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CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON
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**LANGUAGE AND THE POLITICS OF ETHNICITY
IN THE CARIBBEAN**

**The Fourth Annual Jagan Lecture
Presented at York University on March 2, 2002**

By

George Lamming

(renowned author, lecturer, and commentator from Barbados)

CERLAC Colloquia Reports

April, 2004

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CERLAC COLLOQUIA PAPERS

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The Fourth Annual Jagan Lecture Presented at York University on March 2, 2002

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Abstract:

This lecture was given by the renowned Caribbean writer and intellect George Lamming as part of the Jagan Lecture Series commemorating the late Dr. Cheddi Jagan. Lamming looks at the problem of ethnicity - and especially of relations between Africans and Indians in the territories where they form almost equal populations, namely Guyana and Trinidad - from multiple perspectives. He recalls dramatizing strategies employed by the old colonial power in this region, strategies that are still used today by contemporary politicians. He proposes that race and ethnicity are socially constructed categories, and draws upon many Barbadian examples to illustrate the absurdity of racial prejudice in a Caribbean context where cultural miscegenation is so deep, and where habits of perception, accents, and tastes are so mixed, that wearing several categories of identity at once is common to all. His conclusion, however, is far from being a curse: the challenges of cultural, linguistic and racial/ethnic diversity faced by the Caribbean constitute part of the wealth of the region, as amply demonstrated by its cultural workers, and its distinct traditions and peoples.

INTRODUCTION

In any consideration of the role of Language in the politics and ethnicity of Diaspora cultures, it is always prudent to bear in mind the context or location from which you speak. It is context, which gives meaning to every question you ask. "How many children do you have?" may appear to be a simple enough question, but it is context and location, which will soon reveal its complexity.

For an example of the importance of context I must take you back to a visit I had made to Kenya in the mid 1970's. I had spent a day in the village of Limuru at the home of the very distinguished novelist, Ngugi wa Thionga. There was a big family and much jubilation all around; and in a very relaxed way I asked him: "How many children do you have?" And he asked me

in turn whether I would like to have another drink. I said I "yes", accepted the drink and repeated my question: "How many children?" And he said: "As we were saying before..."

This abrupt detour made it clear there was not going to be an answer to my question. A day later I was talking to a mutual friend, and reported this episode; and was told: "Oh no! That question wouldn't be answered. Among the Kikuyu you never count offspring. To do so is to invite calamity." And now, decades later, it makes me think how extraordinary are the multiple frontiers of behaviour we have to explore and negotiate to find ways of entering, with courtesy, into each other's world.

LANGUAGE AND THE POLITICS OF POWER

Language is essentially a very political tool; and the term, political, is used here to define the dynamics of a people's cultural evolution. It is in the context of our political culture that we recognize the decisive authority of Power in the creation of words and the intentional construction of the sentence.

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Let me give two examples to illustrate a certain historical continuity in two distinct geographical locations.

In the early 1970's I was giving some lectures for the Extramural Department of the University of the West Indies. It was the same afternoon of my arrival in St. Kitts that my host and I ran into the Minister of Education whom I was meeting for the first time. When he heard that I was going to speak on the evolution of Caribbean literature, his response was immediate and uncompromising: "Don't bring no broken English in my school!" he said, completed the handshake and continued on his business. The University representative appeared embarrassed; but it was, for me, a very fruitful example of the contradictions at work in the consciousness of this honorable citizen. His reproach was itself a fine example of breaking up the English language that he had asked to be left unimpaired.

In 1977 an even more complex situation arose in the island of St. Lucia where English is the official language of instruction.

However, the island's long experience of French rule had bestowed on St. Lucians the gift of another tongue, so that the entire population, irrespective of social background, are born into an oral tradition of French Creole, which has the pervasive character of a national language. Everyone speaks it. But it is not accorded the authority of English, which is the language of Government and the official exchange required by State institutions. The situation I am referring to involved an elected member of the local Parliament who rose and gave the Speaker warning that he was going to address the Parliament in Creole. The Speaker said he could not, because the existing Constitution did not allow it. When the member persisted, the Speaker threatened him with expulsion from the Chamber. The treat was made in Creole. As a matter of emphasis.

This contradiction is not strictly speaking about language. It is about Power. It is about the politics of cultural subjugation and the transitional period of resistance to that hierarchical authority which makes a clear distinction between the language of

negotiation (Government, school, Church, etc.) and language in action (the market, the school yard, the playing field) between, let us say, State language and street or people's language. The Minister of Education may have had good reason to be worried, for the orthodoxies of language he represented were being transformed into bridges through the subversive intervention of novelists and poets who have narrowed the distance between standard English and the variety of non-standard forms which are now the occasion of much academic critical scrutiny.

Language was a major instrument in the creation of Empire, and there is remarkable evidence from some 19th Century diaries that Empire has also been a metaphor of racial diversity and cultural miscegenation, which challenges the imagination to discover its true location. The St. Kitts Minister of Education would have found a sympathetic missionary witness in Lady Maria Nugent whose journal WO, written between 1801 and 1805 and with the authority and privilege of the wife of a Governor of Jamaica. She has a sense of the relation of language to power, and laments the influence of the black tongue on the English ladies around her. She writes:

The Creole language is not confined to the Negroes. Many of the ladies, who have not been educated in England, speak a sort of broken English with an indolent drawling out of their words that is very tiresome, if not disgusting. I stood next to a lady one night, near a window, and, by way of saying something, remarked that the air was much cooler than usual; to which she answered: "Yes, ma-am. Him raily too fraish."

But if it is the sound, indolent and tedious drawling, which disturbs Lady Nugent; the Reverend William Jones who is in that island during the same period is struck by a more dangerous tendency: the way language may be experienced as a mode of thinking, of receiving and articulating experience.

"I have heard it observed", he writes, "as a fault of the white inhabitants that, instead of correcting the crude speech of the Negroes and better informing

them, they descend so low as to join the same habit of thinking and speaking."

LANGUAGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF EMPIRE

Journeys of conquest, initiated by an imperial thirst for expansion, order and settlement, give way to involuntary migration and the conflicting claims of different groups to equal partnership in new homelands.

Our context and location which is the Caribbean/Guyana is, perhaps, a unique enclosure for identifying these histories of dominance and translation. The narratives recur of Europe imposing its will on the pastoral landscapes of aboriginal peoples whose world collapses and fragments, dissolves before new waves of Africans in bondage and rebellion; the subsequent arrival of East Indians, indentured to sugar plantations, whose lives alternated between jail and hospital, strike and sick-outs, architects of resistance as were their African predecessors.

In order to prepare ourselves for conflict (and conflict must be accepted as a norm and not a distortion) we must remind ourselves of the unique character of this movement of peoples into that archipelago and remember that in this struggle of finding self through language, and discovering language through self, we have a situation in which there are many contestants making rival claims on our attention. There is not only an African Diaspora; there is also an Indian and wider Asian diaspora; and this confluence generates a tense, creative challenge in the demands for democratic claims on the landscape. It is from this turmoil of diverse human encounters that Lady Nugent's term, Creole, acquires a special resonance; and a resonance for us, which would have been beyond her imagination. For it is a word which subverts traditional orthodoxies of inheritance; and at the same time offers itself as a stabilizing constraint on the fragmenting tendencies inherent in a plural society.

To avoid too great conflict about the different applications of the term, Creole, I am going to settle for a single derivation in the Spanish 'crear' which means in my Caribbean context: to nourish, to nurse, to bring forth, to be the evolving product of. We choose that root because it opens the possibility of an authentic civic nationalism that would embrace every self-defined ethnic type. Time and the political economy of the landscape in the form of the Plantation allowed no one to be exempt from the inexorable process of no-creolization. There are those who claim European ancestry, but who were made, shaped, and seeded by the cultural forces of the archipelago, and whose interaction with others have made them a distinct breed from the stock from whom they have descended.

Moreover, the relations of intimacy, voluntary or otherwise, which diagnosed plantation society in the Caribbean did not allow for any reliable claim to any form of ancestral purity. Creole is the name of their anatomy. The sons and daughters of Indian indentured labor arriving in the third decade of the 19th century, may argue a stronger case for ancestral heritage than their African predecessors, but this proximity in time to the ancestral homeland does not erase or obscure their sense of belonging to the creolized world of Trinidad or Guyana. The Indian discomfort with the term Creole, (and it is a word which arouses a certain antagonism) cannot be a denial of the process of creolization, although it may be a correct rejection of the cultural dominance which Power conferred on a particular ethnic group.

In his essay Asian Identity and Culture in the Caribbean, Dr. Brinsley Samaroo raises the very vexatious question: "When therefore the Indo-Caribbean person is being constantly told that he must subscribe to the larger ill-defined something that is Creole culture we must ask the more relevant question, namely, what is there in that culture that is superior to what Orientalism offers?" A momentary reply might be: "But Orientalism is a European concept, (unacceptable to the Indo-Caribbean) and therefore an awkward alternative with which to challenge. But it is this use of

Orientalism that brings us to one heart of the question. It was the European dominant mode of thought which gave a decisive shape and content to the entire colonial experience; and the African's longer and more intimate association with this mode of thought made creolization appear to be a more natural and affirming inheritance than his Indian equivalent could accept.

The African scholar, Ali Mazuri, in his essay, Terminological Ethnocentrism, has made a bold and uncomfortable observation: "The West has invented an entire vocabulary which has landed us with unprecedented ways of thinking about our planet, a planet we share. This little continent called Europe went around naming this, that and the other, and it stuck. And we cannot think of the world in terms other than those of words they bequeathed to us." Against all reasons we go on using terms like Far East and Near East without

wondering far from where, near where. Because we know the answer is Europe. And it is the consequence of this Eurocentric triumph which much of the world, including the Caribbean, is engaged in resisting and

wherever possible neutralizing. Globalization is not new. It is an old European adventure, which has evolved with miraculous virulence into Euro-American nightmare for the poor, small and powerless.

But it may also be helpful to remind ourselves that we distort reality if we encourage thinking about Africans and Indians in uniform and monolithic terms. Controversy about self-definition prevails not only between different groups but also between different layers of the same group. There is a relevant and very touching autobiographical passage from Cheddi Jagan, the man whose memory we celebrate. He is discussing the emotional shock experienced during his transition from rural to urban living as a schoolboy of about 12 and a boarder in Georgetown.

To compensate for the small amount of money my father paid for my board and lodging, I had to do many chores such as washing the Elder's car, carrying his lunch on my bicy-

cle, going to market, and cutting grass for his goats. I particularly resented the latter. Cutting and fetching grass in the country was one thing; doing so in Georgetown as a Queen's College student was quite another. Georgetown middle class snobbery had so influenced me that I soon found some pretext to persuade my father to find me other lodgings.

Caribbean literature will provide us with the most vivid description of the School as an institution whose most critical function (or dysfunction) was to initiate and make permanent the existing layers of social stratification. De-schooling the mind from this early catastrophe is an agonizing task. Dr. Jagan escaped from the indignities of cuffing and fetching grass under the glare of Georgetown. But something no less painful was to follow: He continues:

The new family with whom I stayed belonged to the Kshatriya caste. One of the daughters had married a Brahmin and had three sons and one daughter. Two things particularly irked me about my position in this household: firstly, I was singled out to go occasionally to the market; secondly, I had to sleep on the floor, although there was an empty room with a vacant bed.

Apparently this was for reasons of status; based on caste my family was Kurmi, lower in status than a Kshatriya or a Brahmin. Until then, although I had heard my mother occasionally mention caste, I had never really encountered it.

RACE AND ETHNICITY AS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED CATEGORIES

The phenomenon of class is common to all categories and is a very decisive influence in the process of cultural formation. A large Indian agricultural proletariat in Trinidad or Guyana would not be unaware of the difference in the material interests which distance them from the modernizing

consumerist life style of their own professional and entrepreneurial elites. Nor is the African Creole working-class any less aware of this divide among Afro-Trinidadians. But individuals, responding to the imagined threat of group pressure, are very vulnerable to the most vulgar and opportunistic appeals which warn them about probable destruction by the Other. And when the political goal is not just about securing minority civil rights, but actually acquiring the instruments of power for the regulation of the total society, racial demagoguery on either side makes sure of its advantages even when the fundamental issue is not objectively about Race but Power.

This strategy of ensuring allegiance by dramatizing the menace of the Other was most effectively used by the old Colonial Power; and it has often been called into service by both African and Indian political leadership in the new independent countries. It has been the major obstacle to the realization of an authentic civic nationalism that would embrace and re-creolize all ethnic types in Caribbean society.

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In Barbados where the concept of Race was articulated most effectively through the division of labour, (agricultural labourers were exclusively black, bank clerks exclusively white) we have witnessed

a reversal of roles in the administration of the country's affairs. Now the executive branch of the State (that is, the Government) the Judiciary, and the upper layers of the Civil Service are almost entirely black. There is no traditional anxiety of an Indian threat, although there is rumour of one in the making. But the loss or conceding of political power by white Barbados has alerted us to a novel and challenging grievance from the literate voices of that social entity.

In the Trinidad and Tobago Review publication, *Enterprise of the Indies*, the journalist and historian, Robert Goddard, a member of a powerful white merchant family, makes a charge of Afro-centrism and its debilitating effect on the prospect of regional coherence:

Black nationalism in the Region is predicated on the idea that the West Indies is culturally black, and by inescapable implication, racially black as well. To be black is to be authentically Caribbean. To be non-black is to be an intruder.... Many white West Indians can relate situations where they have disappointed non-West Indians by appearing in the flesh wearing a white skin, as it were, after their accents had led their listeners to assume they must be black on the telephone...

I offer this as an example of a truth we are very reluctant to accept: that race and ethnicity are socially constructed categories. Mr. Goddard's voice on the telephone is ethnic black; on appearance his skin reveals him to be racial white. He wears both categories. Same citizen, two ways of being located in the civic frame of reference. And we have given these categories the power to generate antagonisms that reflect our sectional and communal interests at the expense, even sacrifice, of a liberating civic nationalism.

The question arises: where is home and when does it begin? In the same publication, *Enterprise of the Indies*, the Indo-Trinidadian historian, Dr. Kusha Haraksingh, draws attention to the predicament of the first generation of Indian indentured labourers whose contract carried the condition of return to India after five years. A choice had to be made; and it is Dr. Haraksingh's contention that this choice to stay carried a symbolic significance that was deliberately ignored or lost on those who were not Indian:

"The decision to stay", he writes,

was often coupled with a residential move away from plantation to 'free' villages, which itself often involved the acquisition of title to property. This served as a major platform to belonging, an urge that soon became more evident in efforts to redesign the landscape. Thus the trees that were planted around emergent homesteads, including religious vegetation, constituted a statement about belonging, so too did the temples and mosques which began to dot the landscape. And the rearing of animals that could not be abandoned; and the construction of ponds and

tanks, and the diversion of watercourses; and the clearing of lands. When all this is put together it is hard to resist the conclusion that Indians had begun to think of Trinidad as their home long before general opinion in the country had awakened to that as a possibility.

And there is evidence in many of our narratives of that perception of the Indian as alien and other, a problem to be contained after the departure of the Imperial Power. This has been a major part of the thought and feeling of West Indians of African descent, and a particularly stubborn conviction, among the black middle classes of Trinidad and Guyana. Indian achievement in politics or business has been regarded as an example of an Indian strategy for conquest; and even where such achievement did not exist, there could still be heard the satirical assault on those Indians who appeared to identify too readily with a creolizing process. The calypsos between 1946 and the 60's are the authentic examples of this:

What's wrong with these Indian people
As though their intention is for trouble
Long ago you'd meet an Indian boy by the road
With his capra waiting to tote your load
But I notice there is no Indian again
Since the women and them taking Creole name
Long ago was Sumintra, Ramaliwia
Bullbasia and Oosankalia
But now is Emily Jean and Dinah
And Doris and Dorothy.
Or Sparrow's mischievous mocking of
Ramjohn's struggle for literacy:
Ramjohn taking lessons daily
From a high school up in Laventille The first
day's lesson was dictation
And a little punctuation
After class he come home hungry to death
His wife eh cook Ramjohn start to fret
Whole day you sit down on you big fat comma
And you eh cook nothing up
But ah go this hyphen in you semi-colon
And bust you full stop and stop.

If there is something blasphemous or heretical in this kind of representation, it becomes less so when this drama is seen from a different perspective. The significance of making a home may now be weighed against the African's rebellious feeling

that a home has been stolen. In his very remarkable novel, *SALT*, the Trinidad-born writer, Earl Lovelace, traces through four or five generations the history of this feeling which the character Jo-Jo records. He has been a rebel and a runaway who lost an ear as punishment; but with the rumours of Emancipation he sends petitions to Her Majesty through her Secretary of State for colonial Development. His argument is that:

As a result of the circumstances of our enslavement we have no option now but to make this island our home, since it is the place that many have been born into and it is the place that their labour has gone to build." The appeal is ignored, and we witness his bewilderment when he encounters for the first time a presence he had vaguely heard of.

One morning JoJo was out in the yard, just about to go to the estate, when he heard the sound of cutlassing from the land near-by. He stopped for a moment in something between alarm and vexation. Grasping his own cutlass, JoJo moved to the sound and found himself looking at one of the Indian men cutting the bush. His anger grew even more. These people was bold. They come and take over the work and prevent the Government from dealing with his petition, now, here was one of them squatting on Government land. "Hey", JoJo called out, "what is it you doing? You don't see people living here?" How you come in here just so and don't tell nobody nothing?"

The Indian looked at him in sober outrage and when he spoke he so choked up that his voice came out almost apologetic. "This land is my own."

"Your own?"

"Is because of my contract. I not going back to India." "Your contract? You have a contract? Who give you this contract?" JoJo interrogating him as if he was Protector of Crown Lands.

"What happen?" The Indian man asked him. "You working here?"

"Yes, I working here," JoJo answered.

"You working here and you don't know what a contract is? You don't have one? They didn't make one with you? How long you here?"

"For a fella who just come here I find you asking a lotta questions," JoJo told him. "I don't even know your name."

"I name Feroze. Look, I have my paper right here." JoJo took the paper. He looked at it. He handed it back to Feroze. He didn't say nothing.

"So they didn't make a contract with you?" Feroze was uneasy.

"No. I ain't have none," JoJo tell him. "I have no contract."

"How long you working here, man?"

"How long? Man, I thought I was asking the questions?"

"And I answering you. But you not bound to answer me. How long?"

JoJo did not answer.

"Maybe is because you from around here," Feroze said. "They don't have to pay passage for you. I from India. I from across the sea. They have to pay plenty money for me to travel'.

"Yes", JoJo said, "Plenty money for you to travel." "So where you from?" Feroze ask.

"I from just across the sea there... From Africa." And is only then that Feroze caught on. He could see his mind working. "Why" And before be could finish the question, JoJo said, "Why I still here? I know you would ask that. I know."

"Sorry", Feroze tell him. "I just come here to work." "Don't worry to be sorry", JoJo tell him. "I will tell you what I doin' here?"

"Really", Feroze tell him, "You don't have to tell me nothing. I just come to work this piece of land here." "No, let me tell you," JoJo tell him. "What I doin' here is waking." And he walked away. "You know",

You know, he told Faustin, "they give these Indian people contract and land to work these estates.

"Is not their fault," Faustin tell him. "You should have squat a piece of land yourself."

But JoJo did not agree. It was clear to him that the Colony's treatment of the Indians had given him an even greater claim to reparation, but what was worrying, was his feeling that he had made an enemy of Feroze and the rest of Indian people....

It is this fracture which would remain unhealed; but which would also alert the imagination to the possibility of a novel kind of generosity. It is this possibility which Derek Walcott is referring to in his 1992 Noble speech:

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the ceiling of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is the restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.

The past became a weapon which ethnicity summoned as evidence of group solidarity. Politics became an expression of ethnic grievance made just by any evidence that the Past could sanction.

If language was a major instrument of Empire; it is the very flexible and varying ranges of language, the subtle and explicit manipulations of native rhythms of speech that have won our writers a very special attention. If the metro pole directed what is standard and required by the cultural establishment, it is at the periphery of colony or neo-colony that the imagination resists, destabilizes and transforms the status of the word in action.

This is a mark of cultural sovereignty; the free definition and articulation of the collective self, whatever the rigor of external constraints.

THE EFFECTS OF LABOUR ON CULTURE

I believe that labour and the relations experienced in the process of labour constitute the foundation of all culture. It is through work that men and women make nature a part of their own history. The way we see, the way we hear, our nurtured sense of touch and smell, the whole complex of feelings which we call sensibility, is influenced by the particular features of the landscape which has been humanized by our work; so there can be no history of Trinidad or Guyana that is not also a history of the humanization of those landscapes by African and Indian forces of labour.

This is at once the identity and the conflict of interests which engaged the deepest feeling of those indentured workers inscribing their signatures on a landscape that will be converted into home; and also the bitter taste of loss which the emancipated African Jo-Jo experiences as he sees land become the symbol of his dispossession. How to reconcile

these contradictions was the burden that the late Dr. Jagan accepted and carried throughout his entire political life. But the past was, for us, in these circumstances, not just an exercise in memory, in the retrieval of some ration of consolation for our labour. The past became a weapon which ethnicity summoned as evidence of group solidarity. Politics would become an expression of ethnic grievance made rational and just by any evidence that the Past could sanction. We were given warning of this sentiment when Jo-Jo, in spite of the undeserved card that the Emancipation had played him, experiences a worry he would never have wished on anyone:

but what was worrying, was his feeling that he had made an enemy of Feroze and the rest of the Indian people.

The colonization of the female by an arbitrary division of labour would in time give rise to a crusade in sexual politics that has become a major challenge to all established orthodoxy in the contemporary Caribbean; and the patriarchal character of Caribbean literature has been immensely enriched by the range and quality of women's writing. It's almost a certainty that one of the most fertile areas of its expansion will be occupied by what, previously and by traditional stereotype, was the most dormant of all voices: the voice of the Indo-Caribbean woman.

Less than half a century of access to the school, and the swift migration from barrack room and cane patch into the professional citadels of the nations' workplace, have now broken forever that curtain of silence and submission which we were made to believe was her chosen location. In the Trinidad Express special Indian Arrival Supplement of May 1992, Sita Bridgemohan offers this poignant statement of her claims on the Trinidad landscape:

My forefathers came from India to work in the canefields. They were Hindus. With sweat, tears, hard work and courage, they created a life in a different land, a land in which I was born. By right of birth, I have a place in this land and don't have to fight for it.

If African labour and the cultural dimensions of that labour constitute the first floor on which this Caribbean house was built, then the second floor and central pillar on which its creative survival depends is the total democratic participation of the Indo-Caribbean presence.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The concepts Race, Nation, Ethnicity constitute a family of constructs of largely European origin which served to influence the attitudes we should adopt to any encounter with difference. European racism was a form of ethnic nationalism that invested the colour line with a power of definition which neither Asian nor African colonized could have escaped.

Difference in religion, difference in modes of cultural affirmation, require a new agenda of perspectives, a wholly new way of looking at the concept of nation, of finding a way to immunize sense and sensibility against the virus of ethnic nationalism ("for the culture of an ethnic group is no more than the set of rules into which parents belonging to that ethnic group are pressured to socialize their children . . .") and in order to educate feeling to respect the autonomy of the Others difference, to

negotiate the cultural spaces which are the legitimate claim of the Other, and to work toward an environment which could manage stability as a state of creative conflict.

The challenge of diversity and the peculiar nature of our own diasporic adventure could be made a fertilizing soil and the crusading theme of party political discourse. Indeed, this diversity has been an abundant blessing for cultural workers in all the arts in the Caribbean: the novel, the visual arts, and the syncretic splendour of our festivals. Creative conflict is the dynamic that drives the Caribbean imagination.

I've never been able to separate the creative imagination from the political culture in which it functions; and so in honour of Dr. Jagan I will close with an extract from the American sociologist, C. Wright Mills' essays: Power, Politics and People.

The independent artist and intellectual are among the few remaining personalities equipped to resist and to fight the stereotyping and consequent death of genuinely living things. Fresh perception now involves the capacity to continually unmask and smash the

stereotypes of vision and intellect with which modern communications (that is modern systems of representations) swamp us. These worlds of mass-art and mass-thought are increasingly geared to the demands of market politics. That is why it is in politics that intellectual solidarity and effort must be centered. If the thinker does not relate himself/herself to the value of truth in political struggle, they cannot responsibly cope with the whole life experience.

In the Guyana Chronicle of March 9, 1997 (the day after Dr. Jagan died) I made the following statement: "There is no Caribbean leader who has been so frequently cheated of office; none who has been so grossly misrepresented; and no one who, in spite of such adversity, was his equal in certainty of purpose and the capacity to go on and on until his time had come to take leave of us..." He had invested all his energies in a consistent struggle to liberate the poor from their state of powerlessness, and to create a civil environment that would teach the love and nurturing of genuinely living things.