



In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia

IGDS, Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Special publication commemorating International Women's Day

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Editor's Note

This is a special publication by the Institute of Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit to honour Kathleen Bibiana Drayton, one of the stalwarts of the Women's movement in academia in the Caribbean.

Since 1992 an intensive summer course in Gender and Development has been offered by the Cave Hill Campus which brings together individuals from academia, NGOs, and other interested persons to expose them to an analysis of development from a gender perspective. As part of one of the activities during the summer course, a Caribbean woman who has contributed with her academic, political, and activist work to improving the life of Caribbean women is honoured. Honorees include Dr. Lucille Marthurin Mair, Dr. Peggy Antrobus, Dr. Joycelyn Massiah, Mrs. Mazie Barker-Welch, Mrs. Hermione McKenzie, and Mrs. Kathleen Drayton.

On July 3, 2009 as the honouree of the 8th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development, Kathleen in the opening ceremony delivered a speech that took the listener on a journey through not only her life but also to the socio-economic and racial realities of Caribbean people, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, during the Crown Colony period of the British colonial rule. She captured the interest of those who were listening, and motivated the younger audience to become interested in the realities of the women of her time.

Sadly, Kathleen died two days later. To mark her sterling contribution to the women's movement in the Caribbean, the Institute considers it fitting to make available this special publication on International Women's Day. The issues of women's concerns and her broader call for justice have characterised much of her academic and personal life.

In this publication the reader will enjoy both the remarks given by Professor Eudine Barriteau, Deputy Principal and former Head of IGDS: NBU, at the ceremony as well as Kathleen's final public address as delivered that night. In addition, the publication includes forewords by one of her close friends, Professor Christine Barrow, and from her surrogate son Mr. Carlyle Best.

Foreword

Christine Barrow

It is a pleasure and privilege to write this Foreword and to support the thoughtful initiative by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit at the Cave Hill Campus to keep our memories of Kathleen alive in a very special way; that is by publishing her *"Lessons from My Life"*. Kathleen's presentation, reproduced here in her own words, gives us an intimate insight into the experiences and guiding principles of her life in a way no academic publication or official eulogy could ever do.

Kathleen chose to share her life as activist, teacher and scholar. Her social and feminist consciousness took root in early childhood – as she grew up within a social network of aunts and grandmothers, midwives and washerwomen, who fought to safeguard their personal autonomy and resist economic dependence on men; and of silent, barefoot marchers, men and women, who struggled with "cutlasses and paling staves" against hunger, malnutrition and disease.

The young spirit, imbued in the 1930s with images of poverty, racism and violence, became the woman who championed for social equality, gender justice, and the human rights for all, women, and the elderly in particular. Hers is the oral history of a pan-Caribbean activist, a story told with humility, humour and a vivid recall of the defining moments in her life – her active participation in protest meetings and marches for the rights of the dispossessed; her

commitment to the reform of educational ideology and practice for girls; her pioneering role in the establishment of women's studies on Campus and her research on the lives and experiences of Caribbean women; her promotion of popular culture and theatre arts; her experiences of rustication from Mona and of confronting colonialist patriarchal penalties for women who married and bore children.

The central themes of Kathleen's lessons of life explore the tensions, contradictions and social injustices of class, race and gender in the Caribbean and beyond. She spoke with passion of the power of language in the discovery of self, in the assertion of cultural identity and in the release from "mental slavery", rather than as a hegemonic tool for stigma and social exclusion. She promoted the role of the elderly as guardians and conveyors of culture and history for generations to come. For Kathleen, social justice could never be a gift from the so-called benevolent; it was a right that had to be fought for with hard work and vigilance. For her, knowledge and action were twin pillars in the struggle for equality, justice and rights.

Personally and professionally, Kathleen touched and inspired the lives of many who feel her loss deeply. Ever the teacher, mentor and guide, Kathleen ended her final public performance by motivating her audience with her code for life. She mandated us all to "engage in constructing the new knowledge which will set us all free".

Foreword

Carlyle Best

Had not for the honour bestowed on Kathleen Drayton by the Institute Gender and Development Studies just days prior to her death, many would not have

been aware of her contribution to the growth and development of the Institute. However, to the more informed the nexus would not have been an accident. For there were some things about which Kathleen was deeply passionate. The role and the treatment of women was one such passion. And it may have been her desire to ensure that women receive their just rewards that would have led her in this direction. In fact, a scrutiny of her close friends, or those persons who were frequent visitors to her home, would reveal that they were women who shared and discussed like concerns.

Indeed, long before there was such a Department on Campus to which Kathleen would have given such energy, she was a firm defender and advocate of the rights of women, and domestic violence in any form would never be tolerated. One day Kathleen arrived home with a passenger in the car. The lady was emotional, relying on the comfort and counsel offered by Kathleen. I later learnt that Kathleen had passed this lady – a stranger on the streets, observed she was in distress, and stopped to offer some assistance. The lady was raped by her spouse and was walking away from her home. The proclivity to assist those in need was a constant feature of Kathleen's life.

Her frequent utterances often confirmed the kind of person she was. For instance, one recalls that as she gave her daughter, Alison's hand in marriage, Kathleen began her speech by alluding to some negatives on the subject of marriage, concluding however, that she was still prepared to offer her daughter 's hand in marriage. Again, this writer was preparing a book review in which she had expressed some interest and requested that I discuss the work with her for she contended that any writer worthy of his reputation dare not write without seriously considering the contribution of women. I disagreed and spurned her offer. This was in the early 1990s. She simply breathed and lived for the equality of women, yet she was by no women's liber. Her passion was for the recognition of women as equal partners - persons who owned a soul and voice, and to this she dedicated much of her research and writing.

This publication will surely assist the reader in understanding why Kathleen saw things the way she did, and worked so untiringly to aid her in the battle for equality.

A Call to Freedom and Justice

Honouring Kathleen Bibiana Drayton

8th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development Studies, July 3, 2009

Violet Eudine Barriteau

Are you going to be in a place called fear? Or in a place called love? Where are you? And where are you coming from as you encounter life? For you were called to freedom.

Galatians 5. Vs. 13.

I encountered these two readings this morning in my daily meditations and I thought how apt, how appropriate, how just, because I knew that this evening I would deliver a tribute as part of the Nita Barrow Unit ongoing commitment to honour outstanding Caribbean women whose work has been transformative and visionary in creating a programme of women and Gender studies at the University of the West Indies.

Very early in her life, Kathleen Bibiana Drayton decided that she was called to freedom and as you will see, throughout her personal and professional life she answered the call. In answering the call to freedom, a call available to all of us, Kathleen made certain choices, again choices available to all of us. Very early in her life, Kathleen also decided she is dwelling in a place called love. Kathleen decided that she had no time, no space in her head nor in her life to reside in a dwelling place called fear. The powerful combination of answering a call to

freedom, and ignoring a place called fear, gives us a woman who has been, and who continues to be a force in the academy and within the wider society through a love of service, and a deep commitment to issues of equality and justice. I will present you with just a profile of Kathleen Drayton since to explore her considerable contributions we will need a separate event.

Kathleen Drayton's *curriculum vitae* reveals a Caribbean woman who is a distinguished educational scholar and practitioner with a seasoned track record in teacher education and gender issues in education. Kathleen is an activist, a lobbyist versed in pressure group politics. Kathleen is unafraid to take on the establishment, whether the Establishment happens to be archaic regulations of the University of the West Indies, or government administrations initially unaware of the significant influential power of organised retired persons. Along with the scholar-activist role, Kathleen is an intellectual worker who deploys her analytical and organizational resources and skills to improve services, processes and lives wherever she is involved. Kathleen is a Caribbean woman deeply invested in promoting and nurturing Caribbean culture, specifically theatre arts. Kathleen is a visionary, and as part of a dedicated, organised, formidable group of University women laid the foundation for the emergence of Centre for Gender and Development studies.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Kathleen Drayton is a Caribbean citizen who has lived and worked in so many Caribbean countries, as well as Ghana and Scotland. In 1963, she accompanied her husband to British Guiana to assist with the setting up of the University of Guyana, which was launched in the same year. While there Kathleen lectured first in English and English Methods at the Government Training College. This was followed by periods of lecturing in English and Education at the University of Guyana. This start of academic work in 1963 began a long and distinctive career in tertiary education which culminated in the 1990s. Throughout Kathleen occupied a place called love, love of service, love of high standards, love of plain speaking, but more importantly, love of justice.

Fortuitously, Kathleen came to Cave Hill in 1973 and became a pioneer in the Faculty of Education. She helped to establish the Diploma in Education programmes and functioned in several senior administrative capacities in the Faculty including several periods as Acting Dean. However while at the Cave Hill Campus it is Kathleen's involvement in establishing a programme of Women and Development Studies (WDS) at The University of the West Indies that I want you to reflect on. She worked as part of a team that included Joycelin Massiah, Peggy Antrobus, and Christine Barrow and several others at Cave Hill. Collectively they designed, lobbied and strategised to create what would eventually become the Centre and now, Institute for Gender and Development Studies.

The Women's Studies Programme was preceded by the Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP). This is the first regional research project to centre research on Caribbean women and it ran from 1979 to 1982 under the leadership of Joycelin Massiah. Kathleen Drayton was a critical member of the project and one of its influential researchers. She wrote the Introduction to the volume on Women and Education, Volume 5 of phase one of the publication series. However Kathleen's academic output spans conference papers, journal articles, expert reports, and consultancies to governments and international institutions, and chapters in books.

A sampling reveals *A Review of the Major Issues in Education and of Relevant Caribbean Studies*" prepared at the request of Ministers of Education of OECS countries; *Caribbean Women in 1990: Background Paper to the First European Women's Conference* in Berlin; *The Role of English Speaking Caribbean Women in Politics*; *Racism in Barbados*; *Culture and its Impact on Development*; *Bajan Men*; *Themes in the Poetry of Bruce St. John*, and three of my favourites, *A West Indian Feminist Consciousness*. a chapter in the Centre's book on Ruth Nita Barrow edited by Eudine Barriteau and Alan Coble; *White Man's Knowledge: Sex, Race and Class in Caribbean English Language Textbooks*; another chapter in a book edited by Elsa Leo Rhynie and Alan Coble, and the *Making of the*

Colonial Mind: An Analysis of textbooks used in Barbadian Elementary Schools 1838 - 1960. Answering the call to freedom, ignoring a dwelling place called fear.

Finally I want to give you a sense of Kathleen's work in the establishment of the Women and Development studies Group at the University of the West Indies. Following the successful conclusion of the WICP project, efforts began in earnest to create an academic programme of women studies. Kathleen is a co-founder of the WDS groups across the three campuses. She served on the Regional Steering Committee and was the first coordinator of the WDS at Cave Hill serving in that capacity 1983 to 1992 and in fact started the teaching and research programme administered by the Group.

As Coordinator, Kathleen introduced many unique initiatives. She collaborated with Stage One theatre Group to produce the drama, *Lights, a Sex and Gender Seminar* at a time when gender was not on the agenda. When Dame Nita Barrow was appointed as the only woman on the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa, Kathleen organised an evening of tributes to honour Dame Nita's selection, dwelling in a place called love. With Women and Development (WAND), Kathleen co-hosted the lecture and discussion in the Steel Shed by prominent African American scholar and activist, Angela Davis. Answering the call to freedom.

As a member of the Regional Steering Committee that maintained oversight of the formal introduction of a programme of Women Studies, Kathleen was one of the team that lobbied for the institutionalisation and creation of the appropriate academic, administrative and support staffing and structure for the programme. Kathleen was also an integral member of the Regional Steering Committee that negotiated the change of name to the Centre for Gender and Development Studies.

I want to share with you some highlights of Kathleen's contributions as sent to me by Professor Joycelin Massiah. She states Kathleen:

1. Upheld the political character of Women\Gender Studies
2. Stressed the importance of integrating research teaching and action leading to policy changes
3. Emphasised the critical value of networking within and outside of academia
4. Always valued and practised collaborative ways of working
5. Insisted on maintaining vigilance, hard work, and constant struggle to preserve gains
6. Believed that the highest quality of leadership had to be maintained at the Campus and regional level

Ladies and gentlemen, to all I have said Mrs Kathleen Drayton is one of nine co-founders of the Barbados Association of Retired Persons in 1995. Today the Association has over 21,000 financial members, and Kathleen is currently its president. I argue it is the most powerful NGO in Barbados, BARP ensures its members enjoy a wide variety of services and benefits.

Always answering a call to freedom, always ignoring a dwelling place called Fear.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to ask you to join me in saluting Mrs Kathleen Bibiana Drayton.

Thank you

Eudine Barriteau

Kathleen's Speech

3 July 2009

Lessons from my life

I left academe for different shores about 15 years ago so I am not going to attempt to give you a scholarly address. Fifteen years ago I found myself learning about ageing both practically and theoretically! One of the things I have learned is that it is important for older people, who are the guardians of the culture and of the society's past, to pass on to younger generations their experiences and knowledge. I agree with the Prime Minister who said much the same thing during his press conference in Guyana last Wednesday. Knowledge of the past is essential for an understanding of the present and for the building of the future. Thus I embark, in your company, on what may be regarded as one woman's self-indulgent journey into the past.

I was born at the end of 1930 in the British crown colony of Trinidad, in Belmont, a suburb of Port-of-Spain. In the hills of Belmont the Shango drums used to be played almost every night. In those days babies were delivered by midwives in the homes of the mothers. I was delivered by the same midwife who had delivered my father some 24 years before and who delivered all my sisters, my brother and several cousins!

I was among the privileged because my mother had a home in which to give birth to her babies! At this time it was not uncommon for women, who did not have homes, to deliver their babies, unaided, on pavements or outside somewhere, although there are records of kind women in nearby houses, taking women in to their homes for the birth. (St. Michael Vestry Reports)

A few houses down on the other side of the road from my home lived Miss Gilkes, the washerwoman. Miss Gilkes told me she had come from Barbados.

She laundered clothes and household items for which people paid by the piece. A shirt was one piece. A sheet was two pieces. On day one the sheet and clothes were washed and put out on the stone to bleach for two days, then they were rinsed and starched and hung out to dry. On ironing day they were sprinkled, ironed and folded. Four days work was required to launder sheets and clothes. The price of washing, bleaching, starching and ironing one piece was four or five cents. For laundering 10 sheets you could earn one dollar. I was only four or five years old but I could see a difference between the way Miss Gilkes' lived and the way my family and my friends lived. I learned that Miss Gilkes had come from a different country and was poor!

Poverty and Protest

I was born into and grew up in a colonial society at a time of a world depression. I saw at first hand, the poverty, racism and terror of a British colonial society. Two important documents attesting to the grinding poverty in our societies were the 1882 Report of the Royal Commission and the West India Commission Report (the Moyne Report) of 1939/1945.

My most enduring early childhood memory is of the 1937 Riots in Trinidad. Hearing a noise one day, I rushed with two cousins, with whom I was spending the day, to the corner of Industry Lane and Belmont Circular Road. The noise we had heard was the sound of the "slapping down" of bare feet on the road. Hundreds of barefooted men and women were marching in silence, literally the only sound they made was when their feet hit the road. They were holding in their hands cutlasses and paling staves they had pulled out of fences.

Later in the day when I went home, my parents explained that many people were so poor that they had nothing to eat and that they could not afford to buy shoes and that they were protesting about this. They said that what I had seen

was a “hunger march.” They told me about the riots and protests which had erupted all over Trinidad.

They explained the causes of the riots in the oilfields in Fyzabad (South Trinidad) and about the white South African Managers that Trinidad Leaseholds had brought in to manage the oilfield workers. I heard about the Grenadian, Tubal Uriah “Buzz” Butler (a great supporter of the British Empire) who was organising workers in the South. We heard too about the burning to death in Fyzabad of Charlie King, an unpopular policeman, for which women were later charged and tried (Reddock 1994). Rhoda Reddock has done important work in showing the huge involvement of women in political action and in the 1937 riots in Trinidad. I have not seen comparable work for any other West Indian territory.

Following the 1937 Riots the West India Royal Commission (The Moyne Commission) reported that the economic outlook of the West India colonies was “depressing” (p. 27) and noted that “the poorer quarters of towns, Kingston, Port of Spain and Bridgetown show all the obvious consequences of hunger, disease, ignorance and crime.” (p.34)

I recently read *On the Pastures of Belvedere*, a fascinating biography of L. C. Didier of Dominica by his son, Clayton Didier. This book tells the story of the writer’s brother nearly dying of a broken foot because there was no way to transport him from his country home to a place where medical treatment was available. There was no road and the sea was too rough for any boat to embark.

Poverty meant hunger and severe malnutrition (witness kwashiokor in Jamaica), and slum housing with rickety and insanitary pit latrines. It meant no education, poor or no roads and little health care. Poverty also meant the unavailability of a pure water supply and therefore many disease epidemics, for example, cholera. As late as 1991, I was part of a group evaluating the Caribbean

Development Bank's (CDB) Basic Needs Trust Fund Project in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. In all these islands with the exception of St. Kitts, I saw terrible pockets of poverty and in the countryside a majority of houses with pit latrines which dripped sewage down hillsides for dogs, pigs and chickens to eat.

We take clean running water for granted either in homes or from the standpipe in some places. I have already mentioned the phenomenon of poor women giving birth to babies by the roadside. Infant mortality rates were naturally high in the region ranging from 117 to 217 per thousand. (Moyne p.135, 137) Maternal mortality rates in the West Indies were among the highest in the British Empire. (Moyne Report)

This poverty was the rationale for West Indian migration to Panama and among the WI Islands from the end of the 18th century until the 1940s; and in the 1950s to England and the USA, and, at this time, for Guyanese to Barbados! I remember vividly the migration of the 1950s. I saw people leaving for England with their "grips" in their hands and dressed in their best clothing with no warm garments and very little money! The migrants have been immortalised in the novels of Sam Selvon and George Lamming. Migrants colonised England changing the English way of life in many ways!

From very young I had been witness to the kind of action workers had to take for the right to living wages, for protection from unfair dismissal and so on. Later in Jamaica and in Britain this understanding was crystallized, so to speak, when I took part in many protest meetings and marches first in Jamaica, still a colony, against the British and American cold war policies which banned people from entering Jamaica, banned publications and interfered with the employment of individuals; then in Britain against the British invasion of Suez (a demonstration where I ran into my beloved teacher, Elsa Goveia), against the French invasion of Algeria; the 1953 suspension of the constitution in Guyana and against the

Russian invasion of Hungary. Relative to this latter, under the banner of *The Edinburgh Branch of the Movement for Colonial Freedom* I organised a massive meeting in Edinburgh where I was living at the time. It had the support of all the major trade unions which Mrs. Thatcher later did her best to destroy, the Miners' Union, the Electrical Workers' Union. Edinburgh University Students came and so did members of all the political parties except, of course, for the Communist Party!

From the struggles of colonial peoples for independence and self government; of workers for decent wages and living conditions; of black people for the same rights as white people and of women for equality, I learned that social justice had to be fought for and was not the gift of kind and generous people.

The quality of life and the rights we enjoy today were created by the hard work and struggle of our predecessors. A lesson I learned, which I want to pass on to you is that if you want something you must be prepared to work hard and to struggle for what you want. Struggle takes different forms. It is not always done with a picket in hand.

What was woman's place in this society I have described?

Women's Place

Women lived in a male-dominated power structure which was unchallenged, even by women. Attitudes to women and beliefs about what women could and could not do shaped our lives. Women could not vote or sit in our legislatures, they were brought up to believe that one of their main roles in life was to please men. This was taught in many ways as these simple examples from my life will illustrate. My grandmother who attended St. Joseph's Convent in Trinidad was taught along with the classics, mathematic, languages, poetry and sewing,

about wines in her last year at school. It was explained to her that she needed to know about wine so that she could entertain for her husband. I attended Bishop's Anstey High School (BAHS) where the first compulsory game we were required to learn to play was cricket. I later asked the Headmistress why cricket and not hockey and netball and she (who was unmarried) replied that we needed to be able to talk intelligently to our husbands who would all be interested in cricket!

The official purpose for educating girls, stated in many education reports, up to the 1950s was to make them "good wives and mothers!" Sex education was not however part of the equation! Training in household skills, and the "Duties of a Good Woman" were what was taught! All girls and women were socialised to accept a secondary "woman's" place to men. More serious was the legal right of husbands to own any property owned by their wives before marriage. This oppressive construction of "Women's Place" ignored reality. As I pointed out earlier, women were involved in political activities.

A "Division of Labour" prescribed women's work and men's work. Women were not supposed to be strong enough to do men's work yet working class women worked as labourers on the plantations and women stonebreakers were a common sight, women in the hot sun breaking rocks for roads. These have been immortalised in the Jamaican, George Campbell's famous poem, "Women stone breakers, hammers and rocks// tired child makers, pregnant frocks." Women also had the unpaid responsibility for household and children. Some women, paid pittances, worked as shop assistants. Unmarried middle class women could go into teaching for smaller salaries than men and had to resign their jobs as soon as they got pregnant. This was an imported British "rule" which I learned in Edinburgh when I was told that my resignation from my teaching post would become effective on the date and time of the birth of my first child. Middle class men felt disgraced if their wives went out to work even when the family needed the second income! Men worked outside and earned wages or

salaries and had the freedom to do whatever they chose. The village ram was acceptable but the “immoral” slut was a disgrace!

Education

Limited access to education was another social restriction on women. Primary schools had been set up to provide religious education for the poor. Initially, fees of one penny, two cents, a week were charged for each child which many parents could not afford. In the beginning the curriculum and teachers were big problems. An 1853, Report on British Guiana states of UK as well as local teachers, “ The schoolmaster in this colony is too frequently a man who has resorted to this mode of gaining a living when other ones have failed. “The school is the dernier-resort, the refuge for the destitute.”

Girls however filled primary schools.

There was minimal provision for Girls’ secondary education. In 1937, the year before I entered BAHS, Reddock reports that there was a total of 922 girls enrolled in secondary education in all of Trinidad and Tobago (p.52). I remember when the first science laboratory was set up in Bishop’s Anstey High School. It was equipped with the Bunsen burners and the beakers thrown out by the boys’ school, QRC, whose laboratories were being re-equipped. Our parents sacrificed to pay school fees for us. If the fees were not paid you could not go to school.

So far I have been talking about the material deprivations suffered by people in a colonial society. Now I want to address something more serious, the deliberate use of church and school to shape our minds and our psyches, our ideology, with the aim of making us loyal and respectful subjects of the mother country, her language, her customs and values and even her ideals of beauty.

An influential 1847 Circular Despatch from the Colonial Office to all the colonies set the following guidelines for colonial primary education:

“Diffuse a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilisation for the coloured population of the colonies.”

“Lesson books of the colonial schools should also teach the mutual interests of the mother-country and her dependencies; the rational basis of their connection and the social duties of the coloured races.”

“These lesson books should also set forth the relations of wages and capital, labour...”

From the nineteenth century until the 1950s, the same text books were used in all the British colonies — West Indies, Hong Kong, India, Africa, Canada and so on — a most powerful form of brain washing. In another life, when I was still an academic I decided to analyse the textbooks used in our schools to identify the gender messages they contained. What I found was that gender attitudes and beliefs were being transmitted as part of a complex system of knowledge which shaped everything we believed and which in turn shaped our behaviours. The first paper, *“The Making of the Colonial Mind: An Analysis of Textbooks used in Barbadian Elementary Schools, 1838- 1960”* examined all the primary school text books. The second paper which examined English Language textbooks used at secondary level, I entitled *“White Man’s Knowledge”*. The concluding sentence reads, “The colour of the knowledge of the textbooks is white and their sex bias is male.”

The entire system and structure of knowledge transmitted to us is European knowledge – events, beliefs, interpreted from a European point of view. I will

illustrate this in a simple way with a recent experience. I was listening to the radio about two weeks ago when I heard the DJ ask a most ignorant question and he was offering a prize for the answer. The question was, "Who discovered America?" The correct answer according to the young man, later, was "Columbus." I was very disturbed because every West Indian should know that Columbus did not discover America.

Shadow (Winston Bailey) deals with the myth of Columbus "discovering America" in *Columbus Lie*. In this calypso he attacks the European view of the world which holds that Columbus discovered America. Shadow asks how Columbus could discover a country that had already been discovered and populated and he makes fun of Columbus "having to run from Apaches". He looks at how today every country protects itself with visas, passports and the like. He points out the consequences of Columbus' entry to the new world with most powerful imagery.

"His authority was a cork hat and his passport was violence". We recognise the *cork hat* as the symbol, of the overseer on the plantation or sugar estate. And the *passport* of violence symbolises the considerable terror and violence of the European colonial systems which followed Columbus. Columbus "discovered" America for European exploitation and terror.

What this illustrates is that we must analyse our received knowledge carefully and, secondly, that we ignore the popular culture at our peril. I have consistently recommended that teachers use calypso lyrics and folk songs in poetry classes.

Work on our native realities exists but it stays within universities. It does not reach the schools or the mass media which is the most powerful education tool in modern society.

The work that has and is being done in Women's Studies and Gender Studies is in fact a critique of the received knowledge constructed for the most part by

external scholars. You understand that material things, cell phones, computers, ipods for example are made and constructed by people. You have to get used to the idea that knowledge too is made and constructed by people. People interpret experiences in the light of information they have. The reason why Gender Studies sometimes seems complex to students is that it requires a serious questioning of many long held and often unexamined beliefs and assumptions, transmitted to us from a foreign culture what Bob Marley described as our mental slavery. This course is designed to help you release yourself from mental slavery, to teach you to look at the knowledge you already have in a critical way.

I want to read to you a short statement of the need to analyse seriously the knowledge you take for granted. It is by one of our leading Feminist scholars, Professor Eudine Barriteau:

I was dissatisfied with imported theoretical constructs that did not contain critiques of epistemologies, methodologies and practices...I argued that unless this received knowledge was deconstructed, dominating relations of gender would continue to permeate feminist research and scholarship in the Caribbean...I recognised that a distinguishing power of women's lives is an absence of power...one of the shortcomings of the existing discourses on gender in the Caribbean is our failure to confront the raw power dynamics impinging...(on) women's multiple experience of material and ideological subordination. (2003:3)

Gender/Women's Studies is one of the more revolutionary forms of new knowledge coming out of Universities.

Language is the medium in which, for the most part, knowledge is transmitted. Language was another effective and powerful colonising tool. For the most part language is used not only to construct knowledge but to transmit knowledge and it shapes perception and belief. It is the basis of human culture. The story of how the English used school and language to fight the French in Trinidad is a fascinating tale. I have already read you the Colonial Office Directive, “teach grammatical English” as “the most important means of civilisation of the coloured races.” When I was a child, Trinidad spoke French and Spanish and English and a French Patois or Creole, like what is spoken today in St. Lucia and Dominica and to some extent Grenada, and similar to what is spoken in Martinique and Guadeloupe and Haiti. Much of our vocabulary was not English. I was grown up and in the UK before I realised that a bird I knew as “a cobo” (corbeau) was in fact an English crow!

Trinidad was ceded to the British in the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, but the majority of the ruling European population were of French or Spanish extract and the main language was not English. Although she was born in Trinidad and lived almost her entire life there, my own grandmother’s first language was French and she spoke English with a French accent all her life.

The English policy in Trinidad effectively took about half a century to turn Trinidad into a so-called English Language speaking territory. The British colonial government started the Queen’s Collegiate Schools, later Queen’s Royal College (QRC) in 1859 to provide an English education on the lines of the famous English public schools. In 1863, the Cambridge local exams were introduced in the school and four scholarships to British Universities were offered to those who got first or second class honours in the exam. St. Mary’s College students were ineligible for these scholarships.

By 1870, the principals of both St. Mary’s College and the girls’ school, St. Joseph Convent decided to affiliate their schools to QRC and to introduce the “English

Education” so that their students would not be disadvantaged! Although most of the teachers in these schools spoke French, gradually teaching in English was introduced. There was great criticism in Trinidad of the English school curriculum as being irrelevant to the colony’s needs and as having no connection with primary education, but, irrelevant or not, then English education provided students with the chance of a tertiary education in one of the famous British universities.

Language is basic to our sense of self and of cultural identity. Colonial education taught that the most important language was English and those who could not use it skilfully were inferior. We still stigmatise people who cannot use grammatical English. We laugh at their green verbs, at their pronunciation of the “th” sound and at those who speak Creole alone. Colonial Language policy seriously affected the psyche of people. This is why, in my view, the most important contribution to Caribbean identity in the 20th century is the late Dr. Richard Allsopp's *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*.

Racism was part of the colonial system and social structure as it still is. When I was a child in Trinidad people with fair complexions were said to have “Nature's Passport” and the words “nigger” and “coolie” were widely used as descriptive terms and, as forms of abuse. People had good hair and bad hair or “cheveux tac tac”. I remember one lady saying, “when you pass your hand over your husband's head you don't want it to scrape your fingers!” The ideal of beauty was not black or East Indian! The people in charge who believed themselves to be superior were “white!” What was even more serious is that everybody was taught to believe that this group was superior. Colonial society taught self-contempt.

You know about slavery and its violence but do you recognise that after slavery violence continued to be used as a means of social control. Beating and flogging were parts of the judicial and the school systems. Rape was common

on the plantation both during and after slavery. A popular calypso recommended domestic violence: "Every now and then lick them down// they'll love you long and they'll love you strong."

Earlier, I mentioned that the Church, as well as schools, was used as a means of control and I have not said much about the Church. The Christian churches came with the conquerors. The Spanish historian, Las Casas, wrote about Spanish colonisers, "First they fell upon their knees and then they fell upon the Aborigines." (Commager). The Church taught that the belief systems of the indigenous peoples, and later of Africans, were inferior to Christianity. Indeed the rationale for teaching slaves to read was so that they could read the Bible. The early primary school system was controlled by the Churches. The Church instilled patriarchal beliefs. It held women to be inferior and, of course, it is only recently that some churches have allowed women to do more than fix the flowers or clean the church! The church was very much a part of the control over women's reproductive rights. Its doctrine of sin was used to keep women under control.

It taught that to bear a child out of wedlock was a sin, thereby immediately turning the majority of the West Indian population into sinners. Children called "bastards" were rejected by secondary schools. Here in Barbados both Harrison College and the Lodge School refused to admit children they called "illegitimate". At York Castle School in Jamaica the Headmaster, Mr. Kessen expelled two boys who were "illegitimate" because their mother had a third "illegitimate child. In 1877, the York Castle General Committee met and reversed the decision stating that "illegitimacy should not by itself be considered a bar to admission" to the school. Trinidad used "illegitimacy" to deny children access to secondary schools. I learned recently that the Anglican Church Mother's Union only permits membership to married mothers. The Church tried to define the family in the West Indies with no recognition of our reality. Our reality is a large number of female-headed households and visiting relationships and children in the same family with different fathers. These cruel and irrational rules which *de*

facto deemed some children to be illegal, damaged, and hurt women and children creating low self-esteem.

Reproductive Rights involves your right to control your own sexuality, to determine how many children you want and so on. The Church held that there should be no sex before marriage and if you were a Roman Catholic – no birth control! Mind you the only forms of birth control were condoms and coitus interruptus. The Roman Catholic Church permitted coitus interruptus, which is unreliable, but not condoms! Abortion was not mentioned except as a form of scandalous and illegal behaviour! Abortion remains to this day illegal in Jamaica.

Let me give you an example of the iniquitous way in which this control of reproductive rights worked. When I was a student at Mona, way back in the 1950s, I spent a night off campus with my boyfriend, another student. It was discovered. My boyfriend was sent down or expelled and told he was corrupting me! (Here you see then perception that women were subordinate, hence the man is responsible for the woman's behaviour!) I was rusticated. In those days it was a requirement that all students live on campus. Rustication meant that you were sent down temporarily from university. I was sent to live off campus in a working girls' hostel run by nuns and locked up in a room. Nuns escorted me to and from my room for ablutions and meals. I was literally a prisoner! Fortunately, I became friends with the other girls and when they came home in the evenings they would "steal" the key and let me out when I would climb through the hedge to meet friends!

Can you imagine that for spending a night off campus without permission, a 19 years old woman was virtually imprisoned by a university administration and a 20 year old man's career was virtually brought to an end? The whole saga was covered by newspapers in Jamaica and Trinidad. It later became a joke in my family as my young brother and sisters described to me how every morning

large parts of the newspapers were inked out by our parents before the rest of the family was allowed to see them.

It was also against UCWI rules to get married. I applied for permission to marry and it was refused, I was told by the Principal Dr. Taylor (Dr. T) that if I proceeded to marry, my Trinidad scholarship would be taken away. This turned out to be a lie, which I only discovered later. One of my uncles was very high up in the colonial secretary's office in Trinidad and he later showed me correspondence between Dr. T and the Trinidad government. I am happy to report that the T&T government supported my right to marry and wrote Dr. T. to say that I had won a competitive scholarship and it could not be taken away from me for the reasons he had stated.

I want you to understand that the Principal genuinely believed he had the right to use his power to try to control me "for my own good!" This is actually an example of patriarchy in action.

I was fortunate to learn a great deal about women's lives from my elders – my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother, my aunts and great aunts. They talked to their daughters and granddaughters about their lives. My mother and one aunt were married but the others, when I knew them, were widows or single women. They had all been influenced by ideas from the 1920s women's movement. They were all very poor, as I subsequently learned, but they were extremely independent and all these elder women in my life not only continuously preached but lived the doctrine of independence – the need for women to be financially independent of men and the need for women to stand up for themselves. These lessons have remained with me to this day. My grandmother, well into her 80s, earned her living sewing shirts, pyjamas and mosquito nets for the "stores" for a pittance. There were no garment factories at that time.

When we started talking about Women's Studies in this University, we did not have a lot of theory but we had a lot of experience of male power and of social injustice which we could analyse. We lived and understood male power and women's unequal status. We knew that women had done and were doing a great deal, although according to the books, men had done it all! History books still ignore women's roles in the development of their societies. The knowledge transmitted is that men did it all!

I have tried to give you a picture of a poor society with little technology; of a world which, according to popular belief, had been created by men in which men exercised power in society and power over women. I have tried to show how our ways of thinking, of looking at our reality and beliefs were shaped to make us accept a status quo which enshrined injustice, and the necessity therefore to examine and challenge the beliefs which guide behaviour. I have also recommended that you recognise and respect what is good in our popular culture.

Above all I am concerned that you engage in constructing the new knowledge which will set us all free.

Thank you.

KD

Kathleen Drayton in Photographs

8th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development, 2009
Mrs. Kathleen Drayton, Honouree



Mrs. Kathleen Drayton before the opening ceremony, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, July 2009.

Violet Eudine Barriteau: In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia



Kathleen, Ms Marva Alleyne and Mrs Maizie Barker-Welch



Ms. Joan Cuffie, Ms Carmen Hutchinson Miller, Prof Eudine Barriteau, Mrs. Mara Thompson and Kathleen Drayton



At the beginning of the evenings proceedings, standing for the Barbados national anthem.



At the head table. Prof. Eudine Barribeau, Ms. Joan Cuffie, Kathleen , Ayana Young Marshall (Cave Hill lecturer)and Dwayne Lovell

Violet Eudine Barriteau: In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia



Delivering her public address.



Receiving a gift as Honouree, from Ms Dianne Cummins

7th Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development, 2007

IGDS Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Dr. Peggy Antrobus, Kathleen Drayton and Mrs Hermione McKenzie, Honoree of 7th Institute, 2007



Part of the audience at the opening ceremony of the Institute, 2007

Violet Eudine Barriteau: In Honour of Kathleen Bibiana Drayton: One of the Caribbean's Foremothers of the Women's Movement in Academia



Ms. Verna St Rose, Prof. Eudine Barriteau, Kathleen Drayton, Ms. Margaret Gill, Mrs. Hermione Mc Kenzie, and Dr. Peggy Antrobus

Renaming of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Cave Hill Unit, to the Nita Barrow Unit, 2006

The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, November 2006



Kathleen Drayton in foreground.

Opening of the Nita Barrow Collection
Main Library, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, November 2006



Dr. Joycelyn Massiah, Mrs. Jeniepher Carnegie, Prof. Eudine Barrieteau, Mrs. Kathleen Drayton, Prof Alan Coble and Sir Hilary Beckles

GEND 1103, Theoretical Concepts and Sources of Knowledge, November 2006



Kathleen Drayton, Guest Lecturer
IGDS Nita Barrow Unit, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Summer Institute, 2005



Curriculum review committee, 2005: Mrs Kathleen Drayton, Ms Undene Wittaker , Prof Eudine Barriteau, and Mrs Deborah Deane



Phase three Summer Institute, 2005, Ms Keturah Babb, Mrs Paulette Broomes, and Mrs. Kathleen Drayton

Summer Institute, 2003



Curriculum review committee, 2003: Ms Dianne Cummins, Mrs. Kathleen Drayton and Mrs. Paulette Broomes



Some of the tutors for Summer Institute, 2003