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A PHILOSOPHY OF SURVIVAL: ANANCYISM IN JAMAICAN PANTOMIME

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Abstract

The figure of Anancy/Anansi has featured prominently in the Little Theatre Movement of Jamaica's National Pantomime. The Jamaican audience sees him as a hero, a lovable rascal, even though he is also greedy, selfish and cunning.

Anancyism is a guide to surviving adversity. It is a pattern of behaviour which involves being able to find the loophole in every situation so that the apparently disempowered individual manages to come out on top. It is also a philosophy of resilience which encourages the individual to meet hardship with humour thereby avoiding bitterness.

This paper, the fourth in a series on the National Pantomime of Jamaica, seeks to analyse the intricacies of Anancyism as it exists in the wider society and the way in which this phenomenon is explored on the Pantomime stage before a family audience.

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*On December 26, 2000 at 6pm, on the dot, the voice of Barbara Gloudon¹ welcomed the audience at the Ward Theatre in downtown Kingston to the opening night of **Jack and the Macca Tree** - the Little Theatre Movement (LTM) of Jamaica's 60th Anniversary Pantomime. The house stood up and sang the first verse of the National Anthem, "Eternal Father, bless our land . . ."*

Then the musicians took over, at 6:03, with drums introducing the overture, alone at first but, in time, joined by shakers with the trumpet and piano eventually talking to each other above the beat in a call and answer sequence. The songs in this production would include "Under the Coconut Tree", "Balanceo", "Evening Time", "Man Piyaba", "Carry mi

Ackee" and other familiar folk and popular melodies along with tunes and lyrics written specifically for this production.

The curtain came up to "Balanceo", a market day song. The set was lovely - a beautifully painted backdrop, and props on stage which complemented the country market event about to take place. The audience clapped the empty stage and then continued clapping to the rhythm of the music. With just enough of a pause for the patrons to register their response, singers and dancers with baskets on their heads flowed on to the stage in vibrantly coloured costumes. The whole scene was bright, happy, and dynamic... but the market-people were troubled.

Their lives were lived helplessly in shadow of the Giant - "Mi afraid of him so till," one of the vendors explained - and the imminent arrival of the Giant's Wife who "soon ... come a market" had everybody agitated. Miss Daisy, an older woman dressed in bandana and calico, who was a herb healer and one of the local leaders, shared the trepidation of the others.

[At this point I was mildly distracted by an intervening sound which I soon realised was the clanking of hinged seats in 'the gods' - the cheapest seats in the house - as the first batch of late-comers caused others to stand in order to let them squeeze along various rows to their numbered places.]

In Jamaica, the National Pantomime always starts on time, but that doesn't mean that the audience, in its entirety, always manages to arrive on time.

Introduction

The first Pantomime, **Jack and the Beanstalk** opened on Boxing Day in 1941 as the start of a fund-raising venture which was aiming to build a theatre, "an experimental theatre, which would service the Ward."² This new theatre would try, in the first place, to bring contemporary trends from British and American stages³ to the middle class audience of pre-Independence Jamaica while, at the same time, providing creative space for the cultural expression of the emerging New Jamaica.

At various times the LTM Pantomime tried to change course "to reflect the realities of its own Jamaica"⁴ in various carefully calculated ways. Some worked and some didn't but theatrical mistakes tend to be expensive. The 'African' experiment which used a Maroon legend as the basis of the script for **Soliday and the Wicked Bird** in 1943, was a box office failure. But, when Anancy was introduced in the ninth Pantomime, he was an immediate hit with the 1949 theatre-going public which would still have been predominantly middle-class. As a policy, however, the LTM strove for greater identification with the ordinary people of Kingston in its annual Christmas show and this was enhanced by the Pantomime's ability to present "characters of a typically Jamaican dimension,"⁵ which meant that the changing audience⁶ at the Ward Theatre - the full cross-section of Jamaican society - could be assured of a most enjoyable evening of entertainment.

From **Bluebeard and Brer Anancy** (1949) to **Anansi Web** (1998), the figure of Anancy/Anansi has featured prominently in the National Pantomime. Anancy has played a titular

role in 11 productions, and has appeared by name in two others⁷. There were two Anancy Cycles, the first started with **Anancy and the Magic Mirror**⁸ in 1954-1957 and the second, with **Anancy and Pandora** in 1967-1970⁹.

Between **Tantaloo** (1982) and **Anansi Come Back** (1993) Anancy disappeared from Pantomime in name, but his presence never left the stage as his persona found expression year after year in the role of the trickster/the 'ginnal' who shape-shifted with the changing times through the role of pirate, conman, politician, obeahman, record producer, businessman, hustler and don.

This paper, the fourth in a series on the National Pantomime of Jamaica, seeks to analyse the intricacies of Anancyism¹⁰ as it exists in the wider society and the way in which this phenomenon is explored on the Pantomime stage before a family audience.

The long-established Anancy Story¹¹ is, partly spoken and partly sung. Derek Walcott explains how, in the Caribbean context, even the familiar format of the traditional story becomes an intrinsic part of the creative process because,

In a society that does not have a tradition every creation is new. Every creation is itself revolutionary, since it begins the tradition. What is also important is that the idea of story-telling, in the third world, has kept its original vitality. In other words, fiction has always existed for the purpose of telling a story. One, two, three; A, B, C, which comes out of an oral tradition that still exists in the Caribbean, of saying, *Once upon a time*.¹²

As Walcott points out, the West Indian or third world dramatist, novelist or painter does not need to look to inventions in form in order to be sophisticated or relevant, the earnest utterance of a West Indian perception of the West Indian reality is, in itself, a creatively empowering exercise, indicative of the act of naming.

This paper is trying to show that "the how of what is being said becomes itself a significant part of the statement"¹³ and so the text is organised in an attempt to mimic the structure of a traditional Anancy Story which develops in three main parts.

Simply put, they are:

- I. *Introducing Anancy*: establishing the framework of character and context.
- II. *Mapping the strategy (Anancyism)*: describing the philosophy that he uses to resolve the complications in his life.
- III. *Unravelling the consequences*: exploring the outcome, the moral, the question of responsibility.

Anancyism is a guide to surviving adversity. It is a pattern of behaviour which involves being able to find the loophole in every situation so that the apparently disempowered individual manages to come out on top. It is also a philosophy of resilience which encourages the individual to meet hardship with humour thereby avoiding bitterness.

At times violent and even frightening in the folktales, the spider-man on stage, at the Ward Theatre in Kingston, becomes the heroic embodiment of folk culture and folk

tradition. The Jamaican audience sees him as a lovable rascal, even though he is also greedy, selfish and cunning.

Like the trickster, his more universal counterpart, laughter, humour and irony permeate everything Anancy does. Eventually in the Pantomime, as in some quarters of Jamaican society, the feeble spider-man becomes an unlikely symbol of resistance as people learn to employ the creativity of his approach in manoeuvring through the challenges of disempowerment.

I. Once upon a time Anancy ...

Long, long ago, when all the people who are big now were little,¹⁴ Anancy travelled in the hold of a slave ship to the West Indies. His new life would be a harsh one, but, as we all know, "Anancy cunny sah" and he survived.

He learnt to thread the moonlight with stories "his brain green, a green chrysalis / storing leaves"¹⁵. The poet Edward Brathwaite locates him in his favourite spot, Ceiling Thomas hidden in the 'house-top' - his retreat in times of extreme danger:

memories trunked up in a dark attic
he stumps up the stares
of our windows, he stares, stares
he squats on the tips

of our language
black burr of conundrums
eye corner of ghosts, ancient his-
tories

and watches him work diligently spinning a web of lessons learnt, experience gained, triumphs won and memories retained,

he spins drum-
beats, silver skin
webs of sound
through the villages

so that generation after generation can learn to convert wisdom into common sense.

Noel Vaz introduced Anancy to the LTM Pantomime stage in 1949 by interweaving elements of both British and local folk culture into the highly successful production of **Bluebeard and Brer Anancy**. He developed a concept which he had worked on, with the help of Louise Bennett, at a Knox College summer school. It was a Jamaicanised version of the story of Bluebeard who married several wives and murdered them. Bluebeard needed an adversary. So Anancy, who could be anything and who played a number of characters, was brought in to challenge him. He obviously felt as confident then as he usually does. In Act I, scene ii, he boasts,

Me can be anything me want. Me can be

a dog and bite me enemy. Me can be puss
and tief. Me can be a johncrow. Me can
be your enemy but me can be your frien.
Me can be dis, me can be dat. Me can be
coachman of course, for me is Anancy.¹⁶

In the end, Anancy used obeah to overcome Bluebeard, transforming the 'busha' into a creature to be subjugated by the spider-man.

Bluebeard and Brer Anancy was an exciting production because Vaz, as director, used the full range of highly charged artistic talent that he had at his disposal. The impact of his imaginative concept was acknowledged by the statesman Norman Manley who, speaking to the much younger and rather overwhelmed director backstage after the show said, "So, I see you are trying some new things."¹⁷

Gloria Escoffery, little-understood creative genius, very cleverly painted the scenery; Ivy Baxter, dance pioneer, did the choreography for the weird creatures in the garden of weeds; and Stella Shaw designed the masks for these creatures. Vaz recalls the integrated approach which made the production so vivid:

...we were able to link up local music, the dance and designs by Stella Shaw who was really fantastic. She was a bit weird herself, so she was right in line for designing weird costumes.¹⁸

The 1949 show was revisited in 1957 in the form of **Busha Bluebeard** and this was so successful that in 1958 it was taken to Trinidad as "the major item in the Jamaican contribution"¹⁹ to the first Caribbean Festival of Arts, *Drums and Colours*. Barbara Ferland²⁰ composed the music for twelve songs which were used in this production. Orford St John wrote very witty lyrics for six, and the Ferland opening number, *Evening Time*, with lyrics by Louise Bennett has become such a part of the national heritage that few Jamaicans realise that it is less than 50 years old and only a 'folksong' by adoption.

Anancy was immortalised in Jamaican theatre by Ranny Williams who greatly influenced "the modern, urban, popular perception of the spider-man" as "a comparatively benevolent figure free from malice in all his actions, despite the wicked things he does."²¹

His theatrical epitaph was composed by Ivy Baxter in her seminal account, *The Arts of an Island* (1970) where she wrote:

"His most important contribution ... has been to bring to light in modern theater the character of Anancy, which existed only in the rural folk-tellers' presentations. In the Anancy series of pantomimes, **Anancy and Pandora, Anancy and the Magic Mirror, Anancy and Beeny Bud**, etc., he has taken the part of Anancy, complete with tail coat, top hat and spider's web." (p. 271)

Everybody knows Anancy. So who would they say he is? It is possible to draw quite a detailed verbal picture of his personality and characteristic²² behaviour based on the Anancy stories listened to "on dark nights in deep rural areas for amusement" by some, and encountered in school as the exploits of an "unofficial national hero" by others²³.

Anancy is a survivor who likes his food, his sleep and his independence. Although capable of extraordinary, sustained effort in his own interests, he will only be the willing employee of someone else as a last resort or out of desperation.

Anancy is a performer. He is a wordsmith and a master of disguise who uses metamorphosis as an essential tool in the pursuit of his goals. A talented musician, he sings and dances well in addition to playing the fiddle, and he has even had some experience as a promoter in the music business. His sense of timing is perfect and when the going gets too rough, he can be depended on to bail out of the situation just in time to ensure his own survival. The LTM Pantomime **Moonshine Anancy** (1969) suggests that he is the soul of the nation.

Anancy has had a glorious past. Mervyn Morris explains:

"In Ashanti, Anansi Krokoko, the great Spider, is the symbol of wisdom, and in anthropological language he is known as the Trickster Deity. Through his ruses, he sometimes even outsmarts the Supreme Being."²⁴

Despite his loss of divine status in the plantation context, he will, nonetheless, always seek to rise to the occasion. His favourite time is Christmas at the Grand-Market because it is full of opportunities for "freeniss". He is the spider who always has a web to spin.

Anancy's main dilemma is the loss of his pedigree. The lyrics by Barbara Gloudon for this song from the 1991 Pantomime **Mandeya**, sum up both his tragic story and his indomitable fighting spirit:

Mi ancestor dem was king and queen,
An dem did come from way cross de sea,
But smady tief dem pedigree.
Yes, tief dem pedigree:

Dem put dem in a chain
Wuk dem very hard,
Try fi bruk dem down
Try fi tek away dem yard -
Ay, yai, yai, yai, yai,
Dem rob dem of dem name
And dem history,
Try fi mek dem shame,
Seh dem neva free -
Ay, yai, yai, yai, yai.

But dem spirit strong -
Strong so till
Dem fight fi dem freedom:
Dem fight like hell.

Wid fire 'tick and gun

Oppressor come

Ancestor ground
Dem bun it down.
Ay, yai, yai, yai, yai
An pon dat very ground
Scorching hot and dry
Ancestor kneel
And start fi cry -
Ay, yai, yai, yai, yai.

But deep in de soil, dere was a seed,
Hiding beneath a stubborn weed
An di water from ancestor yeye
Mek di seed bruk out an grow up high.

So, when oppressor try
Fi chop it down,
More roots spring out
An grow an grow -
Ay, yai, yai, yai, yai.
Dat tree is da sign
Telling all a we
Dat we people cyant
Lose dere pedigree
Ay, yai, yai, yai,
ay, yai, yai, yai, yai, yai - Ay.²⁵

Paulette Gayle-Bell explains in her 1983 essay that "Anancy has become a metaphor used to describe the Jamaican experience serving either to criticise or praise. Little wonder then," she exclaims, "that he provides such potential for Jamaican theatre." Anancy is a paradox. Anancy is the cause and the consequence. He is a hero and yet he is a thief, a schemer, a conman, a manipulator, a womaniser, a mocker, a treacherous friend. He is also a reader, a thinker, a storyteller, a creator. In fact, he is the reason why things are as they are - "the Prime Cause why pig mout long, why rat live ina hole."²⁶

II. So Anancy studied ...

Not even the threat of serious punishment is a deterrent to Anancy's scheming. He is bold ...**rockstone!**... and he is fearless - characteristics more befitting a lion or a tiger than a spider. He is "the inventor of the freeniss mentality,²⁷" defined in the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* as the "use of trickery to achieve success; the gaining of one's ends through cunning." This is one form of Anancyism. He understands human nature and the psychology of all the other animals in his community and uses that to best advantage to get the upper hand in any situation.

Despite a keen awareness of his foe's physical superiority, he knows that, if he just "tinks" hard enough, he can usually depend on his wits for an effective solution. Although a versatile and impulsive opportunist who plays for high stakes as a matter of course, he is a strategist who studies his context carefully:

"All dat time him wasa study him head an keep him yeye dem an him aise open fi ketch all de news an see ef him can work him brains pon anybody."²⁸

His daily ambition is to be the unofficial chief who eats the juiciest morsels and marries the prettiest lady. He is accustomed to being anti-establishment - he managed to steal credit for the jungle stories away from Tiger, and though now physically enfeebled, he is the product of a warrior culture which vigorously resisted enslavement:

It is generally agreed, and the evidence is quite compelling, that slaves from the Gold Coast area, the Akan people known in Jamaica in the early period as Coromantees (with several other variant spellings), were the chief instigators of rebellion. . . . Thus Coromantees provided both political and religious leadership in slave society. In fact their folk hero Anansi was also adopted by slaves throughout the Caribbean suggests that there was a whole series of factors favouring the retention of Akan religious forms."²⁹

But life in Jamaica has always been a day-by-day struggle lived in the moment because of the unpredictability of tomorrow. So hunger, of every type, makes pressing demands for immediate gratification and Anancy has become mean and 'croomoochin' in his greedy desire to keep all the reward of his labours, and that of others, for himself. To the delight of the 1954 Pantomime crowd he boasts,

Some have and some have not, but Anancy
him find out always how to get.
(**Anancy and the Magic Mirror**, Act I, scene ii)

Anancy, only a spider, is at a disadvantage in the fierce competition for survival which characterises his jungle environment. Through playing psychological games on his associates (friend or foe), he staves off a potential sense of inferiority by constantly asserting his mastery of a situation through one-upmanship.

Yet Anancy is also, embarrassingly, too African for the same audience, and though his tongue-tied lisp, 'bongo' talk and self-centred stratagems are good for a laugh during the show, part of the side-splitting humour is that he dares to do what he shouldn't - he contravenes the cultural norms. For in Pantomime, Anancy's 'trickify' behaviour is to be repudiated even while relished and he is never to be taken seriously as a legitimate point of reference for establishing social values.

Tragically, Anancy's children have been left with a legacy of self-negation and a great anxiety about being perceived as 'butto' or 'boogooyaga' - words which present the possibility of being, evidently 'unsophisticated', or even worse, 'uncivilised'. Marcus Garvey placed this reality within an identifiable framework of value judgements based on race and empowerment: "a race without authority and power is a race without respect."³⁰

Sylvia Wynter, discussing in 1970 the phenomenon of Jonkonnu in Jamaica and highlighting the reluctance with which West Indians have embraced their folklore as a subject for serious study, acknowledges this ambivalent attitude³¹ of people to the figure

of Anancy, partly because of his African ancestry and also because his behaviour has been highlighted as morally questionable.

In the script for the Pantomime, **Rockstone Anancy** (1970), the co-writers Sylvia Wynter & Alex Gradussov presented a very serious exploration of the issue of Anancyism and its consequences for Jamaican social development. Paulette Gayle-Bell summarises the concerns of the plot in these terms:

The scope of **Rockstone Anancy** covers the entire history of Anansi in Jamaica, tracing his roots to Africa and his original divine status, thence to the period of slavery when he functioned as a strategy of survival and ends up in modern Jamaica, with Anansi as an anachronism which no longer serves a useful purpose. The play suggests means of tackling the problem in its various manifestations. These include all levels of society; civil servants, business people, students, rural folk, in fact all are infected. The cure is dramatised as a process of death, purgatory and rebirth.³²

An from dat day till today . . .

In fact, this debate over the figure of Anancy is still raging with the dawn of the 21st century. In fact, it suddenly gained a new place in public consciousness in March 2001, when the Head of Mico College's Youth Counselling Centre suggested to a conference of Jamaican and Caribbean teachers that Anancy should be banned. Her words, as reported in *The Jamaica Gleaner* of March 18 were,

"Many of our people hold on to Anancy as a hero. If you want to be a ginnal and out-smart people this is what he represents. We should ban him."³³

According to *The Gleaner*, "several educators thumped their tables and nodded in agreement." In a Letter to the Editor of June 5, 2001, Oren O. Cousins refers to the ensuing *Gleaner* debate and makes his input on the basis of an 'interview' with Anancy:

The Editor, Sir:

As a freelance news reporter, I climbed into a roof and had the exclusive privilege of having Mr. Spiderman Anancy most graciously grant me an interview. I am pleased to submit the interview to you (free of cost) in honour of our noble but lately unfairly misunderstood and obscure folk-hero who for sometime now has gone into semi-retirement.

NEWS REPORTER: I hear, Mr Spiderman Anancy, that some teachers are demanding that you be banned. What have you to say?

ANANCY: All I have to say is let dem talk! Ha' which o' dis Anancy dey want fi ban? For fi mi days done! Mi retire since television an' nintendo an' cellular phone an' DJ an' Superman an' Batman an' Pink Panta an' condom come in. What about that mouse on TV who is always playin' nasty tricks on that cat an' that cat that is always playing nasty tricks on that dog? They plannin' to ban dem too? Y'u ever see me,

Anancy, or any of my relatives on TV yet? Nowadays, instead of plannin' tricks, I watch CVM an' TVJ an' Cable. . . .

As the interview proceeds, Mr Anancy makes a distinction between himself and "di youngah Anancy dem mus' ha' talk 'bout fi ban":

Me is pure soh-soh mout' dese days. I retire. Mi is pure-pure story dese days an' y'u 'ardly hear anybody ha' talk 'bout mi. Mi naw interfere wit' nobody. . . . Plenty young Anancy dey 'bout. An' some wey dem say ha' Anancy pickney a noh Anancy at all.

Rejecting Anancy is not a solution as it means rejecting self along the lines of VS Naipaul's stinging dismissal in 1969 of West Indian history as nothing: "History is built around achievement and creating; and nothing was created in the West Indies."³⁴

Nettleford points out the tragedy of living in a society which continues to deny itself heroes³⁵ and where the 'Giants' gain their status on the basis of material power and control of others rather than moral rectitude and visionary leadership:

"The suffering of societies like Jamaica and other Caribbean nations is exacerbated when the new ruling classes become the most uncritical perpetrators of the old values and simply make the new regime nothing more than the old imperial order with a darker skin."³⁶

In order for Anancy to be saved from becoming a folksy³⁷ cut-out, a grotesque cultural artefact, or even an animated cartoon on cable TV, his ability to provide creative empowerment as a cultural guerrilla has to be rediscovered and affirmed by the people to whom he belongs.

As Onyame, one of the African gods, in **Rockstone Anancy**, points out:

Except we return the creator half to the
trickster Anancy half, his trickery which
kept the Jonkonnus alive when they were
slaves will destroy Jonkonnu now that you
are a free nation.³⁸

III. Is Anancy meck it.

It is essential for Anancy to be **somebody**. Edward Brathwaite, suggests an essentially redemptive - though seemingly anarchic - solution to the West Indian dilemma summed up in Naipaul's equation of *ontological* worth with *material* possessions. His is the philosophy of creatively existing on, and building, *nothing*:

for we have achieved nothing
work
who have not built
dream

who have forgotten all

dance
and dare to remember

the paths we shall never remember
again: Atumpan talking and the harvest Branches,
all the tribes of Ashanti dreaming the dream
of Tutu, Anokye and the Golden Stool, built
in Heaven for our nation by the work
of lightning and the brilliant adze: and now nothing

nothing
nothing

so let me sing
nothing
now

let me remember
nothing
now

let me suffer
nothing
to remind me now

of my lost children³⁹

Brathwaite's desire to think against the grain in exploring a deeper reality is developed and explained in more practical terms through the philosophical concept of *smadditizin* proposed by Charles W. Mills⁴⁰. The term *smadditizin* has no equivalent in English but, as Mills explains, it derives from the word "somebody" and revolves around "the struggle to have one's personhood recognized in a world where, primarily because of race, it is denied. . . . It is ultimately, a struggle over who is and who is not to be counted as fully human."

Although Brathwaite defiantly voices the challenge which is a job for a new set of heroes: the end of a community's exile from self through creativity, and Mills suggests an accompanying philosophical framework, it is the resilience of humour which allows the culturally bereaved to grapple repeatedly with the dilemma of self-negation. Louise Bennett's version of an Anancy story tells how the whole world was accidentally put on an equal footing: "...an de calabash bruck up in minces an de common-sense dem scatter out
ina de breeze all ovah de worl an everybody get a lickle bit a common-sense. Is Anancy mek it."⁴¹

Anancy laughed ...

There is an intrinsically Jamaican approach to life which involves laughing in the midst of adversity. Not in the face of it, but in the midst of it, but to such an extent that people

sometimes complain "yuh tek serious tings mek joke". This is a coping mechanism illustrated by the chorus of a song written for the 1984 Pantomime **Sipplesilver** by Noel Dexter:

"Me nah wuk so me nuh mek money fi rack mi brains wah fi buy
Me nuh wuk so me nuh have money fi complain dat prices high,
You who have nuff money, fret when de dollar fall,
but we who have no money, don't worry bout dat at all."⁴²

"Kya, kya, kya, kya," laughs Anancy, crowing, as he triumphs again and again over 'adversity' by using his wits. This aspect of self-actualisation is another facet of Anancyism. Charlie Chaplin in his autobiography⁴³ observes that the spirit of ridicule is an attitude of defiance and is often stimulated by tragedy. Hugh Morrison quotes Nettleford in introducing Miss Lou in concert at the Creative Arts Centre, and asserts that, "Humour becomes, as it were, the expression of a people's will to live and Miss Bennett recaptures this will with understanding, compassion and truth."⁴⁴

And so, Pantomime because it involves so much laughter, allows an audience to look at really serious things and face them because it provides a safe vehicle for expressing a reaction to their painful and tragic consequences. Laughter gives the individual time to think and room to develop a strategy for coping with the situation. We see Anancy illustrating this ploy in the account of the time when he was being chased through the Christmas Grand-Market by the pumpkin-stall keeper. He realized that he could not escape and so he flung the long, pretty-red stalks of the plant in his hand, which he had been claiming was special, into a pot of boiling water in order to prevent his pursuer from discovering their worthlessness:

"Anancy flung the bundle of red plant into the water. The hominy lady screamed: "Wat dat yuh trow into me pot?" The crowd rush up to the pot. One man exclaimed: "It red like blood! It fava wine!" Anancy looked into the pot and laughed: "Kya, kya, kya, kya. It don't only look like wine," he shouted, "is wine!"

Anancy mumbled to himself: "Poor me bwoy, ah hope is not poison."⁴⁵

By successfully 'changing water into wine', Anancy created Jamaica's favourite Christmas drink, sorrel. Is Anancy mek it.

Anancy, the magician, is able to fool his victims through sleight of hand, but he is also capable of being a spiritual force. When in a fix, he will create an escape route by fair means or foul. This can involve black magic or 'guzzum', in other words, being "aided by the mysterious terrors of Obeah."⁴⁶ Absorbed in the comedy of his antics, a Pantomime audience can forget about this, the more sinister and less easily understood, side of Anancy's being.

The theatre goes uncomfortably quiet when the 'magic' of technical wizardry in the use of stage lighting and unsettling sound effects combines with his incantations in unknown tongues and emphatic posturing to send a chill down the spines of the many children present and to make the adults feel uneasy at best. As Cassidy and LePage point out, quoting Lewis (1818), "It seems to be an indispensable requisite for a Nancy-story, that it

should contain a witch or a duppy, or in short some marvellous personage or other."⁴⁷ The audience looks forward to these transformation scenes, but goes eerily quiet while they run their course.

Just as "Akan religion in its conservative version is still practised by Maroons even today"⁴⁸,

there is many a BMW to be seen parked outside a balmyard in Jamaica. So Anancy can be powerful in the material domain. He can be a powerful agent for good or evil.

I would contend that while **when** is a defining word in the British context which is ordered around time as a unit of productivity, **how** would be the corresponding daily concept in Jamaica as life operates in a constant, and often difficult, present tense. This is what the philosophy of Anancyism in its most creative and redemptive sense is all about. Miss Lou's Auntie Roachy says, "Heavy hamper load make jackass-back strong."⁴⁹

In 1973, Rex Nettleford stunned the Little Theatre audience with the premier of his new NDTC piece about *Street People*, waking up from a night's sleep in the urban garbage dump, to the strains of Desmond Dekker's rude-boy reggae hit "The Israelites." His choreographic perspective matched the reflections made by Naipaul in his travelogue, *The Middle Passage*, resulting from a visit to Jamaica in 1969:

"Every day I saw the same things - unemployment, ugliness, over-population, race - and every day I heard the same circular arguments. The young intellectuals, whose gifts had been developed to enrich a developing, stable society, talked and talked and became frenzied in their frustration. They were looking for an enemy, and there was none. The pressures in Jamaica were not simply the pressures of race or those of poverty. They were the accumulated pressures of the slave society, the colonial society, the under-developed, over-populated agricultural country; and they were beyond the control of any one 'leader'. The situation required not a leader but a society which understood itself and had purpose and direction. It was only generating selfishness, cynicism and a self-destructive rage." (p. 247).

This kind of socially-challenging reflection of the realities for the urban poor was boldly and wittily illustrated by Barbara Gloudon in the 1985 Pantomime production called **Trash**. An explanation for this unexpected choice of title is given in the Programme Notes for that production:

"Choosing the title took a lot of mad determination. It was especially off-putting to those who don't know that in the language of today's Jamaican street people, **trash** means good, going along with **ready**. So it is true there is a whole lot of garbage around but we know when trash is Trash . . . even to taking the chance of being accused of having written Trash - at last," says Barbara Gloudon who confesses to being a "mid life anarchist." (p. 5).

Barbara Gloudon weaves the wisdom of folk culture embodied in Jamaican proverbs into an honest engagement with the harsh social realities of post-colonial life and builds on that to create a powerful and nostalgically entertaining, educational tool in the Jamaican Pantomime. The strength, the love of country and resilient optimism, which characterise

her work is powerfully expressed in the song *Better beta come* from the 1985 LTM Pantomime **Trash**:

De more we wuk, de less de money
De time so hard, we no tink it funny cause
Taxes dem a ring we dry and prices just a reach de sky.
Water falling from we eye, better beta come.
We seh, better beta come.

De more we try, de more we cry
Everyone a sell, nobody a buy,
All we feeling is frustration.
What a crosses pon the nation.
We cyan tek dis ya situation, better beta come
We seh, better beta come.

All de same,
We really know,
Is only **we** can make it grow.
By the sweat of fi wi brow, we will haffi show dem how:
Tun yuh han, and mek fashion,
Ban yuh belly, cut we ration,
Stan pon crooked, and cut straight.
Murmur not and meekly wait, better beta come,
We seh, better beta come.

Folk wisdom has an answer to hardship: resilience. Humour is an extremely powerful didactic tool and this is the end to which Barbara Gloudon has employed her creative vision in her playwriting. Brian Heap, who has directed almost all the Pantomimes since **Trash** in 1985, briefly introduces the body of her work:

Barbara Gloudon has written, or co-authored the book and lyrics for some 18 [now 20] Pantomimes since her first **Moonshine Anancy** in 1969. So she tends to dominate the modern period along with Noel Dexter, both of whom have worked closely with the LTM Musical Director, Grub Cooper.⁵⁰

The Jamaican National Pantomime has spun a web of identity, of working out with its audiences the nuances of "the character of the Jamaican people". It is important for Anancy to have style. His way of doing things is an inherent expression and affirmation of his individuality. Edwin Todd somewhat unwittingly answers his own question, *Is There a Unique Style in Jamaican Art?* as he describes in 1965 an aspect of street life in the nation's capital city:

“Style, in another broad sense, brings to mind the traffic cops at work in Kingston. Each cop seems eager to develop his own style of directing traffic. Some do it with a certain authority, some with insouciance, some jerky, some graceful, some don’t care: but all trying to be original. This is style in a personal sense.”⁵¹

This is the same creative flourish which the storyteller Charles Hyatt attributes to the pickaxe diggers who were part of the daytime street theatre in his recollections of his schooldays: "Most of the theatre was on the streets when me was a boy."⁵²

It was Barbara Gloudon who carried much of this into the culturally hallowed ground of the proscenium arch. Brian Heap and Ruth Minott Egglestone discuss the social impact of her work in a recorded conversation:

BH: Her introduction of the urban aspect again is reflecting the tremendous urbanization of Jamaica. The fact that Kingston now is a centre of probably three-quarters to a million people plus Portmore and other surrounding areas. Spanish Town, May Pen, Montego Bay, they have all grown...

RME : Mandeville.

BH: ... Mandeville. They have all grown enormously and many new kinds of issues have come into play: problems of migration, education, returnees, technology, traditional wisdom and what happens to that in a climate of change. So the Pantomime continues to grapple with some very serious issues at the same time it is entertaining people and apparently making light of things.⁵³

Gloudon's **Anansi Come Back** (1993) heralded Anansi's return to a starring role in Pantomime after an absence of several years. The Pantomime Company carefully researched the part from a variety of contemporary and historical sources and made the conscious decision to change the spelling of his name to "Anansi" in an "attempt to more closely bind the traditional Jamaican spelling of Anancy with its African counterpart."⁵⁴

In **Anansi Web** (1998) Barbara Gloudon used the metaphor of the web to link Jamaica's cultural past with the world's electronic future. Mama Sky ('the old-time shop' owner) contests Anansi's claim that his web of intrigue is the only web in the world and with the help of others she creates a new web which challenges the balance of power in Anansi Land. The moral, "always an indispensable part of a Nancy-story,"⁵⁵ is the concept of progress through *Love and Unity* which is sung at the end of the show as a reprise.

Anansi Web recognises the dilemma of a society fragmented from its inception, and the need for an agent to spin unity, a link to the whole region bounded by the Caribbean and beyond. There is an international dimension to the power of Anansi's web but he must recognise its most appropriate role in order to maximise the advantage for social development.

The lesson for the show's anti-hero as well as for the audience is that "the ultimate aim of the quest must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and the power to serve others. One of the many distinctions between the celebrity and the hero is that one lives only for self while the other acts to redeem society." (Joseph Campbell)⁵⁶ Anancy stories and the story of Anancy warn us about the need to question the things we hear. The listener has as much responsibility for the story as the teller.

Gloudon uses comedy as a discourse of empowerment and has skilfully mixed with it the challenges of topicality and relevance alongside the values of tradition and durability.

It is interesting that in the most recent Pantomime, **Jack and the Macca Tree**, the Giant (the unidentified controller of resources) is as much an Anancy figure in the negative sense of the term as the Giant's Wife (the scrounger), Charlie Croomoochin (the obvious trickster) and most of all, Mary Croomoochin (the sycophant who unashamedly betrays her own folk values out of greed).

There are echoes of a Jonkonnu band in the party of animals: cow, goat, donkey and pig, who often perform front of curtain. Sylvia Wynter describes the quality of fear traditionally associated with the masked dancer who 'lends' himself to the spirit who dances through him. She quotes an Elder who describes the Jonkonnu dancers as: "Satanic hosts, some with tusks, some with the heads of donkeys and horses but with the feet of men". The ox-head mask, in particular, inspired terror and the dancing took place to the sound of the Gumbay drum made from goatskin. In **Jack and the Macca Tree**, these vaguely Jonkonnu-like animal figures are the light relief. The Man-Cow, a cow with attitude, is the real hero of the show. He and his friends steal the audience's affections with every appearance:

Act One, Scene 4:

Lights up on a new back drop, a lovely scene with poinciana trees and mountains and sky. The music changes to a reggae rhythm as Man Cow and his friends, Goat, Pig and Donkey come on stage singing "We having a party, we all very hearty, Nay, ne, ne, nanna (goat), moo (cow), oink-oink (pig), hee haw (donkey)." Each animal shows off his little dance routine (the audience needs to give the goat some encouragement to dance) and the cow does a 'mad cow' (social commentary) dance. There is a sudden noise. Duppy? The animals hide behind leaves as the trickster Charlie comes on stage looking for red meat. The audience sides with the animals and refuses to help the trickster. The animals plan to cow itch the place in order to protect themselves. They make sure they are each well-armed then they sneak up on Charlie and sprinkle a sparkling dust over him. He doesn't react at first and then the cow-itch takes him. The animals sing, "nay, ne, ne, nenna, moo, oink-oink, hee haw" triumphantly.

Under the guise of childish simplicity, each animal - a masked dancer - hides levels of symbolism in its person. An important message of the show is that the 'dumb' animals - those of least status in Jamaican society - will work with Jack and the village to build a community free of the Giant's influence.

Conclusion

Anancy was accepted with great enthusiasm by the Pantomime audience when he was introduced in 1949, and his presence on stage was used strategically in the 40s, 50s and 60s to contribute to the LTM's financial success⁵⁷. The 70s presented a more polemical period but over the years his role has become an essential part of the Jamaican Pantomime experience. The controversial aspects of his character, philosophy and role, as

well as his future, need to be lived out on stage so that the members of the audience have the chance to measure the nature of their current response to their 'star' in terms of how satisfied they feel with the show when the curtain comes down.

So each year at Christmas time, starting on Boxing Day and going on into the new year, for about 100 performances, the audience at the Ward Theatre downtown and then at the Little Theatre uptown, is shown Anancy/Anansi at work ambivalently, challenging-and-serving/ serving-and-challenging the 'Giant' of the day. "And the narrator knows even if subconsciously, that Anancy is more than just a spider-man who outwits the society: he is the symbol of resistance. He is the living manifestation that the outside world, the white world, the commercial world, the oppressive world has not been able to overpower the folk culture and the folk tradition."⁵⁸

Jack Mandora me no choose none is the traditional way of ending an Anancy story and it means that the teller has done the job of passing on the story in a version which is faithful to the essence of the story as s/he originally heard it. It is interesting, then, that when Anansi Come(s) Back to the Ward in 1993, after many years away in 'Foreign', **Jenny Mandora** is tipped to be the Queen of the Yam Festival. Just the mere presence of a character with this name on stage is a quiet celebration of the role of women in guarding the country's cultural history.

The Little Theatre Movement Pantomime tradition has been maintained and anchored by three very talented Jamaican women in the course of its 60-year history. It was founded by Greta Bourke who was determined to put theatre in Jamaica on the global map and who was highly skilled at consolidating the achievement of others. Then, there was Louise Bennett who promoted 'Jamaica talk' and consistently interwove Pantomime with rural Jamaican folklore. She did "such pioneering work that it set an almost impossibly high standard to follow."⁵⁹ Her last LTM Pantomime season was for the 1975-76 production **The Witch** and she seemed irreplaceable at the time. 'Miss Lou' had, however, helped the talented young Pantomime scriptwriter, Barbara Gloudon, as she strove to master her craft and "a new generation of writers and composers began to emerge in Pantomime." The baton of building and nurturing the LTM and the responsibility for preserving the tradition of the National Pantomime was passed on from Greta Fowler to Barbara Gloudon in the 1970s.

Storytelling is traditionally the responsibility of grandmothers in Jamaica. Jack might still be climbing trees in the 21st century - albeit a **macca tree** rather than a **beanstalk** - but there is the promise that Jack Mandora will not be 'guarding heaven's door' on his own in the future.

Bourke, Bennett and Gloudon have already spearheaded - each in her own unique style - an important contribution to the challenge of articulating a much needed Caribbean aesthetic.

Anancyism and the dilemma of being somebody goes well beyond the shores of Jamaica, and is an experience shared throughout the Caribbean and in its Diaspora across the world. Merle Hodge, speaking to the first Conference of Caribbean Women Writers in 1990, articulated a painful reality as she presented a case for changing the world through writing stories. She explained that she began writing in adult life in protest against her education and the arrogant assumptions upon which it rested: "that I and my world were

nothing and that to rescue ourselves from nothingness, we had best seek admission to the world of *their* storybook."⁶⁰

The presence of the Anancy story in the Pantomime is a reminder to the storytellers beyond the theatre, and these days, especially in the schools, to keep passing on the rich oral heritage of the fore-fathers and -mothers to the next generation:

“So every night wen de ole oman dem a put dem gran-pickney to bed, Anancy come an show up himself pon de wall or de ceilin so dat de ole oman dem can memba fi talk bout him. Sometimes wen de ole oman dem sleepy Anancy tie up dem face wid him rope an wake dem up, meck dem talk bout him. So dem tell dem pickney Anancy story, de pickney dem tell smaddy else, dat smaddy else tell an tell, so till me an all dah tell Anancy story. Is Anancy meck it.”⁶¹

Jack Mandora, me noh choose none.

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NOTES

¹ The Honourable Barbara Gloudon is the Chairperson of the Little Theatre Movement, Kingston, Jamaica.

² Henry Fowler's words, quoted from the unpublished transcript of an interview conducted by Ruth Minott Egglestone, 10 August 1996, p. 27.

³ Emlyn Williams, George Devine of The English Stage Company, Tyrone Guthrie of the Music Box Theatre in New York City, Sam Wanamaker and Peter Brook, all sent congratulatory messages to the LTM in 1961 to mark the opening of the Little Theatre on Tom Redcam Drive. Their words of encouragement were printed in the Little Theatre Souvenir Programme.

⁴ Rex Nettleford, “Fifty Years of the Jamaican Pantomime 1941-1991,” *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 24, no. 3, February 1993, p. 5.

⁵ Alex Gradussov, "Thoughts about the Theatre in Jamaica," *Jamaica Journal*, March 1970, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 49.

⁶ For an explanation of this process see Ruth Minott Egglestone, "I Wut I': The Dynamic of Audience Response in Jamaican Pantomime", unpublished paper, Society for Caribbean Studies Conference 1999.

⁷ Most of the roles were stellar. The two Pantomimes in which he was not acknowledged in the title were **Tantaloo** (1982) and **Bruckins** (1988) - in which he had a cameo part as the narrator.

⁸ **Anancy and the Magic Mirror** (1954), **Anancy and Pandora** (1955), **Anancy and Beeny Bud** (1956), **Busha Bluebeard** (1957) - a remake of **Bluebeard and Brer Anancy** (1949). Henry Fowler explains in an unpublished 1996 interview with Ruth Minott Egglestone (Transcript, p. 32) that the 1954 Anancy Cycle was a deliberate LTM strategy to get away from the English type of Pantomime as "Ranny's partner, Lee Gordon, had died, so topicalities no longer were quite important in the way they had been. So, we had to get the Jamaican element more definitely into it."

⁹ **Anancy and Pandora** (1967), **Anancy and Doumbey** (1968), **Moonshine Anancy** (1969) and **Rockstone Anancy** (1970).

¹⁰ My thanks to Carlos de la Motta of Kingston, Jamaica who explained to me what he thought *Anancyism* was about. I have leaned heavily on his suggestion that Anancyism is significantly more than a pattern of anti-social behaviour. It was he who first articulated for me the concept that Anancyism is a *philosophy* which enables an individual to laugh in the midst of adversity and thereby survive.

¹¹ F. G. Cassidy & R. B. Le Page. *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press: New York, 1967, 1980 provides a brief recorded history and a description of some of the features of an ANANCY STORY: (Found widely throughout the Caribbean.) An inclusive name for tales favoured among the peasantry (and Jamaicans in general as children), either a beast-fable (in which case it is usually of African origin, and specifically from Ashanti, with Anancy the spider as its prominent figure), or a 'fairy-tale' (in which case it is usually of European origin, at least proximately). Sometimes features of both types are combined. Cf. 1924 Beckwith. • 1818 Lewis (1845) 127-8, "The negroes are also very fond of what they call Nancy stories, part of which is related, and part sung. Observe, that a moral is always an indispensable part of a Nancy-story. [Anancy does not appear in the examples given]. • *Ibid* 133, It seems to be an indispensable requisite for a Nancy-story, that it should contain a witch or a duppy, or in short some marvellous personage or other. It is a kind of '*pièce à machines*'. • 1877 Murray Kittle 17, Nobody would venture on a 'Nancy Story' till 'Red head Thomas' came. • 1907 Jekyll title-page, Annancy Stories, Digging Songs. • 1950 Sherlock in Pioneer 14, Here, then, is a collection of Anancy stories and dialect verse.

¹² "Derek Walcott Talks About *The Joker of Seville*," *Carib* No. 4: *Caribbean Theatre*, 1986, (WIACLALS), Kingston, Jamaica, p. 14.

¹³ Pam Mordecai, "Into This Beautiful Garden - Some Comments on Erna Brodber's *Jane and Louisa*," *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 2, June 1983, p. 44. In writing this critique, Mordecai emphasises the distinction between *the tale of the telling* and *the telling of the tale*. She says, "In 'the tale of the telling', the how of what is being said becomes itself a significant part of the statement; in 'the telling of the tale', form is a part of the statement only insofar as it is its channel or vehicle."¹³

¹⁴ The opening words of "Anancy and Mongoose" as retold by Velma Pollard in *Pathways: A Journal of Creative Writing*, vol. 3, no. 5, December 1985, p. 30.

¹⁵ Quotations from the poem "Ananse" by Edward Brathwaite, *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 14, nos. 1 & 2, March-June 1968, p. 25. This poem is also published as part of *Islands*, in Edward Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*. Oxford University Press: London, 1973, pp. 165-167.

¹⁶ As quoted by Paulette Gayle-Bell, "The Figure of Anancy in Jamaica's LTM Pantomime," unpublished essay, October 1983.

¹⁷ Recalled by Noel Vaz in a recorded Interview with Ruth Minott Egglestone, 18 December 2000.

¹⁸ Transcribed from an Interview with Noel Vaz conducted by Ruth Minott Egglestone, 18 December 2000, Kingston, Jamaica.

¹⁹ Inez K. Sibley, "Boxing Day and the pantomime," *Sunday Gleaner*, December 26, 1965, p. 19.

²⁰ Five had lyrics by the composer.

²¹ Paulette Gayle-Bell, "The Figure of Anancy in Jamaica's LTM Pantomime," unpublished essay, October 1983, p. 4. Paulette Gayle-Bell was one of the first few researchers on the role of Anancy in the Pantomime. She very generously shared with me the outcome of her investigation based on a number of early Pantomime scripts in the form of an unpublished essay, which might now be in print but I do not have the bibliographic details. I am indebted to Paulette for breaking the ground for me on this aspect of the LTM Pantomime tradition.

²² This summary of Anancy's character and role is based on the collection of stories retold by Miss Lou in Louise Bennett, *Anancy and Miss Lou*. Sangsters: Jamaica, 1979.

²³ These phrases come from an article in the *Jamaica Gleaner* (Internet), June 4, 2001, entitled "Bread and circuses" and contributed by H. K. Burke who laments the general loss of direction experienced by Jamaica and sees it as a consequence of American influence in conjunction with looking to "Africa and our culturally weak past for inspiration." <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/200010604/cleisure4.html>

²⁴ Mervyn Morris, Introduction to *Anancy and Miss Lou*. Sangsters: Jamaica, 1979, p. ix.

²⁵ Transcribed from a recorded lecture/performance by Brian Heap, "The Language of Pantomime Songs," Philip Sherlock Centre, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 21 October 1999.

²⁶ Mervyn Morris, Introduction to *Anancy and Miss Lou*, 1979, p. ix.

²⁷ Richard Allsop, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*. Oxford University Press, 1996:

ANANCYISM a. You know, of course, that Anancy, that beloved spider, is the inventor of the freeness mentality. Nowhere in the vast literature on Anancyism is there an instance of Anancy paying for anything. Ananciologists have justified this attitude to life by arguing that Anancy is a small creature who ... has to employ his wits to protect himself against much larger predators and competitors. - DaG (67.05.07, p. 8).

²⁸ Louise Bennett, "Anancy an Ass-Head," *Anancy and Miss Lou*, 1979, p. 55.

²⁹ Mervyn Alleyne, *The Roots of Jamaican Culture*. Pluto Press: London, 1988, p. 83.

³⁰ As quoted by Charles W. Mills in a seminal article on Caribbean identity, "Smadditizin," *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 2, June 1997, p. 64.

³¹ "Jonkonnu in Jamaica: Towards the Interpretation of Folk Dance as a Cultural Process," *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 4, no. 2, June 1970, pp. 34-48. In this article Sylvia Wynter presents a challenging exploration of the emotional complexity involved in the study of folklore in Caribbean societies because of the tragic ambivalence which sought to conceal African heritage (symbolic of cultural inferiority) behind a curtain of silence.

³² Paulette Gayle-Bell, "The Figure of Anansi in Jamaica's LTM Pantomime," 1983, p. 12.

³³ Pat Roxborough, "Ban 'Anancy' - teachers," *Jamaica Gleaner* (Internet), March 18, 2001. <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20010318/lead3.html>

³⁴ V. S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 29.

³⁵ This phrase refers to a statement made by V S Naipaul about Trinidad in 1969, "Power was recognized, but dignity was allowed to no one. Every person of eminence was held to be crooked and contemptible. We lived in a society which denied itself heroes." *The Middle Passage*, p. 43.

³⁶ Rex Nettleford, *Dance Jamaica*, Grove Press: New York, 1985, p. 24.

³⁷ Wynter points out that "When folk becomes consciously folk, 'its insoluble core' disappears. It becomes 'folksy' and parodies itself. The jester dances on, but the gods are gone." Sylvia Wynter, "Jonkonnu in Jamaica," *Jamaica Journal*, June 1970, p. 48.

³⁸ Quoted by Paulette Gayle-Bell, "The Figure of Anansi in Jamaican Pantomime," p. 13.

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- ³⁹ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*. Oxford University Press: London, 1973, p. 13.
- ⁴⁰ Charles W. Mills, "Smadditizin," *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 2, June 1997, p. 55.
- ⁴¹ Louise Bennett, "Anancy an Common-Sense," *Anancy and Miss Lou*, 1979, p. 67.
- ⁴² Words transcribed from the recording of a lecture/performance by Brian Heap, "The Language of Pantomime Songs," Philip Sherlock Centre, University of the West Indies, 21 October 1999.
- ⁴³ Charles Chaplin *My Autobiography*, Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1964, p. 299.
- ⁴⁴ Rex Nettleford, Introduction to *Jamaica Labrish*, Sangsters: Jamaica, 1966, p. 24.
- ⁴⁵ Louise Bennett, "Anancy an Sorrel", *Anancy and Miss Lou*, 1979, p. 50.
- ⁴⁶ Mervyn Alleyne, *The Roots of Jamaican Culture*, 1988, pp. 83 & 84: "The rebellion of 1760 was, according to Gardner (1873: p. 132), led by Coromantees and was "aided by the mysterious terrors of Obeah." . . . Akan religion in its conservative version is still practised by Maroons even today."
- ⁴⁷ See note 11.
- ⁴⁸ Mervyn Alleyne, *The Roots of Jamaican Culture*, 1988, p. 84.
- ⁴⁹ Transcribed from a Radio Education Unit recording of Louise Bennett in Performance, "Verses from *Jamaica Labrish* and *Aunty Roachy Seh*," at the Creative Arts Centre, University of the West Indies, Mona.
- ⁵⁰ Brian Heap, "The Language of Pantomime Songs," Lecture/performance, Philip Sherlock Centre, University of the West Indies, 21 October 1999.
- ⁵¹ Edwin Todd, Robert Verity, Bill Broome, Alvin Marriott, Eugene Hyde. *The State of the Arts in Jamaica*, 1965 Mona Seminar, Programme 4: "Is There a Unique Style in Jamaican Art?", Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University College of the West Indies. Transcript from the University Radio Service, University College of the West Indies.
- ⁵² Charles Hyatt, *When Me Was a Boy*, Jamaica Publications Ltd: Kingston, 1989, pp. 61-62.
- ⁵³ Unpublished transcript, Interview of Brian Heap by Ruth Minott Egglestone, on the occasion of his visit to Kingston-upon-Hull, 11 August 2000.
- ⁵⁴ Brian Heap, "Astonishing Collaboration," **Anansi Come Back Programme Notes**, p. 3, December 1993.

⁵⁵ F. G. Cassidy & R. B. LePage. *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press: New York, 1967, 1980. See note 12 for the more detailed reference.

⁵⁶ Joseph Campbell, quoted from Betty Sue Flowers (ed.). *The Power of Myth*. Conversation between Joseph Campbell & Bill Moyers. Doubleday: New York, 1989.

⁵⁷ **Anancy and Beeny Bud** (1956): "Gala Pantomime Draws Record Crowd: £2,000 gift to LTM theatre," *The Daily Gleaner*, December 31, 1956.

⁵⁸ Gradussov, Alex. "Thoughts about the Theatre in Jamaica", *Jamaica Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1, March 1970, p. 48.

⁵⁹ The two quotations in this paragraph have been transcribed from a recorded lecture/performance by Brian Heap, "The Language of Pantomime Songs," Philip Sherlock Centre, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 21 October 1999.

⁶⁰ Merle Hodge, "Challenges of the Struggle for Sovereignty: Changing the World versus Writing Stories", p. 202 in *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference*, edited by Selwyn R. Cudjoe. Calaloux: Wellesley, Mass., 1990.

⁶¹ "Anancy an Him Story," in Louise Bennett, *Anancy and Miss Lou*, 1979, p. 2.

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