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Take a Wine and Roll "IT"!: Breaking Through the Circumscriptive Politics of the Trini/Caribbean Dancing Body

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Critical Dance Studies

by

Adanna Kai Jones

March 2016

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Anthea Kraut, Chairperson
Dr. Marta E. Savigliano
Dr. Amalia Cabezas

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The Dissertation of Adanna Kai Jones is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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Forever and ever,
Your sister, your niece, your grandchild, and your friend.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Take a Wine and Roll "IT"!: Breaking Through the
Circumscriptive Politics of the Trini/Caribbean Dancing Body

by

Adanna Kai Jones

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Critical Dance Studies
University of California, Riverside, March 2016
Dr. Anthea Kraut, Chairperson

"Take a Wine and Roll "IT"" looks at the ways in which the dance known as the *wine* plays an integral role in the formation of Caribbean identity politics within the US. Also known as *winin'*, the wine is a rolling hip dance that is informally learned at a very young age and is often performed in festive spaces throughout the Caribbean, such as Carnival. The erotic potency of the wine and its link to black and deviant sexuality re-present Afro-Caribbean *winers*, and women especially, as vulgar and sexually manipulative. As a result, any violence incited against them is commonly labeled as self-inflicted and self-imposed. On the other hand, winin' reaffirms the celebration of Caribbean women's beauty, self-confidence, and capacity to display their erotic power, as well as reclaim their right to female bodily pleasure. In turn, I argue that winin' offers an important lens through which we can better decipher the 'problem' of the black feminized body who dances in public.

Because of winin's multivalent uses and meanings, it provides a complex lens through which we can comprehend how contentious discourses on race, gender,

sexuality, and trans-nationality (which then includes citizenship) are intimately expressed and contested at the level of the body. My dissertation first situates those who wine within a broader political framework by exploring the historical links between winin' and the sexualized disciplining of black bodies, especially during the Victorian Era and colonialism. Thereafter, I complicate the focus of current debates by examining the mundane, intimate, and spectacular ways Caribbean masqueraders use their winin' to push against, renegotiate, and/or undermine the overlapping tensions that circumscribe their dancing bodies as they participate in Trinidadian-styled Carnivals within the US. I also investigate the intersecting ways US popular culture, social-media, and other internet-based media sources work to re-construct and re-present winin' bodies, such as Barbados-born pop-star Rihanna, in order to better understand the ways winin' participates in discourses on shame and empowerment. Ultimately, my dissertation shifts how we analyze and understand the wine and winin' bodies by engaging with both the histories and practices that continue to mark Caribbean dancing bodies as exotic, hyper-sexual, feminine, low-classed, and black.

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GLOSSARY

A

All'yuh – Trini term for "Everyone"

Ah – Trini pronunciation of the words "or," "I," or "of" (depending on the context). (Examples: "ah what?" = "or what"; "ah gone" = "I am leaving"; "some ah dis and some ah dat" = "some of this and some of that")

B

Bacchanal – From *winin'* to fighting, "bacchanal" is a very common term used to describe the various revelry that takes place during the Carnival season. Although the word traditionally references Bacchus, the God of 'wine,' the Trini-Creole use of the word can either describe vigorous winin', general commotions, wild parties, or fights between friends, neighbors, and family; it can also be used in a playful sense to describe winin' scenes that are often associated with Carnival revelry.

Bajan – Anglophone-Caribbean terminology for Barbadian.

Ba'John – Trini term for a hooligan.

Bamsee – Anglophone-Caribbean Creole term for "butt." Other spellings: Bomsee or Bumsee (Synonyms: "bombom," "bambam," "bumbum," "bumper," "bottom," "behind")

Bazodi – Afro-Trini creole (from French word *abasourdir*, meaning to daze) that describes being in a state light-headedness or shock as if in a daze or if stunned.[1]

Behavyah – Trini pronunciation of the word "behavior"

Bligh – an opportunity, a chance

Brek (Trini) or Bruk (Jamaican) – meaning "break"

"bruk out" – means to break away from social mores and expectations. literally translates into "break out," but loosely translates into "do whatever you feel, including dance

[1] See: "Bazodi," in *Côté ci Côté la: Trinidad and Tobago Dictionary, The Signature Edition*, ed. John Mendes (Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago: Zenith Services, Ltd., 2012), 18.

however you would like." (Synonyms: "brek-free," "free-up," "get-on," and "misbehave.")

"Bus' ah sweet wine" – literal translation: burst (open) a (bottle of) sweet wine; general translation: to indulge in winin'.

C

Ca'nival – Trini pronunciation of the word "Carnival"

(Trinidadian) Carnival – a momentous pre-Lenten festival found in Trinidad. The season usually starts on Boxing Day (the day after Christmas) and ends at midnight on Ash Wednesday, with the main event (the parading of the bands) occurring on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. During these two days, men and women dance and parade through the streets wearing elaborate costumes.

Chip (chippin') – Trini term for how one is forced to walk in the midst of a crowded Carnival. It's a walking shuffle step that is also performed when one needs rest from the high energy dancing; it is sometimes performed to slower Soca as well. Because your knees never fully straighten as you drag your feet along the ground, *chippin'* is also a way of walking or dancing in rhythm to the music.

Commesse – Trini patois for confusion

Crop Over – the festival in Barbados that is similar to the Trinidadian Carnival. Held …

Cyah – Trini pronunciation of the word "can't"

D

Da'iz – Trini pronunciation of the word "that is"

Dancehall – a popular genre of dance music specific to Jamaica that originally developed out of reggae music during the 1970s.

Dat – Trini pronunciation of the word "that"

Despelote – term used in Cuba for the dexterous and vigorous rolls of the hip, pelvis, and buttocks (literal translation: "all over the place").

Dey – Trini pronunciation of the word "they" or "there" (depending on the context). (Examples: "he dong dey" = "he is down there"; "dey gone" = "they left")

Di – Trini pronunciation of the word “the”

Doh – Trini pronunciation of the word “don’t”

Dong – Trini pronunciation of the word “down”

F

Fete (fettin’ and fetted) – Trinidian creole term meaning “to party” (verb) or “a party” (noun)

Free-up (“free-up myself”) – see “bruk out”

Fuh – Trini pronunciation of the word “for”

G

Gouyad – Haitian patois for grinding one’s hip, pelvis, and buttocks; literal translation: “grind.”

Get-on (“get-on bad”) – see “bruk out”

Grief – in the Trini-social context, this means to “give someone a hard time” (usually a lover and usually to cause to them heartache).

Grong – Trini pronunciation of the word “ground”

Gyal – Trini pronunciation of the word “girl”

H

Horn – meaning to cheat on a significant other. “To get horned” or “to get ah horn” is the phrasing often used when your significant other is seeing someone else behind your back (e.g., “My boyfriend give me ah horn.” Or “He horned me.”)

Horner man/woman – the man/woman your significant other is cheating on you with.

I

Ital – a Jamaican patois term that refers to the food that Rastafarians eat. Deriving from the term "vital," ital food often celebrates food that is natural, unprocessed, and from the Earth.[2]

J

Jagabat – Trini patois term for a "loose woman"

Jouvay (J'Ouvert) – a Trini-Creole word that derives from the French word *jour ouvert*—meaning opening day, daybreak, or opening morning—all of which reference the dawn of Carnival Monday. Sometimes referred to as *dutty mas'* (i.e., dirty masquerading), many of the costumes—such as the devil, the bat, the Dame Lorraine, and the pisse-en-lit—and traditions—which include covering oneself in mud, paint, or oil—that are played and preserved during Jouvay were crafted and disseminated by the late nineteenth century Trinidadian jametres.

"Jump-up with a band" – Like the phrases "free-up" and "get-on," "jump-up" can be used to describe the overall dancing, winin', jumping, and waving that occur during Carnival. In other words, this phrase does not necessarily mean that all you are doing is jumping up and down. (Synonym: "play mas'")

Jumbie – Trini-Creole word for a ghost, spirit, demon, or an overwhelming energy. (Sayings: "di Carnival jumbie")

K

Kompa – a music genre particular to Haiti

L

Lime (limin' and limed) – Trinidadian creole term meaning "to hangout" (verb) or "a hangout" (noun)

[2] For more information, see: "Ital Cooking," *eatjamaican.com: The international Guide to Jamaican Restaurants and Caribbean Restaurants*, copyright 2015, http://eatjamaican.com/ital-recipes/rastafarian-cooking.html.

M

Mas' – a common Trini term for the word "masquerade."

Mahgah – A Creole term used throughout the Anglophone Caribbean that describes a very skinny person.

Misbehave – see "bruk out"

O

"On di road" – Trinidadian euphemism that refers to Carnival, especially the parade of the bands (when masqueraders are out in the streets showing off their winin' skills and elaborate costumes).

Obeah (pronounce Oh-Beeyah) – In general, obeah men/women are said to be masters of occult powers and practices, believed to have derived from several secret African traditions and beliefs. They are often associated with herbology, magic, mysticism, sorcery, and religious practices—although obeah is not considered a religion in and of itself.

Oui – French for "yes" (commonly used throughout Trinidad, due its high population of French plantation owners during colonial times)

"Outta timin'" – literal translation: "Out of timing" as in "off putting;" something said or done that off-sets the flow of things (e.g., to "put your foot in your mouth").

P

Pace – Trini talk that refers to one's ability to keep up with the pace and energy of Carnival, for example, with regards to winin', it means that you were able to wine on or with a lot of revelers.

Perreando – usually linked to the dancing associated with the reguetón from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic; literal translation: "doggy-style." Usually describes a person gyrating their butt onto the gyrating crotch of their dance partner, like the sexual position known as doggy style.

Pickney – an Anglophone-Caribbean creole term meaning "children."

Picong – a way of insulting in a jesting manner; a form of verbal warfare, similar to African-American tradition of the dozens, that is most commonly associated with ol'-time calypso. (Synonym: "fatigue").

"Play mas'" – Literal translation: to play masquerade. A Trinidadian saying that means to wear a costume and participate in the parading of the bands during Carnival. (Synonym: "jump-up with a band")

'Pon – usually associated with Jamaican patois, translating to mean "upon."

Pum-pum – Jamaican patois meaning vagina. (Synonym: "punanny")

Puta – in Belize, this is this movement involves back and forth rolling gyrations of the hip, pelvis, and buttocks

R

Reguetón – a genre of music originally influenced by Jamaican dancehall-reggae. First developed in Panama as an underground style known as "Spanish Reggae," today it is especially dominated by Puerto Rican and Dominican artists and heavily influenced by US hip-hop and other Caribbean musical rhythms, such as merengue, Jamaican dancehall, and salsa.

Rel – Trini pronunciation of the word "real"

Rumba – Spanish term for "party;" in Cuba, this term also describes a type of Afro-folkloric music and dances

S

Sketele –Angolphone-Caribbean term for a loose woman

Slackness – having loose morals

Soca – a style of music historically linked to the Trinidadian Carnival. It started to evolve during the 1970s as a blend of African American soul music and calypso. Since then, it has developed into a high energy sound that mixes calypso rhythms with musical styles from all over the world, including East Indian, African, and electronic dance music.

Steelpan – originally made from old, discarded oil drums, steelpan is an iron drum particular to Trinidad

Storm – A Trini colloquialism that means to enter an event, uninvited.

T

Teif (teifin') – Trini pronunciation of the word "thieve" (thieving)

Ting – Trini pronunciation of the word "thing"

Trinbago (Trinbagonian) – portmanteau of Trinidad + Tobago.

Trini – Anglophone-Caribbean terminology for Trinidadian.

Trini-styled Carnival – festivals held both within the Caribbean and throughout the Caribbean Diaspora that are heavily influenced by or modeled after the annual Pre-Lenten Carnival festivities of Trinidad.

W

Wahbeen – Trini Creole term for a loose woman

Wais'line – Anglophone-Caribbean pronunciation of "waistline."

Wassy – Trini Creole term for a loose woman

Wine (winin') – an Anglophone-Caribbean creole term that translates into "winding," which is how the British described the gyrations of the African people during the colonial era. It is a dance that involves dexterous and vigorous rolls, gyrations, thrusts, and shakes of the hip, pelvis, and buttocks area.

"Wine-up" or "Wine-down" – euphemism that describes acts of winin'. Like the phrase "jump-up," the "-up" or "-down" does not necessarily imply the direction that the wine is happening in; it can be a generalized way of stating that a lot of winin' was happing.

Winer – someone who wines.

Winery – Trinidadian slang that refers to one's winin' skills or abilities.

Wotles – Trini Creole term meaning "worthless;" used to describe a person or their behavior as something that is no good.

"Wukk-up stink" – a particularly Bajan way of saying, "to roll your hips skillfully." Literal translation: "worked up stink." Although the term wukkin'-up is used to throughout the Anglophone Caribbean to describe the act of winin', in Barbados, the term wukkup or wukkin'-up are almost exclusively used in place of "winin'."

UNWINDING THE "IT": AN INTRODUCTION

Roooooollllll
Roll it gyal, roll it gyal.
Roooooollllll.
Control it gyal, roll it gyal.
…
Go to school gyal and get ya degree.
Nurture and tek care of ya pickney.
Gyal ya work hard to mek ya money.
(Roll it gyal, roll it gyal)
If ya know ya smart and ya sexy.
Neva let dem abuse ya body.
Show it off gyal and let di world see.
(Roll it gyal, roll it gyal)

"Roll it Gyal"[1]

It all begins with the "it!" Caribbean bodies are sexually marked and recognized by their renowned abilities to roll their "its"—a skill informally learned at a very young age. Particularly, this movement includes, at the very least, dexterous and vigorous rolls, gyrations, thrusts, and shakes of the hip, pelvis, and buttocks. Colloquially known as *winin'* (or the *wine*)[2] in Trinidad, Guyana, and Jamaica, *wukkin'-up* in Barbados, *despelote* in Cuba, *perreando* (or *el perreo*) in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, *gouye* (or the *gouyad*) in Haiti, and *puta* in Belize (just to name a few), the rolling "it" is often associated with festive spaces—such as *Dancehall*, *Carnival*, *fetes*, or *rumbas*—as well as with popular music genres like *soca*, dancehall-reggae, *reguetón*, and *kompa*. The rolling "it" is sometimes recognized as a dance in and of itself (e.g., the dutty wine, from

[1] Written by Shontelle Layne, a Bajan songwriter, and the late Sheldon Benjamin, a Trini composer and music producer for the 2005 Crop Over season. Lyrics transcribed by author.

[2] Please note that terms commonly used throughout the Caribbean will appear in the glossary; however, they will only be italicized the first time they appear.

the dancehalls of Jamaica, or the bicycle wine, created and promoted by Trinidadian soca artist Denise "Saucy WOW" Belfon); or it can be a movement within a larger dance complex (e.g., the rumbas of Cuba). As a result, the dancer retains the option of toggling between spectacularizing their "it" and rolling their "it" as a subsidiary movement. Moreover, the Caribbean rolling "it" has both public and private connotations due to its associations with spaces such as *Trini*-styled Carnivals and family gatherings. Furthermore, within the Caribbean, winin' has and continues to be practiced by persons of various ethnicities, races, genders, and classes. Yet, in spite of this fact, the rolling "it" remains overwhelmingly normalized as always already linked to black/African histories and female/feminized bodies, especially due to the legacy of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the historical pathologizing of Afro-women's and Afro-slaves' body parts.

In actuality, the roots and routes of the rolling "it" throughout Caribbean are quite expansive. There is no single narrative for the wine's pathway into its current iteration; rather, any semblance of a narrative is at best a labyrinth that has no definite beginning and promises no finite conclusions. Within Trinidad alone, antecedents of the wine can be located within the sacred and secular dances of the Yoruba and Igbo peoples from West Africa as well as of the Bantu peoples of the Congo region. For example, the dances associated with Shango—the Yoruban deity of fire, thunder, lightening, masculinity and virility—are often comprised of a gyrating or vigorously thrusting "it." For one iteration of his dances, your hands must slice through the air, taking lightening from the sky and

bringing it down to your genitals.[3] On the other hand, the dances of Oshun—the Yoruban deity of fresh waters, femininity, fecundity, and love—emphasizes a billowing "it" that moves in circles and figure eights, which can symbolize the act of cleansing or preparing oneself for love or giving birth.[4]

Other roots of the Trinidadian wine are also linked to private Hindu[5] festivities, such as the dances performed during matikor.[6] Additional influential ties include the movements associated with "belly dancing," which were retained by Trinidad's small Syrian and Lebanese populations. Moreover, many of the Trinidadian Afro-Creole[7] dances, such as the bele (or bel aire), also emphasize swaying and rolling one's "it" to the pulsating rhythms of drums. Lastly, the coupling of dancers (specifically the pairing of men and women as they wine) was strongly influenced by the European court dances

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[3] I learned this dance whilst taking Afro-Cuban classes in Los Angeles, CA with Kati Hernandez from 2009 through 2014. Whilst taking an Afro-Caribbean class in Trinidad, under the instruction of Christopher Walker, I also learned that Shango dances differ slightly throughout the Caribbean. Redman, the drummer, informed me that in Trinidad, although the "it" still gyrates, much of the emphasis is on stomping one's feet and shifting one's balance from side to side. Redman (Orisha drummer well known throughout Trinidad) in casual conversation with author at the New Waves! Institute 2015/Dancing While Black Performance Lab in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, July 22-31, 2015.

[4] I also learned this dance whilst taking Afro-Cuban classes in Los Angeles, CA with Kati Hernandez from 2009 through 2014. This dance is practiced similarly in Trinidad.

[5] From 1845 to 1917, about 147,000 indentured Indians were brought to the island of Trinidad for the purposes of working on the plantations post-emancipation. The majority were from the north of India and were drawn from a multiplicity of castes. The vast majority were Hindus, but there was a significant Muslim minority. See Kevin A. Yelvington, "Trinidad and Tobago," in *Countries and Their Cultures (Vol. 4)*, eds. Melvin Ember and Carol R. Ember (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2001). 2238-47. http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Trinidad-and-Tobago.html#ixzz1Ghh0hgdg

[6] Matikor is an all-female, Hindu, pre-wedding fertility ceremony that showcases dances that emphasize their rolling "its." For more information see: Joy Mahabir and Mariam Pirbhai eds., *Critical Perspectives on Indo-Caribbean Women's Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2012). Brinda J. Mehta, *Diasporic Dis(Locations): Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the Kala Pani* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004).

[7] Here the term Creole means born in the New World.

practiced by Plantation slave owners, including the French quadrille and the Spanish dances associated with pasillo and castillian music.[8] Simply put, the winin' body is a hybrid, Diasporic body that is both marked and unmarked by multiple histories and traditions, all of which offer *winers* a plethora of ways in which their "its" can be used, performed, and understood.

WHAT IS SO CRITICAL ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN ROLLING "IT?"

I remember when I was first asked to think critically about the Caribbean rolling "it." It was during my fourth quarter at UCR and the inquiry was simple. "I mean, all they're really doing is just shaking their butts! So what's the big deal?" Yet, with a knee-jerk response, I could not help but be offended. As a Trinidad-born, US-raised, avid winer, there is always a certain pride that overcomes me every time *I bus' ah sweet wine*.[9] I grew up rolling my "it" and even taught my younger brother to roll his "it" at the tender age of five. Growing up in a decidedly Trinidadian household, there were often direct and indirect discussions about how and when to roll our "its," why we do or do not roll our "its," the problems with rolling one's "it," the gendered importance of protecting one's "it," the difference between rolling one's "it" around family and rolling one's "it" around others (including those of other nationalities or races), the difference between adults rolling their "its" and children rolling their "its," and, of course, the difference between males and females rolling their "its." Even if your family avoided addressing the topic of

[8] Errol Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1972), 40 and 72.

[9] Loose Translation: I indulge in winin'

"its," if you listened to soca music or dancehall reggae, indulged in the revelry of Carnival, or went to Caribbean *limes* and fetes, at some point, it would be almost impossible to avoid dealing with the overwhelming pervasiveness of the rolling "it."

Nevertheless, this simple inquiry insidiously worked to unwind my world. I quickly began to wonder, "Why do people who wine say that it is freeing and liberating? Does this one movement actually work subversively or promote liberation? Liberation from what or rather for whom? And if so, how?" *I was feelin' rel bazodi*,[10] as if in a daze; my head was being flooded with the messy memories of prideful histories and shameful narratives, which not only soaked through my veins but also sweated through my pores. Why does the "it" haunt and taunt our Caribbean bodies so? And at the same time, why do we Caribbeans utilize our rolling "its" when attempting to *brek free from di tensions and preshas* of life,[11] and what does that even mean? What is so alluring about the rolling waistline, about a seemingly simple hip gyration, about wiggling and jiggling the butt in rhythm with soca music? From that place, I began to ponder, "How do I even begin to tell the *tale* about the winin' Caribbean *tail*, or any winin' *tale/tail*[12] for that matter?"

Using these questions as a foundation for my dissertation, my goal henceforth is to unwind the convoluted political economies that both limit and enable the complex

[10] Loose Translation: I was feeling lightheaded.

[11] Loose Translation: break free from the tensions and pressures of life.

[12] I use the shorthand "tale/tail" throughout my dissertation to simultaneously mean tales, as in story tales, and tails, as in the corporeal "it" (namely one's hip and butt area). I do this to acknowledge that one's body is capable of "telling" stories, as well as indicate that I am working to translate these corporeal tales.

socialization of the Trini/Caribbean[13] rolling "it." To be clear, my research is rooted in relationships—particularly my relationship to winin' and to other Trini/Caribbean winers. From intimate (e.g., inter-personal) to political relationships (namely politics of race, gender, sexualities, and nationalities), I examine the ways in which winin' mediates the intimate and political dynamics between family, friends, lovers, winers, and non-winers. In so doing, I follow winin'-*tails* through and unravel winin-*tales* within various temporalities, spaces, and mediums in order to render a nuanced analysis of how and why winin' maintains such a central role in reifying Trini/Caribbean identities within the US.

Specifically, I embark on a multi-sited endeavor to encapsulate the complex relationships forged by my Trini/Caribbean informants, who were predominantly of Trini and *Bajan* descent, through their relationship with Trini-styled Carnivals throughout the US. Other informants represented Jamaica, Haiti, Belize, and St. Vincent, while others maintained simultaneous blood-ties to multiple Caribbean nations. In terms of ethnicity, they included Indo-Creole (i.e., of East Indian descent), Spanish-Creole, and Afro-Creole mixtures and lineages; with regards to class, they ranged from low/working-class to

[13] The "Trini/Caribbean" shorthand is my attempt at acknowledging the performative slipperiness of Trinidadian and Caribbean identities within the Diaspora. I specifically privilege the "Trini/" prefix, as opposed to "pan-," for instance, due to the central role Trinidadian-styled Carnivals play in the lives of my winin' Caribbean informants (this point will be further clarified in chapter two). In effect, I identify my winin' subjects as "Trini/Caribbeans" so as to address the multifarious ways in which these particular winin' bodies weave in and out of particular modes of belonging to their own particular nations whilst indirectly representing Trinidadian*ness* via their participation in these Trini-styled Carnivals. Even considering myself, who is simultaneously marked as Trinidadian and Caribbean within the US space, my intention here is to underscore how our identities flow in and out of each other, almost instantaneously. Lastly, this is my subtle way of acknowledging the various ways we Trini/Caribbeans slip in and out of connection to our homeland(s), as some of my informants have parentage from multiple islands. Their slippery connections to their national roots and to family are further complicated by social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter) and free instant-messaging application programs (e.g., Skype, WhatsApp, or Google Hangouts). Effectively, my informants often remain active members of multiple communities through these virtual connections. In the end, I want to keep visible the ways in which winin' bodies evidently weave in and out of particular modes of belonging to both the Caribbean and the US.

upper-middle class. Although my informants live in the Los Angeles and New York City areas, in addition to New Jersey, many maintain deep connections to other Caribbean communities within the US and beyond. In fact, during my fieldwork from 2009-2014, they were, and still are, involved in the Trini-styled Carnivals of NYC, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Miami, Atlanta, Toronto, Notting Hill, Jamaica, and Barbados,[14] in addition to Trinidad itself (either as DJs, party promoters, costume makers/designers, and/or masqueraders). However, as my ethnographic relationship to them developed, I was only able to follow them and participate in the Carnivals of Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Jersey City,[15] Barbados, and Trinidad.

Now before I continue, I must be clear, this dissertation is not actually about the Trini-styled Carnival itself. I am particularly interested in highlighting the complex transnational socialization processes winin' participants experience as they attempt to use their spectacular winin' skills to take up public space and embody pleasure within the United States. I only ended up partaking in the above stated Carnivals because my

[14] I am aware that Barbados has its own history of how Carnival, or rather Crop Over season as it is called, came to be. But after playing mas' there with the band *Baje* (which imported parts of its costumes and at least one of their mas' designers from Trinidad) it was uncanny how much the parade of bands was structured after the Trinidadian Carnival. With the exception that the parade was actually set up as a parade, with set beginning and ending points, just like in Trinidad, there were judging points and the element of competition embedded into the day's merriment.

[15] The Brooklyn version of the West Indian American Carnival was established in 1969 and takes place along Eastern Parkway and ends at the Brooklyn Children's Museum. The Jersey City Carnival reached 20 years old in July of 2015 and travels from Lincoln Park to City Hall. The Los Angeles Carnival was founded in 1998 and took place along Westchester Park, near LAX. However, for all intents and purposes, the LA Carnival became defunct after the Hollywood Carnival was launched in 2012, which currently takes place along Hollywood Boulevard, for three miles, and ends at the N. Highland Avenue intersection.

informants were committed to winin' in *public*[16] spaces that not only offered them both a sense of belonging but also contextualized their winin' bodies as participating in Trini/Caribbean ideologies. Furthermore, because winin' bodies are integrally vital to the spectacularization of the Trini-styled Carnival and the festival itself remains central to the lives of my winin' informants, it would not work in my best interest to completely dismiss the importance of Carnival. In fact, many of my Trinidadian informants referred to winin' as the *spirit* of Carnival. In parallel, many others generally referred to Trini-styled Carnivals as "Winin' Season," especially since famed soca artist Machel Montano popularized the phrase with his hit tune (of the same title) during Trinidad's 2007 Carnival season.

However, when it comes to winin' and winin' bodies, the trend among many Caribbeanist scholars is to restrict their focus to the popular spaces of Carnival or Dancehall.[17] In contrast, my research both challenges and shifts how we analyze and understand the wine and winin' bodies by visibilizing[18] the quieted, relational ways winers strategically negotiate how and when they use their *winery*, especially for the sake of accessing and performing an embodied sense of freedom and agency. For this reason, my ethnographic approach stays attentive to the microscopic, mundane, and "almost"

[16] I emphasize the word "public" here because the desire to be recognized publicly is what drove these winers into the streets.

[17] For example, Daniel Miller (1991), Patricia A. DeFreitas (1999), Natasha Barnes (2000), and Kevin Frank (2007) centralize Carnival in their scholarship.

[18] My use of the terms "visibilize" and "invisibilize" is a direct reference to Brenda Dixon-Gottschild's seminal work in *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*. She uses the terms to "invisibilize" address the "systematic denial and exploitation" of the Africanist presence in American culture. See: Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 1-2.

dismissible moments that impact how, when, where, why, and with whom one chooses to wine. In turn, throughout my dissertation, I work to de-centralize the momentous spectacle of Carnival by using it as a backdrop in order to spotlight the circuitous ways that Trini/Caribbean winers' participation for, because of, and in the Trini-styled Carnival actually works to renegotiate the terms by which they then perform their U.S. citizenship and Trini/Caribbean identities.

By staying present to every bubble-up, tremble-down, rolling gyration, wriggle, wiggle, and shake of the winin' "it," I keep the spectacular space of Carnival connected to the mundane and intimate spaces of my informants' everyday livelihoods without severing the playful slipperiness of the wine from the logic of the Trini-styled Carnival itself. Ergo, my dissertation offers a new apprehension of and appreciation for the particular ways Trini/Caribbean subjects within the Diaspora use winin' to assert themselves in these places abroad whilst navigating through the intersecting, and at times colonizing, political economies of identity and representation. From private family functions, or "behind-the-scenes" interpersonal exchanges, to non-Carnival spaces such as cyberspace, I work to foreground the various uses and effects of winin'. Effectively, I argue that the mundane and intimate political economies of winin' play an integral role in the formation of Trini/Caribbean identity politics, especially with regards to Trini/Caribbeans claiming their right to full citizenship (i.e., their right to be *here*, in *foreign* places, or rather in places that recognize or present their winin' bodies as in but not of that nation.)

RE-PRESENTING THE TRINI/CARIBBEAN ROLLING "IT"

In using quotes to set "it"[19] apart in potentially ambiguous syntactic settings where the word *it* would commonly function as a pronoun, I playfully envisage the "it" as a common noun with multifaceted connotations. At the visceral level, the material, physical, corpo**real**[20] "it" is composed of the major hip bones—which are the anterior pubis bones, the lateral ilia, and the posterior ischia—the sacrum and coccyx bones (the lower back), as well as the head of the femurs (the thigh bone). The sacral part of the back articulates with the right and left ilia, forming the sacroiliac joints. The balls of the femurs articulate with the hip sockets, forming the lateral hip joints. These joints are then set into motion by twenty-three different muscles, including the three glutei muscles (i.e., the butt muscles), the inner and outer abdominal muscles, and the lower back extensor muscles.[21] Nestled neatly within the boney and muscular configuration of the pelvis are a rather complex sensory/nervous system, the pelvic floor muscles (commonly referred to as the kegel muscles), and organs such as the lower colon and rectum, the bladder, and the prostate or uterus, which also extend outward to the exterior genitals.[22]

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[19] Joseph Roach also utilizes the pronoun *It* to describe the "a certain quality, easy to perceive but hard to define, possessed by abnormally interesting people." In other words, according to Roach, some people have *It* and others do not. See: Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 1, accessed August 13, 2015, ProQuest ebrary. However, unlike Roach's definition, my use of "it" is both corporeal and figurative. Everyone possesses an "it" and everyone's "it" plays a dynamic role in how they are then positioned in relation to power.

[20] When written as such, "corpo**real**," I am especially hinting to the realness, the materialness of the body itself.

[21] Karen S. Clippinger, *Dance anatomy and Kinesiology* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2007), 174-6.

[22] Wesley Norman, PhD, DSc, "Pelvis," *The Anatomy Lesson*, copyrighted 1999, www.wesnorman.com/pelvis.htm.

Plainly put, the "it" indicates a major point of intersection within the body, denoting both points of entry and expulsion. As the body's "half-way" point, the "it" bears the weight of everything found above it whilst providing enough strength and stability (both hormonally and musculoskeletally) to keep the entire body balanced and able to move through space. Without our "its," it would be impossible to dance, let alone sit, stand, walk, run, bend down, pass gas, urinate, defecate, orgasm, and procreate. We are conceived because of copulating "its," then birthed through an "it," and soon thereafter, we are marked and identified because of our "its" (i.e., boy "its" versus girl "its"). Yet and still, in spite of the ubiquity of "it"—in that every human is imagined as having an "it" as part of their bodily composition—how we come to know and relate to our particular "its" remains organized by the uneven politics of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationhood, which are further complicated by the personal discourses, traditions, and histories that circumscribe each winer's particular writhing "it."[23]

In *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault reminds us that it is through our identified biological sex, which I term here the "it"—"an imaginary point determined by the deployment of sexuality—that each individual has to pass in order to have access to

[23] From the Cuban rumba to Middle Eastern belly dancing, daggering in the dancehalls of Jamaica, and winin' down the streets for Carnival, as well as twerking or grinding in the hip-hop clubs of New Orleans or NYC, people have etched-out profound spaces within the social fabrics of many societies and cultures for the sake of rolling their "its". The rolling "it" has surfaced in Brasil—via social dances such as *lundú*, *samba*, *maxixe*—as well as in Colombia, through the folkloric and social interpretations of *la cumbia*. Moreover, the rolling "it" can be found in Hawaii (e.g., hula dancing) and in the many East Indian dances that continue to be featured in Bollywood films. By no means are these lists extensive, far from it in actuality, but my point here is that the Caribbean rolling "it" always already remains in conversation with other rolling "its," especially as winin' bodies navigate their way within, throughout, and betwixt cosmopolitan spaces such as the Trinidad and US.

his own intelligibility […] to the whole of his body […] to his identity."[24] Within Western societies, our "its" are used to mark our bodies as either male or female, and, thus, our sexed "its" become the determinants for hetero-normative gender socialization (i.e., male = masculine and female = feminine). In essence, our "its" have come to represent an important socio-political locus of the body, whereby the "it" acts as the subject's premier point of entry into simultaneous recognition or misrecognition, as well as simultaneous legitimization or delegitimization.

Keeping such politics at the forefront, the matter of whether the rolling "it" maintains the potential to *un*mark the discursive markings that are always already attached to the stilted "it" now comes into play. I am careful to use the prefix *"un"* because I believe that the moving body is doing something that the stilted body cannot. In effect, the moving body is *un*doing the static nature of racial and gender identity markers. It is *un*raveling the narrowed, limiting, discourses ascribed to stilted bodies, as well as *un*tying pretty bows and resituating the stilted body within contexts that are perhaps more particular to the subject's own imagined personhood, or, as I like to call it, their state of ME*ness*. I purposefully examine the work associated with "*un*" throughout my dissertation in order to attend to the ways in which the act of winin' itself allows winers to resist the oppressive, macropolitical markings of race, gender, and sexuality seared into the stilted black body.

In so doing, the wine's ability to *un*mark or *un*tangle "Othered" bodies from the stereotypes ascribed to moving, as opposed to stilted, bodies must also come under the

[24] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction Vol. 1* (New York: Vintage Books of Random House, Inc., 1978), 155-6.

microscope—especially with regards to black bodies, which are often imagined, represented, stereotyped, and naturalized as "dancing bodies." Drawing from Jane Desmond's definition of performance, my dissertation recognizes the actively rolling "it" as

> […] a primary not secondary social "text"—complex, polysemous, always already meaningful, yet continuously changing. Its articulation signals group affiliation and group differences, whether consciously performed or not. Movement serves as a marker for the production of gender, racial, ethnic, class, and national identities. It can also be read as a signal of sexual identity, age, and illness or health, as well as various other types of distinctions/descriptions that are applied to individuals or groups, such as "sexy," ["black," or "exotic"].[25]

From this framing, a deeper research question now bubbles up to the surface: How then does the wine actually work to destabilize or *un*tangle the stigmatic mores and histories that relegate Trini/Caribbean winin' bodies to the debased realm of low-art, primitivism, savagery, and hypersexuality, especially when regarding the historical pathologizing of dancing Afro-bodies and their rolling "its" within the West? Or more specifically, how do the 'bodily writings'[26] of Trini/Caribbean winin' bodies contest or affirm the discursive constructs of transnationality, class, race, gender, and sexuality within US contexts? Remembering that the gyrating "it" is always already a marker of black femininity and hypersexuality, the work associated with "*un*" remains wrought with ambiguity, compliance, and subversion. In other words, moving, dancing, winin' bodies must

[25] Jane C. Desmond ed., "Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies," in *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 31.

[26] Here I am referencing Susan Foster postulations on the body as "a bodily writing," whose actions, or lack there of, are derived from specific histories and traditions that perpetually work to construct corporeal meaning. Susan Foster ed., "Choreographing History," *Choreographing History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 3.

continually negotiate what they represent and how they are represented with every roll of their "its," which means that no universal resolution to this dilemma can ever be fully actualized. Given the heaviness of this particular point of inquiry, I give particular attention to the work associated with "*un*" throughout my entire dissertation.

AND NOW INTRODUCING THE WININ' FATALE AND HER FATALISTIC "IT"

Before we can get-down with the "it" and wine, it is important that I present the 'problem' with which my research seeks to engage. In probing the fatalistic discourses associated with tango, Marta Savigliano states, "Tango often evokes fatal men and women caught in a somewhat dangerous dance, where obscure desires (forbidden liaisons, provocation, transgression, betrayal, revenge, and jealousy) become spectacularly stylized."[27] Similarly, winin's association with sexual play leaves especially the female winer vulnerable to depictions of fatalism, nihilism, and ultimate tragedy (e.g., beliefs that skilled female winers are prone to prostitution, out-of-wedlock motherhood, or sexual violence). In her article, "Body Talk," Caribbeanist Natasha Barnes asks, "Given the politics of voyeurism and fetishism that frequently accompany the representation of black bodies, can a resistive praxis emanate from the spectacle of women masqueraders gyrating in full view of television cameras?"[28] Her attempt to grapple with the "fetishizing" problematics that circumscribe the "prevalence of gyrating female bodies"

[27] Marta E. Savigliano, *Angora Matta: Fatal Acts of North-South Translation* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 166.

[28] Natasha Barnes, "Body Talk: Notes on Women and Spectacle in Contemporary Trinidad Carnival," *Small Axe 7* (March 2000): 93.

in today's Carnival[29] also overlaps with Caribbeanist Kevin Frank's agenda in his article "Female Agency and Oppression in Caribbean Bacchanalian Culture." In that article, he first points to the "nihilistic" vulnerabilities that haunt the female winer with his declaration, "One does not need to look too hard into the minutiae of Caribbean social practices to find" sites—spotlighting Carnival and Dancehall—that are "replete with nihilistic scenes of unabashed thrill-seeking, risk-taking sexual displays and competing gender politics."[30] Later, he insists, the

> […] incessant fetishization of women in dancehall and other performance spaces [within the Caribbean] necessitates a reexamination of such optimism [read: liberation from or subversion of oppressive politics]. Are these female sexual performances potentially liberating? Equally important, is there a meaningful difference between that potential and actuality? I contend that, indeed, there is a difference.[31]

Both Barnes' and Frank's lines of inquiries underscore winin' women's problematic access to agency within the realms of the Jamaican Dancehall and the Trinidadian Carnival. Tellingly, their interrogation of whether winin' women can actually liberate themselves from misogynistic agendas and voyeuristic power relations goes straight to the heart of the winer's dilemma.

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[29] Barnes notes on the feminization of Carnival: "Historians of the costuming of Carnival have noted […] the systematic paring down of an elaborate thematically inspired costume tradition that has given way to 'Rio-styled' Carnival pageantry in which spandex and string bikinis dominate. The advent of these 'skin bands', as they are known in popular Trinidad parlance, in the eighties has shifted the aesthetic and demographic landscape of Carnival [so much so …] that it precipitated a dramatic rise in the numbers of women of all races and classes participating in Carnival." Ibid., 95-6.

[30] Kevin Frank, "Female Agency and Oppression in Caribbean Bacchanalian Culture: Soca, Carnival, and Dancehall," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1/2 (2007): 172.

[31] Ibid., 173.

Unlike Barnes, Frank maintains that the "dominant message emanating from the music and performances of dancehall spaces paradoxically contests the potential of female sexual power and attempts to reassert a macho, paternalistic, disciplining, oppressive attitude toward women and women's sexuality."[32] However, in so doing, he inherently positions winin' women as the femme fatales of the Caribbean Sea, who only seemingly "perform self-control, but [whose] sexual displays remain lacking in real power."[33] According to his argument, the "macho, paternalistic, disciplining, oppressive" attitude "ultimately overrides whatever potential exists in the style and stylized exhibitions of female sexuality inside and outside dancehalls,"[34] to which he later includes the winin' that occurs during Carnival in relation to soca music itself. In proclaiming that winin' women remain embedded in heteropatriarchal structures that constantly work to co-opt their bodies for voyeuristic and pornographic pleasure, Frank concludes that "the inflexible position of male power associated with Caribbean female sexual performances renders such acts [like winin'] exploitative, almost pornographic."[35]

However, in further alignment with Savigliano's approach to deciphering milongueras' danced decisions in the tango, I argue that winin' women should be recognized outside the realm of pornography as "smart risk-takers," who are also the

[32] Ibid., 176.

[33] Ibid., 188.

[34] Ibid., 176.

[35] Ibid., 174.

masters of their "own body's seductive dancing powers,"[36] rather than as winin' fatales. In her famed essay "The Uses of the Erotic," Audre Lorde warns that there "are frequent attempts to equate pornography and eroticism, two diametrically opposed uses of the sexual."[37] She later continues, "it has become fashionable to separate the spiritual (psychic and emotional) from the political, to see them as contradictory or antithetical […] the same way we have attempted to separate the spiritual and the erotic, thereby reducing the spiritual to a world of flattened affect, a world of the ascetic who aspires to feel nothing."[38] Because women's passion for *winin' dong di streets fuh Ca'nival*[39] could further be interpreted as "a dangerous addiction that entails putting at risk, again and again, the quality of [their] everyday femaleness,"[40] my dissertation lays bare both the silenced residues that haunt the winin' bodies of today's Trini/Caribbean revelers, as well as the complex relationships modern-day winers maintain with notions of pride, shame, and their own rolling "its."

Although the perspective of Frank does drive important research that deals with the ways female winers are represented in musical lyrics or trapped within discursive power structures, such scholarship concurrently works to marginalize the kinetic and performative importance of the winin' body itself. In other words, it positions the winin'

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[36] Savigliano, *Angora Matta*, 188.

[37] Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984), 55-6.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Translation: winin' down the streets of Carnival

[40] Savigliano, *Angora Matta*, 189.

body solely as a carrier of meaning rather than a maker of meaning. Correspondingly, such arguments refrain from problematizing the male gaze itself, which I am arguing is some of the work done by the winery of Trini/Caribbean women. Frank's failure to acknowledge the intimately discursive and physical work that is being enacted by and through these winers invisibilizes the importance of the corpo**real** winer and the various ways they negotiate their intimate relationships to heteropatriarchal systems of power. Additionally, his focus on the heteronormative, masculine point of view, diminishes both the winer's bodily work—specifically that of female winers—and the mundane spaces and narratives that inform winers' danced-decisions. From popular culture to scholastic endeavors, this positioning further assumes that all males inherently occupy the position of power and authority, which then absolves men from being held accountable for their *mis*readings of winin' women as well as their own sexualized displays and winery. Consequently, the work of the male winer remains invisibilized and un-problematized.[41]

With that said, Frank's postulations do call attention to the undeniable link between the Trini/Caribbean subjects who roll their "its," the irresolvable 'problem' of the black dancing female body, and her over-determination as vulgar, shameful, and excessive. It is along these transgressive limits that the seemingly nihilistic *tales/tails* of

[41] This is not something I directly address in my dissertation, but much can be learned from men's participation in acts of winin'. For example, whenever winin' with a woman, many of my Trini and Bajan male informants would always respond to her lead, especially with regards to speed and rhythm. In fact, they also told me that the woman is supposed to initiate their dancing together. Furthermore, they would touch her only if the woman blatantly signaled that she wanted to be touched, whether it be with their "its" or with their hands. One informant stated, "*Yuh just hafta risk it. If she gih yuh a bligh, den yuh get tru. But if not, yuh go just hafta hold dat burn*." Translation: You just have to risk it. If she gives you a chance, then you win. But if not, then you'll just have to deal with the embarrassment or the hurt. Osiris Senghor (Trinidadian masquerader and friend) in casual conversation with author via Skype, August 19, 2013.

the winin' fatale are forged. Rather, to be more specific, the historical triangulation of the "it," the black (or Africanized[42]) female body, and traditions of violence and shame within the Global North have confined the winin' female subject to the pained histories of and against African bodies in the New World. As Linden Lewis contends, "different, conflicting and contradictory notions of European masculinity and femininity … [have been] imposed—though not without resistance—upon the peoples of the [Caribbean] region."[43] What results is over 500 years' worth of social construction that works to colonize the winin' Trini/Caribbean "it" within a complex interlocking system of racialization, sexualization, and genderization, which then gets played out both globally and locally. Because of the colonizing gaze, the visible "it" (read: hips and butt) and the invisible "it" (read: genitals) are always already working to render the winin' Trini/Caribbean (female) body as incapable of escaping "*being* a bodily mark"[44] of shame and hypersexuality.

For instance, throughout the Global North, the corporeal "it" tends to act as a metonym for the debased positioning of winin' bodies. As a bodily mark, the winin'

[42] Although today's winers come from a variety of backgrounds and heritages, I must also recognize the performative ways winin' "it" links winers to narratives of Africa, especially because of the profound ways in which African cultures and slave legacies continue to pervade much of Caribbean history and popular culture. In turn, the term "Africanized" calls attention to the ways in which the act of winin' re-presents the body as performing (an imagined kind of) African*ness*.

[43] Linden Lewis, ed., "Exploring the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and Culture in the Caribbean: An Introduction," in *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in The Caribbean* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003), 2.

[44] Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 21 and 25. Here, I am influenced by Robyn Wiegman's argument on the visual economies of blackness. Wiegman proclaims, "To mark the body is not the same as *being* a bodily mark" (25). In other words, as a bodily mark one remains pre-scripted by racial and gender expectations and trapped within the visual economy of race and sex/gender, which enable others to ascertain one's "rightful" place in a racial and gendered chain of being (21).

Caribbean (female) body becomes both a site and citation of the violence, shame, and sexual abuse used to induct the winin' "it" into the political economies of colonialism and Imperialism. These colonizing fantasies set into motion by the racist technologies of the colonial era remain the primary registers through which winin' Caribbean bodies remain both legitimized and illegitimated (e.g., marked as fatalistic, vulgar, or shameful). Effectively, the ways in which the black fleshy "it" has been used to construct winin' Caribbean bodies as *slack* and potentially fatalistic is always already a discussion about institutions of power—including slavery, Western medicine, psychology, law, and popular media.[45] Therefore, in an attempt to both conceptualize and historicize the controversial attachment of blackness (Africanization), feminization, and hyper-sexualization to the Caribbean "it," I painfully underscore the violent strategies used to colonize the dancing African body in my first chapter.

It is important to remember that the gendering and sexualizing of winin' Caribbean bodies are deeply indexed by a "history and culture of domination."[46] As a result, when it comes to visual representations of the black female subject, sexual aberrance always makes it into the narrative or trope. In her book *Troubling Vision*, Nicole Fleetwood explains, "Within classic [read: white supremacist] visual narratives and historical discourse, whether rendered asexual in the figure of the mammy, ambivalent or sexually submerged as in the trope of the passing woman, or bestial as in the representations of the Jezebel, black women are produced through visual signs as in

[45] Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[46] Lewis, ed., "Exploring the Intersections," 4.

excess of the idealized white femininity."[47] These tropes of blackness gain such currency that, as they are trafficked across cultural boundaries, the active, dancing, corpo**real** winer gets discursively trapped inside the stilting imago[48] of the winin' fatale. Barnes however, reminds us, "But while these theories explain the limits of women's empowerment within capitalist appropriation, they do not speak to the transgressive potential of the performance itself. Live performance […] has transformative capabilities that can exist independent of capitalist reproduction and co-option when experienced in live encounters."[49] As an avid winin' dance scholar, I am capable of both recognizing and analyzing the work of winin'. In turn, I contend that there is subversive potential for women to be found in the act of winin'. To wine is to push against the limits of winin' and its assumed fatalism. In turn, like the act of winin' itself, my dissertation embraces these seemingly "fatalistic" dilemmas by remaining open to the layered ways winers express and understand themselves both with in and with out the "fraying" spaces of their revelry. It is at this piercing point that I intervene into the present scholarship that engages with winin' *tales/tails*.

[47] Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) 110-1.

[48] Ibid., 23-4. According to Fleetwood's logic, an imago is the disembodied body, replaced by an image.

[49] Barnes, "Body Talk," 97.

WININ' ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Due to the overlapping complexities of winers' subjectivities, my theoretical and research frameworks must cross disciplines and fields, explicitly those of (Post-)Colonial Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Caribbean Studies (which further includes critical discussions on blackness, ethnicity, and transnationality), and Critical Dance Studies. Through ethnography (participant-observation and open interviews) and auto-ethnography (personal memories and self-reflection), historical analysis, dance and movement analysis, and digital ethnography (analysis of social media and popular culture), I trace a love/hate genealogy of the wine and how it has changed through time by problematizing the power structures that circumscribe winin' Trini/Caribbean bodies.

Rooted in the frame of Critical Dance Studies, my research begins its journey within the precedent set by renowned dance scholar Brenda Dixon-Gottschild in her "third installment" of her "exploration/excavation of Africanist presences in performance," entitled *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool*.[50] By revealing the narrative of blackness "as a geography of the body itself," Dixon-Gottschild boldly unravels the complexities of theorizing race through the corporeal materiality of the black dancing body.[51] I too grapple with the values attached to the corpo**real** winin' Trini/Caribbean "it" whilst attempting to decipher the rolling "its'" associations with nationality, gender, sexuality, age, class, and race. Additionally, I employ Melissa Blanco-Borelli's "theory of hip(g)nosis," which exposes the "contours of the hip as a site

[50] Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xiii.

[51] Ibid.

of cultural production, produced and deployed by historically racialized mulatta bodies in their negotiation of 'blackness,' 'whiteness,' the political economy of pleasure, and becoming."[52] Building upon her framework, I reveal the use of winin' "it" as a strategy for *un*mooring bodies from their sexual, gendered, and raced mis-understandings. In the end, Blanco-Borelli's and Dixon-Gottschild's works support my endeavors to lay bare the corporeal methods through which, with which, and in which winin' bodies transmit representations of a particular Caribbean*ness*.

I also engage with Caribbeannist Mimi Sheller's theoretical approach to visibilizing the realm of the vulgar as a tool for erotic agency. In her book *Citizenship from Below*, Sheller argues that it is important to "interrogate how subaltern subjects who are barred from political personhood (and how illegitimate or 'vulgar' topics such as sexuality) are made present within academic, legal, and other official discourses [...]."[53] Using this positioning as an important strategy for conceptualizing resistance and freedom within the Caribbean, I further locate the work of the rolling "it" within what Sheller calls "citizenship from below." She elucidates that the space of

> "below" resonates in many ways, whether as a political or social position, as a distinction between regions of the body and their functions, as a spatial metaphor for larger geographical regions, or as a particular kind of low vibration, bodily movement, or subconscious thought. To think about what is below also means to

[52] Melissa Blanco-Borelli, "A Taste of Honey: Choreographing Mulatta in the Hollywood Dance Film," *The International Journal of Performing Arts and Digital Media* 5, no. 2-3 (2009): 142.

[53] Mimi Sheller, *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), Kindle edition, Location 292.

> interrogate the spatializations of power that maintain and make material such as high—low distinctions and social judgments in the first place [...].[54]

Following her lead, my dissertation underscores the rolling "its"' attachment to embodied freedom and agency, which further allows me to reveal the complex performative modes and emotive aspects of *being* Trini/Caribbean within the US, which I define in chapter two as "Carib[*being*]ness."[55]

Within the US, the Diasporic Trini/Caribbean winer continually struggles to find ways to perform a mode of Carib[*being*]ness that is *not-so*-African-American Black or *not-so*-East-Indian, for example. Hence, in calling attention to the blurring and complex imbrications of the Africanized histories that linger within every wiggle and jiggle of the Trini/Caribbean rolling "it," I further situate my research within the ever-evolving polylogue of what Paul Gilroy has termed the black Atlantic. Gilroy argues that "Afro-diasporic cultures in the Americas are [more than just] culturally interrelated; they in fact form a black Atlantic system that links African-derived cultures from the West Indies, the Americas, Great Britain, and Europe, not to mention Africa itself, in a developing polylogue."[56] Moreover, especially concerning the colonial histories of the Caribbean, it

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[54] Ibid., Location 752.

[55] Throughout my dissertation I use the portmanteau "Carib[*being*]" (Caribbean + being) to express the performativity of feeling and being Caribbean in foreign places. Although I did not "invent" the term—caribBEING is a NYC based "boutique non-profit organization whose mission is to build community through the lens of Caribbean cinema, culture and art"—I use the term to reveal the labor of winin', which I am arguing is a performative strategy for accessing feelings of *being* Caribbean. (See: http://www.caribbeing.com)

[56] Quoted in A. Krims, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Vol. 5) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153.

is important to note that this developing polylogue extends into the Middle East and Asia as well.[57]

Therefore, as a Diasporic body that toggles between multiple constructions of race and citizenship,[58] the winin' subject, to use Anthony Appiah's terminology, can also be distinguished as a rooted-cosmopolitan. According to Appiah, the rooted-cosmopolitan "can entertain the possibility of a world in which *everyone* is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people."[59] Within these frameworks, my research engages with the multiple ways Trini/Caribbean winers use their winery as tools for grappling with the imbricated processes by which their own writhing bodies are scripted and re-scripted every time they cross cultural borders. This is especially made apparent in chapters three and four.

In staying attentive to these layered complexities, I further define my dissertation as a feminist project. Specifically, my research endeavors are in response to Joan Morgan's demanding call to push black feminist theorists into uncomfortable territory. Her aim is to promote the development of both useful and nuanced theorizations of "black women's engagements with pleasure—the complex, messy, sticky, and even

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[57] Antonio Benítez-Rojo reminds us, because the Plantation demanded it, the Africanization, Asianization, and Europeanization of Caribbean culture occured. Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 72.

[58] Stuart Hall reminds us, "The Caribbean is the first, the original and the purest diaspora." Although many have disputed Hall's argument, my point here is that the Caribbean citizenry always already maintains blood ties to other nations as well, including Europe, Asia, and Africa. Stuart Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities," *New Left Review* 209 (1995): 6.

[59] Anthony Kwame Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1997): 618, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344038.

joyous negotiations of agency and desire that are irrevocably twinned with our pain."[60] In accordance, my dissertation remains attentive to the pleasurable ways in which winin' contributes to a playful construction of gender and racial identity. Additionally, I utilize Kamala Visweswaran's definition of a feminist ethnography in order to maintain a critical lens on how winers' identities "are multiple, contradictory, partial, and strategic."[61] The vacillating ways winers position themselves as they navigate structures of power with every roll of their "its," therefore, remain in the foreground.

Visweswaran also counsels, "An analysis of positioning is key to understanding how feminist ethnographers theorize."[62] Due to my own slippery positionality as a Trinidad-born, US-raised, Afro-female, winin' scholar, throughout my dissertation I am able to remain quite cognizant of the intimate and complex negotiations made when one wines within the Diaspora. Visweswaran asserts that this "feminist way of knowing sees the process of positioning itself as an epistemological act."[63] At best, I tend to uphold a system of cultural beliefs and traditions that are at once Trinidadian and American and yet *not-so* Trinidadian nor American. As such, my ethnographic researching and writings remain rooted within my own peculiar positioning. For it is my own complex positioning that affords me access to the information and experiences that especially require an

[60] Joan Morgan, "Why We Get Off: Moving Towards a Black Feminist Politics of Pleasure," *The Black Scholar* 45, no. 4, (2015): 36.

[61] Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 50.

[62] Ibid., 38.

[63] Ibid., 48.

intimate and corporeal awareness of the ways in which winin' mediates power and identity within and between private and public spaces. In other words, if I were gendered or raced differently, born and/or raised in a different country, older or younger than my current age, married as opposed to single, unable to wine, richer or poorer, or more or less aesthetically pleasing to the eyes, the ethnographic information that I would have received, and thus have access to, could have drastically been different. Or, at the very least, the ways in which I accessed information from my ethnographic encounters would have critically changed.

Take, for example, Daniel Miller's discussion on the winin' that occurred during the 1988 Trinidadian Carnival. His analytic interpretations of winin' call attention to the empirical fact that he did not participate in the winery that he theorized on for this particular article. As an avid winer at soca fetes and Carnival, I could easily recognize his distance from the mundane relationships that informed the danced decisions his winin' informants made. Miller himself confessed that his informants "did not provide an interpretation along the lines of the abstract discourse" he laid out in his article.[64] He elaborated,

> For those women amongst my informants whose lifestyles would be associated with Bacchanal, this interpretation was received with complete incomprehension. Such women certainly enjoyed wining at fêtes[65] and almost every other occasion, and they saw Carnival as of central importance to their lives. In

[64] Daniel Miller, "Absolute Freedom in Trinidad," *Man, New Series* 4, no. 2 (1991): 339.

[65] French spelling of the Trini-creole term fete.

> response to my questioning they continually stressed that to understand them one would have to see them at Carnival.[66]

It is unclear how Miller was using the term bacchanal in his article; even though many of Trinidad's social norms have changed since 1988, bacchanal, like the word wine, has many meanings and connotations. The Trini-Creole use of the word can either describe vigorous winin', general commotions, wild parties, or fights between friends, neighbors, and family; it can also be used in a playful sense to describe winin' scenes that are often associated with Carnival revelry. In fact, a common goal during Carnival is to "make a bacchanal in di road."[67] Therefore, if a white male from the UK (i.e., Daniel Miller) came to my country (Trinidad) and told me that I was "associated with Bacchanal," I too would be very confused, if not outright offended, as to what brought him to that conclusion.[68] Moreover, it is important to note that not only did his informants demand that he witness them winin' inside the spaces of Carnival itself, but they also insisted that "as an anthropologist studying mass consumption" the only way he could "come to understand them" was if he too participated in the act of winin' itself.[69] The physical changes, the emotions, and the relationships experienced when one wines can only be forged by engaging in the act itself, especially due to the slippery, amorphous nature of the dance.

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[66] Miller, "Absolute Freedom," 333.

[67] A lyric from Destra Garcia's Soca Hit "Bacchanal," which explains Carnival revelry best, ultimately alluding that bacchanal and winin' can be seen as one in the same.

[68] Whether or not bacchanal is understood as a compliment or an insult also depends on the relationship the involved participants have to each other, to Miller, and to macro-level power structures in general.

[69] Miller, "Absolute Freedom," 340.

Accordingly, my research endeavors remain activated by my own winin' body, which further allows me to elucidate the complex relationships that winers forge with other winin' women and men.

My work is also influenced by Sonjah Stanley-Niaah's scholarship on Jamaican dancehall culture, which centralizes the critical importance of the dances and dancing bodies. She proclaims, "The role of the dance and dancers in the dance halls is paramount […] The portrayal of dancehall as only or mainly a matter of music misses the important role that dance movement plays […]."[70] Accordingly, by underscoring the ways in which the winery of dancehall patrons engages with, as well as challenges, conflicting modes of power, Stanley-Niaah diligently reveals how the performing body continuously makes and remakes itself through performance.[71] In parallel, I also take on Maude Dikobe's challenge to situate the active, corpo**real** winin' body within local discourses. Focusing on winin' female soca artists from Barbados and Trinidad, Dikobe propounds that in order to keep visible the vital ways in which these women "are challenging traditional forms of repression, be it racial, gender, or otherwise," we must "tilt the lens to focus on what [these] women are saying in their lyrics, and the dance movements they use to deliver those lyrics on stage." In doing so, "we gain a more accurate picture of the sex

[70] Sonjah Stanley-Niaah, *Dancehall: From Slave Ship to Ghetto* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 123-4.

[71] Sonjah Stanley-Niaah, "Making space: Kingston's Dancehall Culture and its Philosophy of 'Boundarylessness'" *African Identities* 2, no. 2 (2004): 120-1.

and power interactions at play in the act of wining."[72] Similar to Stanley-Niaah, Dikobe asserts that female soca artists embody agency through their winery. Ultimately, both Dikobe's and Stanley-Niaah's scholarship on winin' Caribbean bodies offers an important platform that critically informs my own research and scholarship. In particular, I utilize their theoretical approaches to analyzing Caribbean dancing bodies in order to satisfy my inquest as to why and for whom is the wine controversial, at what cost, and in which contexts.

Lastly, I heed Sarah-Beth Wright's counsel in her analysis of the informal recording that takes place in Jamaican dancehall venues, which she terms "docu-videos." She advises, "Instead of triggering further assumptions of black hypersexuality and perpetual sexual availability, it is important that we ask what story is being told, where does the story come from and in light of contemporary economic, political and spiritual situations, why is it being told in this way?"[73] Following this framework, I too ask, "Why is *winin' dong di streets ah Ca'nival*[74] so crucial for the reification of Caribbean identities within the US? Does participating in Carnival (already a touristic spectacle) co-opt any intent to *un*mark or destabilize the oppressive markings tied to the rolling "it?" Are winin' Carnival revelers pawning their winin' bodies off to commodification and fetishization in exchange for taking up *foreign* space and making themselves visible? Lastly, what is at

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[72] Maude Dikobe, "Bottom in de Road: Gender and Sexuality in Calypso," *PROUDFLESH: A New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness* 3 (2004), http://www.africaresource.com/proudflesh/issue3/dikobe.htm.

[73] Beth-Sarah Wright, "Speaking the Unspeakable: Politics of the Vagina, Memory and Dance in Dancehall Docu-Videos," *Discourses in Dance* 2, no. 2 (2004): 57.

[74] Literal translation: Winin' down the streets of Carnival.

stake in using one's winery to *get on bad* and *misbehave on di streets ah Ca'nival*, and for whom? In particular, given the multiple layers of racism and heteropatriarchy that prescribe how winin' bodies are received and perceived within the US, in what ways are the winin' Carnival revelry meaningful to both Trini/Caribbean women and men?

By framing my research around such questions, I insist on making visible the intimate and complex lines of connectivity between spectacular and mundane spaces, which not only allows for a different perspective, but this underlying inquiry makes necessary a shift in the terms of current debates on how Caribbean bodies occupy contested spaces of oppression and liberation. My dissertation thus foregrounds winin' subjects' desire to breathe, to slip in and out of categorizing spaces, to destabilize the fixations of the colonizing, nationalizing, and globalizing (i.e., touristic) gazes, and to uphold the wine as a strategic tool for asserting their identities and claiming space. In turn, underscoring these processes highlights the power differentials that constitute our winin' subjectivities vis-à-vis other winers and non-winers. Ultimately, using an interdisciplinary approach, I argue that winin' offers an important lens through which we can better decipher the 'problem' of the black feminized dancing body (a.k.a., the winin' fatale) within the Caribbean Diaspora.

CHOREOGRAPHING PLAYFUL METHODOLOGIES AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

Overall, my dissertation engages with identity politics at the point where globalizing flows of capital intersect with Trini/Caribbean nationalisms and sexualities, which then crystallize winin' bodies, pressuring to re-make and fit them into symbolic

orders and institutions. Within this intimate space, bodies are further dismembered, claimed, and then re-claimed, whilst their entanglements in racialized, gendered, and classed politics of labor and pleasure unravel within the hegemonic global order. Winers' identities are forced to manifest at the very intersection of these contentious spaces and complex processes. Because these multiple constructions of femininity, masculinity, and power must remain visible, I begin my dissertation by scrutinizing the long history of marking Caribbean dancing bodies as exotic, hyper-sexual, feminine, low-classed, and black (Africanized), as well as by foregrounding some of the culturally forgotten and quietly dismissed genealogies that have engendered the empowering, yet controversial, discourses about the wine. I use my second chapter to provide tools for my reader to translate the spectacular and mundane performances of Trini/Caribbean winers. Specifically, I call attention to the sexualized trappings, cultural border crossings, and (trans-)national negotiations that winers must mediate in order to embody a sense of Carib[*being*]ness, whether it be because of, during, or in spite of the Trini-styled Carnival. Thereafter, using feminist ethnography, I highlight the ways in which winin' occupies public spaces within the US. In particular, chapter three focuses on the 2011 Labor Day Carnival in Brooklyn, New York as to bring attention to the ways in which black winin' revelers resist the colonizing discourses of savagery and hypersexuality that threaten to stifle their access to pleasure. Lastly, my fourth chapter is an analysis of a winin' performance by Barbados-born, US-groomed, pop-star Rihanna. Using her as an example, I work to unveil the invisibilized ways her winery resists discourses of fatalism, as well

as consider the controversial ways that Trini/Caribbean winers in general are received and perceived through social media sites like YouTube.

As I hope is now evident, my research invites, indeed demands, entry into the intimate world of the Trini/Caribbean winin' "its," especially with regards to corporeal memories of subversion, resistance, violence, love, eroticism, and spirituality. The rolling "it" occupies a slippery space that is always morphing, especially in the way it is both used and understood. In order to attend to this slipperiness, I rely heavily on María Lugones' call for playful "world"-traveling.[75] In her book *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes*, Lugones offers a crucial framework for researching and translating experiences that exist within the slippery outskirts of heteronormative Western narratives. She urges scholars to remain "mindful to the tensions, desires, closures, cracks, and openings that make up the social."[76] Lugones insists that the "question of inter- and intra-world communication" remain "central to [her] book and to the introduction of the notion of a world."[77] In my voyage to translate the wine into theory, I will travel "across 'worlds' as partly constitutive of cross-cultural and cross-racial loving"[78]—which is not to be confused with an arrogant perception of love, where "love is consistent with abuse."[79] In effect, each

[75] María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 77-100.

[76] Ibid., 5.

[77] Ibid., 26.

[78] Ibid., 78.

[79] Ibid., 81. Lugones beckons that we remain aware of the power differentials that exist between people as to avoid misusing loving emotions to further exploit and thus maintain racist, sexist, and misogynistic practices.

time I enter winin' spaces, I find myself invoking the playful trickster from within as a strategy for both theorizing and coping with the rolling "it" and its slippery yet scrupulous ways.

With that said, I must be honest and admit that I encounter immense fear when attempting to translate these spaces into academia, especially "because there is an impending sense of loss: loss of competence and loss of a clear sense of oneself and one's relations to others,"[80] which is why my writing tends to mirror the performative slipperiness of the wine itself, especially with regards to the physical practice of winin'. In continuing to follow Lugones' lead, I maintain a "playful attitude"—which Lugones assures "is a good companion to fear, [for] it keeps one focused on the crossing, on the process of metamorphosis"[81]—when researching the multifarious ways winers relate to their and others' rolling "its." The act of winin' itself requires a very playful attitude; in fact, to wine is to play. Therefore, my ethnographic research and theorizing will remain attuned to the playful slipperiness of winin' as a strategy for conceptualizing how winers move with and against each other, especially within misarticulating, disarticulating, and rearticulating networks of power. Playfulness, therefore, promises a useful method for grappling with the uncomfortable, intimate, and tabooed spaces of shame and love. Additionally, it works towards: 1. extrapolating the ways in which winers attempt to gain access to agency, subvert oppressive structures, and possibly attain liberation, 2. making space to engage with these quarrelsome points of views, 3. rendering audible voices of

[80] Ibid., *27*.

[81] Ibid.

hurt winer women who refuse to be labeled as a mere winin' fatales, and 4. maintaining the teasingly playful, yet provocative, trickster-like energy of the wine, an energy that also falls in line with the *picong* mindset that is sewn into the most intimate fibers of the Trini-styled Carnival.

Although, as Lugones maintains, such shifting is needed in order to understand these "worlds," this act of "world"-traveling may feel schizophrenic. Her intentions, however, are to capture the at once plurality and oneness of the "self," which then manifests as "an ambiguous being"[82] through memories of one's own "self" within these particular worlds. Such schizophrenia becomes particularly useful in my final chapter, on the winery of Rihanna. Lugones' understanding of "self" remains full of contention, full of tension, full of multiplicity, and full of apparent contradictions, which mirrors the polyvalence of the wine itself. Her approach allows for playful investigations of my own "self" in relation to other "selves" in the world, and of the winin' "self" in relation to power and to how other "worlds" construct the winin' "self." In a conscientious attempt to unveil the multiple modalities of the winin' Trini/Caribbean "it" holistically, my dissertation keeps visible these various interlocking, and at times clashing, worlds that winers inhabit, especially along the blurring the borders of US←→Carib[*being*]ness. This multi-layered approach to grappling with winin' and winers sketches a trans-textual process for understanding Carib[*being*]ness whilst keeping alive the disparate voices, contentious spaces, and dissonant temporalities that bubble-up in my research.

[82] Ibid., 92.

My goal here is to maintain the ability to recognize the agency exercised by winin' subjects not as something that is singular, but as something seeping in and out of plurality and relationality. Throughout my dissertation, I present these winin' identities as both liminal and pluralistic, as something constantly being negotiated through the relationality they maintain with the socio-political world. Their identities, or rather our identities, are located, staged, and performed through the distinct relationships maintained between the global space, other rolling "its," and Trini/Caribbean winin' subjects. I work tirelessly to remain present to the overlapping discourses of intimacy (e.g., familial, platonic, and romantic love), gender (e.g., winin' like a *gyal*), race (e.g., winin' like an African[83]), and cultural identity (e.g., representing your nation at Trini-styled Carnivals). It is here, within these overlapping layers, that the ethnographic skills of "streetwalking" and "hanging out" then come into play.[84]

Lugones explains that the practice of hanging out and streetwalking is "compatible with developing a rather large sense of the terrain and its social intricacies. Hanging out permits one to learn, to listen, to transmit information, to participate in communicative creations, to gauge possibilities, to have a sense of the directions of intentionality, to gain social depth."[85] Hanging out and streetwalking, therefore, are vital to my research and data collection. What people shared and revealed as we limed, fetted, dressed, made costumes, and *jumped-up* in bands together—some of the ways I

[83] Trinbagonians commonly use the terms "African" or "Negro" to mean "black" person.

[84] María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes,* 207-37.

[85] Ibid., 209.

"streetwalked" and "hung out" with my informants—ended up being much more informative and useful than the formal interviews I conducted. In fact, because hanging out and streetwalking proved to be most effective for accessing information on the ways winin' mediates intimate and mundane spaces and relations, I only ended up conducting seven interviews: one with a *mas'* designer, one with a DJ, one with a promoter (who later became the chair of the Hollywood Carnival Committee), and four with important members of the Caribbean community (note: only one of these four lived in NYC; the others were members of the LA community). As my ethnography progressed, what I learned about winin's complexity through limin' and fettin' always remained attached to and informed by intimate relationships and private back-stories, which were often purposefully hidden from me during formal interviews.

Because such researching also revolves around issues of trust, especially with regards to my newer ethnographic relationships, hanging out and streetwalking were the only ways they came to trust me, and I them. Just as I needed to see them in their full complexity, so did they need to see me in mine. They needed to know if they should trust me with their winin' bodies, or if they could trust me with their families or their personal memories (some of which were traumatic). Needless to say, or rather to return to my previously stated argument, because winin' mediated the multiple ways they relate to the world, including their relationship to systems of power within both intimate and public spaces, it was imperative that I was able to travel into their "worlds" without disrupting its multiple logics, or what Visweswaran and Lugones describe as feelings of

"betrayal."[86] Ultimately, it was important that I remain honest about my intentions and alliances, so that they could maintain all sense of agency and decide for themselves how they wanted to interact with me, and vice versa.

It is also important to note that many of my informants are my friends and family; some of us are so close we call each other sisters or cousins. Some of these relationships began long before I even entered graduate school, and others developed because of my dissertation research. Nevertheless, although I identify with many of my outer-national and inner-national Trini/Caribbean family (as informants) and friends (as informants), I further work to distinguish "between moments of gender identification [e.g., women like 'me'] from moments of gender difference or disidentification [e.g., women unlike 'me'] vis-à-vis racial, sexual, or class positioning."[87] Keeping visible the many "threads of culturally tangled identity" that we winers maintain as we wine further visibilizes the ways in which winers manipulate their multiple "strands of identification," such that each strand "may be tugged into the open or stuffed out of sight."[88] These discursive threads illumine my current comprehension of the ways in which winin' can and does occupy spaces of subversion, resistance, violence, voyeurism, spirituality, eroticism, and love—often times simultaneously.

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[86] See Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, 40-59; and María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes,* 209.

[87] Kamala Visweswaran, "Histories of Feminist Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26, (1997): 595-6.

[88] Kirin Narayan, "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?," *American Anthropologist, New Series* 95, no. 3 (1993): 673. Available online at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/679656.

As I translate my experience into academic formalities, I privilege the purposeful ambiguities and intimacies of winers and their winery. Here, I specifically invoke Savigliano's use of performative writing, such as the "choreocriticism" employed in my chapters one, two and three, as a vital tool for reflecting on the polyvalent, transnational politics of winin' culture.[89] In her scholastic endeavors on the tango body, the political economies that construct these bodies, and the ways in which the dancing tango body re-negotiates these constructions, Savigliano's writing often mimics tango *figuras* (movement sequences) to further bring the reader into the intimate world of tango.[90] She also uses the tango opera format in an attempt to both locate herself within the overlapping fields of power (e.g., Western epistemologies) and in the production of a particular knowledge about the Argentine tango.[91] In doing so, she holds herself accountable for the complex positionings that she must occupy as an Argentine ethnographer/tanguera. Like streetwalking, "world"-traveling, and maintaining a playful attitude, my use of performative writing also helps not only to lessen the "impending sense of loss" that Lugones discusses, but it also keeps our eyes open to the bodily work produced by the winin' Trini/Caribbean.

In conclusion, borrowing from Savigliano's agenda in her first book, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, what follows is my attempt "to decolonize myself and

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[89] See Marta E. Savigliano, "Fragments for a Story of Tango Bodies (on Choreocritics and the Memory of Power)," in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power*, ed. by Susan Foster (New York: Routledge, 1996), 199-232.

[90] See Savigliano, *Angora Matta*.

[91] See Savigliano, *Angora Matta*; Savigliano, "Fragments for a Story;" and Marta E. Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1995), 73-137.

thus my readers,"[92] an act I refer to as *un*colonization. Again, I purposefully use the prefix *un-* instead of *de-* before the term colonization, because by definition, it is quite clear that the colonizing webs of power have yet to be dismantled. At best, we, the colonized, have only *un*done certain wrongs and *un*wound certain entanglements of oppression, especially for the sake of providing just enough wriggle room to survive the aftermath of slavery and its Plantocracy. *Un*colonization is the process of decolonizing, such that the act itself exists somewhere between full colonization and complete decolonization. In effect, *un*colonization calls attention to the mundane movements we make towards renegotiating the terms by which we engage with colonizing power structures, especially at the level of the body. It embraces ambiguity and flexibility as necessary strategies for experiencing oneself as a free citizen and a legitimate human. Simply put, *un*colonization is an acknowledgment of the fact that decolonization can never fully be realized within a global system that continually reifies the same power dynamics established during colonialism. As I see it, full decolonization can only be attained if these colonizing power structures are completely dismantled. Writing from this position, I stay committed to showing you, from the winer's point of view, how we winers both construct ourselves and others with every roll our "its." In the end, my dissertation mimics the act of winin' itself—appearing circuitous at times, as well as colloquial, informal, vulnerable, vulgar, playful, and especially intimate—in order to bring you, my reader, into the sinuous world of winin'.

[92] Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, 1.

FROM HOTTENTOT VENUS TO JAMETTES: A HAUNTING MYTHOLOGY OF THE TRINI/CARIBBEAN "IT"

Using myself as an archive, I start—again—with my own winin' body. For if I am to tend to the tedious work of *un*colonization, I must begin with this place—my bodily space—in order to *un*mark the colonizing stigmas I wear upon my skin, throughout my muscles, and within my bones.[1] This time, I begin by frantically shaking through the danced memories and whispered scandals tucked away within me. Using my wine as an archive, I re-search my corporeal memories for any of the silenced residues that continue to haunt and pervade each gyrating thrust of my "it." I re-search my heart for once dismissed or ill-recognized residues of my ancestors, some of whom were called *jamettes*[2] and another, Saartjie "Sara" Baartman, who was misnamed the Hottentot Venus.[3] I re-search my muscles and bones for story-*tales* about wriggling *tails* stealthily subverting their debased social positioning, playfully counteracting violence against their bodies, and deceivingly reasserting their erotic powers and prowess, all through ulterior

[1] Here the Afro-Trinidadian feminist writer Marlene Philip influences me. In her essay on the experience of African-Caribbean women and the silenced histories they are made to carry, she positions "the body" as a space, a site that is both impacted by, and impacts, the outer world. She proclaims that to discuss the body (the African-Caribbean woman's body in particular) "*is to talk about the space that lies between the legs of the female and the effect of this space on the outer space—'place'* [sic]." Marlene Nourbese Philip, "Dis Place The Space Between," in *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory*, eds. Lynn Keller and Cristanne Miller (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 1994), 288.

[2] *Jametres* (unisex) were a subculture of mostly Afro-Creole ex-slaves, especially associated with the Carnival of post-emancipation Trinidad in the late nineteenth century. Today, the words *jamet* (male), *jamette* (female), and *jametre* are all pronounced "jam-it" or "jam-eht." Due to its popular use as a spoken word, more so than a written word, the spelling of "jamet" tends to vary—other spellings include jammet, jammette, jamit, or jammit. Please note that throughout this chapter the spelling does change depending on which scholar I am quoting. However, with the exception of said citations, I will always write the male as "jamet," the female as "jamette," and the general group as "jametre."

[3] Saartjie "Sara" Baartman (aka the Hottentot Venus) was a Khoi Khoi woman from South Africa who was presented throughout Europe as a "sideshow freak" and scientific anomaly during the early 1800s.

uses of their "its." However, the deeper I search and re-search, the more I find myself battling colonizing discourses of black savagery, over-determinations of hypersexuality, and historical productions of the black female dancing body as shameful and always already in "excess" of respectability, whiteness, and legitimate citizenship. In my struggle to detangle my own corpo**real**ity from these colonizing entrapments, I realize that this dilemma is not only my own, or that of other Afro-Caribbean winin' women, but it too was the dilemma of Baartman and the late nineteenth century jamette figure, whose "it" forever changed how Carnival operated within Trinidad and thus within the Diaspora.

Because I research people who participate in Carnivals that are heavily influenced by Trinidad's own Carnival, the corporeal legacies of the jamettes must be recognized as an important historical lineage that informs the winery that takes place within today's Trini-styled Carnivals. Moreover, the legacy of Baartman's *tale/tail* continues to dominate the academic discourses surrounding Africanized-bodies, especially with regards to black sexuality within Western scholarship.[4] For the inimical historicization and dissemination of Baartman's "it" (part of which was crudely referred to as the

[4] For example, see scholarship by Patricia Hill Collins (2004), Nicole Fleetwood (2011), and Brenda Dixon-Gottschild (2003).

Hottentot apron), as well as the social and legal practices of hypodescent,[5] perpetuate the linkage of today's US Diasporan winers to colonizing narratives of feminization, blackness, and degeneracy. These US histories and social practices, however, clash with the embodied histories and traditions of resistance, pleasure, pride, and freedom especially informed by the bawdy legacies of my jamette ancestors. At length, these narratives circumscribe the winin' "it" in such a way that the act of winin' itself simultaneously recalls *tales/tails* of terror and liberation.

Keeping in mind that both my informants and I live in the US and roll our "its" throughout the Caribbean and its Diaspora, this chapter intentionally makes visible the performative ways winers navigate complex socio-political terrains at the level of their bodies. It is from this position that I excavate the bodily legacies of jamette women and their defiant "its." Through an *un*veiling of the jamettes' labor to *un*tangle their own black bodies from the mythological truisms that violently marked their "its" as always already public (i.e., not their own), deviant, feminized, and hypersexed, this chapter interrupts the continued colonizations of the black dancing body from the point where winers appear the most vulnerable to the effects of misappropriation, fatalism, and

[5] For example, in his discussion on West Indian Immigrants and their experiences of "blackness" whilst living in New York City, Milton Vickerman writes, "In the United States, ideas of what it means to be 'black' have tended to be rigid—even monolithic—because of the social and historical circumstances under which individuals of African ancestry were originally incorporated into American society. The 'one-drop rule' represents the clearest expression of this rigidity since, under the rule, all individuals of even remote [Sub-Saharan] African ancestry have been considered 'black.' This definition of blackness has been accompanied by unflattering assumptions about how black individuals think and behave, as well as about their abilities. Importantly, being "black" has involved the experience of racial discrimination. […] In general, the wider American society's claims about people of African ancestry have tended to overshadow the claims that these individuals have made about themselves." Milton Vickerman, "Tweaking a Monolith: The West Indian Immigrant Encounter with 'Blackness,'" in *Islands in the City: West Indian Migration to New York*, ed. Nancy Foner (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 253.

sexualized exploitation. Now before I continue to *un*ravel these particular threads, it is important that I remind you that there is no singular, linear historical thread revealing how winin' came to be. There are only multiple genealogies that participate in an ever-evolving narrative.[6] Within the spaces of the Trini-styled Carnival, multiple embodiments clash and collide, as well as coalesce and convert, forming a corporeal polylogue between the various iterations of the rolling "it." In consequence, today's winers, especially winin' Afro-Caribbean women, must battle to comprehend their own winery within, through, and along multiple borders of nationality, race, gender, sexuality, and vulgarity. Hence, what follows here is but one critical thread amongst the many intertwining threads that can shed light on why, how, when, and where Trini/Caribbeans choose to wine.

As I will soon make clear, because the jametres (both men and women) politicized the female "its" through their controversial participation in the Trinidadian Carnival, I work to reclaim the disavowed residues of the jamette (female) figure by focusing on their vulgar uses of the female "it." This underscores their female-centered strategies for bringing attention to the violent ways patriarchal policies and white-supremacist practices denied them access to actual freedom and full citizenship. Furthermore, due to their dire living conditions, jametres had limited opportunities to distance themselves from the lubricious stereotypes of shame and abnormality

[6] For example, considering that these Carnivals occur in cosmopolitan spaces, it is important to note that there are other corporeal histories that are also being played out during the Carnival festivities, including rolling "its" that are informed by dance histories rooted in East Indian or Garifuna cultures. Garifuna is an Amerindian and African base culture/ethnic group maintained along the Caribbean coast of Central America. The Belizean communal organization of the Los Angeles region proudly maintain and practice the Garifuna dances and music, which I was able to witness during the 2012 Caribbean Heritage Organization's "Salute to Hollywood & Excellence Gala."

discursively marked onto their "its" and thus their dancing subjectivities. As such, in order to ascertain access to the consciousness[7] and the bodily logic of the jamette figure, it is pivotal that I first underscore the ways in which Baartman's ghostly "it" haunted the jamette's "it." It is at this intersection, where the colonization of Baartman's "it" obscures that of the jamette's "it," that I seek to reveal the multilayered framework of black femininity that both informs and constructs the winery of those who *get-on bad, free-up, and bruk-out fuh di* Trini-styled *Ca'nival*.

In revealing the complexities of this particular thread, I also work to fray and *un*ravel the enduring colonizations of the black female dancing body itself. In particular, I move towards decolonization and *un*colonize not only by teasing apart the spectacular and mundane roots and routes of today's winin' reveler, but also by engaging with the blood memories and fleshy residues that remain imprinted within the celebrated rolls of the Trini/Caribbean "it." Henceforth, my work to access the jamette's sense of being relies heavily on the theoretical framework of sociologist Avery Gordon in her book *Ghostly Matters*. Gordon argues, "To study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it. […] The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life."[8] The wraithlike "its" of both Baartman and the jamettes, in addition to all the haunting *tales/tails* that lay atop, inside, and in-between their "its," have forged a

[7] Many thanks to Kai Barratt, a Trinidadian scholar whose doctoral research focuses on contemporary female soca artistes, who advised me to focus on the jamette as a consciousness rather than as particular persons.

[8] Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 7-8.

convoluted map for the future of today's winers. Therefore, acting on Gordon's insistence, I continue this chapter with the ghostly resurrection of Baartman, a misunderstood figure whose traumatic *tale/tail* still haunts the black dancing body today, and end with an invocation of the jamette (female) figure, whose own bodily logic of resistance embraced vulgar uses of her own *tail*. In turn, my resurrection of the Hottentot Venus is an acknowledgement that today's winin' Trini/Caribbean subject, like the *jamette* herself, remains haunted by the violent colonization and misappropriation of Baartman's "it."

*UN*COLONIZING BAARTMAN'S "IT"

My resurrection of Baartman, her misrecognized "it," and the colonizing markings that propel these truisms about the Africanized-"it" is distinctly an invocation of Baartman's "performance" as the Hottentot Venus.[9] Because the violent misappropriation of Baartman's "it" perpetuates the still current truism that the Africanized-"it" (and thus the Africanized person) is inherently primitive and sexually insatiable, this colonizing legacy of Baartman's "performance" calls attention to the ways in which the act of winin' today re-presents winers as performing (an imagined kind of) African*ness*. Born in South Africa around the 1770s,[10] Saartjie (pronounced Sar-kee) "Sara" Baartman was a Khoi Khoi woman who toured Europe from 1810 until her unwarranted death in 1815. Due to the spectacularization of her "it," specifically her

[9] Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 148.

[10] Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

acute case of steatopygia, which is the accumulation of fat on the buttocks,[11] and her elongated labia,[12] Baartman was displayed from London to Paris as a "freak" of "scientific curiosity" named the Hottentot Venus.[13] Nevertheless, according to Janell Hobson, "Baartman did not [actually] 'suffer' from steatopygia in the medical sense but" rather she was a victim of the colonizing gaze, for under the dominant cultural gaze she was always already overdetermined as an anomaly, a freak, an oversexed sub-human.[14] Moreover, as dance scholar Ananya Chatterjea points out, nineteenth-century Europe maintained a fascination "with the genitalia and buttocks of […] women brought over from Africa and paraded from country to country as novelty items, freaks of nature, reportedly because of the enormous size and protruding shape of their butts," in addition to their genitalia.[15] In effect, Baartman's so-called "condition" was merely used by Europe's nineteenth century physicians, scientists, social commentators, and popular culture to normalize the stigmatization of the African body as always already atavistic

[11] Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 150.

[12] The "so-called Hottentot apron, a hypertrophy of the labia and nymphae caused by the manipulation of the genitalia," which also served "as a sign of beauty among certain tribes," including the Khoi Khoi and other tribes from "Basutoland and Dahomey." See Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 206.

[13] The "appellation 'Hottentot' is [now considered] a derogatory name for her people." Kara Reilly, "Two Venuses: Historicizing the Anatomical Female Body," *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 19, no. 4 (2014): 111.

[14] Janell Hobson, *Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 6.

[15] Ananya Chatterjea, *Butting Out: Reading Resistive Choreographies Through Works by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Chandralekha* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 184.

and sexually voracious in nature, such that any abnormal physiognomy of the vagina was seen as scientific "proof" of biologically "bad" behavior (for example, prostitution).[16]

In his acclaimed essay on the ways in which nineteenth century visual iconography and medicine worked to fuse the corpo**real**ity of the black female with the image of the prostitute, Sander Gilman revealed the meticulous ways that European scientists and artists used African female bodies, namely Baartman and others like her, as a strategy for naturalizing the black female body as always already "bad."[17] Gilman explained, **"**Change over time affects the physiognomy of the prostitute just as it does her genitalia, which become more and more diseased as she ages. [Therefore,] … the appearance of the prostitute and her sexual identity are preestablished by heredity."[18] Gilman later reported that the scientists of the time regarded "the anomalies of the [white] prostitute's labia as atavistic throwbacks to the Hottentot, if not the chimpanzee."[19] This conflation further supported belief that the black female possessed "not only a 'primitive' sexual appetite but also the external signs of this temperament—'primitive' genitalia."[20] It is also important to note that the violent sexualization of Baartman's "it" occurred within the very public spaces of Western civility. In turn, the hypervisibility of her black female "it"-parts, or rather her vulnerability to the scrutiny of the colonizing gaze, was a

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[16] Naomi Wolf, *Vagina: A New Biography* (New York City: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012), 142-3.

[17] Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies," 206.

[18] Ibid., 226.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 213.

necessary part of fusing the black female subject with an imagined persona of "bad" sexual behavior. In other words, as an effect of the colonial encounter, the public African-"it" became a symbol of "bad" sexual behavior, which then transfigured into a ghostly imago that haunted Baartman's very own (black) African body.

Furthermore, as Paul Edwards and James Walvin have argued, black "freaks"—Baartman in this case—"[…] 'were exhibited as typical of their race', whereas, 'white freaks were always exhibited as oddities whose value lay in the way they were distinguished from the rest of their species' […]."[21] Effectively, Baartman's genitalia was strategically utilized to 'prove,' beyond the shadow of doubt, that the black female "its" was innately abnormal, and thus the biological opposite of the normal, white body. The effect of such codifications also supported the technologies used to induct black bodies into the socio-political economies of the New World. As Saidiya Hartman reminds her readers in *Scenes of Subjection*, the naturalization of the black "it" as a marker for blackness "results from the brutal corporealization of the [enslaved African] body and the fixation of its constituent parts [read: their "its"] as indexes of truth and racial meaning."[22] From the Middle Passage to the auction block, and straight through the tenure of enslavement, the colonizing gaze violently thrust its "lewd desires and pecuniary interests"[23] on and into the captive Afro-"it" specifically, and the black (Africanized) body more generally.

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[21] Quoted in Reilly, "Two Venuses," 114.

[22] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 57.

[23] Ibid., 40.

For example, Chatterjea argues that the reduction of the black woman, which I add indirectly implicates the black man, to her respective "it" factors not only rationalized the deliberate dehumanization of Afro-bodies, but it also doubled as a violent induction into the hegemonic, heterosexualist framework of the 'civilized' West.[24] In parallel, as Mireille Miller-Young argues, the ambivalent sexual attractiveness of both the black male and female remains constructed as inherent to the corporeality of their black fleshy "its," which further perpetuates the impossible hypersexual "standard"—men are "at least ten inches long" and women have an unquenchable sexual appetite—that very few black men or women can achieve.[25] Evidentially, the black woman and man remain reduced to their respective "it" factors, such that the

> woman [or man] = (necessary misconceptions about) her [or his] sexual organs/body = racial typologies or characteristics of animalistic, lesser developed behaviors = enabling categories for hierarchical ordering of the world and its peoples […] thus justifying the destruction of [Afro-]people who have been 'scientifically' and logically proven to be lesser beings.[26]

In accordance, the corporeal "it" ultimately acts as a metonym for sex, sexuality, and the debased, or rather feminized, hierarchal positioning of Africanized-bodies within Western society.

My overall intent in calling attention to the Medusian effects of a colonizing gaze rooted in the Victorian Era is ultimately to cite the colonizing violence and shame that

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[24] Chatterjea, *Butting Out*, 186.

[25] Mireille Miller-Young, "Hip-Hop Honeys and Da Hustlaz: Black Sexualities in the New Hip-Hop Pornography," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 8, no.1 (2008): 274.

[26] Chatterjea, *Butting Out*, 186.

continues to saturate every wiggle and jiggle of today's winin' "it." The colonizing gaze has silenced the complex histories of the winin' "it" by invisibilizing the legacy of resistance forged by the jametre figure, as well as by reorganizing how winin' bodies relate to time, space, and power in general. According to Slavoj Žižek's theorization of fantasy and fetishism in film, it is the gaze itself that is "the primordial point of fixation (or freeze) [… which] not only mortifies its object, it stands itself for the frozen point of immobility in the field of the visible."[27] Following this logic, the colonial gaze remains "the primordial point of fixation" (a la Baartman) through which the jametre "it," and thus the Trini/Caribbean rolling "it," was captured, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Žižek further elucidates, "[…] movement equals blindness; it blurs the contours of what we perceive: in order for us to perceive the object clearly, it must be frozen, immobilized—immobility makes a thing visible."[28] Therefore, like Baartman's corpo**real** self, the moving, dancing winin' body remains invisible to the colonizing gaze, unless it is frozen and immobilized, thereby trapping the winin' "it" within the colonized imago of blackness, and as always already in excess to whiteness.

As Brenda Dixon-Gottschild indicated, "The actual Sara Baartman, once in Europe for all eyes to see, was unseen, invisibilized, dehumanized."[29] The nineteenth century colonial gaze stilted Baartman's "it" for the "ideological construction of

[27] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (New York: Verso, 2008), 111.

[28] Ibid., 108-9.

[29] Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 151.

otherness."[30] For that reason, Baartman's resistance to the voyeuristic fetishization of her abnormal (by Victorian/White standards) genital labia and buttocks remained unnoticed by the colonizing gaze. Gottschild posits that Baartman's use of stillness was a form of resistance. She explains, "Baartman did not dance, nor utilize any part of her anatomy sensually or kinetically (and certainly not erotically)."[31] Rather, contrarily, "She was a static, unmoving image, reinforcing her deployment as artifact."[32] Baartman was literally frozen, stilted, and fixated by the colonizing gaze. She stood, legs closed, as to perhaps minimize the apparent size of her labia, or at the very least, restrict the spectator's view of her genitalia.[33] Nevertheless, Europeans 'saw' Baartman through the eyes of their own colonizing culture, which endured well past her death. For immediately after her death, Baartman's genitals were removed and placed in a specimen jar and put on display, along with her skeleton and a cast of her body, in various museums throughout France. It was not until 2002 that her remains were finally laid to rest in the area of her birth.[34]

SIFTING THROUGH THE COLONIZATIONS OF THE JAM-"IT"

Herein lies my frustration, for the colonizing hauntings of Baartman's "it" continually limit and block me from accessing my jamette ancestors and their bodily

[30] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 66.

[31] Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 153.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Dixon-Gottschild notes, "Although she [Baartman] submitted to being painted nude, apparently under pressure, she did not part her legs. Her elongated labia were not exposed to the white gaze while she was alive […]." Ibid., 152.

[34] See Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartmann and the Hottentot Venus*, 139-42.

logic, and thus myself and my own winin' body, in their full complexity. In his discussion on the production of historical narratives, Caribbeanist and historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot argued that "any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences," which results from "a unique process" of negotiating power.[35] In effect, my work hereafter is less a historiography of the men and women invisibilized by the colonizing narratives circumscribing the jametre figure and more an unmasking of the jamettes' bodily logic, a voicing of their silenced sensibilities, and an embracing of the ambiguous spaces they occupied. Because the black dancing bodies of my jametre ancestors were categorized as always already in excess of Victorian, white supremacist heteropatriarchy (a la Baartman), they struggled to be received and perceived as something outside of this counterfeit imago. In fact, the term jametre itself is a product of the colonial encounter, for it was not a self-appointed name, but rather a slanderous name of disgust, appointed by the white elite class overwhelmingly to poor, Afro-Creoles who were said to be transitioning from chattel slavery into (disenfranchised) citizenship,[36] during post-emancipation Trinidad (post-1838).[37]

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[35] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 27.

[36] Samantha A. Noel, "De Jamette in We: Redefining Performance in Contemporary Trinidad Carnival," S*mall Axe* 14, no. 1 (2010): 61-3.

[37] Although the Emancipation Act officially came into effect on August 1, 1834, it was not until August 1, 1838 that full freedom was granted to slaves in Trinidad. In order to lessen the financial blow that plantation owners would have experienced if they were to lose all of their enslaved workers immediately, a provision was written into the bill that required "ex-slaves" to be apprenticed to their former slave owners for a minimum of four years. Bridget Brereton, *An Introduction to the History of Trinidad and Tobago* (Oxford, UK: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1996), 43.

Derived from the French term "diametre"—meaning "diameter"—the creolized term, jametre,[38] referred to the "imaginary line that [divided] society into two sectors, the respectable and the criminal."[39] Effectively, as literary scholar Rosamond King notes, the condition of the jametre was to live "below the 'diameter' of respectable society."[40] Other scholars have deconstructed the term "to mean a class of people who [fell] below the limits of morality, into the 'underworld.' [In effect, the] use of *underworld* to describe the locus of these people helps one to understand […] the inferior position African people held in society."[41] Pamela Franco further explained that this term "described a subculture of urban Afro-Creole men and women who reportedly were involved in prostitution and other types of illegal or criminal activities,"[42] which especially included the Afro-Trinidadian stick fighters, singers, dancers, and drummers who participated in the annual Carnival,[43] in addition to *madames* and practitioners of *obeah*.[44]

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[38] In referencing Bridget Brereton, Samantha Noel also notes, "the jametre class was an inherent and definitive aspect of Port of Spain, Trinidad's main urban center at that time." Noel, "De Jamette in We," 63 note 12. I only point this out to clarify that the jametre class was recorded as a localized phenomenon. However, there were other bodies considered to be jametre-like in other parts of the colony, as suggested by Rosamond King. Rosamond S. King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities: Nineteenth Century *Jamettes,*" in *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean*, ed. Faith Smith (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 214.

[39] Noel, "De Jamette in We," 62. Although Britain had gained control of Trinidad in 1797, French-speaking planters were high in population due to *la Cédula de Población* (1783).

[40] King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 214.

[41] Noel, "De Jamette in We," 62.

[42] Pamela Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman' in Nineteenth-Century Trinidad Carnival," *Small Axe* 7 (2000): 61.

[43] Bridget Bereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad 1870-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), ix.

[44] John Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay, and Calypso: Traditions in the Making* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 72.

JAM-"IT" TALES I: POLITICIZING "IT" FOR THE CARNIVAL

As aforementioned, the jametre figure remains deeply associated with the Trinidadian Carnival. Samantha Noel comments, "In the late nineteenth century, as the economic and sociopolitical situation for the formerly enslaved became especially dire, their [the jametres] masquerade illuminated their conditions. [Their overwhelming participation in the Carnival] created what became known as the '*jametre* Carnival,' the term referring to their subaltern status."[45] Because post-emancipated Trinidad had failed to provide any mechanism to support the transition of the formerly enslaved into full citizenship, low-classed Afro-Creole men and women found themselves struggling to obtain "legitimate" ways of surviving the socio-political structures of the island.[46] The promise of full citizenship, namely "upward economic mobility and control of one's [own] body, labor, and relationships,"[47] was never realized by the colonial state. In reality, "freedom" was comprised of "inadequate and limited employment and education and was further restricted by the laws and ordinances passed to control black [and low-classed] bodies and behavior."[48] In an effort to interrupt these skewed power structures, the jametres inserted their "its" into the Carnival space, using scandalous masquerades such as the Dame Lorraine, the baby doll, and especially the *pisse-en-lit* (the bed wetter), which I will mostly focus on here. These costumes not only spectacularized the embodied

[45] Noel "De Jamette in We," 61-2.

[46] Samantha A. Noel, *Carnival is Woman!: Gender, Performance and Visual Culture in Contemporary Trinidad Carnival* (Doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 2009), 69.

[47] King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 215.

[48] Ibid.

injustices endured by jametres, but, as a performance, these masquerades also politicized the ways in which the ruling class were always already implicated in the violent impositions against the jamette's "its," by and through the state. As a result, Carnival became an active space of resistance for jametres.

The Dame Lorraine, said to mean "fashionable lady," is a masquerade that parodies the aristocrats' tense relationship with maintaining respectability.[49] King further explains, "It is less clear why cross-dressed female characters faded away, but today Dame Lorraine refers mostly to a man in woman's clothes, 'dressed as a fashionable lady with large bosoms and posterior' […]."[50] Dame Lorraine costuming often accentuated specific body parts, including the "its" (butt, hips, and genitalia).[51] Historian Errol Hill reports that the masqueraders "were all masked, and inversion of the sexes was a common practice."[52] From oversized posteriors to engorged guts, these characters were a grotesque criticism of the elite class and their hypocritical relationship with sexualized vulgarity and the body.

This masquerade used the 'respectable' dances, such as the French quadrille, to especially mimic and mock the French aristocrats (who made up much of plantation owner's class[53]). In its original nineteenth century iteration, the masqueraders would

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[49] Errol Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 40.

[50] King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 217. With that said, I have encountered many women playing the Dame Lorraine mas' during the Labor Day Carnivals in New York, as well as in Trinidad.

[51] Ibid., 218.

[52] Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 40.

[53] Brereton, *Race Relations*, 8.

perform these dances whilst emphasizing their peculiar bodily deformity, e.g., shaking or rubbing their "its" as they bowed to their partners.[54] As they parodied each dance, the Maître (master of ceremonies) would keep up the air "that everything was quite proper and aboveboard."[55] Again, as King reminds us, "Although individuals from a number of social and economic backgrounds originally participated in it, the Dame Lorraine mas exemplified the explicit sexuality that Victorian Trinidadian colonials abhorred, desired, and overwhelmingly associated with blacks as a whole, but especially with jamettes."[56] Effectively, the jametre person was mocking an aristocrat's imagined construction of the jamette as sexually grotesque.

Like to the Dame Lorraine mas', or perhaps more so, the *pisse-en-lit* mas'—which included variations such as the *pisse-du-sang* (the menstruator) and the *chie-en-lit* (the bed shitter)[57]—also utilized prolific gyrations of one's "it" as political strategy of resistance. Said to be "a modification of a Martinican masquerade called chie-en-lit,"[58] the Trinidadian iteration of the piss-en-lit ranged from men and women wearing chemises to nightgowns, and/or oversized diapers. The cloth covering their "its" would have stains simulating menstruation, diarrhea, and/or urination. Moreover, according to newspaper

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[54] Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 40.

[55] Ibid., 41.

[56] King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 216.

[57] Noel "De Jamette in We," 62.

[58] Ibid., 64.

reports, they often smelled like their assumed characters.[59] The vulgar exaggeration of their constituent "it" parts and its many functions of waste were further exaggerated by their dancing, which generally consisted of a rapid shifting of their "its" from side-to-side, as well as backwards and forwards, all whilst singing obscene songs.[60]

With regards to men's performances of the pisse-en-lit, King comments on their performance, asserting that "aside from sometimes literally stinking, [some versions of this masquerade] revealed black men's bodies, complete, at times, with an exaggerated penis,[61] an exaggerated physical representation of black masculinity that was then very much feared."[62] Franco further elaborates that the pisse-en-lit mas' "allowed [men] to introduce a sexualized hobbyhorse performance,"[63] which often simulated "sexual horseplay with the poui sticks."[64]

Although the jamet's (male) depiction of the pisse-en-lit called attention to the stigmatization of the black/African male "its" as a site and citation of fear and sexual

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[59] Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso*, 46.

[60] Bridget Brereton, "The Trinidad Carnival: 1870–1900," *Savacou: A Journal of the Caribbean Artists Movement* 11–12 (1975): 48.

[61] Often, jametres would use a bois, which is the name of the stick used for stick fighting, as these penile exaggerations. The bois was usually made out of the yellow bark of the poui tree; for this reason, it is sometimes called a poui stick.

[62] King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 217.

[63] Franco purports that men's participation increased after 1884. She explains that due to a ban on sticks and stick fighting, stick fighters ingeniously used masquerades as a way to sneak around their poui sticks, which were used for stick fighting, onto the streets. Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman'," 63 fn12.

[64] "PISSENLIT (Wet the Bed)," in *Côté ci Côté la: Trinidad and Tobago Dictionary, The Signature Edition*, ed. John Mendes (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Zenith Services, Ltd., 2012), 238.

violence (especially against white/elite women),[65] the jamette's (female) depiction of this character was often singled out as deplorably scandalous, more so than the men.[66] Franco explains, "In the topsy-turvy world of Carnival, *jamet* [sic] women were probably 'playing' with the term *pisser* [meaning to pee or urinate], as a way to linguistically foreground menstruation. [In effect, the] linguistic play, coupled with the menstrual cloth, highlights the distinctly female character of this mas'."[67] Moreover, historian and anthropologist Philip Scher elucidates "that *pissenlit* is also the French word for 'dandelion' […]." Seeing that most of the jametre masqueraders spoke, or at the very least understood, the French patois that was commonly used throughout the island, Scher speculates "that, as with so much else in Carnival, a double entendre was at work: the pissenlit was a soiled flower, or possibly a maiden deflowered,"[68] or rather raped. Thusly, this mas' also called attention to the particular abuses the jamette (female) body endured, especially through its use of female nightgowns and signs of menstruation, or violated "its." Franco elaborates that the female references performed through this character

[65] "As M. Jacqui Alexander writes, 'Black make sexuality was to be feared as the hypersexualized stalker,' and almost naked black men playing pisse-en-lit literally flaunted and shook this fear in front of Europeans ('Not Just (Any) *Body*' 12)." Quoted in King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 218.

[66] Citing various newspaper reports, Franco argues that men were rarely singled out, if ever. Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman'," 62-3.

[67] Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman'," 63. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White also discuss the topsy-turvyness of Carnival, stating that it promotes the subversion of linguistic rules, "whereby grammatical order [in this case the use of the term "pisser"] is transgressed to reveal erotic and obscene or merely materially satisfying counter-meanings." Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), 10-1.

[68] Philip W. Scher, "The Devil and the Bed-Wetter: Carnival, Memory, National Culture, and Post-Colonial Consciousness in Trinidad," *Western Folklore* 66, no. 1-2 (2007): 115.

> […] was a protest against [the severe policing of jamette bodies by] the state, reified in the police, judicial system and the medical profession. This particular reading is based on two factors: the rape statistics for a period that parallels the *jamet* [sic] Carnival, 1870s to 1890s, and the premise that young, working-class Afro-Creole women were too readily presumed to be prostitutes or potential prostitutes.[69]

In fact, historian David Trotman's research on women and crime in nineteenth-century Trinidad corroborates Franco's findings. He documents a significant increase in the number of reported rape cases by Afro-Creole women during the *jametre* Carnival.[70] With that said, it was also common for jamettes to be battered or sexually humiliated in public by jamets (men).[71] Ultimately, the pisse-en-lit masquerade was a clear commentary on the sexually violent plight of the jamette (female) in general.

The baby doll masquerade was also a commentary on illegitimate sexual relations, to which I must include rape. "It permitted women of African descent to comment on the working-class men who refused to hold themselves accountable for their children, as well as on the elite men who contributed to the oppression of women."[72] The masquerader wore an exaggerated version of a baby doll's dress and dramatically accosted any man for not supporting her children, all whilst holding an actual baby doll.[73] This character not

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[69] Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman'," 64.

[70] David Trotman, *Crime in Trinidad: Conflict and Control in a Plantation Society, 1838-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 247-52.

[71] Patricia Mohammed, " A Blueprint for Gender in Creole Trinidad: Exploring Gender Mythology through Calypsos of the 1920s and 1930s" in *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in the Caribbean*, ed. Linden Lewis, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 138.

[72] Noel, "De Jamette in We," 65.

[73] Ibid., 64-5.

only illuminated the illicit relationships elite men retained with poor Afro-Creole women, who were mostly women vulnerable to prostitution and poverty, but it also called attention to the burden of shame that was placed squarely on the shoulders of the jamette. For instance, the baby doll masquerader would pretend to "discover" the child, abandoned in the street. Upon her discovery, she would call over a policeman (another masquerader) to protect the child, but the officer would accuse her of being the child's mother. At this point, she would adopt the child out of pity. She would then be showered with revilement for producing a bastard child, but would also be treated with respect and honor for adopting the child and choosing to care for it.[74] Through this masquerade, the burden of shame gets shifted, if only partially, onto the accused "father." In turn, the productive power of the jamette's "its" works to politicize the unequal power dynamic between poor Afro-Creole women and both elite and working class men. At the level of the body, sexualized shame, honor, and the labors of child rearing are brought under the spotlight for all to bear.

Applying Mimi Sheller's theoretical framing of erotic and vulgar performances of citizenship, it is clear that for the jamette, the "bodily politics of freedom [extended] both below and beyond the state"[75] on two levels: 1. at the level of the body, especially seeing that the act of rolling one's "it" literally emphasizes one's lower realm, and 2. at the level of society, such that the positionality of the jametre was to live below the line of legitimate citizenship. In effect, each thrusting taunt of the jamette's "its" performatively

[74] Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 108-9.

[75] Mimi Sheller, *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), Kindle edition, Location 587.

reclaimed her body and her "its" as her own property, to be used for her own needs and desires. As Noel states, "When jamettes violated the conservative rules of etiquette in everyday life and during Carnival, they prompted a reevaluation in Trinidadian society of the ways in which women appeared and behaved in public, thereby challenging society's control of their bodies."[76] Returning focus back onto the pisse-en-lit mas', it is important to note that these dances specifically magnified the public yet intimate stigmas the jamettes often encountered by, at the very least, forcing the viewer to acknowledge the corpo**real**ity of their "its" as their own. Although much of the written descriptions of that time, especially by the newspapers, dismissed the pisse-en-lit's dancing as "disgusting gestures"[77] or "dancing in the lewdest manner,"[78] the grotesque, unruliness associated with the pisse-en-lit masquerade further promoted the use of the "it" as both a site of resistance and a citation of both state-induced and gendered violence. Evidently, the jametre man and woman donned the colonized black female imago and her associated "it" as a strategy for discrediting the negative stigmatizations that haunted the corpo**real** black female body.

Many scholars on the Jametre Carnival, including Noel and Franco, have argued that many of these jametre masquerades were clear embodiments of "the festive manifestations" of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the *carnivalesque* and the grotesque body—which encompass "socially unbounded behaviour, exaggeration, and the emphasis

[76] Noel "De Jamette in We," 60.

[77] Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay, and Calypso*, 128.

[78] Ibid, 110.

on the body's lower stratum and its regenerative functions."[79] According to Bakhtin, the grotesque body thrived within the space of the *carnivalesque*, for it was a body that was always becoming, always mobile, and always hybrid.[80] Within Bakhtin's logic, the unruly performances of winin' jametre bodies during Carnival made their resistance to the colonial power structures visible and comprehensible. Specifically, by mocking and scorning the mores and morals of the elites, the defiant erotic revelry of the jametres' writing "its" not only celebrated their erotic agency, but it also worked to publically reclaim their bodies as their own, and not property to be used and abused by the state. In turn, as Franco proposes, the grotesque jametre masquerader scandalously gyrated their "its" during Carnival as a strategy for subverting their oppressive social positioning. In other words, by playing these "it"-centered masquerades, jametres demonstrated that the only way they could actually fulfill the colonizing fantasies stigmatized onto their Africanized bodies was by exaggerating the "its" and wearing it as a costume (e.g., oversized penises, enlarged butts, or excessively uncontrollable "it" functions), which they themselves deemed to be a persona that was different from their actual, mundane selves.

Now, I would like to argue that because jametres had to exaggerate the very stereotypes and misguided fantasies always already marked onto their Africanized-"its," they were also working to distance themselves from these very same stereotypes. Unfortunately, to the Trinidadian elites and British ruling class, the performative power

[79] Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman'," 61.

[80] Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, 7-10.

of the Dame Lorraine, baby doll, and piss-en-lit mas' mostly worked to actualize the stigmatic imago of blackness (a la Baartman) that remained marked onto the jametres' Africanized-"its." It is important to remember that the condition of being a jametre was to exist at the margins of society. Due to their dire living conditions, the jametre had limited opportunities to distance themselves from the lubricious stereotypes of shame and abnormality discursively marked onto their "its" and thus their dancing subjectivities. The liberating and subversive potential of their winin', therefore, resided and teetered along the ragged margins of the colonizing gaze—a gaze that remains rooted in hetero-patriarchy and Victorian/White-supremacy. Evidently, the jametre body was and is always already constructed as grotesque, carnivalesque, and ambiguous, as well as always already antithetical to the classical, white, Victorian body. Therefore, as with Baartman, within the colonizing gaze, the jametres were merely playing themselves, such that their counter-meanings and resistance remained invisible to the ruling class.

Sheller asserts, "Caribbean sacred and secular dance forms that use the lower body—the winding [sic] of the hips, the shaking of the bottom, or the stomping of the feet—all stand in opposition to the more refined movements of 'high' dance forms such as ballet [...],"[81] which are representative white/Victorian values and aesthetics.[82] In effect, although the jametre Carnival was an active space of resistance, it did not allow for an inversion of social hierarchies. To the white/Victorian elites, the jametres' performance of the pisse-en-lit masquerade represented the epitome of blackness,

[81] Sheller, *Citizenship from Below*, Location 744.

[82] Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 1-10.

African*ness*, immorality, and criminality, which thus permitted the ruling class to persecute all the "bad" behaviors imagined to be associated with the jametre subculture.

JAM-"IT" TALES II: RECOVERING A LEGACY OF BAD BEHAVIOR

Within the logic of today's Trini-styled Carnival, the link between the female body, winin', and "bad behavior" is undeniable. In fact, the terms "winin'" and "bad behavior" are often used interchangeably during the carnival season. Therefore, in an attempt to fully comprehend the embodied ways in which the jamette figure both fought for freedom and set the stage for today's winin' Trini/Carnival reveler, I now re-trace the bodily policing endured by the jamette. For if I am to recuperate the lingering bodily histories of the jamette figure, I must also bring into focus the silencing of their "bad behavior."

Within the Trinidadian context, gyrating "its," and specifically jamette (female) behavior, maintain a long history of being controlled and policed by social practices and laws. In fact, this colonizing gaze, which exists within the "high political realm," is still viscerally negotiated by today's Trini/Caribbean winers. In her scholarship on the important roles women played in the development of the Trinidadian Carnival, Noel traces the evolution of the term *jametre* (read: denigrating description of a man or a woman, often a formerly enslaved Afro-Creole, who occupied a position of disenfranchised citizenship and poverty during the latter 1800s) to *jamette* (read: a slanderous description of any Afro-female, assumed to be of the lowest-class, who exhibits obscene and unruly behavior, usually prostitution). In fact, following this

trajectory, and as one may suspect, Trinibagonians today tend to use the word jamette to mean a whore, slut, or loose woman.[83] Thusly, Noel reminds us, it has become almost impossible to overlook how the various uses of the term jamette both undermine and "feminize the cultural practices of" masqueraders from the nineteenth century jametre Carnival through to today's Trini-styled Carnivals, especially when considering the ways in which Afro-women's sexuality is both policed and scrutinized.[84]

During post-emancipation, Port-of-Spain, the colony's capital and a decidedly white/elite space, was "infiltrated" by ex-slaves and poor immigrants looking for work. As a result, many had to endure oppressive and deplorable living conditions, which included living in overcrowded and unsanitary barracks, if they were lucky.[85] Consequently, many attempts to circumnavigate, resist, subvert, or simply just survive such living conditions were quickly defined as jametre behavior and thus heavily policed and/or criminalized, for example, via the passing of anti-vagrancy, anti-squatting, and anti-obscenity laws.[86] The legal policing of such behavior was often supplemented through social practices of shaming. From *Jamette* to *Jagabat*, *Jezebel* to *Wahbeen*,

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[83] Noel reminds us, "As the twentieth century progressed, society defined jametre behavior more and more in terms of the black working class woman who behaved licentiously, dressed in a provocative manner, and often worked as a prostitute, and would become known as a jamette." Noel, *Carnival is Woman!*, 155-6. With that said, it is also important to note that during Carnival season, the term "jamette" can also refer to the spectacular/vulgar winin' and revelry of both men and women.

[84] Noel, "De Jamette in We," 62.

[85] Noel, *Carnival is Woman!*, 245-6.

[86] Susan Campbell, "Carnival, Calypso, and Class Struggle in Nineteenth Century Trinidad," *History Workshop Journal* 26, no. 1 (1988): 5 and 18. Also, see Bridget Brereton, "The Historical Background to the Culture of Violence in Trinidad and Tobago," *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 4 (2010): 9.

Ba'John to *Sketele*, and *ah cyah fuhget Wotles* or *Wassy* (all colloquial terms used to describe vulgar or "bad" behavior that is then often linked to and associated with the lower classes), such disciplinary traditions have long been the driving force silencing the intricate corporeal histories associated with winin'.

Henceforth, I attempt to deconstruct the complex ways that colonizing histories have circumscribed today's winin' bodies whilst remaining interlaced with the silenced counter-histories and corporeal traditions of resistance associated with the jamette figure. I especially highlight the tensions that reside along the limits of the historical production of the jametre figure and the bodily memories, residues, and private spaces of knowledge that evidently connect the politico-resistive work of the jametre figure to today's winin' reveler. Returning to Trouillot's theoretical approach to accessing silenced histories, my intention here is to decipher how history has worked thus far. He explains,

> For what history is changes with time and place or, better said, history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives. What matters most are the processes and conditions of production of such narratives. Only focus on that process can uncover the ways in which the two sides of historicity intertwine in a particular context. Only through that overlap can we discover the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others.[87]

Following Trouillot's argument, it is important now to focus on how the dominant narratives circumscribing the jametre figure were used to disseminate hegemonic power both over and through the black dancing female body.

[87] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

As aforementioned, the conflation between African-derived practices and beliefs, female bodies, poverty, and unruliness (i.e., any behavior considered illegal, criminal, or disreputable), supported the longstanding belief (a la Baartman) that Africans and their descendants were primitive and savage, and that their abnormal "its" caused them to be inherently deviant. Franco explains, "To [Trinidad's] hegemonic Euro-Creoles, for whom race [read: black or African] was a principal signifier of deviance and unruliness, they [i.e., jametres, blackness, and unruliness] were perceived as one and the same."[88] In effect, although the term jametre was assigned to various types of persons[89]—such as stick fighting men or poor immigrant women from East India and Venezuela[90]—in addition to other various types of non-Victorian/White behaviors—including Afro-Creole or East Indian religious practices—the imago of the jametre remained stigmatized as a low-class, black, dancing (read: vulgar and uncontrollable), female body.

This essentialized imago was further solidified through violent and invasive legal and social practices. For example, members "of the elite, including the already free black and colored middle class, opposed the entry of women into the [legitimate sectors of the] workforce."[91] To make matters worse, the Contagious Diseases Ordinance, first

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[88] Franco, "The 'Unruly Woman'," 61.

[89] "In the jametre Carnival the social, economic, and political predicament of the jametres was manifest, both physically and vocally. Their bands, consisting of both adults [men and women] and children, were a combination of various social groups created in the barrack yards where they resided." Noel "De Jamette in We," 63.

[90] David Trotman, "Women and Crime in Late Nineteenth Century Trinidad," *Caribbean Quarterly* 30, no. 3-4 (1984): 70.

[91] Noel, *Carnival is Woman!*, 69. Also, according to Trotman, "Among the [Afro-] Creole group [living in Port of Spain in 1891] the female component was over 50 percent," which means over half of the Afro-Creole population were denied "legitimate" work. Trotman, "Women and Crime," 61.

mandated by the United Kingdom parliament in 1864,[92] was vigorously enforced in the late nineteenth century. "The Act required women accused of common prostitution to register and to be periodically examined for venereal disease and, if diseased, to be incarcerated in a certified hospital ward. […] In the hands of the police the ordinance became a tool to harass not only prostitutes, but all lower-class women."[93] Noel adds, "Because of the subjugated social standing of the jametre women, the police constantly scrutinized them, following them on a regular basis and, in some cases, extorting sexual favors. Those who did not comply might be sent to the courts to be registered as common prostitutes, a marker that made them even more vulnerable to official harassment."[94] Consequently, low-class, Afro-Creole women were especially vulnerable to succumbing to this marginal social positioning.

By 1881, the tensions between the disenfranchised jametres and the ruling class had come to an all time high with the Canboulay riots.[95] In response, the colonial authorities, who were now extremely "conscious of the jametres' deep-rooted association with Carnival, […] took systematic steps to" clean up and sanitize the festivities,[96] and as expected, the propensity to discipline jametres for their "bad behavior" only escalated

[92] Wolf, *Vagina*, 150. Also, as a "Crown Colony Government"—meaning that Trinidad was subjected to the laws and policies originated by those appointed by the British government—Trinidad was never allowed to have an elected Assembly. See Brereton, *Race Relations*, 24-5.

[93] Trotman, "Women and Crime," 70.

[94] Noel "De Jamette in We," 64.

[95] During the late night/early morning hours of the 1881 Carnival, "several jametre bands and the police force confronted each other during Carnival in a calculated attempt to defeat each other." Ibid., 63.

[96] Ibid.

thereafter. In 1883, due to the "licentious gyrations" of Afro-Trinidadian women during drum dance events, which were first developed by enslaved negroes on plantations, the colonial government moved to prohibit drum dances altogether.[97] Then, in 1884, "an amendment to the previous year's Peace Preservation Ordinance was rushed through the Legislative Council just in time for Carnival. This outlawed disorderly assemblies of ten or more people, as well as unauthorized dancing, processions and drumming […]."[98] This ordinance specifically affected jametre mas' bands, in addition to music or dances that were associated with non-Victorian religious traditions, such as Shangoism[99] and "the Shi'ite Muslim holy day of Mohurram, known in Trinidad" as Hosay.[100]

Such ordinances, in addition to anti-obeah laws,[101] further worked to criminalize the spiritual practices most often associated with Afro-Trinidadian jametres, as well as hinder any Afro←→Indian unity.[102] In effect, these laws not only diminished the particular spiritual meanings and cultural practices that pervaded the "vulgar" dancing

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[97] Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 33-4.

[98] Campbell, "Carnival, Calypso, and Class Struggle," 17.

[99] Ibid. Campbell remarks, "After an 1884 ban on African-type drumming, for example, on March 30,1891 constables moved in to confiscate drums from Shango devotees at Arouca [a village in Trinidad]." Shangoism is a creolized religion that is practiced in Trinidad and Tobago. Similar to Haitian Vodun or Cuban Santería, it is rooted in the Ifá tradition of West Africa.

[100] Ibid., 15. Also see Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 44. Hill remarks that in October 1884, "The ban on Negro drum processions was extended to the Indian immigrants, and when the latter insisted on celebrating their traditional passion play, thirteen people were killed and over on hundred wounded in a savage attack by the soldiers and police."

[101] In 1868, "the colonial government passed an ordinance outlawing obeah under which fourteen people had been convicted by 1873." Campbell, "Carnival, Calypso, and Class Struggle," 8.

[102] Ibid., 16. Campbell states, "With labour unrest at a high point in 1882-84, the colonial government considered it necessary to control Hose' [Hosay] and forestall the development of any Afro-Indian working-class unity."

associated with the *pisse-en-lit* masquerades, but they also limited the ways in which one could gyrate their "it" in public, generally speaking. In fact, as the policing of "its" by the colonial government continued, by 1895, the *pisse-en-lit*, as well as all other forms of transvestite or cross-dressing masquerades, was specifically outlawed; in contrast, the Dame Lorraine masquerade somehow survived.[103] As a result, "the authorities, through new laws and regulations, had succeeded in keeping the jametres from gathering during the Carnival"[104] by the turn of the twentieth century. Thereafter, jamette behavior—specifically any vulgar, cantankerous, or unruly behavior performed by *women*—was further socialized *out* of Trinidad's *public* spaces.

Particularly, women were systematically shunned from participating in the Carnival festivities. During the very early 1900s, the jametre subculture began to be frequented by Afro-creole and colored middle to upper class men, who were commonly referred to as "jacket men" since they often wore jackets as a marker of their class and affluence over the jametre men.[105] Noel reports, "Despite the presence of women in Carnival during this period, there was an unconscious decision among societal forces (particularly the jacket men, government authorities) to create a cultural model in which working class men were the performers while the creative contributions of working class

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[103] Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso*, 129. Somehow, the Dame Lorraine masquerade became the only jametre, cross-dressing masquerade that successfully survived this law. King surmises this was due to the fact that men dressing up as oversized women was less threatening than women dressing as men, or men and women pointing to the traumas of the jamette "it" via the piss-en-lit mas'. King, "New Citizens, New Sexualities," 217.

[104] Noel, "De Jamette in We," 63.

[105] Hollis Liverpool, *Rituals of Power and Rebellion: the Carnival Tradition in Trinidad and Tobago, 1763-1962* (Chicago, IL: Research Associates School Times Publications/Frontline Distribution Int'l Inc., 2001), 337-8.

women remained unnoticed."[106] The "invasion" of jacket men into the clandestine spaces of the jametre culture quickly reified the link between working class Afro-women and behaviors marked as vulgar, obscene, shameful, and illicit sexuality. Patricia Mohammed further elaborates: "Though the double standard of Victorian morality forbade the active participation of their women in Carnival before the 1930s,[107] it allowed middle- and upper-class men [i.e., jacket men] the opportunity to indulge in illicit liaisons with working-class women.

The lingering legacy of gender relations—the sexual relationships of white master and female slave that had existed during slavery—persisted into the twentieth century."[108] The jamette was purposefully promoted as an illegitimate sexual partner whilst simultaneously expunged from important social roles, such as the lead singer (or a chantuelle) of kalinda songs (a precursor of calypso music), the stick fighter, the drum dancer (specifically in public or during stick fighting events), and lastly as the mas'

[106] Noel, *Carnival is Woman!*, 110.

[107] One of my female informants, born in Trinidad during the 1960s, recalled that she was shunned by her family from participating in the Carnival festivities because it was seen as inappropriate for women. However, she stated that her brothers were always allowed to play mas'. (Formal interview with anonymous informant, 1/14/2013. Phone conversation. Los Angeles, CA to East Stroudsburg, PA.) It is also important to note that she was of East Indian descent and was raised in a Hindu household. My parents have told me on multiple occasions that it was generally "uncommon" to see Indo-Trinis participating in Carnival during the 60s, 70s, and much of the 80s. This was due to the longstanding racist tensions held between Afro and Indo Trinidadians. According to Tejaswini Niranjana, many Indo-Trinidadians (especially the men) viewed winin' and Carnival as an Afro-Trinidadian space. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Mobilizing India: Women, Music, and Migration Between India and Trinidad* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 112. These tensions, however, have dropped significantly since over the past 25 or so years.

[108] Mohammed, "Blueprint for Gender," 137-8.

innovator.[109] Furthermore, the participation of jacket men significantly disrupted the matrifocal gender relations often practiced within the jametre circles.[110] This shift not only silenced women's participation in the Carnival space, but it also limited their participation in the "masculine" spaces of the public arena in general. The vulgar, carnivalesque, and indecent embodiments of the jamette—once used to resist, challenge, and call attention to the interpersonal sufferings, financial hardships, and social injustices they had to endure—had now become legally marked as criminal and socially regarded as taboo behavior, even amongst the quickly changing jametre culture.

Consider this social shift towards embodying Victorian, heteropatriarchal ideals of respectability, in addition to the purposeful and legal erasure of the jamette's subversive embodiments out of the public space. How then did the jamette's pugnacious "it" linger around long enough to haunt today's winers? Many scholars on the Trinidadian Carnival recurrently argue that the corporeal legacies of the jametres' scandalous participation in the nineteenth century carnivals have been passed down to

[109] Noel comments that the jamette's "creative input through kalinda songs would have been greatly hindered since the jacket men encouraged jametre men and women to adhere to traditional gender roles. […] The male stick fighters now [circa 1920s and 30s] transferred the energy previously used to challenge their opponents physically into musical composition, appropriating the female chantuelle's banter, gossip, and abuse. Public performances of the new calypso music by women were considered taboo, as all female colonial subjects were expected to behave respectably during Carnival." [Note: Kalinda songs were impromptu songs involving audience participation that chantuelles (lead singers) would sing to the accompaniment of drums.] . Noel, *Carnival is Woman!*, 153-4 and fn #61. Hill also notes that jamettes were integral to the singing and dancing performed in stick fighting yards as a sort of interlude between duels. See Errol Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, 58.

[110] Noel, *Carnival is Woman*, 110 and 153-9.

today's winin' Trini/Caribbean Carnival reveler as part of their "birthrights."[111] For example, Maude Dikobe encourages researchers to situate the winery of today's female soca artists within local discourses—e.g., emphasizing the importance of the butt in Trinidadian culture, or historically situating winin' performances within the politico-historical lineage of the jamette—in order to recognize "the importance of the ways these women are challenging traditional forms of repression, be it racial, gender, or otherwise."[112] Daniel Miller admits, "Obscenity is one of the oldest accusations to be made against the Trinidadian Carnival, and the *pissenlit* ('wet the bed') of the nineteenth century, with their rags of menstrual blood, caused as much of a stir in their time as does wining today; moreover women were also central to the construction of this 'Jamette Carnival'. Wining, then, is related to a tradition of Carnival […]."[113] Noel further stresses that the bikini costuming and Carnival winery of today's Trinidadian Carnival is a clear embodiment of jamette*ness*, which she defines as "a performativity that asserts both a creative and subversive impact on the festival [i.e. Carnival]."[114] She continues, "The jamettes of the first half of the twentieth century provided this new generation with a

[111] Noel, "De Jamette in We," 60. As I will discuss further in Chapter 2, I root my argument in Noel's postulation that the jametre figure's impact "on the corporeal expression of the contemporary woman in Carnival is unmistakable." Also, as noted in the previous chapter, I follow Dikobe's encouragement for researchers to situate *winin'* within local discourses; specifically, she points to the importance of the butt in Trinidadian culture, whilst historically situating *winin'* performances within the politico-historical lineage of the *jametre*. Maude Dikobe, "Bottom in de Road: Gender and Sexuality in Calypso," *PROUDFLESH: A New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness 3* (2004). http://www.africaresource.com/proudflesh /issue3/dikobe.htm.

[112] Dikobe, "Bottom in de Road," http://www.africaresource.com/proudflesh/issue3/dikobe.htm.

[113] Daniel Miller, "Absolute Freedom in Trinidad," *Man, New Series* 4, no. 2 (1991): 327.

[114] Noel "De Jamette in We," 61.

corporeal vocabulary that compensated for its absence in the present costume aesthetic. The pelvic oscillations, gyrations, and wining that 'plagued' the festivities symbolized the social, artistic, economic, and sexual independence and freedom of these women."[115] Evidently, for scholars like Miller, Dikobe, and Noel, the jamette's legacy of using their "its" to push back against the deplorable conditions they had to endure is not only a precursor for today's winery, but this legacy also remains intricately linked to the Carnival space itself.

However, as I have previously argued, in solely focusing on the important ways jamettes have influenced Carnival bodily traditions, the day-to-day erotic politics and bodily logics of the jamette, which also remain layered into the today's winery, will continue to be silenced. In fact, because the jamette was pushed outside of the spectacular space of Carnival by the turn of the twentieth century, many of my informants (especially those under the age of 40) remain clueless about the historical importance of the jametres and the vital ways in which they have impacted the festivities of Carnival. Yet and still, the ways in which winin' operates both inside and outside of the Carnival festivities call attention to the insidious ways the jamette figure has profoundly shaped how winers' use and comprehend their "its" today. In other words, the bodily legacies of the jamettes were not only forged in public spaces, such as Carnival, but also within private spaces, such as the home. So, in an attempt to pay heed to the question "How is it that the winery of today's Trini/Caribbean winer operates in accordance with the bodily logic of the jamette,

[115] Ibid., 76.

despite this 'apparent' cultural amnesia," I now bring focus to the insidious ways the jamette also haunts the private, micro-political performances and constructions of winin'.

JAM-"IT" TALES III: EMBODYING JAMETTE CONSCIOUSNESS

Sheller contends, "To truly write a history of embodied freedom, and to understand its contemporary limitations and possibilities, [… one must reclaim] the disavowed realms of the vulgar, including the lower regions of the body politic and the excluded realms of the bodily, the sexual, and the spiritual [...]."[116] Following Sheller's call to embrace the vulgar realm as a strategy for deciphering the jamette's expression of corporeal freedom and resistance, I return—again—to the mundane, often quieted, sometimes vulgar, yet always intimate space of the erotic, winin' body. As an inheritor of these contentious bodily legacies, I have no choice but to directly engage with the phantasmal, yet hostile, residues that always already work to colonize my own black, female, winin' body. In so doing, the layered ways we winers use our "its" to recuperate the residues passed on to us by the jamette figure—in particular, her delegitimized legacy of "bad behavior," her bodily logic, and her attempts at *un*colonization—can remain visible.

Teetering along the limits of resistance and compliance, jametres clearly used their bodies in general, and their "its" in particular, to exercise their erotic subjectivity. Quoting Lyndon Gill, Sheller recognizes erotic subjectivity as "an 'interpretive frame that

[116] Sheller, *Citizenship from Below*, Location 514-533.

highlights the spectacular and quotidian interworking of the political, the sensual and the spiritual.'"[117] Then, in relation to citizenship, she later expresses that erotic subjectivity

> […] not only refers to the struggles for state recognition by excluded subaltern groups who exist 'below' the level of the citizen, as non-citizens, [disenfranchised citizens,] or second-class citizens [...], but also [...] brings into focus the everyday aspects of physical life, the disavowed, and the abject (low class, low life, low brow, low down) that are usually excluded from the 'high' political realm (high class, high politics, high minded, high and mighty).[118]

Thusly, the jamette, always already aware of her "disavowed," "abject," and dire living conditions and the "high minded" political structures that inhibited her from accessing full citizenship and freedom, utilized her own "it" as a space to negotiate her tattered relationship with power, providing just enough agency, just enough wiggle room to *un*colonize. In hopes of providing a space for both *un*colonizing my self and engaging with the erotic subjectivities of the jamette—vis-à-vis everyday familial bonds, friendship alliances, and romantic exchanges—I return to my embodied re-searching for more *tales* of vulgar *tails*. As the remnants of silenced rumors and gossip about jamette-like behavior flow through my veins, I begin to recall moments of embodying freedom, obtaining retribution, reinforcing pleasure, and manifesting agency through strategic uses of the "it." At first, they appear as fleeting fragments, then in brief flashes and passing moments.

In attempt to create space to acknowledge and analyze the importance of these fragmented memories, I now turn to Marta Savigliano's theoretical use of choreocriticism

[117] Ibid., Location 533.

[118] Ibid., Location 609.

and storytelling. In "Fragments for a story of tango bodies," Savigliano introduces her reader to tango bodies through the use of the choreocritic. Savigliano describes choreocriticism as "a critical take on choreography; a choreographic reading of theories and their writings; a critical stance towards theorizing choreographical undertakings; and a choreographic theorization of criticism."[119] Ostensibly, the choreocritic becomes both the academic translator and the culturally immersed informer. From this position, she reveals,

> To tell you the story, I must rely on my imagination. […] I can only do stories, not histories, no matter how much I research. And no matter how many fragments I collect, I can neither leave them alone nor bring them back from the dead. I can only imagine them alive, moving, breathing between my sweaty hands.[120]

Inspired by this approach, I specifically resurrect the story-*tales/tails* that reveal the quieted sensibilities and embodiments of jamettes-past, which remain buried within the story-*tales/tails* of today's winin' bodies, including my very own.

In using choreocriticism to make sense of the jamette muscle memories trapped within my body, I first become imbued with childhood memories of traveling within Trinidad between houses, between grandparents, between the countrysides of Princes Town, Oropouche, and Marabella. I remember being about four and running around the yard, stark naked, with our *bamsees* out for the world to see, as my brothers and I bathed in torrential rain. Between the ages of three and five, I also remember seeing a few of my

[119] Marta E. Savigliano, "Fragments for a Story of Tango Bodies (on Choreocritics and the Memory of Power)," in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power*, ed. by Susan Foster (New York: Routledge, 1996), 200.

[120] Ibid., 199.

neighbors using a bucket of water, soap, and a rag to bathe themselves in their front yards. Public displays of the "it," as it existed in the mundane spaces of my world then, were both ordinary and expected, and more often than not, related to acts of cleanliness. As I continue this embodied self re-search, I begin to realize that the sum of these fragmented memories not only tie me to the embodied consciousness of my jamette ancestors, but they somehow speak to the performative ways the act of winin' operates as a *un*colonizing strategy towards reclaiming oneself.

In hopes of making these fragmentations whole, I shift my focus towards other bodily archives and invite my Trinidadian friends, family, and informants to join me in their own embodied re-searching for mundane memories of "its." My slightly older cousin quickly recalls, "Grandaunts, granduncles, grandparents, and those of the older generation asked to see [the "its"] of their children, grand-children, and great-grand children, boy or girl, it didn't matter." He continues, "And it also didn't matter who was around. It wasn't a sexual thing. It was kind of normal. They just used ["it"] as a marker to see if you were of adult age, if you were developing well, or sometimes just to put you in your place. As if to say, '*Iz I who make dat, so watch yuhself*.'"[121] My mother also recalls witnessing a similar scenario at her grandmother's house when she was about six or seven; her then twenty-one year-old uncle was made to pull down his pants so the adult women in the family could check to see if he was *clean* (read: free of disease) and *growing up nicely* (read: virile and strong). These memories presented the "it" as a

[121] (Whatsapp correspondence, 4/05/2013). Note: here, the phrase "watch yuhself" means to behave yourself.

marker of purity and strength, as well as a claim to one's own children. In effect, in becoming an adult, how one's "it" develops and how one uses their "it" is inextricably linked to one's family name and legacy.

Another auntie of mine remembers being eight years old and winin' on the porch whenever *di neighbah* passed by the house, because my grandmother and that neighbor were not on good terms. My mother further corroborates this story in stating that my grandmother would also hang her panty out on the porch whenever *di neighbah* passed by the house, as a sign of disrespect. Similar to my grandmother's use of the "it," Daniel Miller also states that his informants, most of whom were Afro-creoles, living in low-income urban areas of Trinidad, would sometimes wine during *cuss-out* sessions and arguments as an embodied form of profanity. He reported,

> Within Trinidad wining is associated with the 'cuss-outs' or cursing that can occur especially in low income groups, for example among cohabiting couples. These were still almost daily occurrences within the community of squatters, which was selected as one of the four areas for my fieldwork. Occasionally, they erupt into long confrontations with possible fighting but mainly verbal abuse. Cuss-outs may collect audiences who, if the verbal debate is - as one person put it - 'sweet enough, wine with the sweetness of it', sometimes, as in party wining, lift skirts above their heads to facilitate the action. But this variety of wining has become rare today [read: the late 1980s].[122]

Here, the gyrating "it" stands in as a tool for inflicting shame and embarrassment onto, as well as emotionally tormenting, another person. Evidently, this link between the gyrating "it" and cursing and profanity is a clear example of the residues that our jamette ancestors have left behind, for they offer insight into their bodily logic, which emphasizes the

[122] Miller, "Absolute Freedom," 325.

gyrating "it" as a strategy for exerting and reclaiming power over one's self. Standing in this reclaimed space of remembering, the old wives tales that I grew up listening to or overhearing, often shared amongst the adults as gossip or secrets, begin to swim around in my head.

In continuing to conceptualize the embodiment of the power differentials written into winin', I revisit Savigliano's choreocritical approach to story telling. *Storying*,[123] as we called it when I was growing up in Trinidad, opens up an important space for conceptualizing the complicated embodiments of race, class, sexuality, and gender. Like Savigliano's choreocriticism, my *storying* also presents no "rigid hierarchies or boundaries between facts and fictions,"[124] instead, the focus remains on the corporeal realities of the winer. For through mundane remembering, bodily re-searching, archival embodying, and kinetic *storying*, the ways in which the jamette's corporeal sensibilities haunt the winery of today's Trini/Caribbean reveler get further revealed.

Gordon too reminds us, "the stories people tell about themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and about their society's problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching towards."[125] Further adding to Gordon's postulation, my *storying* draws out the

[123] Storying means that you are telling stories, which can also be interpreted as lying. The line between truth and lies thus remains blurred or obscure.

[124] Savigliano describes choreocritics as "an invitation to imagine stories about people who move for and against each other, articulating webs of power. No rigid hierarchies or boundaries between facts and fictions, the weight of the storyteller's presence and of her present is acknowledged […]." Savigliano, "Fragments for a Story," 199.

[125] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 4.

private labors of the Trini/Caribbean winin' body, which includes the informal yet technical training, the muscle-building, and the physical endurance, as well as the emotional and sexual energies produced, exchanged, and expended. In effect, I tap into the bodily memories that remain etched into our rolling "its" via stories told about past ancestors, cultural practices, and shared intimate experiences. For it is here, inside these story-*tales/tails*, that worlds get crossed and time is warped, such that the jamette ghosts of the past and today's winin' reveler remain eternally linked, both temporally and geographically.

As I see it, my sisters and I have inherited these tales (our tails) from the sins of our jamet fathers and the woes of our jamette mothers. These sc(h)orned[126] *women dwelled in a circle of pain and resistance that seemingly recycled back into the forthcoming generations. Being sc(h)orned, from both men and society, was so expected that all they could do was pass along the stories of their survival, stories that proved to be especially vital for coping with the grief brought on by Caribbean men. These stories, in turn, became tools for survival, cleverly disguised within entertaining anecdotes and oldwives tales, such that even men found themselves sharing the legendary tales.*

My two cousins, Oneika and Sherry-lyn, and myself somehow all found ourselves huddled around the holiday rum punch when I heard Anthony, or tall man as we always called him, yell out to us, "Wha' allyuh put in di corn soup? It tastin' rel sweet boy! And meh faddah tell meh dat sweet-tastin' soup could lead to yuh death boy." I burst into an obnoxious laugh as he filled his bowl with my aunty's famous corn soup. My US-born cousins, however, could not find the joke in his statement. With a puzzled look on my face, I exclaimed, "You neva hear dem ole woman and dem talk about Gramoxone (pronounced Gram-ah-zone)?" I waited for them to respond but was only met with silence and blank expressions. "What," I exclaimed, "None ah all'yuh hear 'bout gramazone? Hmmm, all'yuh rel Yankee boy! Well, I remember hearing about gramazone as a little girl growing up in Trinidad. What can I say, dat was di kinda ting dey used to talk about in di countryside." I laughed. With our cups now filled with the rum punch, tall man chimed in, "Gramazone, young ladies, is a type of poison. Rat poison, I tink." I then jumped in, "Oh! daiz what it was supposed to be used for? Hahahahaa! To kill rats? Hahahaha. I just thought it was specifically used to 'fix' dem men dem. Di amount of

[126] Here I am playing on the term "horn," meaning to cheat on a significant other (see glossary).

times I hear dem ole woman talkin' about wanting to use against their husbands; so I just assumed that that was its sole purpose." And, as if almost saying it to herself, Sherry-lyn whispered, "What you mean by 'fix'?" I looked straight into her innocent face and replied with care, "Dat is when you 'teach' someone a lesson out of spite or to give him good grief. I rememba Ms. Evelyn used to say, 'If yuh man eva trouble yuh, doh 'fraid tuh put some gramzone in he ass, yuh hear,' every time I passed by her house. I guess Mista Alleyne used to give she rel horn and she was tired of having to deal with it. God rest her soul, but that woman was a bag a trouble, oui. She used to say, 'All you hafta do is cook up a big pot a soup, just for him! And doh forget to put in di works, like cowheel, provision, dumplin' and ting. Now all you need is a drop or so of gramazone; yuh cyah put too much in it at once 'cause den he might be able to smell or taste it. And what sense it make tellin' him you trying to poison him? Hahahaaa! Di point is to remain undetected! So what if it takes a year or more, patience is a virtue. Once enough gramazone build up in his gut, you is a free woman oui! FREE! Hahahahaaa!' And so it would go; every time mommy and I passed by Ms. Evelyn's house, she would somehow work gramazone into di conversation. I mean, I was no more than four years old, but I could never forget her obsession with solving her man troubles with a drop of gramazone!"

My great aunty then walked in the room to pour herself another glass of puncheon when she noticed the shocked look on her daughters' faces. With a chuckle, she looked at me and asked, "Wha' you tell dem Danz?" Without any shame, I retorted, "I just told them about putting gramazone in soup …" She then cut across me and asked, "Who told you about such tings? What you know about gramazone?" Claiming innocence, I said, "I just repeating stories that I remember overhearing when I was young. Like I rememba my grandfaddah tellin' us about parching shit?" Unable to hold it in, my great aunty burst out in laughter! "What kinda shit comin' outta your mout' right now gyul!" (Yeah, my great aunty loved to curse.) I quickly continued, "I know right! You eva hear about dem kinda ting?" She replied, "Yeah, but you too young to know about dat." I then asked, "But why would someone even want to touch shit, let alone parch it?" She couldn't seem to answer me, so I continued, "According to granddaddy, the story goes like this: One of his neighbours used to fix his wife good. Meaning that he used to rel beat she, for any and every thing. But for some reason, she never seemed to mind it much, or at least so it seemed. She clearly knew something that her husband didn't; but doh worry, he would soon to find out. One day, he came home from work earlier than usual, and found his wife still in the kitchen rushing to finish preparing his meal. However, this day, his food had a pungently vile smell and tasted no better. So he asked his wife why his food was so foul, and of course she dared not to answer. And dat was di end a dat! I not too sure what happened after he found out, but as the story goes, he rel put a hurting on her that day. Anyone could tell just by smelling his plate that she had put shit in his food. You see, every day after her husband left for work, she would take a shit and set it ablaze on the stove; then when it parched up, she would grate it into his food. The logic was that dried shit would blend easily into food, as it was more manageable and less foul than fresh shit." There was an awkward pause as the others attempted to deal with the scope of both

serving and eating shit. Oneika then exclaimed, "WOW! She must have relly hated him to go through di trouble of taking her shit out of the toilet, placing it in a pot, and thoroughly parching it; in addition to cooking the entire meal for her husband whilst tending to her daily chores around the house. Now dat is what yuh call dedication!" We responded with laughter!

Amongst the laughter and spilled drinks, my grand aunty decided to share a tale that her mother once shared with her. She began, "I was twenty-one when mummy told me about sweatin' rice. I had just broken up with my first ever boyfriend, Charlie, who had a wandering eye. With a straight face, she wiped my tears away and said, 'Doh waste your tears babez. Next man yuh catch, make sure and serve him a delicious plate of sweated rice. He could neva run around on you after that.' She then continued to explain, 'My aunty, who my mother never liked because she used to get on wassy and disgraced the family name with her loose behavior, told me once that di man who ate di sweated rice of a woman would have eaten the essence of that woman. By eating her essence, that man would then be unable to walkout on her or wander into another woman's bed.' Or someting like dat. The way my aunty explained it, you first have to stand ova a freshly cooked pot of rice wearing a long skirt and no underwear. As di steam from di rice rose up your skirt, your 'womanly essence' is supposed to fall back into the rice. Some women used to put the freshly made rice in their posie (or bed-pan) and sit right on top of it to make sure none of their 'essence' was lost during the sweating process." After some silence, Sherry-lyn coyly asked, "Mummy, do you think that would work?" Unable to answer the question, we all burst out in laughter until we found ourselves too tired to carryon.

Linden Lewis reminds us, it is through these processes "of socialization [that Caribbean] people [have] come to understand and internalize specific meanings of the body, of gender and sexuality, and establish the norms of socially acceptable behaviors."[127] Similar to many parts of the Caribbean, in Trinidad, the "it" in general, and the female "it" in particular, is recognized as something both sweet and dangerous. In effect, the female "it" as a site for rectifying troubled interpersonal power dynamics is not only culturally reified, but the embodiment of such beliefs lays bare both the silenced

[127] Linden Lewis, ed., "Exploring the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and Culture in the Caribbean: An Introduction," in *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in The Caribbean* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003), 13.

residues that continue to haunt the winin' bodies of today's Trini/Caribbean revelers, in addition to the complex relationships modern-day winers maintain with notions of pride, shame, and their rolling "its." Consequentially, these story-*tales/tails* of the "it" remain integral to the multiple ways the "it" can, and does, operate within Trini/Caribbean communities in general, and during Trini-styled Carnivals in particular.

As previously noted, jamettes used their "its" to interrupt the public space through performances of vulgar carnival masquerades; they did the same with regards to their private and intimate lives, as demonstrated in the above tales. With regards to the erotic politics of the jamettes' "it" that resonates within each roll of the wine, the "it" becomes the lens through which one retains an embodied awareness of the self and of the world within which one exists. In other words, this consciousness, or embodied sense of being, promotes the active, moving, corpo**real** "it" as a tool of resistance. Often acknowledged as a site of power and fear, where life and death is always possible, within the Caribbean context, the female "it" is especially revered and feared for its dangerous charm. In effect, the logic behind today's multiple uses of the "it" remains deeply informed by these disavowed, sometimes embarrassing, yet always intimate residues of the jamette's "it." Ultimately, in using these jamette-*tails/tales* as my own version of choreocriticism, the rolling "it" is revealed as always already rooted within the sociohistorical conditions that the "it" itself both expresses and produces,[128] especially with regards to the black female "it."

[128] Theoretical framing influenced by Savigliano, "Fragments for a Story," 200.

Although the jamette's corporeal legacies remain historicized and re-produced within the spectacular space of Carnival, my intention here was to visibilize the ways in which the spectacular "it" was always already situated within and informed by the intimate and mundane ways the "it" itself is both experienced and understood. Connecting to the *shitty* iteration of the pisse-en-lit mas' (the chie-en-lit) to the above tale of 'parching shit,' the *gutted* version of the Dame Lorraine mas' (with engorged guts) to the above tale of 'Gramazone,' and the baby doll mas' (shaming her philandering lover) to the above tale of 'sweating rice,' the erotic subjectivity and mundane uses of the jamette's "it" reveal the important ways in which the spectacularly gyrating "it" stems from quotidian practices of embodying agency and resisting oppression. In other words, by rooting the wine's subversive, liberatory potential outside of the spectacular space of Carnival, the layered ways winers continue to navigate the co-optive attempts to freeze their winin' bodies within violent and oppressive spaces can be accessed. Thusly, through these dismissed and almost forgotten story-*tales* of jamette-*tails*, the "it" gets re-imagined, re-claimed, and re-presented as an important mediator and marker of erotic power and agency—whether it be the power dynamics between family, between lovers, between neighbors, or between children and adults.

CONNECTING THE WININ' DOTS: TRANSLATING THE MUNDANE AND SPECTACULAR POLITICS OF WININ', CARIB[*BEING*]NESS, AND THE TRINI-STYLED CARNIVAL

In recognition of the countless number of historically muted *tales/tails* written into the Trini/Caribbean rolling "it," I now wonder, how I am to analyze today's winin' revelry? What exactly is winin'? What exactly is happening on the dance floor, *on di road*, that causes many to call the act of rolling "it" liberating or freeing? As revealed in the previous chapter, the wine demands a more complex answer than the "cookie-cutter" responses usually given to me when asking Carnival revelers about winin'—such as, "*Dis is we ting,*" or "It's just our culture," or "It's how we express ourselves and have a good time during Carnival." Because there are an infinite amount of registers through which the wine can both be performed and comprehended, there is clearly too much that can be lost in translation. Gayatri Spivak advises,

> She [the translator] must solicit the text to show the limits of its language, because [...] no amount of tough talk can get around the fact that translation is the most intimate act of reading. Unless the translator has earned the right to become the intimate reader, she cannot surrender to the text, cannot respond to the special call of the text.[1]

Following Spivak's counsel, if I am to translate the text of the winin' "it," I first need to surrender to the intimacy cultivated within the complex negotiations winin' Trini/Caribbeans make with each and every thrust and gyration. Combining this with a dance studies perspective, the following acts of translations work to reveal the winin' Trini/Caribbean body as a bodily writing that is constantly being read and misread by

[1] Gayatri Spivak, *Outside In The Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 183.

spectators as it is simultaneously re-presenting corporeal meanings about itself and the other rolling "its" it encounters. Hence, what is to come next requires me to cross clashing borders of transgression, enter private spaces, and stay attentive to the rolls, spins, gyrations, thrusts, and jiggles of every Trini/Caribbean's "its."

An introduction to my translations: The Trini-styled Carnival means different things to different people. For some, it is about getting to dress-up in elaborate yet skimpy costumes and showing off their bodies, or rather embodying self-proclaimed notions of sexiness, beauty, and erotic power. For others, it is definitely about limin' and fettin', or as one of my informants put it, "This year I'm searching for an epic wine!"[2] Then there are those who romanticize it as the epitome of Trinidadian*ness*, while others appreciate it as a space for all Caribbean people to come together and proudly show off their various cultures to the world. And of course there are those who look forward to spending the season with their close friends, lovers, and/or family, whilst others relish in the anonymity of the festivities. The lyrics to the 2013 soca hit "Stranger" explains this sentiment best: "*Nuttin' eh wrong, with ah stranga! Winin' on ah stranga, jammin' on ah Strangaaaahhhh!*"[3] In other words, the festival itself fosters spontaneous human-connections that can either be fleeting and in the moment, or set roots for long-lasting friendships and/or love partnerships to blossom.

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[2] Kambon Mason (2014 Trinidadian J'Ouvert participant) in casual conversation with author, March 2, 2014.

[3] "Stranger," written by Kambon Rigault & Darryl Henry (Trinidadian) and performed by Darryl "Farmer Nappy" Henry (Trinidadian), this was a popular soca song released for the 2013 Trinidadian Carnival season. Lyrics transcribed by author. To hear song, see: Riddimcracker™ Chunes, "Farmer Nappy - Stranger [Soca 2013]," YouTube video, 4:10, posted on November 27, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOVnrMjKfKw&feature=youtu.be.

For me, the winin' dance ethnographer who remains determined to decolonize—yet recognizes that, given the ubiquity of heteropatriarchal systems of power, all she can really do is *un*colonize—Carnival is about all of the above: from looking gorgeous as I play mas' to limin' with friends, as well as winin' *on* and *with*[4] as many worthy contenders as I can find. *On di road*, my winery, my masquerading, my jumping and waving all become acts of *un*colonization. As I dance towards the sweaty ecstasy of Carnival, my winery provides a myriad of pleasure-filled constructions of Carib[*being*]ness, erotic agency, and citizenship.[5] Simply put, Carnival is the space where I can imagine and re-imagine my own winin' body, in relation to other winin' (and non-winin') bodies, in an infinite number of ways.

As stated in the introductory chapter, my intention is not to confine the wine solely to the space of the Trini-styled Carnival, for that invisibilizes the ways in which winin' still remains sewn into the daily fabrics of winers' livelihoods. Instead, this chapter is my attempt to translate some of the inconspicuous ways winin' participates in the transnational project of representing Trinidad, specifically through Trini/Caribbeans' maintenance and promotion of, as well as their participation in, the Trini-styled Carnival, which is Trinidad's largest culturally exported event. In order to do so, I also call

[4] The said difference between winin' "on" versus winin' "with" a partner is permission. If someone does not give their permission for you to wine with them, you are said to be winin' on them (as they are not willing participants). This is also known as *teifin'* (thieving) a wine. Most of the time, such interactions are playful and easily forgiven.

[5] Here I am influenced by Mimi Sheller's argument that "the historian of freedom who seeks traces of subaltern agency must also look beneath conventional definitions of political agency and of citizenship and seek out the unexcavated field of embodied (material and spiritual) practices through which people exercise and envision freedom […]." She later explains that such embodied practices are rooted within the domain of erotic agency. Mimi Sheller, *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), Kindle edition, Location 259.

attention to the contentious ways winin' is used to embody the performative state of Carib[*being*]ness. Heretofore, I translate the spectacular aspects of winin' by foregrounding the mundane, microscopic, and invisibilized complexities of the Trini/Caribbean rolling "it." This offers a nuanced lens through which my reader can conceptualize the various ways winers access feelings of *being* Caribbean via public and private means. Ultimately, this chapter deciphers the contentious uses, comprehensions, and results of winin' outside, inside, and alongside the dynamic spaces of the Trini-styled Carnival in order to call attention to the variegated ways Carib[*being*]ness is actually embodied and performed.

TRINI TO DI BONE?: THE TRUTHS AND *TALES/TAILS* ABOUT THE CARIB[*BEING*] WININ' "IT" AND THE TRINI-STYLED CARNIVAL

Scholars and journalists[6] reporting on the Trinidadian Carnival have argued that Trinidadians, perhaps more so than other Caribbean people, are a Carnival people, which further alludes to the idea that Trinidadians revel in the celebrated aspects of the *carnivalesque*, both within the spectacular and mundane spaces of their lives, especially in terms of time (Trini time vs. clock time),[7] mockery (i.e., picong or fatigue),[8] laughter,

[6] See Peter Mason (1998), Daniel Miller (1991), and Milla Riggio (2004).

[7] As explained by Riggio, "(1) "Trini time" [is] loose and playful, keyed to seasons of festivity, celebrating the resistance to and triumph over enslavement, and affirming a stubborn independence and refusal to be governed even by the tyranny of the clock; and (2) "clock time" [is] measuring labor and guaranteeing the island's place in the multinational flow of capital. This dual rhythm is one dynamic at the heart of Trinbago culture." Milla Riggio, "Resistance and Identity: Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago," *The Drama Review* 42, no. 3 (1998): 8.

[8] Picong or fatigue is a way of insulting in a jesting manner; a form of verbal warfare, similar to African-American tradition of the dozens, that is most commonly associated with ol'-time calypso.

and what I term a *fete*-ish mentality (i.e., a constant desire to party). Effectively, as one of Trinidad's most exported "commodity spectacles,"[9] the Trini-styled Carnival has become a tool for autoexotifying,[10] or rather self-*fete*-ishizing the winin' body. Moreover, although this nuance remains indiscernible to the *foreigner's* gaze, within the space of the Trini-styled Carnival, the winin' body not only becomes a marker of Carib[*being*]ness in general, but also a marker of Trinidadian*ness* more particularly.

A first attempt at translation: Journalist Peter Mason writes, "Many countries have a carnival, but Carnival *is* Trinidad—and Trinidad *is* Carnival."[11] Following the years of Trinidad's independence in 1962 through to the present, Carnival has become the space through which complex re-negotiations and shapings of Trinidadian*ness* have taken place. During Trinidad and Tobago's nascent years of independence from the British, the ruling class decided to refashion *Trinbagonian* national culture, via Afro-Trinidadian cultural endeavors,[12] in order to produce an attractive product for national preservation

[9] Here I am influenced by Anne McClintock's use of the term in her book *Imperial Leather*, which focuses on the spectacle of commodification. Here, she discusses the ways in which visual advertisements and pageantry during the colonial era and thereafter were used to not only sell commodities, but also deploy national commonality, racism, misogyny, and Imperialism. See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 208ff.

[10] Marta Savigliano's theoretical framing of the Argentinean tango influences me here. She explains that the colonial gaze maintains the power to exoticize, "and this is the lens through which local [Argentinean] admirers would see" themselves. Exoticism and autoexoticism, therefore, "are interrelated outcomes of the colonial encounter, an encounter that is asymmetric in terms of power." Marta Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1995), 75 and 153.

[11] (Emphasis added) Peter Mason, *Bacchanal!: The Carnival Culture of Trinidad* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 7.

[12] Here I am pointing to the fact that Trinidad and Tobago are two different islands with quite disparate colonial histories. Carnival, however, is particular to the island of Trinidad and not Tobago; but because these two islands have come to represent one nation, Carnival must also represent Tobago.

and international consumption. The first Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, initially worked to weaken any interest in tourism—by concentrating

> […] on developing heavy industries, small manufacturing and agriculture by drawing on Trinidad's considerable oil and natural gas resources. [However] the changes in the international economy [during the late 1960s, in addition to the] social unrest and civil strife [forged] by the Black Power uprisings,[13] […] compelled the reluctant Williams to [invest in] tourism[, which] offered not only an alternative source of revenue but also a way of bolstering a sense of national unity.[14]

This affect of national connectivity further championed the spectacularization of winin' *dong di streets ah Ca'nival*, especially by women (starting from the 1970s and thereafter).[15] Through this deep integration into the spectacular realm of the Trinidadian Carnival, the exported versions of this Carnival (i.e., Trini-styled Carnivals) now act as important spaces, supported to some degree by *foreign* state institutions,[16] for the public display of one's winin' skills and thus their right to be *here*, in *foreign* places.

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[13] I am also interested in the Black Power movement that flowed through Trinidad in the 60s and 70s vis-à-vis US Black Consciousness movements. Sara Abraham notes that one of the rhetoric surrounding the movement was that Blackness (in Trinidad) included Indians. Abraham quotes, "The leading banner read 'Indians and Africans Unite Now'. The Black marchers swore, "We pledge to create Brotherhood and Unity between brother and brother, between the two Black races of Trinidad and Tobago" Sara Abraham, *Labour and the Multiracial Project in the Caribbean: Its History and Its Promise* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 98.

[14] Garth L. Green, "Marketing the Nation: Carnival and tourism in Trinidad and Tobago," *Critique of Anthropology* 22, no. 3 (2002): 296.

[15] For more information on the feminization of Carnival, see note 29 in the Introduction chapter. Also see Samantha A. Noel, *Carnival is Woman!: Gender, Performance and Visual Culture in Contemporary Trinidad Carnival* (Doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 2009), 177-80.

[16] All the Trini-styled Carnivals that either my informants and/or I participated in had parade permits; some even had some financial support from the local municipalities (namely the Brooklyn Carnival and the now defunct Los Angeles Carnival).

Perhaps this is why Trinidad and Trinidadians continue to claim a large stake in how Carnivals in the Diaspora are produced, especially due to their belief that Carnival is an important representation of Trinidadian cultural legacies and traditions, which includes the soca music that my friends and I wine-up to *'pon di roads abroad*. In fact, Trinidad's influence on, or even infiltration of, other Carnivals, both within the Caribbean and its Diaspora, has further solidified Trini-styled Carnivals as a necessary space where multiple Caribbean identities continue to be hashed out and realized. Trinidadian scholar Keith Nurse reports that by 1999 there were over 60 Trini-styled Carnivals transplanted to cities throughout North America and Europe,[17] which includes all the sites frequented by my informants. In accordance, many Trinidadians argue that when it comes to Caribbean Carnivals abroad, all roads lead to Trinidad. Knowing that is a very controversial statement, and that all of my non-Trini informants will especially curse me out for even making such a statement, my intention here is not to create a controversial, monolithic genealogy of the Caribbean Carnivals abroad, but rather to underscore the purposeful ways producers of these Carnivals situate Trinidad as *the* source, *the* originator, and *the* "mother" of all Caribbean Carnivals.

Trinidad-born feminist scholar Patricia De Freitas helps to elucidate my idea in her discussion on the ways in which the Trinidadian Carnival is produced, marketed, and represented at the national level. She proclaims that

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[17] Keith Nurse, "Globalization in Reverse: Diaspora and the Export of Trinidad Carnival," in *Carnival: Culture in Action—the Trinidad Experience*, ed. Milla Cozart Riggio (New York: Routledge, 2004), 247. Please note that this number is constantly changing. Since I began my research in 2009, the number of Trini-styled Carnivals in the US and Europe has fluctuated as new festivals were established—in Hollywood (2012) and Phoenix (2012), for example—while others became temporarily defunct due to funding or support—including the East Orange, NJ and DC/Baltimore Carnivals in 2012.

> […] the producers of Carnival, concerned with projecting a Self that is distinctively Other, have been concerned with packaging a Self that would sell internationally to those who scavenge the earth in search of new experiences […]. With the 'masculine' values of rationalism, competition, and work appropriated by industrialized nations, the Trinidadian Self is represented in popular nationalist narratives as sweet, sensual, playful, exotic, and beautiful. In Trinidad and elsewhere, these are the distinctive attributes of femininity.[18]

Similarly, the producers of these Trini-styled Carnivals also seek to establish their version of the "commodity spectacle" as a powerful space that is recognized by both the Caribbean communities both at *home* (i.e., in the Caribbean) and *abroad* (i.e., within the Caribbean Diaspora), as well as by the *foreign* host community within which it exists. As a result, producers and mas' makers regularly curate the Trini-styled Carnival in ways that do not: 1. usurp the more "masculine" traits of their host (*foreign*) nation, or 2. out-do the "feminized" traits of the Carnival's *home* nation (specifically Trinidad).

In his discussion on the Carnival network maintained between New York and Trinidad, Philip Scher argues, "Although not always recognised as Trinidadian by observers [and in some cases, its participants], many of these festivals are run by Trinidadians or have had Trinidadians prominent in their leadership and organisation, as well as in the production of costumes and music and as masqueraders on the street."[19] In effect, due to the particular bloodlines of those organizing the Carnivals abroad, a prominent connection to Trinidad is relentlessly nurtured and reified as the vital source of

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[18] Patricia A. De Freitas, "Disrupting 'The Nation': Gender Transformations in the Trinidad Carnival," *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 73, no. 1 and 2 (1999): 20.

[19] Philip Scher, "From the Metropole to the Equator: Carnival Consciousness between New York and Trinidad," in *Globalisation, Diaspora and Caribbean Popular Culture*, eds. Christine GT Ho and Keith Nurse (Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), 45.

this cultural spectacle. For example, in 2001, the official website for the West Indian American Day Carnival Association, Inc. (WIADCA)—the organization that organizes, oversees, and preserves the festivities of the Trini-styled Carnival in Brooklyn—situated their Carnival as being a direct offspring of the Trinidadian Carnival. It stated: "New York's Carnival is the largest and oldest of over 100 Carnivals spawned from Trinidad and Tobago's 225-year-old 'Mother of all Carnivals'."[20] Even in 2015, the WIADCA was accused of discriminating against other Caribbean cultures:

> Organizers of the West Indian Day Parade are making sure it's run by a Trinidadian majority, say critics who are charging discrimination. The West Indian American Day Carnival Association, which organizes the annual Labor Day event along Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway, has raked in more than $1 million in city, state and federal funds over the past five years, but the nonprofit isn't inclusive enough to deserve taxpayer dough, according to [accuser] Rickford Burke, the head of the Caribbean Guyana Institute for Democracy.[21]

With regards to the Los Angeles Cultural Festival (LACF)—initially promoted to those within the Caribbean community simply as Hollywood Mas'—Keron Adams, the Trinidad-born entrepreneur accredited and promoted as the "mastermind" behind the LACF, went on *Good Day LA* on Wednesday, June 27, 2012 to promote the inaugural event. From about 6:30 am to 10 am, there were about 4 "interludes" that featured the different elements one was to expect at the "first ever Caribbean Heritage Festival," as it

[20] Ibid., 54.

[21] Michael Gartland and Rich Calder, "Organizers of West Indian Day Parade Accused of Discrimination," *The New York Post*, last modified August 31, 2015, http://nypost.com/2015/08/31/organizers-of-west-indian-day-parade-accused-of-discrimination/.

was erroneously named by one of the show's in-studio anchors.[22] These expected elements included winin' women (of various ages and sizes, and from various Caribbean nations)[23] adorned in bright, feathered costumes, steelpan music performed by the Pan All Stars band, and a wide variety of Caribbean inspired foods.

During the final segment, the host, Mar Yvette, inquires, "When a lot of people think of Carnivals, they think of Brazil, they think of Rio de Janeiro; but this is all about the Caribbean Carnival, right?" Adams then explains, "Correct. This is our Caribbean Carnival. Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace, the mother of all Caribbean Carnivals. And it has been exported all over the world! Europe! Canada! […] New York and Miami. And this is the first time we are bringing it here, to the Mecca of entertainment, which is Hollywood!"[24] He then continues to explain the time and location of the day's main events, after which Yvette joins in and exclaims, "You don't have to be Caribbean to attend. I'm an honorary Caribbean for the day […];" and with that, she closes the

[22] During the show, the LACF was also erroneously named the "first ever Caribbean Pride Festival" by another one of the in-studio hosts. I conjecture that because terms like mas' or Carnival, which often incites images of Brazil, if not clowns, funnel cakes, and oversized Ferris wheels, have different or no cultural currency within in the popular US space, the term Hollywood Mas' or Carnival did not translate well on air, so the in-studio hosts sought to address this gap by renaming the event on more than one occasion. For edited version of the "interludes," see: Mar Yvette, "Caribbean Parade & Carnival in Hollywood," Filmed June 27, 2012, YouTube video, 9:02, posted June 28, 2012, https://youtu.be/U6j1VqupUgI.

[23] Although none of the masqueraders wore flags that revealed their Caribbean bloodlines, I personally knew that at least two of them were not Trinidadian, one was Belizean and the other was from Dominica.

[24] It is important to state that prior to the Hollywood Carnival, there was already a Caribbean Carnival held annually near the LAX airport. That is where my fieldwork began in 2009. It was run by a Jamaican woman, and according to gossip, many of the prominent promoters within the Caribbean community, especially the Trinidadians, did not think she was presenting the (Trini) culture well. Moreover, many complained that the people in the neighborhood, where the Carnival was held, did not want us there; in turn, the masqueraders felt as if they were being perceived as a neighborhood nuisance.

segment by dancing with the gyrating masqueraders to the sounds of soca in the background.

It is important to note that in these very short segments, the viewer was "taught" several things about the upcoming event: 1. that Caribbean culture is inclusive and multi-cultural; anyone can be an honorary Caribbean for a day if they are willing to perform the part (e.g., wine to soca music); 2. that Caribbean Carnivals are performative spaces where women and men wear elaborate costumes that can vary from fully covering the body to bikini inspired adornments, all whilst rolling, swaying, or shaking your hips to "festive" music (no one explained what soca music was, although it played throughout the final two segments); and most importantly, 3. that the Caribbean Carnival and many of its notable elements, such as winin' masqueraders and steelpan music, were birthed in the country of Trinidad and Tobago. It is this positioning of Trinidad as vital to the crafting of all the major Caribbean Carnivals throughout the Diaspora (namely Brooklyn, Notting Hill, Toronto, and Miami) and the promoting of this belief *as if* it were an uncontested fact that is problematic, especially because it constructs a false narrative that trivializes the important and distinctive histories and traditions that are particular to other Caribbean nations. However, it does point the ways in which Trinidad and Trinidadians are in the

"business" of Carnival, especially with regards to the standardization of the Trini-styled Carnival.[25]

When it comes to winin' *on di road*, many of my Trini informants often assert that there are rights and wrongs, do's and don't's, successes and failures. In fact, because a successful Trini-styled Carnival is always already imagined as having winin' revelers, during my fieldwork it was very common for me to see Trinis take the time to teach a foreigner—read: any non-Caribbean or sometimes any person whose winin' skills seemed to be "off" or *outta timin'*—how to fit into *di scene* by giving them "free," *on-di-spot* winin' lessons. Whether at a fete or *on di road fuh Ca'nival*, when it comes to winin' one's "it," Trini winers work hard to maintain a high quality wine.[26] Even soca songs (from Trinidad) spread narratives about the importance of winin' during the Carnival season as vital to the "authentic" performance of Trinidadian*ness*:

"Ah Trini"[27]
I partin' 'til it rain (na-na-na)
I dressin' up in meh red, white, an' black
I doh care what nobody say
Every carnival ah done dey

[25] Garth L. Green, "'Come to Life': Authenticity, Value, and the Carnival as Cultural Commodity in Trinidad and Tobago," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 14, no. 1-2 (2007): 203. In this article, Green focuses on the effects of "objectification on the Carnival of Trinidad and Tobago." Specifically he calls attention to "cultural nationalists," who seek to solidify national culture by authenticating some forms and traditions over others. In so doing, the Trinidadian Carnival becomes "standardized," such that certain "cultural products and practices" become markers of authenticity and cultural value.

[26] Often such preparation were informal (e.g., winin' in front of the mirror), but sometimes my informants would take formal classes that were specifically geared towards preparing the body for Carnival This included classes such as Island Groove's Carnival Bootcamp in Los Angeles or Socacize classes in Trinidad.

[27] Written and performed by Rodney "Benjai" LeBlanc for the 2011 Trinidadian Carnival season. Lyrics transcribed by author.

Plus I know all artists and all di mas' bands
Dem say I mad an' I bad
I telling you
Where ah from?
I from Trinidad and Tobago
I'zah Trini
Ah Trini

"Like ah Trinidadian"[28]
Whey yuh from? (I doh care!)
Whey yuh from? (It doh matta!)
[…]
Jus' get-on, get-on, get-on, get-on, get-on
Like Ah Trinidadian!
We love to wuk
Wukkin' up
We love to jump
Jumpin' up
We love to wave, misbehave
Meet we on di stage

"Trini To Di Bone"[29]
Welcome, welcome one and all to the land of fete
Trini to di bone, Trini to di bone
When it come to bacchanal, well they cyah beat we yet
Trini to di bone, Trini to di bone
Look sweet women parade abundantly
The bredren dey full ah energy
Some people say God is ah Trini

Effectively, in staying true to this discourse, when *on di road*, the performance of Trinidadian*ness* must include winin'. Within the logic of the Trini-styled Carnival, to roll one's "it" during Carnival itself is recoded as behaving *like* a Trinidadian. A sentiment that is also echoed in the above lyrics, which further contend that: 1. Trinis party even if

[28] Written and produced by Andrew "Hitz" Phillip for the 2013 Trinidadian Carnival season, but performed by Kes The Band. Lyrics transcribed by author.

[29] Written and performed by David Rudder and Carl Jacobs for the 2003 Trinidadian Carnival season. Lyrics transcribed by author.

it rains or if people call them crazy or bad, 2. Trinis know how to wuk, jump, and misbehave on the stage, and 3. Trinidad is the place where people know how to party.

According to Anne McClintock, such objectified representations, "make real" the experience of nationalism. McClintock explains:

> In our time, national collectivity is experienced preeminently through spectacle […] Indeed, the singular power of nationalism since the late nineteenth century […] has been its capacity to organize a sense of popular, collective unity through the management of mass national *commodity spectacle*. […] In this respect, nationalism inhabits the realm of fetishism. […] More often than not, nationalism takes shape through the visible, ritual organization of fetish objects—flags, uniforms … maps, anthems … national cuisines, [national dances, music,] and architectures as well as through the organization of collective fetish spectacle—in team sports, military displays, mass rallies, the myriad forms of popular culture and so on.[30]

Explicitly, like a waving flag, when the winin' masquerader performs their sense of Carib[*being*]ness within the logic of the Trini-styled Carnival, they then stand in as a fetishized representation of the Trini-styled Carnival itself. Ultimately—and do forgive me for the cr**ass** pun—the act of winin' *dong di streets ah Ca'nival* remains cir**cum**scribed by the creative and playful traditions often **ass**ociated with Trinidad.

My point is, because these Caribbean Carnivals are curated by Trinidadians who are especially influenced by the Carnival in Trinidad, the event itself works to uphold, support, and reproduce values that are recognized as important aspects of Trinidad's

[30] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 374-5.

Carnival, as opposed to that of other Caribbean nations.[31] This stance further positions all those who wine *fuh di* Trini-styled Carnival as active members of a Trinidadian driven transnation. Scher defines the transnation as an interactive space that results from the ongoing relationship that is maintained between those *abroad* and those back *home*. He explains, "What must be present is an active and ongoing interaction with the home nation in several spheres, including economic ties, ideological ties, and cultural ties."[32] Also embedded in this process, Scher continues, "is a constant negotiation surrounding the construction of national or ethnic identity," which is then used to mold the "creation of a public life […] and image" for the diasporic group.[33] Using Scher's definition of the transnation as an active space where identities, ideologies, and cultural practices are hashed out, the instability of the transnation itself remains in the foreground. As Linden Lewis reminds us, "Though many speak very loosely about Caribbean culture, as though it were a homogenous entity, it remains a contested site on closer examination."[34] In staying present to this "internal" conflict—where various modes of Carib[*being*]ness are made to confront the propagated constructions of the Diasporic Carnivals as always

[31] Here are some examples of unaccounted for differences. Many aspects of Dominica's Carnival, uphold values and traditions of their indigenous population, the Caribs. Junkanoo, also referred to as the Bahamian Carnival, is rooted in the Christmas celebrations of Africans during the time of slavery. Lastly, Crop Over, also known as the Barbadian Carnival, stems from the harvest ceremonies and celebrations that began during slavery. The list of course can go on; nevertheless, none of these traits or values have been used to curate the Caribbean Carnivals in Brooklyn or Hollywood, for example.

[32] Scher, "From the Metropole to the Equator," 46.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Linden Lewis, ed., "Exploring the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality, and Culture in the Caribbean: An Introduction," in *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in The Caribbean* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003), 13.

already rooted in Trinidadian traditions—my next translation seeks to interrogate the ways in which Trini-styled Carnivals have somehow emerged as a basis for asserting a seemingly coherent (Trini/)Caribbean[35] (trans)nation.[36]

CRYPTIC TONGUES: DECIPHERING THE WININ' WORK OF CARIB[*BEING*]NESS

A second attempt at translation: With the number of patrons frequenting the Carnival festivities starting in the hundreds and continuing up to about two million,[37] the significant number of Trini/Caribbeans *winin' dong in dem streets fuh di Ca'nival* points to the importance of the transnational space of Carnival to Caribbeans living in the Diaspora. In the blog post "The West Indian Day Parade: An Island Woman's Perspective," Arlene Roberts, a Trinidad-born "attorney turned policy analyst"[38] argues that her "favorite holiday remains Labor Day," and she chooses "to celebrate it in

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[35] In Keith Nurse's discussion on the sustained global exportation of the Trinidadian Carnival, he argues that Carnival promotes and supports a "pan-" Caribbean identity, not "Trini/." (See note 13 in the introduction for discussion on "Trini/".) Keith Nurse, "Globalization and Trinidad Carnival: Diaspora, Hybridity and Identity in Global Culture," *Cultural Studies* 13, no. 4 (1999): 680.

[36] Clearly the Caribbean is *not* a nation or even a homogeneous community. However, my intention here is to convey the ways in which Caribbean people's identities get homogenized *as if* the Caribbean (namely the non-Spanish speaking countries) is one place, especially within the US imagination. For example, in representing my own Trinidadian*ness* during Carnival, I simultaneously represent Caribbean*ness* to the outside (read: colonizing) eye. Silvio Torres-Saillant explains that within the United States, there is a rule of homogeneity, "the presumption that we have one root, not many, [such] that, as counterintuitive as it may sound, to claim more than one origin is to be less." In turn, my national sense of belonging to one nation performatively reads as a generalized iteration of many nations, simply known as "The Caribbean." Silvio Torres-Saillant, "One and Divisible: Meditations on Global Blackness," *Small Axe* 29:13, no. 2 (2009): 14.

[37] Keith Nurse, "Popular Culture and Cultural Industry: Identity and Commodification in Caribbean Popular Music," in *Globalisation, Diaspora and Caribbean Popular Culture*, eds. Christine GT Ho and Keith Nurse (Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), 328.

[38] "Arlene M. Roberts," *The Huffington Post*, first accessed Dec 7, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arlene-m-roberts/.

Brooklyn" because it is the only time of the year that "a stretch of Eastern Parkway, from Utica Avenue to Grand Army Plaza, is transformed into a temporary stage showcasing music, talent and culture from across the Caribbean."[39] In fact, her decade-long, ritual participation in the Carnival event has become such a staple in her life that it has even become integral to her relationship with her younger sister as well as with the Brooklyn Caribbean community more generally.[40]

My informants also echoed Roberts' strong feelings of excitement towards the Labor Day festivities. For example, my Haitian-American friends said that they looked forward to participating in the 2011 Labor Day Carnival festivities because they really enjoyed winin'—especially when it involved a hot-bodied man (wink). Due to their relatively conservative Haitian upbringing, the only time they got to free-up and wine-down was during Carnival or at a Caribbean fete. More importantly for them, they enjoyed the opportunity to strengthen their relationships with each other, the Caribbean community in general, especially other Haitians and Haitian-Americans, and myself.[41] In turn, the Trini-styled Carnival was the space within which all of these experiences became possible.

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[39] Arlene M. Roberts, "The West Indian Day Parade: An Island Woman's Perspective," *The Huffington Post*, last modified February 7, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arlene-m-roberts/the-west-indian-day-parad_b_1133643.html.

[40] Here, I am interpreting Roberts statement: "For more than a decade, I have been a regular paradegoer, usually with my younger sister in tow. Our Labor Day routine would run like clockwork. The alarm goes off at 6 o'clock. We were ready and headed out the door by 7 o'clock, bound for Atlantic Avenue station to catch the No. 4 train to Utica Avenue. First we attended the kickoff breakfast, then took part in festivities along the parade route." Roberts, "The West Indian Day Parade."

[41] Three Haitian-American women (a close friend of the author's and her two cousins) in Casual conversations with author on the way to and from soca fetes, house limes, and the Labor Day Carnival, September 2-5, 2011.

With regards to other Carnivals, like the Hollywood Carnival, many of my informants worked tirelessly to make sure that there would be ample events and opportunities for Caribbeans and Caribbean-Americans to free-up and experience themselves as Carib[*being*]. For example, Cassandra and Chandra Chase, whose bloodlines tie them to Jamaica and Barbados created "an event production and promotion company based in Los Angeles, CA,"[42] called Jump Synergy, as a service to the Caribbean community. The company's mission focuses on uniting "all people through the infectious rhythms of soca music and the spirit of Caribbean Carnival."[43] In fact, every time I sit and chat with the Chase sisters about the joys and woes of preparing for both the Los Angeles and Hollywood Carnivals, they always reiterate that the only reason they deal with the financial and emotional stresses, strains, and disparities associated with launching a mas' band or hosting a fete is so that the Caribbean community[44] has a place to assert themselves, whilst connecting with one another on the dance floor or in the street, winin' to the infectious rhythms of soca.

I remember once, in early June of 2014, about two weeks before the upcoming Carnival, I went over to their house to help make costumes for their mas' band. As I was cutting and gluing silver beads onto white brassieres and waist belts, Cassandra despairingly looked at the table where all the still-to-be-made costumes were placed, as if

[42] Jump Synergy, "About," *Facebook*, accessed June 25, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/Jumpsynergy/info/?tab=page_info.

[43] Jump Synergy, "About."

[44] The Chase sisters tend to use the word "community" very loosely, often referring to their patrons, who range from white-Americans, white-Europeans, and African-Americans to those of African and Caribbean heritage.

to say, "We'll never finish in time." This caused me to sigh heavily and yell out to her sister, "Chandra! Why do you put yourself through this stress every year? Designing these elaborate, yet beautiful, costumes that we then have to actually make. Look at you; you're exhausted. Have you even slept?" She then looked at me with a bright smile on her face, "Nope! But it's gonna be fine. It's all gonna work out. It's for the community. Plus, just think of how much fun we're gonna have once we *hit di road*!" And with that, she handed me some more beads and a new waist belt, and I continued measuring, cutting, and gluing the beads on to the costumes.[45]

As the above evidence reveals, the Trini-styled Carnival remains an important space for feeling a sense of belonging to the extremely variegated, yet imagined as whole, Caribbean community. For the most part, Caribbeans within the US continually look forward to *freein'-up, jumpin'-up, and gettin'-on fuh di Ca'nival* year after year, in order to, as my informants put it, stay connected to *their* culture. For them, this Trini-influenced, Carnival version of *their* culture is an emotive and embodied practice, that produces a feeling, a performative identity that exists outside of the US imagination, which is then felt at the level of the body. Within this version of *their* culture, they feel empowered to create an intricate matrix of belonging, whereby they can toggle between multiple embodiments of American*ness* and Caribbean*ness*. In this version of *their* culture, they forge a transnational polylogue between, around, and within their multiple positionings of *home* (or rather, Caribbean places via Trinidadian endeavors) and *abroad*.

[45] Cassandra and Chandra Chase (Mas' Makers and Caribbean event promoters in the Los Angeles area) in casual conversation with author, June 7, 2014.

This version of *their* culture thus forges a spatial connection "*between* the Caribbean and the American,"[46] that allows Trini/Caribbean masqueraders to actively explore and embody their ever shifting identities, citizenships, and positionalities via a plethora of playful and pleasure-filled performances of the gyrating "it." Here, they articulate a new experience of the Trinidadian inspired Carnival whilst simultaneously reflecting back these altered experiences towards their own Caribbean homelands, where they are then "incorporated or resisted, scorned or applauded, modified or discarded."[47]

During the Fall of 2009, I began my ethnographic research on the small Caribbean community within the Los Angeles area. At that time, my only connection to this community was through my cousin, who introduced me to a particular Trinidadian family that seemed to be at the center of the Los Angeles soca scene.[48] Then, I had a very particular kind of access into this family, one that was based on the assumed fact that because I was born in Trinidad, I should be privy to **all** things Trinbagonian, or Caribbean to say the least. However, being that I was a newcomer to the LA area, I struggled to ascertain close ties with any of the family members; hence, I found myself very much outside the private, intimate, and interpersonal connections that they had

[46] Joan Morgan influences me here. She states, "It required mining what Caribbean rhetorician Professor Kevin A. Browne describes as the space *between* the Caribbean and the American […]," in order to position her argument for complicating the canonized methodological approaches to black feminist theory. Joan Morgan, "Why We Get Off: Moving Towards a Black Feminist Politics of Pleasure," *The Black Scholar* 45, no. 4 (2015): 41.

[47] Scher, "From the Metropole to the Equator," 45.

[48] In Los Angeles, Caribbean communities seem to congregate around the music. At first, I was most involved in the Cuban-salsa scene, the Jamaican dancehall scene, and the Trini and Bajan soca scenes. However, as my research developed, I began to focus mostly on the soca scene, especially since my informants put most of their energies in developing that scene by creating and promoting Carnival bands, house limes that were open the everyone in the Caribbean community, and soca fetes.

forged over the years. In turn, my intervention into the lives of this particular Trinidadian family further circumvented my unstable positionality as that of a "native" ethnographer.

"And just so my journey began."[49] *It was the third Saturday of October in 2009, and the weather was bright and sunny. What a great day be at the Los Angeles Carnival. As I searched for the starting point,*[50] *I, along with a few other "lost" Carnival revelers, decided to take a quick jump-up with the TriniFetters band.*[51] *Soon thereafter, with our flags waving high and whistles blowing to the beat of the soca, we quickly moved through them in search of our own band.*[52] *When we had finally reached our truck, we were so excited that we all began rolling our "its" and vigorously waving our rags and flags in the air. Although the parading of the bands had not officially started, everyone had already begun to revel in the excitement of Carnival (read: partake in drinking and dancing in the streets). And as I readied myself, I overheard masqueraders all around saying things like:*

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[49] Amongst Trinidadians, the saying "just so" can mean "all of a sudden" or "just like that" (without warning).

[50] The parading of the bands for the LA Carnival occurred along Manchester Avenue near the LAX airport. The starting point was one block up from where Manchester Ave. and Sepulveda Blvd. intersected. The ending point was at Westchester Park, where Manchester Ave. and Lincoln Blvd. intersected.

[51] The current Trini-styled Carnival is made up of mas' bands, which are organizations that one pays to play mas' with. In addition to costumes, they also provide the music and entertainment, which often includes a big truck (where the DJ and sound system resides), food, and drinks. Just to give you an idea of the set up, masquerading men and women dance and parade through the streets, behind a big truck, as a band of people wearing costumes.

[52] That year I played mas' with Joyce Producshun's band. It was a T-shirt section—meaning our "costume" was wearing matching T-shirts—and the name of our section was "We are All One Under the Sun." This slogan was used to include all the Countries being represented, including Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, Japan and the USA. It express a sentiment of connectivity through the love of soca music and dancing, namely winin'.

"Make bacchanal in di roooaaad!"[53]

"Madness ah tell yuh, MADNESS!"

"All'yuh, we goh get on rel bad today."

"I see yuh come to free-up yuhself!"

"Leh we sho' dem how it's really done."

In the name of Carib[being]ness, we were ready to "behave like we had no behavior," whether or not the streets of LA were ready for us is another story. Then, almost simultaneously with this pre-Carnival banter, I thought to myself,

> *Wait! How bad is bad? What kind of bacchanal and madness are we actually going to bring? And what if our "freein'-up" just looks like commesse to dem American spectators? What exactly are we representing, and to whom? Oh gosh, I wonder if I'll have to be more of an observer than a participant today? Hmmm, I hope I get tuh wine-up on Joel today; he is just too cute. But wait nah, I wonder who will end up winin' on me? Well yes, what have I gotten myself into? …,*

And before I could run like hell away from the parade route, Carnival had begun. The truck moved forward, the music blasted through the air, my thoughts immediately stopped, and I lent myself to the lyrical commands of Iwer George:

Raise dem flags!
Raise yuh Fla-a-ags, Let me see-ee-e dem.
Raise dem flags!
Raise yuh Fla-a-ags, Let me see-ee-e dem.[54]

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[53] Here someone was singing the lyrics to Destra Garcia's hit soca tune for the 2009 Trinidadian Carnival season. See: "Destra - Bacchanal" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzMhI8m8MeE

[54] Lyrics from "Ready," by Iwer George, transposed by author. To hear song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuVVXMCMeo8

The truck then turned the corner and our energy jumped from zero to 60 in what felt like seconds. Any conventional rules of morality, respectability, manners of conduct, or public display of sexuality were immediately footnoted and at times tossed to the side. The winin' marathon had begun!

In order to translate the above ethnographic scene, I want first to underscore the "talk" of winin', specifically the ways Trini/Caribbean winers talk about winin' amongst themselves. My intention here is not to privilege the word over the moving body, but rather to identify the intricate negotiations, subjectivities, and positionalities winers occupy. In other words, I am focused on the particular ways their discourses on winin' are embodied and performed. In "Reconceptualizing Voice," an essay on the ways matrifocality is both conceptualized and experienced by three Tobagonian mothers, gender studies scholar Michelle Rowley suggests that talk can be "the means by which we can explore experience [itself], […] specifically the performance […], content, and intertextuality of talk."[55] She later explains, "Talk not only projects experience, but also provides a vista into the impact that historically constituted discourses (as well as contemporary constructions and interactions) have on subject formation. Talk therefore enacts historical discursive formations […]."[56] Following Rowley's framing, the talk that accompanies winin', in tandem with the bodily writings of my winin' informants, lays

[55] Michelle Rowley, "Reconceptualizing Voice: The Role of Matrifocality in Shaping Theories and Caribbean Voices," in *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought,* ed. Patricia Mohammed (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 28.

[56] Ibid., 29.

bare the complex, and often contradictory, discourses that both construct and deconstruct winers' subjectivities.

From "madness" to "bacchanal," to "freein'-up" and "bad behavior," the cryptic ways we Trini/Caribbean winers talked about our revelry on that particular day, at that particular Trini-Styled Carnival provides an important point of entry for deciphering the performative work that goes into these moments of excitement. Similar to the lyrics of the Trini-centered soca tunes featured above, these words, commonly used to describe the festive scenes associated with the Trini-styled Carnival, also point to the residual retentions of the colonial encounter between Trinidad's white-Victorian ruling class and the "unruly" post-emancipation masquerades of the late nineteenth century jamettes. As I hope I have made clear in the previous chapter, the embodied memory of these particular words not only highlights the colonizers *mis*reading of the jamettes' rebellious masquerades, but it also points to the rambunctious ways these historically invisibilized women used their labor of "misbehaving" to gain some semblance or feeling of "freedom." Because of this history, today's practice of winin' at Trini-styled Carnivals, which I further assert is an embodiment of Carib[*being*]ness, amounts to "a 'practice of freedom,' whereby the subject deliberately acts upon the self in an effort to alter the dimensions already imposed upon it, to reconstitute the energies already shaped by existing relations of power."[57] The crucial ways the jamettes used the space of Carnival in their labor for freedom and access to full citizenship ultimately enabled the tradition of

[57] David Scott quoted in Mireille Miller-Young, "Hip-Hop Honeys and Da Hustlaz: Black Sexualities in the New Hip-Hop Pornography," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 8, no. 1 (2008): 265.

using Carnival as an important space for re-imagining one's own self as having to right to be *here*, in *foreign* places.

In their discussion on Mikhail Bakhtin's book, *Rabelais*, Anthony Wall and Clive Thomson state that "Carnival is an event of cultural memory, and memory, through carnival, can become a collective event. […] Here it is appropriate to speak of bodily—that is, time-and-space bound—memory […]."[58] Within the logic of the Trini-styled Carnival, "behaving bad," "misbehaving," "freein'-up," and "getting-on mad" *on di road* are embodied intentions and desires of the day's festivities, such that the act of winin' itself remains coded as a performance of badness, madness, and/or freedom. As evidenced above, such performances involve letting go of social mores and ideals of respectability in order to publically dance and roll your "it": 1. however you would like, 2. on whomever you would like, as well as with whomever would allow you to dance with them, and most importantly, 3. without any shame. Without repeating the nuanced genealogy of the jamette's history discussed in the previous chapter, my intent here is to further point to the almost dismissible ways that today's winin' revelers uphold the bodily writings and practices of historical characters particular to Trinidad, whether they are aware of it or not.[59]

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[58] Anthony Wall and Clive Thomson, "Review: Cleaning up Bakhtin's Carnival Act," *Diacritics* 23, no. 2 (1993): 60.

[59] As noted in chapter one, I am not stating that jamettes are the only bodily writings and practices that are upheld by the talk and winery seen during Carnival. I am, however, pointing to the invisibilized ways such bodily residues continue to haunt today's winin' reveler.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN *HOME* AND *ABROAD*: TREADING THROUGH THE CARIB[BEING] SEA TOWARDS A *FETE*-ISH TRANSNATION

A third attempt at translation: It is important to note that before arriving to the 2009 LA Carnival, I spent the entire morning at the home of that same "particular Trinidadian family" I had mentioned earlier. There, we ate together, prepared our costumes together,[60] laughed together, and even had a few warm-up winin' sessions as we listened to soca. These were the micropolitics that then played out on the road. These intimate, private moments of bonding became the building blocks upon which our winin' antics and scenes were produced and developed. Through our winin' acts, we masqueraders publically staged our complex, private, and intimate micropolitical relationships. Moreover, the spectators, who were mostly of Caribbean heritage, or at the very least Carnival enthusiasts, supported the revelry with love and awe; some even stole a few wines from the masqueraders. *On di road*, there seemed to be an unspoken alliance between us all. Whether well-established or only created in the moment of winin', these alliances—fostered by the belief that we were all rooted in the same ideologies of the Trini-Carnival transnation—provided a feeling of comfort and safety, which also supported our use of excessive winery, without shame, in that public, *foreign* place.

"Now back to di road!" *About an hour had passed when the deep, heavy voice of soca artiste Denise "Saucy WOW" Belfon blasted across the big truck's large speakers—"Yuh watchin' meh move my wais' boy,* ***Jamm-It!****"—I quickly jumped onto my two feet and swung my "it" to the right in rhyme with the words "****Jamm-It.****" Belfon continued—"Look meh in meh eye when yuh wan' come* ***Ram-It!****"—and I sharply swung my "it" to*

[60] See note 52 above.

the left. It was at that point I felt someone else's "it" roll in rhythm with mine. The music continued—"Doh make di movement make yuh ***PANIC! PANIC! PANIC! PANIC!****"—and as my rolling "it" moved in relation to this newfound rolling "it," we found ourselves making back-half circles to the right, to the left, to the right, and again to the left. As the song continued, I raised my hands in the air and started rolling my "it" in quick circles, accenting the downbeat each time I rolled to the back. Then, as quickly as we had come together, we abruptly separated our "its" and continued to chip forward with the rest of the band. Although I only briefly turned around at one point to see who was behind me, I never took the time to find out who he was exactly. But so it goes during Carnival; sometimes, getting a wine is more important than worrying about with whom it is yuh winin'.*

In recalling this fleeting encounter with someone else's "it," it is important that I further clarify the mechanics of that particular wine. At best, my "it" barely grazed his "it," which sent him the message that I was **not** looking to sexually entice him. Moreover, his choice to respect my intimate space sent me the message that he too was **not** looking for sexual enticement. Because dancing masqueraders instantaneously negotiate how they present themselves by using their winery to relate to and engage with other winin' and/or non-winin' masqueraders and spectators, these subtleties, negotiated through the dancing itself, can quicker send a clear message to one's dance partner than words ever could. Now, I hesitate to make generalized statements like: When a man and a woman wine fast and rough with each other it usually means they want to sleep with each other, or that they know each other well; for that is just not always the case. In other words, it is always

important to take into account the particular context that is allowing the couple to interact in that particular way. With regards to the above scene, our actively winin', dancing bodies offered a more nuanced filter for understanding our intentions and desires. In fact, because we did not engage with each other solely on a sexual level, our winery worked to complicate the expectations of sex and hypersexuality often etched into our black dancing bodies.

"Dis winin' ting had meh rel winded boy."[61] *Soon thereafter, I bumped into some of my girlfriends and immediately started to roll my "it" with theirs. At first, it was just my friend and myself, rolling side-by-side, with my arm around her shoulder. Then another friend jumped in front of us and started rolling her "it" with great speed and dexterity, so (like any dedicated reveler) I decided to jump on di train by winin' up behind my friend, forming a women-only line of rolling "its." We made such a spectacle of ourselves that people began to take pictures of us, which did not stop us in the least. As the music changed, we somehow managed to continue rolling our "its" both in symphony with the changing songs and with each other, all while vigorously waving our flags and rags in the air. In spite of the spectacular commotion, as I rolled my "it," feelings of pleasure and an embodied sense of finally belonging to a community rushed through my dancing body, leading me to believe that somehow, we were actually "all one,"*[62] *cut from the same roots and stemming towards common ideals and traditions. In that moment,*

[61] Translation: "This winin' thing has me very winded."

[62] Here I am reference the name of our costume section, "We are All One Under the Sun." Also, see note 52 above.

on that particular day, and on that particular road, the uncritical Carnival baby[63] *within me* ***knew*** *that our synchronized rolling "its" unified us as a people.*

As the above scene makes apparent, *on di road*, the act of winin' is integral to a masquerader's performance of Carib[*being*]ness as well as the work of *Caribbeanizing foreign* spaces within the US. In fact, every roll of our "its" not only proved to be an important step in my feeling connected to this *foreign* "home" (i.e., the LA area) and its Trini/Caribbean community, but our winery also worked towards building a self-aware re-claiming of and ownership over the (trans)nationalistic constructions of a Carib[*being*] "Self,"[64] at the level of our bodies. In other words, as necessary spectacle of the festivities, the act of winin' inevitably works as a performative link "between the diasporic community and those at *home*."[65] To paraphrase many of my informants: "I wine because it is my culture; it shows the world who I am and where I'm from."[66] Trini/Caribbean men, women, and children living abroad are often expected to roll their "its" as "proof" that they are proud to be Caribbean (or more specifically, a Trini, a Bajan, a Guyanese, a

[63] A Trini euphamism that means someone who was born to play mas'.

[64] Here, I am using "Self" hermeneutically. See note 36 above.

[65] Emphasis added. Nurse, "Globalization and Trinidad Carnival," 662.

[66] Here I am referencing many casual conversations I had with Trinidadian and Barbadian members of the Los Angeles community during the earlier part of my ethnographic research in 2009 through 2011. One informant stated, "*How yuh goh consider yuhself a true Trinidadian if yuh cyah* [read: can't] *even wine*?" Gregorio Garcia (Trinidad-born informant/friend) in casual conversation with author and others at a house lime in Long Beach, CA, October 4, 2009.

Grenadian, etc., just to name a few).[67] Respectively, the danced meanings expressed in the winery of my informants are not only shaped by this Trini-styled Carnival transnation, but they too shape the transnation with each gyrating thrust *fuh di Ca'nival*, for, as it seems, the very comprehension of their subjectivities at stake.

Case in point, some of my Trini informants, who I have unofficially deemed *wine connoisseurs*, proclaim to have the ability to identify someone based on how they wine, or at the very least identify where or how that person learned to wine. In casual conversation, many have argued that one's winery can reveal the winer as masculine, feminine, heterosexual, homosexual,[68] black/negro, white/Chinese,[69] East Indian, American, Latino, African, Jamaican, Bajan, and/or Trini. For instance, a few of my informants from Trinidad stated that there is a difference between the ways Indo- and Afro-Trinis wined. For example, one older male stated, "[East] Indians seem to have like

[67] It was hard to tell if this phenomenon was caused by my presence as an ethnographer researching the wine, or if this is something that Trinidadians do in order to decipher who is "one of them" or not. During my ethnographic research in the Los Angeles and New York areas, from fetes to limes and even *on di road*, there was often a Trinidadian instigating for someone to prove their Caribbean*ness* by winin'. Sometimes it would be a public propagation; other times it would be a whisper in someone's ear. And whenever someone "unknown" came into the space, it was almost guaranteed that their winin' skills would be tested at some point that evening.

[68] There is a "heteronormative" way of winin', especially with regards to male winers. For example, if a man's winery accentuates his rear-end more than his genitals, then he can be interpreted as homosexual. Even local Trini terms, such as batty-man, associates the butt (aka. the batty) with being a homosexual male.

[69] According to many Trinidadian and Anglophone-Caribbean informants, white and Chinese people were imagined as having no rhythm and being unable to wine or keep the rhythmic timing of each roll.

an off-timing *ting tuh di side*, and we [of African descent] have a smooth roll."[70] Another Trini male living in Brooklyn said,

> "I can tell where West Indian women are from. I mean I know how Trini girls does wine, easy. Bajans do more of a wukkin'up, and Grenadian women have like a kinda jab-jab wine, like a jukkin' jukkin' kinda ting. Jamaican women wine a bit more … raunchy. And the smaller island countries, like St. Nevis or St. Kitts, can REL wine. Like di party could jus' start and dey already sweatin', yuh know."[71]

Whether or not these observations are accurate is not particularly important here. What is important: how one rolls their "it" is deeply connected to the conceptualization of particular places, spaces, and ways of being.

In harping further on this point of view, Susan Harewood reports that Bajans also "mark wukking up as an area of cultural distinctiveness." She quotes a long time Bajan columnist, Al Gilkes, as stating,

> (Wukking up) is a talent which I am convinced is uniquely Bajan. Trinis sing about wining and that's exactly what they do. They wind their hips and backsides but they cannot wuk up like a Bajan. Nor can Jamaicans, Americans, Europeans, Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Indians or anybody else on the face of the earth. Africans come close but what they do is more like choreographed movements than the natural, free and innovative rhythmic wuk-up of the Bajan.[72]

Noting these three examples, it is clear that rolling one's "it" not only plays a critical role in upholding the evolving iterations of Caribbean identities, but it also helps many

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[70] Anonymous informant (family friend) in casual conversation with author and her family, August 2009.

[71] Anonymous Trinidadian male (Carnival masquerader living in Brooklyn) in an informal interview over the phone with author, Marshalls Creek, PA to Brooklyn, NY, July 16, 2013.

[72] Susan J. Harewood, *Calypso, Masquerade Performance and Post National Identities* (doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2006), 182.

Caribbean men and women ascertain an overall sense of self, especially in relation to other bodies who do or do not roll their "its." According to these wine connoisseurs, a winer's very identity is written into their wine, so much so that how they rolls their "its" can be used as a gauge for deciphering where that person is from or not from, who they are, and what their intentions might be.

These wine connoisseurs also bring into the foreground the fact that within this Trini-styled Carnival transnation, masqueraders' gyrating "its" are not always informed by Trinidadian traditions and histories.[73] In turn, Caribbean winers must filter their own comprehensions of their rolling "its" through the (not-so visible) histories and traditions associated with the Trinidadian Carnival. In so doing, their particular pleasure-filled labor and sweaty performances of the gyrating "it" get transformed "into a particular kind of object that has roughly the same status as other kinds of commodities,"[74] such that their labor of and for pleasure can be exchanged for capital (i.e. the money spent and gained to the produce the spaces where winin' occurs), as well as for "a more abstract form of exchange: *recognition*."[75] In other words, the powerful legitimizing properties afforded by the Trini-styled Carnival produce a spectacular affect of self-*fete*-ishization (autoexotification) whereby the performative aspects of the Carib[*being*]ness supported

[73] Here I am also referring to the opening paragraph of my introduction, "*It all begins with the "it!"*" There, I discuss the multiple names and spaces the rolling "it" occupies throughout the Caribbean. Nevertheless, because these rolling "it" performances occur within the logic of the Trini-styled Carnival, the Haitian *gouyad*, the Jamaican dagger, or the Belizean *puta*, for example, are continually mediated through the contexts and histories that link the rolling "it" to the Trinidadian Carnival.

[74] Scher, "From the Metropole to the Equator," 57.

[75] Emphasis added. Ibid., 56.

by the festival surreptitiously reference recognizable elements from the Trinidadian Carnival. By participating in the Trini-styled Carnival, winin' masqueraders have no choice but to mediate the Trinidadian derived traditions and practices in order to embody, feel, and perform their comprehensions of Carib[*being*]ness. Furthermore, the sweaty, fatiguing winery that happens during these Carnivals simultaneously works to make the experience and expression of Carib[*being*]ness feel intimately tangible and shareable, not only amongst those actively participating within the Trini-styled Carnival transnation, but also across cultures and geographies. (Recall Mar Yvette, "You don't have to be Caribbean to attend. I'm an honorary Caribbean for the day.")

This intimately tangible and shareable type of recognition, however, is a double-edged sword. If we were to linger in this pleasure-filled moment a bit longer, where self-*fete*-ishization, Carib[*being*]ness, and Trini/Caribbean*ness* are viscerally felt and performed by the winin' body, another *tale/tail* soon bubbles up to the surface—that of the winin' fatale. In other words, Carib[*being*]ness cannot out-run the colonizing gaze. Embedded within this struggle to be recognized or legitimated as some*thing* distinct, Trini-styled Carnival producers must further filter themselves through the "exotic paradigms of Western interpretation."[76] In so doing, the colonizing gaze swaps out the winin' Carib[*being*]—an already complex and variegated state of being—for the winin' fatale—a disembodied imago, or rather a floating signifier, of blackness, savagery, and nihilism. This interaction between Carib[*being*]ness and the winin' fatale was felt by

[76] Patricia T. Alleyne-Dettmers, "The Relocation of Trinidad Carnival in Notting Hill, London, and the Politics of Diasporisation," in *Globalisation, Diaspora and Caribbean Popular Culture*, eds. Christine GT Ho and Keith Nurse (Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005), 328.

many of my Trini/Caribbean informants as they wined in and out of the *foreign* spaces and places in the US. In fact, winers often experienced these multi-conscious moments of self-awareness as tiny, almost dismissible moments of shame and embarrassment.

I remember a certain conservative Indo-Trini telling me that she was very aware that her own, performative conceptualizations of Carib[*being*]ness would clash with her "respectable" work image. It was June (National Caribbean-American Heritage Month) and we were doing last minute fittings for the hummingbird costumes, which were to be displayed at the inaugural Hollywood Carnival on June 30th, 2012. I remember assisting this woman with her neon green, fuchsia pink, and neon yellow brassiere when she looked at me and said, "You know, my boss might be there, at the Carnival, and he might see me. That kind of makes me nervous. He has never seen me like this. And you know how we get on at Carnival. I mean he's going to see me winin' in the streets!" I nod and make sounds of agreement as she sighed contemplatively. "Well," she continued, "I'm only doing this because you all [namely her Trini friends and family] will be there. Plus, I want to represent my Trini culture. We have to represent! You know!"[77]

For her, the performance of Trini*ness* at Carnival mattered more than being seen as *un*respectable by her boss. Whether or not her boss knew how to decipher the winin' performances that were to take place at that inaugural Trini-styled Carnival, she found comfort in the fact that her winin' would represent a deep sense of connectivity to her Trinidadian culture, family, and friends. Like my Haitian-American friends/informants

[77] Anonymous Indo-Trinidadian woman (Hollywood Carnival masquerader in her mid-thirties) in casual conversation with author at the Extacy [sic] Mas Camp in Long Beach, CA, June 2012.

above who *un*latch themselves from their own cultural constraints and mores in order to embrace the anonymity of the Labor Day parade and *get on bad on di streets ah Ca'nival*, or the Chase sisters who push themselves to exhaustion for the sake of creating a space for people to enjoy themselves *on di road*, this Indo-Trini's negotiation of shame and her willingness to "pay the price" for winin' in public is integral to this space, the space "*between* the Caribbean and the American."[78] For it is within this intricately knotty space—where Trini/Caribbean self-*fete*-ishizations confront US agendas—that Carib[*being*] winers find themselves traipsing along the thin lines of accepted and unaccepted modes of masculinity, femininity, and heterosexuality as they get re-sexualized, re-racialized, and re-gendered upon a transnational stage.

WININ' HERE OR THERE, IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?: TRANSGRESSING BORDERS AND BLURRING BOUNDARIES

A fourth attempt at translation: It has become popular practice[79] to use terms like grinding, twerking, or hip-hop "video dancing" interchangeably with the winin' that occurs within Caribbean spaces such as Carnival or Dancehall. In fact, I often find myself becoming defensive when I am confronted by this discursive slippage.[80] The apparent simplicity of the wine—in that all one has to do is rotate their "it" for one to be (mis-)

[78] Joan Morgan, "Why We Get Off," 41.

[79] Cite Kevin Frank, other scholars & US pop-culture (Rihanna).

[80] Famed Trini-American hip hop artist Nicki Minaj definitely blurred the line between video vixen and the Carnival masquerader in her music video "Pound the Alarm," which she filmed in Trinidad. The music video featured herself, Machel Montano (a famous Trinidadian soca artist), and other masqueraders (mostly women) *winin' dong di place* in their colorful bikini costumes.

interpreted as winin'—tends to produce a chameleon-like effect of sameness[81] to the untrained eye, which then promotes sentiments of commonality and unity (e.g., "we are just like them" or "they are all doing the same thing"). Within the US, winin' is often re-presented as "shaking one's butt," or used interchangeably with popular "butt" dances, such as Da'Butt, twerking, grinding, or club dancing.[82] Other times, winin' is described as "shaking one's hips"—which can then reference *tails* of seduction, as well as the African antecedents of *Latinidad*.[83]

However, such misreadings not only invisibilize the particular histories and traditions that influence the various Caribbean iterations of the rolling "it," but they further circumscribe the winin' body within a polylogue of competing constructions of race, gender, sexuality, and nationhood. The literal truth of the matter is, to the untrained eye, there is no drastic difference in the performative mechanics of an "it" that wines for Carnival versus an "it" that grinds or twerks in a hip hop music video. Although the level

[81] If I am to speak about this perspective accurately, especially as I work my way across national and cultural borders, it's best to underscore that such conclusions are relative to one's frame of reference. In other words, what someone may see as "same" I might see as "differentiated."

[82] See note 80 above.

[83] For instance, in her introductory essay on Latina sexuality and sensuality, Alicia Arrizón recalls that in "September of 2006, everyone was talking about California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's off-the-cuff comments on the temperament of Latinas/os while speculating about the ethnicity of state assembly woman, Bonnie García. Schwarzenegger referred to García as 'very hot' and went on to say, 'she [García] may be Puerto Rican or the same thing as Cuban, I mean, they are all very hot. They have the, you know, part of the black blood in them and part of the Latino blood in them and together that makes it.'" In spite of the very specific and divergent markings etched into the gyrating politics of various Caribbean subjects, it is still through the Afro *"*it*"* (the source of "black blood" that Schwarzenegger so crassly references) that Latin-Caribbean bodies have become intelligible subjects within the Global North. Alicia Arrizón, "Latina Subjectivity, Sexuality and Sensuality," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 18, no. 3 (2008): 189ff. See also Melissa Blanco-Borelli, *A Case of Hip(g)nosis: An Epistemology of the Mulata Body and her Revolutionary Hips* (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 2006), 51-2. Here, she argues that by constructing the dancing Latina/mulata body as hip-oriented, discursive associations with the buttocks and Africanness were rendered invisible.

of spectacularization will vary, each dance often includes, but is not limited to, fantastic and vigorous rolls, gyrations, thrusts, and shakes of one's corpo**real** "it." My frustration, however, is not rooted in the performed variations of the rolling "it," but rather within the distinctive ways these dances are socialized, recognized, and legitimized.

As the winin' body navigates the various enclaves of the Caribbean and US and as dancers who gyrate their "its" are forced to come into contact with each other (e.g., Dancehall winers versus Carnival winers versus US twerkers), there are subtle, yet uncomfortable, clashes that force these bodies-in-motion to learn new dialects and renegotiate how their bodies actively partake in the intermeshing sociohistorical and sociopolitical discourses that circumscribe each rolling "it." Specifically, I am channeling María Lugones' argument on "intermeshed oppressions,"[84] which refers to the unique ways in which all forms of oppression—including gender, racial, economic, sexual, Imperial, and colonial oppressions—converge into one another in such a way that they become inseparable. As a result, the oppressed subject becomes encapsulated and reduced within a complex spatiality of power and consciousness. One's translations, therefore, must diligently stay attentive to the ways in which winers continually utilize their rolling "its" to wind in and out of oppressive misidentifications, or rather to *dis*identify with such misidentifications. Here, I am invoking the astute theorizing of the late Jose Muñoz in his book *Disidentifications*. He states, "Disidentifications is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to

[84] María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 223.

negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship."[85] Consequently, if one is to comprehensively translate the winin' manifestations that occur within these spatially conflated places, it is important to surrender to the corpo**real** and cultural conditions that regulate each winer's winery in order to visibilize the complex navigations negotiated with each roll of their "its."

Because winin' *tails/tales* weave through, around, and between multiple sites, such as Trinidad, Los Angeles, Barbados, and Brooklyn, one's translations must also foreground the interweaving complexities of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality implicated within each space/place. In their discussion of sites of assembly, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White describe spaces as discursive, arguing that each place of assemble requires different languages, manners, and morals.[86] Stallybrass and White elucidate,

> Discursive space is never completely independent of social place and the formation of new kinds of speech can be traced through the emergence of new public sites of discourse and the transformation of old ones. Each 'site of assembly' constitutes a nucleus of material and cultural conditions which regulate what may and may not be said, who may speak [or rather who may be heard], how people may communicate and what importance must be given to what is said.[87]

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[85] José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4.

[86] Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), 80.

[87] Ibid., 80.

As the rolling "it" crosses national and cultural borders, not only does "its" name morph along with its manner of performance,[88] but the dancer also gets embedded within the particular political economies and histories of each "new" space/place.

With their winery as their passports, Trini/Caribbean winers often make intimate negotiations, at the level of their bodies, as they cross cultural borders and enter spaces unfamiliar to them. As a result, the nuances and idiosyncrasies of each winer's bodily writings may not transcribe clearly across cultural, gendered, racial, and sexual boundaries. For example, in terms of gender performance, what would be considered "appropriate" for a woman (e.g., two women winin' with each other in a line) could be considered "inappropriate" for a man (e.g., two men winin' with each other in a line). In terms of sexual transgression and vulgarity—or, as we say in many parts of the English-speaking Caribbean, "slackness"—what is often marked as (hyper)sexual, loose, vulgar, or spectacular in one space might be marked as tame or expected within another. In particular, acts of winin' that are marked as slack during the Carnival season may be considered quite tame or unimpressive if performed at a dancehall in Jamaica. In her discussion on the work of Jamaican Dancehall queens, Stanley-Niaah explains, "The dance that is normative for a Dancehall queen is not the norm for most Dancehall patrons or citizens of the middle and upper classes. As Stacey [the crowned Dancehall queen of 1999] admits, 'one has to be real fit to do them' [… to which Stanley-Niaah] would add,

[88] See note 73 above

[and] shed enough puritanical moral ethic to be able to conceive of what Stacey does as other than 'slackness' or vulgarity."[89]

For instance, although the gyrating "it" may appear to be "the same" from Dancehall to Carnival, if a winer informed by the traditions and practices of the Trini-styled Carnival enters the Jamaican Dancehall space/place, the rules that will now govern this winin' body will be rooted in the logic of Dancehall, especially with respect to the ways in which liberation, resistance, transgression, and erotic agency are performed and coded. On the other hand, the infinitesimal ways in which this winer can utilize their own "it" as they dance will still be informed by the discourses, traditions, and histories that circumscribe their particular writhing "it." In other words, each manifestation of this winer's rolling "it" remains deeply tied to the traditions and practices of the Trini-styled Carnival. Whenever I have asked a winer from Trinidad, "What is the difference between Dancehall [read: Jamaican] and Carnival [read: Trinidadian] winery," they often regard Dancehall performances as more lewd and raunchy than Carnival performances. One reveler even stated, "*Dem dancehall people and dem does be rel nasty with it; touchin' up dey vagina and ting. I eh in dat. Dey too stink in dey ass, da'iz dey problem*."[90] However, as Stanley-Niaah has revealed, Dancehall patrons tend to say the same about Carnival revelers. She quotes Dancehall Queen Stacey as stating, "*Look 'pon carnival.*

[89] Sonjah Stanley-Niaah, "Kingston's Dancehall A Story of Space and Celebration," *Space and Culture* 7, no. 1 (2004): 113.

[90] Casual conversation with anonymous reveler at the LA Carnival, October 18, 2009. Loose translation: "Them dancehall people are really nasty when they wine, touching up their vagina and thing. I am not into that. They are just vulgar at heart, *that* is their problem."

Dem lick out 'pon Dancehall an' dem do worse than Dancehall."[91] As evidence shows, these bodily writings do not translate neatly from space to space, place to place, or body to body, especially with regards to erotic agency (e.g., "impressive" winery) and sexual transgression (e.g., "unimpressive," or slack, winery).

In returning to the "talk" of the rolling "it," let us further consider the various names of the rolling "it" mentioned in the first paragraph of the introduction: puta, which means "bitch;" despelote, which means all over the place or mess; perreando, which refers to doing it (read: sex) doggie-style; gouye, which means to grind; and wukkin'-up (aka hard-wuk or wukkin), which literally means "working-up" and can also refer to the work associated with the bedroom (aka to take or give wuk). In addition to discourses of slackness, the tiresome, physical work that goes into rolling one's "it," as well as the slippery, aggressive, and unruly modes of (female) sex, sexuality, and sexualized pleasure already written into the wine quickly become apparent. With regards to the sexual tensions played out in acts of winin during the 1988 Trinidadian Carnival, Daniel Miller insists that one should also consider the overall cultural importance of sex and sexual behavior. He states,

> If wining in Carnival is clearly sexually expressive then this leads to the wider question of what sex represents in contemporary Trinidad for this particular section of the population.[92] It was they who seemed to place exceptional weight

[91] Loose translation: "Look at Carnival. They speak badly about Dancehall and they do worse than Dancehall." Sonjah Stanley Niaah, "'Slackness Personified,' Historicized and Delegitimized," *Small Axe* 21, no. 3 (2006): 184.

[92] Much has changed since 1988 regarding how winin' currently participates in Trinidadian social enclaves; moreover, Miller's informants were from low-income areas and were predominantly of African-decent, so his findings at times are in contention with mine, as, again, my informants are transnational Trini/Caribbean subjects who range from low-income/working class to upper-middle class.

> upon sex as an activity. In conversations amongst both men and women there is a tremendous stress on sexual performance […][93]

Miller's point of inquiry points to the heart of the sexual tensions that permeate the experience of winin'. Because the inter-personal exchanges that privately inform winers' bodily writings varied from memories of lusting after their first memorable winin' partner to memories of winin' contests in the living room between them and their siblings, many of my informants insist that winin' is not about sex,[94] whilst others would quietly admit that yes, sexual tensions do get played out as they wine. Such apparent contradictions, however, provide my informants with the multiple scripts necessary for them to both comprehend and perform various modes of winin'.

"But is 'it' really just about sex?" During one of my first ethnographic encounters, I had asked one of my female African-American friends, who I had invited to keep me company for the hour and a half long drive out to Los Angeles, how she felt about winin'. It was the first time she had attended a soca fete, so I was excited to know what she thought. Without hesitation, she turned to me and said, "It's all about sex!" Immediately, I thought to myself that she had missed the entire point of winin's importance within the Trini/Caribbean community. I grew up associating winin' with love and family bonding, as well as expressions of national pride and feminine strength.

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[93] Daniel Miller, "Absolute Freedom in Trinidad," *Man, New Series* 4, no. 2 (1991): 328.

[94] This positioning falls in line with what Miller terms autosexuality. He explains, winin' "may therefore be understood as the repudiation of sexuality as an act of exchange. Autosexuality then transcends questions of sexuality and becomes tantamount to a rejection of sociality, or a momentary escape from [or denial of] that act of exchange which binds one to the world and its relationships, and in particular, to what women may increasingly be regarding as oppressive relationships." Ibid., 334.

So, in that moment, I was convinced that she had been looking at winin' through a sexualized peephole, turning a blind eye to the wine's potential subversiveness and feelings of liberation. Needless to say, I was offended by her observation.

On the other hand, if I had kept in mind that that was the very first time she had encountered the soca/winin' scene, then, perhaps, I would not have been so offended. Firstly, her own conceptualization of the dancing "it" was primarily mediated by US-based discourses on "the black trembling female butt," which often correlates such "it"-centered dancing with hypersexuality and/or sexual exploitation. Moreover, I remember having to pull my friend away from a few of the young Caribbean fellows that night. They knew she was new to winin' and were all too eager to "teach" her a lesson or two about winin' fundamentals. They caressed her hips and leaned over her shoulder, convincing her that their body-to-body contact would improve her ability to feel the already blaring soca music and pulsating rhythms of their winery. And, as I witnessed them subtly grinding into my friend, which made her blush and giggle, it became all too clear that there was more going on in that moment than some innocent winin'. He (the teacher) and she (the student) traipsed along the limits of sexualized power and erotic agency under the guise of an innocent trans-cultural exchange—such that winin' stood-in as the vital cultural currency.

In addition to supporting my above claim about *mis*translating or *mis*reading winin', I use this moment to further call attention to the always-unfolding saga of the tempestuous hate/love or shame/pride relationship many Caribbeans maintain with the wine. In contextualizing how his informants conceptualized their own winery, Miller

explained, "Caribbean societies have commonly been characterized by a cultural dualism abstractly conceived as a structure of opposition between what Wilson (1973) calls 'reputation and respectability' and Abrahams (1983) 'rude and serious.'"[95] In diving deeper into these moments of ambiguity, the multiple sensory and censorings that get negotiated both on and off the dance floor reveal a playful, tricky, and multifaceted relationship that winin' revelers maintain with their particular "its," especially with regards to the rolling "it" as a citation of sex. These complexities and ambiguities are purposefully written into the wine, such that winers are able to "speak" in multiple tongues with every circle of their waistline, vibration of their *bamsee*, and vulgar thrust of their genitals.

In order to underscore these complex ambiguities, I return, again, to the "talk" of winin'. I addition to being described as "bad *behavyah*," as discussed above, winin' can also be marked as "good behavyah." In fact, the wine is seen as simultaneously sweet and sour, nice and nasty, or desirable and detested, so much so that these meanings often slip in and out of each other. For example, "sweet"—in the colloquial Caribbean sense—can describe something that is beautiful, attractive, well presented, coveted, highly apt, skillful, sensual,[96] and/or "respectably" provocative (another common synonym: juicy).

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[95] Miller, "Absolute Freedom in Trinidad," 327.

[96] Alicia Arrizón explains the subtleties between sensuality vs. sexuality: "While sexuality is characterized by sex, sexual activity and sexual orientation, to be sensual is to be aware of and to explore feelings and sensations of beauty, luxury, joy and pleasure. […] Sexuality and sensuality are different, and yet overlapping, concepts that shape, influence, and inspire one another. While sexuality may be expressed in ones' sensuality, a subject's sensuality stimulates her/his sexuality. Usually, one can perform sensuality in music, clothing, fragrance, and accessories, or while walking, singing and dancing." Arrizón, "Latina Subjectivity," 192-3.

Conversely, "bad"—again in the same sense—can describe something that is spectacularly skillful and desirable yet crass, transgressive, and/or hypersexual (other common synonyms: nasty, stink, wotles, wassy, slack, rude).

The word "wine" itself is a triple entendre that opens up a performative space for flexible circumvention. The playful interaction between wine (the gyration of one's "it"), wine (the alcoholic beverage), and whine (the sound made when complaining), creates yet more liminal spaces within which winers find room to wiggle in and out of stilting definitions, which also imbues care and visibility to the intricate complexities associated with their rolling "its." The descriptors compound these complexities when describing what the "it" actually does during each roll and gyration. Some descriptors include: *cock "it,"* which characterizes the arching of the lower back that occurs when the butt rolls towards the back (one can *cock back* or *up*); *bubble "it,"* which references the bouncing of the butt that happens during faster wines as well as the slow deliberate circling of the hips;[97] *tic-toc "it"* explains the stop and go action of the hips as it rotates in a circle, similar to a ticking clock; *snake "it"* details the rippling or wave-like undulations of the hips that can be performed to the front, the back, or to either side (similar to the movement of a snake); *jam "it"*—or, as they say during Carnival, "*jam on a bumpa*"—which means to throw your hips into another's "it" (it is expected that a man would jam

[97] I was told by two Caribbean dancer/choreographers, Chris Walker (Jamaica) and Makeda Thomas (Trinidad), that you have to imagine hot soup or porridge that is so thick, that it takes more energy for the bubble to break its surface; in effect, you must roll your hips at the extreme edges of a full hip rotation. Makeda Thomas and Chris Walker in casual conversation with author in Riverside, CA, November 16, 2013.

his “it” onto the rear-end of the winin’ woman), and *jukk “it”* which literally translates into poke “it” and describes the forward thrusting of one’s “it.”

These terms, like the word “wine,” can then be used in various ways, including ways that express erotic playfulness and (hetero-)sexual tensions. For instance, the term “cock” also means to ready a gun for firing, describes a male chicken, and is slang for penis. Similar to the cock in search of a hen to mate with, the male winer can use his superb winin’ skills to “wine as if he’s cocky” to attract a viable winin’ (female) partner, which could then lead to bedroom activities, if both dancers are willing. With regards to the gun metaphor, cockin’ it refers to the act of readying one’s “it” for “destroying” its “target.” Here, the goal is to bewilder someone with a spectacular wine. On the other hand, a female cockin’ her “it” can be interpreted as (a) readying herself to destroy the competition (i.e., other winers) with her exceptional winery, or (b) readying herself for a partner to wine *on* or *with* her. Such *tails/tales*, which remain written into each roll of one’s wine, help to forge the dialectic between those who are winin’ and their potential or current winin’ partners. As exemplified above, the winin’ subject embodies flattery and slander, in addition to gendered, racial, and transnational identifications, with every gyrating jiggle, bump, and roll of their “it.”

UNTYING THE TONGUE: A FINAL ATTEMPT AT TRANSLATION

As I have labored to translate the minutia behind various acts of winin’, it has become clear to me that the winers rely on the layered ambiguities of the wine itself in order to embody the slipperiness necessary for navigating in and out of colonization (e.g.,

a body seized and organized by heteropatriarchal constructs of gender and racism) and *un*colonization (e.g., a body in the process of re-claiming itself via the complex ambiguities of winin'). To borrow from Caribbean feminist Kamala Kempadoo, the Trini/Caribbean winer remains, at once, bounded and in flux—rooted in "elements of geography, history, politics, and culture, yet somewhat fuzzy and amorphous at the edges."[98] The Trini/Caribbean rolling "it," especially when used as a performance of Carib[*being*]ness, is not only informed by different cultural traditions, values, and interpersonal genealogies, but also by winers' shifting relationship to power and agency. For example, in spite the fact that the producers of many of the Trini-styled Carnivals within the Diaspora work to insidiously uphold values and traditions specific to the Trinidadian Carnival, as the evidence has shown, the ambiguous micro-politics of the rolling "it" itself remain rooted within the ever-evolving, multivalent cultural traditions of the Caribbean region itself. In effect, Carib[*being*]ness must be interpreted as expansive and polyvalent. Winin' for the sake of accessing Carib[*being*]ness, therefore, allows the winer to experience his/her identity as being in a state of constant negotiation. For, as Stuart Hall has continually argued, Caribbean people are always already delineated as enigmas, as problems, and as open questions, especially unto themselves.[99] Ultimately, if one intends to translate the work of winin' and the embodiment of Carib[*being*]ness—from the macro-political to the micro-political, as well as across spaces, places, and

[98] Kamala Kempadoo, *Sexing The Caribbean* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7.

[99] Stuart Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities," *New Left Review* 209 (1995): 8.

bodies—it remains imperative that one engages with the paradoxical[100] conundrums[101] of *being* Caribbean, especially as winers continue to venture into *foreign* spaces/places.

[100] Janet Momsen, "The Double Paradox," *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought,* ed. Patricia Mohammed (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002).

[101] Natasha Barnes, *Cultural Conundrums: Gender, Race, Nation, and the Making of Caribbean Cultural Politics*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

A WAIST FULL OF CARNIVAL COUNTER-*TAILS*: WININ' AGAINST THE SCANDALOUS *TALES* OF FATALISM

Herein lies my continued endeavor to uncolonize. In plain sight, I labor for my own pleasure. Vulnerable to the colonizing gaze, I stand on the shoulders of my jamette ancestors, jump-up to soca music, and sweat under the hot sun. Despite threats of fatalism or the fear of being misunderstood, I take up public space in this foreign place and wine dong di road, proudly and without shame.

… CUE MUSIC …

"Wassyness"[1]

Cause di music does bring di niceness.
An' di woman dem only winin'.
Way yuh move gyal yuh hypnotizing.
We not timid, iz only wil'ness.

We gettin' on wassy…
We doh have no behavior no, no behavior no.
Gettin' on wassy…
We doh have no behavior no, no behavior no.

"Wotless"[2]

Ah Wotless!

Ah winin' away,
feeling so nice,
so nice, so nice.
Sweat dripping on meh,
but its alright,
alright, alright.
[…]

[1] Written by Akeem "Preedy" Chance, Stephanas "Steffy" Ramgattie of WiiMAD and Destra Garcia for the 2013 Trinidadian Carnival season, but performed by Destra Garcia. Lyrics transcribed by author.

[2] Performed and written by Kerwin DuBois & Kes The Band for the 2011 Trinidadian Carnival season. Lyrics transcribed by author.

You wanna talk? (Talk bout dis)
Cause when ah wine you goh (talk bout dat)
When ah getting on you goh (talk bout dis)
[…]
You!
I don't care what you say!

I remember when these tunes hit di airwaves boy. No body couldda tell me that I was not the queen of wassyness. I mean I knew for certain that I was the most wotles winer dat year. Once my feet hit di road, I had no shame and no behavyah. Mas' is serious business! During Ca'nival, masqueraders does work rel hard, both formally and informally,[3] to educate, train, and rehearse their minds and bodies for the labor of jumpin' up in ah band. Ca'nival is not fuh di faint of heart. You does need rel stamina! And endurance! You need to know—before yuh even show up—how to wine and wukkup. Yuh doh come tuh Ca'nival tuh learn; yuh does come to show off! Di pleasure, di ecstasy, di high I does feel when I winin' in di middle ah di road is always worth it. It doh matta if I dripping with sweat, if di sun bunnin' meh up, if it start tuh rain, or if meh fut huttin' meh, nuttin' cyah stop me.[4] Call meh whatever names you'd like—wotles, slack, wassy, jamette—I still goh wine dong di place. Whether by myself, on some ting, or with somebody else, no body cyah tell me a damn ting! I know I have di right to be here!

In setting the tone for this chapter, I use the above musings on winin' at Carnival as an invitation for you to tune into the shameless and empowered attitude of winin' in public. It is also an invite for you to embody the ambiguous logics of the wine by joining

[3] See note 26 of chapter two.

[4] Translation: It doesn't matter if I'm dripping in sweat, if the sun is burning me, if it starts to rain, or if my foot hurts, nothing will stop me.

me in laboring for our own pleasure, as well as that of other masqueraders. As an honorary winer, you will be forced to engage with the policing discourses that threaten your right to pleasure, as well as your right to be *here*, throughout the chapter. However, you must remain true to the logic of winin' and persevere on. From this perspective, I ultimately invite you to recognize the importance in *winin' dong di streets ah Ca'nival abroad*.

Given the tangled webs that we winers weave across interpersonal boundaries, whilst remaining trapped within larger, structural webbings ourselves, I remain determined to reveal the unapologetic ways winers use their writhing "its" to both embody Carib[*being*]ness and resist the colonizing discourses that still continue to violently discipline the black dancing female body. This point of entry into our labor of and for pleasure during the Trini-styled Carnival begins with the questions: For whom do we wine?[5] And, what is at stake when we wine? The very act of winin' itself during Carnival reveals the intimately microscopic ways in which winers come into direct contact with the interstices and borders of contesting feelings of blackness, of contesting performances of (trans)nationhood, and of contesting uses and comprehensions of pleasure. In effect, our publicized labor of and for pleasure positions the politics of winin' directly against the colonizing, violent, anti-black practices that remain sewn into the socio-political fabric of the US nation. As noted in the previous chapter, when

[5] Dance scholar Cristina Rosa especially influences me here. At the 2015 SDHS/CORD Conference in Athens, Greece, she asked me to think about Joseph Roach's rhetorical question "for whom do you sweat?" I am further influenced by dance scholar Priya Srinivasan's book *Sweating Saris*. In it, she uses the "frame of a transnational Indian dance practice, Bharata Natyam, to explore the terms of citizenship [within the US] for minority Indians post 1965." Priya Srinivasan, *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance As Transnational Labor* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011), 118.

Trini/Caribbean winers participate in Trini-styled Carnivals, their gyrating performances of wotlesness, wassyness, slackness, jametteness, and other such playful iterations of Carib[*being*]ness remain susceptible to the colonizing markings of fatalism,[6] especially because they take up public space in *foreign* places. In effect, this chapter seeks to investigate the embodied ways *winin' fuh di Trini-styled Carnival* specifically works as pleasure-filled strategies for masqueraders to: 1. negotiate the contending racial identities they wear upon their winin' bodies, and 2. mediate the tense and tender ties they maintain with the state.

In order to tackle these intermeshing oppressions,[7] alongside modes of resistance, this chapter threads an autoethnographic vignette, based on my experience of the 2011 Labor Day Carnival in Brooklyn, throughout the rest of the chapter. Officially titled "*Mashin' Up Di Streets Wit' Meh Wais'line Thunda*" but referred throughout the chapter as "my version *ah tings*," this vignette works as the glue that holds everything together, especially since the intermeshed oppressions alluded to above entrap the winin' body within disparate political discourses. I use the two sections thereafter to conscientiously decipher the nuanced ways the winin' "it" further operates as a site through which power is enacted, refracted, reverberated, subverted, and danced. In "Blackening Pleasure," I spotlight the "No More West Indian Day Parade Detail" Facebook scandal that followed the 2011 Brooklyn festivities to discuss the ways in which Carib[*being*]ness remains

[6] In the chapter two, on page 119, I state, that "the colonizing gaze swaps out the winin' Carib[*being*]—an already complex and variegated state of being—for the winin' fatale—a disembodied imago, or rather a floating signifier, of blackness, savagery, and nihilism."

[7] María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 223.

vulnerable to the colonizing gaze of the state, or in this case of the New York City police, who then re-imagined the winin' body as savage, violent, and always already black. In the section after, "Taking Space, Politicizing Pleasure," I analyze a scandalous video clip of a NYC police officer gyrating on and with winin' Trini/Caribbean masqueraders during that very same Carnival. In theorizing these winin' *tales/tails* that play out *on di streets ah Ca'nival*, I ultimately write to reveal the ways in which winers' tireless labor of and for pleasure works as a necessary tool for creating intimacy, resisting fatalism, and *un*colonizing the winin' body, especially when regarding the black winin' woman who actively takes up public space in *foreign* places.

MASHIN' UP DI STREETS WIT' MEH WAIS'LINE THUNDA

I dive straight into "my version *ah tings*" to give you, the reader, an urgent point of entry into the imbricated scripts that play out all too often *on di streets abroad* (or in this case Brooklyn, NY) during the parade of the bands (i.e., the "main event" of Trini-styled Carnivals). Still influenced by Mimi Sheller's concept of "citizenship from below" and Marta Savigliano's use of a choreocritical voice,[8] I use these frameworks to reveal the important ways winin' masqueraders' participation in the 2011 Brooklyn Labor Day Carnival allowed them to "use the energy of sexuality, spirituality, and investments of eroticism not just to reclaim their citizenship, but also to assert their humanity in [...]

[8] For my discussion and use of Sheller's "citizenship from below," see the introductory chapter of this dissertation, on pages 23-24. For my discussion and use of choreocriticism, see chapter one of this dissertation, on pages 77-85.

contexts of dehumanization and physical violence."[9] Please be forewarned, however, as the chapter develops, this version *ah tings* will be **interrupted** and **re-remembered**, by way of other ethnographic and archival data, including that from the Jersey City Carnival and casual conversations with my informants. I strive to engage with the multiple consciousnesses that winin' Trini/Caribbeans partake-in and take-on in order to come to terms with the fear, pleasure, violence, and blackness that get inscribed into Trini-styled Carnivals in general,[10] but especially within the United States. Returning, again, to my own winin' body, and staying focused on *un*colonizing, my version *ah tings* is ultimately meant to underscore just "[…] how difficult it is for any social reality to transcend its own historical specificity,"[11] especially with regards to the event itself and the place within which it occupies. Even still, winin' masqueraders' commitment to embody Carib[*being*]ness remains relentless and persistent. Traipsing along these tense borderlines, where politics of pleasure push up against intermeshing oppressions, I now invite you to read my version *ah tings*:

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[9] Mimi Sheller, *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), Kindle edition, Location 501.

[10] For recent statistics on violence during the Trinidadian Carnival: Geisha Kowlessar, "40 serious crimes over Carnival," *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, last modified February 19, 2015, www.guardian.co.tt/news/2015-02-19/40-serious-crimes-over-carnival. For recent statistics on violence and racial tensions during Caribana (the Toronto Carnival): Stephen Weir, "To The Media, The Caribana Festival Is Code For 'Black Crime'" *The Huffington Post*, last modified August 14, 2012, www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-weir/caribana-black_b_1591949.html. For recent statistics on violence during the Notting Hill Carnival: Ben Morgan and Kiran Randhawa, "Notting Hill Carnival: More than 400 arrested and eight police officers injured as street party hit by rise in violence," *The Evening Standard*, last modified August 31, 2015, www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/notting-hill-carnival-more-than-300-arrested-and-eight-police-officers-injured-as-street-party-hit-a2924371.html.

[11] Silvio Torres-Saillant, "One and Divisible: Meditations on Global Blackness," *Small Axe* 29:13, no. 2 (2009): 7.

As I remember it, the 2011 Labor Day Carnival was the best I had yet to experience in Brooklyn. That year I was determined to get into a band so I could mash-up di streets wit' meh wais'line thunda!

Hmmm ... Before continuing, I want to contextualize this autoethnographic *tale/tail* with the acknowledgement that the work it took to "*mash-up di streets wit' meh wais'line thunda*" was not only exhausting, but also purposeful and pointed. The phrase "mash-up" implies that some kind of "destruction" is eminent. As argued in the previous chapter, the wine itself, and thus the winer, is an embodiment of both flattery and slander. In effect, when one attempts to "mash-up" something or someone with their winery, their goals or intentions can range from: 1. using their exceptional winin' skills to physically challenge, emotionally bewilder, or sexually overwhelm those who are witnessing or experiencing their winery; to 2. disrupting the space, energy, or flow of events in some way, shape, or form with their spectacular winery, such as bringing the party to a stop and/or leaving a mess behind; or 3. partying excessively by winin' on everything and everyone with fervor and rhythmic precision. The act of "mashin'-up" is ultimately a commitment to pleasure at the risk of enduring physical pain or exhaustion, even in the face of hardship, misery, or violence.

I myself had to sleep for almost an entire day to recuperate from *all ah dat* wukkin', jukkin', winin', and rolling from that particular Carnival. In fact, my ethnographic participation in the annual Los Angeles Carnival from 2009 to 2011, the 2012 and 2014 Hollywood Carnivals, the 2012 Crop Over festivities (the Bajan Carnival), and the 2012 and 2014 Trinidadian Carnivals also resulted in extreme exhaustion and "battle" wounds. My feet were often swollen and in some instances, I struggled to walk

on them comfortably for a week. Even my informants suffered from the aftermath of mashin' up Carnival. One severely damaged her toenails, another twisted his knee, and a few others threw out their backs. Such behavyah, however, should come as no surprise. As I have argued in chapter one, this bodily logic is not only the expected behavior for the Trini-styled Carnival, but it is also one of the inherited legacies of the jamette herself.

This brings me to the second half of my proclamation: *wais'line thunda*. Like the clapping sound of rolling thunder, this type of winin' is meant to send shock waves through the dance floor, or at the very least, through the person with whom you are dancing. Furthermore, it implies that the "reverberations" will be done with a skillfully rolling "it," or rather by an "it" that can do *rel* "damage." Herein lies the hidden gendered and racial element. The use of the word "thunda" indicates an expectation of heavy weighted*ness* to each roll of one's "it." Therefore, this kind of wine promotes the image of a big, round, jiggling "it," which is then stereotypically imagined as a black female "it." However, seeing that I did not quite fit this prototype—descriptors such as *mahgah*, narrow, and skinny have been used to describe my "it" by friends, family, and strangers—I had to use my superb winin' skills (i.e., precise, dynamic, and rhythmic use of my hips and *bambam*) to *mash-up di place*. This compensation for the narrowness of my behind, however, further points to the insidious ways in which the black dancing female [read: the nineteenth century jamette] has set the standard for *mashin'-up di place*.

And now back to the Labor Day festivities …

What can I say, after four years of living in Riverside, California without easy access to all things Caribbean, I was excited to be back home on the east coast. My girlfriends, on the other hand (all of whom were of Haitian descent), were focused on finding someone

sexy to wine-up on. So, after scouting the scene and navigating through the densely overcrowded sidewalks of Eastern Parkway for about an hour, a moment of serendipity arrived. One of the officers standing in front of the iron barriers that separated the masqueraders (in the street) from the onlookers (on the sidewalk) looked over his right shoulder, just long enough for us to slip through one of the broken bars and jump into the passing band. "Hide behind their feathers," I screamed out to my three girlfriends as we pushed through the band, making sure to also avoid the band's security crew. After some time had passed, and our fears of getting caught subsided, we began our search for someone sexy to wine-up on. My friend was the first to locate one. As Machel Montano's "Slow Wine" blasted through speakers strapped onto the music truck, she called him to her by deliberately gesturing towards him with her rolling bumsee. With impeccable musicality, she made sure to hit every gyrating contour of that man with her sultry hips as Montano sang, "Slooooo-ohh-oh-ohhh." Even I blushed a bit at her winery, but as with everything in Carnival, the song came to an end, her winin' came to an end, and we continued our search for more men to wine-up on. It was rel pace.

Then, in the midst of all the feathers, screaming, jumping, waving, and winery, I heard the words "Ah Wot-leeeeeeh-sss"[12] *bleed through the speakers, I remember quickly looking up at the DJ, as to let him know that this was my absolute favorite soca song for the season. As I did so, I saw Kees Dieffenthaller himself (known simply as Kes) step out, on top of the truck, to sing the very tune that won him the 2011 International Groovy Soca Monarch*[13] *title. In that moment, I remember thinking, "Now this is freedom!" I had successfully stormed a band, and even better, one of my absolute favorite soca singers was here, in the flesh, straight from Trinidad and on Brooklyn soil, singing my most favorite tune for the season. All I could do was scream aloud, throw my hands above my head, and bus' ah sweet wine in di middle ah di road. The nearby masqueraders must*

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[12] I invite you to briefly pause again in order to address the complexity of performing *wotlesness*. The term wotles is an Anglophone-Caribbean Creole term that derives from the word "worthless." Growing up in a middle-classed, Trinidadian household, the term wotles was synonymous with behaviors that were deemed undesirable or morally loose, and often punishable via shaming or even legal action. In the Signature Edition of *Côté ci Côté la*, a dictionary on the Creole words, expressions, and traditions of Trinidad and Tobago, the term wotles is defined as word used to describe a person, not an inanimate object, who is seen as being "no good." With that said, when it comes to winin', being called wotles, which is also synonymous with the terms jamette and slack, can be easily embraced as a compliment as well as an insult. In turn, it is within this obscure space that the personification of wotlesness, shame, fatality, pleasure, pride and erotic power/agency profusely bleed into one another. And now we can *goh back tuh di road*… (See: "Wotles," in *Côté ci Côté la: Trinidad and Tobago Dictionary, The Signature Edition*, ed. John Mendes (Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago: Zenith Services, Ltd., 2012), 209.)

[13] This is an annual international music competition held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Soca artists from all over the world compete for monetary prizes. Organized by The Caribbean Prestige Foundation for the Performing Arts, there are currently two categories of this competition: Power Soca (high energy or fast-tempo songs) and Groovy Soca (medium/low-energy or slow-tempo songs). For more info, see: "International Soca Monarch: Home," *Caribbean Prestige Foundation*, copyright 2013, accessed March 14, 2015, www.socamonarch.net/home/.

have felt my excitement, because the next thing I know, I was being sandwiched by two men and two other women, who not only wined all around me, but they challenged me to wine down low to the ground on more than one occasion. I did not mind it, so I stayed with the groove for a bit; but when Kes started to sing out "Just show me whey yuh from," I had to break free from the sandwich. With my Trini flag in my right hand, and my left hand on one of the speakers, I latched on to the moving truck and began to jog and wine. The music was just too sweet to let go, so I made sure to grab my girls as well. They loved Kes too! And jus' so, di Ca'nival jumbie in we jump out. We had no choice but to surrender to the moment and the good vibes. We then began to furiously jump up and down behind di truck, making sure to scream out loud, "WE LOVE YOU KES," on more than one occasion!

I now invite you to dwell on the significance of *wotlesness*[14] and engage with the Carnival *jumbie*. In that moment, my winery was deeply rooted within the *fete*-ish mentality, which began with my conviction to "*mash-up di streets wit' meh wais'line thunda*" and was intensified when "*di Ca'nival jumbie in we jump out*," ultimately "forcing" us to enhance our winery, party harder, have more fun, and enjoy the moment more deeply. The sweaty labor of both *wotlesness* and *jumbieness*—which in my version *ah tings*, also worked to *mash-up di streets*—allowed my friends and me to feel the pleasure of performing our own understandings of Carib[*being*]ness. During this visceral moment, our winin' performances revealed us as slippery and playful dancing bodies that desired pleasure, not only for ourselves, but also for the entire Trini/Caribbean community at large. *Hmm, now where was I? Oh right …*

I was running on fumes at that point, meaning I had been up for over 24 hours with little to no sleep. My best friend—who was born to a Haitian mother and a Dominicano father—and I spent much of the previous night covered in mud and paint until we encountered an impromptu jam session, somewhere off Nordstand Ave, where revelers were liberally throwing powder on any and every passerby. This of course was a prelude to the Jouvay festivities held in Prospect Park, a few miles up from where we were

[14] See note 12 above.

roaming. Soon thereafter, still high off the energy (and the rum), I fell in love with a young, strapping, African-American man who ended-up escorting us throughout the rest of the night. He paid for my roti with curry channa, freshly made by one of the Trini vendors, and an ital ginger and lemon juice, freshly squeezed and blended by a Jamaican Rastafarian vendor a few blocks away. I was in my glee.

Then, around sunrise, I returned to my car, somewhere on Pacific Street; and just as I put the key to the car door, my friend called my attention to the massive amounts of people running towards us. We both started to freak out, for the sight of dozens of people running towards us was quite alarming. But, just as we were about to join in on the frenzy, we noticed that members of the crowd started slowing down. My friend then heard one of them mumbling something about how black people can't gather in one place without someone getting shot. So with that we jumped in my car. We were not trying to stick around and face the possibly dangerous situation that had just occurred. Also, I was already determined to storm a mas' band that day, as well as rekindle the love-connection I had made during the pre-Jouvay celebrations. In other words, time was of the essence. So I quickly drove back to New Jersey to drop my best friend off, took a quick shower, picked up my three Haitian-American girlfriends, and returned to the Carnival festivities for the parading of the bands. In that moment of fear, the magic from the night's ecstasy and euphoria flowed through my veins so forcibly that it became necessary for me to not get sidetracked by the possible gunshots and return to safety, so that I could stick to the game plan. I mean, Carnival was calling me and I felt like a Super Trini, invincible from anything that threatened to damper my fun. I wanted this Carnival to be only about togetherness, letting go of worries, and mischievously challenging any rules of authority; so when the opportunity arrived for me to mash-up di streets wit' my wais'line thunda, I was not going to let anything stop me. I had no choice but to wine. Or rather, as I heard a comedian say at a post-Carnival comedy show in Trinidad, "When life gives you soca, WINE!"

Please know that in my version *ah tings*, my hinting to gunshots is not to be dismissive of the immanent violence that continues to haunt the Labor Day festivities. Instead, I am pointing to the ways in which Trini/Caribbeans cope with the reviling desires that circumscribe their winin' bodies by actively pursuing and laboring for

pleasure, which is, in and of itself, an act of resistance.[15] The fact remains, on that particular Labor Day, falling in love and getting hit by a stray bullet were very real possibilities. From ecstasy to peril to feelings of solidarity and moments of social pariahdom, that day, winers had to negotiate multiple states of being in order to ascertain an embodied sense of freedom and euphoria, all whilst always remaining conscious of the very real threat of violence. With regards to the New York City police—who were both policing and embodying the barrier between the masquerader and the spectator—Trini/Caribbean winers had to further mediate the very palpable tension between their own desires to wine and "misbehave" in public, and the tendency of the colonizing lens—or in this case, the policing lens—to link such Carib[*being*] behavyah to scripts of blackness as shameful, violent, hypersexual, savage, or fatalistic. Ultimately, my version *ah tings* points to the entangled ways the politics of Carib[*being*]ness, blackness, sexuality, violence, romantic love, freedom, fear, and pleasure—as well as the consequent policing of all-of-the-above—constantly flowed in, out, through, and around my winin' body *on di* Eastern Parkway.

[15] Just to give another example, Journalist Wilson Dizard reported on the 2015 Labor Day festivities and observed a similar response by the attendees. He wrote, "Just before this year's J'Ouvert, a fatal stabbing occurred along the parade route. Police cordoned off the scene—a big blotch of fresh blood on the sidewalk—and the party went on around it, *undisturbed*." (emphasis added). Wilson Dizard, "Labor Day violence in Brooklyn complicates community peacemaking efforts," *Aljazeera America*, last modified September 8, 2015, http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/9/8/gun-violence-jouvert-west-indian-day-parade-labor-day.html.

BLACKENING PLEASURE: POLICING THE SAVAGE BORDERS OF CARIB[*BEING*]NESS

Through referencing Elizabeth Nunez's novel *Bruised Hibiscus* (2000) as an example of how personal narratives became intertwined in Trinidad's nationalist identity politics and projects, Caribbean literary scholar Donette Francis inquires "why violence is at the heart of narrating national intimacy."[16] With respect to the 2011 Labor Day Carnival, both the New York City police and the perpetrators of the fatalities linked to that year's festivities donned the colonizing gaze, especially because they misrecognized the work of *winin' dong di streets ah Ca'nival* as a sign that nihilism or some ultimate tragedy was being called into the space. In an effort to continue to contextualize my version *ah tings*, I myself remember watching FOX news on channel 5 after that year's festivities, and their "recap" of the West Indian American Day Parade mainly consisted of the total number of shootings and killings that had occurred by the completion of the Monday parade.[17] In fact, countless news outlets reported that year's "West Indian Day Parade [was] marred by violence."[18] Words and phrases such as "the parade-related shootings," "gun battle," "terror-filled," and "bloodshed" were used in direct association with the fun-filled weekend of winery and Trini/Caribbean pride. The 2011 president of

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[16] Donette Francis, "Novel Insights: Sex Work, Secrets, and Depression in Angie Cruz's *Soledad*," in *Sex and the Citizen: Interrogating the Caribbean*, ed. Faith Smith (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 55.

[17] It was initially reported as 48 people shot and 10 killed, but later the toll was updated to 67 people shot and 13 killed over the 2011 Labor Day weekend. Christopher Mathias, "NYPD: 67 Shot In New York City During Violent Labor Day Weekend [UPDATE]," *The Huffington Post*, last modified November 6, 2011, www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/06/nypd-47-shot-in-new-york-_n_950287.html.

[18] "2011 West Indian Day Parade Marred By Violence (PHOTOS)," *The Huffington Post*, last modified December 6, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/06/west-indian-day-parade-2011_n_950135.html.

WIADCA,[19] Thomas Bailey, further noted in an interview, "You have statements like the carnival was very colorful, with beautiful weather and a large crowd, but it was marred by three murders, then you look at the murders and there was one in the Bronx, one in Queens, one in Yonkers."[20] And as Bailey had asserted, most of the shootings and homicides did not actually occur on or near the Labor Day Carnival festivities, which is how I remember my version *ah tings*. Even still, of the 67 shootings and 13 homicides, the violence that occurred in the vicinity of the parade route did, unfortunately, result in three deaths, three gun related wounds, and one stabbing.[21]

I cannot say whether or not these gunmen were of Caribbean descent or if they were even there to partake in the festivities, as most of their identities and motives were never revealed, but what has become blatantly clear is that the winin' Trini/ Caribbean body remains inextricably marked as the border against which violence is both produced and deflected, which then marks them/us as a threat to NYC/US civility. Specifically, winin' *on di streets abroad* positions men and women as the feminized "soft borders" between the US national Self and the Trini/Caribbean Self—again, I use this concept of

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[19] The West Indian American Day Carnival Association, Inc.

[20] Clem Richardson, "Murder, they wrote, was caused by the West Indian Day Carnival; not so, say parade organizers," *NY Daily News*, last modified August 27, 2012, http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/murder-wrote-caused-west-indian-day-carnival-not-parade-organizers-article-1.1144860.

[21] Kerry Burke, Irving DeJohn, Edgar Sandoval, and Barry Paddock, "Two cops shot in Brooklyn gun battle, caps terror-filled NYC Labor Day weekend of shootings," *NY Daily News*, last modified September 6, 2011, http://nydn.us/1Dza97v. It is also important to note that the actual number of people who were hurt on, along, or near the parade route kept changing. Compared to the *NY Daily News*, *The Village Voice* reported more people being shot and one less person killed—"nine people were shot, and two killed 'along or near the parade route.'" Jen Doll, "NYPD Investigated for Excessive Use of Dance at the West Indian Day Parade," *The Village Voice*, Last modified September 13, 2011, www.villagevoice.com/news/nypd-investigated-for-excessive-use-of-dance-at-the-west-indian-day-parade-6710283.

the "Self" hermeneutically.[22] In her discussion of women's position within the Trinidadian Carnival, Patricia De Freitas defines a nation as "bounded entities which require the constructing and policing of borders. "'Soft' borders," she continues, "are easily penetrable while 'hard' borders maintain the integrity of the Self—Other distinction."[23] Borrowing from De Freitas' logic, the winin' Trini/Caribbean masquerader, both men and women, function as "soft borders" between the foreign Other and the national Selves. In other words, these bordered tensions—the site where the imago of the winin' fatale chafes the Carib[*being*] body—have been incarnated as winin' Trini/Caribbean masqueraders themselves.

HHHOOOOOOONNNNKKKKKK!!!!!!

Oh gosh! Look how I clean fuhget, we still on di road, oui! Well, in dat case leh we goh back tuh my version ah tings, but from a different point of reference. During the 2013 Carnival Season, the soca song "Savage" was a rel big tune. So when I heard a big truck blasting it over its loud speakers at the Jersey City Carnival, which was held on July 27,2013 (two years after my version ah tings happened) all I could do was jump up with the band and have a time.[24] As I remember it, the DJ did a clever thing and mixed the original 1976 version of the song with Bunji Garlin's updated version. So, with a big smile on my face, I responded with a steady chipping of my feet and some light jukks of my "it," which would sometimes move into a figure-8 winin' pattern. I enjoyed myself so much; I ended up staying with this band for the entire musical selection:

[22] See note 36 in chapter two.

[23] Patricia A. De Freitas, "Disrupting 'The Nation': Gender Transformations in the Trinidad Carnival," *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 73, no. 1 and 2 (1999): 13.

[24] Unlike the Brooklyn Carnival, the one held in The Heights neighborhood of Jersey City, New Jersey did not have barriers that separated the masqueraders from the spectators. In fact, other than a handful of police cars that directed the traffic, the presence of the police was lightly felt by the Carnival-goers. For a visual reference, see: Trading PhotoS, Videos of Live EventS, "Jersey City Carnival 2013," YouTube video, 4:33:21, posted July 29, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDugr2yzxbo.

"Savage"[25] *(1976)*

Strong like lion
Hard like iron

They start to protest,
How we zest without rest
Manhattan saying how dey so broken
Brooklyn say women could stay but di men must go away.

Savage!
They say we West Indian (Savage)
They say we eh human (Savage)
That's the way we make love (Savage)
Love [read: sex] is all we think of
Vincentian, Jamaican, Martinican, Tobago man.

~Performed and written by Cecil "Maestro" Hume~

"Savage"[26] *(2013)*

Dem say we outta place
Like aliens from outta space
Cuz dem gyal does wine dem wais'
To we amazin' pace

Anitstush.[27] *dem call we antistush*
Cause we does wake di party
Dem say we from di bush
We like tuh make dem move,
Make dem dance til yuh loose yuh shoes.
But as yuh throw wine dey heel get bruise

Dem turn round and callin' we
Savage! Good Lahd!
Just fuh dat dey callin' we
Savage! Hey!
Just fuh dat dey callin' we
Savage! Rrr!
Just fuh dat dey callin' we

[25] Date is in reference to the Trinidadian Carnival. Lyrics transcribed by author.

[26] See note 25 above.

[27] Translation: Not stuck-up, not well-behaved, or not proper i.e., the opposite of respectable.

Savage!
Dem call we savage!

~Performed and written by Ian "Bunji Garlin" Alvarez~

Here, the above calypsonian (Hume) and soca artist (Garlin) point to the very tensions that bubble up to the surface when Trini/Caribbeans take over Brooklyn's public spaces to showcase their winery. In spite of the almost 40 years time span between these songs, both versions share a similar message about the Caribbean body being marked as "savage" by the US colonizing gaze. In the 1976 version, Hume presents Caribbeans, especially the men, as sexually virile and full of energy, so much so that they were seen as savage and thus a threat to US heteropatriarchy. In the 2013 version, Garlin calls attention to the otherness and alien*ness* of Caribbean winers within the US. He specifically proclaims that because of our fierce winery (i.e., our commitment to the *fete*-ish mentality) during the Carnival season, Caribbean winers are often perceived as savage, or antistush as he terms it. Again, as Philip Scher reminds us, "As Carnival moves with Trinidadians, it is made to engage with whatever ideological structures impinge upon the community."[28] With respect to Trini/Caribbean winers who *wine dong di* the streets of Brooklyn—which, at times, overlaps with the very same spaces where anti-black policing and violence seems to be rampant—their winin' bodies too must engage with the gendered, racial, sexual, and economical politics that shape that particular place. Hence, in calling out the misrecognitions imposed on the winin' Caribbean body by the

[28] Scher, "From the Metropole to the Equator," 59.

colonizing eye, these artists both underscore the continual chafing that the winin' Carib[*being*] must mediate *on di streets abroad*.

Returning to my version ah tings, this chafing of borders was viscerally felt when the above sentiments of savagery were revealed to be the driving lens through which New York City police officers conceptualized the Labor Day festivities. In 2011, it became a public scandal when "members of the New York Police Department [referred] to the [Brooklyn Carnival] as the 'West Indian Day Massacre' […] a 'scheduled riot,'"[29] and "Savage Day."[30] Again, the colonizing gaze replaced the winin' Carib[*being*] with the imago of winin' fatale. A pair of Brooklyn lawyers uncovered "over 70 pages worth of racist, violent comments directed at paradegoers,"[31] including "Let them kill each other," "Drop a bomb and wipe them all out," and "maybe next year they should hold it on Rikers Island."[32] Although the "No More West Indian Day Parade Detail" Facebook group[33] has since been taken down, it was verified that "at least 60 percent of the groups' members" were indeed NYPD officers.[34] *The New York Times* reported that the group

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[29] Arlene M. Roberts, "The West Indian Day Parade: An Island Woman's Perspective," *The Huffington Post*, last modified February 7, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arlene-m-roberts/the-west-indian-day-parad_b_1133643.html.

[30] johnd7463, "No More West Indian Day Detail," *Scribd, Inc.*, last modified September 7, 2011, https://www.scribd.com/doc/74938745/No-More-West-Indian-Day-Detail-9-7-11-612-Pm.

[31] Christopher Mathias, "NYPD Group, 'No More West Indian Day Parade Detail', Calls Paradegoers 'Animals', 'Savages'," *The Huffington Post*, last modified Dec 6, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/06/nypd-group-no-more-west-i_n_1131830.html.

[32] johnd7463, "No More West Indian Day Detail."

[33] The online group, "comprised of 1, 200 members strong," was "formed for 'N.Y.P.D. officers who [were] threatened by superiors and forced to be victims themselves by the violence of the West Indian Day massacre.'" Roberts, "The West Indian Day Parade."

[34] Mathias, "NYPD Group."

was created in September of 2011,[35] shortly after I had already *mashed-up di Eastern Parkway wit' meh wais'line thunda*. In the blog "The West Indian Day Parade: An Island Woman's Perspective," Arlene Roberts rightly responded to the scandal: "I am stunned by the disparity in perception on the part of police officers and the reality of my experiences at the West Indian Day Parade. Moreover, I can't help but wonder how their perception informs their approach when dealing with paradegoers."[36]

Now as offensive and deplorable as those police officers' commentaries were to West Indians in particular, and to the predominantly African-American community of Crown Heights where the carnival is held, the feelings of frustration that drove these police officers to react with such vehement disdain were seemingly reinforced by the consistent amount of violence that continually occurs, almost every year since I began my research in 2009, during the holiday's festivities. Nonetheless, pouring their frustrations into the "parade" and its "paradegoers" (to use the language of these state institutions)

[35] William Glaberson, "N.Y.C. Police Maligned Paradegoers on Facebook," *The New York Times*, last modified Dec 5, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/12/06/nyregion/on-facebook-nypd-officers-malign-west-indian-paradegoers.html.

[36] Roberts, "The West Indian Day Parade."

falsely promotes the idea that the carnival itself is the cause of the violence.[37] Even in 2015 (four years after my version *ah tings*), "City Councilmember Jumaane Williams, a [Grenadian-American] Brooklyn Democrat who represents the area the parade passes through, […] cautioned against specifically linking the West Indian American Day Parade with violence. Other ordinary weekends this summer saw more killings, he noted."[38] He himself was also racially profiled and wrongly detained by the police the same time I was *mashin'-up di Eastern Parkway wit' meh wais'line thunda*.[39]

It is clear that on the very public streets of Brooklyn, the winin' masquerader's rolling production of sweat remains vulnerable to the colonizing gaze of the anti-black racist lens donned by the NYC police. Due to the fact that this Carnival is held in a predominantly black area,[40] and many of its participants can be "visibly" traced to a Sub-

[37] On September 7, 2015, "Carey Gabay, 43, the first deputy general counsel at the Empire State Development Corporation and a former assistant counsel to [NYC Governor Cuomo], was celebrating J'ouvert—a pre-dawn kick-off of the Carnival season—with his family when he was hit with a 'random bullet,' […]." Jillian Jorgensen, "Cuomo Administration Official Shot in Brooklyn Hours Before West Indian Day Parade," *Observer News*, last modified September 7, 2015, observer.com/2015/09/cuomo-administration-official-shot-in-brooklyn-hours-before-west-indian-day-parade/. This particular shooting caused state leaders to crack down on the organizers to put systems in place to stop the recurring violence that seems to follow the parade/Carnival. However, Brooklyn community leaders, including Councilmember Jumaane Williams, argue that the real issue at hand is not the parade/Carnival itself, but rather poor gun control and having too many illegal guns on the streets. Kerry Burke and Leonard Greene, "Brooklyn community leaders blame guns, not festival, for West Indian American Day Parade violence," *NY Daily News*, last modified September 11, 2015. www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/brooklyn-leaders-blame-guns-west-indian-parade-violence-article-1.2356497.

[38] Dizard, "Labor Day violence."

[39] For further details see: Fernanda Santos and Michael Wilson, "Police Detain Brooklyn Councilman at West Indian Parade," *The New York Times*, last modified September 5, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/09/06/nyregion/city-councilman-jumaane-d-williams-is-handcuffed-at-west-indian-day-parade.html?_r=0.

[40] Here I am especially referencing the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, where the Carnival's main event (the parade of bands) takes place, as well as Prospect Park, Flatbush, Prospect Heights, Bed-Stuy, and Canarsie where other events (should as J'Ouvert), fetes, and limes associated with Carnival are also held.

Saharan African lineage, the space of the Brooklyn Carnival is as much a "black" space as it is a Carib[*being*] space. Moreover, as discussed in chapter one, the active rolling of one's "it" remains haunted by Saartjie "Sara" Baartman's "it," which then performatively works to mark the winin' body as "black," regardless of one's "visible" connection to Sub-Saharan Africa. Effectively, within this festive space, the winin' body is further articulated and disciplined through discourses of violence and anti-black racism. Herein lies another layer to the chafing, the moment when the colonizing gaze filters Carib[*being*]ness through its anti-black racist lens and re-transcribes the publicly winin' body as a black object that deserves to be violently eradicated from society. Stuart Hall describes this chafing moment as "something different." He then continues,

> The question of learning, learning to be Black. Learning to come into an identification. […] What that moment allows to happen are things which were not there before. It is not that what one then does was hiding away inside as my true self. There wasn't any bit of that true self in there before that identity was learnt. Is that, then, the stable one, is that where we are? Is that where people are?[41]

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, because the winin' body is a Diasporic body that toggles between multiple constructions of blackness and citizenship, winers must constantly learn and re-learn themselves as black subjects as they cross national and cultural boundaries. In turn, when winers are made to engage with the floating signifier of blackness, they often experience conflicting feelings of what blackness represents at the level of the body.

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[41] Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," in *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. by Anthony King (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1991), 55.

During casual conversations with two Trinidadian women of East Indian ethnicities, both of whom lived in the Los Angeles area, I was told that in America because they are Trini, they were sometimes seen as being black, especially in the eyes of the "Indians from India." According to them, because they wine, play mas' in Carnival, eat Trini food, speak with a Trini accent, or rather a non-East Indian accent, and listen to soca, East Indians often mistreat them. One woman stated, "No for real! They treat you like you're black!"[42] And another stated that she purposefully avoids going into places that are owned by East Indian people because "They are pompous. […] I don't like the way they treat me. They are really rude. And the men do, they do look down upon you."[43] According to these women, the disrespectful treatment from the East Indians—who have constructed themselves as pure/authentic East Indians—was triggered by their own rootedness in Trinidadian culture, a culture that is heavily marked and influenced by African (e.g., jamette) histories and traditions. Another Trinidadian informant stated, "It always pissed me off that I had to 'choose' in this country. Back home [Trinidad], I was mixed. That was me, the mixed girl. On my mom's side alone we're Negro—that's what we call black people back home—Chinese, Indian, and Puerto Rican (I think). And you want me to CHOOSE just one! Nevah!"[44] According to too many of my informants, whether they were Trini, Bajan, Jamaican, Vincy, or Haitian, their feelings of blackness

[42] Anonymous Into-Trinidadian woman (Hollywood Carnival masquerader) in casual conversation with author at the Ecstasy Mas' Camp in Long Beach, CA, June 2012.

[43] Anonymous woman (Indo-Trinidadian living in Los Angeles) in personal phone interview with author via Google Voice, January 15, 2013.

[44] Anonymous Trinidadian woman (family friend) in casual conversation with author in Franklin Park, New Jersey, August 2013.

never matched the feelings of blackness imposed upon them through the anti-black racist politics perpetuated within the US.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon explains that the black man experiences himself through layered consciousnesses. He explains, "the black experience is ambiguous, for there is not *one* Negro—there are *many* black men."[45] According to him, some of the multiple registers of racialization are: 1. the black man in relation to the black man;[46] 2. the black man in relation to the white man; and 3. the black man in relation to "the white gaze," which I term here, the colonizing gaze.[47] With regards to the Police Facebook scandal, it is clear that the racist police officers, who were members of that Facebook group, donned the colonizing lens. Effectively, on the streets of Brooklyn, winin' Afro-Caribbean men are often policed as if they are prone to violence, and winin' Afro-Caribbean women are policed as if they are hypersexual savages who should be ashamed of themselves, which is then further marked as a condition of their perceived blackness.

Fanon further extended these layers of consciousness to include the body and its embodied knowledges. He states, "A slow construction of my self as a body in a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema. It is not imposed on me; it is rather

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[45] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 115.

[46] Fanon specifically discusses the nuanced complexities between the Malagasy, Senegalese, French-black, the Afro-Antillean, and the Mulatto/Creole-Antillean. Paul Gilroy too reminds us that it is important to engage with the "antagonism between different local definitions of what blackness" entails. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) 94.

[47] Fanon, *Black Skin*, 90.

definitive structuring of myself and the world—definitive because it creates a genuine dialectic between my body and the world."[48] For Fanon, "in the white world, the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity."[49] He further elaborates: "I am overdetermined from the outside. I am a slave not to the 'idea' others have of me, but to my appearance […] The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am *fixed* [or […] the Whites objectively cut sections of my reality […] I sense, I see in this white gaze that it is the arrival not of a new man, but a new type of man, a new species. A Negro, in fact!"[50]

Using this framing to reassess the grinding and chafing that winers were made to navigate during the 2011 Labor Day Carnival, I return again to my version *ah tings*. According to the aforementioned Facebook group, which further represents a major institutionalized entity of the US national Self, too many of those NYC police officers viewed the foreign Other (in this case the Caribbean cultures represented throughout the Labor Day festivities) as an uncivilized (black) savage who deserves to die, especially because their behavyah is seen as a threat to the rest of US civility. Daniele Giarraputo and George Tavares, two members of that very same Facebook page, seem to harp on this viewpoint in their commentary. Daniele Giarraputo states, "Every year on Labor Day the police department is forced to spend the holiday weekend away from their families and friends to go and deal with this disgusting behavior from the people who are supposed to

[48] Ibid., 91.

[49] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1968), 109, quoted in Torres-Saillant, "One and Divisible," 5.

[50] Fanon, *Black Skin*, 95.

be celebrating a culture not shooting up the neighborhood. I think it is a disgrace and should not be allowed anymore!!!! Wake up Mayor Bloomberg!!!"[51] George Tavares adds, "Let [...] us [police officers] serve those who actually appreciate life and act civilized."[52] According to these police officers, the uncivilized, "disgusting behavior" of winin' Trini/Caribbean revelers—which I previously described as Carib[*being*]ness but here is recognized as the winin' fatale—has been marked as a "disgrace" to the proud city of New York and therefore is reason enough to stop serving and protecting this community and its people.

Manny Mondello, also a member of this Facebook group, insisted, "It shouldn't even be called a parade. We have all seen parades; this is not a parade."[53] And his assertion is quite sharp; for Carnival, especially as it is practiced today in Trinidad, is a state-institutionalized period of time when legal practices and social mores are suspended and replaced by the topsy-turvy politics of transgression. A parade, however, is an organized public procession that is permitted by state entities where legal practices and social mores are enforced and strictly policed. Unlike parades, during a Trini-styled Carnival, one has permission to "misbehave" and "get-on bad," which includes blurring the lines between chaos and order, spectacle (participating) and spectator (watching), or

[51] johnd7463, "No More West Indian Day Detail."

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

appropriate and inappropriate behavyah.[54] Returning to my version *ah tings*, I want to spotlight the moment my friends and I slipped through one of the broken bars of the metal barrier and jumped into the passing band. This moment of slippage, of removing ourselves from the designated spectator space and into the spectacularized space of the street, brought into being the already present tension between the expectations of a "parade" and that of a Trini-styled Carnival. Although the New York Police Department demands that the spectators' space (the sidewalk) and the masqueraders' space (the street) be separated by a metal barrier, the Carib[*being*] masquerader knows that during a Trini-styled Carnival, the wine has no boundaries. From the masqueraders' point of view, an "inappropriate" behavyah *on di road* is that of the non-dancing, non-reveling body. *On di road*, one (both masqueraders and spectators) has an unspoken permission to wine up, down, around, in-between, and through any and every thing, whether it be still, moving, alive, inanimate, or even off-limits. One's pursuit of pleasure thus becomes dependent on who or what one is allowed to wine-up on or with. Effectively, because these bordered tensions must be negotiated with each wine, winers' public displays of erotic agency and cultural pride *on di streets abroad* further implicates their pursuit of pleasure as yet

[54] I find it important to also note that even the language used to frame the Brooklyn event is constantly in flux. Officially, the main event of the weeklong festivities is called "The West Indian (American) Day Parade," well according to many NY state entities and local news outlets. According to WIADCA, the annual event is regarded as a Carnival parade. (See: "About Us," *West Indian American Day Carnival Association, Inc.*, copyright 2014, accessed Feb 2, 2015, http://wiadcacarnival.org/about-us/.) Perhaps they are hinting that the event is actually a carnival masquerading as a parade, or is it a parade-like carnival? Mas' players and makers, soca artists, and general Trini-styled Carnival enthusiasts, however, simply refer to the event as "Labor Day." And although the word "carnival" is not always stated, the energy and desires associated with Trini-styled Carnivals are always already poured into the phrase "Labor Day."

another border that is in need of being policed, which brings me to the next police scandal from the 2011 Labor Day festivities.

TAKING SPACE, POLITICIZING PLEASURE: ENT(WININ')G INTIMACY ALONG THE LIMITS OF FATALISM

When the Carnival jumbie jumps out and bites an on-looker, it can very easily come in the form of a winin' bambam, which is exactly what happened to many on-duty police officers standing along the Carnival route in Brooklyn. One, however, was caught on video indulging in the intoxication of the day's winery and soca music. One week later, the video was posted on WorldStarHipHop.com—a popular urban entertainment media outlet that especially targets young, black, urban audiences—under the title "NY Cops Wilding Out On Labor Day 2011: Daggering On The Parkway! (Grinding And All)."[55] The internet quickly went into a frenzy, and the video went viral. From social media to new outlets,[56] everyone seemed to have an opinion about the officer's candid dancing caught on tape. As a result of the aspersive attention, the NYPD themselves launched an

[55] To see full video go to "NY Cops Wilding Out On Labor Day 2011: Daggering On The Parkway! (Grinding And All)," *WorldStarHipHop.Com*, last modified September 12, 2011, www.worldstarhiphop.com/videos/video.php?v=wshh119k832Gb7nAfp16.

[56] "NYPD Cops Dance Dirty With Women During West Indian Day Parade," *The Huffington Post*. Posted 9/12/2011. www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/12/nypd-cops-dance-dirty-wit_n_958994.html.

Also see Josh Saul, "Stop and frisky," *NY Post*, Posted on September 13, 2011. http://nypost.com/2011/09/13/stop-and-frisky/. This title is also a play on NYPD's stop-and-frisk practices, which enable police officers to stop, question, and frisk pedestrians, with "reasonable" suspicion. Such practices further call attention to the unequal racial profiling of African-American and Latino suspects (often males), illegal practices by police officers, and the invasion of pedestrian privacy rights. For more info, see: www.nyclu.org/issues/racial-justice/stop-and-frisk-practices.

investigation of the events to see if the officers broke any code of conduct rules.[57] However, unlike the video itself, the actual investigation itself was downplayed and almost dismissed by then police commissioner Ray Kelly; none of the officers lost their jobs.[58]

The original video clip shows about four white, male police officers, standing along the Carnival route in full uniform, being approached throughout the day by several female, Afro-Trini/Caribbean masqueraders hoping to *tief* wine or two from the officers. Looking at these women's faces in the film, I could tell they had intentions to "cause trouble," or at the very least, they premeditated their plans to *bus' ah sweet wine* on those police officers. For example, two of the women, both of whom happened to be wearing similar green bikini styled costumes, looked at the officer with their heads tilting downward, while their eyes stared directly at the officer, as if to say, "I'm doing something naughty." One of them even winked at him as she flicked a button on his shirt. Two of the four officers mostly blushed and giggled at these women's antics. And although one officer attempted to dance with one or two masqueraders, there was one particularly "indulgent" officer who "successfully" met the women's winin' challenges. He looked to be in his mid-twenties to early-thirties, whereas the winin' masqueraders appeared to be between the ages of twenty-one and about forty. In the video, every time a

[57] Sean Gardiner, "Dancing Cops Draw NYPD Investigation," *The Wall Street Journal*, last modified September 13, 2011. http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2011/09/13/dancing-cops-draw-nypd-investigation/?mod=WSJBlog. Also See Jen Doll, "NYPD Investigated."

[58] "Mayor Bloomberg, Commissioner Kelly OK With Dirty Dancing Cops At West Indian Day Parade," *TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc.*, last modified September 14, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/14/mayor-bloomberg-commissio_n_961918.html.

winin' woman approached him, he thrusted his "it" into their gyrating behinds. Sometimes their "its" did not touch, but whenever he decided to show off his "daggering"[59] skills to the crowd, he daggered so hard that he would then have to hold on to the winin' masquerader's hips or lower back to maintain his own balance and momentum. At one point, he even stepped over one of the winin' masquerader's leg to widen his stance and meet her challenge to drop "it" low. Even though he was unable to *roll* his "it" in rhythm and time with each masquerader, his thrusting ability to engage with each winer blurred the line between spectator and spectacle. In each instance, his performance of pleasure became dependent upon and tied to the pleasure of his winin' partner. When some of the winin' masqueraders pushed back on him, he quickly learned that he needed to push back on them with an equal amount of force for the both of them to maintain balance.

It was within those almost fleeting moments—where their spectacularized work, sweat, and choreographed labor to attain pleasure with and from each other *on di Eastern*—that an important space of intimacy was forged. As Lauren Berlant contends, "Intimacy builds worlds; it creates spaces and usurps places meant for other kinds of relations."[60] Expanding upon her logic, as the winin' Afro-Trini/Caribbean female

[59] Here I am specifically referencing the title of the video clip. Daggering is a dance style derived from Jamaica's dancehall culture where the man thrusts his "it" vigorously into his dance partner's butt (who is always expected to be a woman). The thrusting is usually so daring—sometimes men jump from high heights to meet their dance partner's "it"—and so brutal, that women must often brace themselves in anticipation of the forceful impact of each thrust. The word itself literally means to stab, but it is often used to mean "fucking." In the Trini-styled Carnival context, the daggering "it" is often interpreted as *jukkin'*. Because my research focuses on winin' that is contextualized by soca music and Trini-styled Carnivals, my dissertation does not unravel the complex gendered, racial, and sexual elements of this particular dance style from a Jamaican dancehall point of view.

[60] Laura Berlant, "Intimacy: A special issue," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 282.

masqueraders and their dance partner—a white, male police officer—pressed their "its" against each other, the intimacy created in those moments allowed everyone involved, including the witnesses, to *un*learn the lived memories of distrusting each other due to long histories of perpetual crime and police brutality in that particular neighborhood. In other words, the work it took for these ladies to *mash-up di streets wit' some wais'line thunda* was not only evident, but rather successful. For it was within those particular moments of public intimacy that their winery became acts of *un*colonization.

With each roll and thrust of their "its," this particular cop was no longer seen as an enforcer of the White supremacist laws and values legally perpetuated within the US, nor did he continue to represent the personification of anti-black racist oppression. Instead, under the public gaze of those witnessing these moments of winery, the power dynamics between the two dancing bodies began to shift. For in those brief moments, their winin' "its" worked to "mash-up" the anti-black racist practices propagated in that neighborhood. In effect, the intimacy created not only functioned "as a countereconomy,"[61] but was also experienced and deciphered at the level of the body. During these wined choreographies, Trini/Caribbean masqueraders were literally able to use their winin' "its" and push back against the racist ideologies of black savagery—as demonstrated by the "No More West Indian Day Parade Detail" Facebook group—that the US imperialist imagination perpetually pours into the Carib[*being*]'s corpo**real** body.

[61] Amalia L. Cabezas, *Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 17.

Referring back to commentaries for the video posted on WorldStarHipHop.com, a good handful of the users echoed a similar sentiment:

> **Bree-Bree (September 3, 2012):** gah headddd nypd … finally see them acting like humans … i love itttt !
>
> **Joshua (January 17, 2012):** see cops aren't so bad.
>
> **Dwayne Lee (November 8, 2011):** It's a lose lose situation it seems … Police don't bend, people say no community spirit … They have fun & go with it, then they not doing there job!!! WTF Everybody there looked safe & community looked pleased. job well done!!!
>
> **Guest (October 2, 2011):** Why can't police have some fun too? They're human just like us.
>
> **Guest (September 17, 2011):** Like the Mr. Po Po is a Trinidadian ah what?[62]

In that finite moment of winin' revelry, that cop was seen as human, as down to earth, or as a few of the masqueraders said aloud as they laughed and high-fived him on their way back *dong di road*, "*Yuh gud, yuh gud, yuh gud*," which in this case loosely translates into, "You're cool with us."

There is another side to intimacy that was also brought into the light during these winin' sessions. Amongst Trinidadians, the phrase, "*Yuh gud*" literally translates into "you good," meaning, "you had enough," which can then be applied as a question or a statement. After reviewing the clip, the above masquerader was certainly not implying that the police officer should stop thrusting his "it" because his white, patriarchal, colonizing desire for the black, savage, female "it" should have been more than satisfied

[62] "NY Cops Wilding Out On Labor Day 2011: Daggering On The Parkway! (Grinding And All)," *WorldStarHipHop.Com*, last modified September 12, 2011, www.worldstarhiphop.com/videos/video.php?v=wshh119k832Gb7nAfp16.

at that point. No! This Afro-Caribbean woman, who implied that the cop was "cool with her," even went as far as to pat the officer on his shoulder. However, as she repeated the phrase, I became painfully aware of my discomfort in watching his thrusting "it" on a webpage that did not contextualize the space, energy, or purpose of Carnival.

Recalling my version *ah tings*, I did not see that particular officer get wined on. I did, however, see other officers being approached and "indulging" in the winery every now and again. However, with regard to this particularly "indulgent" officer, a few of his vigorous daggers actually made me blush and even worry about the safety of each of his winin' partners. Thankfully (for me), this type of daggering never lasted more than a handful of thrusts. Nevertheless, during the few moments that his dancing became "too hard to watch," I became painfully aware of his whiteness, his maleness, and his colonizing gaze. This particular interplay of racialized desire and power is also a residual effect of the colonial encounter. In his chapter on "White Power, White Desire," Robert J.C. Young stresses that throughout the Americas, the white man's desire for the black woman's flesh was circumscribed with ambivalence. He states that during the colonial era, "the white male's ambivalent axis of desire and repugnance [towards the black woman] was enacted through" her construction as a sexual object, an experience that was further solidified by her vulnerability to sexual victimization (i.e. rape).[63] This uneven power dynamic between the white male and the black female perpetuates an abusive relationship between the two. Even a few of the commentaries for the video posted on

[63] Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 152.

WorldStarHipHop.com commented on this racialized and sexualized tension between the black, dancing women and the white, male officer:

> **Dan Joy (June 13, 2012)**: NYPD are out of their minds. [Never mind] they know exactly what they are doing. F*cking black people on the street. that's what they do anyways, lol I'm buggin.
>
> **ShakingMyHeadd (January 24, 2012)**: They wanna piece of that chocolate loving lmao.
>
> **G @RubyHaez (December 30, 2011)**: YOU CANT RESIST THE ASS!
>
> **Guest (September 24, 2011)**: everybody know the jacks love black p*ssy, slave masters had no problem raping their women slaves then hangin the men..like styles said i know u scared of me mister but you dont really seem to be scared of my sister..in a couple weeks those f***in craker nypd prolly will be shootin down a black man..s*** is crazy son.[64]

Furthermore, it is important to note that in this intimate moment, there may also be a cultural clash happening. Although the title of the video clip used the word "daggering" to contextualize his dance choice (and probably to also draw in more traffic towards the video itself), I must ask, "Does the cop even know about daggering? Or, was he merely doing/mimicking what he thought Trini/Caribbean masqueraders do during Carnival?" As I have previously expressed,[65] I do not have a deep proficiency in the politics of Jamaican dancehall daggering to analyze his dancing from a dancehall perspective; which leads me to my next question, "Were any of his female counterparts Jamaican and/or dagger-savvy?" Given my perspective as a Trini, whose winin' histories are rooted in soca music, family, Carnival, and female-centered narratives, the dance

[64] "NY Cops Wilding Out On Labor Day 2011," www.worldstarhiphop.com.

[65] See note 59 above.

analysis I offer tends to privilege women's own desire and pleasure, as opposed to that of the daggering male.[66]

As a "victim" of daggering at a party in Barbados, it is very hard for me to appreciate the experience, especially since it seems to obscure the woman's own winery. When a woman is being daggered by a man, the thrusting can become so forceful that she may loose her balance or at the very least, her own winin' rhythm gets viciously disrupted. Effectively, it was at those moments that the police officer and the winin' masquerader were no longer dancing *with* each other, but rather, the officer was winin' *on* the reveling woman. As a result, the rhythm of woman's writhing wiggles and jiggles became dominated by the officer's thrusting "it." Admittedly, most of these women in the video never actually seem to lose their balance. One woman, however, wearing a white T-shirt and some cut-off shorts, is thrusted so vigorously that the cop actually has to hold on to her for counter-balance whilst moving her body back and forth about three or four times.

My point here is that as practiced, each wined moment does not represent a universal or utopist sentiment of harmony, trust, or cultural understanding, especially when considering the precarious position of the black dancing woman in public. Or rather, to use the words of Caribbean literary scholar Faith Smith, "*intimacy* implies a colonizing

[66] Again, many thanks to Trinidad-born scholar Kai Barratt, who, in casual conversation over Skype on August 13, 2015, expressed her frustration with Jamaican men who constantly believed that her winin' was solely for their pleasure and not her own. In Jamaica, where she currently lives, whenever she turned down winin' with a Jamaican male to either wine by her lonesome or with her girlfriends, they would often get visibly upset or assume she was a lesbian. It quickly became clear to her that the gender relations in Trinidad vs. Jamaica play out very differently on the dance floor.

gaze as much as anything else."[67] In addition to forging a countereconomy of *un*doings, it can also solidify "a naturalization of what [would] otherwise [be] understood as a violation."[68] As English and Latin American literary scholar Silvio Torres-Saillant insists, it is important to understand "[…] racial experience in a manner that accords with the distinctness of the sites, genealogies, and histories in which race occurs."[69] Taking heed to his counsel, these thrusting moments reveal the microscopic cultural chafing that occurs when "its" from different historical and cultural traditions crash into one another, especially in public. Specifically, it brings attention to the contentious chafing of blackness as savage, hyper-sexual, and violent against blackness as *un*colonizing, community building, and pleasure-filled.

Within the US, winin' women continually find themselves acting as the "shock absorbers for the many [local and global] changes that […] cultural, social, and economic shifts entail."[70] Within this *foreign* place, she is marked as both exotic and black; and within the Trini-styled Carnival discourse, her overwhelming participation in the nationalist space of Carnival positions her as the sexualized ambassador of Trini/Caribbean*ness*. In his book *Bacchanal!*, Peter Mason affirms, "At the moment however, the Trinidadian woman's influence on carnival is as a foot soldier not as a

[67] Faith Smith, "'Only His Hat Is Left': Resituating Not-Yet Narratives," *Small Axe* 35, no. 2 (20110): 201.

[68] Ibid., 202.

[69] Torres-Saillant, "One and Divisible," 8.

[70] Cabezas, *Economies of Desire*, 2.

general."[71] Similarly, Trinidadian journalist Pat Ganase, quoted in the 1997 issue of *Caribbean Beat*, proclaims, "Women dominate the [Trinidadian] carnival not as organisers, nor even as creators, but as the force upon whose backs the events are carried."[72] And although women abroad have made many strides in taking up space as producers of these Trini-styled Carnivals,[73] men still dominate as the heads of party promotion and masquerade companies, as well as of Carnival planning boards or committees. "The [winin'] female masquerader, therefore, unapologetic in her self-exposure, sensual in her performance, and beautiful in appearance, has become the quintessential metaphor of Carnival, and by extension, of the 'national' [Caribbean] Self."[74] Evidently, by *winin' dong di Eastern Parkway* and embodying Carib[*being*]ness, female revelers are implicated in representing the general Caribbean space as always already playful, sensual, and exotic, as well as the place to relax and "let go" of your woes. As a result, the winin' female reveler remains the battlefield, the aporetic space where racial and gendered identities are hashed out and her femininity is gambled[75] under the watchful eye of the colonizing gaze.

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[71] Mason, *Bacchanal!*, 146.

[72] Quoted in Ibid.

[73] Some notable women who organize Caribbean events and parties, as well as launch mas' bands for Trini-styled Carnivals within the US are: Giselle "D' Wassi One" (Trini-American woman in Miami), Cassandra and Chandra Chase (Barbadian-Jamaican sisters in Los Angeles), and Joyce Producshuns (Barbadian woman in Los Angeles).

[74] De Freitas, "Disrupting 'The Nation'," 20. Also see note 36 in chapter two.

[75] Marta Savigliano, *Angora Matta*. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 190.

In her discussion of the black female body and the politics of watching, Pascha Stevenson reminds the reader that

> African slave women of the Middle Passage were compelled to remain on the quarterdecks to be accessible for rape, to be exposed and visible and thereby vulnerable to unspeakable horrors. This history of watching communicates both the power of imperial law and the power of black threat; such surveillance has certainly been about containing something mighty. Spectacle, then, as it concerns the black female body, foregrounds both its powerlessness and its power. The object of the spectacle experiences anxiety and discomfort and yet inspires those sensations as well, and the cycle of anxiety and oppression thrives.[76]

Therefore, as we perform and embody Carib[*being*]ness *on di Eastern Parkway*, the link between violence and the black winin' female body continually haunts Trini/Caribbean winer in her attempts to take up public space. So even in these moments of intimacy, she is left to confront the citation of the institutionalized gendered and racial violence against her black dancing body. Take, for instance, my very own gyrating "it." *On di Eastern Parkway*, every gyrating roll of my *wais'line* was a citation of rooted connection to the nineteenth century jamettes, to the violent disciplining of their black dancing bodies, and to their defiant efforts to reclaim their right to full citizenship and pleasure. As a result, my winin' body was re-transcribed, and at times even transmuted, every time I *cocked-back*, *jammed-down*, *tic-toc'd*, or *snaked* "it," on the very public, and at times very violent, streets of Brooklyn.

These streets, however, must be the space where the black dancing woman reclaims her right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or in this case the pursuit

[76] Pascha A. Stevenson, "Dreaming in Color: Race and the Spectacular in The Agüero Sisters and Praisesong for the Widow," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 28, no. 3 (2007): 143.

of pleasure, if she intends to be seen in all of her complexity. According to Carole Boyce-Davies the transgressive limits of winers' strategies towards subversion of gendered and racial confinements are made visible through the act of "taking space." She explains,

> Understanding the concept of 'taking space' in Afro-Caribbean dance allows us some further understanding and allows some agency for Caribbean women, particularly when dance is aligned with personal freedom. 'Taking space' is best understood not simply as taking physical space, but also taking 'mental or spiritual space'. 'Wining' can therefore be identified as the basic verb form of Caribbean dance. It is as well using the body in a certain physical space. […] Taking space then, means moving out into areas not allowed. It is as well the transgressing of restricted spaces, particularly the racialized/gendered space confinements.[77]

In conjunction with my discussion on Saartjie "Sara" Baartman's "it" in chapter one, the black woman lost the right to claim to her own life, liberty, and pursuit of pleasure on the auction block. She was sexualized and thus constructed in public. Her disembodied hypervisibility became a necessary part of her racial and gendered existence, which is why taking public space is both radical and necessary for the black dancing woman. De Freitas also points out,

> In the modern Carnival, notions of femininity and masculinity are de constructed and reconstructed. [… Therefore,] women, among them wives and mothers, dressed in 'provocative' costumes and wining alone, or on other women, or on 'anything,' are anomalies who not only introduce a new category of 'woman,' but subvert the male-female dynamic on which older images were built.[78]

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[77] Carole Boyce-Davies, "Carnivalised Caribbean Female Bodies: Taking Space/Making Space," *Thamyris* 5, no. 2 (1998): 341.

[78] De Freitas, "Disrupting 'The Nation'," 21-5.

In taking public space, and under the colonizing gaze of the NYPD, these winin' women both literally and figuratively pushed their bodies against the barriers that sought to uphold the long history of gnarling trauma and violence into the black dancing female body.

THE LASTING RECOLLECTION OF "MY VERSION AH TINGS": AN AFTERWORD

Because Caribbean winers' visceral, emotive, and felt understanding of black*ness* and Carib[*being*]ness gravely differs from the U.S. racial constructions that get imposed upon them, the way in which winers experience pleasure get policed according to the gendered and racial histories and genealogies of the site itself, which is further used by the state to police their actively writhing bodies. Trini/Caribbeans' participation in the Trini-styled Carnival, in turn, allows them to blur the imagined boundaries that define blackness, that define who or what is *foreign* and *native*, as well as where pleasure can or cannot be reclaimed. Because masqueraders' winery not only teases foreigners' and locals' senses alike with promises of unabashed "naughtiness" and unpoliced pleasure, it also projects back towards their "new" US homeland these same exotic promises, or threats. And as these projections are then played out on the streets *abroad*, Trini/Caribbean winers further fall victim to, as well as play in to, the national and cultural regulations, translations, and contradictions that reside along the chafing of colonization and *un*colonization.

In the end, my intention in this chapter has been to highlight the mundane, intimate, and spectacular ways Trini/Caribbeans use their winery to push against,

renegotiate, or undermine the overlapping tensions that circumscribe their writhing bodies during Trini-styled Carnival festivities in the US. Written along the vein of Joan Morgan's endeavors to reveal the politics of pleasure "as a liberatory, black feminist project," which she argues elevates "the need for sexual autonomy and erotic agency without shame to the level of black feminist imperative,"[79] herein lay my attempt to trouble the inextricable link between "trauma and violence to black women's lived and historical experiences.'"[80] Thusly, in theorizing the winin' *tales/tails* that played out *on di streets ah Ca'nival*, I worked to relegate the pleasure of winin' as an important, relevant, feminist undertaking. In a poll entitled "Should the city cancel the annual West Indian Day Parade?," posted a day after the 2011 Labor Day Carnival, 60% of the respondents voted "No. The vast majority of parade participants have a fantastic time and do not cause any trouble. They shouldn't lose out because of a few bad apples."[81] Even in spite of the violence and the stilting attempts to colonize the winin' body, their relentless desire to maintain a space where Trini/Caribbean people can gather and experience themselves as Carib[*being*] is a testament to the importance of embodying pleasure in the face of fatalism whilst blurring the very boundaries that threaten to limit their civil right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

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[79] Joan Morgan, "Why We Get Off: Moving Towards a Black Feminist Politics of Pleasure," *The Black Scholar* 45, no. 4, (2015): 39.

[80] Ibid., 38.

[81] "Should the city cancel the annual West Indian Day Parade?," *Crain's New York Business*, last modified Sept 6, 2011, http://mycrains.crainsnewyork.com/blogs/polls/2011/09/should-the-city-cancel-the-annual-west-indian-day-parade/.

CAN RIHANNA HAVE HER *CAKE* AND EAT "IT" TOO?: A SCHIZOPHRENIC SEARCH FOR RESISTANCE WITHIN THE SCREENED SPECTACLES OF A MODERN-DAY WININ' FATALE[1]

Writing from a space of schizophrenic[2] frustration, I now write to translate my own legibility and legitimacy within the confines of the US. Within that space, that place, I am dis-placed.[3] *Through the lens of the colonizing eye, I am re-placed by the imago of the winin' fatale. My ability to skillfully roll my "it" in public spaces and in foreign places marks my body as a threat to US society.*[4] *I am a Trinidad-born, US-raised, always ready to bus' ah sweet wine, sometimes creole, never allowed to be Latina,*[5] *yet always recognized as "black" and "female," winin', dancing scholar. Nonetheless, I constantly find myself battling to decolonize my own winin' body and the gaze that*

[1] The ideas in this chapter were first presented at the 2012 annual SDHS Conference, held in Philadelphia. A modified version of this chapter also appears in the *Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies*. See "Can Rihanna Have Her Cake And Eat It Too?: A Schizophrenic Search for Resistance Within the Screened Spectacles of a Winin' Fatale," *Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies*, ed, by Douglas Rosenberg (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[2] Here, I am not referring the mental disorder known as schizophrenia, but rather I am referencing María Lugones's and Maude Dikobe's scholarship. As noted in my introductory chapter, Lugones has described the act of "world"-traveling, code switching from one context to another, or the hyper-awareness of oneself as multiple (multiple-consciousnesses), as a schizophrenic experience. María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 92. See following paragraph for Dikobe's discussion on schizophrenia.

[3] As noted in chapter one (see note 1), Marlene Nourbese Philip influences my embodied self-reflections. She further argues that to talk about the Afro-Caribbean woman's body "*is to talk about the space that lies between the legs of [this] female and the effect of this space on the outer space—'place'* [sic]." Later, she adds, "The space between the black woman's legs becomes. *The place*," such that it is simultaneously a site and citation of both oppression and liberation. Marlene Nourbese Philip, "Dis Place The Space Between," in *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory*, eds. Lynn Keller and Cristanne Miller (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 1994), 288 and 289.

[4] Philip states, "In patriarchal societies (the only societies we have known), the female body always presents a subversive threat." Ibid., 288.

[5] Here I am referencing my maternal blood-ties to Spain and Venezuela.

renders me a black dancing body that is always already working towards its own demise and oppression (read: fatalistic). This battle—which exists between the need to promote a decolonized discourse on the black winin' female body and the historical shame naturalized onto her body—is the source of my schizophrenia.

Because all too often we winers remain fully cognizant of the multiple discourses within which we are being implicated, especially with respect to sexualized behavior, femininity, and shame, the feeling of schizophrenia has become a rather familiar emotion for many winin' women. Maude Dikobe elucidates, "a lot of women in Trinidad, including some of the female [soca] performers, remain schizophrenic about the image they project during Carnival: They enjoy the freedom of 'getting on bad,' but then feel the need to apologize for their frank sexual behavior."[6] Even my informants would express minor shame, or what I call winer's amnesia, whenever I asked them about how they wined *dong di place fuh Ca'nival*. The public broadcasting of their winery, which was often captured on film or video and then posted on Facebook or YouTube, often caused them to either fully deny the act (e.g., "*Dah eh me!*"[7]), or blame their revelry on something else, such as the Carnival jumbie, the alcohol, the soca music playing, etc. After all, the fact that the rolling "it" is tensely tied to histories of the violent sexualization of African bodies as well as the mundane and personal histories of familial

[6] Maude Dikobe, "Bottom in de Road: Gender and Sexuality in Calypso," *PROUDFLESH: A New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness* 3, (2004), http://www.africaresource.com/proudflesh/issue3/dikobe.htm.

[7] Translation: That was not me!

intimacy, romantic or cultural pride, the many registers of intimacy (which of course includes sex) is viscerally felt with each roll of one's "it."

In turn, this chapter works to open up a space for comprehending the ways in which a modern-day "winin' fatale" uses her erotic power and prowess to navigate and negotiate the vacillating discourses of black sexuality within the confines of the Global North and cyberspace. Focusing specifically on the screened winin' antics of the Barbados-born, US-groomed, pop-diva Robyn Rihanna Fenty (known to the public as Rihanna), I analyze the real effects pop-culture has on the consumption and reception of the winin' Afro-Caribbean woman, especially within the virtual realm of YouTube.com. However, as noted in my internal dialogue above, because the flattening affect of the screen digitally collapses blackness, femme fatality, violence, and Carib[*being*] identity politics, the layered ways in which the winin' body is constructed and re-presented by YouTube.com further trigger my schizophrenic frustration. As an Afro-Caribbean female winer who resides in the Global North and must partake in multiple cultural codes of blackness, my words, my logic, my choreocriticism, and embodied theorizing must then remain informed by this schizophrenia, which herein unfolds through multiple voices and from multiple points of views. In addition to my italicized inner dialogue, there will be narratives that stem from my own personal history, and of course my non-italicized critical scholarship. Ultimately, as I engage with the historical shame naturalized onto the Afro-Caribbean female winin' body, I am *un*colonizing my winin' body, and thus the discursive gaze that marks the black dancing body as both fatalistic and sexually deviant.

The complexity of Rihanna's voice and position situates her within multiple worlds that continually clash at the borders (*an experience I also deem as schizophrenia*). In the previous chapter, I argued that winin' *on di streets abroad* positions winers as the feminized "soft borders"[8] between the US national Self and the Trini/Caribbean "Self."[9] Here, I seek to expand upon this concept by paying particular attention to the clashes that happen along the digitized border of the winin' body. According to the Dancehall scholar Carolyn Cooper, the "concept 'border clash' has resonance in defining a broad range of conflicts in Jamaican society. Contested borders are located across language barriers (English versus Jamaican) … [across] cultural genres and their related practices (reggae versus dancehall; and both versus soca/carnival) … between social spaces ('ghetto' versus 'uptown')."[10] As a digitized border body, the winin' Afro-Caribbean female body has been trafficked along the clashing political boundaries of decolonization and colonization. This clash, also a residual effect of the colonial encounter, produces the categories that continue to bind Rihanna's body to discourses of negation and excess (*mis*read: blackness), prostitution, voyeurism, and pornography (*mis*read: black femaleness), and the sweet promise of leisure and fantasy (*mis*read: Caribbean*ness*).

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[8] Patricia A. De Freitas, "Disrupting 'The Nation': Gender Transformations in the Trinidad Carnival," *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 73, no. 1 and 2 (1999): 13. For my interpretation of De Freitas' conceptualization of "soft borders," see chapter three, pages 148-9.

[9] I am still using this concept of the Caribbean "Self" hermeneutically. See note 36 in chapter two for discussion on "Self."

[10] Carolyn Cooper, *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 40-1.

Specifically regarding the "practice" of "YouTubing,"[11] the struggle to *un*colonize is especially played out in the commentaries and by the "suggested videos," which work to promote the "random" linking of winin' bodies to other videos that display blackness, femininity, and violence as always already a given. As a result, colonizing discourses, and thus the viewer's gaze, get both challenged and reified, as supplementary videos and subscriber's comments work to shape how the viewer processes the digitization of the winin' Afro-Caribbean female body. In turn, as these tensions are transplanted into the interactive spaces of YouTube.com, the viewer is either forced to play into, resolve, or come to terms with Rihanna's screened winery, all of which gets played out through the commentaries of the YouTube subscribers. Consequently, Rihanna's digitized, black dancing body is made to exist somewhere in between modes of colonization and liberation and is thus always vulnerable to the colonizing scripts of Imperial power, which ultimately regards the black dancing female body as a "doubled sign of commodification and reproduction."[12]

[11] In making the noun "YouTube" an active verb that can be practiced, I am acknowledging the performative ways one interacts with the website YouTube.com. For example, one can encapsulate the dancing body in to an easy to find digital file that can then be manipulated and displayed on a small, often portable, screen. Another aspect of YouTubing as a practice includes its interactive aspect, namely the ability to comment on the video. Additionally, the YouTube website itself uses algorithms to "predict" what videos the viewer might (or should) want to watch. When I was watching "Rihanna SNL Live Part 1," YouTube suggested that I also watch "The Footage Of Rihanna Popping That Thang At Barbados Car-Ni-Val!". That suggestion was based on 1. previous videos that I had watched, 2. videos that other people who watched "Rihanna SNL Live Part 1" had watched in relation to said video, and 3. videos that are similar, either in content or subject, to the said video being watched. I am also aware there is a commercial element to these video suggestions, but I am unaware of the specificities of that algorithm. Either way, these suggested videos further implicte the viewer in the act of creating a narrative simply by juxaposing one video to another, all of which fall under the "practice" of "YouTubing."

[12] Carol Boyce-Davies, "Carnivalised Caribbean Female Bodies: Taking Space/Making Space," *Thamyris* 5.2 (1998): 340.

It is within this tense yet tender space, as mediated by YouTube, that I search to reclaim the resistive and subversive aspects of the wine. Henceforth, I reclaim and recapture the Dancehall and Carnival residues that reside within the heightened sexual displays trapped within Rihanna's screened "it" performances. In so doing, I make visible the ways in which winin' Afro-Caribbean women in general struggle to embody the seemingly impossible task of decolonizing their black dancing bodies. In visibilizing this digitized socialization of winin', I ultimately create a space outside of fatalism to further comprehend the resistive strains entangled in the rolls and gyrations of today's social-media-savvy winers.

CAKE! A BITTERSWEET *TALE/TAIL*

On May 5, 2012, Rihanna was the musical guest artist on the *Saturday Night Live* (*SNL*) show, and to my surprise, she actually decided to dance set choreography for this performance.[13] Although Rihanna often makes time to improvise dance moves and *wukkup stink on di stage*,[14] the noteworthiness of this particular performance resides in the fact that she seemed to take her dance moves straight off the streets of carnival and out of the dancehalls of Jamaica. That night, *she rel wukkup she wais'line*, boldly displaying her *cake* for the entire US nation to devour.

[13] "Rihanna doesn't really dance. She exhibits 'moves,' sure. She dips. Marches. Stalks. Straddles the barrel of a giant pink cannon. Jogs occasionally. But it's not dancing. Altogether it amounts to choreographed oozing." Ross McCammon, "Rihanna: The Sexiest Woman Alive." *Esquire* 156, no. 4 (November 2011), http://www.esquire.com/entertainment/a11262/rihanna-naked-1111/.

[14] A particularly Bajan saying that literally means "worked up stink on the stage." See glossary for more information.

As her performance began, the sound of a school bell blaring in the background signaled Rihanna to drop her waist about halfway down and roll her right hip inward, which then caused her thigh to swivel inward and outward. She repeated the move four times, making sure to execute it on both her left and right sides. Right away I was able to identify the swiveling as one of the variations of the popular Dancehall dance move called the *butterfly*. With her knees still bent, she then swung her hips from side-to-side, like a heavy pendulum, while pivoting around herself in a circle. In that moment, she made sure to lift her arm above her head, covering her face and further bringing the viewer's attention down to her swinging hips, a trick often used during Carnival or Dancehall festivities to better show off one's winery. All the while, she continually chanted, "Come and put your name on it, put your name on it […]." Then with the twang of horns, a guitar, and a snare drum, she dropped it low *dong to di grong* (i.e., she dropped her bottom all the way down to the floor) and slammed her right hand down in front her hips with her knees spread eagle. With much enticement and playful seduction, she then closed her thighs and slowly rose to standing. As she did so, her hat was tilted down just enough to keep her eyes covered as her hands began to slide up her thighs and towards her crotch, giving her lyrics—"*cake cake cake cake cake* […] (But you wana put your name on it)"—new meaning. Wait! Perhaps I blinked a bit too long, for the next thing I noticed was Rihanna slapping her *cake* with some serious vigor and confidence, like she *pum-pum tun up*.[15] It was a clear demonstration of the *pat and crank*—a dance,

[15] Jamaican patois that loosely translates into: "vagina that is so good, you'll have to come back for more."

usually performed by females, that involves patting (for the "reserved" dancers) or grabbing (for the more "daring" dancers) one's crotch then cranking your legs open as you wine. The entire time she remained in what I like to call the bacchanal[16] stance, with her knees bent and ready to *pelt rel wais'*.[17] Soon thereafter, she upgraded the *cake* metaphor by extending her hand to her rear and repeatedly slapping both her bambam and pum-pum. And then, just in case you missed where or what exactly her birthday *cake* was, she made sure to draw all focus towards her vagina by vigorously slicing her arms down towards it (topping it off with the proclamation, "Imma make you my Bitch!").

As I battled to comprehend Rihanna's televised wukkup, I found myself starting to fracture. Upon witnessing Rihanna's performance, my knee jerk reaction was to slap my forehead, shake my head, and roll my eyes. On the other hand, my American friends—one of whom identified as white and the other two as African-American—made loud gasps and continued to stare at Rihanna in shock, awe, and partial disgust, especially as she continued to slap her *cake*. At that point, I was so upset that I literally yelled out to the television, "Rihanna, stop being the typical, hypersexual, Black, Caribbean girl. You're making it hard for me to love you! SO STOP! This is not Carnival, you're not home in Barbados, and we are certainly not in the dancehalls of Jamaica, SO JUST STOP!" *At this point, it was quite painful witnessing her driving our gaze towards her cake. I mean why hasn't she realized that she is actually being consumed within a racist,*

[16] I am particularly using the term bacchanal to refer to the playful ambivalence of winin', such that to 'make a bacchanal' means to cause 'trouble'—whether playfully or literally—with one's *wine*.

[17] A Trinidadian phrase that is generally used to describe when one aggressively rolls their hip.

misogynistic, and Imperialist social context, or that within the confines of SNL and US pop-culture, her gyrating cake is clouded by discourses of negation and aberration?

With all of this floating through my head, I was ready to leave the room, but before I could even stand up, my friend quickly inquired, "Hey, can you teach me how to do that?" And with a hint of frustration I retorted, "How to do what?" She then rewound the performance[18] and pointed to Rihanna's interpretation of the butterfly. Unimpressed, I said, "That's just a little wine. No big deal. Just that in this case, you let your leg move in-sync with each roll; you can do that, easy." *In that moment, fond memories of learning to wine flooded through my body. As child in Trinidad, I remember learning to wine in front of my entire family—including my cousins, aunties, uncles, and grandparents. We would all gather in the living room, just before the twilight hour, and hold winin' contests between us kids. One time, I competed against my younger cousin; she was two and I was five. I vividly remember the broad smiles across our faces as we both wined all di way dong to di grong,[19] in hopes of out-doing one another and impressing our grandmother, or Grumum as we all called her. Unfortunately for me, I lost to my baby cousin who managed to steal everyone's attention away from me, especially Grumum's—who laughed joyously as she clapped and cheered my baby cousin on. Even though I lost that day, I am still overwhelmed with happiness every time I hear the calypso song that was playing over the radio at that time: "Tiney-Winey, wine yuh bom-bom. Tiney-Winey, wine yuh bom-bom […] Pang-ah-lang ah-lang ah-lang ah-lang-ah-lang […] Wine Ms. Tiney.*

[18] They had a DVR, which made it possible to rewind live television.

[19] Literal translation: "down to the ground"

Roll back Ms. Tiney."[20] *It was a small moment in time that had been repeated for many generations before me and was to be repeated for many generations after.*

Heeding Shayne Lee's call for black feminists to engage in a "discourse on sex and sexuality that celebrates the erotic theatricality of the [black] sexual female body,"[21] I ask, why is it impossible to recognize "sexy" pop divas like Rihanna as "proactive subjects constructing their own sexual representation," rather than sex objects?[22] *With regards to my experience of Rihanna wukkin'-up and cake-slapping on SNL, it was difficult for me to resolve that her dancing "it" did not necessarily indicate sexual promiscuity or deviant sexuality. I continued to fracture.* In recalling the effects and affects of Saartjie Baartman's *mis*appropriated "it" discussed in chapter one, the dancing, lower body always already references a black (via the jiggling butt) female (via the swiveling hip) body, which further acts as a metonym for the debased hierarchal positioning of Afro-female bodies within Imperialist/Western society.

As Nicole Fleetwood explains, "One of the primary issues at stake […] is the problem of the visible black female body or, more precisely, that the black female body always presents a problem within a field of vision structured by racialized and gendered markings."[23] The winin' Afro-Caribbean female's ability to draw attention to her

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[20] Lyrics transcribed, from memory, by author. For an aural reference, see: miguel palacios, "BYRON LEE AND THE DRAGONAIRES - TINEY WINEY - (MUSIC VIDEO)," YouTube video, 5:05, posted December 3, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKNrCUHIPnM.

[21] Shayne Lee, *Erotic Revolutionaries: Black Women, Sexuality, and Popular Culture* (New York: Hamilton Books, 2010), xi.

[22] Ibid., 17.

[23] Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 109.

buttocks and genitals always already remains linked to the brutal ways Western science, medicine, law, and popular culture have meticulously naturalized her body as always already primitive, abhorrent, sexually deviant/hypersexual, excessive, and fatalistic, thereby inciting discourses of violence against her as self-inflicted and self-imposed. In consequence, although both Rihanna and I exist in multiple constructs of blackness, femaleness, and Caribbean*ness*, once flattened onto the screen, these brutally oppressive scripts work to perpetuate the continued colonization of our gyrating *cakes*.

In an attempt to *un*do and resolve these negative discourses, historically, the politics of respectability have been promoted, especially amongst middle to upper class black communities, as the only way, or rather the best way to deter the continual mutilation of the black body by the colonizing gaze. However, the performance of respectability relies "heavily upon aggressive shielding of the body; concealing sexuality; and foregrounding morality, intelligence, and civility,"[24] which further denies the black dancing female body any disruptive potential to challenge colonizing discourses on sexuality and violence. Due to its adherence to racist/heteropatriarchal rules set during colonialism, this approach to redress the black body not only colonizes the black dancing body, but as Mireille Miller-Young notes, it also works to elide and re-pathologize "the lived experiences and political culture of the deviant," as well as invisibilize "the 'full range of political resistance'"[25] present in black, sexualized performances, such as winin'. As a form of auto-invisibility and self-silencing, the politics of respectability negate the

[24] Thompson, Lisa B. (2009, 2) quoted in Lee, Shayne, *Erotic Revolutionaries*, x.

[25] Mireille Miller-Young, "Hip-Hop Honeys and Da Hustlaz: Black Sexualities in the New Hip-Hop Pornography," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 8.1 (2008): 285.

"irresolvability" of the black dancing female as a "troubling presence in dominant culture"[26] by assuming that proper performance will successfully subvert sexist/racist power relations.

Here is what lays at the crux of my frustration with Rihanna: my personal battle to decolonize my own gaze, as well as my own winin' body. This is what turns my fracturing into schizophrenia, which further positions me within a system of beliefs that at once recognizes and misrecognizes the complexities of winin'. I must admit; I too am complicit in the logic of respectability. My struggle to love Rihanna, my schizophrenic frustration with her performance, and my angered desire for her to "JUST STOP" were all rooted in this logic. Effectively, the politics of respectability propagates a culture of continual colonization by further entrapping our black dancing bodies within the negative spaces of fatalistic sexuality. For within this logic, the very public performance of Rihanna slapping her *cake* on *SNL* remains coded as both sexually deviant and invoking potential violence against herself. However, to perpetuate the negation of the Afro-Caribbean woman's gyrating *cake* not only mutes the pleasure and feelings of liberation associated with the act of winin', but perpetually works to deny the bloodlines that tie winin' bodies to the corporeal histories and traditions of resistance.

For example, with regards to the logic of Jamaican Dancehall and politics of being seen, scholar Beth-Sarah Wright argues for the liberatory potentials available to the Afro-Jamaican women by situating their winery within a long lineage of transgressive and radical vagina politics. Her framework specifically remains rooted in local Jamaican

[26] Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision*, 121.

culture—i.e., in Jamaica, the vagina is seen as something both sweet and dangerous—the histories of Hottentot Venus, slavery, and the auction block, as well as other embodied blood memories, such as the various ways the vagina has been used throughout Africa as both a symbol of power and a tool for agency—i.e., the Bakweri women of Cameroon who expose their vaginas to men who insult a woman's lower parts.[27] Consequently, she posits, the vagina is a principal focus for winin' dancehall women because it is utilized as a strategy for healing, reclaiming, and possibly redressing these women's own bodies.[28] Wright also notes that these vaginal dances are often quite aggressive and belligerent. Ergo, Wright's direct engagement with the dance and movement choices that these women make works to unveil the effect/affect that these winin' bodies assert as they move through the Dancehall space, both in relation to the camera and in relation to being seen. Connecting Wright's line of inquiry to Rihanna's decisions to touch her *cake* under her own terms and desires offers another option for conceptualizing Rihanna's efforts to redress her body, heal the wounds from her violent past, and reclaim her body as wholly hers. However, in order to recognize and recover such transgressive work of resistance and healing, the impervious negative historical representations that remain seared into the

[27] Beth-Sarah Wright, "Speaking the Unspeakable: Politics of the Vagina, Memory and Dance in Dancehall Docu-Videos," *Discourses in Dance* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2004): 45-60.

[28] Wright explains, "The performance of the black female body in these videos embodies a representative healing, rewriting distorted assumptions of this historical body through a politics of erotica and pleasure. […] Healing in this sense is the conversion of the vagina as a site for work or as a tool, to a site for pleasure and power, which is to be loved. […] By wining, caressing the vagina in dance and in masturbatory bliss, exposing the vagina to the inquisitive camera lens, allowing it to become public property under her terms, the dancing woman reinscribes herself with new meaning and generates a process towards a whole body." Ibid., 48-9.

corporeality of the black (Africanized) female-body must first be *un*done, subverted, and decolonized.

CUTTING THROUGH THE LAYERS WITH A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD: THE BITTER TENSIONS OF CONSUMING SWEETNESS

"But it's just a wine! Just a little WINE! Ain't no harm in dat, right?"[29] *... WRONG! Hmmm, my schizophrenia seems to be acting up once more.* bell hooks problematized this conundrum in her discussion of the popular song "Doin' the Butt," stating, "When calling attention to the body in a manner inviting the gaze to mutilate black female bodies yet again, to focus solely on the 'butt,' contemporary celebrations of this part of the anatomy do not successfully subvert sexist/racist representations."[30] *If this is true, how, then, am I to make visible the ways in which Rihanna's cake slapping and gyrations not only celebrate the Afro-Caribbean female, but are also viable strategies for her to declare ownership of her own body, her own desires, and her erotic prowess? Herein lies the challenge for the winin' fatale … no, I mean the Afro-Caribbean woman.* Because the discourse on blackness as primitive and savage have been in effect since the Victorian era, and on a global scale, we all remain well versed in these popularized "truisms" on blackness, all of which are only exasperated when the black dancing "it"/body migrates into cyberspace.

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[29] "A Little Wine," written by Johnny "Problem Child" Fontainne (St. Vincent) and performed by Patrice Roberts (Trinidad), this was a popular soca song released for the 2012 St. Vincent Carnival season. Lyrics transcribed by author.

[30] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 64.

Upon visiting YouTube.com to further analyze Rhanna's *SNL* performance, I noticed that many viewers also struggled to decipher Rihanna's dancing body outside of the colonizing gaze. Upon first glance, Rihanna's black winin' female body appears to be unsuccessful at subverting historically sexist/racist representations. Trapped on the screen for less than four minutes many read Rihanna's *cake* gyrations as an invitation to further mutilate her body and put shame to her game:

> **Yazzy wazzy**: SHE IS A WHORE SHES ALWAYS EXPRESSING SEXUAL BEHAVIORS SHE OBSESSED WITH HER PUSSY [sic]
>
> **mhmmdahmad**: "This Woman is obsessed with sex" OmG!!
>
> **6robyc**: Black Bitch
>
> **BABIIFISHBONE**: maybe she's just always horny and wants to get laid
>
> **BlackJackLanza**: Niggers are just sooooooooooooo obsessed with sex. no wonder they are good for nothing[31]

Unfortunately, the overwhelmingly swift link between Rihanna's female body and the terms "whore" and "slut" is an expected conclusion within the colonizing logic of heteropatriarchy. In his discussion on women as "privileged objects of desire," George Bataille proclaimed, "Not every woman is a potential prostitute, but prostitution is the logical consequence of the feminine attitude. In so far as she is attractive, a woman is a prey to men's desires. Unless she refuses completely because she is determined to remain

[31] Christopher Villarreal, "Rihanna SNL Live Part 1 (Birthday Cake & Talk That Talk)," *YouTube* video, 3:20, from a performance televised on Saturday Night Live by NBC on May 5, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhcjYLm66vQ.

chaste, the question is at what price and under what circumstances will she yield."[32] Accordingly, Rihanna's sexualized dancing marks her as unchaste and therefore prostitute-like.

Furthermore, the use of descriptors such as "nigger" and "black bitch" is also rooted in the histories of colonialism. This hostility and vicious disciplining of Rihanna's black femaleness call attention to the ways in which Rihanna's body remains trapped within the racist/misogynistic naturalizations forged by the colonial constructs of black femaleness. In parallel, during the late nineteenth century, when Trinidad was still a British colony, *Fair Play* (a local periodical) described the colonized winin' Afro-Caribbean body with similar disgust and horror. The local slaves were performing drum dances for each other, which were said to have involved "male and female partners, who seemed to have danced 'winin' style":

> As for the dancing, it is nothing, but the most disgusting obscenity pure and simple, being an imitation more or less vigorous and lustful by the male and female performers of the motions of the respective sexes whilst in the act of coition. Not only the exercise, but copious draughts of rum warm their blood; quarrels ensue, sticks are freely used and the entertainment is ordinarily wound up by a fight. Performers and spectators then disperse with their passions excited to go and put into immediate practice the immoral lessons they have been greedily imbibing.[33]

Consequently, similar to the YouTube spectators, the British colonizer's gaze recognized winin' as immoral, lustful, manipulative/seductive, and always alluding to the act of sex.

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[32] Georges Bataille, *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*, trans. Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1986), 131.

[33] John Cowley, *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso Traditions in the Making* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97.

In other words, because the colonizing gaze encoded the act of gyrating your *cake* as solely as induction to coition, as well as the practice of "immoral lessons" in general, winin' Afro-bodies of today remain marked as deviant, inferior and in constant need of policing. Accordingly, from a colonizing standpoint, Rihanna was merely being your typical deviant (read: black/Caribbean) woman, performing her "natural" tendencies to be hypersexual and vulgar, and therefore deserving of the shame and disciplining expressed in the above commentary.

These hostile anxieties are further complicated by the winin' body's scrupulous rootedness to the condition of being Caribbean—which is marked by an immutable link between one's corpo**real**ity to the exploitation of sun, sand, leisure, pleasure, and sex. In Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar's article "Challenging Negative Stereotyping and Monolithic Constructions Through Caribbean Studies," many of the misconceptions her students maintained about the Caribbean were symptomatic of the many stereotypes that are continually marketed throughout the globe. When she asked her students "why people [wanted] to go on holiday to the Caribbean," what emerged "was a picture of tourists seeking immediate gratification with no consequences—alcohol, drugs, sex, and basically irresponsible behaviour [sic] they would never engage in at home."[34] This promise of fantasy, leisure, and paradise has been historically institutionalized and thus remains supported by the Imperialistic demands of the tourist market.

From Malibu Rum to Sandals Resorts, the Caribbean space is continually marketed as a tranquil paradise, where exotic and beautiful people reside; as a place

[34] Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar, "Challenging Negative Stereotyping and Monolithic Constructions Through Caribbean Studies," *Caribbean quarterly* 51.3/4 (2005): 81.

where people are always happy and no one ever has to worry about anything; or as lascivious party scene filled with rum-soaked black and brown bodies winin' to the rhythms of reggae music. As expected, some YouTube users maintained that Rihanna's *SNL* performance was simply an expression of these Caribbean roots:

> **Stunness101**: In the caribbean where she is from, there is a dance just like it. It's just another way of expressing that "I got the good good" We are a free spirited people with few inhibitions, that's why we express ourselves the way we do. All it would take is one trip and a few parties for you to see and feel what I mean!
>
> **TreniceGreen**: she is just dancing like the girls in d caribbean!!! nothing wrong with that!!! she is cool
>
> **stepgirl305**: I think what some people may not understand or forget is that she's from the islands. If you go to a dancehall or reggae /caribbean club, you'll find similar moves. (Not necessarily slapping an imaginary booty but moreso [sic] the continuous patting of the crotch area) It's a culture thing I suppose. I'm not #TeamRihanna but I do understand the reason behind the moves.[35]

Now although Rihanna learned to wukkup in Barbados at a very young age, such generalized statements tend to fuel the unequal power relations between the Global North and the Caribbean. Specifically, within the constructs of YouTube, such thinking does not *un*colonize the gaze, but rather it tends to invisibilize the ways in which Rihanna's *cake* performances are informed by Jamaican Dancehall music and the Bajan Carnival, as I will discuss below. Therefore, on YouTube, Rihanna's wukkup gets re-encoded as an

[35] Villarreal, "Rihanna SNL," *YouTube*.

authentic spectacle of general Caribbean*ness*, thereby perpetuating the stereotype of Caribbean women as sexually free and uninhibited.[36]

To be clear, Rihanna was introduced to the wukkup through the traditions of carnival, known as Crop Over in Barbados.[37] As a young child, she, along with the rest of her schoolmates, would participate in Junior Kadooment,[38] parading and dancing through the streets for all of Barbados to see.[39] When she was a bit older, she used to go to local house parties in her hometown (Bridgetown) and wukkup a storm with her friends and family. A childhood acquaintance of hers remembers meeting her for the first time around the age of 15. According to him, as they all danced to the current soca, reggae, and Dancehall songs of the time, he quickly noticed that Rihanna was very skilled at wukkin'-up, or rather, to use his words, "*Gyal could wukkup stink, Oh Lawd*!"[40] It was through these processes of socialization that she came to both understand and internalize specific meanings of her gyrating *cake* and of her gender and sexuality, which further solidified what she then recognized as socially accepted norms and behaviors.[41] Bajan

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[36] Hernandez-Ramdwar, "Negative Stereotyping," 82.

[37] Originally signaling the end of the yearly sugar cane harvest, Crop Over has since evolved into a national event that closely mirrors the Trinidadian Carnival in many ways, especially with regards to the costumes, the music (soca and calypso) and the dancing (*wukkin'up*/*winin'*).

[38] In general, the word Kadooment in Barbados refers to a big, fun filled occasion, what we in Trinidad would call Carnival. Junior Kadooment day is usually held the last Saturday of July, during which school children, ages 15 and younger, would represent their schools by dressing up in costumes and parade through the streets of Bridgetown (the capital of Barbados).

[39] Pete Samson, "Rihanna sold clothes in a street stall... then she won a school talent show and her life changed forever," *The Sun Online Newspapers*, last modified January 20, 2011, http://bit.ly/187aDrH.

[40] Personal conversation with friend, Torand JC, over WhatsApp on 6/12/2012.

[41] Linden Lewis, ed., introduction to *The Culture of Gender and Sexuality in The Caribbean* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003), 13.

dance scholar Susan Harewood details how wukkin'-up became a symbol of Bajan*ness* during the 1990s, and as such was then linked directly to African histories, as well as to Afro-Caribbean resistive practices.[42] Effectively, Rihanna's wukkup remains rooted to histories of Afr0-Caribbean resistance, practices of Crop Over celebrations, and traditions of dancing to dancehall music[43] with friends and family. It is these variegated socialization processes that fuel how Rihanna has come to know, understand and engage with her own writhing *cake*.

This distinction between the aforesaid generalization of her performance as a display of universal Caribbean*ness* versus the specific relation of her wukkup to Bajan cultural practices is rather important. In her discussion of the dancehall culture of Jamaica, Sonjah Stanley-Niaah implores that dancehall, and expressive cultures of the like, must remain contextualized by its multiple elements, both "historically and within contemporary performance [… in order to] succeed in expanding and updating the definition of dancehall. This is an imperative with expressive cultural products and practices such as dancehall that shift with the shifting spaces and bodies that occupy them and that they occupy."[44] Spotlighting the specific social contextualization of Rihanna's wukkup creates space to comprehend the ways in which she references long-standing

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[42] Susan J. Harewood, *Calypso, Masquerade Performance and Post National Identities* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2006), 175-88.

[43] Here I am pointing to the fact that although many cultures throughout the Caribbean listen and dance to dancehall music, it is still distinctly a Jamaican cultural practice. As a result, Bajans, for example, would have learned and practiced the latest dance crazes created in the Jamaican dancehalls from the music that circulates out of Jamaica.

[44] Sonjah Stanley-Niaah, "'Slackness Personified,' Historicized and Delegitimized," *Small Axe* 21. 3 (2006): 175-6.

traditions, both national and private, that promote the celebration of the black dancing body. However, as evidenced above, within the confines of YouTube, Rihanna's *cake* slapping and wukkin'-up loses its cultural specificity and thereby remains vulnerable to the Imperialist trappings of exoticism and the hypersexual expectations of the colonizing gaze, further invisibilizing the complex "socio-political dimensions and evolutions"[45] of the Bajan wukkup. Now marked as a "black Caribbean whore" who is "obsessed with sex," it is clear that the YouTube spectator who dons the colonizing lens also dons the ability to re-contextualize Rihanna's subjectivity.

In taking it one step further, the naturalized expectation of the colonizing gaze further deems that Rihanna's behavior is destined to end in fatality. Respectively, many spectators seamlessly linked Rihanna's dancing to her personal history with violence:

> **Leonidus0**: From domestic abuse... to returning to the person who caused the abuse... to this video... she's SUCH a good role model. I honestly miss her SOS days.
>
> **dasexiestred**: she iz so obssesed with chris brown that she making it her business 2 try 2 let him know wat he's missing […] in the end all she doing is making her self look dumb and her bad girl image really doesn't work 4 her especially since chris already whooped dat azz...where was her man down then...hummmmm????? [sic][46]

To contextualize the above commentaries, in February of 2012, Rihanna released a remixed version to this song ("Birthday Cake") that featured Chris Brown, her ex-boyfriend and fellow pop-star entertainer, who was very eager to "lick the icing off." This

[45] Ibid., 176.

[46] Villarreal, "Rihanna SNL," *YouTube*.

remix, however, was the first song that she and Brown had collaborated on since their very public, domestic violence altercation, which had occurred about three years prior on the night of the 2009 Grammy Awards Ceremony. Unfortunately, taking note of the immense backlash that both artists and their song received,[47] America (and much of the Western world) was not ready for Brown and Rihanna to reconnect, especially under such sexually explicit terms. To them, singing about sex with Brown would only lead to more bouts with violence

Upon engaging with Laura Mulvey's reflections on "the presence of stillness within the moving image,"[48] Miranda Pennell proclaims,

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[47] For the month of February 2012, when there was only talk of the musical collaboration, fans, critics, and media made sure to voice their disapproval for Rihanna's possible decision to re-join forces with Brown, even if it was only hearsay at that point. Billboard.com wrote open letters to both Rihanna and Brown. Jason Lipshutz, one of billboard.com's associate editors, pleaded, "But, in all honesty… you can't do you, Rihanna. Not here. Not with Chris Brown. Because like it or not, millions of people are paying attention to you, trying to be as cool as you, attempting to find love in a hopeless place and wondering if it's okay to walk down the same dark alleyway twice. [...] As essential as your voice has become in the pop landscape, you have the opportunity to deliver a message that transcends any lyric you could ever sing, to stand for something that lasts much longer than any three-minute piece of radio fodder. We, like you, all want to let our individuality shine – to know who we are, and just be ourselves – but in this one instance, we need your message to be perfect" ("Open Letter to Rihanna"). Both Rihanna and Brown responded to the negative criticism via Twitter and other such social media, both basically stating, "It's just music, so get over it!" (For complete open letter to Rihanna see: http://www.billboard.com/articles/news/504552/an-open-letter-to-rihanna-its-time-to-talk-that-talk#/features/an-open-letter-to-rihanna-it-s-time-to-talk-1006219752.story.) (For complete open letter to Chris Brown see: http://neonlimelight.com/2012/02/17/billboard-spin-magazine-join-media-backlash-against-rihanna-for-birthday-cake-remix-with-chris-brown/.)

For Twitter responses by both Brown and Rihanna see: http://www.hiphopweekly.com/2012/02/17/chris-brown-responds-to-birthday-cake-remix-backlash-reveals-turn-up-the-music-remix/; and http://www.rucuss.com/gossip/rihanna-welcomes-backlash-over-birthday-cake-remix-with-chris-brown-details/.

For more info on the media blacklash, see: http://www.billboard.com/articles/news/504551/an-open-letter-to-chris-brown-act-your-age; and http://www.statepress.com/2012/02/20/rihannas-birthday-cake-remix-a-recipe-for-disaster/.

[48] Miranda Pennell, "Some Thoughts on 'Nowness' and 'Thenness'," *The International Journal of Screendance* 2 (2012): 72.

> Viewing still photography, I instinctively measure the distance between myself (now) and them (then), as well as the effect of the 'pastness' evoked. However, re-contextualised through an image-sequence, the fixed, self-contained world of the still image becomes a world that is waiting for something to happen; it adopts aspects of the linear trajectory and future anticipation associated with the moving image. As a result, the photographic sequence makes for a potentially interesting dialectic between viewer and image, which can at once become a reflection on the past and an anticipation of the future-of-the-past, the anticipation of cause and effect.[49]

Using Pennell's logic concerning still images versus moving images, Rihanna's *cake* slapping creates a dialectic between the YouTube viewer and her dancing image. As applied here, the above YouTube spectators have marked her *cake* performance as both the cause and effect of violence against her. Within the constructs of YouTube, Rihanna's perceived life is collapsed into repeatable, manipulatable, digital clips. In effect, by watching the full sixty-seconds of her blatant *cake*-slapping, the spectator gains enough information to situate Rihanna within an imagined, digital trajectory of her screened "life." Through the unrestricted accessibility to past video clips of the pop-star—from the broadcasting of her bruised face caused by the altercation between her and Brown to this *SNL* performance—the practice of YouTubing allows the spectator to create a linear trajectory of Rihanna's life, as captured by the various video clips of her posted onto YouTube. In effect, her *SNL* performance can easily be re-imagined in direct correlation to her graphically publicized violent past, which causes the viewer to anticipate that more violence is destined to ensue. Thereafter, every time *she does wukkup stink 'pon*

[49] Ibid., 74.

YouTube, the roll of her hips, the pelt of her waist, and the jiggle of her bambam work to further reify the imposed fixity of her black dancing body within a history of brute terror.

My point here is to call attention to the continuing relationship blackness retains with violence. Paul Gilroy maintains, "Violence articulates blackness to a distinct mode of lived masculinity [to which I add femininity], but it is also a factor in what distinguishes blacks from whites. It mediates racial differences and maintains the boundary between racially segregated, non-synchronous communities."[50] Therefore, I remain interested in the ways Rihanna's violent encounter is continually re-incorporated into the corporeality of her black dancing body, especially through the colonizing gaze. The discursive markings of Rihanna's femaleness and blackness tie her to the long history of framing the black woman's sexual subjectivity through violence, such that it is almost an expected experience of black female sexuality.

Historically, the tense and troubling link between blackness, violence, pleasure, and sex mark the terms by which the black dancing female body has been, and continues to be, produced and consumed. Saidiya Hartman, in fact, argues that it is important to acknowledge "the sheer weight of a history of terror that is [both] palpable in the very utterance 'black' and inseparable from the tortured body of the enslaved,"[51] such that the blackness of one's skin denotes a given connection to the brutal terror of enslaved histories. She continues,

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[50] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 174.

[51] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 58.

> It [the black skin] acts as a reminder of the material effects of power on bodies and as an injunction to remember that the performance of blackness is inseparable from the brute force that brands, rapes, and tears open the flesh in the racial inscription of the body. In other words, the seeming obstinacy or the "givenness" of "blackness" registers the "fixing" of the body by terror and dominance and the way in which that fixing has been constitutive.[52]

Because the "naturalized" link between "black" bodies and tropes of violence and sex was actually echoed in Rihanna's very public and horrific encounter with love and domestic abuse, Brown's physical violence towards Rihanna was also perceived as a predetermined fatality, as the "natural" effect to her very public performance of black female sexuality, or rather by her wukkin'-up under the US limelight. Ultimately, due to both the provocative nature of the lyrics and the blatant display of her *cake*, the YouTube spectator's immediate connection between her past encounter with violence to her gyrating *cake* was "organically" supported by the historical power structures of racism and heterosexism.

"CAN SHE HAVE HER CAKE AND EAT IT TOO?": BLURRING THE LINES OF FATALITY AND LIBERATION

At this point, after noting the various ways Rihanna's wukkup continues to be re-conceptualized by the colonizing gaze, I begin to question what actually makes winin' different from other similar US dances, such as grinding, twerking, and stripper dancing or as my African-American dance teacher used to describe it, "shaking your butts like those 'girls' in those hip hop videos?" Through the colonizing gaze, the viewer sees no

[52] Ibid.

difference between Rihanna's public wukkup as a pop-diva, an Afro-Caribbean woman who wines during carnival, and an exotic dancer or a prostitute, who is pornographically imagined as performing solely for the sake of the male gaze. If within the popular imaginations of the Global North such dances are easily made interchangeable with the wine, then is it even possible for my winin' to liberate my body from being mis-recognized as a symbol of pornography and prostitution within the constructs of YouTube? Even though I root my own wine and Rihanna's wukkup within the depths of Carnival traditions, within cyberspace, the colonizing gaze often dismisses our gyrations as shameful performances of "black femaleness." *So does this mean that if I am to wine outside the constructs of carnival festivities—specifically by embedding a clip of my winin' body onto YouTube—can my wine liberate my body from the mutilations of the colonizing gaze?*

When Rihanna's wukkup was transposed from the streets of carnival onto YouTube, both in 2011 and 2013, she was disciplined again with words of shame. Her reportedly scandalous wukkup was trafficked throughout YouTube and other gossip and pop-culture websites, such as TMZ.com[53] and SplashNewsOnline.com. Everyone, from the UK to Hollywood,[54] was quick to add their two cents. Words and phrases like "risqué,"

[53] This site is no longer accessible: "RIHANNA'S HALF-NAKED BODY HEADDRESSED TO KILL," first accessed December 10, 2011, http://www.tmz.com/2011/08/01/rihanna-barbados-kadooment-day-harvest-festival-celebration-parade-pictures-photos-gallery-sexy-bikini-headdress/.

[54] "Well that didn't last long… Rihanna goes back to her rude girl ways getting raunchy as a scantily-clad carnival queen," last modified July 31, 2011 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2020977/Rihanna-goes-rude-girl-ways-getting-raunchy-scantily-clad-carnival-queen.html. "Rihanna Wears Next to Nothing for Barbados' Kadooment Day!," last modified August 5, 2013, http://www.justjared.com/2013/08/05/rihanna-wears-next-to-nothing-for-barbados-kadooment-day/.

"raunchy," "scantly-clad," "rude girl," "strip-down," "pussy-poppin'," "slut," "whore," and others of the sort were used in the titles, captions, and commentaries to "explain" Rihanna's behavior. It was the wukkup heard 'round the world! *Again I lapse into schizophrenia. Even here, on YouTube, my sacred Carnival traditions remain scarred by shame and fatality. Seemingly, I am still under the watchful eye of the colonizer. When I wine my wais' fuh di ca'nival, I remain coded as a ho, a whore, a slut, and an unrespectable woman. With each embedded clip, my winin' body is further petrified into fixity and calcified as always already exotic and deviant.*

Using her first participation in the Crop Over festivities as a pop-star for an example, upon viewing the smuggled footage of her wukkup,[55] I couldn't understand why they called her performance "scandalous." According to the standards of carnival, there was no scandal made on August 1, 2011. Rihanna merely paraded along the streets of Bridgetown, Barbados as a "Firefly"—a red and gold bikini costume adorned with bright beads and lavish plumes—for Kadooment Day, which is the culmination and dénouement of the Crop Over festival. As both Harewood and John Hunte emphasize in their survey of dancing in Barbados, "The main, if not only, social dance form on display in these environments [read: Kadooment Day] is wukking up,"[56] and Rihanna, like the other participating masqueraders, *wukkup stink 'pon di streets*. From sunshine to pouring rain,

[55] Greatest Entertainment, "The Footage Of Rihanna Popping That Thang At Barbados Car-Ni-Val!," *YouTube* video, 1:26, amateur footage of Rihanna participating in the Kadooment Day parade on August 1, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJRyojSOBVo.

[56] Susan Harewood and John Hunte, "Dance in Barbados: Reclaiming, Preserving and Creating National Identities," in *Making Caribbean Dance: Continuity and Creativity in Island Cultures*, ed. by Susanna Sloat (Orlando: University Press of Florida, 2010), 276.

she made sure to *wukkup she tail 'pon* women, men, and even inanimate objects, such as speakers, cars, and trucks.

Nevertheless, within the confines of cyberspace, Rihanna's wukkup was not enough to liberate her black dancing body from the colonizing oppressions of racist heteropatriarchy and Imperialism. Again, the question that lingers on my tongue is captured by bell hooks' passionate inquiry, "How and when will black females assert sexual agency in ways that liberate us [black women] from the confines of colonized desire, of racist/sexist imagery and practice?"[57] The logic of this inquiry, however, is rather flawed; as I've previously argued, within Western society, the black dancing body has been constructed and conceptualized through the very same colonizing stigmatizations and practices from which we seek liberation. In effect, as Carole Boyce-Davies reminds us, the Afro-Caribbean female "resists being hailed as [she] is still hailed,"[58] or in this case, the winin' Afro-Caribbean female resists being hailed as a winin' fatale as she is still hailed as a winin' fatale. It is important to acknowledge the complex and circuitous paths of resistance available to the winin' fatale, especially since her body is always-already readily exploited and commodified. "The black female subject in the New World," Boyce-Davies adds, "is born within the context of commodification and has only been able to resist it when deliberately re-claiming itself outside of the terms of and in resistance to this commodification."[59] However, as an active symbol for generating capital—a sentiment that is captured by the euphemism "sex sells"—and the creation of

[57] hooks, *Black Looks*, 75.

[58] Boyce-Davies, "Carnivalised Bodies," 340.

[59] Ibid.

life (via procreation), the *cake* gyrations of the winin' fatale remain simultaneously rooted in and constructed by histories of exploitation; in turn, liberation from "the confines of colonized desire, of racist/sexist imagery and practice," through the act of winin', at best, can only ever be imperfect.

To further explicate this point, I excerpt Stuart Hall's expressive take on the audacity of "black" people to embrace and rearticulate their "Black Identity":

> We said, 'You have spent five, six, seven hundred years elaborating the symbolism through which Black is a negative factor. Now I don't want another term. I want that term, that negative one, that's the one I want. I want a piece of that action. I want to take it out of the way in which it has been articulated in religious discourse, in ethnographic discourse, in literary discourse, in visual discourse. I want to pluck it out of its articulation and rearticulate it in a new way.' […] In that very struggle is a change of consciousness, a change of self-recognition, a new process of identification, the emergence into visibility of a new subject. A subject that was always there, but emerging, historically.[60]

Similar to the recreation of "Black" as a political category rooted in Civil Rights movements, decolonization, and nationalistic struggles, the Afro-Caribbean female, resists, and thus survives, the colonizing mark of the winin' fatale by embracing it and re-coding it. As noted in chapter two, throughout the Caribbean, one's winery is often described by words that have ambiguous meanings, such as bad and sweet or beautiful and ugly.[61] If I were to reanalyze the YouTube commentaries with a *Carnivalized*

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[60] Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," in *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. by Anthony King (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1991), 54.

[61] Caribbeannist and literary scholar Jennifer Thorington-Springer discusses this feeling of ambiguity as a pleasurable shame. In Barbados, she explains, the shame associated with wukkin'-up is rooted in the historical disciplining of dark-skinned, low-/working-class women. Jennifer Thorington-Springer, "'Roll It Gal': Alison Hinds, Female Empowerment, and Calypso," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 8, no. 1 (2008): 94.

sensibility, the words such as "disgusting" and "ugly" can easily become positive descriptors for winin' dexterity. For example, the Bajan use of the word "stink" can be used to describe either disgusting smells or skillful winery. The comments "way overboard" or "too much" can reference being *outta* control or too much to handle. Using this logic, if your winery is so exemplary and spectacular that it remains unmatched by any other, you can then be marked by other winin' revelers as being so in control of your own movements that no one, but you, could control your body.

With respect to her Carnival performance, not unlike the other Carnival revelers, Rihanna's wukkup exemplified the performance of *un*colonization. Also encoded as "shameful behavior" from the colonizing viewpoint, *un*colonizing wukk-ups revealed her as someone who has reclaimed her bodily pleasure and is, therefore, not afraid to show off her body; as someone who is willing to challenge the voyeur to become a participant; and as someone who is bold and proud enough to revel in the contention of wukkin'-up *'pon di* streets for Carnival, breaking-away from social mores, and getting on "bad" for the sake of their own pleasure and pride. Rihanna's act of sexual *un*colonization arguably extends into her public image as "an artist who owns her own sexuality and knows how to wield it;"[62] perhaps it was in this vein that Rihanna was motivated to title her third album *Good Girl Gone Bad*. In the end, such layering of meanings alludes to the complex relationship Caribbean people tend to maintain with their own gyrating *cakes*, and more specifically with the Afro-female *cake*.

[62] April Long, "Forever Strong," *Elle*, no. 321, May 2012, 307.

It is important to note that under the logic of carnival the winin' fatale resists the oppressions of colonizing boundaries by embracing the intimate tensions between shame and pleasure. In so doing, the act of winin' opens up a space to acknowledge and engage with the troubling "irresolvability" of the black dancing female in such a way that the act itself tends to symbolize both pride and shame at once. Brenda Dixon-Gottschild has deemed this quality "embracing the conflict," an Africanist[63] aesthetic that "can be understood as a precept of contrariety, or an encounter of opposites."[64] Although, Rihanna's *cake*, my *cake*, the Afro-Caribbean female *cake* remain cut open by double-edged swords—such that the corporeal histories and traditions of our winin' *tails/tales* become disembodied, decontextualized, misrecognized, and even forgotten—embracing the conflicts located along the borders of respectable vs. unrespectable or decolonization vs. colonization, reveals the Afro-Caribbean woman's winery as a strategy of resistance and *un*colonization.

Effectively, and in alignment with María Lugones' claim, I "count as resistance all those tensions whose logic belongs to a logic of resistance, even when they do not redraw the spatiality [of power]."[65] Accordingly, even if her digitally entrapped acts of resistance seemingly fail to *un*do the oppressive power dynamics that were being resisted

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[63] Here, I borrow Brenda Dixon-Gottschild's use of the term to include "concepts, practices, attitudes, or forms that have roots/origins in Africa and the African Disapora." See: Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), xiii.

[64] Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996),13.

[65] María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, Inc., 2003), 10-1.

when performed live, it is still important to recognize the tensions that arise as Rihanna utilizes her rolling "it." Lugones later explains that only by "noticing the tensions, the small deviations, the senseless communications within the spatiality of power [can] we begin to be able to speak to each other about resistance. […] As one understands the limits, erasures, violations, and reductions of oppressions, one also begins to understand them as they are resisted."[66] In forging a space to conceptualize the liminal ways winin' Afro-Caribbean women resist the fatalistic markings of the colonizing gaze, it is important to keep the conflicts "inherent in and implied by" her winin' rooted within "difference, discord, and irregularity," rather than move towards erasure and the blurred appearance of resolution.[67] *Hmmm … this brings me back to the active space of uncolonizing. If I keep in mind that modern-day "winin' fatales" often resist just enough to survive the macro-political structures that link their bodies to fatalistic, racist, or misogynistic representations (a.k.a., uncolonization), then perhaps I can keep my schizophrenia under control.*

In other words, as a modern-day "winin' fatale," the tensions caused by Rihanna's public wukkin'-up offer a different way of understanding her bodily logic, even as the colonizing gaze works to keep her body entrapped within its own logic. In a 2010 interview with GQ Magazine Rihanna proclaimed, "They just don't understand me. I just think people straight up don't know who I am; they just know what I look like, they know the idea of me. But—they'll learn more this time, because now I let my guard down, and

[66] Ibid.

[67] Gottschild, *Digging*, 13.

I'm more comfortable just being myself. That's exactly what I want to be."[68] Later, in a 2012 interview with Elle Magazine she further explained that because invisibility is not an option, due to her pop-diva celebrity status, she has no other choice but to find freedom within the colonizing expectations of her hypervisibility. She confesses,

> I was like, well, fuck. They know more about me than I want them to know. It's embarrassing. But that was my opening [referring specifically to her altercation with Brown]. That was my liberation, my moment of bring it. I wanted people to know who I am. Whatever they take that to be, good or bad, I just want them to know that truth. […] I have more freedom the more people know about me. It's like, one less skeleton in the closet, one less secret […].[69]

In turn, through the use of hypervisiblity, Rihanna has found enough wiggle room to assert her agency, or more specifically, to assert an "honest" depiction of her imperfect self, without shame or the stigma of fatalism.

It is within this contentious yet spectacular space that Rihanna has located her power. In addition to Trinidad-born Nicki Minaj, Rihanna's success as an Afro-Caribbean female artist in Western mainstream pop-culture remains unparalleled by many; and she still continues to actively take up public space on a global scale. By her 24th birthday, Rihanna had earned over 500 nominations and won close to 250 international awards for her music.[70] Of these wins, 6 were Grammys and 18 were Billboard Music Awards (and by the time this dissertation is published, she will have

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[68] Lisa DePaulo, "Good Girl Gone Badass," *GQ* (January 2010): 3, ***http://gqm.ag/10Un1lQ***.

[69] Long, "Forever Strong," 302.

[70] "List of awards and nominations received by Rihanna," first accessed June 14, 2012, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_nominations_received_by_Rihanna.

well surpassed those numbers). In December 2010, when Billboard introduced The Social 50 chart, a weekly chart that lists the general popularity of an artist over the internet,[71] she debuted at number one and has consistently remained on the chart since then. In 2011, she was crowned the most liked celebrity on Facebook, with over 52 million Facebook fans/friends, and was the third most Googled celebrity woman of 2011.[72] In 2012, *Time Magazine* listed her as one of "The World's 100 Most Influential People,"[73] and *Forbes Magazine* placed her as fourth in their "2012 World's Most Powerful Celebrities" list. Furthermore, "with a staggering *2 billion* video views," Rihanna currently [circa 2012] reigns as "the most watched female on YouTube."[74]

From the streets to the page and throughout cyberspace, the deployment of Rihanna's celebrity puts her gyrating *cake* under the brightest of spotlights. Accordingly, one can easily surmise that her spectacular popularity permits her to actively take up public space in a way that aligns her with power. Here, I reference Boyce-Davies' use of the term "taking space," which I first introduced to you in the previous chapter.[75] *"Give me room to wine, and spread a little more, spread a little more, spread out a little more."*

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[71] The Social 50 chart ranks the most popular artists on YouTube, Vevo, Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, Wikipedia, Myspace and Instagram. The chart's methodology blends weekly additions of friends/fans/followers along with artist page views, song plays and reactions. See: http://www.ballerstatus.com/2010/12/03/billboard-debuts-new-social-50-chart-rihanna-lands-on-top/.

[72] Kelly Schremph, "Rihanna Turns 24: 5 of Her Biggest Accomplishments," copyright 1999-2016, *Hollywood.com*, LLC., first accessed March 2, 2012, http://www.hollywood.com/celebrities/rihanna-turns-24-5-of-her-biggest-accomplishments-57695514/.

[73] Stella McCartney, "Time 100: The List – Rihanna: Superstar," *Time Magazine*, last modified April 18, 2012, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2111975_2111976_2111948,00.html.

[74] Long, "Forever Strong," 302.

[75] Boyce-Davies, "Carnivalised Bodies," 341.

Sorry, I cyah help it, the soca song just pop into my head! "So gime room to rock back and play myself, and spread a little more, spread out a little more." I certainly think this is quite applicable here. Soca artiste Patrice Roberts is talking about taking public space for the sake of winin'. She even sings later on in the song: "I come to wine. I come to jam. All I need is soca, two drinks in meh hand. I doh wah no body tuh come and hol' meh wais'. I tellin' yuh from up front. I set di record straight."[76] *When I wine to this soca song, I literally push people out of the way to give myself enough room to perform my fiercest wine.*

By taking up public (cyber-)space, Rihanna's *cake* works to circumvent the politics of respectability, forcing the world, and YouTube spectators, to acknowledge and reckon with her assertive brand of sexual agency. In fact, some YouTube commentaries pointed to the reality that Rihanna's *cake* remains both empowered and *un*deterred by the colonizing gaze:

> **Tchago Almeida**: Too much negative comments calling her "bitch, slut..." But, in the end, everybody wants to lick Rihanna's birthday cake. Deal with that haters!
>
> **MsRussianBeauty**: If this was a man shaking his dick everywhere, no one would have an issue. But because it's a woman, she's a SLUT. Go fuck yourselves. Its 2012. Tap that pussy all you want girl.[77]

[76] "Spread a Little More," written by Sheriff (Trinidad) and performed by Patrice Roberts (Trinidad), this was a soca song released for the 2013 Trinidadian Carnival season. Lyrics transcribed by author: "Give me room to *wine*, and spread a little more, spread a little more, spread out a little more. So give me room to rock back and play myself, and spread a little more, spread out a little more. I come to wine. I come to jam. All I need is soca, two drinks in my hand. I don't want anybody to come and hold my waist. I am telling you from now. I set the record straight."

[77] Villarreal, "Rihanna SNL," *YouTube*.

Here, the spectators call attention to the gendered double standard that works to stigmatize the black dancing female body as both desired and undesirable. Lee expands upon this point in her argument that "Labeling a woman a slut is a way of using sexual reputation as a strategy of power to de-legitimize and stabilize female sexual agency."[78] Rihanna's success thus forges a space for re-legitimizing black female sexuality and desirability within the public arena, specifically the public performance of black female desire and pleasure. Essentially, the space she has claimed—capitalistically, via her fame, and psychologically, via her said freedom to be honest and truthful about who she is or what she desires—further reveals her as an agent within the spectacle of her hypervisible success.

According to Pascha Stevenson, this "fact of agency denotes a profound shift in the usual power dynamic within a spectator-object relationship […], wherein the oppressed appropriate and revise oppressive systems for their own subversive objectives […]."[79] Therefore, the spectator of Rihanna's *cake* performances "does not get to choose a comfortable, empowering subject for consumption; rather, this sort of reclaimed spectacle acts upon the onlooker subversively, often inducing a subtle sense of discomfort, insecurity, and—most important—displacement."[80] As a hypervisible spectacle, Rihanna asserts her erotic power and prowess whilst navigating and

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[78] Quoted in Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 152.

[79] Pascha A. Stevenson, "Dreaming in Color: Race and the Spectacular in The Agüero Sisters and Praisesong for the Widow." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 28, no. 3 (2007): 143.

[80] Ibid.

negotiating the terms by which her black dancing body is consumed. In so doing, the spectator is left to negotiate the discomfort and insecurity of their own positionality; they are left to deal with their own discomfort of the shame:

> **sweeeeetey**: I used to like her but she's way over board now. I hardly could watch this performance so embarrassing and vulgar. Always about perverted stuff.
>
> **Undefeated92**: This is so disgusting... looks so ugly! Save it for bed, too much for TV.[81]

Even on YouTube, Rihanna's *cake* performance worked to displace the location of shame; or rather, some spectators were forced to close their own lenses of the colonizing gaze, instead of using that gaze to shame her winin' body into silence.

WININ' IN AND OUT OF SPECTACTULARITY: RE-LOCATING THE TERMS OF RESISTANCE

Wait, did I do that or did Rihanna really dislocate shame? Is my work naively re-presenting Rihanna's "agency" as the pretty pink bow that beautifully wraps-up the painful controversies that persistently burn through the layers of my blackness, my Caribbeanness, and my femaleness? Ok, in terms of the spectacularity of Rihanna's screened winery, did I remember to factor in Rihanna's complex position as a black body that is both female and Bajan? With that in mind, does Rihanna's actual dancing work to legitimate the winin' Afro-Caribbean female body within the constructs of YouTube?

[81] Villarreal, "Rihanna SNL," *YouTube*.

Here, I am alluding to the thunderous clash that exists along the limits of black female sexuality, where the borders of the Global North collide with that of the Caribbean space. Although many observers have deemed her *cake* performance as "way overboard," "embarrassing and vulgar," and so "perverted" that they could hardly watch the entire performance, those aware of Caribbean dance cultures proclaimed that she was not actually being "spectacular" enough. According to them, her bland *cake*, namely stiff hips and lazy dancing, failed to accurately represent the Bajan wukkup. In effect, her performance did not seem to match the self-imagined Carib[being] whose "it" rolls dexterously, proudly, and in resistance to intermeshing oppressions:

> **MizzReyRey**: I'm tired of people using the fact that she is a caribbean an excuse for her stiff choreography and shit gestures. I have friends from the islands who say that islanders are not that stiff. A lot of islanders don't see the big whoop w/ Rihanna because she makes islanders seem like they can't dance
>
> **The1985andy**: Destra, Allison hinds, Faye Ann, Patrice.... Shit even Patra are Carib. females that put on high energy shows. Please stop using Robyn's "caribbean-ness" as an excuse for her lazy performances. Gyal look good...just wish she did more! Lol[82]

The expectations of performing Carib[*being*]ness during Carnival, for example, are to push the boundaries, to take space, to spectacularize yourself as an expression of your greatness. Compared to other revelers I have seen at Kadooment, some of whom would invert their bodies or crawl between the legs of other revelers to show off their winery, Rihanna's wukkup during Crop Over can easily be considered quite "tame." In reanalyzing her *SNL* performance, the moments when she covered her face with her arm

[82] Villarreal, "Rihanna SNL," *YouTube*.

as she wukk'd-up or when she used the brim of her hat to cover her eyes during both the *butterfly* and the *pat and crank*, not only did she invite the colonizing gaze to freely do as it pleased with her body, but any potential resistive use of her own gaze was thereby muted. Unlike the soca and dancehall performing artistes mentioned in the above commentary—namely Destra Garcia from Trinidad, Alison Hinds from Barbados, and Patra from Jamaica—Rihanna did not use her *cake* performance to directly challenge the male gaze. Often times during these Afro-Caribbean women's live performances, they would call a man up from the audience and challenge him to a wine-off, the goal being to show the audience "who is boss." By showing that their winery is better than that of a man, these artists create a space where the winery of other Afro-Caribbean women can also be marked as legitimate and respected. As I see it, their spectacular winery, often regarded as "vulgar" to the colonizing gaze, is another form of "taking space."

Influenced by Francesca Castaldi's confession about the importance of her dancing abilities within the Senegalese *sabar* dance function, my point here is to present the spectacular wine as a subjective strategy of resistance that is negotiated at the level of the body. Castaldi expressed, "That is the way I feel: good dancing protects me from unwelcome overerotized bodily encounters. But as a beginner and inexperienced dancer I am too vulnerable to male manipulations and transpositions of motility from steps and floor patterns into caresses and tight holdings."[83] In effect, the corporeal boundaries one must transgress in order to be recognized as "spectacular" within an already spectacular

[83] Francesca Castaldi, *Choreographies of African Identities: Négritude, Dance, and the National Ballet of Senegal* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 95.

context (read: Carnival or Dancehall), must push against the limits of fatalism, colonization, and shame. Spectacular winin', therefore, re-presents the Afro-Caribbean female body as the actual limit across which the polyvalent discourses of subversive sexuality, gender, race, class, and (trans)nationality are implicated, consumed, constructed, and legitimized.

Unfortunately, to these YouTube spectators, Rihanna's *cake* performance fell short of these expectations; in fact, I further conjecture that her movements fell in-line with the "sexy" dancing generally expected from today's pop-stars. As a spectacle unto herself, for Rihanna's winery to be considered spectacular, especially by Carnival or Dancehall devotees, I surmise that her dancing must somehow push against the limits of her very own hypervisiblity. For instance, in a controversial cover spread for *Esquire* magazine, Rihanna was declared "The Sexiest Woman Alive" of 2011, where she was problematically cited as being the very "essence of sex."[84] These are the colonizing limits of her hypervisiblity. Therefore, her wukkup and *cake* gyrations must push against this desire of the colonizing gaze to construct her black femininity as one-dimensional (i.e., as the very essence of sex).

Moreover, the ways in which Rihanna has actively taken up public space throughout her career also plays into Imperialistic scripts, which continually work to both commodify and reproduce the Afro-Caribbean female body as exotic and hypersexed. Boyce-Davies advises, "The historical specificity of the black body as commodity and its contemporary representation as a site for Euro/U.S. social and political constructions has

[84] McCammon, "Sexiest Woman Alive."

to be factored in, particularly given the fact that the black female body became that doubled sign of commodification and reproduction."[85] During the nascent period of her career, Rihanna's Caribbean heritage was highly exoticized upon the global pop-stage. For her first two albums, *Music of the Sun* and *Girl Like Me*, her managers, Evan Rogers and Carl Sturken, heavily controlled her image and sound. The name of her first album even expressed one of the most valued and coveted resource of the Caribbean, the warmth of the sun. As Kamala Kempadoo reminds us, the Caribbean tourist industry "hinges on the exploitation of a number of the region's resources, particularly sun, sea, and sand […]."[86] Promotional pictures of the budding teenager associated her with the beach and fun, often dressing her in a bikini bra top and making sure to show her smiling with her mouth open, as if to say, "Hey! Come here." Such sugary imagery further to fed into the "fantasies about the erotic and exotic nature of Caribbean sexuality and life … masking inequalities between tourists and the Caribbean inhabitant, yet compounding the long-standing relationship of dependency of the Caribbean on the global North."[87] In other words, Rogers, who was on vacation when he "discovered" Robyn Rihanna Fenty, was able to introduce Rihanna to the US pop world due to the unequal economic power dynamics between the United States and Barbados.

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[85] Boyce-Davies, "Carnivalised Bodies," 340.

[86] Kamala Kempadoo, *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 20.

[87] Kamala Kempadoo, *Sexing the Caribbean: Gender, Race, and Sexual Labor* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 121.

And if we are being honest, based on his continual testimony of their first encounter, I posit that he was more impressed with her exotic beauty than he was with her singing.[88] In an interview, Rogers recalled his first meeting with the young starlet, stating, "I thought Rihanna was a star from the moment she sang for me. She had a *presence* when she walked in to the room. Her voice was *raw* but distinctive—and she wanted this career more than anything. I signed her without any hesitation. A true star is obvious to me from the moment they walk into a room. I could never have predicted how huge she would become, but I always believed she was a star from day one."[89] Through Rogers' eyes, which I am asserting were colonizing, Rihanna was a manifestation of the island Exotic, from her exotic green eyes to her thick full lips and inviting smile, not to mention the deep swing of her hips and her caramel complexion. The affect of her incredible *presence* and beauty, in addition to the rawness of her voice, provided him with marketable resources. Rihanna was the viscerally raw corporeal material that would be refined and re-presented to the world, based on the already marketable, yet colonizing, scripts of "Exotic Caribbean Fantasies." Thereafter, under the bright US limelight, she

[88] According to attendants at a John Legend concert in Trinidad on August 29, 2006, she was booed off the stage because of her supposed bad singing.

[89] (emphasis added) Dre Decarlo, "Interview With Evan Rogers (Who Discovered Rihanna & Shontelle)," *Kurama Magazine*, last updated February 18, 2010, http://www.kuramamagazine.com/interview-evan-rogers-who-discovered-rihanna-shontelle.

In another interview, Rogers similarly expressed that of all the girls who auditioned with Rihanna that day, "She [Rihanna] had this incredible presence when she walked in." Eric R. Danton, "Discovering Rihanna Among Storrs Native Evan Rogers' Credits," *Hartford Courant Blogs*, last updated May 18, 2012, http://articles.courant.com/2012-05-18/entertainment/hc-storrs-native-evan-rogers-discovered-rihanna-20120518_1_rihanna-robyn-fenty-audition.

was no longer distinctively Bajan, but rather generally Caribbean.[90] Henceforth, as Rihanna's gyrating *cake* reflects back onto the Caribbean more generally misinformed *tales/tails* of winin' fatales, black hypersexuality, and perpetual sexual availability.

Ultimately, Rihanna's status as a pop-diva superstar is like a double edged sword that contradictorily locates her wukkup and *cake* performances within and around "the issue of the Caribbean woman body: at one level of voyeuristic gaze; at another level assertively in the taking of public space."[91] As a hypervisibile spectacle, and a commodity in and of herself, Rihanna's agency, perhaps even more so than that of the common winin' Afro-Caribbean woman, remains imperfectly enmeshed in the overlapping tensions of power vs. powerlessness, resistance vs. commodification, and decolonization vs. colonization. Stevenson explains, "Spectacle […] as it concerns the black female body, foregrounds both its powerlessness and its power. The object of the spectacle experiences anxiety and discomfort and yet inspires those sensations as well, and the cycle of anxiety and oppression thrives."[92] In turn, Rihanna's spectacular position as a pop-diva shifts the terms by which her resistance and agency can operate. Once co-opted by the Imperialistic agenda of the colonizing gaze, she must work doubly hard to

[90] Throughout her career, Rihanna has been promoted as pop artist who stayed "true" to her reggae/dancehall heritage. However, this marketing tool blurs the line between Jamaican and Bajan cultural traditions. Moreover, it feeds into the invisiblizing affect of Imperial hybridity, where the distinctions between Jamaican and Bajan not only are inconsequential, but interchangeable. Although reggae/dancehall music is promoted all throughout the Caribbean, the misappropriation of reggae/dancehall as an authenticator for what it means to be Caribbean, re-constructs Rihanna as an exotic woman who can then be marketed to the world as an "authentic" Caribbean.

[91] Boyce-Davies, "Carnivalised Bodies," 334.

[92] Stevenson, "Dreaming in Color," 143.

re-visibilize these multilayered oppressions and unravel the ways in which her winin' body gets re-presented upon the global stage.

AN IMPERFECT ENDING TO A SCHIZOPHRENIC *TALE/TAIL*

This chapter was my last attempt at uncolonizing. However, in visibilizing these multiple registers of oppression and resistance, my schizophrenia remains present. Like Rihanna, I too, a questionable winin' fatale, battle to simultaneously decipher the terms by which the Caribbean space and the colonizing gaze interplay with the already complex positionality of the winin' Afro-Caribbean female, as well as histories of conquest and domination. In my search to locate the "perfect" liberation or the most "efficient" resistance forged by the winin' Afro-Caribbean female body, I keep coming back to the same question that Caribbean feminist Wright posed in the opening of her article on the female subjects of dancehall docu-videos (which I first shared with you in my introductory chapter): "what story is being told, where does the story come from and in light of contemporary economic, political and spiritual situations, why is it being told in this way?"[93] *Can, then, my schizophrenia ever be cured?*

Her resistance remains imperfect. Her subversions are only temporary. Yet, she still finds ways to heal from the wounds of these intermeshing oppressions. In response to the question, "Does it make you feel powerful to voice erotic and sexual desire?" Rihanna matter-of-factly responded with, "To me, sex is power. … It's empowering

[93] Wright, "Speaking the Unspeakable," 57.

when you do it because you want to do it."[94] When it comes to sexuality, and especially black female sexuality, there is a very thin line between oppression and liberation. *My intention here was to problematize the colonizing gaze and re-present digitized winin' Afro-Caribbean women, like Rihanna, as complex, polyvalent subjects who are constantly negotiating the tensions of their own power and powerlessness. I also sought to unveil her/their winery as a strategy for subverting colonialist shame and embrace, or rather rearticulating the black dancing female as a symbol of pride. Now whilst I can't deny that heteropatriarchy isn't always already at play and up to its old tricks, I find it critical to call attention to the invisibilized ways which black women uncolonize by publically advocating for their sexual agency, autonomy, and pleasure. If not only for the sake of creating a space where we winin' women can negotiate, rework, and express the complex messiness of our own erotic power and sexual desire. Today's script on respectability suggests that in public, it's best for black women to have no sexuality. But that's an impossible task to ask of any woman, let alone a pop-diva, who knows how to wukkup she waist and mash-up di place. Ultimately, in my shift towards healing, towards self-imagining my sexual self and sexualized body as apart from the always already imposing "truisms" of the colonizing gaze, I retain "a multiple sensing, a multiple perceiving, a multiple sociality."[95] Reveling in all of my messy complexity, I continue this uphill battle of uncolonization.*

[94] Long, "Forever Strong," 307.

[95] Lugones, *Pilgrimages*, 11.

***WE IS OBSESSIVE WINERS!*:**
REARTICULATING "IT" BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION

We is obsessive winers
We doh deal wit' outta-timers
Jus' get yuhself some blinders
Yuh doh wan' see we wais'

Dem cyah wine like weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeh
{We Obsess wit' dis}
Dem doh know bout weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeh
{Doh mess wit' dis}

"Obsessive Winers"[1]

What can I say. I am obsessed with winin'. I love the feeling of ecstasy I get every time I roll "it" fuh di Ca'nival. And I especially love the sinuous way that rolling "it" plays an important role in how we Caribbean people come to know ourselves, both at home and abroad. In the preface to *Intimate Communications*, Robert Stoller reminds the reader, "[…] what the observer feels and what is felt by those whom we observe is part of the research and not an interference to be washed out in research methodology."[2] It was in this vein—through a heartfelt processing of intimate spaces and uneasy misplacings—that I wrote and theorized about winin' bodies. Like the rolling "it," my writing wined, rotated, and swiveled in unruly ways as I sought to answer why winin' plays such an

[1] Written by Kerwin DuBois for the 2009 Trinidadian Carnival season, but performed by soca artistes Destra Garcia (Trini), Denise "Saucy WOW" Belfon (Trini), and Alison Hinds (Bajan). Lyrics transcribed by author. Translation of lyrics: *We are obsessive winers / We do not deal with people who are out-of-time / Just cover your eyes /* [Because] *you do not want to see our rolling "its" / They can't wine like us / We are obsessed with winin' / They don't know about us / Don't mess with our winery.*

[2] Gilbert Herdt and Robert J. Stoller, *Intimate Communications: Erotics and the Study of Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), ix.

important role in the identity politics of Trini/Caribbean people, especially in relation to Carnival. Ultimately, I have argued towards an intricate comprehension of the 'problem' of the black feminized dancing body by exposing some of the complex transnational socialization processes winers undergo within the Caribbean Diaspora.

With regards to the gyrating "it," there is a formidable clash between the social politics and racial histories of the Caribbean and those of the United States. For example, if we think about the ways in which dances similar to the wine have been treated in the US, "it" tends to be marked as always already shameful and/or gets associated with negative concepts of blackness, sex, and sexuality. Two very famous examples in US pop-culture are Elvis Presley, who scandalized America when he gyrated his hips on national TV in 1956, and Miley Cyrus, who was marked as 2013's biggest scandal when she twerked both on YouTube and during a televised MTV Music Award ceremony. In each case, their writhing "its" were greeted with immense public shaming, especially from public figures and the media. More notably, the black dancing body was implicated in both situations. For instance, Miley was said to be "acting black" (a statement that she herself made in an interview) and Elvis's gyrating routines were said to be heavily influenced by the black music culture of the South. Due to these continued misappropriations of the black dancing body, my research pushes against these negative discourses and practices by highlighting: 1. the different ways winin' is both used and performed; 2. the cultural values attached to the gyrating body parts of one's "it;" 3. the controversial ways winers engage with competing constructions of shame, empowerment, gender, race, sexuality, and pleasure within the US; and 4. the contested ways in which

winin' bodies carry representations of both the Caribbean as a whole and the individual nations that make it up.

As I have stated throughout each chapter, my dissertation is an attempt to decolonize myself, and thus my readers. As such, it is a feminist act of *un*colonization. From private spaces (e.g., the home), to mundane moments (like getting dressed for carnival), and spectacular acts, (such as patting "it" on *Saturday Night Live*), every chapter works towards a nuanced reading of winin' and winin' bodies. In the article "Feminist Approaches to the Global Intimate," Alison Mountz and Jennifer Hyndman argue that "feminists have reclaimed the global through the *intimate*," which they define as "embodied social relations that include mobility, emotion, materiality, belonging, [and] alienation," as well as "those entanglements rooted in the everyday."[3] Through geographies of the writhing "it," each chapter uses the playful ambiguities of winin' to underscore the multiple registers—from the macro-political to the microscopic—winers traverse in order to both experience pleasure and access full citizenship, all at the level of the body. Effectively, as a feminist act of *un*colonization, my dissertation calls attention to the mundane movements we winers make towards full decolonization by especially focusing on the embodied renegotiations of the terms by which we are made to engage with colonizing power structures.

From choreocriticism to schizophrenia, my writing further demonstrates the innovative methodologies of Dance Studies by foregrounding and then translating the

[3] Alison Mountz and Jennifer Hyndman, "Feminist Approaches to the Global Intimate," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1-2 (2006): 447.

playful ways the winin' body itself theorizes. As a way of further conceptualizing the embodiment of the power differentials written into winin', I scrutinize the movement of winin' bodies through time, across national borders, within foreign places and spaces, as well as put myself in the center of turbulent choreographies. In other words, to borrow from Marta Savigliano's choreocritic agenda, I immerse myself in the multiple articulations of the "dance itself and the sociohistorical conditions it expresses and produces."[4] Because the winin' *tales/tails* I witnessed weaved in and out of danger with each and every roll of their "its," I trepidatiously traverse the overlapping temporalities, embodied memories, private intimacies, in addition to the spatial complexities of winers' multiple geographies, in order to come to terms with the actual work their labor of and for pleasure produced.

This nuancing is further influenced by Mimi Sheller's and Audre Lorde's theoretical framings of erotic power and subjectivity. Drawing upon their frameworks, I work towards a capacious understanding of Caribbean cultural identities through an *un*gnarling of the political economies of pleasure, erotic power, shame, blackness, sexuality, and transnationalism. In so doing, my project further fulfills Joan Morgan's call to

> […] articulate a politics of pleasure that positions pleasure not only as a desirable goal and a social and political imperative, but also as an under-theorized resistance strategy for black women in the United States and the Caribbean. In doing so, [one thus makes …] a contribution to black feminist thought that encourages recognition of black women's pleasure (sexual and otherwise) as not

[4] Marta E. Savigliano, "Fragments for a Story of Tango Bodies (on Choreocritics and the Memory of Power)," in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power*, ed. by Susan Foster (New York: Routledge, 1996), 200.

> only an integral part of fully realized humanity, but one that understands that a politics of pleasure is capable of intersecting, challenging, and redefining dominant narratives about race, beauty, health and sex in ways that are generative and necessary.[5]

Building upon this premise, my dissertation forges a vital space to grapple with the multiple ways clashing histories of blackness, pleasure, violence, shame, and empowerment intimately imbue the act of winin' itself. As a result, this feminist act of *un*colonizing, which thus includes my winin', my researching, my writing, and my embodied theorizing, etches out a space for the dancing body, both in its corpo**real** and discursive forms, to heal, to become whole, and to publically matter, in other words, for Trini/Caribbean winers to experience themselves in all of their erotic complexities of human[*being*]ness.

RE*WININ'* THE CHAPTERS

In my first chapter, I situate those who wine within a broader political framework by exploring the historical links between winers of today and the sexualized disciplining of both Saartjie "Sara" Baartman (misnamed the Hottentot Venus) and the nineteenth century jamettes of Trinidad. Not only does this chapter reveal the very mundane and intimate ways the winin' Afro-female resists the colonizing history that naturalized their "its" as a marker of immorality and hypersexuality, but it also unveils the ways in which US and Trinidadian politics of race and gender are always already in conversation with each other. The tormented ghost of Baartman haunted Trinidad's nineteenth century

[5] Joan Morgan, "Why We Get Off: Moving Towards a Black Feminist Politics of Pleasure," *The Black Scholar* 45, no. 4 (2015): 44.

jamettes and both these *jumbies* haunt every roll of today's Trini/Caribbean winer, especially *on di road*. Although most winers are unaware of where the bodily consciousness that drives the winery during Carnival comes from, the jamettes' bodily legacies that one learns through their participation in the Carnival provides a vital script of survival against fatalism and violent disciplining.

From (trans)national endeavors to sexualized trangressions, chapter two unveils the ways the Caribbean rolling "it" both solidifies and blurs the multiple borders that circumscribe the winin' Trini/Caribbean body. First, I problematized the insidious ways *winin' dong di road* remains rooted in Trinidadian endeavors. In so doing, I reveal the inter-cultural conflicts that Caribbean winers must navigate when participating in Trini-styled Carnival. Thereafter, I focus on the minutia, the micro-politics that contextualize winers' dancing decisions in order to demonstrate the important ways the logic of winin' is simultaneously rooted in the mundane and spectacular realms. Ultimately, through four separate attempts at translation, this chapter unveils the contentious modes of winin' in order to call attention to the multivalent ways Carib[*being*]ness is actually embodied and performed.

In chapter three, I underscore the ways in which the logic of winin' at Trini-styled Carnivals complicates the focus of current debates on the politics of blackness, policing, and pleasure within the US. Foregrounding Brooklyn's Trini-styled Carnival, I especially examine the multifaceted ways Caribbean masqueraders use their winin' to push against, renegotiate, and/or undermine these intermeshing oppressions and politics. This chapter in particular spotlights the current microscopic ways the colonizing gaze and the winin'

body constantly rub and push up against one another. In particular, I call attention to the violence caused by the *mis*reading of the colonizing gaze. In doing so, I also lay bare the important ways winin' functions as a strategy for resisting the oppressive disciplining and shaming that winers must face when choosing to dance in public.

In my fourth chapter, I investigate the intersecting ways US pop-culture, especially via YouTube, works to re-construct and re-present Barbados-born pop-star Robyn Rihanna Fenty's winin' body in order to better understand how winin' participates in discourses on shame, respectability, and empowerment. Through schizophrenic theorizations, I grapple with the obstreperous ways the winin' body gets trafficked through the interstices of cyberspace. In staying present to the blurring of liberation and oppression, this chapter also offers a nuanced reading of Rihanna's winin' body by visibilizing the fundamental ways Crop Over and Jamaican Dancehall music both work to inform her gyrating "it," as well as provide a counternarrative to that of the winin' fatale and its imago. Ultimately, considering the overwhelming influence social media has in popular culture, I rearticulate the vicious ways digitized winers remain vulnerable to the misreadings of the colonizing gaze, while offering a radical way to comprehend the erotic power cited within their winery.

Effectively, my dissertation relays a playfully earnest translation of the ways in which winin' bodies navigate the intimately hostile spaces of the United States, especially during the moments when things feel "wrong," "uncomfortable," or "taboo." Because these feelings are lingering effects of an encounter with the colonizing gaze, intermeshing power structures established through the long tradition of racial, gender,

and sexual colonization continually get played out on the dance floor, which, in this case, is effectively everywhere. This exchange of power, therefore, is always already sewn into the multiple ways in which winers negotiate when, where, how, and with whom they wine (or not). In an attempt to attend to these complexities, my writing conscientiously works to elucidate the subtle and spectacular ways winin' Trini/Caribbeans, especially Afro-female winers, performatively mediate their convoluted relationships with oppressive power structures. Explicitly, I call attention to the unapologetically public ways winers resist, embrace, or alter the fatalistic colonizations of their own winin' bodies. Thusly, by attending to the ways winers complicate US-based constitutions of black femininity, black sexuality, and (trans)nationality, my research puts Critical Race Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Caribbean Studies into a critical dialogue with Dance Studies.

ROLLING "IT" INTO NEW PLACES AND SPACES

As stated in my introduction, my dissertation is but one thread of many. The ambiguities of the Caribbean rolling "it" could never be fully encapsulated in any one piece of writing, especially because "it" is always on the move, ever shifting, ever changing, and ever responding to the environment around "it." My remaining questions, therefore, lie in new spaces and places. From the dancehalls of Jamaica to the Gede festivals of Haiti, I am quite eager to continue learning about the other *jumbies* that both haunt and inform the winin' Caribbean "it" within the Diaspora, especially since they are made to confront one another at Caribbean Carnivals. This was made quite apparent in

chapter three; the parameters of my research prevented me from fully deciphering the polylogue of gyrating "its" that roll along the Eastern Parkway. Furthermore, because I remain extremely interested in ever-changing nature of pop-culture and its intimate relationship with social media, I find it imperative to update chapter four as well as bring other Afro-Caribbean winin' fatales, such as hip-hop/pop-diva Nicki Minaj, into the conversation of shame and empowerment vis-à-vis the politics of cyberspace. My intention is to forge a well-calibrated lens that can decipher the particularities of these variegated winin' bodies. The violent homogenizations perpetuated by the colonizing gaze must be interrupted so that the rich cultures that the Caribbean continues to offer the world can remain visible. It is from this point that I wish to continue my research endeavors.

My future research builds upon my current work by calling attention to the ways in which winin' is used to resist US-based politics and policing of blackness. Within Caribbean Studies, sociologists Milton Vickerman and Philip Kasinitz have each explicated how dominant narratives of blackness are continually used to homogenize the Caribbean experience within the US. As Kasinitz points out, Afro-Caribbean immigrants remain paradoxically stigmatized by both their physical visibility (i.e., their apparent connection to African bloodlines) and social invisibility (i.e., their physical appearance does not evidently connect them to particular Caribbean histories or traditions).[6] Accordingly, Vickerman argues, Afro-Caribbean immigrants constantly push up against

[6] Philip Kasinitz, "Conclusion. Invisible No More?: West Indian Americans in the Social Scientific Imagination," in *Islands in the City: West Indian Migration to New York*, ed. Nancy Foner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 257-75.

the regulatory forces of US black politics due to the complex ways blackness in particular, and race in general, operate within Caribbean contexts.[7] Like my dissertation project, my future research will continue to attend to such marginalizations of the embodied ways that Afro-Caribbean immigrants choreograph socio-political relations in response to the social and cultural discrimination they endure within the US.

Firstly, I will focus on how US-based, Caribbean-born choreographers situate their contemporary dance practices and performances within Afro-Caribbean political and cultural traditions and histories as a strategy for shifting the conversation around race and gender politics. Here, I aim to answer: What happens when a highly co-opted but also profoundly empowering bodily discourse becomes the basis of "high art" dance? By elucidating the ways in which Caribbeanist choreographers situate contemporary dance practices within the political and cultural traditions and histories of the Caribbean, I am interested in foregrounding the Caribbean social body, a term I use to conceptualize the mundane interactions and intimate social practices that Caribbean people maintain with each other, their ancestors, national histories, and cultural traditions in both secular and sacred spaces—including the Trinidadian Carnival, Jamaican Dancehall, and Afro-Caribbean religious ceremonies. This interdisciplinary framework will build on my dissertation research, which examines the Caribbean social body through a consideration of the practice of winin'. This new branch of my research, however, will detail the circulation of the Caribbean social body into the space of the concert stage. Specifically, I

[7] Milton Vickerman, "Tweaking a Monolith: The West Indian Immigrant Encounter with 'Blackness'" in *Islands in the City: West Indian Migration to New York*, ed. Nancy Foner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 237-56.

intend to investigate how four US-based choreographers—Makeda Thomas from Trinidad, Christopher Walker from Jamaica, Tania Isaac from St. Lucia, and Cynthia Oliver from St. Croix—produce concert dances influenced by their interactions with and access to Caribbean bodily discourses. In the same vein as my dissertation, this project will open up a space to further decipher the ways that Caribbean dancing bodies construct, reiterate, and destabilize dominant debates on immigration and black identity politics within the US.

Secondly, in remaining attentive to the complex scripts that get played out *on di road*, I aim to bring the winin' that happens during Trini-styled Carnivals in conversation with #BlackLivesMatter[8] and "hands-up-don't-shoot" protests. By analyzing the ways winin' allows Afro-Caribbeans to access pleasure within the very same spaces where violence against the black body is rampant, I am interested in keeping visible the embodied ways Caribbean people push back against America's anti-black racist practices. It is within these marginalized moments of reclaiming pleasure that winers' erotic power and agency provide a sense of liberation and freedom. In her discussion on why #BlackLivesMatter in Brasil, Christen Smith argues, "Throughout the Americas, police violence inscribes blackness onto the body and the landscape, marking black bodies and black spaces as expendable and violable while producing the nation-state at the site of the black body in pain."[9] Like the black winin' body itself, black public spaces,

[8] For more information on the movement, see http://blacklivesmatter.com/

[9] Christen Smith, "Performance, Affect, and Anti-Black Violence: A Transnational Perspective on #BlackLivesMatter," Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, last modified June 29, 2015, http://culanth.org/fieldsights/698-performance-affect-and-anti-black-violence-a-transnational-perspective-on-blacklivesmatter.

such as the many Trini-styled Carnival throughout the Diaspora, are also marked as sites and citations of pain, which is why it is important for pleasure to be included in this conversation against violence. As argued in my dissertation, Caribbean lives are vulnerable to the anti-black racist policing in the US. In effect, by spotlighting the micro-resistances that Caribbean bodily discourses perpetuate, the ways in which "the history of racism and violence in the United States [is always already] connected to the transnational and diasporic experience of anti-Black racism and violence" can remain in the foreground.[10]

When I think about the important ways Caribbean people have already contributed to society within the US, from Bahamas-born Bert Williams to Barbados-raised Shirley Chisholm, the roots and routes of Caribbean men and women appear to be an integral part of US history. As a dancing scholar, I see myself occupying this rooted/routed space and winding across fields that extend beyond academia. I want my research to be a platform for black feminist activism, as well as a reminder that change must include pleasure for it to be sustainable. In her article "The Choreography of Survival," Aimee Cox reminds her readers that "young Black women have historically been at the forefront of such activities [namely Black activism], as initiators of conversations meant to protect the interests and lives of all who claim membership in

[10] Bianca C. Williams, "Introduction: #BlackLivesMatter," Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, last modified June 29, 2015, http://culanth.org/fieldsights/688-introduction-blacklivesmatter.

their communities."[11] So here is where I choose to stand, at the front lines, instigating for a different comprehension of black and Caribbean bodies, dancing, lives, and humanity.

[11] Aimee Meredith Cox, "The Choreography of Survival," Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, last modified June 29, 2015, http://culanth.org/fieldsights/690-the-choreography-of-survival.

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