these limits, we are forced to raise questions such as: can our planet sustain another round of technological innovation and growth within the capitalist logic of limitless accumulation of profits? Will growth and technological change have to be uncoupled sometime in the

21st century from this logic of accumulation and re-embedded in a new set of ecological and redistributive values?

It is the new place that we establish for ourselves in this emerging economic order that will determine the pressing challenges for the Caribbean in the 21st century. Antigua and Barbuda along with most of the region have been stuck in a form of state capitalism that was functional and progressive up to about the mid-70s. Since then, and particularly since the onset of globalization, that particular type of state capitalism has become increasingly less function and incapable of inserting the region into the new global order in a competitive and growth producing mode. Consequently, the struggles and creative upsurges that will produce the new left of the future will be significantly different from the struggles of the 1940s and our struggles of the 1960s. However, because of the many still unsolved problems such as social inequality, class domination, and mass poverty there will also be important continuities with the struggles of the past. It is for these lines of future continuity that we need to leave clear accounts of our thoughts and deeds as well as their relations to the struggles of the 1940s. In this regard, the writings of Tim Hector are vital and indispensable, as well as accurate accounts of Bird's thoughts and deeds as he was not a writer. This should be the combined package we pass on to the new left of the Antigua and Barbuda of the future.

AB: How then would you place VC Bird within the pantheon of political activism and ideological currents within the region?

PH: VC is hard to classify because of the ambivalence in the outcome of his long period of rule. He starts off in a very impressive way with a clear vision of a black democratic socialist transformation. However, by the early sixties he feels as though he has to compromise on the economic issue because of difficulties he was experiencing in keeping the Antiguan and Barbudan economy growing. It was this compromise more than anything else that has cast a dark shadow over his place in the Caribbean pantheon of political activism. I think for a lot of people, and in particular those on the left, if he had stuck to his black democratic socialist guns and failed he might now be more revered figure and less of an ambivalent one. But in succumbing, compromising and then in the last years becoming quite corrupt, his image and legacy has been permanently tarnished. So with regard to the pantheon of Caribbean leaders, I think the best way to deal with VC is to divide him into two phases. In his earlier and radical phase, he's there with the best of the old left; and in his phases of deep compromise he

indeed becomes very ordinary. But this trajectory moving from a radical beginning to a conservative ending is a political curve that we must study more closely as it is such a common one – one that we are likely to see again. In the curve of Bird's political career, I see a major textbook on Caribbean politics with very instructive chapters on the strengths and weakness of political leadership in the region.

AB: You call his political philosophy Black Democratic Socialism. Democratic Socialism, as it appears and operates within the Caribbean, can perhaps be defined as a broad democratic political strategy, which seeks to reform both the political and economic system within the region. It is somewhat to the left of traditional social democracy because it seeks to confront the powerful colonial legacies which shaped Caribbean life and often has a radical international policy. But you add black to the democratic socialism because you also argue in a couple of places in the book that which VC was not just a democratic socialist as say NW Manley was, but because of his Graveyism he also confronted the question of race. So can you talk a little bit about that?

PH: Oh sure. When you read a lot of the reports of the union and its affiliated political party the Antigua Labor Party (ALP), the race question is always coming up. There is a lot of talk about what a black man can and cannot do in Antigua and Barbuda. For example, we find the repeated assertion that if he doesn't have a white sponsor he cannot advance in the civil service, and or other areas of professional endeavor. In short, there is a real sense of discrimination as an accepted practice in the society. As I noted in the book, when in the 1940s the governor appointed a very light-skinned colored man to a major civil service post it precipitated a racial and political crisis. Alexander Moody Stuart, the chief of the planters, resigned his seat in parliament. They really thought that by withdrawing completely from participating in the governing process that they could have forced the governor to withdraw the appointment. To his credit he did not. With incidents like this, one feels the presence of this racial struggle very strongly from the earliest stages of the labor movement in Antigua and Barbuda. The experiences of this racial struggle fed consistently the black or Garveyite dimension of Bird's black democratic socialism. Further, when you look at the newspaper that the workers produced, *The Workers Voice*, you can find these racial themes filling its pages along with various aspects of the class question. There were also important ethical issues that were taken up at this time. One writer in particular for whom they were important was LUV. I really have to do some more work on this man, as he

clearly wrote under a pseudonym. But the early VC and many others in the movement embodied and affirmed a black presence that also engaged the historical legacy of the black struggle for liberation.

AB: One of the exciting things about this kind of research work is the "discovery" of people whom we do not pay attention to normally or have not been given their historical due. You discovered a few of those people, did you not?

PH: Absolutely, but nobody remembers who LUV is. I have been asking around but he is now completely unknown. Here was somebody who just took life to be an ethical undertaking, including politics. To be a good politician, a vital part of you had to be ethical. He went on to suggest that if there were not better ethical practices inside the ATLU, the organization would surely go into decline and decline badly. It was a very interesting ethical vision that he had. For him race was secondary, class was secondary – first and foremost were one's ethics and the ethics of one's group. LUV and S.A Henry, someone else who I am also looking more closely at, were the two major ethicists in the movement.

In addition to these ethicists, there were also Pan Africanists and Garveyites in the ATLU, who took race first positions. There were also communists who felt the need to write under pseudonyms, and who took class first positions. Finally as noted earlier, we had the Black Democratic Socialists, and all of these positions were hotly debated in the pages and editorials of the *Workers Voice*. Novelle Richards, Edward Mathurin, and V.C Bird were among the leaders who steered the movement in a black democratic socialist direction.

AB: Race then, although it is very much outside of what I think we can call creole nationalist political thought, seems to be central in the Antiguan case?

PH: Oh, yes.

AB: It is upfront in the writings and agitation of the anti-colonial movement?

PH: But again it was not as upfront as it was in the U.S.

AB: Yes, yes

PH: Thus in 1951, when Governor Blackburne brought British troops into Antigua and Barbuda from Jamaica, it was the racially-charged nature of the strike that made him press the panic button. As such this became another of those moments in which VC would urge restraint in order to avoid a violent confrontation which he knew he could not lead. So even in this major strike it is the need to cooperate with the British fighters, to make this a moment of racial compromise, which for me is the factor that VC is responding to. So often during the racially charged street dramas of this strike one would hear him say "calm down", "calm down". And he would again on several occasions play this role of mediator in order to prevent the race issue from reaching the boiling point.

AB: Why would he step back?

PH: Because if on occasions such as these the race issue had gotten to the boiling point, it would have disrupted Bird's on-going relations with his British labor colleagues, whose support he found quite strategic. But, in spite of this reserve, we can't just say that he was a Democratic Socialist. That's just not accurate. The race issue was by far too present for that. Hence in my view, calling him a black democratic socialist would be closer to the mark.

AB: Well, this means that one implicit argument of the book is about the different political /ideological strands which make up the anti-colonial moment in Caribbean political history. It means as well we need to pay attention to the various nuances in Caribbean anti-colonial thought.

PH: The Antigua and Barbuda Labor Movement, was in fact a class dominated movement. The masses of the people were really conceptualized in labor terms. They thought of themselves first as workers and so as labor the color question for the majority was second to the class question. And to the extent that it was recognized, I think that recognition varied a lot. With some members it was quite explicit, but with others it remained rather implicit. The recognition of the gender question I think varied even more. I didn't get into it too much even though there were lots of sexist passages and editorials that I could have quoted. However it is clear that the movement had a lot of women in it but they had to come in first as workers and not as women.

AB: Were there women in the leadership

PH: No, no. But again it is important to emphasize that they had to be

there as workers primarily. Women could very easily be incorporated within the laborist framework that undergirded much of the thinking within the movement. You had the women's sections of the various constituency branches of both the union and the party. But first and foremost your identity had to be that of a laborer, second a black, third a woman.

AB: Let us shift a bit. In the book you write about the necessity for the emergence of an entrepreneurial group in Caribbean society today. Can you expand on that a bit and say what exactly what you mean? How would you respond to the criticism that you are arguing for the further development of a national bourgeoisie and that this class and its role have been exhausted in Caribbean society?

PH: Well first of all by suggesting that we establish an entrepreneurial sector to deal with economic dependence in Antigua and Barbuda, I wanted to separate to a significant degree entrepreneurial activity and the bourgeois class. I wanted us to see entrepreneurial abilities as they existed among the working class. I did not want us to see the working class as just all workers. If indeed we are moving into an increasingly globalized world then we must continue to refine and hone our entrepreneurial abilities including those of "working class" entrepreneurs. In other words, I am making the claim that entrepreneurial talent is randomly distributed. It is not the monopoly of the bourgeoisie class. We have seen so many entrepreneurs in the Antiguan middle class who have little or no talent. They began doing something yesterday, and forty years later they are doing the exact same thing. Their business has not grown. It has simply allowed them to support their families and that's it. On the other hand, we have had entrepreneurs from the working class who have moved well past that. So what I was really trying to do in that section of the last chapter was to drive a wedge between entrepreneurship and class identity and to begin to address those members of the working class who could move up, better themselves and change their situation by, in fact, acknowledging that they have entrepreneurial skills.

To me another advantage of the notion of an entrepreneurial sector as opposed to a class that we need to consider is the following: if in fact we acknowledge the entrepreneurial capabilities of the working class, what would be their normative impact on bourgeois entrepreneurship. What would be their normative impact on the state bourgeoisie? Both of these groups would have to confront these working class entrepreneurs as partners in the national response to the problem of growing global

competition. Now I'm not exactly sure where this changed position of working class entrepreneurs would lead. It could lead to the strengthening of the traditional bourgeois classes. That is a definite possibility here. However I do think that this heightened recognition of working class entrepreneurs has some potential to change how we think about bourgeois entrepreneurship. It can be proletarianized just as working class entrepreneurs can be captured by the bourgeoisie. But one way or the other to the extent that globalization continues to be organized on the liberal economic principles of the moment then we have no choice but to up our game and mount a stronger entrepreneurial response. Even if the more state capitalist regimes of China, Brazil and India emerge as new centers of the world economy, we will still need to increase our entrepreneurial capabilities, including those of workers. Failure here will only result in greater economic dependence of foreign capitalists.

AB: Let's reflect on the book now that it has been out for a several months. Whenever an author writes a book and it is published, often times when he/she reviews it there is that wonder about what might have been written differently. Reflecting on this very informative and a major piece of political biography showing Antiguan and Barbudan political life at a certain period, how do you now think about the book?

PH: Really I just wish I had had a few more months in the archives. I'm sure that there's so much more I would have been able to uncover. There are still so many questions left hanging. For example, all of these figures around VC about whom we know so little. Take someone like Luther George. He was a skilled organizer, who was very active in the Antigua Small Farmers Association and also in the Antigua Working Men's Association before Bird came on the scene. George had a truck in the 30's and was always carrying people from the countryside to political events in St. Johns. I interviewed two elderly persons he took to St. Johns in the back of his truck when Marcus Garvey spoke in Antigua and Barbuda. He is this figure that I kept hearing about and who figured prominently in the biographies of so many people. Fortunately, there is now a book about his life, *Luther George* by Lionel Hurst. So I think the story would have been very different if I could have written solid five page accounts of the lives of some of these people who were around Bird. Another was Prince Hurst, who I quoted several times in the book. I could have gotten more information on him with a little bit more time. So I really would have liked to have fleshed out in more detail the figures around VC.

AB: So is there another book potentially on working class leadership in Antigua?

PH: Well, no —- it depends on my energy. Before I started this biography of VC, I was working on the follow up to my book, *Caliban's Reason*. So my main priority now is to go back to that philosophical work. I've just been hoping that I could have an Antiguan graduate student . . . somebody who was interested in these sorts of political issues. I could then guide him or her in these areas that I've only partially explored and mined. In this way, a little bit more of the Antiguan and Barbudan story could be told.

AB: Well thank you very much for the book Professor Henry

PH: Thank you Professor Bogues for some very good questions.

January, 2011

Paget Henry, Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird,
London: Hansib, 2010. 231pp.
Adlai Murdoch

The task that Paget Henry sets himself in this biography is challenging, if indeed not daunting; to analyze, and to account for the broad and indelible impact that Vere Cornwall Bird had on political events in Antigua and Barbuda over the fifty-five years of his public life between 1939 and 1994. Given the Herculean stature of such a figure, simply recounting the major occurrences of this period would be challenge enough; after all, these decades were witness to a substantial number of telling transformations in the governance of Antigua and Barbuda, including, or perhaps most especially, the transition to ministerial government in 1956, followed by Statehood in Association in 1967 and, ultimately, to full independence in 1981. But along with this political task, Henry also sets himself a philosophical one; to inscribe these events in an analytical framework that sets the dominant capitalist order of the sugar plantations and the Antigua Syndicate Estates against Bird's development and practice of a liberatory black democratic socialism that would itself morph into a strategic merging of black nationalism and state capitalism. In order to fully account for Bird's achievements and failures, then, and the potential for postcolonial transformation at the national level and within a Caribbean context that would be a principal part of Bird's legacy, Henry's assessment of this leader will itself strike out into uncharted paths.

Henry's book is divided into seven chapters, chronologically organized to cover the various stages of V.C. Bird's life in the personal, political, and philosophical domains. His opening chapter, aptly entitled "Meet V.C. Bird," immediately places the scope of the challenge ahead into clear perspective. We are told that "V.C. Bird was a very complex man with many sides to his personality," and that "his public presentation of himself often included a deep and stoic reserve" (21). This deliberate veiling of his persona would not only make it difficult to know Bird both personally and politically, it would inhibit to a certain extent the reconstruction of the overt ideological formation by which he was to challenge the ascendancy of the sugar barons and their iron-fisted grip on the island's economy in the 1940's and 1950's. For if Bird abjured the articulation of a fixed philosophical positionality, the generation that would have been present at the creation of Bird as union activist-turned-politician is rapidly waning, if not disappearing, thus making the definition of a clear political philosophy, as Henry seeks to do through a conjunction of trade unionism and ethical bad-mindedness in Chapter 3, and the filling-in of personal details and political strategies that much more challenging.

In marking Bird's beginnings as a wholesale trader turned trade union leader, Henry is able to establish through the details of this transition the stark, poverty-driven environment that framed the contemporary condition of Antigua and Barbuda. So that while Bird's election to the presidency of the ATLU in September 1943 serves as the catalyst for his entry into mainstream politics, Henry is able to sketch out the way in which a succession of constitutional changes enacted and approved by the British colonial government in fact paved the way for the appearance of a leader of stature, and with a strong popular following, to challenge the dominant monocrop economic regime and chart a new economic and political course for the nascent twin-island state. As the process of constitutional decolonization ramped up in the wake of the Second World War, its Caribbean repercussions proved irreversible; indeed, changes on the political landscape tied the fortunes of labor even more closely to those of politics, as Henry points out, "As the British government shifted its policies toward independence for the region, the political dimensions of the labour struggles only increased" (35). These changes came in rapid succession; first, effective candidates now had to be chosen for "election to the new legislative council in which five seats had been made elective by the new constitution of 1936" (35). This was followed by "The constitutional changes of 1951 [which] introduced adult suffrage and removed the income and property restrictions on voters of the 1936 constitution. Further, it divided Antigua and Barbuda into eight constituencies instead of the one that both territories had been under the previous constitution."

These developments were followed by "The constitutional changes of 1956 [that] introduced the ministerial system of government and transformed committees and their chairs into ministries and ministers" (36). These relatively swift and certainly monumental changes in the style and substance of self-governance mediated Bird's concurrent rise to dominance and power in the fields of labor and politics, and allowed him to carry "the nation-in-formation on his broad and sturdy shoulders." And yet the essential worker vs. planter dichotomy that framed the island's economic functioning was never far from Bird's mind, and, as Henry states, it is incontrovertibly true that "His goal was clearly to replace the white planter/colonialist tradition of politics with a black proletarian one" (37). It is the extent to which this goal was successfully carried out, and the changes wrought in political structures and the nascent Antiguan middle class, that concerns Henry in this book.

The ideology that presumably undergirded this struggle proves rather difficult to pin down, however. In practice, Bird clearly sought to balance "the insurrectionary aspirations of the masses" with "an organizational frame" that needed to be "channeled strategically in the interest of winning specific battles" (38); it is this nuanced approach to conflict that ultimately permits Henry to characterize Bird's leadership as "non-revolutionary [in] nature' (39). At the center of this struggle, locally, was the long-established planter class, best embodied, perhaps, by the economic and political dominance of the Moody-Stuart clan. However, within the span of a few pages, Henry is able to put into place two key factors that would catalyze the coming change; on the one hand, that the critical patterns and structures of the Antiguan economy had remained relatively unchanged for over a century since the post-emancipation period of the 1840s, and, on the other, the global shifts in the centers of economic and political power which meant that "the rise of the United States and Germany in particular" in the early part of the twentieth century "increased the competitive pressure on British industrial production" (49), with the concomitant effect that "Caribbean economies remained in the hands of a planter class that was woefully unable to compete in the early industrial era" (50). The tensions and teleologies of this economic, social and political metamorphosis, one that would ultimately erase the planter class as a valid seat of power, gave rise to the birth of black democratic power in the Caribbean, and V.C. Bird would be at the center of it.

As Chapter 4, entitled "The Struggle for Power," proceeds, what becomes increasingly clear in this section of the book, in which Henry narrates and dissects the signal series of events marking Bird's ascent to power, is the extent to which the planter class went out of its way in its attempts to persuade the British Colonial Office of its indispensable leadership role in the political and economic affairs of Antigua and Barbuda. When such attempts took the form of an official petition, as they did on occasion, the results, in retrospect, were both laughably and mind-bogglingly egotistical, particularly with regard to race relations and the maintenance of contemporary hierarchies of racial strata. Henry recounts one such episode in Chapter 2, one which, given its brazen and shameless grounding in the attempt to perpetuate white supremacy at all costs, deserves to be read by all Antiguans, so that they can be fully seized of the magnitude of the struggle for racial equality whose results they now perhaps take for granted.

This unimaginably arrogant 1937 attempt to convince the governor and the secretary of state for the colonies of the rectitude of the contemporary racial status quo and the inadvisability of considering any transformation to the black majority rule implicit in the trusteeship system then being implemented in several West African colonies was penned by Moody-Stuart, and took as its premise the unbelievable position that whites were the older immigrants to the region, and so deserved preferential treatment, "because there is in these islands no indigenous native race; there is an immigrant Black Race and an immigrant White Race; and of the two the White Race is the older immigrant." As a result, their argument continued, ceding political and administrative control to the black majority population would constitute "racial discrimination in favour of the Negro race" (60). Such brazen and barefaced attempts at what today would be termed reverse discrimination convey clearly the deeply entrenched nature of white power in the Caribbean, the lengths to which its cohort would go to preserve it, and the lengths to which V.C. Bird and his stalwarts would have to go to dislodge and overturn it.

As labor insurrections multiplied, and Bird increasingly took center stage as the unquestioned leader of the union-based working-class movement, Henry makes the telling point that "Bird was definitely aware of himself as a link in a long chain of working class leaders" (74). Clearly, his goal was to advance and enhance not only his own position, but that of Antigua's working class as well. In the key conflicts that marked the 1940s and 1950s, sparked by the Antigua Sugar Factory dispute of 1939 and the waterfront strike of 1940 against Bryson and Company, the strikes and street demonstrations that erupted fed the contestation of the entrenched and hierarchical system of racialized economics. Importantly, when such labor-based conflicts occurred, he repeatedly took advantage of his central role in resolving them to simultaneously enhance his own leadership role while improving working conditions for the masses. Indeed, Bird's election in September 1943 as leader of the ATLU, effectively displacing longtime leader Reginald Stevens, cemented his growing leadership role in the twin domains of labor and politics.

In a crucial observation, however, Henry points out that Bird's successful activism and increasingly visible political profile appeared to substantially precede his articulation of a political ideology or philosophical stance, one separate and apart from his contestation of the continued race-based domination of Antigua's black working class. This is not to say that he was unaware of the various praxes and philosophies of black radicalism; indeed,

as Henry shows, Bird was acutely aware of the leadership path(s) blazed by those who had preceded him, from his local contemporaries Reginald Stevens and George Weston, to their historical counterparts King Court, Tomboy and Hercules of the failed 1736 uprising, to internationally-known black thinkers like Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. DuBois. As his adoption of 'bad mindedness" – an amorphous but powerful way of thought and deed that can be briefly characterized as black stubbornness and resistance — took shape, it was his "ethical and oppositional projection of the evil category onto the planters" that ultimately gave it substance as "the foundation and first phase of Bird's political philosophy" (82). Such awareness was buttressed by the "diasporic internationalism" that Henry cites, where labor demands created "reverse migratory trends" (84) that connected the islands to the imperial centers. The result was the first, fully-fledged stage of Bird's political philosophy, one that he would adapt and rework over several decades as changing political contexts and circumstances warranted. At this juncture, then, it was a judicious mix of "European Left thought and indigenous race discourse" that served Bird's purposes best, giving rise to his "creole political philosophy of black democratic socialism" (91). However, as Henry explains, this positionality would see several iterations over time as Bird responded to the shifting tensions and interests of politics, economics and labor in an evolving Antiguan landscape.

The merging of labor, economic, and political interests in the early 1950's proved the catalyst that finally catapulted Bird onto center stage. Henry's incisive, multifaceted analysis shows clearly the importance of a series of strikes and go-slows in that year, topped by the Mill Reef strike against Clarence Johnson Construction Company. The climax came when Moody-Stuart unilaterally canceled the 1951 sugar agreement in response to the ATLU choosing to observe May 1st as a holiday, in concert with workers around the world. The ultimate result was the negotiation of a new constitution that, as Henry puts it, was "the start of an accelerated process of constitutional decolonization" whose reforms "significantly increased the power of Bird and his colleagues" (128). But even as he acquired "greater control over state power," Bird was obliged to continually retool his philosophical stance to meet the unprecedented challenges of local conditions. As a result, his political accumulation proved limited, and the "black democratic socialist order" (131) for Antigua and Barbuda that was arguably the initial and primary goal of his activism found itself forced to give way to the hard realities of world capitalism. Following the successful land settlement program, the failure of a number of agro-industries overseen by the Bird-chaired Industrial Development Board led to the introduction of light industry and a transition to black labourism.

Henry's Chapter 5, entitled "V.C. Bird in Power," recounts in great detail a key series of events that would in relatively short order bracket Bird by both triumph and tragedy, but would also arguably shape the political landscape of Antigua and Barbuda for the foreseeable future. Having become Antigua's first Chief Minister in 1956 and its first Premier in 1967, Bird could legitimately take credit for a generation of transformational achievements that had remade Antigua's political and economic landscape. But Henry charts tellingly the tensions and conflicts within the still crucial labor base of the ATLU that would lead to a series of confrontations that would ultimately undo the secure support base that Bird had so carefully built up for so long. Here we see writ large the consequences of joining the personal to the political; as Henry astutely points out, at that juncture, "Political power was being gradually shifted from the governor and other colonial administrators to the premier and his ministers," which meant that, in the critical union base, competition for leadership was fierce. In George Walter, the General Secretary, the ATLU had a young activist and organizer who was "in many ways a lot like Bird" and who "had strong leadership aspirations" to boot (147).

This rivalry, in Henry's words, meant that "the Antiguan and Barbudan working class was now split right down the middle;" ironically, Bird's position as Premier meant that key segments of his own union were now ranged against the state power that he now embodied, and Bird found himself obliged to "transform himself into a parliamentary dictator" (147) in order to counter this double-edged challenge to his union and, by extension, political authority. As the resulting strikes, demonstrations, and police actions enabled by Bird's introduction of the Public Order Act proceeded to paralyze Antigua and Barbuda even as they rent it in twain, Henry's account of these ground-breaking and monumental events, still razor-sharp in the memory of so many Antiguans, effectively dramatizes this moment of acute political crisis, climaxed by his revelation that the meeting between the rivals Bird and Walter on March 20, 1968, saw Bird offer his resignation, only to have it turned down by Walter (159).In this critical moment was born the push and pull of perspective and allegiance that continues to haunt Antigua in the long term, and swept Bird from power in the short term even as it ushered in a new era of partyism.

Chapter 6, "The Conservative Years," picks up the narrative with Bird's return to power upon defeating the PLM in 1976. But for this final chapter in the Bird saga, culminating in his withdrawal from political life in 1994 at the age of eighty-five, the tone is ineluctably elegiac, as this larger-

than-life figure is increasingly assailed by charges of corruption and misrule even as he strengthens his party's parliamentary dominance. Indeed, while we witness an astonishing consolidation of power in the 1980 and 1984 elections – capturing 58% of the popular vote in the former and a clean sweep of all sixteen Antiguan parliamentary seats in the latter – there was concomitantly "increasing pressure on the Bird regime to reform its state capitalist order," resulting in a retreat from Bird's earlier radical socialist agenda and the gradual transformation of Antigua and Barbuda into a "classic tourist economy" (186). Indeed, the list of corruption scandals that attached to and emerged from the Bird administration during that period is both exhaustive and exhausting; the Space Research Corporation, Robert Vesco, Brigadier Joe Burke, Stanley Siegal and the Antigua International Bank, Building Finishing Systems and the airport resurfacing project, Israeli Arms and the Medellin Drug Cartel, Maurice Sarfati and Roydan Farms. The double irony here is that while this wave of disgrace was arguably the indirect effect of the shrinking of state capitalism and the transformation of the local economy from a manufacturing- to a market-driven model led by Bird's son Lester as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economic Development, his other son and namesake, Vere Bird Jr., managed somehow to be at the center of most of these humiliations to the nation's image. Henry describes in telling detail the personal toll that these political crises took on Bird, climaxed by the ministerial resignations of Lester Bird and John St Luce in early 1991. Forced to submit to political ultimata by family and colleagues, Bird's decision to demit office in 1991 was an event of great moment; indeed, as Henry states, "A crack opened in the political time of Antigua and Barbuda" (199). In many respects, a decisive and indelible era had come to an end.

Henry's final chapter, "Closing Reflections," mulls over the milestones of Bird's life and career, but, perhaps even more importantly, considers the economic and political forces with which Bird and his cohort had to contend. These forces, he suggests, have also shaped the present-day economy of Antigua and Barbuda, despite, or perhaps alongside, the struggle for racial and class liberation that was Bird's goal. In fact, what Henry's book illuminates above all is the very real way in which the economic and political trajectory of Antigua and Barbuda over most of the twentieth century was mediated and even catalyzed by the ongoing political struggle waged by V.C. Bird against white power in various forms and locations. And indeed, Henry aptly emphasizes the set of ironies that came to haunt Bird's efforts, both foreign and domestic; on the one hand, on the economic front, "one of the deep sources of dissatisfaction and disappointment with

V.C. Bird's state capitalism was its need to re-introduce white economic power after such a vigorous black fight against the planters" (208). As this struggle gradually took the form of state capitalism, catalyzed by Bird's "decision to rescue Moody-Stuart and his planters by securing for them a loan when they had lost the confidence of their creditors" (214), the end result was that "the private firms and corporations" involved in these enterprises "were for the most part less than competitive firms and corporations that survived because of the protection of government granted monopolies, special incentives, and government as risk reducer and rescuer of last resort" (215). On the other hand, and contemporaneously with this shift, "his black labourism was also being rapidly eclipsed by the new political philosophy of ALPism" (170), as Bird sought to retain and consolidate his political power against the cohort of AWU and PLM stalwarts who had been transformed from early supporters into bitter rivals.

Henry concludes with a number of suggestions for constitutional and entrepreneurial modifications, necessary if Antigua and Barbuda is to remain competitive internationally as the twenty-first century proceeds. What is clear, however, is the extent to which, for better or for worse, the life and activities of V. C. Bird dominated the horizons of Antigua and Barbuda for a substantial part of the twentieth century. Truly, he bestrode Antigua and Barbuda like a Colossus. In like manner, Henry's unabashedly personal and political memoir melds both of these analytical strategies in order to come to grips with the colossal stature that this most Antiguan of figures still retains.

Paget Henry, Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird, Hansib Publications: London 2010

George K. Danns

Paget Henry's book presents a political biography of Vere C. Bird, former Prime Minister and founding "Papa" of the small island state of Antigua and Barbuda. The book is an enlightening narrative of the leadership style and philosophy of Bird; an exegesis on the Caribbean culture of which he was a product and in which he functioned; a fascinating, yet eclectic account of the political economy of colonial and post colonial Antiguan society on which he impacted; and, a constructive lament about the failures of this leader to lead his people to a promised land. Henry adopts a multidisciplinary approach to the study of this transformative leader. His work is in part literature, history, philosophy and social sciences. The author moves freely among these disciplines, not bound by any. He presents the reader with a work of art. Like a highly skilled surgeon with multiple scalpels, Henry probes at the personal and the political, people and places, the idiosyncratic and the ideological, the spiritual and the mundane, the national and the global, all in an effort to find and construct a profile of the enigmatic Bird; and, to locate him in time and place. In the process he provides the reader with a menagerie of exciting theoretical and philosophical constructs which serve to illuminate his narrative, and make the book an intellectual feast. It is this multidisciplinary approach and liberty of creative thought that enable this accomplished scholar to produce a book for the ages.

Bird's biography is the ship on which the author travels into the sea of time of Antiguan society in a quest for meaning and explanation. Paget Henry is not a captain that navigates around the storms of the society in which he was born and loves. Instead, he confronts them with the studied dedication of an experienced scholar, his personal passion, and intellectual sagacity.

Antigua and Barbuda is a small island state, but in Henry's account this society is writ large; and, shown to encapsulate the same struggles for freedom from colonial rule and an exploitative planter and ruling class that was experienced in larger countries like Ghana, India or even Guyana. The people of Antigua shared the same disillusionment with their post colonial rulers as was experienced in former colonies in the developing world. In Henry's work you soon forget the size of this country which produced large sociopolitical drama and spawned a titan of leader in VC Bird, who ruled

for decades and was larger than life. An advantage of studying this micro state and its leadership is that it presents a microcosm of the complex currents of conflict and change that exist in larger societies. This gives this book a broader appeal to anyone studying systems of leadership and domination and seeking to understand the politics of developing countries. Vere Bird was not overthrown by his people like former President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; but, his regime was corrupt and he ceded control of state power to his son after over 40 years of controlling Antigua and Barbuda. As Henry concluded, after so many years in power, he ceased to rule and reigned instead.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In chapter one Henry introduces the reader to the hero, V. C. Bird. This chapter is the closest one gets to a conventional biography in which rich details of Bird's life are sparingly, yet coherently provided. I will give greater attention to this chapter as it contains key elements of the author's perspective on the object of his study. Henry postulates that "as human beings with will and agency our lives must progress along two axis simultaneously …a vertical axis along which we grow and develop the capabilities that are inherent in our subjectivity". The second axis is a "horizontal axis along which we give over our increasing subjective capabilities to the realizing of a political, religious, economic, educational, and other collective projects that are capable of transforming one's community and the lives of the people within it." (22). Henry argues, that given the overwhelming public nature of Bird's life, the biography he constructs will proceed along the horizontal axis of this leader's existence. He further advises the reader that information on Bird's personal life was very difficult to come by and, sources accessed often provided contradictory accounts on this national leader's life depending on who supplied the information. Further, much of the materials on his life are held in archives in the United Kingdom and the United States and not yet accessible to researchers. The personal life of this very public figure was seemingly clouded in much mystery. The book is consequently an account of the public Bird, with just enough of his personal life being shared to facilitate some understanding of his leadership motivations and ideological and philosophical orientations. Henry's political biography consequently whets the reader's appetite to know more about this enigmatic national leader. This book is the first biography on V. C. Bird, and as Henry puts it, it will not be the last.

Born on December 1909 to unmarried parents, Bird grew up in a poor single parent household and was the fourth of five children. His "illegitimate status" and poverty precluded him from attending the exclusive Antigua Grammar School and later influenced his decision to socialize and democratize the education system in his country. He attended the St John's Boys School instead where he internalized values of "toughness rather than high academic achievement" and was instilled with "a Puritan code of conduct, which emphasized dignity in adversity, restraint under pressure, and a determination to defend what was deemed to be right."(p.26). Race discrimination was a factor in the color class colonial Antigua. Henry concluded that Bird was "the classic cast down your bucket and pull yourself up by your economic bootstraps kind of guy" (p.27) in the sense of acting with resolute dignity and purpose despite the denial of social and political rights, and discrimination. Henry traces this "cast down bucket" philosophy to the influences the Black American thinker, Booker T. Washington and Bird's high school Principal T. N. Kirnon. Bird's life was reportedly deeply spiritual and he was socialized in the Afro Christianity of his day. Bird's early life was characterized by integral involvement with the Salvation Army faith to which he converted at age 15. He was an ardently spiritual and drum- beating follower of his faith. He rose to the level of captain after studying in Trinidad and Tobago in the Salvation Army Seminary between 1927 -1929. Henry reports on Bird leaving the Salvation Army either because he was corrupt in allegedly embezzling the organization's funds; or, because he was bypassed for higher leadership because of his race; and, he also was housed in segregated quarters relative to his White counterparts. Not taking a position one way or the other on the alleged negatives of V. C. Bird's character is both a strength and a weakness of the author's portrayal. Henry seems unwilling at times to judge this great leader and escapes instead in the comfort zone of saying that some people like Papa Bird and some hate him.

Bird was reported to be a good speaker and had "a natural talent for flattery, persuasion, and compromise, an ability never to let the right hand know what the left was doing, and the talent to lie convincingly when necessary'.(p.43). He was big man with a commanding and powerful presence which Henry describes as charismatic, even mesmeratic. He was also portrayed as having an aura of mysticism, and for much of his adult life had a "concealed spirituality". Bird was also a very good organizer. He was able to command loyal followings as he set about mobilizing the Black working class in Antigua against the planter class and the colonial state. He was able to tap into the collective power of the dispossessed workers as a union leader and wrest opportunities and resources for them from the recalcitrant

ruling class. His numerous successes as a labor leader led to him being seen as a hero by the people. He was respected, if not also feared, by the colonial ruling class. He was reported to have a tactical capacity to employ violence or unleash such by his supporters in pursuit of political objectives. Further, he had the skill of dividing the colonial administration from the ruling planter class by promoting dissension between them. Equally, Bird was known to be able to effectively use diplomacy and negotiation in procuring deals or making tactical concessions. As Henry puts it:

"As such as a political figure, he progressively developed the ability to make himself a symbol of the aspirations, values and material goals that the masses of Antiguans and Barbudans were declaring in their strikes and other insurrectionary activities"(p.38).

V. C. Bird was not the founding father of Antiguan labor movement, but emerged to be its leading light and preeminent leader. He became president of the Antigua Trades and Labor Union (ATLU) in September 1943. Like other parts of the Caribbean, the labor movement provided a platform for the emergence of the nationalist movement against colonial rule. By the early 1950s the Antigua Labor Party headed by Bird, was established to carry on the struggle for political independence.

Unlike other Caribbean leaders such as Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago, Michael Manley of Jamaica, and Grantley Adams of Barbados, Henry notes that V.C. Bird did not acquire an education in metropolitan countries. He only had a two year study sojourn in Trinidad starting at age 18. He was no scholar, did not write books like Williams and Manley. His philosophy, Henry concluded, was essentially homegrown. One such example of Bird's homegrown philosophy was his "ethical bad mindedness". Henry defines ethical bad mindedness as an ethical discourse in which people are seen as acting out of bad motives rather than good ones: "acting out of spite, out of hate, acting with the intention to deceive, to dominate the other or to advance oneself at the expense of the other" (p.30). Henry was anecdotally reminded by his sources that "that Bird, he is a badman" and "a despotic ruler who often engaged in the strategic use of violence to crush his opponents" (p.42). Bird's outlook on life was oriented to this bad mindedness, a disposition that also characterized the disposition of the White planter class towards the Black working class in Antigua. Yet, he was also seen as "a brave and courageous champion of the cause of the Antiguan and Barbudan workers, and a major anti-colonial hero" (p.42). Thus, the good Bird and the bad Bird are equally and skillfully portrayed in the book as the same Bird.

Paget Henry's work has elevated the concept "ethical bad mindedness" to explain not only individual behavior, but also leadership conduct. The attitudes of the current crop of Middle East despots towards their peoples can undoubtedly be characterized as "ethical bad mindedness". In this sense, bad mindedness is not only an aspect of the psyche and a cultural derivative, but also a motivated practice in the armory of tactics of many leaders. Leaders who remain in power as long as V.C. Bird did are even more prone to exhibit "ethical bad mindedness" in an effort to intimidate their people and defeat challengers. As an attribute of selected leadership types, bad mindedness is as much a weapon of revenge as it is a weapon of fear. As evidence of this, Henry notes that Bird's "use of violence was always concealed and strategic" rather than revolutionary (p.39). The exercise of "ethical bad mindedness" leads to the perception of leaders like Bird as "polarizing figures who attract extremes of devotion and rejection" (p.41).

Henry notes that Vere Bird's homegrown ideology and creole leadership was somewhat influenced by the teachings of Marcus Garvey, and the Fabian socialism of the British Labor Party. This led to the development of what Henry labeled Bird's own homegrown "black democratic socialism" which later morphed into "black laborism" as he became the Prime minister of an independent Antigua and Barbuda. The author does not provide any real justification for labeling these ideologies "Black" except that the Antigua and Barbuda masses were dominantly Black or Afro Caribbean. Bird stood up against racism, but there is no serious indication that he was concerned with "black power" as opposed to workers rights and people power. Bird played a leading role in attracting White tourists to his twin island state and courting White, Arab and Hispanic entrepreneurial investments. The constructs of "black democratic socialism' and 'black laborism" are seemingly less apt descriptive representations of V.C. Bird's own ideology than the author's typification of these. Indeed, Bird's maternal grandfather was reported to be white. This tendency to describe aspirations in the human condition as "black" because black people are involved needs to be reexamined.

Taking issue with the labeling of Henry's constructs on the stages of Bird's ideological evolution, should not however, detract from their heuristic and explanatory value. Bird's ideological development did indeed traverse the stages Henry described. Not only did his ideological orientations metamorphose, but so too did his leadership style and practices. Henry first describes Bird as a "non revolutionary charismatic leader" with a strong popular following when he was a labor leader and out of political

office contesting for power. He then states: "Charismatic leaders often change their style of leadership when they are in power and have an institutional and not just popular base to protect and defend. The possession of property shifts the passions motivating one's politics"(p.40). Henry sees Bird and leaders of his ilk as oriented to staying in power and defending the property and privilege that come with the control of state power. As Premier, and later Prime Minister of an independent Antigua and Barbuda, Bird became what was called a "mesmeratic leader using his political position to mesmerize, manipulate, coerce and co-opt the masses" (p.40). Henry further explains that Papa Bird became in this phase the 'political boss' using his control of economic resources and opportunity for patronage of supporters or for punishment of opposition. His regime became "engulfed with stories and images of corruption" (p.40); with several major instances involving his own son, Vere Bird Jr. As the "mesmeratic leader" and "political boss", Bird repudiated his original disposition as a charismatic hero of the people and became instead their ruler, using state power and resorting to ploys and stratagems to maintain his rule.

Chapter 2 offers a comprehensive overview of the political economy of colonial Antigua and Barbuda which provided the setting for an understanding of the confrontation between the planters and the masses. This chapter is a classic description of the structure of colonial domination, the origins and rise of the Antiguan labor movement, the power of the powerless, the use of protest as a resource, and, the emergence of VC Bird as a charismatic leader and a hero to the crowds of workers and the dispossessed. Henry notes that as workers became increasingly restive and engaged in protests, the colonial regime was counting on what Franz Fanon called "the weakness of spontaneity" and hoped that such mass gatherings would have been ephemeral. The emergence of Bird and the Antigua Trades and Labor Union soon gave organized direction and sustainability to the collective action and discontent of the working class.

Chapter 3 treats Bird's political philosophy in systematic detail. Henry is rightly concerned that Caribbean philosophy has long been underserved by the inadequate attention to it. He asserts:"It is a hidden discourse that we live and breathe, but have not taken the time to systematize or celebrate (p.77). Henry traces Bird's philosophy as evolving through several phases from ethical bad mindedness, black democratic socialism, black laborism, partyism or ALPism, and finally state capitalism. The author also makes reference to his "national trade unionism" and later recognized his embrace of "state capitalism". In this chapter, Henry treats ethical bad mindedness

as an early phase in the trajectory of Vere Bird's political philosophies. This construct is however, a more enduring attribute of leadership than Henry intended. The author looked at the role of external ideological influences in the shaping and changing of Bird's political philosophies including Pan Africanism, the Fabian or democratic socialism of the British Labor Party and communism.

Although Henry recognized that Bird had close ties with other Caribbean leaders and societies, the book does not deal much with Antigua's role in the post colonial regional integration movement. Vere Bird was very much a Caribbean leader with a proven track record of fostering regional integration. His Fabian socialism and Pan Africanism were also shared by other Caribbean leaders like Forbes Burnham of Guyana, Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago and Michael Manley of Jamaica. After the collapse of the West Indies Federation, Bird joined Burnham, Manley and Errol Barrow of Barbados in establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA), an institution that has since evolved into the regional common market CARICOM. More emphasis on Bird's leading role in the regional integration movement in the Caribbean would have enabled the author to identify the influences other Caribbean leaders may have had on Bird's leadership and he in turn on theirs. Indeed, there are similarities in the leadership progression of all of these leaders who took their countries to independence and ruled for some years after. Further, not emphasized in the book is Bird's commitment to nationalism as a political philosophy and ideology. Nationalist fervor was sweeping the colonies in the developing world and the recipes for its effective adaptation were perfected elsewhere in countries like India and Ghana and shared by anti colonial nationalist everywhere.

The strength of Henry's book is in its emphasis on the homegrown social, political and economic conditions that gave rise to Vere Bird's leadership and his reciprocal influences on these.

Chapter 4 examines the struggle for power between the working class, the planter class and the colonial state. This chapter presents a solid exposition on the sociology of domination and the politics of protest and unionism. It portrays Bird as a protest and labor leader; while being at the same time a member of the Executive Council of colonial administration. He was regarded as a master negotiator and diplomat balancing contradictory leadership roles. Illustrating his iron will and resolve as a leader, Bird is reported to have said to Moody Stuart, the planter's representative who

had pledged to starve striking workers and crush them into submission, "we will eat cockles and widdy widdy bush! We will drink pond water until we get what we deserve" (p.120).

Chapter 5 highlights Vere Bird in power, occupying the top position as the national leader of his country. It showes his efforts to rule by nationalizing industries. He alienated and divided the same working class that brought him into power, while forming cozy alliances with the planter class and capital in general. Bird soon found, that it was easier to protest and agitate than to rule. He democratized education in the country making it accessible to all. He introduced other beneficiary measures but still lost control of his base in the labor movement. George Walter, another charismatic labor leader emerged to challenge and replace Bird as the dominant labor leader and later as the country's Prime Minister. Bird returned to the office of Prime Minister in 1976 after five years in opposition, having learned from his missteps in his previous term.

Chapter 6 looks at Bird settling into conservatism and consolidating his rule while moving further and further away from his working class background and his democratic socialism. Partyism or party paramountcy as a power mechanism replaced his reliance on the labor movement and his trade union. In this period, the division of the Antigua and Barbuda working class along party lines was completed, and the color class stratification of the society was reaffirmed. An aging Papa Bird avoided dealing with the problem of his succession, though the apparent heir to his throne was one of his two grown sons. Lester Bird succeeded his father in office ahead of Vere Bird Jr. The latter had many publicized episodes of his involvement in corruption. Each time he was defended and protected by his dad. Both sons were cabinet ministers in Papa Bird's cabinet. For three decades Antigua and Barbuda was ruled by a Bird.

The reader of this book will be caught in the currents of a silent revolution led by V.C. Bird, a truly revolutionary figure. There was no violent overthrow of the colonial order. Global forces, history and Bird's cunning and resolute leadership led to his riding a tidal wave of changes that transformed Antigua and Barbuda from colony to an independent sovereign democratic nation. Henry metaphorically portrays Bird as shouldering his country on his broad shoulders through these changes. Perhaps he did. Bird became old and increasingly conservative on his sojourn with the young nation. In the opinion of the author; this national hero may have lost his way.

Paget Henry is a master at his game; he takes you on an exciting journey and gives you an intellectual high from which you cannot readily descend even after reading the last page. Every page contains gems of expression, nuggets of knowledge that transcend the ordinary. Importantly, for this author his narrative is also a personal journey of meaning. You can feel Paget Henry's passion for critical thought and love for his country in every line, each articulated with intellectual sagacity.

Paget Henry, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The life of V.C. Bird,* London: Hansib Publications, 2010.
Ambassador Lionel Hurst, *Luther George: The Barack Obama of Antigua and Barbuda,* Chicago: Publisher Services, 2010.
Patrick Albert Lewis

One has to begin by complimenting both Antiguan/Barbudan scholars for bringing to light much detailed information on two of the pioneers of the forward thrust of Antigua and Barbuda in the twentieth century. Both individuals have published books before, Henry with *Peripheral Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Antigua* and *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*, while Hurst's previous work was *Democracy by Diplomacy*. That Antiguan/Barbudan writers have been producing many books lately is highly commendable; but most are creative works in the form of novels or poetry. Hurst and Henry have jumped into the historical biographical realms of an emerging state, and, as in the case of Henry, the formative years of a proud independent country.

Looking first at Hurst, whereas there has been much potent information garnered, unfortunately his fundamental premise is sadly off base. The author claimed that Luther George was the "very first Black Antiguan male to win an election entitling him to sit in the Legislative Council at a time when black skin was a reason for exclusion from exercising significant authority." [1] Black skin *per se* was never specifically the barring unit in Antigua for a forward thrust, it was the contradictory reality of "black blood." Even our calypsonians have reminded that"if you are not white, you're considered black." Subsequently, Hurst's declaration that "in the election of 1937, three of the five winning candidates were undiluted British descendants; two were of mixed race, of fair skin and hair that would not identify them as being primarily of African descent," [2] would not have exonerated them from slavery in the early nineteenth century. But we do know that for racial listings they would be black. To argue about percentages of dilution is irrelevant to the realities of western society, in which Africans were unwittingly thrust. Hurst who received his higher education in the United States, is most aware of the famous judicial case "Plessy vs. Ferguson," of 1896 in which Homer Adolph Plessy who was seven-eighths white and one-eight black was deemed incapable of riding in a white railroad car, as he was clearly black, even though his blackness did not manifest itself through pigment. Likewise, Hurst speaks of Thelma Walling as the first black woman employed in a bank in Antigua. Whereas I do not know whether the

"light-complexioned" woman who preceded her was the daughter of John Jeffrey, one of the two blacks who preceded Luther George in t he Legislative Council, she was not white. J. Oliver (Pookie) Davis emphasized that fact on more than one occasion to an assembly of early morning sea bathers at Fort James Beach in Antigua. She was referred to as Miss Jeffrey.

Both Hurst and Henry have chosen to write biographies, and most historians consider that brand of history to be extremely sensitive, as it can become overly personal. And since Hurst and Henry are writing history, they have to be assessed along the lines of historical requirements, whether they are trained historians or not. Both scholars unfortunately adopted a behavior which historians are constantly reminded to guard themselves against. Hurst, through his friendship with the son of Luther George, and Henry through his close alliance with Mali Olatunji, allowed themselves to be "clouded" in regard to aspects of their analyses. For example, Hurst desires the Antiguan/Barbudan populace in its condemnation of Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer for renaming Boggy Peak as Mount Obama, to seek to have it named after an Antiguan/Barbudan, that is, Luther George. Admittedly, Hurst is finding solace in some statement of the 2009 Barbuda contestant and winner of the Barbuda Caribana Queen Competition, Jameel Jones, who apparently thought that a national of Antigua and Barbuda should have Boggy Peak named after him or her.[3] The reality of the situation is that streets, squares, schools, and/or markets should be used for that purpose. Natural attributes of the country which stand out as naturist members of the twin-island state's family should be left alone, admired by nationals and manifested to visitors. Subsequently, Boggy Peak, Devil's Bridge, and Bat Cave in Antigua should remain with the names they have had for generations, likewise the Lagoon, the Caves, and the Highlands of Barbuda. In the same manner as Hurst, Henry's friendship with Mali Olaatunji, has him submitting the formulation of a political philosophy to the leading Antiguan/Barbudan photographic artist. But whereas much of Olatunji's creative works are to be admired, and more than that cherished, Olatunji was never the creator of a resounding political philosophy or leader of a political movement.[4] At the same time that Henry had Robin Bascus allied to Mali Olatunji, he had him as a trusted confidant of V.C. Bird. This was possible because of the Dashiki clad Ovalites were manifesting identity, not a political philosophy. In reality it has to be seen in the light of "Black Powerism."

Hurst, like most historians at the start of their careers, loves to tell a story, and for this reason careful stipulations are placed on historical norms. Hurst, unfortunately, editorializes too much. For example, passages relating to the friendship of Luther George's son Kenrick and Father Franklin Reid of the Anglican Church; and the identical traits of all Luther George's children with their father in being their own bosses have no relevance to the topic at hand.[5] These are but two of the many examples of the author gravitating from the focus of the study.

Max Hurst did not have enough information to devote a whole book to the study of Luther George. He would have been better placed had he done a study on the contributions of Luther George, J. Oliver Davis, and Harold Tobias Wilson. The first two having been members of the Antigua Trades and Labor Union and found reasons to leave and align themselves with other political bodies; and Wilson, for all his contributions, never blended into the working class body, which became the major industrial-political voice of the underprivileged. That would have made a most enlightening study, *vis-à-vis* those who continued to fight under the banner of Labor.

Whereas both Henry and Hurst speak about the influence of the Pan Africanist Movement on the thinking of those who were to create the blueprint from which Antigua and Barbuda was to emerge, Hurst suggests that Negritude was also significant.[6] That is not so, Negritude *per se* might have been espoused in Martinique and Guadeloupe, but it never was an all absorbing feature of the English speaking Caribbean. Even in Africa, it was more pronounced in the Francophone region than elsewhere on the continent. Leopold Senghor's Negritude had many contradictions which will not be discussed here, it is simply worth emphasizing that it did not impact the twin-island state of Antigua and Barbuda. Surprisingly, neither of the two authors pay any attention to Edward Wilmouth Blyden the true "Granddaddy" of Pan Africanism. It must be forcefully stressed that Blyden laid the foundation upon which Trinidad's George Padmore, and the United States' William E.B. Dubois built; and Blyden was a "small-islander," hailing from St. Thomas in the then Danish West Indies. Mohammed B. Sillah, a thoughtful Sierra Leonian scholar, regards Blyden as the "founding Father of Pragmatic Pan Africanism."

Lewis Gordon, a distinguished professor of Philosophy at Temple University in Philadelphia has dubbed Paget Henry as Antigua's most distinguished philosopher, and this reviewer has no issue with that as he is the

only Antiguan/Barbudan academician known to be specifically working in the field of philosophy. But the fact that his former school teacher, Tim Hector, might have castigated him for not waxing metaphysically in his *Peripheral Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Antigua*, seems to have caused him to stretch the limits of a metaphysical orientation in V.C. Bird's evolutionary path. With Hector's mention of metaphysics, one wonders if he was not talking about ideology.

It is baffling to be talking about a metaphysical influence on his subject, when, nowhere, is there any discussion of V.C. Bird in regard to Laborism and Salvationism. Henry states that Bird broke with the Salvation Army,[7] but Bird insisted that he was only on leave from the Salvation Army, and stated this to his close associates on many occasions. At his death, the High Official of the Salvation Army who presided over the first religious service associated with his funerary celebration, declared that Bird had approached the Salvation Army Hierarchy, and requested permission to take leave and represent workers because of the miserable conditions under which they worked and lived. In reality, more information has to be garnered as to whether there was a break or not. The point here, however, is that if one must find some metaphysical connection, then the fact that V.C. Bird, having been a Salvation Army Captain, and having understood biblical equations and images, would certainly have applied spiritual lessons, images, prophesies and/or realities to the lives of his people. Henry discussed in his study, his inability to get Bird to answer questions during his interview at the ZDK radio station in Antigua after his fall from power. Instead, Bird prophesied of his return to favor among the electorate and of the changes that would be made. Subsequently, V.C. Bird has to be seen from the perspective of the brilliant Antiguan/Barbudan scholar, the Reverend Dr. Kortright Davis is his study entitled, *Emancipation Still Comin'*: *Explorations in Caribbean Emancipation Theology*, that "every time the Caribbean was written off as a certain Gehenna, God seemed to answer with a greater certainty of survival and meaning for the region." Bird, like Davis, was a product of religious ministerial training, and that perspective must have permeated his endeavors. Likewise, it was a generating force in his sustained leadership. The argument, then, is that this Laborism and Salvationism helps to buttress Henry's statement in regard to the planters that: "They acted toward Black Antiguans and Barbudans out of bad motives—their minds, their very natures were bad. Seeing them in this manner helped to determine Bird's well-known uncompromising attitude of resistance to that class."[8]

A very puzzling aspect of Paget Henry's search for influences on early labor leaders is his reference to Claudia Jones. Today, because of the neglect that women have suffered in historical writing, it has now become a fad to speak of women whether they had any direct influence on the particular study or not. Marcus Garvey yes, Claudia Cumberbatch Jones no. Whereas Jones may have been neglected in African American studies, she in no way had any impact on Antigua and Barbuda, and creative links should not be established to any influential feminist thrust in Antigua and Barbuda prior to the Second World War.

Intriguingly, whereas Hurst may be writing from a personal perspective to bring semi-forgotten leaders in the working class struggle to the fore, and clearly fits into the mode of the Whig historians, in being projective as to the forward movement of an element in Antiguan/Barbudan society, Henry was instead a commissioned author. He was commissioned by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the United Progressive Party, to write about someone from a party to which the UPP was and is intrinsically opposed. Hence, Henry had to go overboard in not appearing biased. To his credit, he does a remarkable job but the preoccupation with carefulness manifests itself. And as good a writer as Henry is, it causes some segments of the book to be somewhat clumsy. For example, in most chapters it is quite clear that we are dealing with the personage of Vere Cornwall Bird, and so the references, as it is common in historical essays, is to Bird; but at other times Henry is overly respectful with his repetitions of Mr. Bird.

But, so much for some criticisms of the works, both of which are most valuable in the twin-island states evolution. While Hurst gives us insights on a man, who, if we were not careful, history might have forgotten, Henry, on the other hand, gives much depth on a man who can never be forgotten. One has to logically assume that indices will be provided in any reprintings or revisions of the works. It is incumbent upon the citizens of Antigua and Barbuda that these are viewed as pioneering works, which will lead to discussions, debates, challenges and conclusions. Both men write well, Hurst more journalistic and Henry more as an academician. Both explain the conditions under which the peasants and "workers" existed. The elitism, and pomposity of elements of Antiguan society throughout the twentieth century have been brought out and Hurst gives a semblance of village characteristics before the Moyne Commission, Henry sheds some light on St. John's or "Town."

Hurst enlightens his readers to some of the documents upon which his essay was based. It is hoped that they will interest school children to make extensive use of the Archives. In the reproduction of the *Anvil* article of October 3, 1956 by Luther George entitled "What is Their Election Platform for 1956?," one gets the feeling of a man who was inwardly bleeding. George is presented as a visionary capitalist, and more in regard to his desire for self independence, and at the same time seeking to represent the workers cause. This tension needs to be assessed. "Notwithstanding his acquisitive streak, Luther George confirmed by experience that economic independence from the minority rulers allowed him to think freely and speak openly about the oppressive conditions that marginalized his customers."[9] Putting that quote next to the following causes one to wonder as to George's quality or purpose. "In 1951, when the Welsh Fusiliers were dispatched to Antigua at the request of the Governor, in an act of intimidation against striking sugarcane workers, Luther George would, for a price allow his trucks to engage in the transportation of the soldiers." [10] Analysis, analysis, and more analysis is needed, and Hurst is more than capable of such.

Lionel Hurst's simplicity of style and mastery jumps out to the reader with a phrase such as: "It seemed as though the post-slavery Antiguans and Barbudans were very much like the Biblical people of Israel; religion was one source of strength. Though members of the majority African-descendant population claimed very few material possessions, virtually every mud house and cottage contained a copy of the King James' version of the Bible."[11]

But returning to Luther George specifically, he obviously was not only a hard-working man, but a man with a variety of skills; and this is perhaps worth emphasizing when there are so many complaints about the working habits of Antiguans/Bardudans, and complaints run throughout the society. Not only was George a hard worker, he had no inferiority complex in regard to his blackness, at a time when the lighter complexioned were generally favored for available openings or promotions.[12] Hurst pointed out that George had no qualms whatever about an individuals color or race. On September 5, 1956, he wrote an open letter in the *Anvil* addressed to V.C. Bird: "Again, I say, the greatest men I know are white men who serve Negroes. Two such are Dr. Richard Alexander Cory….and Dr. John Edward Wright." Presumably, both were medical doctors.

Both Henry and Hurst in discussing the emergence and exploits of their respective subjects adequately bring out the problems of the monoculture

nature of Antiguan society, that is a society totally dependent on a single cash crop for its economic sustenance, the dominant sugarcane. It was responsible for conflicts, sabotage, and even the riot of 1918 in regard to the interactions between the workers and the plantocracy. They discuss adequately problems relating to the Donkey Tax (The Animals Tax Ordinance, No. 10 of 1922), and efforts on the part of individuals such as the Moravian parson, the Reverend Franklin Francis to alleviate the plight of the working class. The significance of Sir Walter Citrine who was a great motivator in the formation of an adequate trades and labor union is given due and just coverage.

It was pleasing to see both authors give the Labor and Contract Act of 1864 which was not repealed until 1937, it's just due. It was in 1939, not long after the repeal of the Labor and Contract Act that the Antigua Trades and Labor Union was formed. That is, both Bird and George were friends working for a common cause. Interestingly, Hurst is clear on Luther George's concepts on or toward religion, his self assurance and belief in his own intrinsic worth, his view in regard to the necessity to acquire financial wealth; and his personal desire to acquire the leadership mantle for the progression and projection of what would be a national cause. Hurst has signaled that he intends to write other biographies, and there is no doubt that he will grow as a writer, given his innate ability.

Paget Henry is both accomplished and acclaimed. However, he must not subject himself to statements of others whom he respects or in a personal way is allied to. Henry was most cognizant of the fact that he was working for a specific political entity, and like the great German historian, Leopold Von Ranke, endeavored to transcend himself. Henry suggests that George did not consider Bird to be of any major significance in the early stages of the movement. Was there then an aspect of early distrust when Bird began to rise within the union-party? I do believe that Hurst could have applied more analysis to Bird refusing to take cheese to George when he was ill in Jamaica. It was Moody-Stuart that took the cheese. Could this also be of significance why Luther George was a strike breaker and did not "tow the line in 1951?"

In summarizing Hurst's presentation of/on Luther George, he gave a deep sense of the inner feelings or sentiments that George had toward his immediate family. The long quotes which he employs manifest George's political arguments. Henry does not delve too deeply into Bird's familial attachments, but focused primarily on his political personage. In doing so,

Henry desired to be perfectly and completely objective. This was a standard set by the great man, Leopold Von Ranke, but it was a utopian ambition or desire, and the German militaristic tradition always came through in his analyses and interpretations. Henry, therefore, achieved much, writing under the circumstances that he did, in his effort to produce a balanced work. He carried out many interviews, and read many studies by writers on Antiguan and Barbudan affairs. These included theses and unpublished works. But for whatever reason he never consulted or quoted anything from the research of Pat Lewis of Ovals. Perhaps Lewis was too closely identified with the Antigua Trades and Labor Union and the Antigua Labor Party. But so was Robin Bascus, an individual of unblemished objectivity. Lewis, it must be recalled, did more than anyone else in his campaign through the Worker's Voice and other media to demonstrate that George Weston of Loblolly Hill, Greenbay, or of the Garvey Movement, was separate and distinct from the George Weston who led the uprising of 1918 in conjunction with Willie Dean Collins, and who hailed from the Point.[13]

Henry could not have been expected to cover all aspects of Bird's activities, and the foreign envoys would probably claim that his view of foreign affairs could have been enhanced. Be that as it may, there is much in-depth material presented.

The various phases and changes of V.C. Bird's life were presented in an insightful manner, and the reader would have gotten a fuller understanding of conflicts within the union-party in 1967, which caused the abandonment of the Antigua Model and the acceptance of the Jamaica model in regard to unions and politics. As detailed and constructive that Henry's chapter 5 (V.C. Bird in Power) was, and it certainly contained much pertinent information, Chapter 3 (V.C. Bird's Political Philosophy) is the best essay in the book, in terms of getting an understanding of the forces that "formed" the man. It is clear in regard to the social fabric of the society, and of the varied influences that presented themselves to Bird, from which he had to choose.

High credos to Paget Henry's intense scholarship, and hopefully his work will encourage both young and old to read more and to seek a deeper and better understanding of Waladli, which for some reason we call Wadadli, that the Father of the Nation helped to guide, advance, and project. To both of the authors whose books are under review, it must be recalled that in regard to biographies in particular, there is no clear cut

answer regarding some of the problems or situations which faced the subjects of their studies, and analyses have to be applied through multiple perspectives. Henry is the more experienced researcher and he was most cognizant of that fact. Both authors have taken the plunge into socio-political biographical writing, and have laid down the mantle for others. The children of the children must be imbued as much as possible, with the efforts and sacrifices of their ancestors, for, "La Lutta Continua"—the Struggle Continues.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Lionell Hurst, *Luther George the Black Obama of Antigua and Barbuda* (Chicago: Publisher Services, 2010),p.3

[2] Hurst, pp. 12.

[3] Hurst, pp. 8-9.

[4] Paget Henry, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird* (London and Hertforshire: Hansib Publications, 2010), pp. 57-160.

[5] Hurst, pp. 23, 184, 222, et al.

[6] Hurst, p. 125 and 198.

[7] Henry, p. 31.

[8] Henry, p. 81.

[9] Hurst, p. 57.

[10] Hurst, p. 50

[11] Hurst, p. 44.

[12] Hurst, p. 64.

[13] See Dr. Pat Lewis, "The Emergence of the Union Party System in Antigua," in *Antigua and Barbuda: 150th Anniversary of Emancipation* (Commemorative Magazine) St. John's, Antigua: The National Emancipation Committee, 1984), p. 64,

Paget Henry's Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird: A Review Essay

Tennyson S.D. Joseph

Paget Henry, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird,* London: Hansib Publications (2010)

General Comments

Paget Henry's *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird* is a welcome and vitally important contribution to the study of the politics of Antigua and Barbuda, a small state in the Eastern Caribbean. Its importance lies first in the fact that the research into the political economy of the smaller OECS, Eastern Caribbean countries which decolonized in the late 1970s and early 1980s, is an enterprise which is playing catch up with pre-existing research efforts into the experiences of the Caribbean countries which had decolonized in the 1960s. Thus, whilst the experiences of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Guyana have attracted much intellectual attention, the late decolonisers of the Eastern Caribbean have been historically under-researched. Henry's story of Antiguan anti- and post-colonial politics told through the prism of the political biography of V.C. Bird - the father of the nation - is thus a historically significant nudge into the fresh fields of the study of the political economy of the Eastern Caribbean. The studies which will no doubt follow will have the good fortune of having his example, methods, and perspectives as friendly, though challenging, guides.

A second basis for the importance of the work revolves around the stature of the author himself. Given the intellectual pedigree of Paget Henry, described in the frontispiece blurb of the text by Lewis Gordon as, "Antigua's most distinguished sociologist and philosopher", the work is important not only as a study of the political economy of Antigua and Barbuda and the Caribbean, but also as an additional window into the political thought of Paget Henry himself. Coming upon the heels of Henry's publication of *Caliban's Reason* (Henry 2000), in which his main task was to make visible the previously ignored presence of Caribbean ontology and philosophy as distinct from its politics, economics and sociology, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda* provides further elaboration of Henry's ideas on Caribbean philosophy.

Henry himself is fully conscious of the work as touching upon themes of Caribbean philosophy beyond a mere political biography of the life of VC Bird. This is revealed particularly clearly in Chapter 3 devoted to V.C.

Bird's Political Philosophy. Whilst in *Caliban's Reason* Henry's goal is to announce and demonstrate the historical invisibility of Caribbean philosophy, in *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda* he demonstrates how such invisibility can be overcome. According to Henry, "unlike the case of Caribbean literature or Caribbean history, we are only now beginning to give Caribbean philosophy the attention that it deserves. It has been the hidden discourse that we live and breathe, but have not taken the time to systematise or celebrate. Yet it is a crucial lens for grasping ourselves and for understanding a public figure like V.C. Bird" (77).

On the above bases alone, the book should be read by all persons interested in the history, politics, sociology and political philosophy of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Critical Review of Henry's sub-themes

Given the many sub-themes and inter-disciplinary methodological bent which deliberately inform Henry's study of a political figure who was "without the advantage of marination in higher education in some of the world's finest universities" (Nettleford 2010, 93), the book must have been extremely difficult to write. The challenge for Henry was the necessity of balancing several mutually antagonistic sub-themes and to hone these several competing strands of analysis into a neat, objective and intellectually engaging analysis of the life of V.C. Bird. Among the more critical tensions within his divergent sub-themes were: (i) the wide gap between the philosophy and the opportunistic pragmatism of V.C. Bird and Henry's insistence on closing this gap; (ii) the application of Henry's theoretical analyses of the Jamesian notion of the pitfalls of State capitalism as a framework for understanding V.C. Bird's failures in Antigua; and (iii) Henry's efforts at critical intellectual objectivity given his sensitivity to the sharp political divisions in the small state of Antigua and Barbuda. This was compounded by the fact of the book's commissioning by the Prime Minister of the day, Baldwin Spencer, whose party the UPP, had defeated the ALP founded by V.C. Bird, and further, by Henry's own association with the parties to the left of the political spectrum in particular the ACLM and his close association and admiration for the ACLM's founder, the late Tim Hector.

As a short response, it can be stated frontally that the success of the book lies in Henry's masterful navigation around all of these protruding rock heads, with varying degrees of skill. However, deeper elaboration of each

of these identified difficulties is required in order to clarify fully the strengths and weaknesses of the work. The review which follows assesses Henry's efforts in overcoming each of the thematic difficulties identified above.

(i) The Gap Between Philosophy and the Opportunistic Pragmatism of V.C. Bird

One of the big challenges facing Paget Henry was the burden of bringing to the fore a political philosophy and identifying it as a guiding principle in V.C. Bird. To anyone else writing a biography of a working class Caribbean political leader, this burden of identifying and clarifying a political philosophy would not have existed. With Paget Henry, however, given his intellectual concerns, such a task became an indispensible necessity. However, despite Henry's deep commitment to making visible the invisible, he appears to be "clutching at straws" in his quest to tease out a political philosophy of V.C. Bird.

Henry raises three issues which constitute the basis for identifying the political philosophy of V.C. Bird. The first is the notion of "ethical bad mindedness" a concept which Henry identifies as being applied by the Jamaican born Lewis Gordon in his treatment of anti-black racism. Borrowed from the "concept of bad faith that was developed by the great French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre", Henry describes the notion of bad mindedness as "an ethical discourse that suggests that people quite often act out of bad motives rather than good ones" (32). Once identified, Henry therefore inserts the concept at several points in his story of Bird's political struggles, from the fight with the planter class to his electoral contestation with George Walter's PLM.

The other two philosophical strands identified are Christianity, due to Bird's deep religious association during his youth with the Salvation Army, and black democratic socialism. Insofar as Christianity is concerned, Henry is careful to point out that,

> although expressed in the language and symbols of European Christianity, the spirituality of the Antigua and Barbudan working class was and still is African in nature. Thus the spiritual identity of this class is best described as Afro-Christian. As such the belief in a spiritual dimension to all existence was based not just

> on the authority of the *Bible*, but also on the evidence of certain kinds of experiences. The most important of these was the ability to allow oneself to be possessed by the holy spirit" (28).

Bird's black democratic socialism is consistent with the wider Fabian socialism that influenced the entire first generation of trade union type anti-colonial labour politicians throughout the English-speaking Caribbean.

However, the challenge for Henry is to demonstrate that these philosophical strands were important to Bird in his actual political praxis. In other words, beyond identifying them as ideas with which Bird may have come into contact, Henry is unable, with the possible exception of black social democratic socialism, to concretely demonstrate their influence in shaping Bird's approach to politics. This gap results in Henry giving V.C. Bird greater philosophical credibility than he deserves. Significantly, this point was raised in a review by an obvious Bird sympathizer who, in an ironic twist, criticized Henry for introducing an "ideological" perspective which he felt did not, and could not apply to Bird (see Hurst 2010). Whist I do not share the reviewer's hostility to Henry's "ideological perspective" (on this more later), what is significant is his rejection of the philosophical box into which Henry's loftily stubborn search for philosophy seemed to have placed V.C. Bird. Thus according to the reviewer, "pragmatism was Vere Bird's only ideology" (Hurst 2010, 100). He goes on to argue that, "in order to frame this work, Henry relied upon an ideological yardstick against which to measure Bird's performance and in so doing committed an error. Vere Cornwall Bird was not an ideologue. He had long determined, like the former head of the AFL/CIO that 'ideology is baloney'. Bird was a pragmatist".

Thus, on the negative side, Henry can be accused of trying too hard to find a philosophy in V.C. Bird. To further buttress this criticism one only needs to contrast the ease with which Henry is able to clarify and demonstrate concretely the political philosophy of Tim Hector and the ACLM (173). In the case of the ACLM there is little need for Henry to "squeeze out" a philosophy and a political perspective, for it is there, conscious of itself as a philosophy and visible for all to see. On the positive side however, this search for philosophy presents a method which is useful for the future research on other political personalities in the Caribbean. As a pioneering effort, Henry must be commended, not condemned. His subject however, proved to be a rather difficult test case.

(ii) Henry's Theoretical Application of James' Category of State Capitalism

One of the real strengths of the book was Henry's application of C.L.R. James's state capitalism critique to the study of the life of V.C. Bird. The application of this analytical category provided Henry with a useful handrail to support his walk through the life of V.C. Bird. Indeed, Henry identifies this theoretical application of the state capitalist critique to Bird as the main story which he wishes to tell. Thus according to Henry,

> the key question arising from the study of Bird's life, is the broader significance of his failure to achieve his original vision of a black democratic socialist order for the black proletarian tradition of politics in the Caribbean… The major challenge that his life poses is the grasping of the deep meaning of the ideologically unexpected outcome of a white-owned state-capitalism from what began as a black democratic project (16).

However, given the centrality of the concept of state capitalism to Henry's biography of V.C. Bird, one major weakness is that he leaves the theoretical clarification of the concept to the concluding "Closing Reflections" chapter, and in particular its last pages (212-230). The work and its central argument would have been much enhanced had Henry clarified his meaning and application of the state capitalism critique as his first order of business. This weakness is however of a structural nature and does not deflect from the validity of the concept as a theoretical construct.

Far more problematic however, is the fact that the problem of the state capitalist turn may be construed as a universal challenge confronting nearly all states in the world system, and therefore contributes little analytical value to understanding V.C. Bird in Antigua and Barbuda as a specific case. Henry himself points to the state capitalist turn as the dominant tendency of Twentieth and Twenty-first Century political life impacting on all the major states in the world system. On the Caribbean and state capitalism Henry writes the following:

> It should come as no surprise that the derailing of democratic socialism in Antigua and Barbuda was not an isolated event in the region. On the contrary, a broader pattern of compromise in the direction of state capital-

> ism can be observed across the Caribbean. Particularly outstanding are the cases of Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad in the 1950s and 60s, and in the 1980s, Jamaica again and Grenada. Cuba remains the exception here as it has held quite firmly to its socialist principles. But even in this case there have been definite moves in the direction of state capitalism, which could increase in the years ahead. As a hybrid formation, specific instances of state capitalism are reflections of the local political and performative balances of power between the state and the private sector. Thus, since the 1930s, the Caribbean in its own way has shared in this global pattern of oscillations between capitalism and socialism that have brought many of the countries of our world to the hybrid mode of state capitalism.

On the expression of state capitalism at the global level in the immediate present, (which indeed is another strength of the book), Henry writes:

> Although we are very much a part of it, I cannot say just how long this period of state capitalism will last, but it seems reasonable to assume that it will last for a while… Thus it is quite possible that dynamic ones such as China, Japan and the U.S. may move out of their current state capitalist locations and into more socialist or capitalist phases. Out of Chinese state capitalism, its leaders are still committed to creating a market socialist society. Prior to the current collapse, Japan and the U.S. were on course for a new phase of capitalism – one that I have called informatics capitalism. The case of Indian state capitalism is another interesting and strategic one to watch if we are to grasp the future of this state capitalist period we are in… Suffice it to say that we will be in this state capitalist conjuncture for a while and that it is within the framework of this current compromise between capitalist and socialist trends that we must think about the possibilities of reforming Antiguan and Barbudan state capitalism (214).

The aim of this long sampling of Henry's words is not to praise him. The point is to ask the question: if state capitalism is a universal and dominant feature of global politics from the 1930s to the present, is it not too broad a framework with which to undertake a political biography of V.C. Bird or any other political figure for that matter? In other words, Henry uses the wrong tools. He introduces a macro structural framework, where a micro analysis of the personality and politics of V.C. Bird was required.

The main error which springs from Henry's poor tool selection is that he makes his subject appear morally larger than History would allow. At several places in the book, one gets the feeling that V.C. Bird is excused or "let off the hook", as a result of Henry's unwillingness to use Bird-centred explanations for Bird's political choices. Instead, the explanations are moved from Bird to the structural imperatives of state capitalism.

For example, the book is largely silent on corruption. While this may be due to Henry's desire to overcome the "stereo-typed" view of the Antiguan state presented by the likes of Robert Coram's famous *Caribbean Time Bomb* (27), it is also true that his use of the theoretical construct of state capitalism serves to deflect from a more detailed examination of psycho-personal proclivities of V.C. Bird. The end result is that V.C. Bird's political choices are explained away through structural explanations. Thus, through the use of this particular lens, through Henry's own admission, "the picture [of V.C. Bird] that emerged was a mixed one – that of the political boss in tension and competition with the labour Parliamentarian. Together they gradually substituted his powers of patronage and parliamentary authority for his declining personal power. Thus I would not be surprised if it is these last images of Bird that are uppermost in the minds of Antigua and Barbudans and thus the primary source of the many and opposing views of him and his legacy" (41).

It is in response to this, that Henry introduces the state capitalist analytical framework:

> Consequently, the most comprehensive framework for examining the changes that did occur as a result of Bird being in power is one that also includes these socialist projections that did not occur. This broad framework of analysis must be the actual emergence of a state capitalist social order as a replacement of the plantation system instead of the projected democratic socialist

> one… Indeed, Bird's retreat before the behemoth of white capitalist power foreshadowed Williams retreat and Michael Manley's about face in the late 1980s (131-132).

From Henry's perspective therefore, the reader is left with little of the micro factors which can assist in understanding the politics of V.C. Bird in Antigua but is presented with a broad structural framework that was impacting on all Caribbean states and was shaping the decisions of all its leaders. The reader was therefore given too much, and as a consequence, was left with too little.

(iii) Henry's Efforts at Critical Intellectual Objectivity

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing Henry was his intention to write an honest and objective biography of V. C. Bird, one which would balance all of the conflicting political views, and which would do justice to the many sided nature of Bird's personality and political experiences especially given his long tenure as the most dominant political personality of a small state. The pressure on Henry must have been quite immense given his own political associations with the Antiguan Left, and given the fact of the book's commissioning by the Prime Minister of Antigua who was responsible for the ouster of V.C. Bird's son and successor from office and effectively ending the domination of Bird's ALP. It is perhaps in an attempt to walk the objectivity tightrope that Henry deliberately avoided the issues of corruption and the other personal foibles of V.C. Bird which have become part of the popular consciousness. It is also perhaps for this reason too, that Henry found safe refuge behind the rather detached (and devoid of personal sting), state capitalist analytical framework.

The result was a refreshing and analytically rich product, which brought the political economy of Antigua and Barbuda to the centre of the study of Caribbean political economy, devoid of the descent into partisan political discussion that normally sullies political analysis in the Eastern Caribbean. Henry was able to walk the objectivity tightrope with the finesse of a circus master, and remained the detached political observer from beginning to end.

Depsite this huge effort at objectivity, which indeed results in him stifling criticism of Bird at points where such criticism was required, it is ironic that Lionel Hurst (2010, 99) in an earlier review of the work accused Henry of producing a "bias that does not favour Vere Bird very strongly".

In particular, he accuses Henry of excluding as sources, "intellectuals and writers who have given support to this enormously important subject or his political party [and] those scholars who worked with the leader or who wrote favourably about Vere Cornwall Bird" (ibid., 101). In order to overcome Henry's bias, Lionel Hurst hints and begs that the "next biography ought to be written by Lester Bryant Bird, the second son who inherited the mantle of leadership and who holds Vere Cornwall Bird in extremely high esteem for good reason' (ibid., 103).

Clearly from this call, it is clear that Hurst is not interested in objectivity, and as a result, his accusations against Henry ring hollow. They have confirmed Henry's honest search for objectivity.

Concluding Comment

It is clear from this accusation too, that Paget Henry, was perhaps the best qualified Antiguan to write a political biography of V.C. Bird that can be classified as objective social science. Using all the tools available to him, as sociologist, political scientist, historian and philosopher, Henry produces a masterful piece of social science research on the political economy of Antigua and Barbuda. It is also a study of Caribbean political economy in the late 20th and early 21st Century. It has created a framework for the study of the politics of the OECS and small Eastern Caribbean states, and it has nudged the research of the Eastern Caribbean to the centre of Caribbean political economy. It should be on the book shelf of all committed researchers in Caribbean Politics, History, Political Thought and Political Economy.

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Papa Bird in Perspective

Paul Buhle

Paget Henry, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird.* London: Hansib, 2010.

Paget Henry has written a fine volume that is destined, at least for a long time, to remain the definitive biography of Vere Cornwall Bird, an outstanding figure in the Anglophone Caribbean nationalist movement at large, and the first Prime Minister of little Antigua and Barbuda. The intriguing questions about Bird and especially about his early life that have not yet been resolved and that remain so here, will not likely find any near-time solution. Nor, except for the hobbyist and antiquarian, can they be regarded as crucial to resolve. Paget Henry give us the life as it was, requiring us (that is to say, the further developments of history) to make more final judgments.

Not that there is any doubt about Henry's own point of view. He and I were both disciples, in one way or another, of the late Tim Hector, Antigua and Barbuda's great Marxist and Pan African leader. Henry was actually a student of Tim's in fifth and sixth forms of the Antigua Grammar School. Hector was once bitterly critical of Vere Bird, and at the same time enormously appreciative of his role, especially at the turning points of the modern independence movement when independence became an ultimate inevitability, although the direction of the emerging society was more uncertain. Henry shades his own criticism of Bird for the sake of greater balance, jettisoning anything that could be taken as polemic. But he gives us all we need for judgment at large, seeking as a writer on the Caribbean a gravity that reminds the reader of one more father-figure in this narrative of history-making-and-history-writing: C.L.R. James.

So let us go back, now, to the saga as Henry unravels the details. Born in 1909 and raised by a single mother in the worst of slums in the island's capital city of St. John's, Bird may possibly have owed his presumptuous first and second names to the imprint of his maternal grandfather, a white planter. Or, perhaps not. His father, a local craftsman, lived apart, emigrated to Bermuda, and evidently supplied no resources. The sickly child not only made it through the St. Johns Boys School but stood out in sports and youthful church activities. Then he advanced into the Salvation Army, got a first short trip abroad (to Trinidad) and came back to join a brother who was doing surprisingly well, as an overseer of a sugar estate.

We might well stop the narrative here and ask what made Vere Bird one cut or more above the average Antiguan lad his age. Henry suggests that the influence of his mother would have been decisive. But perhaps he also gained from his own race-mixed status, a self-creating iron will to rise. For rise he did, through one small business after another during the 1920s-30s. He also fathered five children, nearly all of them destined to rise in their own way, through his shadow.

But it seems as if Bird, only thirty at the outbreak of war in Europe, had always been waiting for something. The appearance of Caribbean strike waves during the 1930s, in some cases general strikes of sugar workers or dock workers that swept almost the whole way across the islands and set the basis for the independence struggle, did not have such a dramatic effect in Antigua—except, perhaps, as warning to the rulers, economic and colonial. The Antigua Trades and Labor Union, founded in 1939 with Bird later becoming its leading figure, embodied this combination of both hope and warning.

Paget Henry employs his breadth of research and philosophical energy to resolve a question previously considered almost imponderable. His previous study, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*, raised the possibility that something outside other well-known discourses can be discerned in the particular island experience. Rejecting the "ethical bad mindedness" practiced during centuries of white rule, Bird had decided early on that there could be no continuation of this bad rule. What alternatives existed? Not Communism (the Anglophone islands remain unique in the region for lacking any history of communist parties being influential in the culture even when not in politics), but what Henry calls "black democratic socialism" offered definite promises—but with a problem. The Fabianism of the so-called Mother Country was based on the worker and urban life. Antiguan (not to mention Barbudan) working people, by a vast majority, still tilled the land through the first half of the twentieth century.

Behind this problem stood another that would have been daunting to any concept of socialism, even the mildest Fabian variety. The islands' productive forces were so underdeveloped—centuries after a lucrative, slave-based sugar economy had enriched investors—that "nationalization" offered no apparent panacea. What to do, what to think?

The Minority Report filed by Bird to the Soulbury Commission in 1949 offers as close an answer as we are likely to get. Research by Tim Hector

and his friends, decades ago, turned up political tracts and a heavily annotated set of copies of the British journal *Marxist Quarterly*, suggesting beyond doubt Bird's early socialist leanings back in the 1930s. In 1948, Bird's intellectual advisor McChesney George apparently drafted the Minority Report to which Bird, ever the man of action, unquestionably signed on. Limiting absolute ownership of land, appropriating land for peasant use, nationalizing sugar factories, creating alternative economies where possible and affirming the rights of labor organization, taken together, could transform the economy and society.

The plantation owners, descendents of slave systems, could not be expected to agree willingly, even as the sugar economy continued downward. Worse in some ways, the Cold War climate pushed aside socialistic, communitarian impulses in the region, with Harry Truman's administration placing heavy pressure on any regime that would seek to step outside the bounds of Western imperial control. By this time, Western imperial control was passing from the British Foreign Office to the US State Department. The first hopes for Federation were smashed. By the time the ATLU converted itself to the Antiguan Labor Party and ordinary Antiguans were granted the vote, in 1951, the odds against rapid social progress had worsened considerably. Bird was already slipping, Henry suggests, from a vision of State Socialism to one of State Capitalism, a State Capitalism governed by the party in power, *his* party in power.

There were more than a few heroic, or at least admirable, moments along the way, a grand vision if not a grand reality of land distribution, backed by political campaigns that drew upon Pan Africanism with touches of militant labourism if not Marxism. Henry carefully analyzes the 1956 election manifesto of the ALP, finding it full of phrases about the dignity of labor and the dignity of the islands' people of color, wedded to a vision of a future Caribbean federation that would by its nature be egalitarian, even socialistic. In tune with the vision, the Bird government actually took over public utilities, making electricity and water supplies available to people who had grown up in mud-and-wattle hovels and now could live in something approaching modern conditions. It was a great advance. The sugar plantations, however, remained in private hands, and government ventures for alternative agro-businesses (arrowroot in particular) met with little or no success.

Henry does not push this point, but it is evidently important in establishing the labor-socialist leaning rhetoric and intent, as well as of decisive

events in the following few years. Bird was no revolutionary but was definitely carried along, and somehow personified, the radicalism and even Pan-Africanism, of the time. Dark-skinned poor people (and in Antigua that meant mostly black, because the mixed race sector had never grown large) were telling white-skinned wealthy classes what they wanted. It was almost a revolution.

Henry largely passes over another mystery or perhaps misunderstood series of anecdotes from the war years, Bird both leading a near-strike and then breaking it for the sake of securing his leadership. This would hardly have been surprising. But the declaration "under the Tamarind Tree" in 1951 offered him a supreme moment of courage and historic placement. When he determined that he would "eat cockles and widdy widdy bush" and "drink pond water" rather than accept the old ways, he swept the masses of the island along with him.

Beyond the horizons of these little islands, the impulse toward democratic nationalization of crucial industries, so strong in the immediate postwar years, was fading in Britain and most of Western Europe, just as the memory of the grander New Deal dreams faded in the United States. The Cold War created consumer societies for those who could afford them, and Antigua and Barbuda seemingly destined to be a third- or fourth-class version of same, with increasing numbers of its working people waiting on tables and making beds for Americans and Britishers on vacation.

The sinking reality of a seemingly robust but increasingly unbalanced tourist economy (seen across the region, ironically prompted in no small part by a redirection of what would have been tourism in Cuba into other islands) reinforced a dark side in Bird's philosophy as well as his practice. Not that the bright side was ever entirely absent. He could and did sponsor Carnival with new energy, and this was as typical of his vision as the intended improvement of education; the great leap forward in education that he had hoped to see required greater means at the government's disposal than, perhaps, the best of leadership could have summoned.

But deepening corruption, as Antigua and Barbuda emerged into the tourist economy and grew steadily dependent upon everything from abroad, pulled society downward in many ways. Casino activity, sex work money and drug money poisoned public and private morality, almost hiding the other increasing source of cash— the remissions of hard-working emigrants to the US, Canada and the UK to their families back home. As

he aged and fell out with former lieutenants, Vere Cornwall Bird lost most of his remaining virtues. He retained the aura of nation-founder, and probably for that reason was able to pass his legacy on, albeit with various uncertainties, to his son, future PM, Lester Bird. He sagely counted upon the disunity of opposition forces as well. In the end, disunity also took over the ALP, and the sheer incoherence of island politics rivaled corruption as the central theme.

The three-day mourning for Bird in June, 1999, inevitably brought together the vision of an era passing, not only in Antigua and Barbuda, but in the region as a whole. Not by a long stretch the most important figure, Bird had nevertheless been one of the longest-lasting of the old generation. He had long since outlived his time politically when he regained the prime ministership in 1976, yet he already seemed to be the living embodiment of life and struggle closely remembered by so many. The passage of two more decades changed little, in that respect.

Paget Henry has captured the drama, the courage of political pioneers and the melancholy of nationalist hope's decline, in this incisive biography. He has added important pages to the great, still mostly unwritten book of the Anglophone Caribbean.

V.C. Bird, Politics and Philosophy: A Reply to Critics

Paget Henry

I must begin this reply with a word of thanks to Patrick Lewis, George Danns, Tennyson Joseph, Adlai Murdoch, and Paul Buhle for taking the time to submit to this issue of the *Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books* their thoughtful and carefully crafted responses to my book, *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda: The Life of V.C. Bird*. I would also like to thank and include in my response two important reviews of this book by the late Rex Nettleford and by Lionel Hurst, which were published in the previous issue of our *Review*. Together, these critical and appreciative reviews have not only given me a lot to think about, but have also created the right setting for a lively debate about the legacy that V.C. Bird has left us, and also about the future directions for Antigua and Barbuda. I will do my best to make the most of this rich opportunity for debate, which I hope will continue in subsequent issues of this *Review*. With deep respect, appreciation and gratitude, I will begin by responding to the masterful writing of Rex Nettleford, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies.

Rex Nettleford

I must open this response with a very special thanks to Prof. Nettleford for his formal launching of this book with such a poetic and beautifully crafted review. Hearing him deliver it was certainly the high point of that evening's celebrations. The artistry that permeates Nettleford's response is most definitely not decorative or accidental, but rather functions as a framework and vehicle for the insightful, subtle, humorous, irreverent, and critical nature of his review. In giving to this short text, some of the best insights of a Caribbean artist and thinker, he has also made us very aware of the greater tradition of Caribbean poeticism in which his art was nurtured or as he would say – "marinated". As I have suggested in *Caliban's Reason*, Caribbean poeticism has not, and still does not, stand alone as a discourse. It is a philosophy that has a twin – Caribbean historicism. The best of both our poeticists and historicists have been those writers who have been able to move skillfully between these two halves of this twinned philosophy. The ease with which Nettleford moves between history and poetics, art and politics in this review makes it ever so clear why he was one of our leading scholars and artists. These often-separated discourses were seamlessly woven together in both his person and his scholarship. It is this rare and powerful combination that accounts for the aesthetic quality, charm and intellectual challenge of his review of *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda*.

The theory of Caribbean creole culture that informs my book, *Caliban's Reason*, and also the concept of a creole political culture that informs *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda* both derive largely from the creole theory that Nettleford developed in his classic work, *Caribbean Cultural Identity*. This is a theory that makes excellent use of spatial metaphors in representing the convergences and divergences between Europe and Africa that developed across the various arts and discourses of Caribbean cultural systems. The divergences produce what Nettleford called "battles for space" and thus a pressing need for cultural synthesis and reintegration. In my essay, "Rex Nettleford, African and Afro-Caribbean Philosophy", I noted: "Nettleford symbolizes this reintegrating and creolizing of inner and outer space by the simultaneous gestures of an inward stretch and an outward reach. As we reach inward, we take hold of those creative rhythms and ideas that are beyond the reach of oppressors and structures of domination… At the same time, we must reach outward and resist when necessary or follow through with positive actions based on the self-definitions of our inward stretch" (1997:59). It is this legacy of scholarly excellence that we associate with Nettleford and which is also very evident in his review.

Nettleford's review grasps *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda* in its entirety, from introduction to closing reflections. At the same tie Nettleford was able to g beyond my text and, from his own vantage point and direct experiences, situate Bird regionally and in comparison with a number of other Caribbean leaders such as Eric Williams and Norman Manley. I was very glad that we were in agreement about the uniqueness of Bird's achievements within the region. On this point Nettleford wrote: "I, myself, found that through his efforts Antigua and Barbuda during his watch came nearest to what an ex-slave postcolonial society should be" (2010:94). These statements underscored my central point about the uniquely proletarian nature of the early outcomes of Bird's struggles with the planters of Antigua and Barbuda.

I was delighted that were also in agreement about the importance of Bird's unique, homegrown vision and style of political leadership. To my account of these aspects of Bird's politics, Nettleford added: "at the height of his powers VC played ringmaster in a circus of participatory governance by having his ATLU/ALP 'ministers' account for their stewardship in front of delegates. I attended a number of those meetings myself, viewing with admiration the performance skills of the leader. He had his delegates teasing and baiting their portfolio managers to his perverse delight especially when the questioners had the better of his political colleagues. It made for delightful entertainment" (2010:95).

By underscoring so clearly the proletarian significance of Bird's leadership, Nettleford's review also points very directly to the great loss that we, in Antigua and Barbuda and the region as a whole, are confronted with as we have been allowing this very precious legacy of proletarian politics to recede from our vision and practice of politics. If we do not succeed in reforming and advancing this legacy, we will only end up filling the resulting political vacuum with imported models of politics which we can only imitate but never really master. Such a loss can be compared to an imagined situation in which the American revolutionaries of 1776 abandoned their political philosophies of republicanism and democracy as they entered the fog of their postcolonial period.

Finally, Nettleford and I are in agreement on both the importance and the difficulty of reforming this proletarian legacy that Bird has left us. I will offer some thoughts on how we can do this after responding to the other reviews as many of them also raise very directly this question of building on and advancing the Bird legacy.

Lionel Hurst

As past performances clearly indicate, the readers of this *Review* can always count always count on Lionel Hurst, former ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN, for very spirited and hard-hitting contributions. He has done so many times in the past, and his review of *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda* in the previous issue of our *Review* was no exception. After making clear his general appreciation of the work, Ambassador Hurst makes his primary focus the well-emphasized claim that I "committed an error" in using an "ideological yardstick" by which to judge Bird's performance. This yardstick, he suggests, produced a bias in my reading of Bird that made him appear with warts and failures, in other words – less than perfect. My ideological yardstick Hurst identified as the "black-nationalist lens" of my rebellious youth in the 1960s. By reading the trajectory of Bird's career through this lens, Hurst suggests that "Henry produces a bias that does not favour Vere Bird strongly" (2010:99).

In defense of my position, I will make three basic points. The first regards Bird's black democratic socialism and the ideological outlook that it gave him. That the early Bird embraced this political philosophy is a claim that I am prepared to maintain and defend. I think the evidence I produced in the book supports the claim. Within this broader philosophy of black democratic socialism there was a definite ideological stance regarding the capabilities, merits and legitimacy of the class or racial group that

should govern Antigua and Barbuda. Thus within Bird's broader political philosophy of socio-economic reform, there was a more specific ideology that argued for the capability, merits and legitimacy of black proletarian rule. This ideology of black proletarian rule was not a discourse that I imposed on Bird. It was an ideology that he fashioned for himself as an integral part of his broader political philosophy of black democratic socialism. It is important to distinguish between the ideology and the broader political philosophy, as the two are not the same. The ideology of black proletarian rule can be linked to other political philosophies as Bird's transition to a black laborism within a white dominated state capitalist order clearly indicated.

In his review, Hurst is unable to refute my claim that Bird's early political philosophy was in fact that of black democratic socialism and that he was ideologically committed to the position of black proletarian rule. On the contrary, he indirectly confirms these claims. He wrote: "Although the debate over this ideological template which Henry labels 'black democratic socialism' is not universally settled, it was indeed the case that African Diaspora youth, fifty years ago, could not envisage living peaceably within an economic system designed to enrich the sons and daughters of the oppressors of their African-descendant fathers, mothers and ancestors" (2010:100). It would be very difficult to exclude Bird from the group of people who had this ideological outlook described by Hurst.

Given this strong support for the existence of this ideology of black proletarian rule for Bird and others, I must strongly disagree with Hurst that using this ideological yardstick is necessarily an error. I did not, as Hurst suggest, impose my Jamesian ideology on Bird and then measure the extent to which his performances conformed to my expectations. Instead, I took Bird's ideology and its broader philosophical base as my starting point and used it as one measure of his achievements. To ignore Bird's ideology would be a major error. It would amount to the ignoring of a major set of facts, overlooking a vital creation of Bird's political imagination and an important mark of his identity. The ideology of black proletarian rule and its changing philosophical associations were not my impositions on Bird, but were some of the most important creations and manifestations of the genius of Hurst's great hero and political leader.

The question that arises at this point is: why is our ambassador so eager to suppress this ideological side of Bird? I can only surmise that as a reference point or "yardstick" it reveals that Bird did not achieve all the things

that he had set out to do, a limitation that we can find in all great leaders. In other words, by this yardstick Bird does not appear perfect. Indeed, Hurst makes reference to writers who in his view "deified" Bird. This kind of perfection in a strong but fallible and human political leader is not a position that I think we should encourage. It inhibits needed criticism, compromises objective evaluation and clouds the vision, thus preventing us from seeing clearly what we must do in order to move this valuable legacy forward.

The second point that I will address is the claim that my supposed ideological bias and its error led directly to the individuals that I chose to consult. Hurst drew this conclusion from the people I acknowledged in the preface of the book, while ignoring the additional others who are highly visible in the text. Further, Hurst claims that I cited the *Outlet,* the paper of the ACLM, "an inordinate number of times", without noting the number of time I cited *The Worker's Voice*, the paper of the ATLU. The people I acknowledged in the preface are either alive or actively contributed to the completing of this particular book. There are many people who have passed on or were not interviewed for this specific work that are quoted in the body of the text but not acknowledged in the preface. Some of these voted for Bird while others did not. Two prominent examples in the former category that Hurst should have recognized are John St. Luce and Rueben Harris, both of whom were ALP ministers and members of Bird's cabinet. Further family membership and casting "a vote in favour of Vere Bird" are not necessarily good criteria for choosing who I should have consulted. On the contrary, I chose individuals, whose information I was able to confirm by at least one other source or archival records, and who had reputations for fairness and objectivity.

Third and finally, Hurst generalizes his critique of my use of Bird's "ideology" of black democratic socialism to all ideologies. In this generalized form, he adopts the position that "ideology is baloney". This is really an unfortunate move as it pushes his argument to the extreme point of absurdity and self-contradiction. Princeton economist, Larry Bartels noted some time ago that perhaps the most important influence on income inequality in the U.S. is whether or not a democrat or a republican was in the White House. Ideologies are not baloney. They have very real consequences as this observation has made quite clear.

As the savvy and experienced diplomat and politician that he is, I will assume that Hurst really knows better and is here engaging in some politics that I won't let him get away with. The absurdity of his extreme

position becomes clear when he asserts that pragmatism "was Vere Bird's only ideology". If ideology is baloney, then so too must have been Bird's pragmatism. Is this what Hurst wants to say about his hero? I don't think so. Indeed the lesson here is the absurdity of trying to deny the necessity of an ideology in the arena of politics. Further the claim that pragmatism was Bird's only ideology is just false. It contradicts the passage from Hurst on black democratic socialism that I quoted earlier. The major difficulty with making pragmatism Bird's ideology has been very succinctly stated by our outstanding philosopher, Charles Ephraim in his book, *How to Become Your Own Person*. He writes: "Of course it has often been objected that the 'practical man', that perennial paragon of common sense, 'has no need of ideas'. But this is simply absurd. As Disraeli once pointed out, the practical man in this sense is 'one who repeats the errors of his forefathers'" (1998:10). This was clearly not the case with V.C. Bird.

Paul Buhle

Turning now to the reviews that were submitted to the current issue of the *Antigua and Barbuda Review of Books*, I will begin with Paule Buhle, an American author known to many Antiguans and Barbudans for this book, *Tim Hector: A Caribbean Radical's Story*. True to his roots in the American New Left Movement of the 1960s, Buhle keeps his focus consistently on the ideological or black democratic socialist aspects of the text and also on that earlier phase of Bird's life. This locates him in a position that is in sharp contrast to that of Hurst. For, while Hurst is doing his best to deny this phase of Bird's political career, Buhle is doing his best to explore its significance – its achievements and its failures from a Jamesian socialist point of view. In grasping the importance of this phase in Bird's philosophical and ideological development, Buhle underscored my attempts to counter the tendency to erase or minimize the significance of the unique contributions of Afro-Caribbean political thought. Bird's black democratic socialist phase is an important Antiguan and Barbudan contribution to the history of socialism in the region from which many valuable lessons can be learned. To ignore it is only to continue the practice of making our political thought invisible. This is a practice that we must end, just as only a full acknowledging of the many and varied phases of our tradition of political and economic thought will position us strategically to make the right moves that will finally bring us out of the mid-20th century and into the 21st.

Looking at Bird's democratic socialism, Buhle's response is a very ambivalent one. On the one hand he is sympathetic to the socialist aspects of Bird's vision such as "limiting absolute ownership of land, appropriating

land for peasant use, nationalizing sugar factories, creating alternative economies where possible and affirming the rights of labor organization…". He also applauds Bird's vision of a Caribbean federation, his taking over of public utilities, his housing policies and his attempts at alternative agro-businesses. Buhle is also sympathetic to some of the difficulties that confronted Bird's attempts to implement this black democratic socialist vision. For example, he notes the preponderant location of labor in agriculture at the time, the underdevelopment of the productive forces, the resistance of the planters, and the Cold War climate of the postwar period. These, Buhle suggests, "would have been daunting to any concept of socialism even the mildest Fabian variety". It was the pressure of these events that leads Buhle to agree with me that Bird made a transition from black democratic socialism to state capitalism. However, the broader significance of this transition, its similarities and differences with other transitions from socialism, is not taken up by Buhle.

But in spite of this sympathetic reading, Buhle's ambivalence towards Bird's political project is nonetheless quite clear. As a more revolutionary Jamesian socialist, he has serious reservations and criticisms regarding democratic socialism whether black or Fabian. Buhle identified strongly with the American New Left and the clear distinctions it made between itself and the Old left of which Bird would have been a part. Much more to his liking was the socialism of Tim Hector and the ACLM. However, as I tried to indicate in my conversation with Prof. Bogues, if the Left heritage of Antigua and Barbuda is to move forward a much closer look at the mistakes made and challenges encountered by both the Old and the New Left must be undertaken.

Tennyson Joseph

As a political scientist, who hails from St Lucia, a thanks to Dr. Tennyson Joseph for his thoughtful contributions to this debate on politics in Antigua and Barbuda. I particularly appreciated his underscoring of my attempt at fairness and objectivity. However, in this regard I was somewhat surprised by his claim that "the book is largely silent on corruption". I devoted pages 187-193 of chapter 6 to the issue of corruption, detailing some of he major scandals that engulfed Bird's regime. However, unlike Robert Coram, who Joseph mentions, I definitely did not want to make corruption the lead story, as it is not. There was just too much more to write about.

In addition to underscoring my efforts at fairness, Joseph has two other important concerns. First, he is engaged by my attempt to reconstruct Bird's political philosophy but has doubts about the feasibility of the proj-

ect. These doubts are not about the ideological aspects of this philosophy as in the case of Hurst. Rather, they arise from his concern as to whether or not I had sufficient data for undertaking this reconstruction and to what extent did this philosophy actually affect or shape Bird's political practice. Second, Joseph also has doubts about my use of James' theory of state capitalism to understand the legacy that Bird has left us.

Addressing the first of these two concerns, let me begin by acknowledging the challenges and difficulties of this type of reconstruction in the case of an individual who was not a writer. These difficulties were further compounded in the case of Bird who, in spite of being a great speaker, did not take great care to record and preserve his speeches. In this case, such a collection of recordings would have been the ideal database from which to undertake the reconstruction of his philosophy. Although such a database does not currently exist in an organized and easily accessible form, I do believe that this empirical base exists in a scattered, disorganized and not easily accessible form. I am also convinced that someone who was much more experienced than me with the existing archives could have uncovered much more material than I was able to. But, in spite of not having as extensive a body of writings as in the case of Tim Hector, I did have access to many of Bird's later speeches and signed party documents. Further, I had the advantage of hearing him speak on nothing less than fifty occasions, and also the opportunity to interview him twice. On the basis of this body of data, I felt and still feel confident that a reasonable account of Bird's political philosophy could be outlined. Consequently, I still stand by the broad developmental trajectory that I established in the book.

In this trajectory, I presented Bird's political philosophy as moving through four crucial stages: ethical bad mindedness, black democratic socialism, black laborism in a white dominated state capitalism, and partyism or ALPism. The common thread running through these changing philosophical positions was a deep and abiding commitment to the uplift of masses of black Antiguans and Barbudans. Ethical bad mindedness has been a basic construction informing the moral outlook of Antiguans and Barbudans at least from the 1930s to the present. It is one half of a binary category through which individuals and groups are classified as good or evil. It continues to be central to our moral outlook and is rooted in our Afro-Christian heritage. It is a category that I heard my parents use, one I have used, and many others around me. Listening to Bird characterize the planters while speaking on the political platform, I recognized on many occasions his use of the category of ethical bad mindedness. Through it, he

was able to make them the embodiment of social evil. Consequently, it was an integral part of his moral mobilization against the planters and their rule. Add Bird's historic battles with the PLM to both of these uses of ethical bad mindedness and, I think, this philosophical outlook could be textually justified to the point where it would satisfy Joseph's demand for evidence of practical impact.

In contrast to Hurst, and more in the spirit of Buhle, Joseph grants the practical effects of the phase of black democratic socialism. Consequently there is no need for me comment any further on that phase in my view of the development of Bird's political philosophy.

In his critique of my reconstruction, Joseph says nothing about the third phase of Bird's philosophy that I've called black laborism. But even clearer than in the case of the second phase of black democratic socialism are the practical effects of black laborism on Bird's ideological interventions and policy moves between the early 1960s and the mid-1970s. Black laborism was the philosophical and ideological outlook that guided Bird's shift away from black democratic socialism and towards a white but non-planter dominated state capitalism. This was a new political philosophy that openly embraced a form of capitalism in which the entrepreneurial dynamic of the economy would come, not from workers, but from a foreign private sector in close alliance with a labor controlled Antiguan and Barbudan state. Black laborism contained a very different ideology from that of black democratic socialism. In black laborism, the new white capitalist elites were accorded legitimacy and power on the basis of their entrepreneurial performances that the planter had lost in the era of black democratic socialism. This entrepreneurial function was then transferred to the workers and the state. However, under the pressure of the forces emphasized by Buhle, we get a reversing of this trend with black laborism legitimating the giving up of this entrepreneurial role to a foreign private sector. At the same time and in spite of this return of major power to a white external group, it would be the job of the labor-controlled state to keep the interests of black labor as its central concern. This too was a tall order, but maybe not as tall an order as were the challenges confronting the implementing of black democratic socialism.

Further, without this shift to black laborism and its embrace of an entrepreneurially dependent capitalism, it is impossible to understand the nature of the ideological exchanges between the ALP and the ACLM. The exchange was not one between a revolutionary socialist party and a black

democratic socialist party. Rather, as the intense exchanges over the abandonment of socialism make clear, this was an exchange between a pro-capitalist party and a socialist one. As I pointed out in my conversation with Prof. Bogues and in my response to Buhle, this is an important and complex shift that has become even more in need of closer examination since the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Grenada, Jamaica and Guyana.

With regard to the fourth phase of Bird's political philosophy that I called partyism, Joseph joins Hurst in calling it pragmatism. But pragmatism here is not an end in itself but the strategic aspects of how one hopes to achieve ideologically defined goals.

Throughout the text, I pointed to the consistent presence of this strategic aspect to both Bird's theory and practice. Naturally, it emerges the clearest in periods of head-on confrontations as with the planters and later with the PLM. However, the distinctness of what I've called the partyist or conservative years was the extent to which party-driven strategic action rose to the position of top priority. Thus it was also a period in which we saw the rise of what Joseph has called "Bird-centered" political choices. This was precisely the moment in which black laborism was consumed by this partyist type of "pragmatism".

The above account of Bird's political philosophy is one that I am still prepared to defend even though the textual evidence for it could be stronger. Joseph is concerned that in taking this position I may be "giving V.C. Bird greater philosophical credibility than he deserves." But clearly the danger associated with his position is that of underestimating the philosophical capabilities of working class leaders like Bird, who do not leave behind extensive bodies of written work. In other words, what at this early stage may appear as me "trying to hard to find a philosophy in V.C. Bird" could in the future grow into a major contribution of working class thinkers to the expanding tradition of Caribbean political thought. This possibility is one I would not want to miss.

Finally, with regard to Joseph's second point concerning the applicability of James' theory of state capitalism to Bird and his legacy, I will address this at the end of these comments as I address the concerns of others about the future of Antigua and Barbuda's state capitalism.

Patrick Lewis

Like Lionel Hurst, Patrick Lewis is a former ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN. He has now returned to his first love, being a university professor of history. His review is a joint one in which he also reviews Lionel Hurst's book, *Luther George*: *The Barack Obama of Antigua and Barbuda*. Special thanks also to Prof. Lewis for his close reading of my text, and, like Joseph, for underscoring my attempts at fairness and objectivity. However, beyond this particular point of convergence, Lewis' concerns are quite different from those of Joseph. Here I will respond to three of them: first, Lewis's concern with the Christian aspects of Bird's philosophy; second, his queries concerning the Caribbean feminist, Claudia Jones; and third, a particular person I did not consult.

In contrast to Joseph, Lewis was most impressed by my efforts to reconstruct Bird's political philosophy. Thus he refers to it as "the best essay in the book, in terms of getting an understanding of the forces that 'formed' the man". But at the same time Lewis has some problems with the reconstruction. His primary concern with my reconstruction of Bird's philosophy is my treatment of its Christian foundations. Lewis suggests that these foundations went far beyond the phase of ethical bad mindedness on the grounds that Bird never broke with the Salvation Army. He argues that Bird was a life-long Christian and that this Christian foundation remained an enduring influence through all the changing philosophical scenes of Bird's life. As such an enduring influence, Lewis further argues that Bird "would certainly have applied spiritual lessons, images, prophesies, and/or realities to the lives of his people". In Lewis' view, this Christian spirituality is the only valid metaphysical aspect of Bird's political philosophy. Thus he adds that "V.C. Bird has to be seen from the perspective of the brilliant Antiguan/Barbudan scholar, the Reverend Dr. Kortright Davis."

This is an intriguing set of arguments that I cannot confirm or disconfirm without more evidence. As Lewis himself acknowledges, "in reality, more information has to be garnered as to whether there was a break (with the Salvation Army) or not." Thus although my research suggested a break, I indicated in the book that this was one of the areas of Bird's life where opinions and sources differed widely.

In the course of making this argument for a Christian reading of Bird's political philosophy, Lewis made some additional comments regarding philosophy in Antigua and Barbuda that point to why we need to take this

aspect of our intellectual life more seriously. For example, Lewis suggested that without a Christian reading of Bird's philosophy I was stretching "the limits of a metaphysical orientation in V.C. Bird's evolutionary path, and as a result confusing metaphysics and ideology. Further, in the middle of his review, Lewis asserts that Paget Henry is "the only Antiguan/Barbudan academician known to be specifically working in the field of philosophy. These are statements that say a lot about the state of philosophy in Antigua and Barbuda and the extent to which we cultivate this field of scholarly endeavor.

With regard to the last assertion, Lewis is clearly overlooking our very good friend and colleague, the late Charles Ephraim, to whom this issue of the *Review* is dedicated. As the tributes to him indicate, he was the first person from Antigua and Barbuda to receive a Ph.D in philosophy. On the basis of his two books and articles in the field, he could be considered more distinguished than me, in spite of Prof. Lewis Gordon's comments. As I indicated in my review, *The Pathology of Eurocentrism* is a major work of philosophy for which Prof. Ephraim deserves our recognition and gratitude.

Turning to the first point regarding metaphysics and ideology, let me begin by saying that I make a clear distinction between the two. I see ideology as a more specific power-legitimating discourse, while political philosophy, including its metaphysical aspects, is a broader theoretical discourse on the nature of power, its institutional organization and management. Political philosophy incorporates one's ideas about freedom and the limits that should be placed on it, how the state should be organized, the responsibilities of political leaders and also those of citizens. On the other hand, ideologies constitute that part of one's political philosophy that addresses the more limited question of who or what social group should rule or control the state. Thus a technocratic ideology is one that argues for the rule of those with technical expertise, while a plantocratic ideology is one that argues for the rule of a planter class.

In my view, it was not only the Christian phase or aspect of Bird's political philosophy that went beyond the category of an ideology. The black democratic socialist and black laborist phases also went beyond this category and are more accurately described as political philosophies with metaphysical foundations of a historical materialist nature that are quite different from those of Christian spirituality. Further, as I indicated in my review of Ephraim's book, metaphysics is all about justifying ontological priorities and the ordering of things around these elevated centers of think-

ing and acting. Although the term metaphysics derives from a period marked by the ontological priority of God or Spirit, the secular orientation of the modern period has introduced other ontological priorities that require us to extend the meaning of the term so that in can included the justifications that have been provided for these newer ontological priorities.

On the issue of the influence of feminist, Claudia Jones on the rise of the ATLU, Lewis some how missed the point that we are in complete agreement. She was included as a very important part of the larger Caribbean diasporic ferment in New York and London that was having a definite effect on the outlook of the masses in Antigua and Barbuda. However, my point was that while there is clear evidence of the ATLU absorbing the Pan Africanist and socialist influences from this ferment, there was none to support the absorbing of the feminist influences for which Jones is remembered today. In short, my point was that although very progressive on the class and race issues, the Union was behind on the gender issue.

Finally, with regard to the issue of sources, let me here acknowledge that I do owe Prof. Lewis an apology. On two different occasions you did tell me about the two George Westons that I had collapsed into one in my first book, *Peripheral Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Antigua*. Thus I definitely should have included you, along with Robin Bascus and Susan Lowes, as the critics who are responsible for its correction in *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda*. So, definite apologies for that omission!

George Danns

Once again, a special thanks to George Danns for making such a stellar contribution to this very Antiguan and Barbudan exchange of ideas. Danns hails from the land of Guyana and is a professor of sociology. I must begin by saying that I was particularly surprised by the focus of Danns' review and his strong interest in chapter 1. As a sociologist, I was expecting him to be intrigued by the more institutional dimensions of the analysis offered in the book. Even more surprising was his primary interest in the concept of ethical bad mindedness and thus the first phase of Bird's political philosophy. Along with his appreciation of the concept of ethical bad mindedness, Danns made two clearly articulated criticisms of the book. The first was directed at the adjective "black" in the label of black democratic socialism that I placed on Bird's political philosophy. The second was my failure to adequately address the importance of regional integration and nationalism in Bird's thought and practice. I will begin with the appreciation and then take up the two criticisms.

I agree very much with the broader implications of the concept of ethical bad mindedness that Danns pointed out more than once in his review. For example, he suggests that "bad mindedness is not only an aspect of the psyche and a cultural derivative, but also a motivated practice in the armory of tactics of many leaders." Indeed, on more than one occasion I hinted at some of these implications myself, but never really followed through to more sustained analyses. This strong push from Danns will certainly help to motivate me to write a paper on this topic and really flesh out my ideas. It is one of those homegrown concepts that we have taken for granted without full recognition of its depth and power. So, thank you, Brother George, for this one.

As I am doing appreciations, let me also note here my delight at Danns' approval of my use of his concept of "the mesmeratic leader" from his important book, *Domination and Power in Guyana*. I have always thought that it was a very original contribution to Caribbean political sociology, and I certainly found it very helpful in grasping and presenting the complex changes that Bird went through as a political leader.

Turning to Danns' criticisms, let me respond first to the objection to the use of the adjective "black" in black democratic socialism. This objection is based on the claim that I did not "provide any real justification" for using black in this label. Danns also suggested that "this tendency to describe aspirations in the human condition as 'black' because black people are involved needs to be reexamined." As I did not see myself as doing the latter, and I think that have provided more than sufficient evidence for the use of the term, I must disagree with Prof. Danns on this one.

When did human aspirations become distinctly "black" and on what basis do they continue to take on this color in the present? As I indicated in the book, human aspirations became black in this case when people of African descent were racialized or negrified on the basis of the color of their skin in very dehumanizing and disempowering ways. It was under these conditions that Yoruba, Akan, Fanti and other Africans came to be called "negro" or "black" with the connotation that they were not fully human and therefore could be economically exploited along with the rest of nature. Thus the remedying of the condition of "black labor" in Antigua and Barbuda could not have been just a worker or people issue. It also had to be a black issue as only a revalorizing of the meaning and significance of the skin color of African people could address the specific devaluations that accompanied being called a "negro" or a "black" as

opposed to Yoruba or Akan. My earlier review of Ephraim's book developed in even greater detail this view of how human aspirations became distinctly black.

This issue of countering the specifically anti-black devaluations that came with the label "negro" was a vital component of Bird's political philosophy and political practices. The critique of and the fight against acts of anti-black job discrimination, the restrictions on "black" access to land in order to preserve white hegemony, these and more, in my view, justified using the label "black" when describing Bird's democratic socialism. His democratic socialism was certainly different from that of the British Labour Party. A major part of that difference was the discursive and practical efforts at changing the meaning that whites attached to the skin color of people of African descent.

With regard to the issues of regional integration and nationalism, I am in full agreement with Danns. Here I have most certainly been found wanting. Both of these aspects of Bird's political philosophy and practice should have been more fully developed. His position on nationalism I treated only implicitly as I described his role in the process of constitutional decolonization. However, I never really made it explicit and addressed it directly as a distinct discourse that was a part of his overall vision. Even more egregious is my failure to say more about Bird's leadership role in the various stages that the regional integration movement has gone through. His role in this area definitely needs a fuller and more extensive treatment.

Adlai Murdoch

Last but certainly by no means least is the detailed and closely focused review by Prof. Adlai Murdoch. As a son of the soil, he is well known to many Antiguans and Barbudans and also for his writings on the literature of both the French- and English-speaking Caribbean. He is the author of the important work, *Creole Identity in the French Caribbean Novel*.

In contrast to Danns, who was most intrigued by the ethical aspects of Bird's philosophy and by the moral ambiguities of his period of rule, Murdoch's focus is very much on Bird's coming to power as a phenomenon in its own right. As a result, his review is very much a political one that keeps its focus on Bird's struggle for power, and the many hurdles that he had to overcome in ridding Antigua and Barbuda of its white dominated plantation system. Like the other reviewers, Murdoch is engaged by and captures well my attempt to articulate the changes in Bird's political philosophy that accompanied the ups and downs of his political career.

I must confess that I was quite surprised this strong political approach that Murdoch took to the text, given his literary background. Rather than Danns, I was sure that he would have been engaged by chapter 1, which contained the biographical details and the ethical ironies that I know have captured his subtle imagination in the past. But, a pleasant surprise it was!

There are many important points that emerge from the emphases in Murdoch's review. Here I will take up just three: the race question, the ambivalence of Bird as a political figure, and the future onto which the final years of his political achievements opened. I will begin with the race question.

From his review, there can be no doubt that Murdoch was engaged by the racial dimensions of Bird's struggle for power. In particular, he was struck by the intransigence of the white planters. I completely understand this response, as in the course of doing the research on the period of the 1940s I came to a much fuller understanding of the depths of the race problem in Antigua and Barbuda. Because of our small size and invisibility compared to the United States or South Africa, race in Antigua and Barbuda has often been experienced indirectly or vicariously. We have identified with African Americans and black South Africans in their highly publicized struggles for black liberation. Indeed, much of the language through which we have articulated our own racial experiences has come from the leaders of these two historic struggles.

While this has been good, it is also important for us to grasp the specificity of our unique situation, and where necessary to formulate it in a language of our own. In this way we can be clearer about the distinct contributions of the Antigua and Barbuda experience to the broader Caribbean and Africana discourses on race and racial liberation. Indeed, pondering the emphasis that Murdoch placed on the racial dimensions of Bird's struggles against the planters, I could not escape the feeling that in Antigua and Barbuda, we have not yet formulated with sufficient clarity and historical specificity the form that the race problem has taken in our society. Here, anti-black racism was institutionalized by a once dominant white planter class, which was never able to revolutionize its mode of production, and make a progressive and competitive entry into the 20th century. Yet, in its regressive and declining phases, it was able for a long time to block the transferring of political and economic power to the black masses. More of the specifics of this experience must be researched and told. This is one message that Murdoch is sending us through the emphasis on the race problem in his review.

A second note of emphasis struck by Murdoch alerts our ears and eyes to contradictions and ambiguities in the figure of V.C. Bird, the politician. He always seems to Murdoch to be surrounded by or engulfed in ironies. Thus in reference to the closing reflections of my final chapter, Murdoch writes: "Henry aptly emphasizes the set of ironies that came to haunt Bird's efforts, both foreign and domestic". Murdoch's eloquence rises as often as needed to the challenge of portraying the heroic sides and phases of Bird's life, and also to the challenge of finding the depth it must reach in order to grasp the tragic dimensions and phases. More often than not, commentators are able to grasp just one side of this complex and not too transparent man – loving him or hating him. This is not so in the case of Murdoch. With a sure grip, he has grasped both of these opposing sides of V.C. Bird.

Third and finally is Murdoch's note of emphasis that fall on the details of Bird's rise to power, the popular and institutional consequences of his being in power, and the future horizons onto which these achievements opened. Murdoch recognizes that in spite of the long and difficult fight, and in spite of its many successes, the still racialized political economy of Antigua and Barbuda is in need of transformation if it is to secure its legacy and move forward. This is the fork in the road to which Bird's long march to power and long tenure in office had brought Antigua and Barbuda. He also recognizes that the need for this transformation will grow as the 21st century matures. Murdoch does not get into details here, but communicates the importance of this need for transformation by notes of emphasis as he does with other crucial issues throughout his review.

However, before taking up this complex issue of transforming Antigua and Barbuda's still racialized political economy, let me say a brief word on the absence of extensive criticism noted by several reviewers, Danns, Buhle and Joseph in particular.

The limited criticism in the text was not primarily motivated by trying to stay clear of controversy. Rather, this limiting was motivated by the absence on the left of a clear alternative to the present order. It was also motivated by an effort to capture the important lessons that must be learned from both Bird's successes and his failures. Not having a clear alternative to offer in the present conjuncture was the biggest factor inhibiting my impulses to criticize. It is confidence in my alternative that really empowers my critical undertakings. In spite of the many ways in which the current crisis of Western capitalism has validated many of our analyses of

this economic system, particularly in relation to labor, the problems of socialist planning and the looming ecological crisis both point to the need for a lot of new thinking on the part of the Caribbean left.

Conclusion: Reforming Antigua and Barbuda's State Capitalism

As I look over the foregoing reviews and my responses, I am pleased by the lively discussion they contain regarding philosophy in Antigua and Barbuda. It makes it clear that there was a tidal wave in political philosophy generated by Bird's project of black democratic socialism and its subsequent metamorphosis into state capitalism. In spite of Tennyson Joseph's objections, our discussion suggested that this was not a Bird-specific transformation, but one of much broader significance that was also rich in philosophical content. It is now certainly time for us to take this philosophical heritage and its growth more seriously.

At important moments in many of these reviews, questions were raised regarding the future of Bird's legacy and how best to grasp it theoretically and practically. We just saw this quite clearly in the case of Murdoch's review. These questions were raised at the end of Rex Nettleford's review and in the body of Paul Buhle's review. However, they are raised most explicitly in Tennyson Joseph's review. Joseph questions the appropriateness of my use of James' theory of state capitalism to grasp the systemic aspects of Bird's legacy, and suggests instead the use of "Bird-centered" explanations. Thus he points to my "unwillingness to use Bird-centered explanations for Bird's political choices. Instead, the explanations are moved from Bird to the structural imperatives of state capitalism." Coming from a different angle, Buhle in his account of the decline of Bird's black democratic socialism and its replacement by state capitalism does not link this important transition to the many other cases in which it occurred, and in that way thematize its broader significance. Engaging these two differing positions on Bird's state capitalism, I will conclude these responses with a brief consideration of why this Jamesian theory is not only appropriate but also vital for a solid grasp of the current macroeconomic situation in Antigua and Barbuda and the possibilities for reform and renewal open to it.

In response to Joseph's concerns about "Bird-centered explanations", I think my earlier replies to his queries regarding the practical effects of Bird's political philosophy demonstrated my willingness to use these types of explanations. Along with my replies, I could add Danns' comments on the motivational significance of ethical bad mindedness. The political actions

and choices that I referred to were centered and motivated by passions that Bird had converted into ideologies. There really is no need here to oppose the micro and macro aspects of political life in Antigua and Barbuda. I made no statements such as the following by economist and Nobel Laureate, Paul Krugman: "why dwell on a presidential candidate's psychology when trends in unemployment would tell you who would win an election?" This is not my way of deploying macro-level analyses against micro-leveled one, and neither is it my way of using James' theory of state capitalism.

Further, Joseph's hint that corruption may have been a better example of a Bird-centered explanation is very problematic. First it overlooks the systemic aspects of corruption and the poor results that its popular use in partisan politics has produced. Corruption arguments have produced regime changes but none of the structural transformations that Antigua and Barbuda and the Caribbean regions as a whole so desperately needs. Second, corruption has been for a very long time, and still is, an integral part of politics just about everywhere. It is more universal that the forms of state capitalism that motivated my use of James' theory. Yet, Joseph criticizes this application of the theory to Antigua and Barbuda on the grounds that it is too broad to capture the specifics of this small twin-island state. This I did not find convincing. Whether the theory is applicable or not can only be determined by whether or not the macro political economy of Antigua and Barbuda is or is not state capitalist. Joseph did not show the latter – that is, the political economy of Antigua and Barbuda was not state capitalist.

Given my arguments for the former in the book, I will assume here that the political economy of Antigua and Barbuda is indeed state capitalist. On that basis, I will then try to make clearer the relevance of James' theory and its power to illuminate the impasse in which we currently find ourselves.

In works like *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, James showed that there were strong tendencies for state socialist societies and young socialist states in formation to oscillate between state capitalism and socialism. He also suggested that in capitalist societies there strong tendencies to oscillate between forms of private and state capitalism. The common factor behind these oscillations in both of these types of societies was the premature appearance of crises of growth and development that demanded macro-level changes in the existing political economy. The nature of these crises was of course different – crises of private accumulation in the capitalist societies and crises of state accumulation in the socialist societies.

President Obama's attempts to move the American economy in a state capitalist direction following the Great Recession of 2008, is a good example of a capitalist oscillation. After the Great Depression of the 1930s, the U.S. entered a period of state-led growth that saw the rise of its welfare state and state regulation of key markets. In Europe, similar state-centered policies led to the creating of social democracies and democratic socialist states. This was also the period in which Bird undertook the task of moving Antigua and Barbuda's plantation capitalism in a black democratic socialist direction – in other words, radically altering its political economy.

By the mid-1970s in the U.S., stagflation and rising competition from Japan severely reduced the rewards to investors in this post-depression state capitalist order. This led to the well-known revolt by the rich on behalf of stockholder value. The leaders of this revolt wanted nothing less than a return to pre-depression forms of private deregulated capitalism that was without a welfare state. From President Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush (1980-2009) a partial return to this type of capitalism flourished as enterprises were privatized, markets deregulated, and regimes of tax cuts for the wealthy investors were introduced. During this period, from 1976 to 2005, the richest 1% of Americans increased their total share of wealth from 8.9 % to 21.8%.

By the mid-1960s in Antigua and Barbuda, difficulties in peasant production, state-led manufacturing and cold war pressure were producing crises in growth performance for Bird's black democratic socialism. At the same time, the U.S. was definitely in search of new investment opportunities with high values for stockholders and investors. Caribbean tourism including Antigua and Barbuda was one such productive outlet. Thus a mutually satisfying solution to their crises of accumulation and growth was the context in which the incipient socialist political economy of Antigua and Barbuda moved in a state capitalist direction. James referred to this crisis-ridden context as one in which socialist states in formation are often forced to absorb some of the contradictions of capitalism in the dominant societies. Other Caribbean societies that could not provide such profitable outlets entered long periods of decline for which no solutions were found.

Particularly in response to Paul Buhle's review, I would like to emphasize here the broader significance of this move in a state capitalist direction. This significance of Bird's turn is that it would be repeated in several other countries under similar circumstances – in Soviet Union, Eastern Europe Jamaica and most recently in the state capitalist reforms announced by Raul Castro

in Cuba. But the most dramatic case has clearly been China. In response to major slowdowns in China's growth in the later years of Mao's rule, Deng Xiaoping in 1976 initiated a period of market-oriented reforms within the context of a détente with the U.S. These reforms resulted in the making of Chinese labor available to U.S. manufacturers, who were under increasing competition from Japan, in exchange for American capital and technology. The result has been a symbiotic relation between the U.S. and Chinese economies that has produced the label Chimerica. It was in the course of the evolution of Chimerica that the Chinese state socialist economy was transformed into a state capitalist one. In solving the problem of the "high labor costs" for the U.S. economy, we see even more dramatically a transition to state capitalism in which socialist growth problems are resolves in exchange for absorbing a major contradiction of private accumulation in the West. All of these cases of socialist transitions to state capitalism, from Antigua and Barbuda to China and Cuba, belong together and need to be examined comparatively. From such a comparative perspective, Antigua and Barbuda emerges as the case of a small incipient socialist state that was strong in relation to domestic class forces, but was overrun very early by the challenges of implementing socialism and by pressure coming form American capitalism.

Returning to the case of the U.S., the above period of private capitalism came to a devastating end in the Great Recession of 2008. President Obama's challenge has been an attempt to push the U.S. in a new but more moderate phase of state capitalism in spite of the tremendous resistance from the leaders of Wall Street, who, with the support of Republican Party, are determined to destroy what is left of the welfare state, push America in an even more private direction and further to the right politically.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the recession of 2008 has also initiated a period of crisis and decline as the foundations of its tourist-based state capitalism have been disturbed to a degree that significant growth is no longer possible. The severity of this interruption in state accumulation has been such that the government has been forced to go to the IMF. However, the lines between our two political parties are not ideologically drawn along this private capitalist/moderate state capitalist divide as in the U.S. Indeed, one of the defining marks of the political economy of Antigua and Barbuda, as well as much of the region, is the weakness of a private market tradition of political economy, which is so strong in the U.S. I devoted much of the closing reflections of *Shouldering Antigua and Barbuda* to this problem of improving entrepreneurial performance within the framework of our state capitalist political economy.

If our macroeconomic framework were of a different nature – socialist or private capitalist – the specific suggestions that I made would have been different. But it is not. Rather, our dominant tradition of political economy is a state-centered one. This has been buttressed by a declining African based political economy in which production is socially embedded in community and kinship values – what today would be called a solidarity economy. Consequently, if we are to grow our way out of the present crisis, we can only do so by taking full responsibility for introducing needed changes in our disturbed political economy that will once again spur growth, shift the balance of power between the classes, change the nature of the state, change patterns of income distribution, increase or decrease practices of social welfare, increase or decrease the solidarity oriented aspects of our political economy.

In response to Rex Nettleford's and Adlai Murdoch's concerns about the continuing impact of white capital on our economic future, an example of such a set of needed growth-producing changes in the Antiguan and Barbudan political economy could centered around a reorganized and expanded educational sector. The reorganization of this sector would see regional two-year institutions such as the Antigua State College, or the Arthur Lewis Community College in St Lucia being upgraded to four-year institutions and the University of the West Indies becoming primarily a graduate institution. This new university system should be geared to educating and training for the 21st century the many high school graduates in the region who are still finding access to tertiary institutions difficult. It should also be linked to the productive and research needs of new areas of the economy that must be targeted for expansion. This expanded educational sector has this potential because of its high level of social and cultural capital, which could be used to attract financial capital, both local and foreign. Caribbean scholars have earned great reputations abroad and could be wooed back to the region to be part of such an expanded educational sector. Further, unlike the attempts to add financial and internet-gaming sectors to the Antiguan and Barbudan economy, this new educational sector will be for the most part locally owned. This is one possible set of state-led changes in our existing political economy that might be able to spur growth. It will most likely benefit the middle class the most, but without a more active international workers movement a more pro-working class set of changes will not be very likely to succeed.

This brief locating of the politico-economic oscillations of Antigua and Barbuda in relation to those of China, America, and Cuba, illustrates the power of the comparative perspective that James' theory of state capitalism

makes available. It provides a unique window on the macroeconomic dimensions of the Antiguan and Barbudan economy that makes policy choices visible as well as their implications for the power of particular classes, processes of private and state accumulation, the role of race and many other social factors. The theory allows us to see the world economy in the oscillations of the Antiguan and Barbudan economy and the latter in the ever-changing dynamics and patterns of regionalization of the world economy. Such a vision is important for any adequate grasp of the meaning of politics and economic transformation in Antigua and Barbuda. In suggesting that Bird's psychology would be a more appropriate lens through which to view the politics of Antigua and Barbuda, I think here again, as in the case with Bird's philosophy, we see Joseph in danger of once more minimizing the significance of political activities small states like this one.

Thus at a period of major crisis such as this, James' theory tells us that we need to introduce significant changes in our political economy – changes on an order of magnitude similar to those introduced by Bird in the 1940s, or they will be imposed on us as external shocks coming from the changes others are making their political economies. Debating the next set of needed changes in the macro-structures of the Antiguan and Barbudan economy should constitute the next phase in our tradition of political economy, which should not by any means be done in opposition to equally careful analyses of the ideologies and personalities of political leaders. But the latter cannot be substituted for the former in the way that Joseph has suggested.

These globally interconnected ways of seeing Antigua and Barbuda that are also linked to local patterns of class formation, income inequality, and to shifts in the organization and ideological outlook of the state are some of the advantages that I have gained from using James' theory of state capitalism. This multi-leveled approach becomes all the more important when, as I did in the book, the theory is applied to Bird's legacy – the system that he left behind. As the actions of charismatic/mesmeratic leaders such as Bird are slowly institutionalized, they often leave behind an organized legacy that survives their death. Thus many Antiguans and Barbudans refer to the present political system as "Birdism without Bird". It is in moments such as the present, when an inherited system needs to be transformed, that "Bird-centered" explanations prove inadequate. For grasping the current oscillations in the Antiguan and Barbudan economy and for imagining its post-recession future as it may be shaped by changes in its political economy and those in other nations, I can think of no more appropriate lens than James' theory of state capitalism.

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