Embracing the Political Calypso and Engaging Healing

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ABSTRACT

The calypso, which forms an integral part of the cultural carnival celebration of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, is a syncretic popular art form that has its origin in Africa. The art-form, having been influenced and adapted by the experiences of enslaved Africans in the Diaspora, has been fused in the vortex of plantation society. Today, the music of carnival has evolved considerably, so that the calypso has become one of the cornerstones of our carnival celebration, having been significantly influenced by this Carnivalesque tradition.

Recording as it does some of the experience from the extensive ethnographic research that I essentially completed for the purpose of this paper, the principal objective of this presentation is to illuminate key processes that underlie a different, yet complementary approach by calypsonians, as agents of non-governmental political action. In doing so, the presentation recognises the pre-existing **formal** and **informal** modes of dispute resolution. In extending on that duality, it adds a third model that is a **non formal, cultural community conflict management mechanism**, applicable to Trinidad &Tobago's local, temporal context. By adding this new set of intellectual tools, this paper enables recognition of the language of calypso as "Symbolic Action" in resolving conflict in the republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

In making a significant contribution to the fields of **Legal Anthropology** this presentation augments the link between methods of dispute resolution and culture in concurrence with Clifford Geertz's expressed view that law is a type of social abstraction that is driven by culture and imagination and is designed to regulate social life. Geertz argued that there is a direct relationship and correspondence between law on the one hand and myth, ritual, ideology, art or classification systems focused on structures of meaning, especially on the symbols and systems of symbols through whose agency such structures are formed, communicated and imposed (Geertz 1983:182).

The presentation therefore exposes aspects of those Calypsos that offer commentary on the socio-political and/or economic issues in the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago (Trinbago), recognising them as bedded in the popular practice of ritual resistance. It examines the developments in the field of dispute resolution showing how this specific sub-set of Calypsonians can legitimately be situated in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). It shows how, through the medium of these Calypsos, the skilful Calypsonian, using verbal creativity, freely comments on aspects of Trinbago's everyday life, exposing scandals of politicians and the rich, while recounting gossip, as they redress the powerful. This work argues that Calypsonians, using this localised language that is steeped in colloquialisms, to sing on the prevailing socio-political and economic ills within Trinbago, function as liminal-servants in an **Indigenous**, **Non-Formal, Community Conflict Management Mechanism**.

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BIOGRAPHY

Everard, who is currently the Director of Training for Personal Power Unlimited, holds a Ph. D. in Dispute Resolution from the London School of Economics. Through the mechanism of his research, he has enriched and expanded the field of dispute resolution from the duality of formal and informal, to include the third non-formal strand of community conflict management.

He is accredited by the Mediation Board of The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as a mediator and as a trainer of mediators. He is also an accredited mediator by the Legal Services Commission in the UK. He has lived in Europe for 38 years, and has worked in the field of education and training for the past 27 years. During this time, he has had extensive experience as a practitioner in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution (A.D.R.). Using the process of mediation, he has helped over 1500 parties find new ways of resolving their Commercial, Environmental, Community, Workplace, Victim/Offender, and Family disputes. He has also worked as an advocated in over 800 cases and has designed Conflict Management Systems ranging from customer complaints to employee grievance procedures.

His wealth of international experience now enables him to effectively lead a team of consultants and trainers, bringing an international dimension to his training programmes.   He is a trained teacher bringing the capital of that experience to the design and delivery of ADR training programmes, making them bespoke to the needs of emerging mediation practitioners.

Everard has presented papers on various A.D.R. topics at international conferences in the UK, the USA, and The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. These presentations have included the International Restorative Justice Conference., The National Conference for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution (NCPCR) and at the annual conference of the Academy of Family Mediators (AFM) (now called the Association of Conflict Resolution). Over the years, he has also presented numerous papers at various Mediation UK conferences.

He is a 1998 Winston Churchill Fellow. This Fellowship allowed him to travel around the United States quite extensively, visiting numerous A.D.R. services. The main thrust of the fellowship was to complete a comparative evaluation of dispute resolution practices and principles as they occur in the UK and the USA. During this period he undertook Advanced Restorative Justice Training for Perpetrators of Serious Crimes with, Professor Mark Umbreit in Minnesota, as well as at the San Diego Mediation Service, reputed to be the oldest established mediation service in the USA. He later returned to Hamline University to complete a training programme in advanced Transformative Mediation conducted by Professors Baruch Bush and Joseph Folger.

Embracing the Political Calypso and Engaging Healing
By Dr Everard Phillips

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the language of Calypsos that offer commentary on the social, political and economic issues within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It discusses how, by doing so, these calypsos function as a medium generating a level of social interaction, which ultimately drives Trinbagonians, to think about the prevailing social, political and economic issue that surround their lives. It argues that by so doing, the sub-set of calypsos generate a level of social interaction that subsequently enables Trinbagonians to gain understanding, derive meaning, and construct their knowledge of the prevailing situations. Furthermore, this paper goes on to suggest that by so doing 'Trinbagonians' are then able to interpret these lived experiences in a way that subsequently permits them in turn, to affect their socio-economic and/or political behaviour in a way that embraces and hence engages their process of healing.

Arguing from that position automatically leads to questions being raised regarding determining what tools, skills, and processes are used by calypsonians, in order to achieve such an outcome. This approach ultimately leads to establishing the paradigm of healing to which such a process subscribes. In setting out to address these issues, this paper inevitably embraces some of the arguments regarding the rhetoric of performance communication, through the medium of the calypso, facilitated by calypsonians as they engage in reframing. Hence, this paper offers an insight into the tools, skills, and processes used by the calypsonians who offer commentary in this way.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This paper is set against the backdrop of Kenneth Burke's concept of "Language as Symbolic

Action." The approach exemplifies a theory of language, a philosophy based on the theory, and

methods of analysis that are based on the theory and the philosophy. This process is known as

"Dramatism" (Burke 1966). As such, this way of looking at language invites an opportunity to

move beyond seeing words just as labels to help in the categorisation and identification of objects.

Rather words, but more specifically, it is highly important to recognise that in this case, the words

of the political calypsos become descriptions of situations that engulf Trinidadians and

Tobagonians.

In subscribing to the above this paper is intended to contribute to the understanding of these

calypsos in the wider context of African music.

AFRICAN MUSIC GENRES AND PERFORMANCE STYLES

Based on her research into the American traditions of black music, Maultsby (1991) argues that the

established musical traditions of enslaved Africans derived from their African heritage and that

over the years, and certainly, after Emancipation, these customs evolved in response to the local

demands and the circumstances of the environment. Maultsby argues that under these conditions

of enslavement, *each generation of slaves and freeborn blacks created new musical genres and

performance styles,* (Maultsby 1991:185). Although Maultsby's conceptual framework for the

musical genres and performance styles of African American music does not expressly mention

calypso, there is no doubt that the experiences of the enslaved African in American were similar to

those enslaved Africans who were sent to the Caribbean. It therefore seems reasonable to surmise

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that were this framework to be rewritten to include all the musical genres within the Diaspora, depending on the slant of any given calypso, collectively they would all fall under the general heading of "African American Secular Traditions." Depending on the theme of the calypso it would then be grouped under either of the two headings in that categories that she attributes to having emerged during the 1960s i.e.: "Work Songs, Field Calls and Protest Songs" or "Game Songs and Social Songs," (Phillips 2009: 12-14).

In her discussion on the role of African American musical forms, and the aspects of these that have been retained in *formal and informal settings*, Maultsby (1991:187) recognises the fundamental concept underlying music performance in African and African-derived cultures. She contends that *music-making is a participatory group activity that serves to unite black people into a cohesive group for a common purpose*, (Maultsby 1991:187). In this paper I contend that for our purpose in Trinidad and Tobago, calypsos raise awareness of our situations. It is this heightened consciousness that permits us to at least begin our process of engaging healing.

ENGAGING HEALING V.S. CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

In this text, I am using the words "Engaging Healing" and "Conflict Transformation" synonymously. In doing so I am also assuming the meaning of the term 'Conflict Transformation,' as used by Bush and Folger (1994) in their groundbreaking and seminal work entitled *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict through Empowerment and Recognition*, as this more accurately describes the processes engaged in by the subset of political calypsonians in Trinidad and Tobago.

It would be incorrect and inappropriate not to recognise that social, political and/or economic conflict is an intrinsic part of life in any community and by implication, also in Trinidad and Tobago. Isenhart and

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Spangl contend that conflict is a vital social function where tensions are released and new communal norms are established or refined…………Conflicts force parties to deal with deeper issues and thus serve as a constructive social process (Isenhart and Spangle 2000, 9).   In reality, conflict is always lurking, it does not really go away, i.e., conflicts cannot really be resolved but they can be managed.   Conflict offers an opportunity to learn, to make choices that result from that learning, and thus to choose to change the way we view a specific set of circumstances or situation, and subsequently take action in the direction of that changed view.   So the goal of this healing/transformational process is to enable audiences "*to move beyond solutions to transforming relationships.   The transformational mediator attempts to influence interaction patterns, change how the partners talk about themselves and each other*" (Isenhart and Spangle 2000, 10).

Hence, the conflicts that occur, of which calypsonians sing, are not necessarily and always resolved. Frequently though, through listening to these calypsos audiences are empowered.   They begin to recognise, to think, to reflect and discuss the issues being presented by the calypsonians.   It is this process of 'Empowerment and Recognition,' as delineated by Bush and Folger (1994), which I contend leads individuals within an audience to identify the options they have that can make an impact, thereby bringing about constructive change or the process of 'Engaging Healing'

This notion of 'Engaging Healing' being advanced here sees the idea of healing or peace being intrinsically connected with that of social justice, right relationships, and human rights, within a social structure.   This is quite in opposition to what is customarily referred to as 'conflict resolution' wherein one party may feel co-opted to succumb, for the sake of either making or maintaining peace.   In supporting the view that the term conflict resolution is an oxymoron, Wallenstein (1991) argues that solutions do not necessarily show up as resolution and contends that what could be seen as resolution of conflict can in many settings actually perpetuate the inequality or injustice that initially generated the dispute.

It is for these reasons that to my mind, either of the phrases: 'Engaging Healing' or 'Conflict Transformation' seems more appropriate and relevant than the phrases: conflict management or conflict resolution, which are customarily associated with processes of peacemaking. My problems with these two terms stem from my work as a practitioner in the field of dispute resolution, where I have come to recognise that the conflicts which occur as a natural part of life are an inevitable part of the triadic process of learning, growth, and change. Hence, I subscribe to the view that conflicts are entirely different from disputes. Being an intrinsic part of life conflicts provide a sort of undercurrent for life that edges our learning processes forward. Ultimately, this approach leads to the recognition that while disputes can be resolved, conflict cannot really be eradicated from society. Embracing this approach, we arrive at a place where we begin to see why the term 'conflict resolution' is an oxymoron. More significant though, this term suggests co-opting. This idea of going along can be seen as an attempt to minimise the conflict, when the legitimate issues being brought to the table by at least one party are not being fully regarded. This type of quick fix 'conflict resolution' approach to a people's deep socio-political or economic problems, oft-times give way to verbosity without any of the significant action that leads to subsequent, substantive change. The unfortunate aspect of that approach is its failure to incorporate the real transformations needed in order to move from an attempt to 'just create peace' as opposed to that of 'having achieved justice.' This alternative idea of 'conflict transformation' to which this text subscribes, embraces an idea of the establishment of social structures that both scaffold and sustain the development of right relationships and constructive change, through a respect for fundamental human rights.

In the final analysis, it is helpful to reflect on Bush and Folger's summary of the value of this Transformational approach. They contend:

> *The strongest reason for believing that the Transformational Story should guide mediation is the story's underlying premise: that the goal of transformation – that is, engendering moral growth towards both strength and compassion – should take precedence over the other goals mediation can be used to obtain, even though these other goals are themselves important. It makes sense to see transformation as the most important goal of mediation, both because of the nature of the goal itself and because of the mediator's special capacity to achieve it* (Bush and Folger 1994, 28–29).

This concept of 'Conflict Transformation' is bedded in an understanding of the difference between action and motion. The difference between these two as they apply to this text can be illustrated by considering a stone rolling down a hill. While such freefalling movement of the stone can be regarded as motion, should someone takes the stone and throw it, this activity is an action. This text therefore recognises not just the lyrics of calypsos, as 'Symbolic Action,' as explained above in the Theoretical Background.

This approach is important, opening as it does a new doorway to understanding and interpreting the localised form of entertainment in Trinidad and Tobago. In doing so, it is helpful to set this local cultural art-form in the context of the entire range of approaches to resolving disputes and managing conflict as shown in Figure 1 below.
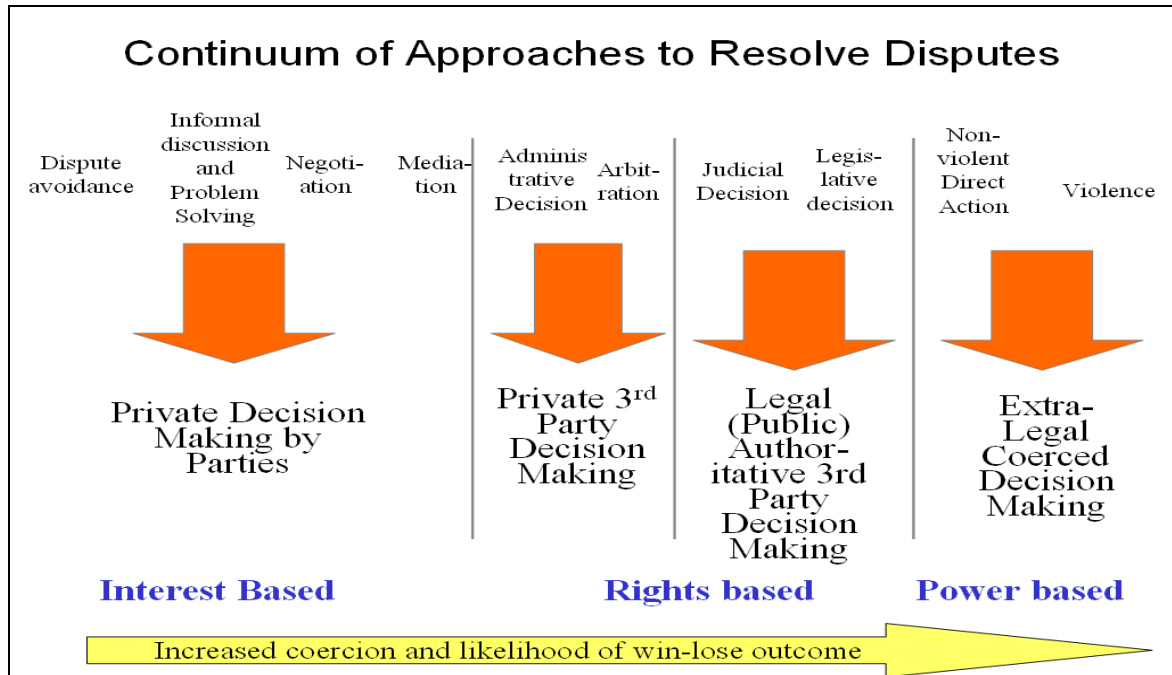
Figure 1 – Continuum of Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF FORMAL, INFORMAL AND NON FORMAL SYSTEMS

Traditionally, in the field of Legal Anthropology, the resolution of disputes is divided into **Formal** and **Informal** approaches, with the Formal process referring to the due process of law, as takes place in a courtroom. On the other hand the Informal speaks to the processes of mediation, negotiation and arbitration that take place in a more informal setting. The diagram above is a schematic representation of these approaches, showing the juxtaposition of the interest based, the rights based and the power based approaches to resolving disputes.

This paper extends on the duality of the formal and informal approaches to dispute resolution. It shows that with respect to the local Trinidad and Tobago situation, the political "Theatre of Emancipation," as manifest through the calypso tent and the Dimanche Gas show, offers a third '**Non-Formal'** strand to the field of Engaging Healing.

As with many other colonised countries, in Trinidad, the very practice of colonialism propagated the imperial power's metropolitan legal system throughout the territory, imposing this as the formal dispute resolution process to be used in the resolution of conflict. However, it needs to be understood that there were significant differences occurring between the available structures for resolving conflict in the territories of the "New World," when compared to those available in the African continent or the India sub-continent.

These differences resulted from the fact that imperialism within the African continent, like the Indian sub-continent, was imposed on a people who were already well established in their own homeland, having their own operational socio-cultural systems which included well recognized methods for resolving their conflict. The emergent dispute resolution systems in these societies, was a form of legal pluralism where, a hegemonic colonial power shaped the formation of a **formal** dispute resolution processes, while the parallel, local, **informal** system continued to coexist. For the reasons embedded in the complexity of the social, political and economic matrix that drove developments in Trinidad, this structure was not mirrored there.

Hitherto being supplanted in Trinidad, this composite group of Africans from different tribes, now arriving as slaves, had been used to variety of socio-cultural system that ranged from chiefdoms to acephalous societies. In their new Caribbean homeland, the Africans collectively became an amalgamation of disorientated, disempowered, bemused people, from a range of different tribal

systems, having neither a sense of community, nor continuity nor a common language with which to communicate.

Newly arrived in Trinidad, these totally disorientated people found themselves in submissive bondage, with their primary drive being survival. Within these complex dynamics of subordination and struggle, the Africans, although numerically superior, were not of the mindset that allowed them to entertain either the idea of implementing a unified dispute resolution system, or the resurrection of one to which any of them had previously been accustomed. On the other hand, for their part, the migrant Europeans now residing in Trinidad already had their own imported formalised dispute resolution system which became the *de facto* system for the application of justice.

The 1797 change in imperial governance from Spanish to English, supplanted Hispanic law with British law, engendered accompanying tensions within the Trinidad community, (Wood 1968). This further impeded the capacity of the African slaves to form an integral, informal structure for the resolution of disputes among either themselves or between themselves and their slave masters. The absence in Trinidad of the type of formal/informal legal pluralism that existed in Africa and the Indian sub-continent was sustained for some considerable time and can be seen being evidenced in the writings of Herskovits, which appeared much later.

Writing in 1947 in relation to the microcosm of the *Trinidad Village* of Toco, Herskovits and Herskovits, comment that most of the villagers, being born elsewhere, had no long, common local

tradition to be upheld, or that required the support of the people in their old ways. Herskovits and Herskovits' research identified that in those early days in Trinidad, the procedure for the resolution of disputes was a process that was conducted through a Court system that was entirely of European origin, (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1947).

For my part, except for the Panchats, my research into pre-20th century Trinidad has not revealed any **informal** system of dispute resolution existing in the island that corresponds to those available in either Continental African or the Indian sub-continent.

Quite apart from this, the 50's, 60's and 70's temporarily gave rise to an informal system of resolution wherein respected members of the community (Priests, Head-Teachers, the Post Master/Mistress, and the Village Police Officer) assumed an informal role of peacemaker in local disputes.

Within the last 10 years, Trinidadians and Tobagonians have grown in their awareness of the potential of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), with a corresponding increase in commitment to the mediation process. Currently, various national and private bodies, following a North American model of mediation, offer certain types of conflicting parties the opportunity to **informally** resolving their disputes.

LEGAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Turning to the wider area of legal anthropology, we see the release of Bronislaw Malinowski's study at the end of the first quarter of the 20th Century (*Crime and Custom in Savage Society*),

heralding in a significant epoch in modern legal anthropological studies. However, this approach so skewed the understanding of the entire spectrum of the dispute resolution processes that were engaged in at this local level, that it further distorted aspects of the theoretical development that might otherwise have been available. This occurrence was a consequence of the fact that these early studies produced a static analysis that took no account of the interactions between the formal and informal systems, neither did they consider the implications of the asymmetric power imbalance between these processes, particularly with regard to the importance and impact of the imperial models.

The 70's saw the field of dispute resolution continuing to evolve and grow in a significant way (Gulliver (1978), Comaroff & Roberts (1981), Moore (1985). During this period Nader and Todd's (1978) produced a pioneering florescence of studies of village law, using a choice-making model of action, a focus on local places and a processual mode of analysis of disputes, hence, producing a framework typology for dispute processing. Correspondingly, this inspired other legal ethnographic research, into socio-cultural frameworks in various locations around the world, and as a consequence, providing rich descriptions of the local significance of these contexts.

The literature of the 70's and 80's shows an awareness of the need to regard not just the localised, informal, rational, choice-making models of behaviour, but the formal as well. Some researchers (Snyder 1981), (Chanock, 1985), criticised the micro-level approach to the study of disputing, with Starr & Collier (1989) generating an expanded framework of dispute analysis incorporating historical, temporal and the world system.

In recognition of the link between methods of dispute resolution and culture, and particularly relevant to the approach that this paper takes is Clifford Geertz's expressed view that law is a type of social abstraction that is driven by culture and imagination and is designed to regulate social life (Geertz 1983). Geertz argued that there is a direct relationship and correspondence between law on the one hand and myth, ritual, ideology, art or classification systems focused on structures of meaning, especially on the symbols and systems of symbols through whose agency such structures are formed, communicated and imposed (Geertz 1983:182).

The field of dispute processing has evolved considerably over the last 40 years or so, with legal anthropologists defining and redefining this evolving domain to embrace socio-cultural systems, (Comaroff & Roberts (1981), Starr & Collier (1989)).

The processual model of law, of which dispute processing forms part, developed quite significantly in the 1950s, (Turner (1957), Gluckman (1955), Bohannan (1957)) and built upon Malinowski's action oriented functionalism. This approach was supported by comprehensive case analysis. The establishment of this model of dispute processing launched a significant challenge to the existing rule-centred approach. However, the 1970's saw legal scholars attempting to produce a synthesised model that bridged both the rule centred and the processual models.

The 1980's saw legal anthropologists developing a concern for meaning and power, hence drawing from the theoretical orientations of different disciplines, producing enriched and expanded theoretical frameworks that provided a bridge between aspects of the social sciences and law (Comaroff & Roberts (1981); Starr & Collier (1989); (Abu-Lughod (1990); Comaroff (1985); Comaroff & Comaroff (1991); Scott (1985)). These newer innovations sought to combine the areas of dispute processes in a social context, with notions of how legal institutions and actors create and transform meaning within the context of their particular cultural framework.

This work from the colonial and post-colonial worlds was taken up from the late 1970's, and drawn upon in the process of the renovation of metropolitan legal systems. The ensuing shift in orientation from *formal* to *informal* processes for resolving disputes has been accompanied both in metropolitan centres and in the post-colonial world with new understandings of theories of dominance and resistance, (Abu-Lughod (1990).

The objective of this paper, recording as it does the experience of the ethnographic research that I essentially completed as part of my study, is to illuminate key processes that underlie a different, yet complementary approach to the resolution of disputes, as applicable to Trinidad and Tobago's local, temporal context. In doing so, I am adding a set of intellectual tools that enable us to recognise the *Language of Calypso as "Symbolic Action" In Resolving Conflict in Trinidad and Tobago*.

My approach, set as it is against the backdrop of the discussions around ideological conditions of anthropology and the implications of these conditions for its discourse, enables a vision primarily of Calypsonians, and secondarily their audiences, as social actors, both engaging in and demonstrating their potential for human action or agency within a ***Matrix of Domination***[1] (Collins 1990). It invites an understanding of how Calypsonians, through the medium of the Calypso, influence the social creation, maintenance and alteration of structure, in their process of articulating an ***inequality problematic***[2] in the localised situation of Trinidad and Tobago.

This being the case, using an interpretive framework, I define a ***Non-Formal*** approach to the resolution of structural conflict within Trinidad, thus taking us somewhere new. In doing so, I extend the duality of resolution processes earlier identified, taking a quite different line from previous researchers of the Calypso Art-Form. Hence, this work unveils a third strand, adding intellectual tools that offer an understanding of aspects of the Calypso art-form, which show it as a ***Non-Formal*** approach to transforming conflict. In this view, the Calypsonian functions as a ***liminal servant***, using in part, a Trinidadian language, the vocabulary of which reveals the various ideas encoded in the restricted terminology, which is used to represent the daily challenges that some Trinidadians and Tobagonians face.

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[1] ***Matrix of Domination*** refers to the dynamic interaction of the combination: race, class and colour. It addresses the disempowered effect of the interactive and reinforcing process that exists between these attributes, not as individual attributes in themselves, but only in relation to the interaction between the various attributes as these affect and influence inequality.

[2] ***Inequality problematic***: In using this term I am referring to the Calypsonians' attempt to articulate the pertinent issues that arise from the *Matrix of Domination,*(as it applies to the Trinidad situation), as they operationalise an approach that necessarily addresses the issues within this Matrix.

I need here to highlight that the ideologies discussed in this work reflect the Trinidad situation wherein there exists radical class inequalities within the system, which in turn, generate clear forms of socio-political and economic conflict that, correspondingly, have been accompanied by attempts of some governments to exercise control on calypsonians through censorship.

In using the term *Non-Formal*, I am therefore referring to a process wherein the Calypso functions as a facilitator in a dialectic that is attempting to resolve contradictions or oppositions, as perceived by the Calypsonians, in either the socio-political or economic domains of Trinidad and Tobago.

Functioning as a *liminal-servant*, the Calypsonian has a sense of immediacy of purpose, offering the audience verbal symbols as part of an artistic rite, which is a response to pathologically prevailing issues. In a forthcoming book entitled: The Political Calypso: A Sociolinguistic Process in Transforming Conflict," I show how the audience become co-celebrants in a learning process that is characterised by their committed participation and involvement in "the act", thereby creating a truly deep, meaningful and edifying learning experience for them.

This paper is based on a recognition of how, in relation to the events occurring within a Calypso Tent, the rules for this particular approach to dispute processes are negotiated, and simultaneously, social life within the Calypso Tent is governed by normative repertoires that involve the manipulation by the Calypsonians, of the rules of performance, in order to bring about increased consciousness. My approach builds on other authors' (Benda-Beckmann *et al* (1988); Roberts, (1979)) who, lending their weight to an informal approach, argue that the rules governing localised conflict behaviour are not internally consistent codes of

action analogous to Western written law, but can instead, be negotiable, internally contradictory repertoires that are applied with discretion.

Hence, my approach to the anthropology of dispute resolution, offers a cultural analysis that identifies how the local institution of the Calypso Tent and its actors create meaning. I identify the impact of this meaning on the surrounding social relationships, and the effect of the cultural framework of the Calypso Tent on the nature of the processes of conflict transformation itself.

I recognise a parallel between my work and that of Comaroff & Roberts (1981:18-19) who, in their work on dispute processes within Tswana society of Africa, examined the cultural logic of the localised dispute processes. Other authors, (Schapera, 1955), (Dikobe 2003) contend that there are striking similarities between Calypso and Tswana songs of derision in which grievances are articulated.

LINKING STAGE DRAMA AND SOCIAL DRAMA

That there is a close reflection in the calypsos of any particular time and the events occurring in the lead-up to that calypso season is beyond question. As a classic illustration of this fact, consider the chronology of events immediately below and the list of calypsos that track those events.

SOME KEY EVENTS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

- ➢ **1981** - George Chambers becomes prime minister following the death of Eric Williams.
- ➢ **1986** - The national alliance for reconstruction headed by Arthur Robinson wins the general election.
- ➢ **1990** - Over 100 Islamist radicals blow up the police HQ, seize the parliament building and hold Robinson & other officials hostage in an abortive coup attempt.
- ➢ **1991** - Patrick Manning becomes prime minister after his PNM party wins the general election.
- ➢ **1995** - The Indian-based United National Congress (UNC) and NAR form a coalition with Basdeo Panday as prime minister.

CALYPSOS THAT TRACK POLITICAL EVENTS

➢ 1986: Sinking Ship – Gypsy (A protest at the existing government)
➢ 1987: One Love – Sparrow (A welcome to the newly formed amalgamated party)
➢ 1989: Chauffeur Wanted – Chalkdust (An expression of abject dissatisfaction with the new PM)
➢ 1991: Say ah prayer (for Abu Baka) - Cro Cro (Advocating a balanced view of the coup)
➢ 1991: Still the best – Cro Cro (Satirical post coup commentary)

FORM: TOOLS AND SKILLS USED IN CALYPSO ART

In the process of influencing and persuading, the Calypsonian exercises his/her ability as an artificer, adept in the art of navigating along a spectrum of meanings that range from standard English to colloquial dialectic. Using various types of wordplay, the calypsonian successfully and skilfully manoeuvres within this spectrum, demonstrating a degree of sensitivity to each of the attributes of an active triadic, co-existing relationship that engages the audience, their encompassing social world and the performer. Focusing on this intersection, allows the establishment of a dramatic structure for the process of addressing the prevailing dispute.

This approach acknowledges the difference between the lived-in world of the audience, the encompassing social universe and the liminal world of the performing calypsonians, as s/he mediates the tensions between the social world and the lived-in-world.

In tracking some of the key events in Trinidad and Tobago, juxtaposing them with the calypsos of the era, brings us to a practical appreciation of the relationship between stage drams and social drama. This therefore opens an opportunity to understand Burke's analysis of the relationship between 'language' and 'reality'. This paper therefore now looks briefly at both the context and

content of calypsos that offer commentary on the socio-political and economic issues within

'Trinidad and Tobago, as these calypsos articulate the 'inequality problematic' and mediate the

struggle in the competing class structure of the nation. In so doing, to further guide our

understanding of this non-formal process, there is now a need to addresses both the function and

Form of calypsos. This paper therefore explores political and sociological issues, as these are

addressed through the language of the calypso art-form.

This approach requires an exploration of the mechanisms that underpin the concept of

"Dramatism" as it manifests in the calypso art form. In this cause, I posit that calypsonians use

reframing in the process of raising consciousness, when they engage in their approach to

transforming conflict. For this purpose, Hall, (1998:230) defines reframing as a process where a

speaker takes a frame-of-reference so that it looks new or different. Hall argues that when

reframing an event or idea, the content or context of a situation is presented from a different point

of view so that it invites a different meaning.

FORM: STAGE DRAMA V. S. SOCIAL DRAMA

As discussed earlier in this paper, the lyrics of the Trinidad calypsos are a mirror reflecting the

country's pertinent issues. They frequently show how the inter-relations of the social phenomena

of the island bear on each other. Hence, in relation to the disputes that inevitably occur within the

social world of the people of the islands, the calypso is uniquely poised to prize open a window to

the understanding of motives, as we try to grasp the lyrics therein. Thus this concept bringing an

awareness of the relationships between: language *of* motives (i.e.: the structure of the language),

motives *in* language (i.e.: the intentions of the calypsonians) and language *as* motive (the

relationship between these two).

The use of reframing is central to the calypsonians' role in the process of conflict transformation,

as it gets their audiences to see alternative perspectives. When reframing, calypsonians can change

the conceptual and/or emotional setting of a set of experiences, placing the experiences in another

frame that equally well fits the 'facts' of the same concrete situation. Through this process, the

calypsonians change the entire meaning of the circumstances, thereby enabling a new and different

vision of the situation.

FRAMES AND MASKS

I have already stated that calypsonians, singing on the social and political issues occurring in

Trinbago, enable their audiences to take an alternative perspective, thereby helping their

development of a social construction of reality. This section of the paper looks at the processes

that calypsonians employ in achieving this outcome.

The fieldwork engaged in as a necessary part of writing this article showed the extensive use of

frames and masks by calypsonians, as they endeavoured to effectively deliver their messages to

their audiences, (Phillips 2005). Used as a tool in this way, reframing permitted one idea or object

to be thought of as fitting into a different category. Hence calypsonians abundantly used metaphor,

metonym, and Polysemy. While metaphors establish a relative relationship between two different

fields, mapping from one domain of experience on to another, by contrast, in metonym the

mapping is within the same domain. On the other hand, the use of Polysemy enables multiple meanings of the same expressed view to be effective. Hence, this can be seen as a stage in the interpretation of expression that goes beyond that of *double entendre*.

The work of Bateson (1972) and Goffman (1974) formed a backdrop for this study. Hale (1998:174:162), has further grounded this area of work and as an academic and practitioner in the field of ADR, has taken a perspective on frames which uses the Burkean epistemology as a touchstone. Embracing the concept of Dramatism, she shows how a practitioner in the field of conflict resolution can reframe a given situation.

Using frames, Calypsonians plausibly juxtapose principles and pragmatics, exposing the inconsistencies of Caribbean experiences. Rohlehr (1985:2) refers to this process as *oscillation between geographical and situational opposites as* a way of shaping, not only the Caribbean aesthetic, but the social and psychic experiences of the dispute. In doing so, Hale argues that in conflict, individuals can find themselves in one of the problematic drama fames. She contends there are a number of different types of frames that can be placed into two fundamental categories. These she identifies as the problematic frame and the hopeful frame. While the former does not necessarily help with engaging healing, the latter more frequently does. Using these techniques, the calypsonian's artistic use of linguistic form deploys a nebulous haze that invites multiple meanings and interpretations of the lyrics of a calypso, The mediator Robert Benjamin (1995) calls this process, creating *cognitive dissonance*.

I refer to calypsos that engage this process of Polysemy as having 'lamina lyrics'. Much like an onion, these calypsos have a number of different levels of meaning, concealed one beneath the other. Achieving this phenomenon, calypsonians use frames and masks that manifest in calypsos as metaphor, metonym, Polysemy irony and satire. While a number of calypsonians repeatedly use these techniques, I will illustrate the use of linguistic Form by focusing on the lyrics of two calypsos. The first of these is the Original De Fosto's calypso, entitled: "In a Palace State of Mind" which is a very caustic attack on the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Patrick Manning. The second is: "My Observation" by Sugar Aloes (whose real name is Michael Osuna).

In a Palace State of Mind

On minion, two million, three million four Million
One billion, two billion, three billion four billion
On minion, two million, three million four Million
One billion, two billion, three billion four billion

Patrick could I be like you? Yes
Should I fool the people too? Yes
You see all these years ah singing calypso
Ah singing the truth
Ah still cah win the crown
They does thief meh in town
Cah buy meh own house ..
no Look ah renting still
But just like you
Is a palace I want to build
Maybe I have to be
Ah politician in T&T
Cause calypso money cah build no palace for me

Ah want a palace just like yours
With about three hundred doors
Calypso cay give me that
Ah telling you flat, flat, flat
One fish for bout 20,000
Ah want about 10 dozen

Ah infomatic centre too
Ah gym, to be fit like you

Patrick would we start building soon…..Yes
Could we start in the month of June……..Yes
Did you take land from the poor? Yes
Will they still vote you for sure? Yes
Is it true your eyes very long?
Did you spend money to the gorund?
Ah hear the master bedroom alone will blow me away
The figures they make known, look ah do know what to say
The dining area for sure, cost about 6 million
The executive suite and more is a big squanderlisation
So much people in poverty some have nowhere to sleep nightly
Still you building palace, well ah want you build one for me

Ah want a palace just like yours
With about three hundred doors
Calypso cay give me that
Ah telling you flat, flat, flat
Three million for drapes alone
How much for the tiles and stone
How much the contractors make
Ah want to know for goodness sake

Was more than 300,000 million spent? Yes…
Was there transparency to the end? Yes…
Did you put a burden on the treasury? Yes…
Was it a waste of taxpayers money? Yes…

On minion, two million, three million four Million
One billion, two billion, three billion four billion
On minion, two million, three million four Million
One billion, two billion, three billion four billion

Do you see 'bout the people's needs?
Do you think you's a man of greed?
Listen .. you tell we to tighten we belt
But yours slack for ever more
You gone and build your palace
Without no regards for the poor
Hospital deteriorating, no beds to see bout the sick
Police and fire stations collapsing still you gone and build it quick
If its palace you love so much and it makes you feel alright

If they put meh out the apartment ah sleeping with you tonight?
.
.
.
Ah want a palace just like yours
With about three hundred doors
Yes I want it in full view
So like you ah could show too
I deserve it that I know
For all these years of calypso
All these years I begging
Why you living like a king

Do you think God will forgive you?   ………Yes
Do you know he loves you too?   ………Yes
Will you change from your selfish ways? ………Yes
Will you give to God his praise?   ………Yes
Do you have an altar inside of here?   ………Yes
Do you kneel down and say your prayers? ………Yes
Do you take Holy Communion?   ………Yes
Did you get rid of the obeah woman?   ………Yes

Through the words of this calypso De Fosto clearly aligns himself with the populace as he seeks to

raise the consciousness of the nation by drawing attention to how, in his view, the Prime Minister

of the country squandered the nation's revenue.   It is worth noting that he ends the calypso as he

began it. For at the end of the first verse he states:

Cah buy meh own house ..
No, look ah renting still

Quite aligned with this approach, coming to the end of the calypso he returns to this theme as he

questions: If they put meh out the apartment ah sleeping with you tonight? Indeed the whole

calypso features levels of comfort which the average Trinidadian and Tobagonian does not attain.

De Fosto focuses on this dichotomy in a way that helps to awaken and then heighten the awareness of the people of the country to the squandering of their treasury funds.

Also in the first verse he states that Mr Manning fools the people to succeed, while he, singing the truth suffers in that he has not yet been able to "win the [highly coveted calypso] crown." By so doing he very powerfully juxtaposes what he sees as Mr. Manning's success through lying, with his lack thereof, by engaging in "singing the truth," as a consequence of which "They does thief meh in town" and so "Ah still cah win the crown."

The process of which this article is the subject is further illustrated by the words that calypsonians Sugar Aloes uses in the Calypso Tent to introduce the audience to the calypso "My Observation," which is a critical observation on the due processes of law within The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the context of the theme of this article we will then attend to some of the lyrics of the calypso which demonstrate many of the tenet in this paper.

Note in the example below: while I have embolden some of Aloes' words to draw specific attention to the way in which he uses language. The words that are in the shaded area, embolden and in brackets [ ] are my focus and explanations of the conflict transformation resolution process as display by this rendition of the calypso.

While appearing in the "Review" calypso tent in 2004, Sugar Aloes, upon entering the stage

introduces his calypso to the audience thus:

"Al yuh enjoying the show?"

"Al yuh missing anybody? Neither we, Tasha fall-in for Denyse, Super fall-in for, what he name …Bomber.   We have Steve Sealy falling in for DeFosto. And we could go on and on, right? But give yourself a round of applause for supporting a tent that had exist for 43 years and still going strong. And we ent care what no body say, if after 43 years for the first time we ask for a little help, we well deserve it."

"All yuh reading about is Revue get [$]85 million, two days before that, they say that Chutney get [$]280 Million, nobody ent talking about that."

"Ah think dat is more than wat we get ent?" [**demonstration of getting the audience to think critically about this situation**]

[**He then neutralises the situation with these words**] "Ahhhh but doh bother with that, every brook have to get a little water ………do bother with that."

"Ah want to do something here, **ah breaking it down slow so that all yuh could understand what a saying because if ah do it fast the thing does go over alyuh head, and al yuh doesn't understand, but this is reality, this one ent name face reality enh, not me!"** [**demonstration of Aloes' direct communication with the cognitive ability of the audience**].

"Dis one is called '**My Observation'** and **ah go bring back some things for all yuh to remember to**" [**example of Aloes engaging the audience in the important process of re-cognition or recognition**] "Le'we go"

Lyrics of My Observation By Sugar Aloes

I made ah serious observation, couple years ago
And my findings really disturb me, I want yuh to know
Every time we hold a criminal in high society
By the time the matter reach the courts
They get away Scott-free
Whether it's a priest, a lawyer, or a politician
It seems like the wheels of justice greased with corruption
I find we should check out the system, cause *listen my friend*
It looks like the UNC no more law than the PNM

Cause Gopeesingh, get away Scott-free
And Bill Chaitan, they never charge he
If a **poor black man** did commit that crime and boast
All now so he in jail getting he ass roast
But Gypsy, get away Scott-free
Galbaransingh, he free already
Once the UNC put their lawyers on the trail
None ah dem doesn' make no jail

Verse 4
See if all yuh remember this one (Aloes spoken words to the audience)
Police found some coke and a missile, in a water tank
Town say that they must charge the fella, I'm telling you frank
With that kind of evidence in hand, so the critics say
As a big UNC minister, he can't get away
I was even hearing talks you may not believe me
People say he control the two gangs in Lavantille
PNM supports plan that day, Panday start to ball
Investigation was stopped,
As yuh know the man wasn't charged at all.

Lewis Gomez, get away Scott free
And Sadq Baskh, they never charge he
If the police did find all that Coke by Cro Cro
The midget would be making jail until he grow
But Richardson, get away Scott-free
Brian Kuei Tung, he free already
Once they have Carl Hudson-Philip jamming the tail
None ah dem doesn't make a jail

In the Calypso above Aloes uses appropriate language that challenges the audience to identify the ridiculousness of our legal system. He draws on their memory of key events that illustrate the state of the legal processes in the country. He aids them to recognise the disparity in how the wealthy and powerful are regarded and how the "poor black man" is treated. The request is to "Check out the system" because we need to listen, to heed the signals of the demise both of and within the society.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have examined the language of Calypsos that offer commentary on the social, political and economic issues within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. In doing so I have shown how the interaction between stage drama and social drama enables audiences to create understanding, derive meaning, and construct their knowledge of the prevailing situations within the country. The paper goes on to suggest that by so doing, 'Trinbagonians' are then able to interpret these lived experiences in a way that subsequently permits them in turn, to affect their socio-economic and/or political behaviour in a way that embraces and hence enables processes of healing/transformation.

The paper discusses the tools, skills, and processes used by calypsonians, in order to achieve such an outcome and shown how this approach ultimately leads to establishing the paradigm of healing to which such a process subscribes. In addressing these areas this paper inevitably embraced some of the arguments regarding the rhetoric of performance communication, through the medium of the calypso, facilitated by calypsonians as they engage in reframing. It then offers an insight into the tools, skills, and processes used by the calypsonians who offer commentary in this way. It is through this process that these calypsos function as a medium that support development of social cognition, through generating social interactions that allow individuals to be aware of their situations, and through such heightened awareness, create opportunities for them to engage in their process of healing.

Through this process calypsonians can be recognized as a liminal-servant who, using a narrative that encompasses artistic form, engage a non-formal approach to transforming conflict.

I have argued that the activities of the political calypsonian can be seen to be falling centrally into the domain of what is known as "political theatre," with these calypsonians enabling their audiences to 'Engage Healing' through their non-formal approach to transforming conflict.

In the final analysis, the efforts of the political calypsonians can be seen as a non-formal approach to engaging healing within communities, while simultaneously leaving their audiences to decide whether action needs to be taken, and if so, what the nature of that action may be. This process is ably demonstrated by the train of events that surround the 1990 coup and other political perturbations as have taken place within The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as discussed within the paper.

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