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Introducing Entanglements and Interdependencies in the Americas: Perspectives from the Carib – Kalinago – Garifuna People

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The European conquest that began in the late fifteenth century brought to the "New World" explorers, cartographers, missionaries, and military officers to whom we owe much of the historical narrative of the Americas. Colonial administrators and planters added their bit to the narrative that would serve the historiography of the Age of Exploration. Most of these historical writings, on which we have relied almost exclusively until recently, have obscured the lived experience of the Indigenous people in the Americas, the meanings of their experience, and the role Indigenous and colonized people played in resisting land confiscation and preserving their sovereignty. Relevant to this discussion are the words of Chinua Achebe to the effect that "until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. … the story of the hunt will also reflect the agony, the travail—the bravery, even, of the lions" (qtd. in Brooks) when it is related from the perspective of the lions.

Increased accessibility to archives has allowed us to better assess the production of knowledge and interpret the writing of history through a more critical lens, bearing in mind the victor and the subdued, the colonizer and the colonized, and acknowledging the agency of all parties involved. Notwithstanding, earlier narratives have left us with a heavy stock of vocabularies of differentiation describing the subdued and the colonized, and those who openly resisted European occupation of their territories. This is the case for the groups we focus on in this volume: groups the Europeans encountered in what would become known as the Americas including the Caribbean Basin. For indeed, the perspectives we bring here could well have focused on the Kalina, quite simply. This would have been a more accurate cover term for the Carib – Kalinago – Garifuna people, thus sparing us the multiple designations used in the subtitle of the volume. Yet, the choice of Kalina would have required just as much clarification. Why Kalina rather than Karina? After all, both names can be found in colonial literature. In fact, Kalina and Karina are cognates, which could be explained by the allophonic status of the sounds /l/ and /r/ in the Cariban language of these linguistically and culturally diverse groups of people from South America.

The people of the Lesser Antilles whom we call Carib or Island Carib are more accurately Kalina. Had they been the first to tell their story, we would have been spared the plethora of designations used to name them. Pelleprat was probably the first to associate the Carib in the Antilles with the Galibi of South America. He contended that the "Island Carib" were descended from this mainland group. A decade later, Breton refuted the idea that the Island Carib he sought to evangelize in Dominica used Galibi as a term of self-ascription. According to him, the Carib reported that Galibi was the name given to them by the Europeans but that it was more appropriate to call them *Callínago* in the women's language and *Callíponan* in the men's language (Breton 105). In the seventeenth century, the term genderlect could therefore be used anachronistically to describe this linguistic duality (Bakker, "Intentional"; Bakker, "The Garifuna"; Jansen).

In more modern anthropological literature, we find the designations Kalina and Karina (Taylor, "The Place"; among others). As I have noted above, these are synonymous terms since the phonemes /l/ and /r/ are actually co-variants in the Cariban language. Whereas the mainland Kalina spoke a language of the Cariban family, the Island Carib language fused Cariban lexemes with Arawakan grammatical morphemes (Taylor, *Languages* 27). Hence, the terms Galibi and

Carib are phonologically related owing to the co-variant status of the phonemes /g/ and /k/. As such, the untrained ear can readily perceive /karib/ as /galibi/ and vice-versa. For Taylor, while /l/ and /r/ are allophones of the same sound in Karina, they are distinct phonemes in the language spoken by the Carib in the Lesser Antilles (*Languages* 94). As for Kalinago, one can easily identify the lexeme Kalina to which the honorific suffix -go was added (Taylor, "Diachronic" 30). Finally, the sound /p/ can be aspirated to sound like /f/. This explains why the term of self-ascription which Breton perceived as *Callíponan* evolved, through phonological change, into Garifuna, the self-ascribed identity of the descendants of the Carib who were exiled to the island of Roatán and who eventually settled on the Central American mainland, in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The fact that the chronicles published during the Age of Exploration and throughout the period of colonization were written in different languages possessing different spelling conventions does not simplify the task of analyzing these terms: we find alternations between C, Ch and K. In the Garifuna language today, Garinagu is used as the plural of Garifuna when referring to the people. Its phonological affinity with *Callínago* and Karina –to which the honorific morpheme -go can be added– need not be demonstrated. The contributors to this volume navigate between the terms Carib, Kalinago, Garifuna and Garinagu.

Our heavy reliance on European narratives has influenced our ability to understand the multiple layers of entanglement and interdependency between the groups – African, European, and Indigenous – that converged in the Americas, specifically in Saint Vincent and Dominica where there were massive Carib settlements. To ignore that these groups were entangled and interdependent at multiple levels – political, social, economic, and cultural – would be to downplay the extent to which their existence was mutually affected by the presence of each other in the American ecology. The success of one group did not necessarily mean deprivation for the others. As Murphy asserts, the Kalinago and the Europeans engaged in a constant play of negotiation of status and space in the Antilles (Murphy 32, 41, 71, 95, *passim*). The Europeans may have had nothing to gain by admitting that the Indigenous and manumitted Africans were but impediments to their bid to maximize the spoils of the territories they occupied. And although they downplayed the importance of Indigenous cooperation in achieving their aims, they realized that their exploits could only succeed if they rid the islands of the Indigenous people and their sympathizers. As a result, the colonial era was marked by the signing of several peace treaties which testify to the obligation of the Europeans to negotiate and deal tactfully with the natives. One of the first such treaties was the 1660 Peace Treaty signed by the French, English, and Carib, which recognized the neutrality of Saint Vincent and Dominica. This meant that, in theory, only the Carib had the right to occupy the land. Treaties to determine the share of British and English rule over the Indigenous territories, which entangled the lives of Europeans, natives and Africans in the Americas, were signed in 1713 (Treaty of Utrecht), 1719 (Treaty for "mutual" assistance between the Carib of Saint Vincent and the French in Martinique), 1770 (Treaty allocating the eastern half of Saint Vincent to the English, the western half to the French), 1773 (Treaty of Peace marking the end of the first Anglo-Carib War in Saint Vincent), and 1783 (Peace Treaty of Paris wherein the Carib territories of Dominica, Saint Vincent and Grenada were restored to the British and that of Saint Lucia to the French). These examples of negotiation illustrate how entangled and interdependent these groups were. Murphy aptly describes the Lesser Antilles as a "site where overlapping Indigenous, African, and European polities alternately dominated, vied, and coalesced with each other" (14).

It is worth recalling, briefly, some major events in Carib history in Saint Vincent, recognized by the Garifuna people as their ancestral homeland, *Yurumein*. This territory was one of the last bastions of Indigenous resistance and, therefore, a late target for European colonization. As colonization and evangelization efforts intensified elsewhere in the Lesser Antilles throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Saint Vincent's native population was augmented by Africans, shipwrecked, freed or runaways. A report by William Young, a member of the British plantocracy, declares that these

were black people who had usurped Indian habits and customs (xli), and who had to be evacuated from the island if the English wanted to set up sugar plantations there. Saint Vincent was ceded to the British in 1763 but they could not settle peacefully because of the presence of the African elements among the Carib, whom Young labeled the Black Carib (xxxix). According to Young, they should be moved to a territory so far enough away that they no longer posed a threat to the transformation of the island into a full-scale sugar territory (ibid.).

Continued resistance by the Carib to the British resulted in open conflict. The first Anglo-Carib War broke out in 1769 and lasted until 1773. The second was played out from 1795 to 1797. When the Carib were defeated in 1797, their removal from the colony was enacted. By October 1796, before the end of war, the British had imprisoned scores of Carib men, women, and children on Balliceaux, a barren island in the Grenadines. Around 4,000 Carib were captured. Over the months, the British released the light-skinned individuals and allowed them to return to mainland Saint Vincent, convinced, as it were, that only the dark-skinned Carib had fought against them (Gonzalez 21-23). In March 1797, the survivors of this captivity –fewer than 3,000 Carib– were embarked on *The Experiment* and abandoned in Roatán, an island off Honduras.

The study of the Carib inevitably leads to the notions of entanglement, relations of asymmetry, and continual adjustment to circumstances involving others. Sometimes co-existence in the Lesser Antilles triggered mutual accommodation, but oftentimes, the web of relations between Indigenous, Europeans and Africans was interwoven with divergence and conflict. The more distinct people are in their values, cultures, and modes of thinking, the more difficult it is to appreciate the peculiarities that define other groups. The more remarkable the intertwining and entanglement of lives, practices and entities appear to be, the more palpable the conflict, resistance and tension become. As Graham and Raussert epitomize, while entanglement encapsulates:

> "… interconnectedness and interrelatedness, its predicaments and consequences may be quite different. Entanglement may signal important cultural, economic, and political networks, significant personal ties, and productive collaboration. On the other hand, …, entanglement may be the description of being caught or trapped in unequal power constellations, colonial and neo-colonial patterns of control and exclusion." (6)

Let us briefly consider how entanglement can be conceived in English, and more relevantly, entanglement in the ecology of the "New World." Bauer and Norton inform us that the first recorded attestation of the word "entangle" is in Richard Eden's English translation of Peter Martyr d'Angheira's publication in Latin, which recounts European encounters with the natives (1). Eden chose to translate Martyr's use of the Latin verb "offenderunt" (Martyr f. xv) as "entangled" when Martyr related Columbus' delight at the prospect of finding what he thought were clothed – meaning civilized – human beings whom his men had noticed fleeing into the interior of Cuba. The admiral sent his men "fortie myles into the llande" but "attemptinge to goo throwgh the grasse and herbes, they were soo entangled and bewrapte therin, that they were scarsely able to passe a myle, the grasse beinge there little lower then owre rype corne (Eden 16v). Emphasizing that the original Latin text used the word "offenderunt" meant "they stumbled", Bauer and Norton actually suggest that Eden's translation is inadequate, but they go on to show that "entangled" symbolizes how the new ecology dampened, impeded, and resisted Columbus' efforts to master it. According to the authors, "the entanglement by American nature not only physically entangles European conquerors with disastrous consequences; it defies the imposition of a European order of things … the four elements, nature and culture, subjects and object, time and space" (Bauer and Norton 1-2).

It is interesting to note that MacNutt, another translator of the same work, did not borrow the entanglement metaphor. In fact, the first three occurrences of "entangle" in Eden's translation

are rendered by distinct lexemes in MacNutt's English version of Martyr's volumes: compare (1) "they were soo entangled and bewrapte therin" (Eden 16v) with "they … wandered about so hopelessly that they hardly advanced a mile" (MacNuttt 99), (2) "entangeled in the mudde and maryshes" (Eden 151v) with "the ground being swampy, they sank into the mud" (MacNutt 10) and finally (3) "They were so tossed in both sydes and entangled with whirlpoole" (Eden 160v) with "They drifted about in this terrible whirlpool (MacNutt 37). Although one might assume that "entangle" would be more established nearly four centuries later, the absence of "entangle" in MacNutt's translation is not surprising since Eden's use is metaphorical. The use of metaphors can be a highly personal choice.

This trilingual volume exemplifies the degree of entanglement and interdependency, first, of the disciplines in which the authors situate their study. The methodologies on which the works are based strengthen each other: sociology, history, political science and anthropology in Agudelo's study; linguistics and history in Prescod's investigation; socio-didactics, intercultural studies and education studies in Solórzano's contribution; ethnography and musicology in Barnat's work; and diaspora studies and Afro-Indigenous theory in Ramsey and White's study. Second, each contribution brings to the fore different levels of interdependence between the Carib, Europeans, and Africans in the colonial era whether tacit or dynamic, or between the Carib and present-day societies and socio-political ecologies. Through their unique methodologies, the authors highlight that entanglement should not be seen as the harmonious co-existence of peoples. Rather, this notion invites us to consider the dynamics of contact, whether they might be inherently conflictual, and whether they direct groups to exercise agency in negotiating space for themselves, their language, their cultural productions, and their progress.

The Garinagu of Central America, particularly Honduras, are the focus of Carlos Agudelo's study. Agudelo applies the monikers "Children of uprooting", "Pilgrims of the Caribbean" and "People beyond borders" to show that the multiple obstacles – physical, social, and political – that should hinder their migration to North America have not prevented hundreds of thousands of Garinagu from circulating within the Americas. Nevertheless, the author acknowledges that while transnational circulation has evolved, it is now conditioned by modern-day crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as by local and US politics that contribute to capitalizing on the vulnerabilities of some members of the group. The political dynamics of Garifuna migration can be seen as triggering new modes of adaptation and readjustment. Instead of restraining the mobility of the Garifuna people, public policies have only encouraged members of the group to redefine their way of life, the spaces they occupy, and the way they celebrate their religious and cultural identity. They also have implications for the place of the Garinagu in the national societies of Central and North America, for the nature of the problems that affect them as a group, for the forms of organization, and for specific demands expressed by the Garinagu.

Paula Prescod's study of Indigenous place names in Saint Vincent positions toponymics as a valuable source of information about the linguistic imprints left on a place throughout history, but also about the interplay of relationships and power between the different groups that inhabited that place. The study reveals that the presence of the Carib favored the maintenance and preservation of Indigenous toponyms until the establishment of full-scale slavery in Saint Vincent at the end of the eighteenth century in the wake of the Garifuna exile. What remains of Indigenous toponyms is tied up with hegemony and violence on the one hand, and legitimacy and the will to preserve Indigenous sovereignty on the other. They are shown to reflect the intertwined history of the Carib and the Europeans. This is particularly evident in the hybrid nature of some toponyms that still exist today, hence the notion of traces of Indigeneity that have withstood attempts to erase Indigeneity through exile, and to commemorate British history. The historical approach adopted in this contribution serve to illustrate the cross-existence and cohabitation of the different populations, often marked by strong tensions. In this respect, toponymics offers a window through which we can account for the interweaving of different strata of power and rivalries for control of the island.

Carlos Solórzano's contribution deals with a key aspect regarding the experience of the exiled Carib: the recognition by Honduran education authorities of the Garifuna culture and language, a language which has not been preserved in Saint Vincent. The author examines pedagogical materials used to teach Garifuna language and culture and assesses their ability to develop multilingualism and multicultural competencies as part of a broader language planning initiative known as the Intercultural Bilingual Education program. This model aims to strengthen Indigenous identity and recognize Indigenous and Afro-Honduran languages and cultures. The author adopts a socio-didactic approach to address the question of whether these aims are being achieved. He also investigates whether the deployment of the program fosters the development of intercultural competence to improve mutual understanding in multilingual societies, as well as the desire to work and collaborate with each other. Rather than having individuals compare and juxtapose cultures and languages, the program seeks to initiate dialogue between individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The intercultural approach is therefore one that enables learners to appreciate their interdependencies. The author argues that the pedagogical strategies for the development of inter- and multicultural competences proposed in the Intercultural Bilingual Education program lack contextualization since they are presented under a monocultural approach. While the program is headed in the right direction, more needs to be done to enable students to initiate and maintain intercultural dialogue. The author's choice of schools in Punta Gorda is very symbolic since it is located in Roatán, where the exiled Carib first landed in 1797.

Artistic interdependencies and entanglements are the focus of Ons Barnat's contribution. The author unravels the creative strategies used by Aurelio Martinez, the Garifuna *parandero* from Honduras, in his music album *Laru Beya* (a Belizean, Honduran, Canadian and Senegalese production). In this contribution, a symbolic place is chosen for recording the album: a beach restaurant in the heart of the Garifuna community of San Juan on the northern coast of Honduras. The author's ethnomusicological perspective focuses on the sound processing techniques, the entangled experience and collaborative relationships of the people involved in the project, centered around Martinez and Duran, his Belizean music producer. The album thus brings together Garifuna and non-Garifuna artists and offers an interesting demonstration of the intermingling and fusion of creative production strategies, and languages –the collaborators alternated between Spanish, Garifuna, English and French– that work toward the same goal, that of producing a record that represents a concrete example of the impact of globalization on the creation of musical works in the domain of world music. Barnat concludes with cogency that the collaboration has produced an album based on processes ranging from improvised creation to non-Garifuna rhythms fused with "traditional" Garifuna musical elements, and reworked 'traditional' Garifuna material enmeshed with "non-Garifuna" musical elements. The album symbolically closes with rhythms, melodies and themes showcasing the Garifuna cultural heritage, which Martinez hopes will encourage young Garifuna artists to safeguard the endangered Garifuna music.

Nicole Ramsey and Melanie White's joint contribution serves as a timely reminder of the social and political struggles that Afro-Indigenous groups in multi-ethnic nations in the Americas continue to lead in order to construct, preserve or reclaim their identity. The authors approach the notions of identity construction and identity affirmation from the perspective of Black and Indigenous Studies Theory, particularly in the context of former European colonies where being and belonging are highly biologized concepts. This approach allows Ramsey and White to focus not only on the Central American Garinagu but also on Creoles in the same geographic space. Like the Garinagu, Central American Creoles have had to find avenues not articulated with ancestry and biology to negotiate their identity in an ecology which has traditionally been hostile toward them, individually and collectively. In this regard, the dual focus on the Garinagu and the Creoles goes beyond the borders of the nation-state to take on a more regional significance. Both peoples position themselves

as Afro-Indigenous, having been agents in the development of Central American spaces before the birth of the nation-states proper. As such, their existence is intimately entangled with that of the multiplicity of ethnic groups in Central America, particularly in Belize and Nicaragua where the study takes us. However, while it can be argued that the Garinagu are internationally recognized as the Black Indigenous people of the Caribbean par excellence, the authors provide arguments for a broader appreciation of Black Indigeneity as a concept that goes beyond the ethnic group. In so doing, they engage notions of fluidity and multiplicity of culture, language, history and social experiences to enhance our understanding of the processes at work in being and belonging.

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