

## ABSTRACT

### ENGLISH

SIMMONDS, RUBY

B.A. AUGUSTANA COLLEGE, 1969

M.ED. CHEYNEY STATE COLLEGE, 1978

THE WORDS BENEATH THE SAND: AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORKS  
OF THREE VIRGIN ISLANDS POETS, CYRIL CREQUE, J. P. GIMENEZ, AND  
J. ANTONIO JARVIS

Advisor: Dr. Janice Liddell

Dissertation dated March, 1995

This study is an excavation and examination of the works of Virgin Islands poets, Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis, who wrote in the first half of the twentieth century. It looks at the historical and literary context that fostered them and provides a thorough study of one aspect of each man's poetry. In particular Creque's Romanticism is examined, as are Gimenez's vernacular poems, and Jarvis' dual consciousness. All three are examined from the perspective of the tensions created by their being products of the United States Virgin Islands, a territory at once Caribbean and American.

The study set out to refute the assertions of critics that Virgin Islands poets were mere imitators of the European style. What has been revealed is a rich tapestry of original imagery and language, reflective of the Virgin Islands unique history and culture.

A thorough examination of selected poems of each writer was conducted, as was research on each writer. This research was supported by available data and to a significant extent by information gathered from interviews with persons who knew the subjects of the study.

This dissertation is, most likely, the first comprehensive critical work on Virgin Islands poetry and on Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis. As such it will be useful to scholars interested in the literature of the Virgin Islands and also of the Caribbean and the United States of which the territory is a part. It verifies, not only the presence of a poetic heritage, but testifies to its quality as well as its significance in the two poetic traditions of which it is a part.

## ABSTRACT

### ENGLISH

SIMMONDS, RUBY

B.A. AUGUSTANA COLLEGE, 1969

M.ED. CHEYNEY STATE COLLEGE, 1978

THE WORDS BENEATH THE SAND: AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORKS  
OF THREE VIRGIN ISLANDS POETS, CYRIL CREQUE, J. P. GIMENEZ, AND  
J. ANTONIO JARVIS

Advisor: Dr. Janice Liddell

Dissertation dated March, 1995

This study is an excavation and examination of the works of Virgin Islands poets, Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis, who wrote in the first half of the twentieth century. It looks at the historical and literary context that fostered them and provides a thorough study of one aspect of each man's poetry. In particular Creque's Romanticism is examined, as are Gimenez's vernacular poems, and Jarvis' dual consciousness. All three are examined from the perspective of the tensions created by their being products of the United States Virgin Islands, a territory at once Caribbean and American.

The study set out to refute the assertions of critics that Virgin Islands poets were mere imitators of the European style. What has been revealed is a rich tapestry of original imagery and language, reflective of the Virgin Islands unique history and culture.

A thorough examination of selected poems of each writer was conducted, as was research on each writer. This research was supported by available data and to a significant extent by information gathered from interviews with persons who knew the subjects of the study.

This dissertation is, most likely, the first comprehensive critical work on Virgin Islands poetry and on Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis. As such it will be useful to scholars interested in the literature of the Virgin Islands and also of the Caribbean and the United States of which the territory is a part. It verifies, not only the presence of a poetic heritage, but testifies to its quality as well as its significance in the two poetic traditions of which it is a part.

THE WORDS BENEATH THE SAND: AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORKS  
OF THREE VIRGIN ISLANDS POETS, CYRIL CREQUE, J. P. GIMENEZ, AND

J. ANTONIO JARVIS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF ARTS IN THE HUMANITIES

BY

RUBY SIMMONDS

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MARCH 1995

© 1995

RUBY SIMMONDS

All Rights Reserved



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of all persons who in any way facilitated the completion of this dissertation. Those persons include: Dr. Charles Duncan, Director of the Doctor of Arts in Humanities program at Clark Atlanta University; my readers, Dr. Janice Liddell, Chair of the English Department at Clark Atlanta University; Dr. Phyllis-Briggs Emanuel and Dr. Ernestine Pickens, both Associate Professors in the English Department at Clark Atlanta University. I also wish to thank Mr. Robert Quarles, Inter-Library Loan librarian at the Robert Woodruff Library and other staff of the Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center. Other library personnel who assisted during the process are Ms. Beverly Smith at the von Scholten Collection, at the Enid Baa Library in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands and the staffs of both the Florence Williams Library on St. Croix and the Ralph M. Paiewonsky Library at the University of the Virgin Islands in St. Thomas.

Additionally, I wish to thank all the persons whom I interviewed, including relatives and associates of Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis, as well as my parents Ralph and Viola Simmonds and other members of my family.

The completion of this dissertation was facilitated by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D. C. I thank them for their support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	ii
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION .....	1
I. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS: ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR LITERATURE .....	10
II. "SHOW ME YOUR COMPANY AND I'LL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE": LITERARY INFLUENCES AND INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE CARIBBEAN, BLACK AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS .....	30
III. THE NATURE OF CYRIL CREQUE'S ROMANTICISM .....	44
IV. GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS: THE VERNACULAR POETRY OF J. P. GIMENEZ .....	94
V. J. ANTONIO JARVIS' DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS .....	125
CONCLUSION .....	149
WORKS CITED .....	155

## INTRODUCTION

### WHY DIG IN THE SAND?

Invariably, any attention to literature of the African diaspora focuses on the work of African Americans and writers from the larger Caribbean islands such as Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados. Seldom is mention ever made of the contributions of the United States Virgin Islands to the diasporic literary landscape. There might be several reasons for this oversight. First of all, as a territory of the United States, the Virgin Islands shares its political, economic, and educational identity with other Americans. However, geographically and culturally, it is properly a part of the Caribbean. Unfortunately, for many years people in the Virgin Islands minimized the Caribbean part of their heritage, choosing instead to demonstrate a greater affinity with the United States. Being, as one writer calls it, "America's Caribbean Outpost," the Virgin Islands is often subsumed under Puerto Rico or the general category of offshore territories, thereby failing to ever exhibit its own cultural identity. This is an identity defined by Olivia Cadaval, Director of the Office of Folklife Programs' Quincentenary Program at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., as an emergent, continuously evolving, local creole culture distinct from similar cultures of other islands that absorbs and reworks cultural practices which came and are still coming from both outside and within the Caribbean (21).

Moreover, readily accessible Virgin Islands writing and much of what is used in schools is largely political, historical, or scientific in nature - a possible result of the ongoing attention to the natural beauty of the islands, as well as the constant political flux in which the territory found itself for many years. However, there is indeed a body of creative work developed since the turn of the century which has not been critically examined. In fact, a review of Caribbean Bibliographic Series No. 1: Theses on Caribbean Topics, 1778-1968, by Enid Baa reveals no critical study of the creative literature of the territory. However, more recently, Adelbert Anduze's master's thesis done at Howard University in 1975, examines the literature of the United States

Virgin Islands from 1900-1970, studying the works of some seventeen writers including the subjects of my dissertation, Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis. As a survey of the literature, Anduze's study examines the historical writing, poetry, prose, and folklore of the first seven decades of this century. Anduze states as his thesis his intent to substantiate the existence of a Virgin Islands literature:

Before undertaking any in-depth analysis of Virgin Islands literature, one must be convinced that there is such a literature. This awareness, this cognizance, along with some appreciation for the poetry and prose of the native Virgin Islanders, with recognition of their use and treatment of unique native expressions, their colorful and sensitive imagination, indelible traditions and folklore, and an unswerving pride in the beauty of their islands - this is the thesis of this paper. (vi)

It appears that Anduze was primarily concerned with introducing his readership to the literature of the territory without offering any significant criticism of the works. Indeed, in keeping with the parameters set forth in his preface, he provides some general historical background of the islands, offers an overall picture of the literature from 1900 to 1970, and profiles each writer, providing examples of his/her work.

Anduze's observations concerning the derision and general disbelief usually accorded any mention of a Virgin Islands literature parallel mine, and while he was instrumental in presenting the works as [creations] worthy of scholarly consideration, I find it necessary to build on the foundation which he has laid. To that end, this study will concentrate on the poems of three writers who represent the educated elite of the Virgin Islands during the early 1900s, but who nevertheless capture the essence of the time, the people, the culture, and the environment. They epitomize, according to Dr. Orville Kean, current President of the University of the Virgin Islands, the romantic, intellectual mindset prevalent at the beginning of the century (Interview). By evaluating the historical, political, and social climate which produced these writers and by examining the literary movements taking place in the Caribbean and Black America during the commensurate time period, this study will seek to refute the notion epitomized by historian Gordon Lewis that "The poetic literature put out by the local versifiers - Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, Aubrey Anduze, and others - has been couched in a feeble neo-

Tennysonian Gothic style, quite ignoring the possibilities of the rich picturesque speech of the masses" (Lewis 172). In fact, I will demonstrate that the uniqueness of the Virgin Islands, being both geographically Caribbean and politically American, creates the necessary tension to produce works reflective of the European influence evident throughout the Caribbean, while exhibiting the essence of Virgin Islands sensibilities resultant from a complex history of dehumanizing enslavement, piracy, and political machinations overcome by the resiliency of a people torn from their African roots.

While this complex history reaches back to the fourteenth century before the beginning of the slave trade, the first half of the twentieth century was a time of change and movement for the Virgin Islands. After much negotiation, the territory was transferred from Denmark to the United States in 1917, and the later years saw many Virgin Islanders migrate to New York and the Dominican Republic in search of greater economic opportunity. In this milieu is found the poetry of a number of Virgin Islanders, including Cyril F. W. Creque, José Antonio Jarvis, and José Patricio Gimenez. The lives and works of these writers span a period of 70 years, beginning in 1893 with the birth of Gimenez and ending in 1963 with the death of Jarvis.

Cyril Felix William Creque was a noted musician as well as writer whose poems were published in two collections, Trade Winds in 1934 and Panorama in 1947. Additionally, he composed three patriotic songs, "The Upward Way: A Patriotic Song of the Virgin Islands;" "The Song of the Virgins," a patriotic anthem written on the occasion of the granting of citizenship by the United States to the people of the Virgin Islands in 1927; and "From the Mark of the Yoke," dedicated to the abolition of slavery in the Virgin Islands. His recognition exceeded local boundaries as he was listed in Who's Who in American Poetry and was published in a number of mainland periodicals. The poems collected in Panorama are categorized as follows: "Poems of Mood," "Christmas Poems," "Poems of War and Peace," "Views of the Virgin Islands," "Light Verse," and "Dedications." The influence of the English romantic poets is evident in his writing, which he viewed merely as a hobby, indicating that there was not enough demand in the Virgin Islands for him to pursue writing as a vocation. However, in the style of the true artist, Creque, in his "Foreword" says, "I have not strained to produce a volume of

'native verse' in order to attract curious attention either to myself or the islands, or to invite patronage, I merely wrote out of the natural passion to express my views of life in the recognized poetic form. . ." (Panorama n. pag.). Certainly his passionate expressions of man's inhumanity to man are evident in the first stanza of "Where Men Still Dwell":

The culture of this world is but a screen  
 Before the mouth of pre-historic caves,  
 Where men still dwell with savage fear which craves  
 From crime grim souvenirs of what had been  
 A human life before, slain by the keen  
 Hate of a crazy mob. Men still are slaves  
 Though free flags fly aloft and Justice waves  
 An emblem, proud and stately as a queen. (Panorama 16)

This sampling of Creque's writing is representative of the poetry of the period. It reflects a sensitivity to the plight of the oppressed although the sentiments are clothed in the language, form, and style of the oppressor.

Like Creque, José Gimenez was a musician. He was a composer dedicated to preserving the folklore of the Virgin Islands. According to the compiler of Profiles of Outstanding Virgin Islanders, the objective of Gimenez's 1933 work Virgin Islands Folklore and other Poems was: "to conserve the folklore of the Virgin Islands of the United States in its original native dialect; to provide a souvenir of the Virgin Islands for the natives of these islands residing in the United States and other countries." Interestingly, the majority of the poems in that collection are not written in dialect, but in standard English, and, like Creque's work, demonstrates an intensity of thought and the influence of writers of other times and places. However, a significant portion of the work contains poems in dialect which address issues common to the masses, such as government accountability, male/female relationships, and economic difficulties. These poems also illustrate Gimenez's ability to fuse indigenous subjects with a borrowed European style. For example, poems such as "De Man From Jerusalem" and "Jumbi in Berah Alley" illustrate the native belief in spirits. These particular poems provide a slice of Virgin Islands life at a time when street lights were nonexistent and people's claims of seeing "jumbies" were more believable. Additionally, Gimenez's work introduces the reader to a cross section of the people of the

Virgin Islands through his many poems dedicated to various people. A number of his poems reflect a sense of spirituality and respect for the Creator. In fact, he was known as the Virgin Islands mystic poet. Among Gimenez's other works are Caribbean Echoes published in 1934, Deep Waters, 1939, and Voices of the Virgin Islands, 1952. His musical compositions include "Granada," "My Chinese Baby," "Dolores from Old Rio," and several others.

Perhaps the most prolific of the writers of this period was José Antonio Jarvis, an educator, journalist, poet, and playwright. His best known work The Virgin Islands and Their People stirred much controversy when it was published in 1944. In addition to that book, he wrote The King's Mandate, a three act play about the 1848 liberation of slaves in the Virgin Islands. His poetry collections include Fruits in Passing, published in 1932 and Bamboula Dance originally published in 1935 but later reprinted as part of a work which anthologizes other Caribbean writers including Wilson Harris of Guyana. Like his contemporaries, Jarvis addresses themes of love and nature, but he also is sensitive to the painful heritage of Africans in the diaspora and so writes "Bamboula Dance":

Can I in pride mock sad buffoons  
Who ape ancestral circumstance?  
My fathers, too, these thousand moons  
Cavorted in some tribal dance.

I still can feel, when drumbeats call,  
The pulsing blood new rhythms take;  
As garment-like refinements fall  
Unconscious longings spring awake!

My honored sire now would say,  
For all his solemn high degrees  
That drums recall Nigerian play  
And drown out later dignities.

Few naked tribesmen yet remain  
To dance the sacred dance for rain! (Bamboula Dance 3)

Like the other two poets, Jarvis' talents were not limited to the written word. He was a renowned painter, whose "Woman with Pears" was

exhibited as a part of the International Business Machines Corporation Collection at its Gallery of Science and Art in San Francisco in 1939.

Evident in the works of all three men are their formal education, exposure to the European "masters," and the need/desire to demonstrate the polish of a people isolated between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Nonetheless, concerns for the suffering of their African ancestors and the ongoing plight of Blacks both in the Virgin Islands and on the United States mainland continuously protrude through the finely crafted veneer of iambs, trochees, stanzas, and rhymes.

The words of these poets have lain fallow for too long, and they are deserving of critical study so that a proper appreciation of their work may be developed. It is necessary that what has lain dormant be exposed so that scholars as well as lay persons within and without the territory will be more cognizant of the Virgin Islands literary tradition. This is a tradition which illustrates the unique creativity of the Virgin Islands spirit which developed the Creole language and the Virgin Islands rendition of the quadrille dance. As their ancestors melded the language of the European colonizer with the syntax of their indigenous African tongue to create a workable, usable Creole, and as their foreparents infused the European formal dance with African rhythms to create the Virgin Islands version of the quadrille, so too, Cyril Creque, José Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis utilized the tools available to them in the style of the romantics to provide a voice for the creative treatment of issues important to the Virgin Islands. Their treatment of issues such as the transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States or the plight of Virgin Islands coal workers amid poems of patriotism and praise to the United States are illustrative of the paradox which results from efforts to hone a wholesome identity while balancing between the geographic and political realities defining the territory's existence.

The duality of existence which has shaped the United States Virgin Islands, a territory at once American and Caribbean and struggling for recognition in both, has influenced the writings of the period. The authority and leadership of the United States during the period of transition and the nurturing culture of the Caribbean has had a lasting impact on the Virgin Islands. This influence, as revealed in the works of Creque, Gimenez, and



Jarvis, will be examined, not in a vacuum, but in relationship to literary developments in both the Caribbean (which is heavily influenced by the Romantics) and the African diaspora of the United States during the first half of the century.

Attention will be paid to the development of poetry in the Caribbean and Black America during the period in which these Virgin Islands poets wrote, to ascertain any similarities in trends and influences. Because critical work on early Virgin Islands poetry is so limited, it will be necessary to use the works of several Caribbean and Black American contemporaries of Gimenez, Creque, and Jarvis, such as Frank Collymore and Claude McKay, as bases for comparison. A selection of the available poetry of the three writers identified will be examined.

In addition to literary analysis of the works, this examination will also seek to determine the impact of the political flux of the time on the poetry, including the manner in which these writers address socio-economic changes taking place in the territory. Particular attention will be paid to the way each poet addresses common themes such as the beauty of the islands, the relationship of the territory with the United States, manifestations of an African heritage, and specific historic events.

The first two chapters will establish the historical and literary atmosphere which produced the writers. Each of the three succeeding chapters will be devoted to an individual writer and will include biographical information as well as educational and social status. The prime focus of each of these three chapters will be to analyze selected poems which address major themes. In addition to examining the growth and development of each writer, attention will be paid to the respective similarities and differences in their treatment of particular topics.

Interestingly, there is an anthology of Virgin Islands poetry currently being compiled and edited by Marvin Williams of St. Croix with the assistance of Jeannette Allis Bastian. The anthology provides a general introduction to the poetry of the Virgin Islands, as well as individual introductions to each of the time periods featured. Among the poets anthologized are Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis. There is also in progress a cultural manual for teachers which will include some analysis of the writers

being studied in this dissertation. These efforts are part of an overall trend in which writers of the Caribbean are being featured more regularly in literature courses at colleges and universities. Also a wider selection of Caribbean literature is becoming more available in book stores in both the Caribbean and the United States, and certainly, the awarding of the 1992 Nobel Prize in literature to St. Lucian, Derek Walcott, has helped to spotlight the Caribbean.

Therefore, given the current focus on the Caribbean, particularly in the realm of academia, it is appropriate that "America's Caribbean Outpost" become a part of that literary landscape which is poised to make a substantial impact on the rest of the literary world. Additionally, according to Jeannette Allis Bastian, the Virgin Islands Director of Libraries, Archives, and Museums, and author of West Indian Literature: An Index to Criticism, 1930-1975, although people such as Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis were writing, the second half of the literary activity - the criticism - was, and still is, missing. She maintains that because there was not a nurturing literary climate, the writers got little response and little recognition. I share Bastian's view that there is a genuine need to develop a critical climate suited to the continued growth and development of an indigenous literature, and I further contend that Virgin Islands scholars should be in the forefront of this effort. This study will provide much needed criticism on three neglected but worthwhile writers of the territory. Additionally, it will hopefully provide the impetus for others to take a closer look at what was written earlier in the century and create a new appreciation for the talent extant at that time. Further, along with new efforts by English faculty at the University of the Virgin Islands and the heightened interest in Virgin Islands culture, it should stimulate a new interest in writing generally so that the Virgin Islands literary landscape will experience a new surge of literary works. Critical study of these Virgin Islands writers, then, will provide not only other Caribbean scholars and Black Americans a new body of work to consider, but will also generally substantiate the literary attributes of the Virgin Islands. More significantly, however, this study should be useful in helping to enhance the current literary offerings at the University of the Virgin Islands, my home institution, either by adding to the Caribbean literature courses or by strengthening the Virgin Islands literature course which has been attempted on occasion. This,

hopefully, will be only one step in the process of bringing Virgin Islands literature into the mainstream of its dual currents - the Caribbean and the United States.

## CHAPTER I

### THE VIRGIN ISLANDS: ITS PEOPLE, AND THEIR LITERATURE

The United States Virgin Islands, one of the major tourist destinations in the Caribbean, advertises its beauty, tranquil waters, and soothing leeward breezes as its premier selling points. This bit of the United States in the Caribbean consists of three large islands, St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John and forty islets and keys. While it is a tropical playground to many and an investment opportunity to others, it is home to those who have roots planted in the early Danish settlement and its accompanying slavery as well as to those who have elected to make it their place of abode. Although the Virgin Islands of today entices with its beauty and tranquillity, it is not so far removed from its turbulent past replete with political turmoil, a gruesome slave trade, natural disasters, and the uprisings and revolutions of a people struggling to emerge from the sands of oppression.

The Virgin Islands is located about 1,440 miles southeast of New York, to which many Virgin Islanders migrated in the early 1900s; forty miles east of Puerto Rico, its nearest Caribbean neighbor; 639 miles northwest of Trinidad and 800 miles east of Jamaica, the two largest island nations in the Caribbean; and 4,120 miles from Denmark, home of its first colonial settlers. Each island has certain basic characteristics which have contributed to its development. For example St. Croix has fertile plains and valleys which were suitable for sugarcane cultivation in the days when sugar was "king." St. Thomas, on the other hand, is more mountainous, with picturesque landscapes, white sandy beaches, and a superb harbor, important to trade during the early years and a major asset to today's tourist industry. St. John, by contrast, has steep mountains, cliffs, and narrow valleys and has never been conducive to cultivation, although sugarcane did flourish in the valleys for a while (Hill 29).

In many ways the history of the Virgin Islands parallels the history of other Caribbean islands and in some ways also parallels the history of enslaved Africans throughout the Western hemisphere. However, it does

possess its own background which produced the writers responsible for the poetic words being analyzed in this study. Significantly, one of those poets, J. Antonio Jarvis, is considered the preeminent historian of the Virgin Islands. In fact, his biographer, Addelita Cancryn calls him "the only man of letters ever produced by the Virgin Islands since this tropical paradise became a possession of the United States" (1) and adds that he was "the intellectual father of his native land" (2). While much of Jarvis' historical data are taken from journals and travel diaries of some early settlers, his Brief History of the Virgin Islands has served as a primary source for a majority of subsequent historians. Surprisingly, noting that at the end of Brief History of the Virgin Islands Jarvis almost apologizes for not having completed a regular bibliography although he does provide a list of materials consulted, Cancryn suggests that he does not qualify as a historian in the scholarly sense of the word. Nevertheless, she insists that Jarvis was a significant historian because of his interpretation of people and events in the Virgin Islands: "[H]e interpreted their history in a way that no one else did, or possibly could. His love of the islands and deep insight into thoughts and feelings of the people qualified him as a historian in ways that are probably more important than scholarship for the task he sought to accomplish" (75).

Given the regard with which Jarvis' work is usually viewed, it seems natural, then, that his account of the history of the territory should also serve as a significant source for the background information provided in this study. In 1493 when Christopher Columbus embarked on his second voyage, he first came upon the island known to its early inhabitants, the Carib and the Arawak Indians, as Ay-Ay. Columbus named it Santa Cruz or Island of the Holy Cross. This is the island today known as St. Croix (15). In fact, Columbus is credited with naming all the islands supposedly for St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins (16). Of the two groups of indigenous inhabitants, the Arawaks are described as the more mild mannered, while the Caribs were described by Jarvis as fierce and unconquerable (19) and by Isaac Dookhan as the most warlike (26). Unfortunately, these early inhabitants, while able to defend themselves against their own kind, were no match for the ruthless Europeans who invaded their homeland. According to Jarvis, when Charles V of Spain feared that the Caribs would one day rise up and

dispute the claims of wealthy Spaniards to their land, he ordered them hunted down and exterminated (24). Similarly, in his history, Valdemar Hill, Sr. writes, "The Carib Indians, the first Virgin Islanders, withered and died under the steady attacks of the white colonists" (17).

Over two hundred years of Danish rule commenced in the early seventeenth century when the Dutch introduced the Danes to the West Indies. The first settlement established by Erik Nielsen Smit in 1665 was not successful because of attacks by privateers, sickness, devastating hurricanes, and a lack of support from Denmark (Dookhan 33-36). The new colony established in 1671 saw the installation of the Danish West India Company as the ruling arm of Denmark in the Caribbean. Immediately, forts, including Bluebeard and Blackbeard towers, named for the infamous pirates, were constructed (Jarvis 33). The colony developed under the leadership of its first governor, Jorgen Iversen whose tenure commenced in 1672. He was succeeded by Nicholas Esmi. To a large degree St. Thomas was a penal colony because many of the settlers were there against their will (Jarvis 35-36). In fact, Dookhan indicates that sixty-two of those original settlers had been recruited from prisons and places of ill repute while the 116 company employees were indentured immigrants contracted to serve the company for a period of from three to five years (40).

As the Danish crown acquired more property, expanding its holdings from just St. Thomas to St. John and St. Croix as well, it became necessary to import laborers to work the many sugar and cotton plantations that were being developed. Because the Danish settlers were either unsuited to the task or unwilling to work, the Danes began their slave trade in 1681 or 1682 under the administration of Governor Nicholas Esmi through the Danish West India and Guinea Company (Jarvis 43). Most of the Africans brought to the Danish West Indies were Ashanti, Senegalese and Ivory Coast natives and some also hailed from Nigeria and the Cameroon region (45). Noted historian, Valdemar Hill, Sr. suggests that because the slaves were taken from all walks of African life, most shipments included a few chiefs, priests, and witch doctors who had some ability to lead and organize. They became the nucleus for continuing the culture, customs, practices, and heritage of their native West Africa (15).

Today, that heritage is evident in the native music, and dance, namely the cariso, quelbe, and bamboula, and also in traditions such as carnival, the use of herbs for healing, and the belief in obeah and "jumbies." The ever present market square on each island, as well as the moko jumbies (stilt dancers) who perform at carnival and other festivals, and the use of Anancy stories to entertain and to teach are all part of the culture inherited from those who were its keepers over two centuries ago. However, the rich tapestry of Virgin Islands cultural inheritance supersedes the music, folklore, and medicine, for from that heritage also emerged leaders such as Queen Mary, General Buddhoe, Kanta and Klas, D. Hamilton Jackson, and others who were instrumental in securing basic rights for the people of the Virgin Islands. It appears that the colonists' efforts to prevent rebellion by engaging in purposeful tribal fragmentation were unsuccessful because there were sufficient leaders among the enslaved Africans to carry on the traditions brought from the motherland and to take the necessary stands against injustice. Hill points out that "because there was little contact with the moving world of commerce at St. Thomas, the blacks on St. John, mostly from the Amina tribe, preserved their individuality for a long time. Their tribal characteristics remained with them, and they maintained with great persistence their racial purity" (15). Hill's observation is significant in as much as the leaders of the several uprisings in the Virgin Islands, particularly the one in 1733 in St. John and the 1848 rebellion on St. Croix, emerged from among those whose sense of self and commitment to justice had not been contaminated by the commercial atmosphere on St. Thomas.

As was the case in virtually every situation in which Africans were enslaved, the colonizers imposed heinous punishments upon the enslaved for the smallest infractions. The uprisings which resulted from such inhumane treatment were, therefore, inevitable. One such uprising took place on St. John in 1733, when the Africans rebelled against the inhumane treatment being meted out by the Danish plantation owners who were growing richer and more rapacious as time went on (Jarvis 46). The unbearable conditions were compounded by a drought in the spring and summer of 1733, a hurricane in July, and an insect plague later that year. To add insult to injury, the workers were being threatened with famine when

another hurricane destroyed the remaining crops (Dookhan 167). This then was the climate which precipitated one of the most significant events in Virgin Islands history. The well orchestrated revolt left soldiers dead and the slaves in control of the fort. For several months the slaves held the estates and everything of value on St. John, despite the desperate attempts of the Danes to regain control. Realizing that their efforts were in vain, the Danes recruited assistance from Martinique where the French had a stronghold. With the aid of 400 French soldiers and all the available Danish and other military men, including a detachment of Africans from St. Thomas, a concerted effort was made to roust the rebellious Africans. However, realizing that their enslavers had recruited sufficient reinforcement whose intent was to capture and punish them, many slaves committed suicide (Jarvis 46-47). Many of the Africans on St. John were reported to be of the Amina tribe, said to be "of independent spirit and bellicose disposition." As all hope of escaping the combined forces closing in on them vanished, hundreds of slaves plunged to their death over the cliffs of Mary's Point. According to Hill, "This form of protest - suicide - was prevalent among the blacks of the West Indies because they believed in a legend that all deceased slaves would be reborn in Africa" (20).

Another significant event which holds prominence in every history written of the United States Virgin Islands and which informs much of the early literature is the uprising on St. Croix which led to the emancipation of slaves in the then Danish West Indies. While the Danish Government had outlawed the slave trade in 1792, it was not abolished until 1803. However, the colonies did not immediately desist from buying and selling blacks. Knowledge of this travesty incensed the slaves who plotted to gain their freedom. Under the leadership of Moses Gottlieb, known as General Buddhoe, the enslaved Africans demanded their freedom, which was granted on July 3, 1848 by Governor-General, Peter von Scholten (Jarvis 50-51).

As was common in most colonial societies, the church played a significant role in the development of the Virgin Islands. At the time when the Danish West India Company was synonymous with the government, governors insisted that the Sabbath be observed and therefore made attendance at Lutheran services compulsory. However, the role of the Dutch



Reformed church cannot be minimized. According to Jarvis it became the most important church in St. Thomas and maintained that status for many years (57). However, although both the Lutheran Church and the Dutch Reformed Church were important in the over-all life of the colony, the Moravian Church was instrumental in Christianizing and educating the black residents of the islands. Men such as Leonard Dober founded missions, schools, and welfare services in 1732 to provide for the slaves. It is reported that sometimes missionaries permitted themselves to be chained with the slaves in the field or in their huts just so they could teach them the tenets of the new faith. The behavior of the Moravians might be perceived as benevolent; however, despite all they did to improve the lot of enslaved Africans, they were themselves slave owners and did not willingly give up their human possessions. It was not until the Anti-Slavery Society of England refused to fraternize with the Moravian Elders at the Unity Conference because of their status as slave owners, that the Moravian church set its slaves free in 1844, four years before the Emancipation proclamation (Jarvis 58-59). It would seem that Jarvis either ignored or was not cognizant of the contradictory nature of the church both as slave owner and benefactor, and of the dastardly role played by Christianity, in particular, in propagating slavery, for he gives the Christian church far too much credit for fostering a humane environment:

It is not difficult to evaluate the work of the churches during the years they existed on the islands. Perhaps more than anything they were responsible for the spirit of resignation which helped to keep the peace most of the time. They rendered valuable social aid to the sick, both physically and spiritually; they fostered education for white and black, to a small extent, it is true, but without their work these islands must have been more barbarous indeed. They supplied the only entertainment the poor people could get, both as slaves and later on as free men. (62)

Ironically, his observation reveals the true reason for the church's benevolence - to keep the enslaved Africans docile and minimize any chance of rebellion. It also reveals something of Jarvis' attitude toward his African ancestors and contravenes his earlier criticism of the clergy in his poem, "Comment."

As the colony continued to grow and develop, it made strides both in government and education. A number of public schools as well as St. Thomas College were established. The colony earned the right in 1864 to elect a Colonial Council, and education became compulsory. However, despite these strides, the Virgin Islands was beset by a series of calamities. In July, 1867 one of the worst hurricanes struck, killing more than three hundred people. Then in November of the same year an earthquake shook the colony, and this was soon followed by a tidal wave which terrorized the awestruck inhabitants (78). Natural disasters such as these were so common in the territory, as well as the rest of the Caribbean, that they became one of the central themes addressed by most early twentieth century poets.

While the Virgin Islands continued to bounce back from natural disasters, it also experienced ongoing internal strife occasioned by the harsh treatment meted out on laborers even in the aftermath of emancipation. It is little wonder then that in its early history, the colony would experience at least two other major uprisings. The labor revolt of 1878 in St. Croix was led by Mary Thomas, a cane cutter known as "Queen Mary." A number of plantations were burned during this revolt (Dookhan 228). Although little is known about the woman herself, the story of Queen Mary, a Virgin Islands "shero" immortalized in song, is known by all Virgin Islanders. Hill describes her as "an ordinary canefield worker who had a genius for leadership" and notes that she had no aversion to killing (49). According to historical accounts, thirty years after the Emancipation Proclamation had been signed, the situation for workers on St. Croix was little improved. They were still in bondage - forced to sign an annual contract that bound them to the plantation and meager wages. On October 1, 1878, rather than sign the annual contract, the workers revolted, setting fire to the town of Frederiksted and all the sugar works and canefields. The names of three women surface as leaders of this uprising, Queen Matilda, known as Bottom Belly, Queen Agnes, and Queen Mary, but it is Queen Mary who figures most prominently in leading the workers to seek justice. After Danish troops intervened and the smoke cleared, Frederiksted as well as fifty-one sugar plantations had been completely destroyed. The uprising resulted in the Labor Laws of 1879 under which workers were given a wider choice of jobs and improved living

conditions ("4 Great Sherioes" 34). For her role in the uprising, Queen Mary was captured by Danish soldiers, dragged to town between two horses, and sent to Denmark for investigation. The Danish government later pardoned Queen Mary and memorialized her by placing her image, along with those of two of her lieutenants, on the Danish West Indian twenty and forty cent silver coins (Hill 49). Hill further observes, "In those days, like in the early days of African history, the women were fully liberated in spirit, and displayed courage and leadership which oftentimes surpassed the men" (49).

Hill's observation might explain, in part, the role of women in yet another revolt which came in the wake of the Danes' inhumanity to the coal workers who demanded a pay increase and payment in gold or its equivalent ((Jarvis 87). Although both men and women worked at coaling the ships, the majority were women. The preponderance of women in this industry might be connected to another African tradition- that of women as carriers. Ralph and Viola Simmonds offer several reasons for the large number of women coal carriers. First of all women were good at carrying loads (in this case fifty pound baskets of coal) on their heads. Secondly, the wage of two cents per basket was probably considered too small for men. Additionally, the women were not allowed to work on the ships as dock hands, loading the ships, so they were assigned to what was perceived as "lighter" work. Apparently the men who did work in the coaling business were foremen. Viola Simmonds, whose uncle was such a foreman, reports that when she was a child, she took his lunch to him on the docks regularly and observed during these sojourns that the men were never as covered in coal dust as were the women. This suggested to her that the men were not working directly with the coal but were more likely supervising (Interview). Given women's roles in the coaling business, it seems natural that in the uprising of 1892 they were led by a Bamboula dancer named "Queen Coziah." According to Jarvis, "The women were frantic and they had sticks and other weapons brandishing about while they danced and marched ahead of the soldiers who had been sent to disperse them. With their heads wrapped in colorful Madras kerchiefs, and their flashing teeth in black and angry faces, they were not pleasant to look at" (88). Fortunately, the uprising did not result in any bloodshed. The plight of the coal workers and the bamboula dance associated

with the working class emerge as major tropes in the early poetry of the Virgin Islands which will be examined later in this study.

Ongoing injustice against laborers brought into prominence men such as Judge David Hamilton Jackson who was instrumental in founding the St. Croix Labor Union and moving the Danish government toward much needed reforms. Jackson's efforts led him in 1915 to journey to Copenhagen on behalf of the sugarcane workers (Jarvis 108). His efforts resulted in several reforms, although the Danes were reluctant to admit that he was responsible for any innovations in government they were about to implement. The most significant outcome of Jackson's sojourn was the gaining of freedom of the press (110).

In 1917, after fifty years of sporadic negotiations, the islands were transferred from Denmark to the United States. Although the date of sale was January 17, 1917, the actual exchange of ratifications of the treaty and formal transfer did not take place until March 31, 1917, the date still celebrated today as Transfer Day (116). The magnitude of this event can never be forgotten as annual celebrations, including reenactments of the transfer ceremony are observed. Additionally, many poets, past and present, have written compositions commemorating this event and Creque's musical composition, "The Upward Way," expresses his attitude toward the islands having come under American rule.

During the first fourteen years of American rule, the islands were governed by the Navy with various Naval officers serving as governor. It was not until 1931 that civilian rule was established, at which time the islands were placed under the Department of the Interior by President Herbert Hoover (155). When Hoover visited on March 25, 1931, he was the first United States president to so honor the territory. However, his reference to the islands as " 'an effective poorhouse' and his lamenting the United States ever acquiring the territory created quite a furor" (Jarvis 159).

Hoover's first appointee was Paul M. Pearson, a Quaker, who served as governor from 1931 to 1935. He left his mark on the architecture of the islands having modernized many public buildings. "He taught the people the value of cooperation, the power of concerted action, and showed them how they could 'let down their buckets' to find the very means of subsistence at

hand instead of looking abroad." However, among his greatest dreams was developing the islands for the benefit of winter residents and pleasure seeking tourists. "He had the forward-looking attitude of the man who knows that life is a constant struggle, and during his term of office he never let a moment pass without putting the interests of the islands before the American people." He enlisted every means at his command to portray their real beauty, as well as their potential and present value (Jarvis 187).

At the time of Pearson's appointment, legislative authority resided in two colonial councils, one for St. Croix and one for St. Thomas and St. John. These hold overs from Danish rule consisted both of members elected by the populace and a lesser number appointed by the King (Bough and Macridis 18). However, with the advent of American civil government, major responsibilities, such as contracting for the employment of and fixing salaries of employees of the Virgin Islands government, were accorded the Secretary of Interior (40).

Not much changed in the structure of government until the appointment of Lawrence W. Cramer as governor heralded the hope for a new Organic Act. The passage of the Organic Act of 1936, an act which still serves as the constitutional document of the Virgin Islands, was one of the most significant events in the territory's history because it provided greater self-determination for the people. Specifically, it defined the respective powers of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, and provided for legislatures completely elected by the people. While the idea of an Organic Act was mentioned in Governor Cramer's inaugural address, the realization of the dream grew out of the efforts of David Hamilton Jackson and Rothschild Francis who had worked tirelessly for seventeen years against great odds to secure this basic right for their people (Jarvis 230-31). The magnitude of this event is captured in the words of other historians as well. For Dookhan, "The Act brought the Virgin Islands to the forefront of political and constitutional development in the West Indies" (281). Hill says, "After many decades of struggle on the part of the natives of the Islands for citizenship, civil government and freedom of the press, a new era of political self-determination for the masses in the Virgin Islands was ushered in" (90).

One might wonder what kind of complicated society would result from a history rife with natural disaster, colonial brutality, and the feistiness of an enslaved people struggling to come into their own. In addition, what kind of people grew out of a colony politically affiliated with a European power which had little real involvement in its development but ruled with an iron hand from thousands of miles away? The complex texture of the Virgin Islands fabric is in part responsible for that imitative quality of which Gordon Lewis speaks disparagingly. But that same multi-faceted experience also allowed for the protrusion of Africanisms from which Virgin Islanders cannot hide. It seems that the descendants of two races - one which contrived the most heinous crimes against the other and that other the recipient of the punishment - are in a natural state of conflict. This is reflected in their need to imitate and emulate the one side of their heritage while seeking to address the atrocities perpetrated against the other side of the self. This dichotomy is a feature evident in the works of Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis.

In describing the Virgin Islander descended from a people once regarded as property, Jarvis writes:

There is a servility mixed with rebellious independence of spirit that often causes amusing situations. The people are imitative, but not of the virtues of foreigners. They readily accept the weaknesses of whites, but if those whites are too lenient, or too forgiving, they lose caste. The variety of the captured tribes, together with the thousand and one European stocks, mingled socially, biologically and psychologically have produced a strange hybrid known as the Virgin Islander, less puzzling in St. Croix, but from St. Thomas quite unpredictable as to behavior. (53-54)

He adds further that the Negro slaves developed no folk music (a point which can be contested) and had no incentive toward any typically Negro forms of worship in religion, but instead were duly constituted Moravians, Anglicans, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Dutch Reformed, and all the other denominations patronized by their masters (54). Jarvis' assessment continues, "Even their legends are legends of white folk colored over and mutilated to fit local conditions. . . . There are no legendary heroes, white or black, whose deeds are sung or told in the history of the Virgin Islands. Such remarkable figures as are found must be dressed before they may be seen and fully appreciated" (54). This comment demonstrates Jarvis' insensitivity to

his own history, for the carisos "Clear De Road," "Queen Mary," and one sung about D. Hamilton Jackson tell of legendary heroes and their deeds, as does Gimenez's vernacular poem, "General Budhoe," in praise of one of the leaders of the 1848 emancipation struggle. Further, the attitude of imitation which Jarvis describes seems to inform his poetry as well as that of his contemporaries, for stylistically much of his work is dressed in the robes of English romanticism. He utilizes the sonnet form quite often and frequently writes of seascapes and landscapes in the vein of Wordsworth and others while ignoring the rich African rhythms surrounding him.

While Jarvis is critical of his compatriots, Hill provides a different point of view. He suggests that at the time of the emancipation, the blacks in the Danish West Indies outnumbered the whites by more than ten to one, and unfortunately, together the two groups never constituted a society or a community. Instead, there were the white colonists on one hand and the black slaves on the other, each constituting an entirely distinct social group separated by race and the rigid economic structure of the artificial society, occasioned by the existence of both groups in a common geographic space. He continues, "Neither was a normally balanced social group, for each had been up-rooted from its normal environment and had lost in the process the traditional social sanctions and the spiritual basis of social life." Tripled with these two groups were the mulattos who were still apart both from the white and the black elements of the population (33-34). This feeling of separation continued to the time of the transfer, for neither group had developed a sense of belonging to the Virgin Islands. In fact, the Danes always considered Denmark their home to which they would some day return. On the other hand, the blacks were never made citizens of Denmark but remained Danish subjects throughout the period of Danish rule (35).

Periodically, the question is raised as to why there are no remnants of the Danish language in the Virgin Islands. Perhaps this phenomenon has more to do with the attitude of the Danish colonizers than with the language aptitude of Virgin Islanders, for Jarvis clearly illustrates the ability of the Virgin Islander to grasp new languages. He says that Virgin Islanders are very imitative, adaptable, and self-possessed. Additionally, Hill indicates that the Danes had never intended to educate blacks to the extent that they became a

social and economic threat. Their intention was to provide a limited amount of education so that they could read, write, and understand the Bible in English (52). Besides the rationale already provided, it is generally believed that because much of the trade during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth was with English speaking people and because most of the books and magazines reaching the islands were printed in English, it became the dominant language. Additionally, the language of the schools from 1850 was English. Danish was offered only in the upper grades, not as the mother tongue, but as a foreign language. Another factor responsible for the prominence of English was the printing of government publications in both Danish and English, so there was no urgency to learn Danish. According to Hill, "The language, mores, and the plantation system of agriculture, the political organization were all borrowed from the British West Indies rather than from the Danish State" (53), a factor which helped to shape many aspects of Virgin Islands life, including the literature. This conclusion is borne out by Jarvis who indicates that some of the people, unable to read and write, could quote readily from the great authors and were apt at epigram and repartee. They knew of Robin Hood and King Arthur, of Henry the Eighth and Victoria, but of Christian the Fifth of Denmark they were entirely ignorant (189). It seems, then, that the people of the Danish West Indies were completely immersed in English and the Danish colonizers did little to insure that their mother tongue would predominate.

Regardless of the dominant language, the social and intellectual environment which produced Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis appeared to be heavily European. This might be due in part to the subtle destruction of self esteem among blacks which occurred after emancipation. Hill suggests that because the former slaves were separated from their native ways of life in Africa, they emulated what they could observe of white culture and came to accept many white values. This aspiration, whether conscious or unconscious, toward the status of whites, led to a forsaking of the African portion of their background (Hill 36). This perception of white superiority is responsible in large part for the nature of creative works produced by Virgin Islanders during the first half of the century. This is why Hill maintains that when the descendants of enslaved Africans started to create, they had no



choice but to use European languages and European artistic forms because they had already been imbued with the belief that African speech, values, and ways were inferior. However, he suggests that in content and style, their originality overpowered the European influences, oftentimes producing something neither European nor African, but distinctly West Indian (37).

This West Indian creativity is most readily observable in artistic forms such as the Virgin Islands quadrille and the accompanying quelbe music which Dimitri Copeman describes as a synthesis of Africa and Europe in the Caribbean. In describing the quelbe, he calls it a fusion of bamboula rhythms and chants, cariso songs and melodies, mixed with the old European fife and drum music, and the various quadrilles, minuets, and jigs. The rustic nature of the music was enhanced by the homemade instruments used (40).

The ingenuity responsible for the development of the quelbe is as much a part of the heritage of Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis as the Convent School of the Roman Catholic Church which Jarvis says was the alma mater of many a businessman and gentle lady (127). Clearly, these writers lived at a time when the European influence was overpowering. As Jarvis notes, the homes of the 1930s were "still in the dreadful stage of Victorian stuffiness and over decoration" (198).

Historian, educator, and cultural expert, Ruth Moolenaar, says that at the time Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis wrote, the intellectual atmosphere was "higher" than that of today. By higher she means more academic and perhaps more European. She tells of writer, musician, and businessmen, Adolph "Ding" Sixto having introduced classical music to the community, adding that he held concerts in his home and developed a kind of appreciation for music in the community. Because of men like Sixto and bandmaster Alton Adams, the average person knew about the musical "masters." Besides, there was nothing else to talk about so people talked about literature and music. That, she says, was the general atmosphere (Interview).

In the estimation of Dr. Orville Kean whose family was part of the intellectual elite, the intellectual climate of the 1940s was Romantic. He said there was a Romantic intellectual mindset, characterized by activities such as playing the piano and speaking several languages by those who wanted to

attain the expression of what it meant to be human. Jarvis, Creque, and Gimenez were part of the educated elite - those seen as cultivated. He adds that reading music was a mark of literacy and that music and poetry provided access to the sublime and the profound (Interview).

An illustration of this penchant for the arts, but one which also underscores the adaptive genius of the Virgin Islands, is revealed in a 1933 letter from Governor Paul M. Pearson to Dr. Arthur Howe, President of Hampton Institute in Virginia. Pearson tells of the ingenuity of the students at George Washington School in St. Thomas in making musical instruments for an orchestra. The fifty piece band was comprised of flutes made from papaya stems, drums constructed of cheese boxes and goat skin, and other instruments made from hollowed out gourds and pan covers, and lemonade bottle stoppers. He brags, "They are now practicing Brahms's Hungarian Dance, which was found at the back of an old copy of the Etude." Pearson's description of the students' band is reminiscent of the manner in which the *quelbe* bands developed. This ingenuity is one of the ingredients of Virgin Islands culture which informs the poetry, for although there is a concerted effort to dress the content in European garb, the Africanness of that content surfaces, revealing the dichotomous mix of the Virgin Islander.

This dichotomy or cultural hybrid is characterized for Kean by a robustness of survival, full of many contradictions. However, he observes, "While survival is necessary, once you've survived, you've got to become, and unfortunately, Jarvis and his contemporaries defined becoming in an older sense," [perhaps becoming like the model rather than developing or helping to evolve one's own sense of self] (Interview). In Kean's estimation the changes in the metropole, the introduction of new themes and styles, did not affect artists in the colonies. It appears that the old Romantic version of the art persisted even when new trends were taking place elsewhere. He continues that the backwardness of their vision and the critical atmosphere which created them did not resonate with the new trends (Interview).

Kean's assessment is significant in characterizing the early poetry of the Virgin Islands because it speaks to the works of writers who appear to be one step behind the rest of the literary world. Several factors might account for this less than favorable position. First of all, the isolation occasioned by

geography and political affiliation might be responsible for writers not being at the same level as their contemporaries in other places. Certainly, the new status of American possessions acquired in 1917 separated the Virgin Islands politically from its Caribbean cousins and its location in the Caribbean put it out of the reach of Americans with whom its inhabitants might have shared some affinity. While the islands of the English speaking, those of the French speaking, and also the Dutch speaking Caribbean had support from each other in terms of language, culture, and political affiliation, the Virgin Islands was in a place by itself. Additionally, as has been alluded to earlier, there was no critical climate in which writers could grow and develop, so an essential part of the literary equation was absent. The Virgin Islands' inability to keep pace culturally with the metropole is part of the same phenomenon which, for years, saw fashions, music, and other trends coming to the Virgin Islands as they were exiting other locales.

Characterization of the Virgin Islands as literarily isolated does not suggest that it was completely cut off from the rest of the world, for certainly there was much economic trade between the territory and other jurisdictions. Significant also was the presence of educators from the mainland whose reports of living conditions in St. Croix stand in stark contrast to the romanticized life of the elite portrayed by Jarvis and his contemporaries.

The literature of the Virgin Islands grows out of the many social, political, and cultural dichotomies which shape its existence, so that the result is an emulative, imitative, style, which in some respects denies one segment of a heritage and expresses the adaptive genius of the other half of that heritage.

Gordon Lewis in his history provides an interesting assessment of the Virgin Islander. He says that Virgin Islanders do not fully recognize and appreciate their oneness with the rest of the Caribbean and, instead, prefer to highlight their association with the United States. In this regard he suggests that many historians, including Valdemar Hill and Darwin Creque, promote the attitude of praise for the United States. He further says, "Not even Jarvis, the remarkable historian of the Creole patrimony, could ever bring himself to undertake a thoroughgoing critique of the American colonial system, despite

the fact that he saw clearly enough at times the damage it was doing to Virgin Islands life and society" (21).

Lewis's assessment might illustrate why all three poets wrote pieces in praise of the United States and its leaders. In denying the rest of the Caribbean, the Virgin Islander was denying his/her Africanness. In a sense even the reaction to Jarvis' The Virgin Islands and Their People is a manifestation of that denial. The controversy stirred by that book was directed particularly at the chapter entitled "Superstitions, Witchcraft, and Necromancy Undermine Health and Morals" which addresses the people's belief in obeah or voodoo. It includes tales of werewolves and ghosts and details some of the potions women supposedly prepared to cast a spell over the objects of their affection. Virgin Islanders, both in the territory and abroad, took exception to Jarvis' representing these beliefs as still being held in the 1940s. So strident was the opposition that a resolution was passed by the legislative assembly to remove Jarvis from his position with the school system. However, the acting governor refused to honor the resolution and Jarvis was able to retain his principalship (Cancryn 91-92).

Reproof and censure notwithstanding, Jarvis' contributions as a writer have, since his death, been recognized by political leaders, educators, and historians alike, and he is regarded as one of the pioneers of Virgin Islands literature. This literature, to which Jarvis contributed significantly, includes a number of histories, some mere travelogues by various Europeans who settled during the early days. However, there are more serious historical accounts which have been written including Jarvis' Brief History of the Virgin Islands and other sources being used in this study. Indeed, Jarvis' contention that the Virgin Islands produced no original literature or music is erroneous because it represents the viewpoint of one steeped in the European tradition of assumed superiority which fails to recognize some forms of music as forerunners of poetry. His assertion is further characterized by Glenn "Kwabena " Davis, in an article entitled "V.I. Music: How Sweet It Is," as subjecting the reader to a European stereotypical summation of African music. He adds that this view has been disproved time and time again (24).

The role of the oral tradition in the development of poetry is articulated by Gordon Rohler in his introduction to an anthology of oral and

related poetry from the Caribbean. He defines the oral tradition as "a heritage of song, speech and performance visible in such folk forms as the litanic work songs, chants, battle songs, Queh Queh songs, hymns, thousands of calypsos, mentos and reggae songs, sermons of both the grass-roots and established churches, riddles and jokes and word-games" (3). For him music has been the means of preserving linkages between the Caribbean and non European sensibility and has become the container of a wealth of alternative rhythms, a few of which have begun to inform the poetry of the Caribbean. He further maintains that songs were the Caribbean's first poems (3).

In the Virgin Islands that oral tradition includes jumbi stories, Anancy stories, and the musical form known as the cariso. As recently as the early 1950s, it was common for families to sit around, particularly on moonlight nights and tell stories either of the escapades of Anancy, the spider-man of West African heritage or stories of people's encounters with jumbies, those entities known in other cultures as spooks or spirits. However, in addition to that story telling tradition was the tradition of conveying messages or insulting another person through the medium of song. This was the function of the cariso. Historian and culturalist, Glenn "Kwabena" Davis, explains that the cariso, which means "carried like so," was significant in shaping the history of the Virgin Islands because it was used during the uprisings of both 1848 and 1878 to alert the laborers to the plans being made in their march toward freedom. He says that every strategy and every segment of every plan was revealed through the cariso (25). Another significant feature of the cariso is that it recounts important events in Virgin Islands history and also immortalizes heroes such as Queen Mary, General Buddhoe, and D. Hamilton Jackson.

Interestingly, Jarvis seems to recognize the shortcomings of the literary elite of which he was a part, for in his The Virgin Islands and Their People he says that none of the several writers he names, including Creque and Gimenez, added to the understanding of the various dialects and picturesque speech that were once identified with the Virgin Islands. He continues, "None made an impassioned plea for justice, or sang a new hymn to beauty; none interpreted the sensuous languor of the tropics or put a legend in unforgettable language" (166). While his criticism might be appropriately

applied to the derivative format of much of the poetry, his assessment of content misses the mark. Jarvis fails to recognize, even in his own writing, attention to issues such as the plight of the coal carrier or the depiction in words of the glorious beauty of Magens Bay. He fails to recognize in Gimenez a spokesman for the downtrodden and a man who captures the speech of the populace in his collection Virgin Islands Folklore and Other Poems. It is difficult to ascertain what kind of writing would have been acceptable to Jarvis. Nonetheless, the writing being produced at the time does what literature is intended to do. It not only reflects the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values of the time, but through the manipulation of language, captures experiences in a form which gives them perpetuity. As works of art, the poems present vivid mental images of scenes in nature, events, and people, providing an added dimension to the subject. In so doing, the reader of Creque's "Hurricane" relives the fear of the people wondering if their houses will survive the onslaught and feels the pain and despair of Gimenez's "Old Coal Heaver." Additionally, the literature chronicles important events and provides some insight into the people's way of life through various tributes and works addressed to individuals, but does so in a way that makes those events and people live once more. It expresses the community's displeasure with political matters such as the effects of prohibition on the Virgin Islands economy and shares the elation which accompanied the landing of Charles Lindbergh on St. Thomas, and as Laurence Perrine characterizes literature, serves as a gear for stepping up the intensity and increasing the range of experience. The literature, in other words, serves as a glass for clarifying the experience (Perrine 524).

In addition to his failure to appreciate the literary efforts of his contemporaries, Jarvis is not cognizant of the significance of the early songs, particularly the cariso and the bamboula which provide impassioned pleas for justice and immortalize the contributions of Queen Mary and Buddhoe. These songs, by Rohler's definition, are precursors of Virgin Islands written poetry and, like the written poetry, provide a window through which early Virgin Islands society can be viewed. They select, combine, and organize the experiences, saying more, more intensely than any other medium.

Another significant element on the literary scene was the newspaper. Not only did it provide a forum for concerns of the populace to be aired, but it also served as an outlet for a number of poets. In fact, many of Jarvis' and some of Creque's poems often appeared in the Daily News. The newspaper also frequently featured another important element of Virgin Islands literature, the newspaper narrative. These narratives, often written in an attempted version of the English Creole, address important social and political issues and date back to Lionel Roberts' "Hait Boobie," which appeared in the Emancipator. The tradition continues with Rufus Martin's "Undah De Market," which appeared in The Home Journal in the 1960s and 1970s and carries over to Arona Petersen's more recent renditions in The Daily News.

However, beyond these offerings, there were poets like Aubrey Anduze, Isador Paiwon, and Erica Lee. There were historians and politicians who wrote and at the turn of the century Adolph "Ding" Sixto's prose piece Time and I, or Looking Forward was published.

While Virgin Islands poetic offerings today are more plentiful, more diverse, and perhaps more original stylistically, the contribution of the early writers cannot be minimized. Although they depended heavily on the European examples available to them, they did write, they did create, and they did contribute to the Virgin Islands literary landscape. Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis are among the earliest poets published and are generally acknowledged by writers of history as the Virgin Islands' first poets. However, there are other common elements which link these men. They are all artists in more than one discipline. Creque, in addition to being a poet, was a pianist, organist, and composer. Gimenez also was a musician and composer and Jarvis painted and sketched. Additionally, when the total works of all three men are considered, there is a sufficient body of poetry available for study and there are also the musical compositions of Creque and Gimenez and Jarvis' histories and dramas which provide a fairly complete picture of their literary abilities. The contributions of these men to Virgin Islands literary history has been recognized to some degree, but the magnitude of those contributions is yet to be realized.

## CHAPTER II

### "SHOW ME YOUR COMPANY AND I'LL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE": LITERARY INFLUENCES AND INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE CARIBBEAN, BLACK AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

In 1932 when J. Antonio Jarvis' first poetry collection, Fruits in Passing, was published, the literary movement known as Modernism was already in vogue. In fact, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, there had been a turning away from Romanticism as writers such as Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Charles Dickens, and Henry James sought to provide a truthful representation in literature of reality - that is contemporary life and manners (Mack 877). The hallmarks of Romanticism: imagination, historicism and its glorification of the past, subjectivity, and the exaltation of the ego and the individual gave way to truth, contemporaneity, and objectivity, concerns of the naturalists and realists (Mack 878). According to Richard Long and Eugenia Collier, by the last decade of the nineteenth century all the great Romantics were either dead or silent, and in their wake came writers of sentiment and cynicism (115-16). Another writer, Arthur Davis, asserts that this era of which Carl Sandburg and T. S. Eliot were a part, was characterized by anti-Victorianism, antididacticism, and antisentimentalism (5).

However, although these vast changes were occurring on the literary landscape in Europe and the United States, early Caribbean and Virgin Islands literature, comprised mostly of poetry, still reflected the elements of Romanticism being rejected in the metropole. Several factors account for this failure to keep pace. First of all, the geographical isolation of the Caribbean from the continent accounts for the delay in literary and other trends reaching its shores. Secondly, the experience of colonialism created a different mindset among a people who had to first struggle for selfhood and then seek to find some voice for that new found self. To this end, by the time that voice was found, Caribbean writers were employing styles and concepts abandoned by writers in other parts of the world. Thirdly, the educational



system of the Caribbean in the early 1900s was completely European, often with outdated textbooks being the primary source of information for young scholars. This resulted in Caribbean writers imitating what was available to them - outdated European modes of literary expression. Indeed, Peter Blackman, in a 1948 article entitled "Is There a West Indian Literature?" offers several reasons for the derivative nature of Caribbean poetry. Among them is the fact that the English did not develop a new life in the islands with standards comparable to those existing in their homeland. Additionally, until well into the nineteenth century, there were no book shops and in some islands not even a printing press, and the English children were sent home (to England) to school (97). When education was extended to the black West Indian, English patterns of thought and English canons of beauty were taught and accepted even at points where they were hostile to the self-respect of most West Indians (100). It was natural, then, for the writers to imitate what was available to them. It also seems logical that in their imitating, the writers would be anxious to prove themselves worthy by not straying from the forms and even the themes they had been taught to emulate. Marvin Williams, editor of a forthcoming anthology of Virgin Islands poetry, shares the following sentiments about the derivative nature of early Virgin Islands poetry:

These writers represented a largely unvoiced people still locked into a prescriptive and proscriptive colonial society; yet they sought to inscribe their voice within a scribal convention that heretofore had denied them [that] possibility. That imitation occurred is not surprising; that the master tongue remained virtually uninfluenced by [that of the] islands was almost inevitable. (2)

These educational and geographical factors coupled with the social and political intercourse extant between the Virgin Islands and Harlem, and the Virgin Islands and the Eastern Caribbean helped to shape the writing of these early Virgin Islands poets. The book European and African Influences on the Culture of the Virgin Islands cites Virgin Islands musician, Hugo Bornn, who says:

The influences that shaped the native music did not come solely from successive waves of conquerors. Another source was the lively inter-island commerce which existed throughout the nineteenth century. Songs were carried from one island to another by migrant workers, by

ships' crews and cargo workers, and occasionally by political refugees. Some of the songs may still be discovered in different versions in many islands and generally it would be impossible to decide which is the original version. (68)

Apparently, the influence exerted on the music of the Virgin Islands resulting from contacts with its Caribbean neighbors, applied similarly to other aspects of life and culture including literature. Additionally, some of Gimenez's folklore poems like "A Virgin Islander's Letter to Uncle Sam" clearly show that there was significant commerce among the islands.

Although the islands were owned by Denmark, the education to which J. Antonio Jarvis, Cyril Creque, and J. P. Gimenez were exposed was British. Retired educator, Eulalie Rivera, who was born in 1909, writes in her recollection of childhood on St. Croix that literature in the lower grades consisted of Bible stories and English poems (26). Likewise, Charles Turnbull, noted historian and University of the Virgin Islands professor, indicates that education under the Danes was very religious. Bible stories, particularly those which encouraged human love and kindness, were common. Much of the reading came from the Psalms and Proverbs. He adds that even stories which were not taken from the Bible provided moral lessons. The beauty of nature was also stressed in school. Additionally, he states, there was a heavy dose of English literature, a fact corroborated by Elizabeth Michael, Jarvis' sister and Aline Kean, another of his contemporaries. Pilgrim's Progress, Shakespeare's works, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and Rudyard Kipling's writings were among the readings done by students in the Danish West Indies. Nonetheless, despite the predominantly British leanings, students, were exposed to some American literature, particularly Oliver Wendell Holmes and Walt Whitman. Memorization was a significant part of the learning process and also students were encouraged to write their own poems (Interview). It would seem, then, that having been thoroughly immersed in a certain type of literature, students, in their own compositions, would imitate that to which they had been exposed. Certainly, the influence of their early education is evident in the writings of Jarvis, Creque, and Gimenez.

Another factor which helped to shape the style of writing coming out of the Virgin Islands in the 1920s and 1930s was the interaction with educators

from the Eastern Caribbean. While most teachers in the Danish schools were local, a number of them either came from Antigua or, like Emanuel Benjamin Oliver under whom Jarvis worked, had been educated there. Also common, was the practice of sending teachers in training to Antigua in the then British West Indies (then considered the center of learning in the Anglophone Caribbean) to complete their education, so that Virgin Islands teachers to a large extent were exposed to much the same literature which shaped the literature of the rest of the Caribbean (Turnbull. Interview).

Not only is the literary experience through education similar, but the peoples of the Caribbean share the common heritage of dehumanizing enslavement and many of the influences which shaped the literature of the Caribbean in general were also responsible for determining the face of Virgin Islands literature. The experiences of enslavement and colonization, for critics such as Louis James, are in large part responsible for the type of poetry produced by early Caribbean writers. Indeed, James maintains that West Indian literature has grown out of the explosive tensions of diversity (32) and in his estimation is perhaps the richest and most varied field of writing in English to emerge since World War II (10). As will be shown later in this study, a number of the characteristics of Caribbean poetry revealed through its literary history apply to the poetry of the early Virgin Islands as well. However, by the time Jarvis, Gimenez, and Creque came on the literary scene, there was already a body of poetry developing in the rest of the English speaking Caribbean, a Caribbean characterized by Paula Burnett in the introduction to her collection of Caribbean verse as uniquely placed between three poetic traditions - the British, the West African, and the North American (xxiii). The significance of this uniqueness is echoed by Lloyd W. Brown who asserts that the hybrid nature of West Indian culture and history cannot accommodate the tidy exclusive identity of the Western " 'offspring.' " However, while insisting that West Indian literature not be oversimplified as a mere extension of English literature, he cautions that it should also not be defined exclusively in non-Western terms (9). Other critics share these sentiments. In fact, Jeannette Allis maintains that although West Indian literature has not been seen as the expression of a distinct culture, but rather as the extension of Western literature, the literature of one culture cannot be

assessed from the viewpoint of another (xxxi). In addressing this point further, Allis quotes Ismith Khan:

In all societies, the artist is an embodiment of his culture and society. He functions within the framework of his heritage, and through his labors, he adds, enriches and further defines that background. The picture is an entirely different one for the West Indian. . . . No one living in the West Indies is indigenous to the area. . . . Our cities, parks, public buildings, places of worship have nothing whatever to do with the Caribs and the Arawaks; they are bits and scraps of Spain, England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland all held together by the English language. The West Indian artist, therefore, came to define himself, not on terms of his original ancestry, not in terms of the people indigenous to his geography, but in terms of something else and the way in which he sees himself in relation to that something else. (Allis xxxiii)

Khan's assessment provides the appropriate lens for viewing early Caribbean poetry as well as for understanding the misconception of Caribbean literature as merely an extension of something else.

The Caribbean poetic tradition begins with the oral literature of the enslaved Africans and includes not only writers of African descent, but the colonizers and their descendants as well. While there are some songs in African languages, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Caribbean born slaves used the English vocabulary available to them. This tradition includes the "jamma" or work song, featuring the call-and-response structure which came from Africa (Burnett xxx). The satiric song, which ridiculed some aspect of the slave masters' lives is also a part of this as are adapted folk songs (Burnett xxxv). In the Virgin Islands this tradition was expressed in the carisos a form of song used to send messages between different plantations and sometimes to ridicule other persons. It is also the one form of Virgin Islands literature which immortalizes a number of Virgin Islands heroes, "sheroes," and historical events. This oral tradition was expanded with the inclusion of hymns which came with the missionaries, and later with increasing literacy came the newspapers which were often read aloud (Burnett xxxvii). Likewise in the Virgin islands, the local hymns such as "Brother Hopeful" and the sacred songs and solos referred to as Sankeys make up a significant part of the oral tradition.

Very often the vernacular is perceived as the medium of oral literature. However, with the advent of writers such as Michael McTurk, the vernacular crossed the divide from oral to scribal, thus weaning the words from music (Burnett xxxviii). On this point, Brown surmises:

The history of West Indian poetry may be perceived and treated in terms of an evolving cultural consciousness which is manifest in the deliberate articulation of a West Indian identity and in the equally deliberate, though not always successful search for distinctive forms - for a distinctive poetic language. There is more than a coincidental relationship between this latter search for form and the West Indian's poetic quest for a cultural identity. For one of the central paradoxes of West Indian literature has been the historical requirement of using the colonial language, complete with its cultural, literary, and philosophical heritage, in order to describe a West Indian experience which remains rooted in its socio-linguistic inheritance from the West, but which has increasingly insisted on its own non-Western, even anti-Western modes of perception and self-expression. These modes are often the result of fusing English language and English literary tradition, on the one hand, with non-Western and West Indian forms of sensibilities, on the other hand. In effect, the artist's realization of a West Indian selfhood is integrated with the perfection of literary forms that must not be polished for their own sake but are also a reflection of the complex process of self-realization which they describe. (12)

It would appear that since the Virgin Islands oral tradition, through the cariso songs and the Sankey and other hymns, developed much the same way as that of the rest of the Caribbean, it would follow that the development of the scribal tradition also parallels that of the Eastern Caribbean. In fact, the Caribbean version of the pastoral articulated in Brown's text is very evident in the works of Jarvis, Creque, and Gimenez. Interestingly, Jarvis, in describing St. Croix in his book, The Three Islands, says "Driving east toward the Centerline is a drive for a painter in search of the plains of Arcadie or the scene of Millet's Angelus, for the country spreads out in spacious field and low land for miles in all directions" (11). This classical allusion is indicative of Jarvis' knowledge of the Romantics and their possible influence on him.

The Caribbean pastoral in Brown's estimation reflects the intellectual and cultural relationship between the colonial West Indian's writing and its European sources. The colonial need to mimic the mother country is reflected in a slavish imitation of the European pastoral mode (22). For

example, he cites the poem, "Sugar Cane" written in 1794 by James Grainger, a Scottish doctor living in St. Kitts as "a very unimaginative and absurdly pretentious attempt to create what the author calls 'a West Indian Georgic.' " Similarly, Jarvis' "The City Sleeps in Fog" is very reminiscent of William Wordsworth's "Composed upon Westminster Bridge." Louis James concurs with Brown's assessment, adding that familiarity with the European master's way of life, rather than breeding contempt, bred respect and a desire to emulate it. He indicates further, "Even today, English Victorian attitudes to morality, dress and literature still remain, often alongside contradictory African and Indian ways of life, giving a curious sense of double focus" (24). This appraisal is reminiscent of the St. Thomas of the 1920s described in Jarvis' history of the Virgin Islands. Brown further maintains that the Caribbean pastoral has always extolled the beauties of the West Indian landscape to the exclusion of any perceived West Indian experience, or at the most, in conjunction with a patronizing, self-indulgent view of the folks as exotic "swains and 'servants of choice' " (20). While Virgin Islands poets might not have gone so far in their characterization of the inhabitants of the islands, a significant number of their poems extol the beauty of the landscape and very often ignore the presence of people as a part of that landscape.

In addition to treating the landscape, much of the Caribbean poetry written during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dealt with natural cataclysms such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions (Burnett xlv), another feature evident in early Virgin Islands poetry. Other features of early Caribbean poetry evident in the writings of the Virgin Islands include Gimenez's use of vernacular and attention to the Afro-Caribbean belief in obeah. Like the writers of Guyana, who developed a vigorous tradition of patriotic verse toward Great Britain, designed to strengthen new bonds and new allegiances (Burnett 1), the Virgin Islands' poetical forefathers were generous in their tributes to the United States, its military might, and its leaders. There was also, particularly on the part of Creque, attention to developing a sense of patriotic pride in the Virgin Islands itself. According to Burnett, all the territories shared this sense of patriotism to a certain extent, just as they shared the Victorian tradition of loyalty to Britain (1). This is the same tradition carried on by the writers of the Virgin Islands including

Creque, Jarvis, and Gimenez. Burnett characterizes much of what was being written as "unremarkable, late-Victorian verse, spongy with sentiment and soft verbiage." However, she applauds the work of Horatio Nelson Huggins, who wrote what amounts to the Caribbean's first epic poem, a work which addresses the decimation of the Caribs in the region (1). Burnett's discussion of Huggins provides an avenue for viewing one of the few categories in which Virgin Islands poetry deviates from other Caribbean poetry, for she notes that the pathos of the virtual extinction of the Caribs had become a commonplace of the Caribbean literary tradition (11). However, although the Caribs in the Virgin Islands were exterminated in the same manner as Caribs throughout the Caribbean, and while all histories of the Virgin Islands, including Jarvis', record this atrocity, none of the poets being studied here, addresses the issue. It is possible that none of the available European models viewed the extinction of the Caribs as a subject worthy of their poetry and the native writers in like fashion ignored it as an opportunity to voice their sentiments on this vital aspect of Virgin Islands history.

Not surprisingly, Brown's evaluation of the poetry of the nineteenth century is much like Burnett's, for he calls it mediocre and says that this period was the heyday of a Caribbean pastoral in which hackneyed nature verse in the Romantic mode alternates with the colonial's embarrassingly sycophantic verses in praise of the British Empire. He adds that while the hackneyed nature verses and songs of the empire hark back to and celebrate the black colonial's ingrained loyalties to the mother culture, the poems about the black, the Indian, and the poor, represent a major breakthrough in nineteenth-century West Indian poetry (23). Although Brown's criticism is directed specifically at the works of Guyanese Egbert Martin, it is equally applicable to the poetry of the Virgin Islands. For Brown the two aspects of Martin's work and that of other Caribbean poets are not mere contradictions, for "taken together they represent the double-consciousness of an emerging poetic tradition which is still rooted strongly in entrenched loyalties to the literary forms and imperial sovereignty of England, but which is simultaneously beginning to respond to the growing social and ethnic pressures of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century (24-25). Louis James shares similar sentiments on these early writers in his

evaluation of the works of poets such as W. Adolphe Roberts and J. E. McFarlane. For him, they were pioneers of a literature and wrote consciously as West Indians prior to the national political movements. They explored their unique world of sun, sea, poui trees, and poinsettias. "Yet reading these works," James says:

one is conscious of something wrong, of something missing. Ultimately, it is that their literary sensibility is too English. They are using for their models Wordsworth, Rosetti, Tennyson, Swineburne. They do not take into account that a different technique is needed to cope with the different Caribbean situation, with its distinct complex of colours, the subtly different pronunciation and speech rhythms, the absence of such central English themes as the contrasting seasons, and the presence of Caribbean natural rhythms, flat heat, hugely silent night, hurricane, drought. Nevertheless, they were pioneers, both social and, sometimes inadvertently, political (25).

James' assessment of the work of early Caribbean writers is significant as later chapters of this study which specifically examine the works of Virgin Islands writers will reveal marked similarities in the types of subjects addressed and the styles used by the writers. However, that examination will also reveal their ability to transcend the stereotypical images common at that time, and capture the force and tedious duration of a hurricane and the painful, parching anguish of a Caribbean drought.

The dual consciousness which characterizes the poetry of Virgin Islanders is in some ways epitomized by the works of Jamaican Claude McKay, a man of the working class who lived and wrote in both environments with which the poets of the Virgin Islands were affiliated - the Caribbean and the United States. Additionally, McKay, in his early poetry brought the vernacular into the literary tradition, making the first move in the search for a poetic language which could bear the full weight of the Caribbean experience (li). McKay is important to this study because his work will provide an avenue of comparison particularly with the dialect poems of Gimenez and some of Jarvis' tropical reminiscences. Although there was a sense of nationalism developing during the early twentieth century, loyalty to Britain was not perceived as incompatible with loyalty to one's native soil. In fact, poets such as Thomas MacDermot of Jamaica and James Martinez of Belize, who both wrote patriotic and nationalistic verse in a sentimental post-



Victorian style and also tried their hands at vernacular verse are illustrative of the transitional phase which Caribbean poetry was passing through. Even though Gimenez is not mentioned by critics of Caribbean literature, his works clearly show him to be a part of this tradition. According to Burnett, "[b]etween them, they illustrate the tension between the literary and vernacular traditions in Caribbean poetry, a tension which has found a true creative resolution only in the last twenty years" (liii). Brown asserts, "As a host of still flourishing West Indian 'Wordsworths' demonstrate in our own time, the tradition of a bald, colonial derivativeness in West Indian poetry has died hard, if at all" (13). While Brown's judgment might be true to some extent today, the late Cliff Lashley provides a more optimistic perspective in a paper on the political context of West Indian literature. He indicates that this literature is born out of the same impulse as the labor and independence movements - self-interest that expresses itself as patriotism and nationalism. In his examination of the literature he cites Norman Manley who notes that the national movement which brought about the new birth of Jamaica brought with it an upsurge of creative energy. He says, " 'We suddenly discovered that there was a place to which we belonged, and when the dead hand of colonialism was lifted, a freedom of spirit was released and the desert flowered. Our best young men plunged deep into the lives of the people and came up with poems and paintings and with vivid and powerful books' " (8).

Manley's statement points to the acquisition of a sense of self and the movement away from the derivative poetry, at least for some writers, as early as 1938 in Jamaica. However, it appears that the impetus for that type of change came much later in the Virgin Islands. This lack of momentum is part of the uniqueness of the Virgin Islands. It makes the territory part of, yet apart from, the rest of the Caribbean, just as it identifies with the plight of Black America although not being fully a part of that experience. It seems that the Virgin Islands, while walking with the shoes of its geographic siblings on one foot and those of its political cousins on the other, manages to walk with its own gait, thus forging its own footprints in the sand. In this vein, therefore, it is appropriate to examine the relationship which existed between the Virgin Islands and black America generally and Harlem in particular.

The Virgin Islands' relationship to Harlem goes back to the early 1900s when Virgin Islanders became active in a number of movements in the mecca of Black American life. Casper Holstein was busy making philanthropic contributions to the arts; Hubert Harrison, also known as the black Socrates, was among the speakers at the opening of the Schomburg Center and also made a large loan of Negro literature to the center; Ashley Totten was organizing the sleeping car porters; and Ludwig Harrigan, who later served in the Virgin Islands Legislature, was an officer in Marcus Garvey's army. In addition to his philanthropic activities in support of the arts, Holstein, whose name appears in most accounts of the Harlem Renaissance period for his significant monetary contributions, was a champion of the rights of Virgin Islanders both at home and on the mainland. Among his activities were his regular contributions to Marcus Garvey's newspaper, The Negro World repudiating the actions of American officials whom he felt were dealing unfairly with the people of his homeland. Additionally, he was in the forefront of raising funds to send back to the Virgin Islands after the territory had been devastated by a hurricane.

The pilgrimage of Virgin Islanders to Harlem continued over the years, and, in the early 1930s, J. Antonio Jarvis joined the ranks of those seeking to expand their horizons. According to Virgin Islands culturalist and Jarvis associate, Rufus Vanderpool, Jarvis took some of his paintings to New York to see if he could branch out into the new world that was unfurling. Although one of his paintings won third prize in an exhibit in Harlem, for a number of reasons he did not stay long. However, even prior to his sojourn to the mainland, Jarvis' affinity for the writing of some black American poets was known. According to some of his former students he especially liked the works of Countee Cullen and Paul Laurence Dunbar. In fact, his poem, "Paul Laurence Dunbar," appears in one of his collections, Fruits in Passing. Additionally, Cliff Lashley and Eddie Donohue, script writers of the 1986 video, "Poets in Paradise," which presents poems and images from the United States Virgin Islands, refer to Jarvis as having been a part of the Harlem Renaissance. They also cite his poem in response to Countee Cullen's "Yet Do I Marvel," which wonders how God could make a poet black and bid him sing. Jarvis' poem, "I Marvel," which begins, "Yes; I marvel that

you wonder / At the urge within to sing" (Fruits in Passing 88), speaks of the black man's poetic urges as God-given rights and suggests that God's gifts are for everyone. In substantiating his point that Jarvis was partial to Cullen, Vanderpool recalls that it was common for a teacher to write the valedictory address to be delivered by the top ranking student. He says that Jarvis was the teacher who wrote the valedictory address for his graduating class, the class of 1928, and began the speech with the following quote from Cullen, "We have tomorrow bright before us like a flame / But yesterday came before . . ." (Interview). Edward Richards, another Virgin Islands poet who was encouraged to write by Jarvis, recalls that when he was a student, Jarvis read Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, and Claude McKay to his pupils. He said that Jarvis liked Cullen and often recited to his students "Heritage" which begins, "What Is Africa to Me" (Interview). Yet another young man who came under Jarvis' influence, Ernesto Vanterpool indicates that Jarvis liked Dunbar. He said, "He quoted him at the drop of a hat" (Interview). In addition to this, Jarvis' son, Franklin indicated in an interview that once Langston Hughes visited the Virgin Islands and paid Jarvis a visit at his home in Tivoli (Interview). Interestingly, Edward Richards indicates that he himself had been influenced by Langston Hughes, just as he had been by Jarvis.

The Virgin Islands' connection to literary movements in Black America, however, goes beyond Jarvis' recitation of poems by his favorite writers. Both Jarvis and Creque had poems published in Opportunity, a major black publication sponsored by the Urban League. Jarvis also wrote a poem in tribute to Marcus Garvey, the Black Moses of the Harlem Renaissance period. Thus, the interconnections between the Virgin Islands and Harlem during the early 1930s show an influence of culture and literature. In fact, among Jarvis' poems are three which address Harlem specifically, "Harlem Comedy," "Harlem Tragedy," and one reminiscent of McKay's "Tropics in New York," "On Spring in Harlem." Additionally, he wrote a poem in tribute of Paul Laurence Dunbar. The impact of the New Negro movement on the Virgin Islands is not unusual, for in his book, Harlem's Danish-American West Indians, 1899-1964, Geraldo Guirty, a Virgin Islands journalist who lived in Harlem for many years, indicates that there

was a branch of Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association in St. Thomas. He also notes that among the subjects of political activist, Rothschild Francis's black achievement lectures were Paul Laurence Dunbar, George Washington Carver, Phillis Wheatley, Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth, suggesting that the populace of the new territory of the United States was being kept abreast of black American history.

Nevertheless, although some of the major cultural and literary links lie in the Caribbean and Black America, there were also other influences on Virgin Islands writing. For example, Jarvis acknowledged the influence of Longfellow and Byron on his style. Edward Richards, whose work was written in free verse, recalls Jarvis admitting that Richard's work would stand out because it did not follow a pattern. He acknowledged that Richards' work was unlike his own which was patterned after Longfellow and Byron (Interview). Also, when the American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay visited St. Thomas in 1935, she visited Jarvis and autographed his copy of her book, Wine from These Grapes (Franklin Jarvis. Interview). Vanderpool also notes that after Millay's 1931 visit to St. Thomas, she wrote a poem entitled "Epitaph for the Race of Man" to which Jarvis wrote a response "In the Twilight of Man" (Interview). In addition to Jarvis' contact with well known literary figures, Creque too was influenced by the course in Advanced Poetics which he took from the Home Correspondence School in Springfield, Massachusetts.

While much of the connections seem to have been made with Jarvis, it is important to note that because of his position as an educator, journalist, and publisher, Jarvis wielded much influence in the community. Other writers frequently gathered at his home for discussions. In fact, according to those who knew him, Jarvis' home, Tivoli, was a center for the exchange of intellectual ideas. Apparently, Creque and Gimenez were not part of these gatherings which attracted primarily younger men desirous of gleaning knowledge from Jarvis' vast storehouse of wisdom. Nonetheless, Creque and Gimenez interacted with Jarvis and with each other. Additionally, Vanderpool recalls that anybody who wrote, took their work to Jarvis for evaluation. In his words, "He was the divining rod" (Interview).

Just as J. Antonio Jarvis serves as a pivotal figure in Virgin Islands literature, the United States Virgin Islands sits as a pivotal geographic and political link between the Caribbean and the United States mainland. It was, and continues to be, influenced by the divergent cultures which visitors, new residents, and returning Virgin Islanders bring with them. Given the history of commerce in the islands, the nature of its early educational system, and the emigration and immigration that have determined its human anatomy, the Virgin Islands presents a multi-faceted image which is reflected in the works of its writers. It would appear, then, that the words flowing from the pens of those early Virgin Islands poets were to a large degree dependent on the words which washed to the islands' shores from both their political affiliates and their geographic neighbors. However, those diverse influences, when mingled with the context of Virgin Islands culture, served to produce a poetry that is the Virgin Islands' alone.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NATURE OF CYRIL CREQUE'S ROMANTICISM

William Wordsworth's definition of good poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," has evolved as a hallmark of English Romantic poetry, developed during a period which he helped to shape. It is a period which, because of the prevalence of English literature in Caribbean schools, had a profound effect on education in the Caribbean and on the early writers of that region. Therefore, the examination of one poet, Cyril Creque, a product of this environment, necessitates some discussion of the Romantic period its, concerns, emphases, and players.

Contemporary English scholar, J. R. Watson in his English Poetry of the Romantic Period 1789 -1830, indicates that the poetry of this period is characterized by an interest in nature, the self, the wonderful, and also in confusion, fluidity, and indeterminacy. He adds that concepts prevalent today such as the nature of the individual, the society in which he lives, the natural world which surrounds him, and the role of art in society are all inherited from the Romantic period (1). According to Watson, there is in the work of Romantic poets, "an extraordinary sense of life and energy, of freshness and excitement, as they engage with the great questions raised by the self and the world" (3). These questions which inform the poetry of the age are: "Who am I? How did I come to be as I am? What is my relationship to my fellow human beings? What are my feelings in relation to their joy and their suffering? What great moments do I wish to celebrate? What do I know of the nature of Art? What is the best form of political society? What is my understanding of the past and my hope for the future?" (3)

Given these concerns, it is understandable that the poetry of the English Romantics focuses primarily on nature, one of its overriding features; dreams, with attention to reveries and prophecy; and the human condition, including compassion for the poor and problems of crime. The Romantic period is also characterized by the growing influence of the machine, which although designed by man for his own purposes, was coming to shape and, in

some cases, dominate his life. It becomes necessary, then, for the individual to assert his identity against such pressure. This and man's intuitive turning to nature are two of the fundamental impulses behind Romantic poetry.

In addition to Wordsworth, the poets most often associated with this eighteenth century movement are Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Butler Yeats, John Keats, William Blake, and Lord Byron, who despite their fierce individuality had much in common. Among these commonalities are their interest in the social and political state of the world and its effect on them as individuals. To this end, the poets manifest their concerns by allying themselves to revolutionary causes. For example, Blake was a member of a radical circle in London; Wordsworth was a friend of radical reformer, William Godwin; Coleridge was an enthusiast for Pantisocracy, a plan for settling a community in America; Byron addressed the House of Lords on behalf of the frame makers; Shelley was a political agitator in Ireland; and Keats was a supporter of poet, Leigh Hunt in his attack on the Prince Regent (Watson 76-77).

However, each writer possessed his own qualities which characterizes him and his poetry. The uniqueness of William Wordsworth, known as the poet of nature, lies in his insight into the nature of man, both individually and in society. According to Watson, Wordsworth has an extraordinary ability to foresee the present problems of human beings in society, and is interested in the problems of living in cities, the relationship between money and the individual personality, the relationship between the individual and the state, and the state's responsibility towards its members. He is also very concerned about the way certain pressures tend to reduce the individual to a machine, or at least to something less than his or her full individuality (166).

Similarly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose poetry Watson characterizes as very much like his life: "enthusiastic, open to experience, uneven, sometimes chaotic, and even annoying, but always touchingly human and vulnerable"(213), captures the strange magic of the world of the supernatural. In contrast, George Gordon, Lord Byron, whose most important work is "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," did not think writing should be taken so seriously as to take up the whole of life. He wrote "To draw myself from myself" (Watson 260). Nevertheless, although he did not

believe in the importance of the imagination or the idea of the poet as prophet, in asserting his own individuality, he is Romantic.

William Blake's capacity to see visions makes him the most original and the most exclusive of the Romantic poets (Watson 131). However his characterization as visionary and radical are only partial aspects of his nature and his poetry, for he takes the eighteenth century natural habit of personification and extends it into an enlivening myth-making. In addition to the use of personification and symbol, there is a note of social and political concern in his poetry, as well as discovery of an original prophetic voice (Watson 134).

Of the three younger poets of the period, John Keats is quite interesting, having given up a career in medicine to write poetry. He worked to fulfill his destiny as a poet by studying other poets, reading classic legends with intense delight, and cutting himself off from his friends in order to write (Watson 339). Similarly, Percy Shelley's poetry is exciting and demanding because it contains a considerable amount of his voluminous reading, it attempts to describe that which is beyond description, and it moves with great speed (Watson 299). Of this younger set, William Butler Yeats was born years after the other major figures of English Romantic poetry had died; nonetheless, he is part of the Romantic tradition, his writing characterized by boldness as he deals with the irreversible cycles of eternity while relating them to specific historical eras (Rosenthal xix).

English Romanticism as represented by Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Blake, and others was at the heart of the literature to which pupils in the United States Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean were exposed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This, then, is the literary influence out of which Cyril Felix Williams Creque, one of the forerunners of the Virgin Islands poetic tradition, comes. Although he never lived outside the Virgin Islands, he was well read and well educated. As a product of the Virgin Islands primarily British school system, Cyril Creque was exposed to the same models and influences as other Caribbean writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was primarily the influence of the British Romantics who focused on the importance and goodness of the individual, placed new emphases on imagination and feeling, and were



absorbed with the physical reality of the natural world. In this vein, like his Caribbean contemporaries, A. J. Seymour, Frank Collymore, and Vivian Virtue, Creque devotes much effort to extolling the beauty of the islands, paying tribute to the many colonizers whose flags flew over his home, and singing the praises of men who made their mark on history. However, a great deal of Creque's work addresses man's inhumanity to man, the conflicts among the races, and matters of injustice. In fact, injustice, whether exhibited in nature or among humans, emerges as an overriding theme in his writing. Even works that seem on the surface to be mere tributes to a "Morning Star" or "Artificial Flowers" are really opportunities for the poet to express his feelings on some deeper issue. Creque's attention to these myriad topics places him directly in the tradition of the English Romantics, who were enamored of such topics.

Poet, organist, and composer, Cyril Felix William Creque, was born on St. Thomas in the then Danish West Indies on May 30, 1899 to prominent St. Thomas merchant, Henry O. Creque and Sarah Williams. He attended the Moravian Town School and the Boys' High School on St. Thomas. Because of the limitations of the school system, Creque and others who desired to advance intellectually completed their education through correspondence courses. His post-secondary education included correspondence courses in Poetics and Versification as well as Advanced Poetics and Versification from the Home Correspondence School in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1929. His instructor for both courses was Mary Eleanor Roberts, who with J. Berg Esenwein authored The Art of Versification, a 319 page guide to versification published by the Home Correspondence School in 1913. He also earned a diploma in psychology and harmony from the University Extension Conservatory of Chicago, Illinois, also by correspondence in 1938. Additionally, he worked for the department of health for a number of years, beginning as a clerk and attaining the position of Director of Sanitation at the time of his retirement in 1950, an experience which might have informed poems such as "Plaint of a Mattress" and "Old Shoes," poems which give voice to the mundane and discarded elements of life. Even this choice of profession is a manifestation of his Romanticism as one of the tenets of Romantic nature poetry is the association of nature with moral and physical

health. Interestingly, one of Creque's responsibilities as Sanitation Director was to insure that open containers of waters, which encouraged the breeding of mosquitoes, were discarded from yards and other outdoor locales. Because of his concern for the community's health and for preserving the environment, he was fastidious in this effort, and as a result incurred the ire of residents whenever he discarded their water supply (Vanderpool. Interview).

While Cyril Creque earned his living overseeing the sanitary and health needs of St. Thomas, he derived pleasure from composing and playing music and writing poetry. The poems in his collections, Trade Winds, published in 1934 and Panorama, published 1947, clearly express his love for his home and its people. This concern for his homeland is also reflected in his musical compositions, all patriotic numbers commemorating significant events in Virgin Islands history. They include "The Song of the Virgins," a patriotic anthem written in 1927 on the occasion of the granting of citizenship by the United States to the people of the Virgin Islands; "From the Mark of the Yoke," a 1948 piece dedicated to the abolition of slavery in the Virgin Islands; and "The Upward Way," a patriotic song of the Virgin Islands, written shortly before his death in 1959. Here again Creque's immortalization of historic events in song and verse mirrors the Romantic penchant for celebrating great events.

In addition to being a composer, Creque gave piano lessons and worked as organist at both the Memorial Moravian Church and the Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church of which he was a member. Ms. Irene Torres, a retired medical records supervisor and active Moravian, who worked with Creque when he was Director of Sanitation, recalls that after he left the Moravian church, he would still perform cantatas for them and occasionally play at a service. At Frederick he served as choir director and produced two plays, utilizing members of the congregation as cast members. His first production was "David, the Shepherd Boy" in 1937 and in 1940 he directed and produced "Yokohama Maid" (Marvin Creque. Interview). Not surprisingly, in another manifestation of his Romantic inclination to matters of health and the welfare of society, Creque combined his profession as a health officer with his artistic abilities to produce an impressive performance

for National Health Week during the 1938-39 school year. Miss E. Blanche Grayson, Jeanes Supervisor for St. Thomas,<sup>1</sup> wrote in her annual report that the Health Week Pantomime, comprised of 320 school children under the direction of Mr. Cyril Creque, was a colorful and interesting feature of the Field Day exercises. She continues, "The staging of the pantomime revealed much along the line of cultural and recreational values, as well as the beauty found in healthy bodies" (6).

In testimony to his national appeal, Creque received recognition for his poetry beyond the shores of the Virgin Islands. Not only was he listed in Who's Who in American Poetry, but also several of his poems were published in mainland magazines. For example "Sad Commentary" appeared in Opportunity in 1946 and "To One Who Paints" was featured in Port O' Poets: The Magazine with a Conscience edited by Guy Pickens and published in the interest of amateur and professional poets (Ports O' Poets). Another poem appeared in World's Fair Magazine in 1942.

Creque exhibited another facet of Romanticism in his love for the arts, which he shared generously. He once extolled the virtue of music in a radio address on WSTA, a St. Thomas radio station and on May 6, 1952, he contributed a substantial article on Music Week to the Daily News of the Virgin Islands. Additionally, for several years, he hosted a monthly radio music and poetry program on WSTA with his son, Neal. The December, 1955 notes from his "Team Manager's Guide," which outlined the evening's presentation, shed some light on his perception of art and its importance to the community. Apparently one of the features of the show was a contest to which persons submitted music and/or lyrics. In those December notes for program number eight in the third year of the program, Creque writes, "Bluebeard Castle Hotel, by its ten dollar donation sponsored this contest, and via courteous and polished Mr. Lind Weber, has participated in our island's

---

<sup>1</sup>In 1907, shortly before her death, Anna T. Jeanes, a Quakeress of Philadelphia, wanting to make a contribution to the colored children of the South, established a fund to be used in "helping the small rural schools." Teachers working in the resulting program were referred to as Jeanes teachers. In the 1930s the United States Virgin Islands became a part of this program (Dillard and "Annual Reports of Jeanes Teachers").

endeavor to keep music on a high level and raise the standard of music appreciation locally. This cultured act sheds lustre on Bluebeard Castle whom we salute" (n. pag.). The penciled in addendum indicates that he would read his poem about Bluebeard's Castle after proffering these words of praise and appreciation.

His sentiments concerning not only music, but his desire for "the cultured" to inhabit the community are likewise revealed in yet another note from the same "Team Manager's Guide," where after playing Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" in tribute to a couple celebrating their fortieth anniversary, he notes, "The Maduros have wisely invested in the resources of the Virgin Islands by procreating children with professional endowments. The exemplary conduct of these jubilarians helps to sustain the moral tone of the community, and their commercial exploits enhance our domestic economy" (n. pag.). These notes attest to Creque's attitude about society, the importance of the arts, and the high regard in which he held persons who contributed to what he considered to be the moral upliftment of society. Indeed, Creque himself was held in the same regard, for a brief biographical note appearing in the booklet of the 150th Anniversary of the dedication of the Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church reads:

Mr. Creque, Supervisor of the Department of Sanitation in St. Thomas, knows how to produce harmony not only in the realm of music but also in that of poetry. His "Trade Winds," a collection of nearly a hundred poems, was published in 1934. His finest achievement, however, he has gained in cooperation with his wife: an ideal home with eight ideal children. Homes like the Creques', cultured and Christian - and thank God there are many of them in St. Thomas - preserve society from degradation and lift it up to higher ground (30).

This description of Cyril Creque as preserving society from moral degradation, indeed one of the features of Romanticism, underscores characterizations provided by persons who knew him. Virgin Islands historian and University of the Virgin Islands history professor, Charles W. Turnbull, says that Creque stood out from others because he was "refined" - refined in that he knew literature and music. Likewise, Irene Torres remembers him as a well known, well respected, and well educated member of the community. According to her, he was also always well dressed. She

indicates further that he was very respectful, but if he disliked a person's behavior, he would let that person know exactly how he felt. In her words, "He didn't like people to make any 'stupidness' with him" (Interview).

Another characteristic of the poet is pointed out by his cousin Lauritz Creque, whose violin renditions he often accompanied. The younger Creque characterizes Cyril Creque as very, very meticulous, indicating that he didn't allow for any mistakes. He says that if a person were weak in his musical scores, Cyril Creque would "fly off the handle," for, in addition to being meticulous, he was very temperamental (Interview). Indeed, Creque's insistence on correctness once created difficulties between him and Ariel Melchoir, the editor of the Daily News, a major outlet for most writers in his day. Creque's son and daughter-in-law, Marvin and Marilyn Creque tell a story of Cyril Creque's having complained to Melchoir about the repeated errors in his published poems. Melchoir's response was that Creque could stop sending his poems to the paper if he were so displeased. Whether or not he heeded the editor's advice is unclear, but interestingly one of his unpublished poems, a rondel entitled "I Go To See The Editor," seems to be about this incident. It reads:

I go to see the editor to-day  
     To right the letter-wrongs which writers feel.  
     "The Author's Champion" made my temper reel  
 And burn while reading an approved essay  
 Whose printed words were crippled on their way.  
     That I may on this matter deadly deal,  
 I go to see the editor to-day  
     To right the letter-wrongs which writers feel.  
 I'll stir up his typesetters in a fray,  
     And stab his humor with my sharpest steel ---  
     No, lest I gain his woe and lose his weal,  
 Perhaps at home I'd better swear and stay,  
 Nor go to see the editor to-day. (Creque, Home Correspondence  
 School Lesson 9)

While the speaker in the poem appears in lines twelve and thirteen to have had second thoughts, Creque, in actuality, confronted the editor.

This penchant for perfection coupled with critic Lloyd Brown's observation that "West Indian writers had to be more British than the British," is very likely what led Creque to enroll in the Home Correspondence

School's courses in Poetics and Versification and Advanced Poetics and Versification. In taking courses designed to improve his poetic skill, Creque engages the paths of both Keats, who worked to fulfill his destiny as a poet and Yeats, who recast many of his early pieces even after publication. During the tenure of these courses, Creque was advised to utilize simpler language and avoid mixed metaphors and compound adjectives (a feature effectively used by William Blake). While his attention to rhyme scheme, meter, and some of the other mechanics of poetry might have improved, his "spontaneous overflow of emotion," the quality ascribed to poets by Wordsworth, was sometimes stifled because his instructor was unfamiliar with the images Creque intended to portray. This is understandable as she obviously had never experienced such Caribbean grandeur as that of the flamboyant tree, described in "Blooming Giants" or witnessed the wonder of a Caribbean sky. The discrepancy articulated here is further examined by Caribbean critic Louis James in the introduction to The Islands in Between: Essays on West Indian Literature. He says that Trinidadian poet, Judy Miles in her poem "Holocaust," writes of "tears spilling 'free as milk from a broken poinsettia.' " He also tells of another Trinidadian poet, Wayne Vincent-Brown who in his poem, "Indecisive," describes a member of the comfortable merchant class as "a grouper / sitting squat on his tail, deep in the dark / of his anonymous hole." James explains further:

Here Caribbean flora and fauna are no longer emotive decorations as they tend to be in earlier Caribbean poetry, but they are integral to the poet's act of creation. They show poets true to their experience, making no compromise for the sake of European readers who have never broken a sappy twig of poinsettia, who have never seen lying motionless in a coral cave, the huge obscene mass of a grouper fish. European readers must accept such possible obscurities for the sake of the integrated vision these poets present. (34)

In Creque's case, the flora integral to his creation is outside the experience of his American instructor and is, thus, misread. The poem in question celebrates the majesty and grandeur of the flamboyant tree, a spreading giant which blankets the ground in fire red petals during the summertime. Because he was admonished that the word "bungle" is a verb and cannot be used as a noun, Creque recasts an image which is very specific

to someone who has seen a flamboyant tree in bloom to a diluted version of the glory he sought to portray. In fact Roberts' recommendation that he change "O, what a beautiful bungle / July has done!" to "Surely July didn't bungle! / See what she's done!" (Home Correspondence School, Les. 16), minimizes the poet's celebration of nature, so that the opening lines of the published version become:

Lo! What a blaze of desire

July has caught there: (Trade Winds 74)

While the conventional meaning of "bungle" is to fumble or do a job improperly, bungle to a St. Thomian, means a clump or cluster of something as in a bundle. The flower of the flamboyant, scientifically named the royal poinciana, is compressed into a pod so that when it opens it resembles a tangled bundle, hence a bungle. The original version, a concrete poem which alternates eight syllable lines with indented four or five syllable lines portrays the spreading branches of the flamboyant. Similarly, the last two lines in the first stanza, "Painting the olive-green jungle / Vermilion," images an artist's brush splashing bright red throughout the green foliage. Again, this presents the scenery of the hillside viewed from an elevation, and certainly the route that Creque frequented was splashed with the scarlet glory of the flamboyant tree. Unfortunately, the splash of red on green dissipates in the revised, "Flowering boughs flutter fire / In bottle-green air."

However, while Creque originally captures this sense in "Giant Blooms," his revision with the more descriptive title, "Blooming Giants," loses its concreteness and metaphorical beauty. The final stanza of the original poem becomes the second stanza of the revision and because the imagery has been altered, loses the original effect. The original poem ends:

Gaudily kirtled the giants,  
                     Bound up in a clump,  
 Flourish, in scarlet defiance,  
                     A tropical pomp. (H. C. S., Les 16)

The flower of the flamboyant tree when opened by hand or of its own volition boasts a petal with a crinkled flounce resembling the skirts worn by bamboula and quadrille dancers in the Virgin Islands, hence the poet's use of the word kirtled. The height and brilliance of the flowering tree suggests

defiance. Although the changes were not all recommended, Creque, in his own desire, like Keats, to perfect and refine his skill loses the impact of the original imagery of the poem. In the original, there is meticulous attention to the length of each line so that the overhang of the odd numbered lines is evident. The use of the rhyming words *jungle* and *bungle* further create the image of the ordered entanglement of the flower. The efflorescence of the tree is captured by the poet's repeated use of the plosives "b" and "p" which suggest the sudden emergence of the flower when the pod bursts open. The lines, "Spilled, in pursuit of her duty, / Bright red on dark green" also depicts the red spilling out plentifully on the green as the trees perform their assigned duty of producing blooms.

Of course the poem is not solely about the flamboyant. It boasts of the surrounding atmosphere, the "clear nights," "summer-blue breezes," and "brilliant moons," which are part of the July panorama. Although the red flower predominates, the halo of the blue breeze reflects the tranquillity of the sea and the sky and blends these various elements of nature into a "potion that pleases, / Perplexes and swoons." While grammatically, it may be argued (as Roberts does) that the potion does not swoon, the image, nevertheless, is of the heady, intoxicating effect of the breeze, moon, sky, and sea in consort. The poet effectively depicts the sensuality of nature which coaxes young lovers to give themselves to each other as suggested in stanza three:

Roused from debauching on beauty,  
                   The gay artist-queen  
 Spilled, in pursuit of her duty,  
                   Bright red on dark green. (H. C. S., Les 16)

When considered along with poems such as "Tropic Dance," which expresses the poet's fear of traditional dances becoming extinct, and "Sleeping Beauty," which is concerned about the changes affiliated with progress, the last two lines of the poem take on new significance. It takes on the social and political implications which are hallmarks of Romantic poetry. The flamboyant, whose very name means gaudy or showy, flourishes despite any efforts to eliminate it. Naturally, Creque is speaking to the need for preserving not only the flora, but other aspects of the Virgin Islands' environment and culture as well, even if defiance is required. The sedate



ending of the published poem: "Flash of yon flowers abundant / Which dazzles the heart" lacks the fiery note of social protest on which the original poem ends:

Gaudily kirtled the giants,  
 Bound up in a clump,  
 Flourish, in scarlet defiance,  
 A tropical pomp. (H. C. S., Les 16)

Unfortunately, Creque reworks the poem to a point where it loses its Caribbean glow and becomes a poem which could very likely have come out of an experience anywhere.

This poem, "Blooming Giants," is an excellent example of one of Cyril Creque's more outstanding qualities, his love of nature, clearly a manifestation of his Romanticism. Like the Lake poets of that period, he spent quite a bit of time walking, enjoying the foliage, listening to the sounds of birds, and contemplating the changing images of the clouds. So important was nature to him that he records the inspiration derived therefrom in a poem entitled, "Inspiration." In fact, the poem clearly illustrates nature's impact on him and his writing, for it catalogs the various elements of nature which he encounters on his walks. He speaks in awe of the sun, the "golden clouds . . . curdled white," birds, flowers, and "The restless little stars" playing "At hide and seek." The poem ends:

Come often, O delightful Muse,  
 With charming thoughts of thine;  
 They point the way to noble deeds  
 Which help the earth to shine.  
 Come, live within me, let thine hand  
 Conduct my feet afar,  
 Above the confines of this world,  
 Where naught our bliss may mar. (Panorama 18)

This tribute to nature, which attends to minute details of birds and clouds, is reminiscent of the work of Romantic poet, William Blake, who was inspired by visions and dreams and who communicated regularly with the muse. It also echoes Coleridge's use of landscape to describe the working of the imagination in his Biographia Literaria as cited in Watson's study. The poem which speaks loudly to the impact of Creque's environment on his work begins with his acknowledgment of sitting and waiting to be inspired by

"the muse." His inspiration comes during the dream which carries him wandering over "emerald plains / With flowers everywhere." This dream state which makes his proximity to the sun close enough for a salute, also puts him out of the reach of "Life's harsh fingers," so that he is completely free to enjoy this experience. The first stanza of the poem, only four lines, is an invocation to the muse. It ends with a colon, signaling the end of the invitation and the beginning of the spiritual journey. The succeeding three stanzas of twelve lines each are devoted to different aspects of nature. The second of these stanzas is attuned to the many sounds of nature and heaven, from the "rustling of angel's wings" to the "minor notes from feathered throats." However, the penultimate stanza of the poem, indicates that this pleasurable interlude cannot last and as "This lovely pageant fades away," the poet ponders his whereabouts. Much to his chagrin, he is back on the "cold, relentless earth," with its "sorrows" and "cruel passions" which "rob from men / Their happiness divine." At this juncture, he invites the muse to come often and remove him from the "confines of this earth" so that he may engage in "noble deeds / Which help the earth to shine."

The love of nature evinced in this poem was noticed by many. Indeed, his son, Marvin Creque, reports that Cyril Creque walked the hillsides quite often, covering a distance of about three and one half miles each way between his house in Long Path and Fairchild Castle, atop Bunker's Hill. It seems that during these sojourns, he would get the inspiration necessary to pen his verse. His habit of walking is very much like the Romantic poets of the Lake District, as Wordsworth, Shelly, and Keats, all walked the lakeside seeking inspiration. While Creque did not walk along a lake, his final destination at Drake's Seat provided him a magnificent view of Mogens Bay, considered one of the ten most beautiful beaches in the world. The image of Creque, the poet seeking inspiration from the muse is corroborated by Virgin Islands historian and culturalist, Rufus Vanderpool who recalls Creque walking to Drake's Seat, about a mile beyond Fairchild Castle. According to Vanderpool, "He would take his notebook and wait for the muse." Likewise, Lauritz Creque indicates that, while moonlight walks were common, day or night one would find Cyril Creque going for a walk to get his thoughts together. This suggests that Cyril Creque's penchant for walking was more than simply to enjoy the

moonlight like other people; he walked to seek inspiration, much like Keats went on tour in 1818 seeking the sublime.

Nonetheless, even if Cyril Creque had not penned so pointed a poem as "Inspiration," his description in the Foreword to Panorama, of Charlotte Amalie, the capital of his hometown, as nestled in the lap of three green hills clearly illustrates his Romantic bent and nature as a driving force of his creativity. The description continues:

Viewed in brilliant sunlight from these summits the huddling houses appear to be sculptured out of a block of marble and, contrasted by their vermilion roofs at almost measured intervals, present an altogether picturesque and inspiring scene. The whole island is set, like a cameo, in languid blue sea studied with gray-green islets. At these cool elevations I felt the urge to write most of the poems appearing in this collection, and that is the main reason for my choice of the book title "Panorama." (13)

This description is reminiscent of Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," in which he contemplates the early morning panorama of London, and also recalls the writings of other poets of the Romantic period who took nature walks and were inspired by nature and feelings. In fact, an introduction to the Romantic period in volume two of the Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces notes that the physical reality of the natural world became a matter of interest for both poets and novelists and that flowers, clouds, and oceans became the common poetic stock (448).

Because early Virgin Islands poetry was clothed in the language of the Europeans whose styles the writers emulated, critics often missed the sensitivity to issues like industrial development and social injustice beneath the surface. Indeed, Virgin Islands scholar and critic, Marvin Williams, questions why the early Virgin Islands poets, including Creque, had a propensity for glossing over or altogether ignoring the unadorned faces of the islands so that one cannot distinguish them from, say, an American pastoral or seaside scene. He adds:

One suspects that many of the writers attempted to achieve a vaunted universality that in reality cannot exist without the particular lapsing into cliché. Thus a poet might engage an island landmark and never evoke its specific contours, idiosyncrasies, character; he might never draw his images and metaphors from the place where he actually

stands, however much this location might have been the source of his inspiration. (11-12)

While Williams' assertion might apply to some poets, it certainly is contravened by Creque's rendition in tribute to one of St. Thomas' landmarks, Magens Bay, the very beach that Creque would contemplate when sitting at Drake's Seat. In "The Heart of Magens Bay" Creque writes of love inspired by the moon, the sound of the waves and the heart shape of the beach. In this poem the writer captures the physical characteristics of the beach in his portrayal of the "love-inspired moon," the "sand-strewn Magens Beach," the palms waving in the breeze, the smell of the salt air, and the sounds of the lapping waves. He also parallels the meeting and the affections of the lovers with the relationship between several elements in nature. For example, the sun has been petitioned by the evening and yields, just as the one lover, probably the female, weary of trying to avoid the consummation of their love, gives in to the petitions of her lover. The trembling fronds of the palms are indicative of the young lady's nervous anxiety and the convulsions of the body which accompany sexual arousal. The lovers' climax is portrayed in the auditory imagery of the roar of the sea upon the salty air which can only come from someone who has witnessed the deep resonance of a wave emerging from the very depths of the sea. This image is suggestive of the final throes of passion which, in this case, come from deep within the soul of the lovers. The sexual act complete, the lovers, awoken to the early morning breeze wishing they did not have to break their embrace or leave the place of their rendezvous. The coming together of their bodies welds their love. In the poet's words:

The lapping waves now beat above  
What they in welded love bequeathed  
A crystal heart. (Trade Winds 72)

The poem is both sensory and sensual, for the poet provides the sounds of "fanning breeze" and waving palms, and his reference to "The organ of the Deep" evidences his aptitude as a musician and an organist who would have an ear for such sounds. There is also olfactory image in the "saline-odored air." Together the sights, sounds, and smell of the beach create an atmosphere conducive to love. Further, this is a concrete poem, its shape

evocative of the waxing and waning of the tides as they caress the shoreline. The parallelism of the lovers with the elements of nature is revealed in the pairs of parallel lines in each stanza. The final line of this poem illustrates Creque's poetic talent in that, while the "crystal heart" speaks to the love shared by the two people on the beach, it is also about Magens Bay, for the one distinctive feature of that beach is its heart shaped shoreline. The lights on the sea at night, washing over the heart of Magens Bay must certainly resemble a crystal and this is the image which Creque captures. However, the image of the crystal heart also invokes the fragility of love because crystal, like the heart of one in love, can easily be broken. Additionally, he employs a technique common to many of his poems. The "welded love" and "crystal heart" are contrasts of the same image, for while love can be as solid as welded steel, its fragility is ever present. Certainly, it would seem that this view of the beach provided inspiration to Creque and he washes the shoreline with language which allows the reader to hear, smell, and see, the beauty of Magens Bay and share the experience of the lovers on the beach.

Nonetheless, Cyril Creque's love of nature sometimes catapulted him into verbal altercations with his fellow Virgin Islanders. Because he did not believe the beauty of nature should be altered just to accommodate progress, he would often speak out against proposed development on the island (Lauritz Creque. Interview). His desire to preserve the sanctity of nature is vividly illustrated in his poem, "Conquest," which is a lament on man's need to conquer everything, even nature. The poem begins with the portrayal of mountains as barriers and ends with a picture of them as hedges, the direct result of man's need to subdue whatever is in his path. The language of this three stanza poem is intentionally unflattering to human kind because the poem attests to man's desire to conquer. His conquest of peaks is not sufficient. It simply whets his appetite for more game because anything that would dare mock man must be removed. Apparently man's conquest of the mountains puts him closer to the heavens, so the next logical step is to conquer the heavens too, for according to the poem:

From conquered peaks  
He saw higher things  
Till yearning gave him

An airman's wings. (Panorama 26)

While Creque does not appear to be averse to man's learning to fly, he does seem to be troubled by the new perspective provided from the air. From on high, the hills become hedges which no longer mock and which are, in fact, conquerable.

The clarity of the poet's message is emphasized by his use of uncomplicated rhyme scheme and meter. The effort here is to insure that man's plan to destroy nature is not shrouded in a poetic style which obscures the message. He uses predominantly monosyllabic words with the only three syllable word in the poem being "barriers," indicating the object to be overcome. The use of "mocked" in the first stanza is also significant because it seeks to justify man's elimination of an entity that makes fun of him. While the mountains in the poem are not cut down, the perspective from the air is frightening to the poet who sees the vulnerability of nature in the face of unscrupulous mankind.

The mountains are representative of other aspects of nature - the forest, the seas, the sky, which are likely to be pursued by humankind. The title is also suggestive of the historical and economic conquests of the Virgin Islands which have, over the years, reduced it to a faint reflection of its former beauty. The poet's fear expressed in the final stanza is his apprehension about his homeland and what it could become once developers start conquering its mountains. Ironically, Creque's poem proves prophetic as some of the larger hills on St. Thomas have, in fact, been altered to accommodate development, and beaches have been similarly despoiled in the name of progress.

Even though Creque might not have been speaking of the physical destruction of the hills in "Conquest," when the views expressed in "Conquest" are juxtaposed with the sentiments voiced in "Sleeping Beauty" and "Island of Scenic Charm," the political implications of Creque's nature poems become evident. Lloyd Brown notes that in the mid 1900s, Caribbean landscape poetry began taking on political significance, with writers such as Jamaica's John Figueroa, whose poems collected in Blue Mountain Peak turn more directly to the Jamaican landscape than do some of his older odes. Brown indicates that the landscape began to be used not as background for

neoclassical or neoromantic imitations, but became a living symbol of the West Indian's historical experience and sense of identity (66). The ideology articulated by Brown becomes painfully evident in Creque's treatment of the beauty, potential, and usurpation of each of the islands in the United States Virgin Islands. First of all the poem "Sleeping Beauty" issues a warning to the island of St. John based on the experiences of the other islands. Secondly, in "The Island of Scenic Charm," the poet laments the scarring of the once beautiful St. Thomas, but manifests the hope that history will record her in a favorable light. Finally, "To Santa Cruz" portrays the deception which has caused St. Croix to "[s]hed tender tears." The poems also reflect his Romantic sensibilities, for although Creque was not an activist, his poems served as his way of opposing injustice.

"Sleeping Beauty" is a lyrical song to the beauty of St. John's green hills and "virgin bays," which sounds the voice of caution based on experience and employs the prophetic quality of the Romantics. It appears that St. John is holding her breath for fear some developer might come and devastate her beauty as has been done to her sister islands. She listens attentively for "The alien sound / Before approaching feet." The other islands, St. Thomas and St. Croix watch jealously, for their beauty has already been marred. Jealous, on first blush, implies envy of St. John's continuing virginal beauty, but it is really the jealousy which guards and protects. Interestingly, although the advent of outsiders is usually perceived as positive, there is hidden danger associated with Prince Charming's kiss. In this allusion to the fairy tale, "Sleeping Beauty," Creque parodies the awakening which should lead to a bright future, but the jealous eyes of the sisters suggest that such an awakening could be devastating. While the title of the poem clearly alludes to "Sleeping Beauty," it appears that Creque might have borrowed the sisters from another fairy tale, "Cinderella" in order to represent the three islands. While he does not, like Blake, create his own fairy tales, he uses them to portend St. John's fall. In the poem, he parallels St. John's sleep to the sleep of the princess in the fairy tale and attests to her virginity. In the second stanza Creque apparently misuses the word "plaintiff," as the context suggests that "plaintive" would have been more appropriate. Nonetheless, the

sentiment of the poem is clear - St. John is a virgin fearful of being ravished but is powerless to avoid the inevitable.

The poet employs personification to portray the sleeping virgin, while the rhythm of the poem offers the rocking of a cradle. The repetition of the sibilant "s," as well as the words "hum," "silence," and "holds breath," capture the quietude of the island as portrayed in the following:

For Silence which a sigh might break  
                   In high or low retreat,  
 Holds breath to hear the alien sound  
                   Before approaching feet. (Panorama 59)

The sisters' concern is two pronged. They do not want the sleeping baby to be awakened, neither do they wish their virginal sister to be sexually aroused. They would prefer that she maintain her innocence. However the change of tone of the last stanza warns of the need for constant vigilance. The reference to the "glowing prince" suggests the cunning with which the oppressor comes to charm the inhabitants away from their land. The subterfuge of another of Creque's poems, "Birthright," is alluded to here because the land, St. John, does not have to be taken by force. The image here is reminiscent of the Romantic poets' concern for the small landowner who, according to Watson, "had his land prised from him by force, as larger property-owners attempted to acquire neighbouring plots" (77-78). The prince's kiss will be sufficient enticement for the island to yield its beauty, its culture, and its people. A further allusion here is to the island's history which includes the rape of black women by the not so charming colonizers during the period of enslavement.

Unfortunately, Creque's fears about the future of St. John have come to pass and it is no longer the "littlest virgin" for it, like the other islands, has been severely altered by progress. Although more than half of the land mass is designated as National Park territory and enjoys some protection because of this, the island has been overrun by pleasure seekers who have turned it into a carnival which invites crime and other social problems. Creque's observations are particularly poignant in light of the history of the islands as simply real estate conquered and possessed by one European power after the other.



The second poem in this trilogy, "Island of Scenic Charm" provides yet another picture of nature's beauty devastated by humankind. This poem looks at the once beautiful St. Thomas, now fallen from the pedestal of tropical loveliness because it has yielded to the charms of outside investors and developers. It evinces some of the melancholy characteristic of the Romantic period as it implies that the island and its inhabitants might be responsible for their plight. Stanza two depicts the magic combination of the elements of nature, "subtle scenes," "ardent moon," and "giddy stars" which "hath drawn earth's sons beneath / The noble palms to live." The lines that follow suggest that in being taken in by these outsiders who have come to live among the natives, St. Thomas, through its leaders and its people generally, have spurned "the good." This good that is nature still provides for the island which has neglected it for the sake of development.

The poem pictures St. John as it will become if the warning issued in "Sleeping Beauty" is not heeded, for "The Island of Scenic Charm" is the story of one of the battered sisters. In just three stanzas the lovely Caribbean island is transformed from "peaceful settings" to "bruises," "bitter years," and "scars." The queen of stanza one loses her "crown of jeweled green" and is permanently marred. The change comes at the hands of those welcomed to her shores. Although they take advantage, the island continues to give, for:

A charm hath drawn earth's sons beneath  
The noble palms to live,  
And if the good thy ways hath spurned,  
Still do thy fountains give. (Trade Winds 77)

The language of the final stanza is important as the poet points out "The bruises of the bitter years / hath scarred not altered thee." However, once something is scarred, it is physically altered, yet the poet sees beauty and goodness below the surface. While the word eulogy can mean simply a commentary, here it implies the death of beauty. Once the natural beauty of the island is marred, and it cannot return to its original state, people will recount its past glory as:

Time, silent guider of thy course,  
Whose pen moves sure and free,  
Should write in language sweeter far  
A fuller eulogy. (Trade Winds 77)

These lines also refer to the role of the poet in keeping the positive image of the island alive. Those writers not strictly bound by the accuracy of history can write freely and will be able to record a story which tells of the island's "True worth" "hid beyond the gaze / Of change's scrutiny." Creque's concern for the changes taking place in his home were well founded, for the changes which came with tourism and major development have altered the face of the islands irrevocably. This ability of the poet to foresee the negative effects of progress is yet another aspect of his Romanticism, for Romantic poets such as William Blake had similar foresight.

The final poem of this set, "To Santa Cruz," delves below the surface beauty of America's outpost in the Caribbean. The poet's use of the Spanish version of the island's name is not unusual, for St. Croix was once owned by Spain and even today boasts a large Hispanic population, spawned from the nearby island of Puerto Rico. He depicts an island different in many ways from the other two. It lacks the hills of St. Thomas and the purity of St. John, but boasts its own charm provided by the fields which "spread plots of peace." The momentum of this poem is carried by the action of verbs such as "laughed," "washed," "plumed," and "bronzed." Even the adjective "waking" before sunlight energizes the poem. Characteristically, this poem goes beyond the beauty and grandeur of the island, for this is a poem about deception and a kind of Romantic concern for the human condition. Beneath the vivid scenery, the laughing knolls, and haughty pole-like palms, is the hardship of the sugar cane worker. The third stanza which describes "light carts" wheeling "Their precious loads" and the "plots of peace / 'Round sugar-mills," tells of the main industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sugar. Of course, even this description is deceptive because while the carts themselves appear light, they are actually laden with sugar cane being transported to the mill and, therefore, represent the heavy load of toil the workers must endure. The image of the "cane piece," the Caribbean name for the cane field, and the round sugar mill are telling of the severe and arduous labor.

The poet's use of words with dual connotations further underscores the hardship and pain below the beauty and charm of the islands. In the first stanza, the poet writes: "The knolls laughed as I came, / In waving green.

The "waving green," in one instance, depicts the green of the trees and the sugar cane waving in the breeze. On the other hand, it also represents the money which the visitor, the outsider waves as a temptation to those residing on the island. Another doubly connotative phrase is "plots of peace" which conjures an Arcadian image of rolling tranquil plains. However, those plots represent the "cane-piece," the place where the workers toil daily, symbolizing the hard work associated with the sugar cane industry. The phrase also suggests the final "plot of peace" the cemetery to which cane workers go prematurely because of the hardship of their work. Still another image associated with the sugar cane industry is "Round sugar mills." While the apostrophe indicates the poet's use of an abbreviation for the word "around," "round" also represents the shape of the sugar mill which is used in the crushing and grinding of sugar cane and suggests the never ending tedium faced by the sugar cane worker. Finally, the line "Now as I walk your ways / My hopes turn fears," can mean that as the speaker of the poem walks the streets of the island, he begins to see the true conditions beyond the scenery. However, the line also alludes to the proverb about not knowing another person's pain until having walked in his shoes.

Creque also employs a number of contrasts to further highlight his message of the suffering and hardship of the inhabitants of an island whose beauty beckons all to come. The poem begins with laughter and ends with tears; the light tone and light steps of "A lilt of smiles was cheer / On ribbon roads," becomes the ponderous "Now as I walk your ways / My hopes turn fears;" and finally in the last two lines, "those happy eyes / Shed tender tears." Creque's artistry is further evident in the rainbow of colors he weaves in the first two stanzas which depict "waving green," "Blue breezes, "sunlight bronzed," and "ribbon roads." Unlike the "pastoral" poets of his day, Creque does not write of happy laborers in the field. Obviously the life of the sugar cane laborers is difficult, but Creque is also fearful of what the development, the progress in the form of the sugar industry will mean to St. Croix. The apprehension in this poem is similar to that expressed in "Sleeping Beauty." The difference is that while St. John awaits the "kiss of death," St. Croix, like St. Thomas, has already been violated, hence the tears.

Taken together, these poems reveal the passionate concern of the poet for the environment, for the individuals who inhabit the islands, and for the impact outside interests have on each, all concerns which place him squarely in the Romantic tradition of his literary predecessors. He fulfills the role of the artist in vividly portraying the many levels of reality which constitute life in the Virgin Islands.

Fortunately, Creque's attention to the beauty of the Virgin Islands does not always take the tenor of foreboding or melancholy. In fact, he wrote a number of poems which simply celebrate the beauty of the islands. Nonetheless, in keeping with his Romantic bent, he invariably addresses other concerns along with his praise of nature's beauty. J. R. Watson notes that for the Romantics, there was a joy to be found in the natural world which was not found in man-made institutions and practices. A similar sentiment is evident in Creque's "Song for St. Thomas" and "St. Thomas" which, not only boasts of nature's superiority over the "Steel and stone that throng the heavens, / Reared by brilliant builder's hands" (Panorama 59), but also brags that St. Thomas is more beautiful than many other locales. In "St. Thomas" he asks, "Where the land upon this globe / That boasts a more resplendent robe?" (Trade Winds 67). Even in this vein, then, he continues to champion the attributes of his homeland, expressing his displeasure at the island's not receiving the recognition it deserves. Ironically, Marvin Williams refers to "Song for St. Thomas" to support his argument that Creque sings "the praises of the landscape whose welfare stood in stark contrast to its people's conditions" (15). However, discussions of some of Cyril Creque's other poems, such as "Santa Crux" and "Coal Carriers" reveal a deep and abiding concern for the welfare of the people even as he sings the praise of the islands' beauty.

While Williams' assessment might apply in some instances, it appears that generally Creque is sensitive to the concerns of humankind and even in poems which on the surface appear to be mere nature poems, there is an overriding concern about people's injustice to each other. It would appear, then, that while Creque is part of that tradition of West Indian pastoral poetry, he is not truly of it, for his subtle digs at race and other issues, stand in contrast to Lloyd Brown's characterization of the Caribbean pastoral. Brown

maintains that the Caribbean pastoral extolled the beauties of the West Indian landscape to the exclusion of any perceived West Indian experience, or at the most, in conjunction with a patronizing, self-indulgent view of the folks as exotic "swains and 'servants of choice' " (20). However, while Creque does not specifically address the Virgin Islands experience in his "nature poems," he does address common issues with which Caribbean people, specifically, and black people, generally, are faced. His treatment of these issues is, as University of the Virgin Islands professor, Gene Emanuel, says, both Romantic and Elizabethan, for like Frank Collymore of Barbados, he throws barbs at the end of his poems. One example which illustrates his attention to social and race issues is the five line poem, "Morning Star," which reads:

Over the hills near dawn,  
A magnetic maiden  
Boldly displays her white amazement  
At the unconscious beauty  
Of a black sky. (Trade Winds 25)

Here, the black sky has not yet realized its potential, as its beauty is unconscious. The black sky heralds the coming rain, the arrival of which will bring its beauty to fruition. However, this poem addresses more than the beauty of a star which appears in the morning. While it could be merely speaking to the juxtaposition of the white star against the black sky, it is more likely a commentary on the attitude of whites towards blacks. The boldness of the white beauty's amazement suggests her arrogance or at least her comfort with her own beauty and her astonishment that the black sky could be beautiful at all. This stands in contrast to the "unconscious beauty" of the black sky. Blacks, called ugly for so long, are often unconscious of their own beauty. The sentiment expressed in this poem is amplified when another of his nature poems, "Black Lilies" is considered. It opens:

Love-odored, unblown blooms!  
Breathing the beauty of blackness  
Upon a lonely air  
Somewhere . . . (Trade Winds 42)

The first significant observation in this poem is the contradictory title, "Black Lilies." Because lilies are traditionally white, the use of the adjective black is suggestive of a subversion of the traditional, to highlight the poems

theme. This lily, which is associated with resurrection, very possibly represents the awakening of the black person to the realization and appreciation of his/her beauty. The poem might, more specifically, address the beauty of the black woman that is unappreciated by her and by others. The flowers with the smell of love, as yet unopened, emit the "beauty of blackness" upon a world that frowns at its unique beauty. Thus, the world of the black beauty is lonely. In the last three lines:

Know you the lavish glow  
Of bright-hued roses  
Monotonously merge? (Trade Winds 42)

addressed directly to the flower, the poet poses a question which underscores his message that the bright glow of roses, which are common flowers, do not outrank the uniqueness of the black lily. Along with the question posed in these closing lines is an implicit admonition to those clothed in black skin to be proud of their blackness, for it is that hue which gives them prominence.

While the imagery created by the juxtaposition of black and white is not unique to Creque, his utilization of this feature, specifically in his nature poems, might be his way of addressing his racial heritage, as he was the offspring of a white or near-white father and a black mother. Because of Creque's precise deportment, there is a perception among some people that Creque felt intraracial supremacy because of his color. However, the sentiments expressed in a number of his poems appear to be laudatory of blackness. In fact, Creque's demeanor might have been his way of coping with his own mixed heritage, something over which he had no control. This attention to the color question continues in the poem, "Mime," whose title alerts the reader to the theme of mimicry. In this short but poignant composition, he writes:

I have seen  
White Day  
Caracturingly (sic) change  
To night-like blackness,  
But never  
Black Night  
Intentionally turn  
To day-like whiteness. (Trade Winds 44)

In this poem, the speaker addresses that phenomenon of nature which allows a brilliant, sun-lit day to suddenly become as dark as a pitch black night when a storm is approaching. However, he admits to never having witnessed this imitation in reverse. In this instance he is alluding to those occasions when lightning brightens the sky, but even that is not sufficient light to turn the night into "day-like whiteness." Nonetheless, like so many of Creque's other poems, "Mime" speaks to an issue other than nature and stormy nights, for the white day which caricaturingly changes to "night-like blackness" could be a reference to whites who don black face either for stage performances or for some act of deception. It is relatively easy for a white person to darken his/her skin, even if that darkening results from hours in the sun. However, the reverse is difficult without some medical or chemical intervention. Quite possibly, the poet is speaking to the fact that blacks who are white or near white in appearance have not designed themselves that way. Such coloration is the result of mixed parentage or albinism. There is some question as to whether or not Creque's father was white. It is said that he was a very light complexioned black man. This observation underscores the earlier supposition that Creque was, in his poetry, working through the conflicts of his own ethnicity. Creque's attention to issues of race parallels the Romantic poet's concern for the disparity between "the progressive, forceful, energetic, and successful elements on the one hand and the discontented, neglected, and poverty-stricken on the other" (Watson 77).

Whether or not Creque was experiencing personal struggles because of race, he was nevertheless cognizant of the struggles around him caused by the transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States. He was part of a generation which had undergone a political transition and, like many of his compatriots, hoped that the transfer of government from Danish to American would result in positive changes for the territory. It is not unusual, then, that in keeping with the West Indian poetic tradition, Creque has, among his poems, a number of patriotic pieces which pay tribute to the United States and some of its leaders.

In her discourse on the development of Caribbean literature, Paula Burnett observes that a vigorous tradition of patriotic verse originated in Guyana. She says that as a country with many new people and much new

settlement in the late nineteenth century there was a need to strengthen new bonds and allegiances, hence the growth of patriotic poetry. According to Burnett, Guyanese, Egbert Martin, whose work is "unremarkable, late-Victorian verse, spongy with sentiment and soft verbiage, best represents this poetic vein (1). However, Lloyd Brown, who sees this loyalty to the Empire as being in the true tradition of the Caribbean pastoral, says that the loyalty proved beneficial, noting that Martin's "Verses Written for the National Anthem" as well as "Welcome" won prizes in a London newspaper competition (23-24). According to Burnett, this tradition of patriotic verse was shared by all the territories. Although the United States Virgin Islands is usually not considered when general observations such as these are made about the Caribbean region, in this instant, the Virgin Islands is no different, for Creque and his contemporaries all write poems in praise of both the United States and Denmark.

Among his published works, Creque has over ten pieces which may be categorized as patriotic. However, only a few of these share the wider Caribbean tradition of allegiance to the mother country. Among these are "Old Glory," subtitled "A ballade of National Bunting," which discourses on the significance of a country's flag, with particular attention to the flag of the United States; "Two from the House of Denmark," a tribute to the Royal Crown Prince Frederick and Crown Princess Ingrid of Denmark; and "The Brilliant Exit of F. D. R.," a poem written on the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In addition to these salutes to princes and presidents, Creque dedicates a section of Panorama to "Poems of War and Peace." Nonetheless, the poems of the patriotic tradition which stand out and which place Creque squarely in the tradition of the Romantic concern for the individual are his poems which address the transfer of the islands from Denmark and the resultant fears and anxieties of the populace.

One such poem is "With Mingled Feelings," a Petrarchan sonnet which articulates the ambivalence of native Virgin Islanders at their having been passed from one colonial power to another when the United States purchased the islands from Denmark for twenty-five million dollars in 1917. In keeping with the structure of the sonnet, Creque presents two conflicting scenarios in the octave and the sestet. His first eight lines identify the Virgin



Islands, and by extension its inhabitants, as "Three tiny wards," Denmark's orphans in the Caribbean. It articulates their supposed life of leisure, and enumerates their limitations in relation to the colonizer and "her pets." The first six lines tell of the islands' birth and early development, and of the inhabitants losing the feistiness of their ancestors to the pseudo-security offered by the limited freedoms doled out by their oppressors. The second line which says that the wards "Grew tame from too much frisking in the sun," suggests a level of laziness erroneously associated with life in the tropics. Ironically, it is the whites who frolic on the beach while the native blacks work hard, for the wards are admonished not to tease "Her pets who were allowed the shade of trees." The implication here is that the whites need the shade of the trees, but blacks can endure the sun's heat. However, the poem offers another admonition to the orphans. They are not to "meddle with matters that were done / Out of kind regard for everyone" or "copy acts like these." The "dark children" are to stay in their places.

The deception of the colonizers is further emphasized by the structure of the first sentence of the poem, comprised of the eight lines of the octave. This construction forces the reader to hurry the lines so as not to lose their full sense. The need to encompass all eight lines into one complete thought suggests the subterfuge revealed in the sestet.

They seemed to love these bonds until one day  
     A Yankee connoisseur came along  
 With ideas which he did not choose to say  
     Would make them and his countrymen more strong.  
 He simply bargained for them and away  
 They went with mingled feelings for a song. (Panorama 62)

Further, the use of the word "connoisseur" modified by the adjective "Yankee," confirms that the arrangement to bargain the islands away "for a song" was intentional, since a connoisseur is an expert, who pays attention to details. Also the term Yankee is suggestive of the Northern carpetbaggers meddling in other people's politics. This definition of Yankee draws attention to the irony of the word "meddle" because it is acceptable for the outsider to meddle, but the pawns in the game have been instructed not to "meddle," not even in matters like the transfer which involves them. The mingled feelings are alluded to in line twelve, for the plans of the "Yankee

connoisseur" would make the wards, as well as "his countrymen more strong." While it is possible that some benefits might accrue from the transfer, the uncertainty of change is still frightening. The Romantic dislike of capitalists and the middle class found in many of Byron's poems is also evidenced here.

In writing of the political and social climate which fostered Creque and his contemporaries, critic Marvin Williams says that sixty years ago, America's disfiguring technological culture had not yet had an impact on the Virgin Islands; thus, the writers were ambivalent toward their new colonial masters. He says further:

While they hoped to win relief from depressed socio-economic conditions, at the same time they feared that the United States government would renege on its promise to improve the island's welfare. And although these forerunners sincerely responded to a landscape that was in many ways still edenic, they seem also to have been endorsing the stereotyped view of the islands as paradisaal haunts. (14)

Of Creque's "With Mingled Feelings" Williams notes that there is no protest against colonial rule and no suggestion that the Virgin Islands might pursue an independent path (14). This observation falls short of recognizing the deep sensitivity revealed in the poem, for Creque acknowledges the status of the Virgin Islander as less than equal, first with the Danes and secondly with the Americans. The word "[w]ards" in the first line of the poem certainly recognizes the role of Virgin Islanders as orphans of the mother country, Denmark. Their inferior status is further revealed in the second half of the octave which notes that the "dark children" were not to "meddle" in affairs which did not concern them nor imitate the behavior of the white citizenry. Even his treatment of the United States acquisition of the territory reveals his displeasure with the manner in which the purchase was handled, for he acknowledges that the "Yankee connoisseur" never revealed his true intentions and bought the islands and their inhabitants "for a song." Nonetheless, the black Virgin Islander who is left out of the negotiations but who is, in fact, a pawn in the game, is left with "mingled feelings." Significantly, the concept of independence was not an issue for Virgin

Islanders at that time. They were more concerned with acquiring American citizenship and gaining the full privileges which that status could afford.

Creque's political concerns are similar to those of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In a discussion of the interpretation of Romantic poetry, critic J. R. Watson referring to the political implications of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" says that Romantic poetry by its language, its complex inclusions and exclusions encourages the asking of awkward questions (89). Noting that it is a poetry based upon individual experience, he also enumerates a number of questions posed by Romantic poets. Namely: What is my relation to my fellow human beings? What are my feelings in relation to their joy and suffering? What great moments do I wish to celebrate? What is the best form of political society? (3). Taken together, these parameters of Romantic poetry encompass Creque, whose patriotic poems address these questions. Certainly, the absence of any specific reference in "With Mingled Feelings" to the transfer of the islands, requires that the reader possess some knowledge of Virgin Islands history. Nonetheless, it is an articulation of the poet's experience, his concern for his fellow human beings, and the political nature of their society.

Historical accounts of that most significant event in Virgin Islands history bear out the sentiments expressed in Creque's poem. Journalist, Geraldo Guirty, who was a young boy at the time of the transfer, writes:

Contrary to the publicity in American newspapers and magazines, there was no wild rejoicing approving the change. The St. Thomians returned to their homes, closed their doors and windows. They were fearful of the marines with rifles and sidearms. The leathernecks in khaki uniforms and wearing stiff felt hats with the frontal pinch replaced the gendarmes in white uniforms and helmets with their swords and scabbards. (*Sixtonian* 31)

Similar sentiments are expressed by Valdemar Hill in Rise to Recognition as he quotes from an editorial, with added emphasis, in Lightbourn's Mail Notes the day after the transfer: " 'We are taken under the Stars and Stripes, *not as a conquered people, neither do we expect to be treated as such ...* From this moment on it is our flag and *in every respect we demand every privilege, and all the protection that it stands for.*' " Hill observes,

however, that the people were suffering from delusions, expecting to become full fledged American citizens overnight. He continues:

They had anticipated that the federal government would undertake vast spending programs to bolster the sagging colonial economy; and had hoped that the American private capital would pour into the Islands in the form of private investments of all kinds. They envisioned a glorious future of political, social, and economic prosperity under the American Flag. None of these visions materialized soon after the Transfer. (71-72)

During the Danish regime, Virgin Islanders were not granted citizenship. Instead they were subjects of the king. Their anxiety about acquiring American citizenship is understandable, as they have been denied that basic right for too long. The acquisition of the territory by the United States further complicated their lives because once the bonds with Denmark are broken, the black Virgin Islanders are literally, a people without a country. Understandably, when citizenship was granted, there was reason to rejoice, which Creque does in his musical composition, "The Song of the Virgins."

This piece is one of Creque's three musical compositions and, like the others, celebrates a significant event in Virgin Islands' history, again underscoring Creque's adherence to the Romantic tradition of celebrating great moments. However, although the song adheres to this Romantic trait, it lacks the revolutionary verve of Wordsworth and his contemporaries. In fact, the capitulative allegiance of this piece expresses the dual influences of both the Romantic historical and the Caribbean pastoral on Creque. This five stanza lyric which has hymn-like qualities is totally reverent to the United States and does what Paula Burnett characterizes as typical of late nineteenth century Caribbean patriotic verse. It is designed to strengthen new bonds and allegiances, but it also fits her characterization of other patriotic pieces as "unremarkable, late-Victorian verse, spongy with sentiment and soft verbiage" (1). Although, in a number of his other works, Creque is able to meld a strong, lasting message into the imitative European, romantic style, in this instance, he falls into the mold of his compatriots and pays homage to the new colonizer with nauseating reverence. This song speaks of the gratefulness of a citizenry who feel that they have just been given the greatest gift possible. They yield completely to the control of the new rulers, for they

see them as "our Hope." The blind loyalty continues in the third stanza which demonstrates a powerful sense of belonging. There appears to be on the part of the speakers a desire for reciprocal ownership:

America, be ours  
Until thy shining towers  
With dust shall blend.  
Thee shall we ever own;  
Thine ideals be our throne;  
Let what is thine alone  
Our paths attend. (Trade Winds 70)

Interestingly, the language of this stanza is hauntingly reminiscent of the "Doxology," an offertory sometimes used in the Lutheran service and reflects the influence of Creque's Lutheranism on his writing. The resemblance of Creque's words to the Doxology's, "We give Thee but Thine own / What ere Thy gift may be / All that we have is Thine alone, / A trust O Lord from Thee," further suggests that the Virgin Islands is willing to offer itself fully to the United States. This plea takes the language beyond that of a possession recognizing the new authority, and places it in the realm of an equal seeking a mutual relationship. The people assume that they share common goals with the United States and are ready to cope with their new status. Another feature of this composition is the use of the Biblical pronouns "thee," "thou," and "thy," often capitalized, suggesting a deification of the entity represented by those pronouns. Further, the tone of the poem is submissive and reflects a reverence to the United States which could only lead to a subjugation of the Virgin Islands will. It is possibly this attitude that Williams references when he says that Creque's patriotic writing offers an acceptance of the inevitability of control (14).

Another feature of the Caribbean pastoral noted by Paula Burnett as a reflection of the European poetic tradition of the eighteenth century is attention to natural cataclysms. This tradition was initiated by James Grainger, the only early Caribbean poet whose work has been regularly included in surveys of eighteenth century poetry, in his effort to address specifically West Indian topics. She says that while European writers were paying attention to the grandeur and terrible steepness of the Alps, the natural cataclysms of hurricane, earthquake, and volcanic eruption became the

standard subject of Caribbean literature (xlvi). Grainger, in his best known work, "Sugar Cane," provides a vivid description of an earthquake, "nature's agonizing pangs" which "Oft shake the astonished isle" (Burnett 104). Similarly, in 1767 the British born writer, John Singleton who frequented the Caribbean describes with awe his descent into the sulfurous crater of Montserrat's volcano (Burnett xlv). The poems of these two European born contributors to Caribbean poetic history are reflective of the dangers of the Alps and its ever-present avalanches detailed in these lines from Wordsworth's Descriptive Sketches:

-Alas! in every clime a flying ray  
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way,  
Condemn'd in mists and tempests over rife,  
To pant slow up the endless Alp of life. (qtd. in Watson 171-72)

This, then, is the tradition that Creque continues in the 1930s when he writes of droughts and hurricanes. His poems "Tropic Drought" and "Broken Drought," which examine the ravages of drought and the hope that comes when it finally breaks, imitates Victorian poet, Robert Browning's style of composing companion poems.

The title of "Tropic Drought" clearly situates this ordeal in the Caribbean where the terms winter, spring, summer, and fall are not used in reference to the seasons. Instead, people speak of the dry season, the rainy season, and the hurricane season, so that droughts are an expected part of seasonal activity. However, on the occasion of unusually harsh or long droughts, there is cause for concern. The drought of Creque's poem is uncharacteristically severe and moves this lover of lush vegetation to address his ongoing concern of unfairness to and in nature. In this instance, nature is harsh on humans, animals, and vegetation, all integral parts of nature. In essence, then, nature is being unfair to itself. Nevertheless, he speaks of nature with reverence and in conjunction with the companion poem, "Broken Drought" portrays the current disaster as one of the natural cycles of life.

"Tropic Drought" begins with an image of pregnant clouds, the blue sky, black with "hoarded rain" and continues with the image of

"The ragged beggar-land" yearning for relief. The sun, which in brighter times would be welcome, has no real value now. The once tall grass has turned to straw and is all that is available "To lull the puling low of hungry kine." The drought is experienced by humans, animals, and vegetation alike, and as a result:

Where praise from grass in watered fields arose,  
Tall blades no longer billow, sing and shine.

At the same time:

Men storm with prayer the levees of the air  
In hopes anon the fettered sky may burst. (Trade Winds 75)

In these four lines, the poet provides a vivid contrast between what would normally be the songs and shouts of praise to the Creator and the actuality of their anger revealed in prayers which storm the levees and the heavens.

Creque's use of the words "rich," "hoarded," "silver" "treasury," and "gold" speaks to the worthlessness of the enumerated commodities under these circumstances, for the "silver solace" beaming from the sun is of no comfort to an area parched by the drought. The "hoarded rain" with which the sky is rich is also of no value to the dry earth unless it is released. The image of the earth as a beggar stands in stark contrast to the "tumultuously rich sky." There is a suggestion of greed in the last stanza, for the "Stone tanks that hoard" refer to a stone-hearted provider who refuses to yield to the supplications of the needy. Creque creates an image of the earth, the vegetation, the animals, and the humans all suffering from the lack of rain, the presence of which they can sense, but which refuses to fall. The "stone tanks" in stanza four are probably the reservoirs on the hillside, once used to store rain water, since the Virgin Islands has no streams, rivers, lakes, or other bodies of fresh water to supply such needs. While the reservoirs might provide some respite, they certainly are not sufficient to meet the needs of all the thirsty. The pun "storm" in line three of stanza four suggests that even a storm would be an appropriate answer to the prayers of the people, even though the more obvious image is of the people battering, with their prayers, the barricades which hold back the cherished water. The poet creates an effective image of the water being imprisoned by the "levees of the air" and the "fettered sky." The poet uses a bit of irony in the language of the final

stanza of this poem. Levees are usually constructed to hold back and prevent flooding, but the poet here indicates that the people would welcome such an occurrence since the imprisoned water is useless to them.

Creque also presents a number of contrasts in this poem, underscoring the diverse complexities of nature evident in the lush tropical freshness that pervades the air at one time and the arid dryness of a brown hillside dominating the scene at another. First of all, the black and blue of the sky are contrasted with the sun's silver and gold. Secondly the "Tall blades" provide a contrast to the "tufts of straw" in stanza two, and the contrast of praise and anger, already mentioned, focus the poet's intent. The consistent regularity of this poem heightens the wretchedness associated with the drought. Each stanza is four lines, each line is ten syllables, each stanza is one sentence, and there is no variation from the a, b, a, b rhyme scheme. The reader must endure the suffering of those experiencing the drought, for the poet chooses words and a rhythm which do not allow for light, tripping reading. Instead there are ponderous lines such as"

When black from blue the deep sky-basin turns  
Tumultuously rich with hoarded rain,  
The ragged beggar-land in-utile yearns  
For fecund drops to cool its parching pain. (Trade Winds 75)

Fortunately, the companion piece, "Broken Drought" brings some relief from the agony of "Tropic Drought." However, this poem of hope and rebirth still carries a measure of pain, for even the weed, which can usually withstand most conditions, retires beneath the earth. The sturdy trees surrender and the sun characterized as a "vandal" seems victorious. The severity of the drought is further emphasized in the "hungry moans that rise from roasted / pasture-lands," as the "earth sizzles" and any remaining moisture ascends to the already pregnant clouds. The greed of drought is further underscored as watchers observe the fat clouds merge becoming even heavier with their undelivered load. The image this conjures is of a nursing mother, her breasts heavy with milk, thumbing her nose as she passes starving children on the roadside reaching out to her. Fortunately, whatever is filled to overflowing must eventually yield, and so the sky finally gives way. The sound of the rain drops on the galvanized roofs is music to the ears



of those within, for in stanza two, the poet says "Then the thrilling tips of little silver hammers / Beat bright tones incessantly on gladdened iron roofs." Here Creque suggests an image familiar to Caribbean people, that of the steel drum being played with little silver mallets. In picturesque personification, he shows the thirsty earth gulping down the cherished liquid of which it has long been deprived. The language of the final stanza, "The dead in splendor break their brittle tombs," is clearly an allusion to Christ's resurrection on Easter morning when dawn reveals an empty tomb. As the Biblical resurrection represents hope of new life to Christians, so the first shoots peering out from the earth represent hope to a parched land.

In these two poems Creque immerses his reader in the intensity of the pain and futility of the people's efforts during drought. He also shares something of Virgin Islands aesthetics in his reference to the reservoirs which dot the hillside and the galvanized roofs which become musical instruments when rain beats on them. The imagery of "Broken Drought" is particularly vivid. The title not only alludes to the rain breaking the fetters of the drought, but also conveys the broken grass, cracked earth, and broken spirits which accompany the drought. Even the form of this poem, with every sixth line being only one or two words, breaks the strict rigidity of the previous poem, thereby suggesting that relief is eminent. The form of the final stanza changes in keeping with the change in conditions as the drought has indeed broken and it is now safe to smile. As regularity returns to line length, so a regularity returns to the lives of the people and the surrounding environment. In Creque's treatment of this Caribbean calamity, he shares the Romantic concern for the human condition exemplified by Wordsworth, who J. R. Watson says had a deep indignation and compassion for human suffering (3).

Creque's compassion and concern for his fellow human beings is further exemplified in "The Hurricane," a poem suggestive of the power and strength of Percy Bysshe Shelly's "Ode to the West Wind." It also calls to mind Watson's discussion of Book V of Wordsworth's Prelude, for Watson says that in Wordsworth's encounter with the Lake of Esthwaite, there is a confrontation with the sacred. He continues, "Nature is a power which can inspire awe and love, and be evidence of a mysterious and wonderful power

in the universe (63). The awe of nature which inspired this poem is evident throughout. "The Hurricane" provides a very vivid portrayal of the advent, the actual experience, and the aftermath of one of the worse tropical disasters, a hurricane. In language which suggests a sequel to his drought poems, the first stanza describes the conditions before the hurricane strikes:

The sweltering heat that swoons the busy brain,  
And moves the sun-parched earth to thirst for rain;  
That robs of rest the red and weary eyes,  
And for a solace yields the fairest skies,  
The which by day a soft blue charm impart,  
By night reveal a glorious diamond chart. (Trade Winds 85-86)

Creque's choice of words in stanza two, "The drama starts. The grim precursors come," is important, for a hurricane is indeed a drama, beginning with a prelude, rising to a climax, and fading away with an epilogue. He describes the slight winds and the scattered raindrops which precede the onslaught and indicates that these precursors affect both the wary and the comfortable. He provides some insight into the islands method of providing warning to the residents as he notes, "A red flag flies with balls of ominous black; / And barking guns with shivers twitch the back." Before the islands had sirens, residents of St. Thomas knew to look to Signal Hill on Hassel Island, a small island in the mouth of the harbor, or to Fort Christian for news of the impending hurricane. An official in the Harbor Master's Office was responsible for having the appropriate flag hoisted, indicating the intensity of the approaching storm and its proximity to the island. The red and black flag, alluded to by Creque, was a warning flag. However, by the time the "barking guns with shivers twitch the back," the storm had struck land. The poem also affords the reader the opportunity to view the islander's means of securing their homes, with shutters nailed to their windows.

With a series of onomatopoeia, Creque provides the sounds of the hurricane as it "howls," "growls," and "shrieks like fiends in poignant pain." The repeated hammering of the wind is evident in "The gusts with sledge-blows" which "strike and hit again." The storm spares neither life nor property and continues its relentless onslaught until it is spent. Even the pageantry of the thunder and the lightening is fascinating as "the chariots of the heavens" "run . . . with the roar of guns," while "Electric darts fly from

their heated wheels." He also describes the anguish of those left homeless and hopeless. Interestingly, all elements of nature, "the earth, the sea, the air" are equally affected and those who, in their arrogance, had earlier ignored the warnings now humbly offer supplication to God. Although the duration of the storm is torturous for those living through it, "time" takes its own time, even though people would like to hurry the experience along so that the torture can end.

When the hurricane has finished its destruction, it moves on, seeking another victim, and as it passes, the "languid eyes look on a wilted day, / With prayers that hurricanes may pass away." The reference to "supplicating eyes" and "prayers that hurricanes may pass away" provide insight into yet another Virgin Islands custom started during the days of the Danes. At the beginning of the hurricane season, Virgin Islanders celebrate Supplication Day, a day of prayer and petition that the islands will be spared the ravages of a hurricane. Likewise, at the end of the hurricane season, late in October, Hurricane Thanksgiving Day is celebrated with church services and prayers in thanks to the Almighty for sparing the islands, or if a hurricane has in fact hit, for minimizing damage and sparing lives.

The length and ponderous nature of this fifty-six line poem is designed to draw the reader into the long, arduous experience of a hurricane. As he does in "Tropic Drought," Creque places words in sequence which dictate deliberate reading of each line, so that the terror being described can be fully experienced. For example the alliterative opening lines of stanza four demand the reader's full attention:

How wild the whitest morn, the moon, the night!

The difference puzzles even the keenest sight. (Trade Winds 86)

Additionally, his reference at the end of stanza one to the sky awaiting "The blasting open of the storm-barred gate," hearkens back to "Tropic Drought" in which the people want to unbar the gate and release the storm of water being held back. Here, however, the barricade is needed to protect the people from the onslaught of the storm. The reference here again points to the duality of nature, which like the wind in Shelly's ode is both "[d]estroyer and preserver."

Stanza three presents an especially eerie picture suggestive of the sirens of Greek mythology, for the image is one of a tortured spirit bent on destruction:

As enraged beasts in pain aloud might growl,  
The gusts with sledge-blows strike, and hit again -  
Here wound a place, there wreck some weak domain.  
While on this course of gruesome mischief bent,  
They stop not even for life. (Trade Winds 85-86)

This dramatic portrayal of nature is a poignant precursor to Creque's treatment of another arduous aspect of Virgin Islands life - the pain and hardship endured by both the sugar cane and coal workers and suggests a direct influence of Wordsworth on his writing. In discussing Wordsworth, J. R. Watson says that more than his evocation of nature, Wordsworth is extraordinary for his insight into the nature of man. He notes that among Wordsworth's concerns were the relationship between the individual and the state, the state's responsibility to its members, and the way certain pressures tend to reduce the individual to a machine, or at least something less than his or her full individuality. He also notes the poet's ability to foresee the present problems of human beings in society (166). While it is uncertain how much of Wordsworth Creque read, there is an uncanny similarity in his attention to comparable issues. Nonetheless, the concern for the individual was an overriding trait of the Romantic period and it is this sensibility which is evident in Creque's work. His "Night Song of a St. Croix Laborer" is a commentary on the melancholy experienced by the workers in the processing of sugar.

Although Marvin Williams maintains that, in this poem, Creque is not so much interested in scrutinizing the conditions of the laborers as with unveiling their nobility and the dignity of their work, the poem lays bare the various aspects of the sugar industry and reveals the sounds accompanying each step in the process. It is a satirical piece which creates a song out of no song, for while the laborer laments that no "Wild-beat nor strum my joy-robb'd longing fills," he is working to the melody of his trade. Creque brilliantly orchestrates the sounds associated with the processing of sugar and records a song which rehearses itself in the laborer's head even after the work day is over. The opening strains of the laborer's song are the "melodies a

ripened cane field waves." This is followed by the pulsating percussion of the "wheels that push the crushing mills." Next is heard the hum of "Bag-laden wagons, factory to shore," and the final tone comes "When a funnel anchors near the quay." Such are the sounds of the St. Croix laborer.

Underlying the substance of this poem is an allusion to the African ancestry of the laborers and the concept of singing while one works, a practice brought to the Virgin Islands along with the enslaved Africans. However, for the laborers of Creque's poem, there are no verbal songs to lighten their loads, only the sapping sounds of the machinery and appliances associated with their tasks. Creque skillfully enumerates the various steps and the accompanying sounds in the processing of cane from the cane field to the sugar mills, to the waiting boats on the dock. Because this work is so much a part of the laborer's existence, he is never free of its sounds. Creque's use of "song" in the title could lead one to believe that this poem is about the songs sung or hummed by workers to wile away the hours. However, in reality the working hours of the St. Croix laborer are songless and joyless. In fact, the attitude of melancholy is underscored by the words "depression," "joy-robbled," and "sad." In exposing the only sounds available to accompany the sugar industry worker, Creque is, in fact, commenting on the arduous spirit-sapping nature of the work.

Another poem which illustrates the severity of working life for Virgin Islanders, this time on St. Thomas, is "Coal Carriers." Here Creque details the life of the coal carriers, mostly women, in an industry once an essential part of the Virgin Islands economy. According to the August 1, 1970 anniversary edition of the Daily News, coaling ships by basket was one of the occupations of hundreds of women and some men during the early days of Virgin Islands commerce (13). While Marvin Williams acknowledges that line six, "And jingling pennies their slim purses feed," is potentially explosive, he asserts that the poem displays a romantic and glossing impulse (12). Indeed, this example of hard labor is couched in the romantic language typical of Creque's time and while the poem offers no protest against the hardships of such work, it does address the long hours and the inequity of the merchants' profits compared with the wages of the workers. The nature of the work and a revelation of the mediocre wages are revealed in lines which fail to disclose

the reality of the fifty pound baskets carried by each woman or the pay of two cents per basket. In fact, "The anthracite lumps they fling fast in the hold" does not conjure quite the same image as the following description by Charles Edwin Taylor in his An Island of the Sea: "Busy as bees are the coal-women when at this exhausting labour; hundreds of them, each with a basket of coal on her head, run along the gangway leading to the steamer, empty it, and run back to have it once again refilled" (34). What the poem does underscore, however, is the inequity extant in an industry which paid workers a pittance while their labor would result in "a volume of gold" for the employers. The poet also recognizes the necessity of work and the honesty of the women "Black-bathed in an ocean of dignified dust." Moreover, "Coal Carriers" parallels Keats' concern with the destructive effects of capitalism evidenced in his "Isabella," which addresses the hardships of pearl divers in Ceylon.

Furthermore, the poem makes the point that the coal workers are always at their assigned stations like sentinels, for "[t]heir watch is the skyline which touches the sea." They are surrounded by soft soothing sounds such as, "The soft plunging rollers that billow the sand" and "the thrilling salt-echoes that ramble the land." However, these tranquil sounds do not invite the coal carriers to relax on the beach and enjoy their serenade; instead, they signal the beginning of the coal carriers' work day. The leisurely rhythm of these lines provides a vivid contrast to the more rapid paced "jingling pennies" and the "anthracite lumps" flung "fast in the hold," of the second stanza. Additionally, it is evident that these women are working to feed themselves and their families, for the "jingling pennies their slim purses feed . . . . This solemn exchange of the commonest need," signifies the necessity and the dignity of work.

Creque parallels the coal carriers' work day to the rising and setting of the sun indicating:

They greet the worn smile of a glorified day;  
Co-sharers in toil and co-partners in trust  
They sink with the sun at the close of his sway. (Trade Winds 89)

The workers "greet the worn smile of a glorified day" with which they have been "co-sharers" and "co-partners. At the end of the day they sink, whether into bed or the bath, just as the sun sets at the end of its work day. This image

of the workers sinking at the end of the day, calls to mind the recollection of Virgin Islander Viola Simmonds who, during her childhood, lived next door to a coal woman. Mrs. Simmonds remembers that when the worker, Ms. Theodore, came home she was so tired that all she could do was wash the coal dust from her body and go to bed. Certainly Creque's portrayal neither glorifies nor romanticizes the life of the coal carrier, for he addresses the atmosphere in which they work, their hours, and their wages. His capsulization of this twelve hour work day into three stanzas each with four eleven syllable lines underscores the amount of work which is packed into each day, for each line represents an hour of work. However, unlike the coal carrier who only receives two cents for each basket, Creque's reader reaps "volumes of gold" from these lines.

Another poem evidencing Creque's concern for the individual and opposing the injustice of the oppressor is "Birthright," an allegory addressing hard work and perseverance. This is one of several poems which underwent the scrutiny of his versification course and represents the rare occasion in which he explains his word choice. In fact, his explanation of the use of the oxymoron "malignant tonic" underscores the message of persistence in the poem, for he says, "From the standpoint of a potion, anything that is bad can produce no good, but from the angle of human temperament, the bad is a tonic which strengthens character" (Letter 7/16/29). In this poem, Creque praises the resilience of the human spirit in the lines: "Each day he bends as does triumphant grass / Which knows the hooves that burden it shall pass." The resilience of the "triumphant grass" suggests that the farmer will overcome any obstacles which interfere with his "birthright." The poem also addresses the individual's need to assert his identity against the pressures of his society. Interestingly, Creque's response to some of the recommended changes in this poem illustrate his own willingness to assert his identity against the pressures of European interpretation represented by his versification instructor, Mrs. Roberts. Creque begins stanza two, "And they would mar his field with sour loam." The phrase "sour loam" is questioned by his instructor, but Creque explains, "The expression 'sour loam' has been used in justice to the fact that it would require constant effort on the part of the planter to keep his land sweet when people are constantly making it sour"

(Creque, Letter 7/16/29). This is one of the few instances in which he defends his word choice and retains it in the published version of the poem.

In a literal sense the poem addresses the plight of a farmer struggling against the shrubs and thickets strangling his crops. The land is his by virtue of birth and he seeks to clear away the shrubbery to plant "lovelier things." The rain is generous and he works hard digging the necessary trenches to catch the rain. However, the thicket which springs from roots rather than seeds continues to "wimble through the earth," like pesky animals or insects. The farmer toils from "dawn to gloam" seeking to gain a productive yield, knowing that one day he will be triumphant. "Each day he bends as does triumphant grass / Which knows the hooves that burden it shall pass." Creque's portrayal is reminiscent of the Romantic compassion for the poor.

At another level the poem suggests the land is truly not virgin because it is already inhabited by the coppice, small weeds which grow from roots rather than seeds. Their constant presence suggests their inhabitation of the plot. The farmer is infringing on their birthright, much as the Europeans imposed themselves on the Caribs they found in the Caribbean and sought to root them out. The "nuisances" of the poem bore through the ground and rise high, in an attitude of prayer, in "reverend thought" and "yield a shriveled crop of joy." However, there isn't much joy in a crop that is withered. The poet suggests that the weeds are teasing the farmer. However, the battle seems to be over who truly has the right to the land, for like Columbus and his cohorts, who claimed to have discovered already inhabited land, the farmer claims the right to a virgin plot which is truly not virgin. Stanza two says, "they would mar his field;" however, he is marring the field with his digging to produce so-called lovelier things.

Another possible explanation of this poem might be that the farmer is a slave or former slave who has been given his own piece of land to till, but is having difficulties. The "they" of line nine could be the overseer who doesn't really want him to be successful, so tramples the plot with his horse's hooves or commits other acts to make the farmer's life more difficult. This poem also has sexual connotations. For example, the image of a farmer plowing a virgin plot is one found elsewhere in literature, as is the concept of the rain sinking deep into the earth and producing young shoots.



Still further, the classical allusion to the Biblical story of Jacob who stole his brother's birthright speaks to the other meaning of the word plot, a scheme. In the Biblical story, Jacob connives with his mother to steal his brother, Esau's birthright. The conniving, plotting, scheming, which the Europeans did to steal the virgin land from the Caribs and to steal Africans from their home is implicit in the poem. Also implicit is the possibility of Virgin Islands landowners being duped out of their land, the Virgin Islands, by American developers who promise jobs for locals and an infusion into the treasury by the taxes they will pay. Again, this alludes to the Romantic concern for small landowners whose properties were forcefully taken away by the larger property-owners seeking to acquire adjacent lots. Further, given Creque's original language, "For some embittered, strengthening breeze to pass," and his intention in this poem, it would seem to speak to the fact that the black man has to work harder, has to suffer "malignant tonic breezes" before he can realize whatever he desires. Similarly, as a writer, he has to endure the arduousness of rewriting and honing his skills so that he too will be strengthened by the "malignant tonic." In composing such a multi-layered poem, Creque underscores his theme of perseverance for like the poem, life is filled with obstacles and challenges, but it also offers options and various means of handling whatever comes.

In addition to exhibiting Creque's poetic ability, "Birthright" introduces the theme of injustice which emerges as an overriding theme in Creque's poetry. This poem specifically, speaks to the injustice against the original inhabitants of the land as well as the injustice against the laborer who works hard to cultivate the land. The richness of this poem lies in its intertextuality, its many possible levels of interpretation. Additionally, his use of seemingly contradictory terms can be characterized as a strength when the ideology of Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky is applied. In discussing the language of Romantic poetry, Shklovsky maintains that the " 'technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar,' " and adds that the deviation from a norm is what produces style. For him, "Figurative language, and unusual word order, are the rhetoric by which we encounter a 'special perception of the object' " (qtd. in Watson 88-89). Creque deviates from the norm in his word choice and produces very specific images in his use of "sour loam" and "malignant

tonic" in "Birthright" and "gaudily kirtled" in "Blooming Giants."

Unfortunately, on too many occasions he was influenced to change, thereby affecting the original sensibilities he brought to his creations.

Moving from the hardships of labor to the frolic of dance, Creque pictures another aspect of Virgin Islands life. In this portrait he completes the complex tapestry of a people descended from Africa, but molded to a large degree by Europe. In his "Bamboula Echoes," "Tropic Dance," and "Masquerade Frenzy," Creque emphasizes the centrality of the drum to Virgin Islands music and the importance of music and dance to the people's survival. The bamboula, a dance of African origins, is performed to the pulsating rhythms of an African drum. So powerful was the rhythm of the drum and so uninhibited the accompanying dance that the plantation owners were fearful of it. Because this was a dance of the masses and purely of African origin, it did not enjoy the same respect as the primarily European quadrille.

Marvin Williams says that among the early poets, the bamboula drum and dance constitute a central trope signifying a difference that edifies. It is a sign of real or potential subversion (7). The sentiment here seems to be that the bamboula serves the same function in Virgin Islands poetry as vernacular verse does in early Caribbean works by diverting from the traditional European images. The bamboula drum proclaims Africa in all its rhythmic glory. Williams further notes, "Each time bamboula appears it declares an African and West Indian selfhood that counters prevailing notions of black inferiority, cultural deficit, and mimicry. Bamboula says this is us and ours. Yet in the early poetry it hardly ever achieves its liberatory potential, never really rises above the gesture it was intended to be" (7). However, he does speak favorably of Creque's bamboula poems noting, "Cyril Creque's 'Bamboula Echoes' unabashedly celebrates African blood, its enduring dynamic influence; and it does so with an energy befitting the passionate rhythm of the bamboula drums" (9). Nonetheless, while Williams acknowledges the many positive aspects of the poem, he maintains that the traditional ballad structure and melody of the poem muffle the drum's authentic voice (9).

The drum whether in African, African-American, or African-Caribbean literature, symbolizes the heritage of African derived people. It represents the one aspect of African culture which has survived the centuries of European intrusion and in many ways helps to record and authenticate black history. The drum is no less significant in the Virgin Islands. It is the central instrument of the one surviving African dance in the territory, a dance originally associated with religious practices. Creque's portrayal is Romantic in that it celebrates the wonderful and depicts the society in which the individual lives.

"Bamboula Echoes" and "Masquerade Frenzy" mirror each other in many ways. The onomatopoeic "slamming," "billowing," and "barrel-rolling" of "Bamboula Echoes" are amplified in the heightened resonance of "Masquerade Frenzy's" "tumming," "strumming," "drumming," and "humming." Both poems have alternating long and short lines with the eleven or twelve syllable lines being the odd numbered and the one, two, or three syllable lines being the even numbered. The image created by the drastic difference in line length, particularly because the short lines are indented, imitates the movement of the dancers sashaying from one side to the other and pausing to perform some heel and toe step at preestablished intervals. Interestingly "Masquerade Frenzy is half the length of the thirty-two line "Bamboula Echoes." The shortened length seems to be a fulfillment of the poet's prophesy at the end of the longer poem where he warns, "For the twilight of their echoes soon in darkness / fades away." The element of prophecy here coincides with that tenet of Romanticism, the poets' gift of foresight.

The influence of the European on the culture hovers around the fringes, for in "Bamboula Echoes" the poet compares the movement of the drummer's fingers to those of Polish Russian pianist, Ignacy Paderewski, declaring, "You can draw more rhythm with your tips than / Paderewski can!" Similarly, he queries the African pastmasters, "Did you ever do the dance so well in petticoat / and skirt?" However, the overriding message is that regardless of a person's station in life, the "savage blood" is awakened. In "Bamboula Echoes" "Aunt Jemima leaves her basket, takes a jig, a slide, / A prance," because she cannot "snub the tempting music of a subtle, pristine /

dance." Similarly, in "Masquerade Frenzy" "They are jigging up their face masks to some gay / bamboula tunes," while in "Tropic Dance" the poet quips, "O vanity, you tinge the lettered cheek / When black drums thrum and waken savage / years." Creque's use of "savage" here does not appear to be derogatory. In fact it is uttered with a level of respect for the motherland. Indeed, of Creque's use of the word "savage" Williams notes that it is not used with a pejorative phlegm; rather it suggests Creque's concern for the African heritage becoming adulterated or rejected (10).

Creque expertly uses language to comment on aspects of the dance and its participants. For example, in "Bamboula Echoes" Aunt Jemima symbolizes the house slave who would not ordinarily participate in the activities of the field slaves. She also symbolizes those blacks in the generations since slavery who try to keep their distance from blacks whose proud manifestations of their Africanness embarrass them. However, Creque clearly establishes himself as one of the unashamed, for he calls on the African pastmasters to awaken from their European induced slumber and note the impending demise of their culture. Further, he captures the intensity of the music as he describes the movement of the dancers "swelling like a river" and chides those of African ancestry who ape the Europeans with the quadrille. He suggests that they are probably jealous of the bamboula dancers because the quadrille does not allow them the freedom of the highly energized bamboula. Significantly, he issues a call to his contemporaries to learn these dances because this one genuine aspect of African culture is fast fading from the Virgin Islands cultural scene. In doing so, Creque addresses a question posed by Romantic poets: "What is my understanding of the past and my hope for the future?"

Again, in "Masquerade Frenzy" Creque captures the life, energy, freshness, and excitement which Watson maintains characterizes Romantic poetry (3). He also exhibits his aptitude with words as "face masks" in the opening line implies that the true feelings of the people are hidden beneath the surface of their daily lives. Beneath the "skirts and / pantaloons" are the rhythms of Africa "Whose music shakes their suppleness in dance of savage / wars." However, even in this moment of gaiety, the poet sounds the note of caution that "they'll toss a fleeting mirth," for just as the time allotted to

these celebrations is brief, the continued existence of the bamboula is threatened.

The third poem of Creque's bamboula tradition, "The Tropic Dance," differs in tone and style from the other two. In this rendition, the frenzy and energy of the masquerade have already been diluted. The lines lack the variety and exuberance of the other poems, as it is locked into the sixteen line iambic pentameter of a sonnet. The freedom of the dance has been muffled by a form that does not allow it the freedom of expression just as the "petticoat and skirt" of the other poem hinder the freedom of the dancer. Another difference is that the speaker of the poem invites someone to observe the dancers, "Come near and watch the tropic dancer sway." The characters in the poem are observers rather than participants, so that the first person point of view lacks the enthusiasm and verve of the third person omniscient. The onomatopoeia of the other poems is absent. All that is left here are "Some pale bamboula airs which years ago / An early sire fashioned in the glow / Of pristine passion, groping for a way."

One feature of this poem evident in a number of Creque's work is the use of the question mark. Watson notes that Romantic poetry often ends in a question mark indicating the poet's penchant for asking probing questions. He adds that the poetry of the period is "exceptional in its awareness of the problems of language and the indeterminacies of meaning." In Creque's case, he asks why traditions are being wantonly cast aside, why the beauty of the landscape is being destroyed, and why one segment of the population has to toil so that another can profit. Truly his Romantic nature is evident in every aspect of his writing.

As an artist seeking to master all aspects of the poetic craft, Creque attempted most of the poetic forms. He wrote sonnets, ballads, lyrics, rondels, odes, ballades, and even tried his hand at the limerick. However, regardless of the form employed, there is always in Creque's poetry a question about fairness, injustice, and people's treatment of each other, and a concern for the individual and his relationship to the state. The following limerick, "Not Guilty" reveals Creque's wit as well as his attention to the question of censorship and poses a question often asked by the Romantics, "What is the best form of political society?":

A pen was once haled into court  
 For publishing words of some sort.  
     Said the judge to the pen  
     With a roar from his den:  
 "Why indulge in such critical sport?"

The pen held its peace a good while  
 Till the jury felt tickled to smile,  
     But the courtroom was tense  
     With itching suspense  
 To hear the defense of a style.

His honor, now visibly hot,  
 Held a pen to put down what he thought;  
     "Please judge", the quill said,  
     Shrewdly scratching its head,  
 "Do you hold me in guilt or do not?" (Panorama 71)

It is possible that this poem was inspired by the controversy surrounding and subsequent censorship of a book by Creque's contemporary, J. Antonio Jarvis. Whether or not that relationship did exist, the poem clearly articulates the fears of the writer who had to be cautious of every word he writes. While not presenting an argument of the magnitude of Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry," Creque uses the pen to symbolize the writer and his art. As he does in other pieces, Creque uses words with double meanings to underscore his point. Here the irony of "Why indulge in such critical sport?" is clear, as the judge, who represents the wider society is the one being critical. Additionally, the line suggests that the public does not take the writer seriously and, thus, makes sport of his efforts. The "peace" in the second stanza refers to the writer's "piece of work" which must be defended. The ultimate irony of the poem lies in the final stanza in which the poet establishes the importance of the written word to every profession. He further points out that censorship of the poet constitutes censorship of everyone else. Additionally, as a place of justice, the court is responsible for upholding the rights of the people including the right to free speech.

The form of the poem alludes to the two sides of the argument and the orderly presentation of a case. Each stanza begins with two long lines presenting one side of the argument, followed by two shorter indented lines

which present the opposing side. While no verdict is rendered in the poem, the poet leaves the reader to consider a very important social and political question, "Do you hold me in guilt or do not?" His use of the limerick rather than some other style which would lend a greater air of seriousness to the topic, is indicative of the manner in which literature is viewed as opposed to law or some other profession. By poking fun at the judge and by extension the community, Creque drives home the seriousness, the unfairness of censorship.

The poems of Cyril F. W. Creque reveal a multi-talented artist who, to some extent, was misunderstood and unappreciated during his lifetime. In a literary career which spanned at least thirty years, he composed and published almost two hundred poems. The variety of style and content portray a man concerned with his home, with nature, and with the human condition. Although he was not overtly an activist, he used his poetic pen to bring to light injustices, to provide words of caution, and to leave a legacy of the time in which he lived. The nature of this study does not permit exploration of all of Cyril Creque's creative efforts. However, the insights provided by the works examined reveal a wealth of material which not only exposes the nature of the writer and provides a portrait of the Virgin Islands during his lifetime, but also situates Cyril Creque squarely in the company of Wordsworth, Keats, Blake, and others of the English Romantic tradition.

## CHAPTER IV

## GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS: THE VERNACULAR POETRY OF J. P. GIMENEZ

In a 1993 article on the use of nation language by Jamaican women poets, Caribbean critic, Thelma B. Thompson, calls the writers' attention to "English as spoken by the masses," a recent development. However, while the term "nation language," defined by Caribbean writer and critic, Edward Kamau Brathwaite as the submerged area of Caribbean speech closely allied to the African aspect of experience in the Caribbean, might be new, the tradition out of which it comes is, in fact, centuries old (13). Studies of the Middle English writings of Geoffrey Chaucer and the eighteenth century verse of Scottish poet, Robert Burns, reveal that their works give primacy to the language of the masses. In Chaucer's case, during the thirteenth century, as a result of the Norman Conquest, French was the official language. Consequently, the English, which he popularized, was a Midlands dialect based on London speech (Millward 124-25). Similarly, Burns utilized the Celtic dialect, Scots Gaelic, in his poems rather than the standard British English commonly used in Scotland at the time (Millward 309). Closer to home, among the descendants of Africa displaced and dispersed by the slave trade, the use of vernacular in Caribbean poetry dates back to the nineteenth century when Michael McTurk and Edward Cordle "wrote for a new readership, who for the first time, saw their own lives reflected in literary form" (Burnett xxxvii). In Black America, vernacular usage has roots in the stories of Charles Chesnutt, the dialect poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar, and the sermons of James Weldon Johnson. In fact, the use of "the people's language" is evident in the writings of many cultures and locales. In those areas with which the United States Virgin Islands shares geographic and/or political bonds, the tradition has been enriched by the contributions of Jamaicans, Claude McKay and Louise Bennett; Cuban, Nicolás Guillén; and black Americans, Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes. In the United



States Virgin Islands, J. P. Gimenez is an exponent of this tradition, expressing the economic, social, and spiritual beliefs of the people.

The language of the masses, variously identified as dialect, vernacular, Creole, or nation language, invariably lacks standard orthography, thus the written words often take the shape designed by their practitioners. Consequently, vernacular usage of English has been perceived as " 'the mere mutilation of English spelling and pronunciation' " (Gates 183), or viewed by detractors such as Caribbean writer V. S. Naipaul as something from which one has to graduate (Brathwaite 27). However, the language in question, whether found in African America or the English speaking Caribbean grew out of two language bases, one African and the other English. Based on Caribbean linguist, Peter Roberts' definition, this vernacular usage can be classified as a Creole, which he defines as a dialect or language resulting from contact between the language of a colonising people and the language of a colonised people (13). He adds, "In the Caribbean as a whole, Creole languages are the result of contact between English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch ('languages of colonising people') and West African languages ('languages of a colonised people')" (14). Similarly, in discussing the development of black American English, linguists Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman note that in order for the enslaved Africans, who came from various linguistic backgrounds, to communicate, they were forced to use the one common language accessible to them, English. They, therefore, invented a simplified form incorporating many features of their West African languages (292).

Clearly, these definitions identify the various forms of English spoken by blacks and represented by black poets in their verse over the years. In fact, the languages of Africans in both the United States and Caribbean diaspora are variants of the English language as it evolved in the Western hemisphere. One reason these languages are effective in delineating the plight of the masses is their having evolved out of hardship situations themselves. As tools of survival, created by the enslaved Africans to facilitate the basic human need for communication, these languages are lean, often eliminating auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and some conjunctions. However, the term dialect, traditionally associated with the lower class rural speaker

and with the non-serious or comic, has been more commonly used to describe the speech of blacks. Unfortunately, because it does not enjoy the prestige of standard English, the language has been perceived as inappropriate for literature and a feature of black culture to be avoided.

According to African American critic, Henry Louis Gates, some black Americans viewed black dialect as a remnant of slavery and as such a degradation to the dignity of a proud people (Gates 182). In fact, Langston Hughes, one of the prime movers of the Harlem Renaissance, was called by those who repudiated his efforts to give voice to the masses, The "poet Lowrate of Harlem" (Tracy 41). Similarly, Louise Bennett was not readily accepted by Jamaica's "learned society" because of her use of the language of the folk. Edward Brathwaite notes that for years she performed in crowded village halls across the island but could not get anything published in The Gleaner, Jamaica's oldest and largest newspaper, and often the only outlet for a budding artist. Additionally, she does not appear in the Independence Anthology of Jamaican Poetry but is rather placed at the back of the book as an after thought or embarrassment under the heading, "Miscellaneous." Bennett herself acknowledges the rejection, noting in a 1968 article in Caribbean Quarterly, "I have been set apart by other creative writers a long time because of the language I speak and work in" (qtd. in Brathwaite 28). This, then, is the early perception of a language which sought to replicate the speech of the black masses who were unempowered to speak for themselves .

Nonetheless, despite the misconception of its worth, black vernacular has survived, growing out of the oral traditions of calinda, quelbe, cariso, and calypso in the Caribbean and gospel, spiritual, and blues in African America. As used in poetry, the vernacular serves several functions. For Brathwaite, the writer of verse in nation language is a folk poet, a spokesperson "whose whole concern is to express the experience of the people rather than the experiences of the elite" (26). Similarly, in her definition of the folk poet, Thompson asserts, "The poet acts as a scribe for the ideas of those who cannot or do not record their own experiences," and adds that while the language lacks a standard, it aims at communicating neglected ideas (47-48). Thompson further notes that by writing in the language of the masses, these poets capture the political tensions that permeate the lives of the masses (58).

For Gates, the use of dialect in Afro-American writing is a kind of masking. It is a descent into the unknown tongue of the African part of the heritage. He adds that because African American dialects exist between two poles, one English and the other "lost in some mythical linguistic kingdom now irrecoverable," the use of dialect obviates the English thesis (172). In other words, use of dialect is a repudiation of the European part of the self and a celebration of the African. He notes, further, that dialect poetry has the capacity to carry imagery compactly, focusing and strengthening it, in contrast to its standard English reflection (190). While Gates speaks of some mythical, irrecoverable linguistic kingdom, linguists, such as Roberts, Fromkin, and Rodman clearly identify that linguistic source as West Africa.

In defining the phenomenon that is black vernacular poetry, the perceptions of critic Martha Cobb in her study of Langston Hughes, Jacques Roumain and Nicolás Guillén are pertinent. According to Cobb, "Literature both mirrors and interprets the society that produces it, projecting the communal wisdom of a culture, the survival strategies, the community's hero-images and woman-images, its social ordering and authority symbols, that ultimately determine values (5-6). She adds that dialect poetry, which derives from the oral tradition of religious music and the images employed in social statements, describes poetically the conditions of black people, their responses to those conditions, and their desire to escape from them (12), addressing themes such as man-woman and love relationships and the condition of the enslaved or the exploited (14). Other features of Hughes' and Guillén's works are nostalgia for something or someone that is gone, ironic humor, joy, and sorrow, and while music is the inferred background of some of these works, their themes usually concern loneliness, unrequited love, poverty, and emotional conflicts (112). Cobb continues, "In sum, verbal techniques were used to transform each poet's national language into modes of expression emanating from the black world." She adds that the poets employ dialect and street argot as well as poetic rhythms designed to replicate the beat of the drums evident in dance, blues, jazz, the Cuban 'son' and rumba. In so doing, they attempt to capture on the printed page the quality of speech tones characteristic of black people (135).

This, fascination with black folk culture, then, is the tradition of which Virgin Islands poet and songwriter, J. P. Gimenez is a part. His own intentions relative to the use of the vernacular are articulated in both the foreword and the dedication of Virgin Islands Folklore and Other Poems. In the "Foreword," he gives the following objectives for publishing the book: "To conserve the folklore of the Virgin Islands of the United States of America, in its original native dialect, and to provide a souvenir of the Virgin islands for natives of the islands residing in the U. S. and other countries, tourists, and other people interested in the islands' folklore" (n. pag.). The publication also carries the following dedication from the author:

Each Creative Thought,  
Each Word,  
Each Deed,  
Helps God's Universal Plan to speed.  
Helps to make this a Perfect Earth,  
The Earth God Plann'd,  
When He gave it Birth

The sentiment expressed in this dedication underscores Gimenez's belief in the divine plan, and his attention to the folklore and beliefs of the masses of Virgin Islanders of African ancestry and suggests that he wanted to insure that their place in God's divine plan would also be preserved. It also is very much in keeping with the sentiment of James Weldon Johnson, who is reported to have said, "The final measure of the greatness of all peoples is the amount and standard of the literature and art they have produced. . . . No people that has produced great literature and art has ever been looked upon by the world as distinctly inferior" (qtd. in Gates 184). Although Johnson's statement was uttered as justification for moving away from dialect poetry, it, in fact, adds impetus to the use of the vernacular by African American and Caribbean poets in their work.

José Patricio Gimenez was born in St. Thomas in the then Danish West Indies on March 17, 1893 to Abelado Gimenez of Spain and Miss Naar of Dutch St. Maarten. Utilizing, alternately, the Spanish version of his name, José Patricio and the English, Joseph Patrick, Gimenez wrote in Standard English, Spanish, French, and the Virgin Islands vernacular. During his early childhood in St. Thomas, Gimenez attended the Catholic School (Miller.

Interview) and later studied steam, mechanics, construction, accounting, electricity, business, and salesmanship ("Joseph Gimenez," 1). This varied training certainly, provided the capacity for his intermingling with the masses throughout his life. At the age of sixteen he moved to neighboring Puerto Rico where he became manager of an electrical plant, married, and had a daughter. During those years in Puerto Rico, he read his poems on the radio (Miller. Interview), a practice he continued when he resided in Santo Domingo (Anduze 46 ).

While this study focuses on Gimenez's vernacular poetry, the majority of his works are written in standard English and primarily focus on mystical concerns of the great beyond. In fact, Gimenez is known as the Virgin Islands mystic poet, a title he acquired from some visiting poets, early in his literary career. Indeed, many of his poems focus on concern for the human condition and evidence his continuing quest for truth, two qualities of mysticism. Of his mysticism, his daughter, Aida Miller, indicates that Gimenez would sometimes get up at night, which was when he did most of his writing, and walk around. When asked what was wrong, he would say that someone was telling him what to write. Additionally, he wrote a number of occasional poems to and about significant personages on the Virgin Islands scene and also wrote about some not-so-prominent folks. Some of these "people poems" were done by request, but very often, the poet wrote poems about people who fascinated him. Gimenez, although a prominent businessman, was very comfortable with the grass roots people from whom he garnered the type of knowledge which informs his folklore poems. Nonetheless, his social circle was varied, including both J. Antonio Jarvis and Cyril Creque, whom he counted as good friends and with whom he shared his creative efforts. Additionally, he was friends with and inspired Erica Lee, a young female poet, who visited Gimenez's store daily. He read her poems and assisted her in having them published (Miller. Interview).

In addition to being amiable, Gimenez was said to be extremely generous, providing his customers a reasonable installment plan. His generosity, a part of his mystical concern for the whole human, undoubtedly encouraged the masses to conduct business in his establishment, thereby providing him a ready audience for his poetry. Indeed Gaveston David, a

retired pastor who was in high school when Gimenez was writing, substantiates this belief and indicates that whenever customers or passers-by were willing to listen, he would recite. It seems, though, that the store also supplied him with stock for his verse because he liked hearing about the jumbi stories from some of the people who frequented his store, and he wrote about these stories and other common occurrences in his poems. These jumbi stories are tales of encounters with the spirits of dead people. According to David, he even recited poems which had not yet been completed, a practice which led David to believe that Gimenez sometimes used his listeners as guinea pigs. Gimenez's penchant for reciting his poetry is very likely a result of the oral tradition from which vernacular verse emerges. As a practitioner of this descendant of the oral tradition, Gimenez functions as a griot, keeping the traditions alive and telling the stories of the people. In this vein, then, his need for an audience is related to Edward Brathwaite's assertion that the oral tradition demands not only the griot but the audience as well, to complete the whole of the community (18), an assertion also maintained by Steven Tracy, who says that poetry needs the poet, the performance, and the audience to be complete (13).

Nonetheless, David admits, that Gimenez was a very kind and generous man who never turned anybody away. In fact, David was himself once a recipient of that generosity. David further notes that Gimenez was not involved in politics but was greatly concerned about the political situation at the time and wrote about it, a fact evident in poems such as "A Virgin Islander's Letter to Uncle Sam" and "Mistah Editah." In Profiles of Outstanding Virgin Islanders, retired educator and cultural specialist, Ruth Moolenaar corroborates this perception of Gimenez; she indicates that he was an articulate speaker who could arouse a crowd with fiery speeches lashing out at social injustices and wrong doings by local leaders (86). In a recent interview, Moolenaar further adds that Gimenez wrote with more emotion than Jarvis. In her assessment, "He felt what he wrote and he lived what he wrote." She says that his poems reflect his personality and provide a good image of what was happening at the time. According to her, a person reading Gimenez's poetry about particular events can sense the atmosphere. For example, she says that the landing of the first plane on St. Thomas was an

historic event, and in his poem commemorating that occasion, Gimenez captures the fear of the people at seeing the plane land. For her the major difference between Gimenez and Jarvis is that Gimenez retained the important contributions of his fellow Virgin Islanders and preserved much of the essence of the people, events, and times (Moolenaar. Interview). Former University of the Virgin Islands English professor, David Gershator in "Poetry of the Virgin Islands: Past and Present," offers similar observations, noting that Gimenez "was more prolific than Jarvis in the area of poetic expression and more adventurous in his experimentation with language" (410).

Of the writers in this study, Gimenez was the most widely published. His best known collections are Virgin Islands Folklore and Other Poems, Voices of the Virgin Islands, Caribbean Echoes, and Deep Waters. However, notes on Gimenez in the von Scholten Collection at the Enid Baa Library in St. Thomas also show him as having written Sunshine and Shadows, Looking Beyond, and A Handful of Gems. Additionally, he composed a number of songs, including "Granada," "My Chinese Baby," "Give Me Wine, Women, and Gasoline," "Dolores from Old Rio," "That Man of Mine," and "Freddo" (also a vernacular poem). His literary accomplishments afforded him membership in "Poetry Week" Fellowship, National Poetry Center in New York and he was also an honorary member of the International Mark Twain Society, whose membership list includes Carl Sandburg, W. Somerset Maugham, and Albert Einstein.

In his master's thesis, Adelbert Anduze suggests that Gimenez's poetry evolved through four identifiable stages. The first stage, which manifests experimentation in theme and form, includes poems primarily written in Spanish. According to Anduze, many of these were published in newspapers in Santo Domingo. The second stage, which to Anduze is the most important, shows experimentation in language and addresses themes mostly focusing on immediate surroundings and atmosphere. Poems in this period include those for which Gimenez will most likely be remembered, for they involve "the preservation of Virgin Islands' folk tales and stories of heroes, villains, occurrences, and fantasy" (47). The third stage identified by Anduze is a transitional didactic stage in which the poet makes an attempt at

universality, concentrating mainly on "those nagging thoughts of the lot of Man and the Universe" (48). He adds that while these poems brought him recognition from all parts of the world, they moved him far from the island scene because he wrote only for the intellectual, the scholar, and the poet's poet. Anduze further suggests that the poems in the final stage reflect an in-depth study of human self. However, he notes that Gimenez's potential in the fourth stage was never fully realized, for at his death in 1953, he was in the process of compiling several books which show this new direction his work was taking (45-48).

Gimenez's changing focus as a poet is clearly evident as one examines the poems in his 1933 collection and those in his later publications, for the later works concentrate more fully on universal themes surrounding the human condition and less on situations particular to the Virgin Islands. This total abdication of the vernacular is in keeping with the habits of other practitioners of the vernacular art such as Claude McKay and Paul Laurence Dunbar who moved away totally from the vernacular tradition. Nonetheless, during the period in which he writes in the voice of the masses, Gimenez gives expression to their economic, social, and political concerns and validates their spiritual beliefs.

Gimenez's first collection, Virgin Islands Folklore and Other Poems, published in 1933, is a compilation of traditional verse, musical compositions, and poems in the vernacular and provides an articulate tapestry of Virgin Islands life. The vernacular poems can be divided primarily into three categories - those that address political issues such as citizenship, those that provide accounts of interpersonal relationships, and those that deal with Virgin Islands folklore. Of Gimenez's vernacular poems, Gaveston David observes that although the poems address very serious issues affecting the welfare of the masses, at the time they were written, they were misunderstood and not given the attention they deserve. Because the vernacular was not the preferred tongue of the educated, Gimenez's vernacular verse was perceived as trite and childish. The reception given these poems is very much in keeping with the historical reception of vernacular verse, for as Paula Burnett says, "The prejudice against the everyday language of the ordinary people was entrenched and persistent, and



it is only very recently that vernacular poetry has been taken at all seriously by the academic establishment" (xxxviii). Of Gimenez's poems, David adds that these poems were often seen as humorous, so many people missed the point. Even his poem, "How Tings Change," although widely recited, was generally misunderstood. David explains that in this poem, Gimenez is concerned about the restrictive covenants imposed on the territory by its new colonizers, the United States government, and the fact that people can no longer visit the Governor or even traverse Government Hill because of the guards (Interview).

The poem bemoans the change of ownership of the territory from Danish to American rule during the transfer in 1917. This change, which was supposed to enhance the life of Virgin Islanders, has instead brought strife and hardships. Hence the speaker laments, "Taint nottin like de Danish time." The coming of the marines has brought an end to the "big can 'o poke an pease" distributed by the Danish government, as well as the "Big black bread" which could be bought "foh ah few bit, / An get lots o' sausage free wid it." The nostalgia evinced in this poem is ironic because the life of Virgin Islanders during Danish rule was extremely difficult. In fact, in St. Croix in Another Time, Crucian author Richard Schrader interviews George Cornelius who experienced life under the Danes. Cornelius recalls how labor leader, David Hamilton Jackson went to Denmark to advise the king of the terrible treatment workers were receiving at the hands of the plantation owners. He says they were "making us work like dogs for little and nothing" (5). Given the fact that life was hard under the Danes and continues to be difficult under American rule, the point of the poem, "How Tings Change," becomes one of the people's perception of hardship and oppression. Indeed, Marilyn Krigger, history professor at the University of the Virgin Islands, in her introductory essay on the early period of Virgin Islands poetry for an upcoming anthology of Virgin Islands poetry, states that the early period of American sovereignty was marked by a mixed record. She notes that substantial improvements were initiated and implemented in areas such as education, medical and dental care, and public works and sanitation. However, the performance of the United States Navy, which was granted initial control of the islands, in areas such as political administration and

participation, general economic development, and race relations was dismal and caused distress for much of the population (1). Similarly, Valdemar Hill in Rise to Recognition, cites the fortieth anniversary issue of the St. Thomas Daily News which addresses the treatment of natives under navy rule: " 'Life under the Navy was not the idyllic story found in books. In 1917 the Navy virtually 'occupied' the islands, and there were few rights for the unfortunate subjects. They were ordered, kicked, and shoved and treated, as one commentator has pointed out, exactly as a rough sea captain would treat a recalcitrant sailor' " (78).

Given this scenario, people, understandably, pine for "the good old days." However, further examination of the situation described, reveals that the residents are welfare recipients, receiving food staples from the Danish government. Apparently, the people are blinded to the reality of their situation by the size of the bread and the can of "poke an pease." The behavior of the gendarmes, Danish police, who control the barracks where the handouts are made, is designed to maintain control of these black people who are not Danish citizens, but who nonetheless, think of the Virgin Islands as "dis land o' mine." The black bread which is bought from the Danish barracks is "Bettah black bread dan day on de street." The quality of the Danish product keeps the people beholden to the Danes for their sustenance. Additionally, once the gendarmes have over imbibed, they frolic with the masses creating the illusion of friendship, for as the last stanza of "How Tings Change" illustrates:

Den dey use to have de Pascalam,  
When t'was finish, gendarme shout - "Ta-ham".  
When de people run an shout wid glee,  
An gendarme trow each odder in de sea,  
In de night gendarme kep wan big spree,  
An invite all meh friens an me. (V. I. Folklore 86)

The footnote following the poem, identifies "Pascalam" as the anniversary of a Danish Military victory, "Ta-ham" as Danish for "hold him," and "spree" as a dance or party. The stanza depicts an air of cordiality between the gendarmes and the populace, but accounts by older Crucians (natives of St. Croix) of the gendarmes' cruelty underscores the supposition that any

overtures of friendship were simply a facade designed to distract the locals from the reality of their lives.

This poem, "How Tings Change," introduces hardship and nostalgia, which are the overriding themes of Gimenez's vernacular poetry, and establishes a person's ability to acquire food as a measure of his/her poverty. In the poem, rum, a sugar cane product, serves as a bartering agent for the locals because "Many ah time when ting went on de bum, / Gendarme changed bread an sausage foh rum." Similarly, in several poems, fungi (spelled "fungee" by Gimenez), a dish made with cornmeal, lard, and water surfaces as a symbol of the degree of hardship a person might be experiencing because, usually, even the most destitute can afford a pound of cornmeal and the shopkeeper, if asked, would donate the shortening. Additionally, the very nature of fungi speaks to the people's poverty, for fungi not eaten at one sitting becomes hard, making further consumption difficult. The hard coating, called a jacket, further alludes to the hardships of the poor, suggesting that in the days before refrigeration, even the fungi conspired against the poor because it could not be saved for a second meal.

Three poems which illustrate the depths of poverty by reference to fungi are "Mistah Editah," "Dem Wuz De Good Days," and "Musings of a Virgin Island Coal Carrier." In "Mistah Editah," a poem exhibiting ambivalence similar to Cyril Creque's "With Mingled Feelings," the speaker is concerned about what the change from a naval to a civilian form of government portends. He apologizes for his preoccupation with thoughts of the future, saying, "So doan blame meh; if ah talk plenty rot, / 'Cause ah now seein meh fungee all shot." Here, as in "How Tings Change," the speaker is concerned about being able to provide his most basic need, food, under the new form of government. Because he sees an end to his basic sustenance, he can no longer think clearly. Similarly, the speaker in "Dem Wuz De Good Days" laments:

Now, yo can't make to buy fungee,  
Less yo know geeumetre.  
Yo mus' larn figures till yo bust,  
Matty Matics an calculus. (V. I. Folklore 94)

In a nostalgic desire for the old days, the speaker notes that because things have changed, he cannot even "make" to buy fungi. The reality expressed by this line is even more devastating than that of other poems because not only can the person not afford to buy fungi, but he/she cannot even consider such a purchase. The hardships are compounded by an increase in prices, which the speaker facetiously says requires a knowledge of geometry and calculus to effectuate a purchase. The coal carrier in "Musings of a Virgin Islands Coal Carrier," a piece which resembles Langston Hughes' blues poem "Out of Work," also measures the speaker's poverty by her inability to buy fungi:

Tings gettin woss and woss each day,  
Ships doan come no mo in de bay,  
Now ah kin hardly buy fungee,  
Guess Ah goin have to ketch booby. (V. I. Folklore 95)

Again times are so hard that the coal worker, who once depended on the ships coming in to refuel to earn her living, cannot even afford to buy cornmeal to make fungi. The extent of this speaker's poverty is, however, heightened by the extreme means she will have to employ in order to survive. In line four she speaks of having to "ketch booby." This reference is to a large brown and white sea bird, not normally eaten but whose brown speckled egg with the green "white" and orange yolk is a delicacy. Because the booby bird usually alights on rocks at sea, the possibility of a coal carrier catching one is highly unlikely. The irony of her situation is that because she cannot afford to buy the most basic food, she will have to resort to catching an inedible bird whose eggs are a delicacy. The situation is further compounded by the suggestion that "dese hills kin produce carn." However, from her vantage point, "Ah doan see nottin but MARAHN." Marahn is an inedible bush used for sweeping yards and repelling sandflies and fleas. The person who has to resort to such an impossibility for food is truly destitute. The hardness of life is further imaged by the fact that the booby bird is "hard" to catch and the marahn, if it were edible, would be "hard" to chew. Of course the poem ends on a note of cynicism because these indelectable alternatives highlight the hopelessness of the coal carrier's predicament.

The extent of the hardship is further underscored by reference to the curse of Peter Crumble, an expression which suggests that a person is suffering a multitude of hardships simultaneously. The poem focuses on the multiplicity of troubles experienced by one segment of society. First of all, the prohibition act, imposed by the eighteenth amendment to the United States Constitution, brought an end to a significant aspect of the Virgin Islands economy, for coaling ships was a mainstay of the economy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors into or out of the United States and its territories. Since the ships were no longer able to buy Virgin Islands rum they stopped coming into port. This action resulted in a loss of work for the women who coaled the ships during their layovers. The problems caused by prohibition, however, were part of a series of hard times, for the dock in the harbor had sunk some time before, since those in authority failed to heed the warnings of the coal carrier.

The language of the poem underscores the multiplicity of the coal carriers burden. The word "woss" is repeated in the first line of the poem and is used again in line five, a feature of the Virgin Islands English Creole in which the repetition of words is used to indicate the comparative or the superlative. The double "s" in "woss" and "cuss," two words which represent hard times, further testifies to the multiple nature of the hardship. The double negatives "doan come no mo" and "kin hardly" in lines two and three also say that times are uncharacteristically hard. Further the reference to the curse of Peter Crumble suggests that the hardness of life has not only broken the people's spirits but has in fact caused them to crumble. Anything that is crumbled is almost impossible to reconstruct. Additionally, "Dis is like Peter Crumble cuss" suggests that the people experiencing these hard times are cursed and the changes wrought by prohibition have changed a lifestyle that can never be regained.

Gimenez uses several other words in these poems to indicate the difficulties of poverty. For example, "Mistah Editah," written as a letter to the editor is signed "Jawn Pinch Meh Tight," a name which suggests being in a "tight squeeze." It also alludes to being "In a pinch," another euphemism for under pressure or hard times. Additionally, this poem is about fear. The

speaker fears the unknown, taxes, and lawlessness. Nonetheless, the speaker knows the pain of the last several years of naval rule, so is caught between the proverbial "rock and a hard place," knowing what lies behind, but nevertheless fearful of what lies ahead. The poem also alludes to the social classes, and points out that while the merchants are presently financially comfortable, they might be joining the poor masses under civilian rule, a sentiment also expressed in "Why 'Merikin Use Concrete." Although Gimenez speaks for the "little people," his reference to the possibility of all merchants becoming poor might very well speak to his own fears as a businessman. The concern that "de law goin be bo'stick and fis" might also be his fear that without police on the streets the "better off" members of society might find themselves at the mercy of the down trodden.

Of this poem, Marvin Williams says that in language and theme it serves as a polemic on at least two fronts. First of all, despite its guise of defacing innocence, it reminds the newly installed government of its responsibility to the islands. Secondly, it makes its point in the authentic voice of the islands instead of in the "Bokra's" voice. He adds that Gimenez's linguistic choice underscores his thematic intent. Williams continues, "Gimenez saw poetry as more than a purely aesthetic vocation; for him it must speak to the struggles, triumphs, and flawless imperfect humanity of his people" (11). This assessment is corroborated by the observation of Gerald Moore, who in "The Language of West Indian Poetry" says that the representation or creative rehandling of a particular texture of West Indian sound (be it speech or song) is not some sort of verbal decoration, more or less dispensable, but the very material out of which the new literature and drama are being wrought (130).

Another poem whose language ably illustrates the difficulties being experienced by the people is "Dem Wuz De Good Days," in which the speaker's mind is "like ah twisted string" from trying to learn mathematics. Once again the hard times have bound the laborer. While the hard times are suggested in most of these poems, they are clearly articulated in "How Meh Boss Kin Lie," where the last two lines of the poem read, "But now a-day every ting change so, / Nottin but hard time every place you go." This poem is a study in nostalgia and exaggeration. The implication that the boss' stories

are lies is clear in the last line of the first stanza, "He always swears wha he say is true." The first exaggeration is to the kind of houses which existed in the past, for "Befo for a shingle dey used Lang Cake." The speaker here uses hyperbole to indicate how prosperous life was under the Danes. He suggests that life was so good that the shingles on the houses were made from cookies. Concerning other peculiar sights of long ago, he says:

Boy, in ole time funny tings ah see,  
Den wid sausage dogs dey used to tie,  
Sugar Cake use to fall from de sky. (V. I. Folklore 82)

This exaggeration serves to illustrate how "good" things were under the Danes because the house roofs were made of cakes, and candy fell from the sky. While obviously, none of this is true, the hardships of the current life are so extreme that life of the past is a fairy land. The poet once again uses food to underscore the intensity of the poverty.

Gimenez has developed a food continuum as a measure of poverty and the people's perception of their situation. In some parts of the Caribbean, food is a measure of a person's position in the community. For example, since chicken was generally only eaten on Sundays, a person who could eat chicken during the week was perceived to be financially better off than others. At the extreme left of the continuum is the impossible, represented by the inedible "booby" and "marahn." The next level is the basic food, fungi. This is followed by the comfortable, bread and sausage. Although they are handouts, they nevertheless represent a more substantial meal than fungi alone. Beyond the necessities, the speaker of "Talking 'Bout Xmas in De Virgin Isles" longs to once more taste the luxuries of sweetbread and guavaberry, the delicacies consumed at Christmas. The extreme right of the continuum is represented by the houses made of "lang cake" and the sky raining "sugar cake," for this is the fantasy. The people can fantasize, reminisce and long for the good old days, but in reality they have lost their free sausage and black bread and can hardly buy fungi, so they have to resort to the impossible. Life does not get much worse than that. These poems express sentiments similar to those articulated by Jamaican folklore poet Louise Bennett in her poem, "Dutty Tough." The difficulties for the masses are highlighted in the last stanza of her poem which speaks of the price of

bread being so high that the people have "Fe cut we y'eye pon bread an all," in other words ignore this basic staple and "Tun dumplin refugee!" (qtd. in Brathwaite 29). It appears that the dumpling serves the same purpose in Jamaica as the fungi does in the Virgin Islands. The concept of food as a measure of one's financial standing is not unique to these two folk poets, for in a treatise entitled "The Context of Hunger" in his Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad, Gordon Rohlehr notes that the fictions of the nineteen thirties were shaped out of the context of hunger, unemployment, economic depression, worker militancy, desperation, struggle, and sheer survivalism (216). Further, in discussing male/female relationships in calypso, he says, "No man is loved for himself, but for what he can provide. Food lies at the centre of relationships. These are calypso axioms which grew directly out of the context of hunger" (217-18). Gimenez, it seems, is following a tradition established by those Caribbean bards, calypsonians, who have come to be known truly as mouthpieces of the people.

In the Virgin Islands of which Gimenez writes, the hardships of the people are inextricably bound to their political condition resulting from the acquisition of the territory by the United States and Gimenez's poems constitute an ongoing debate over the benefits of the islands having become American. For example, "Why 'Merikin Use Concrete," offers a poignant perspective on what American ownership really means for the Virgin Islands. In a two stanza dialog, the poet offers an argument in praise of the United States' ability to build, countered by the eye opening reality of the American way. Commenting on how slowly the Danes do things, Bill, the first speaker, praises the Americans' ability to lay concrete on everything, "All de way from ah carner stone, / To ah tomb to lay daid people's bone." His friend, Joe, in countering the argument calls Bill an idiot for not recognizing that concrete stops all growth, "Dat's why on Main Street grass doan grow / Before dem hard-up marchants doh."

This poem differs from some of Gimenez's others in its absence of melancholic nostalgia. In fact, the poet uses irony to underscore the severity of the people's condition. In this poem, concrete, synonymous with progress, is deadly because it is used "to stop all growth." The line "An some time give it asphalt coat," while literally speaking to the workers covering the concrete



with asphalt whether for aesthetics or safety, alludes to the developers' habit of justifying their proposals by claiming that the proposed project will provide jobs for locals (black people). The corner stone is the beginning of a project and a tombstone is planted once the dead has been buried. The implication here is that the Americans now have control of every aspect of the people's lives from their very beginnings to the grave. The poet's use of the verb "lay" rather than "put" suggests a flattening, but it can also mean "lay one on you," a euphemism for deception. The word slow in line one applies not only to the manner of doing things, but it also applies to the Danes' mental capacity, for Bill says, "Lots of tings dem people didn't know." The Danes' ineptitude is contrasted with the Americans' knowledge, but Joe questions whether "Dem folks know mo dan you o' me?"

Of course the advent of the Americans stifles more than the growth of grass on Main Street. It strangles an entire way of life and turns an agrarian community into the proverbial "concrete jungle." With the concrete jungle comes the hustle and competition of the city. The leisurely ways of Main Street have died with the coming of concrete because merchants can no longer afford to pause and chat with each other or with customers. The word "concrete" also refers to the concrete plans and the, hard, calculating ways of conducting business as opposed to the slower, softer pace of life accustomed to under the Danes. There are other significant words as well. The use of "awful" in line one to modify slow suggests that not only were the Danes very slow, but their slowness was a deficit. The last line of the poem speaks to the depressed economy wherein even the merchants, who were once more financially comfortable than the average citizen, are now "hard-up," putting them, in the eyes of the Americans, on the same level as those in the lower classes of society. Line three says, "Now, de 'Amerikin' can't be beat," implying that it is difficult to beat him at his own game. Additionally, the concrete in this poem, represents the farthest extremes of the food continuum earlier delineated, for concrete is completely inedible. At least the "booby" and the "marahn" in "Musings of a Virgin Island Coal Carrier" are living things, but if the only thing available is concrete then the next step is death, and the only planting which will result from the American use of concrete will be tomb stones for the "daid people's bones."

These poems by Gimenez achieve the same effect of the nation language poems by women that Thelma Thompson discusses. According to Thompson, their poetry is bereft of nature poems and lyrical free verse: "The beauty of nature has given way to endless recounting of the ugliness of human nature. The language of urgency and reality now sits beside the language of pretty dreams and promises" (45). Gimenez's poetry reveals the ugliness of human nature and is devoid of the natural beauty of the environment which he highlights in some of his standard English poems. However, although the poems do deviate from the standard nature theme, stylistically, they are ballads which harken back to the nineteenth century style of Barbadian Edward Cordle, who Paula Burnett says, "stuck to a regular four-line rhymed stanza, whose humdrum rhythm became indelibly associated with the tradition" (xxxviii).

One noticeable feature of Gimenez's vernacular poems is the manner in which standard English intrudes. Although the non-standard orthography of Creole allows variations like the commonly used "fungi" and Gimenez's "fungee," the syntax of the language is specific. For example, in the second stanza of "Musings of a Virgin Islands Coal Carrier," the poet uses the standard English past participle form of the verb "sink," and the past tense of "tell" in the line, "Ah told dem so when de dack sunk." In Virgin Islands English Creole, the tenses do not change, so that in correct Creole the line would have read "Ah tell dem so wen de dack sink." Similarly the standard English spelling of "although" appears in that same poem instead of the Creole "Doh." He also inverts lines to accommodate the rhyme, sometimes using syntax uncharacteristic of the Creole. For example, in the third stanza of "How Meh Boss Kin Lie," he says, "Den wid sausage dogs dey used to tie." While "tie" rhymes with "sky" in the following line, the construction of the line is awkward. The line would normally read, "Dey used to tie de dog dem wid sausage."

These vernacular poems which address social and political issues are also in the tradition of the newspaper narratives of Lionel Roberts, a Virgin Islands political leader and journalist whose column "Hait Boobie" (the old cry of the seller of booby eggs) in the Emancipator, were written in dialect. Interestingly, J. Antonio Jarvis in his social history, The Virgin Islands and

Their People considers Roberts the "only repository and interpreter of native speech" and notes that "He uses this dialect for powerful arguments against corruption in politics, social shams, and for comments on current events" (167). It appears that Roberts' use of the dialect in his column was more acceptable than Gimenez's use in poetry because poetry, in the minds of many, was "better than" the local speech. Gimenez's use of the vernacular in the manner that he does, symbolizes his boldness and courage in venturing into an area untrod by his contemporaries. These poems by Gimenez are also in the tradition of Claude McKay's dialect poems collected in Constab Ballads and Songs of Jamaica, which provide an insight into the hard realities of black life in Jamaica during the first two decades of the twentieth century (Cooper 36). According to McKay's biographer, Wayne Cooper, McKay's duties as a constab kept him in touch with the poverty of the people and "brought him face to face with the injustices of Jamaican social life and the daily tensions, frustrations, and pain they engendered" (42). In like manner, although, Gimenez never experienced the wrenching poverty of a coal worker, he nevertheless was in touch with the feelings of the people through his contact with them when they came to his store to conduct business. His concern for people and the injustices which pervade society at the time lead him, like McKay, to provide a mouthpiece for the masses through his poetry.

In addressing the three distinct arenas of conflict facing people during his day - conflicts with the government, interpersonal conflicts, and conflicts with the spirit world - Gimenez assumes the role of bard, in much the same way as Haitian poet, Jacques Roumain, spoke of the bard as one standing before the people and using the beauty of their language to address their humanity (Cobb 126). In the Virgin Islands, singers of cariso, quelbe, and calypso all engage these topics in their songs. These various song types are components of the oral tradition in which the vernacular poetry has its roots. Gimenez's poems of the hard life of Virgin Islanders address the type of concerns which provide substance for the local songs, themselves a product and mainstay of the lifestyle of the masses. Similarly, the second category of poems, concerned with interpersonal relationships, fit into the music tradition of the Virgin Islands and that of the wider Caribbean. In fact, Virgin Islands cariso singer, Leona Watson says that when she was growing up, she

never heard people curse. "If they wanted to abuse you, they did so in song. As I grew older I realized they were attacking one another in song" (49). A number of Gimenez's poems accomplish a similar goal as they talk about people who have abused friendships, been unfaithful in love, or shunned the responsibility of parenthood. Like the *quelbe* songs which address infidelity and its consequences, these monologues, addressed directly to the unfaithful, bear the titles of the persons being addressed. For example, "Cassie," a poem about a woman who has many male "cousins," much to her lover's chagrin, is similar in theme to an old *quelbe* tune, "Caroline," which asks, "Way yo been las nite Caroline?"

"Cassie" tells of an unfaithful lover, who is making her companion so miserable that, "Tis monts now ah can't sleep ah wink, / You got me so - ah can't even tink." The young man is so troubled that he believes "Mus be some obeah you work foh meh." The reference here is to the belief in potions which can be fed to a spouse or lover to keep him "tied" so that he is unable to extricate himself even from an overtly adulterous relationship. In this instance, the wronged lover is aware of Cassie's numerous trysts, for he laments, "Lots of time ah seen you in de dark, / Sportin wid strange fellahs in the park." Cassie explains away the accusations by saying that the men are her cousins. The poem ends on a note of ironic humor, for the speaker quips:

Ah've seen brown cousin, black an white,  
Ah seen a new cousin every night.  
Yet, if ah talk o' make complain,  
You say ah goin make you lose your name. (V.I. Folklore 84)

Evidently, Cassie is afraid of her wronged lover sully her name, but obviously she has already accomplished that by her behavior.

In addition to mirroring the tradition of the *quelbe*, this poem is also reminiscent of Langston Hughes' blues poems which treat the subject of infidelity. However, "Cassie" differs from Hughes' "Only Woman Blues" in which the wronged man acknowledges that he has been mistreated by his woman, but resolves at the end "You de last and only / Woman gonna mistreat me" (qtd. in Tracy 191). The man in Gimenez's poem makes no resolve to remedy his situation. He acknowledges his cognizance of his woman's unfaithfulness and apparently receives some consolation from the

knowledge that her own behavior will be her downfall. Steven Tracy, author of Langston Hughes and the Blues, asserts that "Only Woman Blues" serves as a kind of therapy for the speaker. It offers a way of facing, not evading, the problem at hand (192). Gimenez's poem, on the contrary, presents the problem but makes no effort at resolution. It appears, therefore, that while the poems of these two writers address similar themes, the poems serve different functions.

Another poem in this vein, "Freddo," does however, present an ultimatum to the young man responsible for impregnating the speaker's daughter. Once the pregnancy has been confirmed, Freddo discontinues his frequent visits. In fact the parent recalls:

You's in meh house every blessed night.

You sit on meh chair an bust de seat,

Dirty meh flo wid yor two big feet. (V. I. Folklore 84)

But now "Freddo, you keep out of sight." As a result of Freddo's behavior, the parent warns: "Freddo, you bettah come make tings right." Both "Cassie" and "Freddo" address topics which are ingredients of the blues, quelbe, and calypso, but unlike Hughes' poems, and the various musical forms, Gimenez's poems do not have repeated lines or refrains. The lack of a refrain accounts for the difference in musical appeal of the poems as refrains and repeated lines, facilitate the songs. What these poems of personal relationships do have in common, though, is the direct address to the offender. Cassie is addressed by name in each of the three stanzas of the poem, while Freddo is addressed once in the first and twice in the third. Similarly, in other poems of this genre, the offender whose name is also the title of the poem, is addressed directly in each stanza. The utilization of the offender's name as the title of the poem is a way of drawing attention to the wrong which has been committed. It is a way of proclaiming to the "world" the wrong that this person has done. Interestingly, Tracy notes that blues songs rarely have a name as its title unless it is followed by the word "blues." He adds that one of Hughes' poems, "Cora," which does have a name as a title, is not presenting the blues side of the woman. Rather the poem defines her and her existence. Tracy adds that the woman is either resigned to her situation or refuses to believe that she did not break her own heart (190-91).

Gimenez's poems certainly do not articulate the blues of the title holder, but rather, that person is giving the blues to the person making the address.

Quite noticeable in these two poems is the intrusion of standard English. The poet is not as diligent in utilizing spellings that duplicate the speech of the people. For instance, in "Cassie" the words in the line "You got me so - ah can't even tink," are all standard English except "ah" and "tink." Similarly, in "Freddo" he writes, "You bring yor guitar, you play, you sing." With the exception of "yor" this is also a standard English line. Possibly, the poet does not consider these issues serious enough to warrant closer attention to orthography.

Gimenez's treatment of interpersonal relationships is not limited to wronged lovers. He also pays attention to friends who take advantage of the kindness of others. In "Cammie" the speaker has taken in a friend who has just been released from jail. Cammie wears out her host's shoes and lies around the house. While the friend has tolerated Cammie's behavior, she draws the line when "Not satisfied wid dis, Cammie, / You want to take meh man from me." The ugliness of human nature to which Thelma Thompson refers in her article on Jamaican women poets and nation language, is clearly evident in this and several other poems. In "Cassie" the word "Underhan" in the last stanza underscores this theme. Likewise, the speaker in "Jane Ann" acknowledges, "Jane Ann, Ah know yor monkey tricks." That ugly nature is also revealed by friend and/ or lovers who only come around when they are in financial need. "Jane Ann" and "Ah Doan Walk Wid Turkey When Dey Wing Broke," exemplify this category. However, "Ah Doan Walk Wid Turkey When Dey Wing Broke" differs from the others in several respects. First of all, it is titled differently; and secondly, that title is a proverb, which according to educator and folklore scholar, Elaine Warren Jacobs, encapsulates the narrative verse that follows it. For her, this poem represents a folklore genre known for its brevity and distillation of folk wisdom (13). As a proverb then, it offers a lesson to those who would abuse friendships as the offender of the poem has done. Since this poem is not addressed to a specific person, as are the others, it is obviously intended to bear a universal message that the speaker has no need or desire to be around so-called friends who have no money. The word "turkey," a slang for an inept person, also alludes

to the Virgin Islands expression, "Strutting like a proud turkey," often used in reference to someone who has acquired a new possession or position. The offender in the poem once proudly "strutted" in his car, totally disregarding the very friend he now beseeches, "len meh a quarter - len meh ah dime." This is the typical story of a person who ignores his/ her friends when things are good and when he falls on hard times, returns to the same friends he had earlier ignored. The irony, and perhaps humor of this situation, is that just as the offender has been a "fair weather friend," his other friends in turn have deserted him because he is broke. The pun "broke" alludes to the turkey who is unable to fly with a broken wing and the financial condition of the offender, which disables him from "strutting his stuff."

The final category of vernacular poems to be examined in this study addresses the spirit beliefs of the masses. In both the Caribbean and African America, stories of jumbies, duppys, 'ha'nts, werewolves, and other spirits abound. They are the stories of people's interactions with the spirits of the departed and have come, in many instances, to be associated with malevolent behavior. However, the spiritual history, like the linguistic history of Africans in the diaspora, has been perverted by centuries of European intrusion. In fact, during the period of enslavement, the spirituality of the African culture was suppressed because the colonizers wanted to disconnect the people from their beliefs. Nonetheless, remnants of the African tradition of interaction between the living and the ancestors, as documented in Malidoma Patrice Somé's autobiographical work, Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman have survived and are manifested in various aspects of both African American and Caribbean literature. In the late nineteenth century, African American writer, Charles W. Chesnutt published The Conjure Woman, a collection of conjure stories which includes selections such as "The Gray Wolf's Ha'nt" and "Mars Jeems's Nightmare." More recently, in the Caribbean, Antiguan Calypsonian, King Obstinate, sings a song about jumbies which refuse to stay buried. In the Virgin Islands, stories of jumbies and werewolves were once commonly told by older children to frighten their younger siblings or friends. Sometimes adults use these stories as disciplinary tools to make children obey. In an effort to preserve this aspect of Virgin Islands culture, Ruth Moolenaar

collected a number of jumbi stories in a Virgin Islands Department of Education publication, The Lamppost Man and Other Stories.

True to his objective of preserving Virgin Islands folklore, Gimenez includes in his Virgin Islands Folklore and Other Poems, eight poems about jumbies or werewolves. While the werewolf is a spirit, it is different than the jumbi. In fact, in The Virgin Islands and Their People, historian and poet, J. Antonio Jarvis describes the werewolf as "a large-headed heavy quadruped about the size of a sheep, very fleet and nimble since it can climb house roofs, vault over fences, and scamper faster than the average dog. It is supposed to be a Dane or German who has divested his humanity in a Jekyll-Hyde transformation by using drugs, incantations, and a number of backwards somersaults over a four-legged stool" (130). Gimenez vividly details one family's encounter with such an entity in the poem, "How Meh Fadder Lick De Wharewolf."

Although Jarvis doesn't use jumbies or werewolves as subjects of his poetry he does discuss the Virgin Islander's belief in these supernatural beings at length in Chapter eight of his book, The Virgin Islands and Their People. The title of the chapter, "Superstitions, Witchcraft, and Necromancy Undermine Health and Morals," implies that Jarvis was not supportive of the people's practice of or adherence to these beliefs; however, the information in this chapter is useful in understanding Gimenez's poem. Jarvis explains that the werewolf was always a Dane or a German, never an Englishman or a Frenchman, who, once transformed, would seek a victim, preferably a pregnant woman, whose blood he could suck. One of the purported methods of catching a werewolf was to place ninety-nine grains of corn or rice under a window and the werewolf would be so intent on finding the hundredth grain that he would be easy to capture. In further explaining the method of capturing a werewolf, Jarvis explains that while the werewolf searches interminably for the missing grain, the hunter sneaks up on him with an iron-wood club and belabors him with blows. Jarvis continues, "In order not to break the spell and have him escape with peril to the hunter, the club user must cry out "one" at each blow. Under pain of death no other number must be called. The wolf cries piteously and runs away eventually, especially when reinforcements of humans appear" (129-32).



In his poem, Gimenez gives life to the scenario outlined by Jarvis, recounting the fear of the narrator and his/her mother when the werewolf "come to our doh." Fortunately, the father knows the remedy and prepares to do battle with the beast. In keeping with the prescribed procedure, the father uses the ninety-nine grains of corn to lure the werewolf and beats him severely until, "When de licks no mo de brute could bear, / Dat wharewolf suddenly disappear." The beating is successful as the werewolf never appears again.

Given the severe hardships faced by Virgin Islanders at the hands of the Danes, this poem can be read as the common man's revenge, for accounts specify that the werewolf was generally a "Dane man," the colloquialism for a male of Danish nationality. In real life, the average native is powerless to beat the oppressor at his game of domination. However, in the supernatural world, the oppressed obtains the advantage and is able to rid himself of the power which has demoralized him. The word "lick" in the title is suggestive of the black man's conquest over the Dane. This is the only "court" in which the little man can get justice. Even in his supernatural state the Dane interferes with the comfort of the black man, for when he comes to their house, the following ensues:

All night he howl, we couldn't sleep no mo.  
 He kep' us awake all through de nite,  
 Me an meh mudder nearly daid from fright. (V. I. Folklore 89)

The father literally takes matters into his own hands, as he "den take he bo'stick in han," his weapon against the oppressor. The periodic attacks by the werewolf are a form of oppression which terrorizes the populace. That werewolves like to suck the blood of pregnant women suggests a desire on the part of the Danes to diminish the black population by possibly causing a miscarriage or in some way harming the fetus through the mother's loss of blood. On another level, the werewolf's attack on a woman is a symbolic rape, reminiscent of the colonizers' abuse of African women during their enslavement. As Walter Evans, a contributor to The Popular Culture Reader, explains in "Monster Movies: A Sexual Theory," the monstrous transformation is directly associated with secondary sexual characteristics and with the onset of aggressive erotic behavior. The Wolfman, for example,

sprouts a heavy coat of hair, can hardly be contained within his clothing, and when wholly a wolf is, of course, wholly naked" (338). In Gimenez's poem, the father's attack on the werewolf, then, is his way of defending his woman from the rape of the colonizer. The bo'stick, a phallic symbol representing manhood, is used to beat the rapist at his own game. In other words, while the werewolf is intent on defiling the woman, the husband exerts his responsibility and in protecting his family asserts his manhood.

The importance of precision in the werewolf beating ritual is underscored by the precise language used in the poem. According to Jarvis and other accounts, a successful werewolf beating requires that the person administering the blows repeat the number one to keep the werewolf occupied with the task of finding the one hundredth grain of corn. Supposedly, if the beater fails to count "one" during the beating, he will be overpowered by the werewolf. First, the corn has to be thrown at exactly midnight and the person trying to catch the werewolf has to be sure to throw no more than ninety-nine grains. Next, as the ritualistic beating is performed, the father has to say "one" repeatedly. Any variation from this will break the spell and werewolf will escape. The terror of the night described in the first stanza is contrasted by the promise of relief implied by the first line of the second stanza, "Nex' day, bright an early in de marn." In stanza four, the werewolf is hit three time and each time the father says "one." Seemingly, he administers one blow for each member of the family.

Although, the poem is typical of Gimenez's other iambic lines, there is a variation in the pattern of the fourth stanza. The rhyming words "quick," "stick," "trick," imitate the rapid lashes falling on the werewolf. They also recall the word "lick" in the title, underscoring the image of beating the werewolf but insuring the father's success in beating him at his game of terror. The terrorizer here becomes the terrorized. The pace of the fourth stanza is quickened by the use of the phrases "good an quick," "Mistah wharewolf," and "'wan bo'stick.'" The repetition of the word "wan" also increases the pace. The word "work" is also used in this stanza implying that defeating the werewolf is work, even though its use in the poem suggests that it is the vernacular expression for hitting.

This is a poem of celebration because the little man is triumphant over the exploitation of the oppressor implied by the blood sucking practice of the werewolf. Whereas, the black man is victimized in the hardship poems, the tables turn in this tale and allow the oppressed to get the "last lick."

Among Gimenez's jumbi poems are those that tell of women leading men to their doom, those that deal with magic items, and others that feature disappearing men. For educator and folklorist, Elaine Warren Jacobs, one such poem, "Dat Jumbi Cigar," illustrates titular significance as the "jumbi" identifies the supernatural character in island lore and underscores the belief in the existence of "spirits." For her this poem also speaks to the belief in magical objects for the cigar changes magically into "an ole shin bone from some daid man" and highlights another important aspect of the jumbi narrative, the speaker's escape from the encounter through a fainting spell so that he/she survives to retell the incident (Warren 9, 10).

The stories recounted in "Dat Jumbi Cigar," "Dat Jumbi Woman," "De Man From Jerusalem," and "Jumbi in Berah Alley" are all reminiscent of the stories collected in Lamppost Man and Other Stories and the many jumbi stories to which people were exposed. Very often if the jumbi is male he is extremely tall or has huge white teeth. If the apparition is a woman, she is dressed completely in white. The poems also have another characteristic of the jumbi stories; they involve some one stopping a stranger at night to ask for a light or to ask the time or simply to say good night. In some instances the spirit disappears, gets larger, or leads the inquirer to a graveyard. The speaker in "Dat Jumbi Cigar" stops to light a cigarette while he is on his way home one night. In keeping with the "jumbi" story line, he has no matches, but, fortuitously, a man appears "down de street." This stranger hands the speaker his cigar and then mysteriously disappears. However, the fright created by the man's disappearance is compounded by the fact that the cigar has become the shin bone of "some daid man." The speaker is so frightened that he is unable to move and then he is unable to recall what happens next. However, he says, "When ah come to mehself - 'twas break ah day." The intensity of the fright is underscored by the first four lines of the last stanza, which read:

Foh ah while ah stud dere dum an still,

Den goin down meh back - ah felt a chill.  
 Hair raise on meh head - an try to go  
 But dem foot of mine - wouldn't go no mo. (V. I. Folklore 82)

Similarly in "Dat Jumbi Woman" a woman in white leads the speaker all over the island before taking him to the graveyard where she tells him to " 'hurry come', befo 'tis too late, / Your friends an mine - in de bone -yard await" (V. I. Folklore 87). As the speaker finally realizes that he has had an encounter with a jumbi, he breaks out in a cold sweat as the lady who has said nothing all night "larf wid empty, hallah soun, / An jump o'er de wall of de burial goun." In like manner, the speaker in "Jumbi in Berah Alley" is coming home late one night from a party and encounters a man "Tall like a house, even taller, may be (sic)." The fear at seeing such a tall man is compounded by the fact that it is midnight, the hour when spirits supposedly roam the land. As the speaker gets nearer,

- de man disappear,  
 An brudder, doan ask meh: if Ah was scare?  
 Mo daid dan alive, ah say: foot, way you dey?  
 Ah ain't pass through dat alley - up to dis day. (V. I. Folklore 96)

As with the other poems, "De Man From Jerusalem" involves a disappearing man with big white teeth and "eyes like live coals." This jumbi appears to be a composite of characters in two different stories, for there is the story of the lamppost man who appears and reappears each time larger than the time before, and there is also the story of the jumbi who, displaying extremely large teeth asks, "Yo evah see teeth like a dese?" In this account, the speaker's realization that he has encountered a jumbi comes after he asks the time of a stranger.

He cleared he throat wid ah hem, a-hem,  
 Said 'twas two - when he lef Jerusalem.

An den he grin, Lawd, wha big white teeth,  
 An den, 'yours truly,' jus take to he feet. (V. I. Folklore 95)

Among the commonalties of this and the other jumbi poems is the point of view. They are all told from the first person narrative with the speaker recounting a personal encounter with one of these supernatural beings. Secondly, they each end with some behavioral change. In the case of the werewolf, he "doan come no mo." The narrator of "De Man from

Jerusalem" "doan ask time o' night no mo," while the speaker of "Jumbi Gut" "doan go to dat Gut no mo." Similarly, the speaker in "Jumbi in Berah Alley" "ain't pass through dat alley - up to dis day." In essence, the encounters put an end to some habit whether on the part of the speaker or the entity of whom the speaker is afraid. These endings are commensurate with that aspect of folklore tradition which requires that some lesson be learned from the experience. Additionally, they ensconce these poems in the storytelling tradition which utilizes ritual endings such as that utilized by Louise Bennett, "Jack Mandora me no choose none," or the Virgin Islands' "Dey weel ben an dey story en." Similarly, several of these poems begin with ritualistic openings, a feature which Peter Roberts says characterizes Caribbean folk tales (149). Gimenez's invocations take the form of apologies. For example, the speakers in "Dat Jumbi Woman," "De Man from Jerusalem," and "Dat Jumbi Cigar" all refer to possibly having told the story already or having told a similar tale before, but each is ready to tell it again. Another feature of these poems is the absence of witnesses. In all but "How Meh Fadder Lick De Wharewolf," the narrator is alone, coming home from some visit or occasion. The nature of the situation requires the audience to trust the authenticity of the story. However, given the ethnic makeup of the majority of the Virgin Islands population, stories such as those recounted by Gimenez's poetic persona are believable because they are a part of the rich African heritage which comprises much of Virgin Islands' culture. Another characteristic of these poems is the contrived rhyme. Constructions such as, "of wha to mehself one nite befell," and "Foh a match ah start to look aroun" in "Dat Jumbi Cigar" are uncommon even in the vernacular. Feet also feature prominently in these poems. In "Jumbi in Berah Alley," the speaker asks "foot , way you dey?" and in "De Man From Jerusalem" the speaker "jus take to he feet." However, in "Dat Jumbi Cigar" "dem foot of mine - wouldn't go no mo." The feet are the only mode of transportation available to extricate the speaker from this terrifying encounter, and in the one instance where the feet fail, the speaker passes out and cannot recall what has occurred.

The jumbi poems also demonstrate Gimenez's humor. The exaggerated size of the jumbies, the speed with which they move, their ability

to disappear, all place the persons who encounter them in a position of possible ridicule when the stories are told. In the dark of night when shadows create frightening scenarios, the person having the experience can easily be petrified. However, in the light of day, the experience might seem a bit far fetched. The humor of these poems also provide a much needed respite from the harsh seriousness of the hardship poems.

Gimenez's utilization of jumbies in his poems attests to his knowledge of the folklore and his contact with the common people. Customarily, people of Gimenez's class would not give credence to such "foolishness." Gimenez's attention to these "common" aspects of Virgin Islands life sets him apart from the other writers, for he is comfortable writing about subjects close to the hearts of the masses and is also comfortable writing in their language. By all accounts Gimenez was sincere in his dealings with everyone. Further, his dedication at the beginning of this publication attests to his belief in the equality of all people and his adherence to the laws of universal concerns. The reaction to his vernacular poems is illustrative of how the upper classes of society view the common people because by dismissing Gimenez's poems as trite and humorous, they are in essence saying that matters which affect these people are not worthy of literary consideration. However, in committing these subjects to paper, Gimenez gives credence to the beliefs of the people and shows that they are worthy of consideration. Further, in giving voice to the Virgin Islands' voiceless, Gimenez becomes the bard of a territory lost between two entities struggling for their own voice, for neither Caribbean nor African American literature or criticism on the vernacular includes the work of Virgin Islanders. Gimenez, by choosing the linguistic vehicle which he does, gives voice to a people doubly unvoiced. He preserves the stories for posterity, but also demonstrates to the two literary communities with which the Virgin Islands is affiliated, that there is a viable body of work comparable to that of other jurisdictions. In utilizing the language of the people, Gimenez does more than provide a souvenir for tourists. He preserves an important part of Virgin Islands heritage, a part which it shares with African American and the wider Caribbean.

## CHAPTER V

## J. ANTONIO JARVIS' DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In every age and in every community there is someone who stands apart from the masses because of his/ her achievements, influence, and demeanor. In the Virgin Islands, one such person was José Antonio Jarvis, historian, journalist, educator, painter, playwright, and poet. Jarvis' character is ably captured in a 1967 article in a Virgin Islands magazine, Virgin Islands View. The unsigned article, entitled "A Nomination," offers the following reasons why, on the fiftieth anniversary of the transfer of the territory from Denmark to the United States, Jarvis should be chosen as "the finest product of the Virgin Islands":

At a time when few could show a disenfranchised and impoverished Negro how to attain a manhood built on dignity and integrity and ability, he did.

As a man secure in his fight for individual progress, he negated the role of the rabble rouser and petty politician, so suffered at their hands.

If his histories and poems and publications are never extolled for their greatness, they will always be respected because he wrote them, he painted them, he published them.

It is a long and arduous path from poverty, blackness, and illegitimacy to an honored niche in history, but there lay in the genes of an itinerant preacher and an indifferent mother a combination which gave him an intellect that would rise above the conditions of birth and station, and he was blessed with love and guidance in his youth, the foundation for a life of honesty and courage.

Yet it was the man himself who developed greatness - the man as teacher, as friend - the man who showed others what could be done - the man who could always help, while yet inspiring achievement. (62)

In his life and in his work, Jarvis stood apart from others. While he shares certain commonalties with the other writers in this study and with other Caribbean writers of the early twentieth century, Jarvis is different in many respects. Although he writes of nature in the Caribbean pastoral tradition, his nature poems are informed by his attributes as a painter and playwright. While, in his poetry, he does not dwell on the hardships of life in

the Virgin Islands, as do Cyril Creque and J. P. Gimenez, he addresses the injustices of race evident on a national scale, primarily as they impact African Americans. Additionally, as several of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance do, Jarvis exhibits an ambivalence toward his African origins in a number of his poems, quite possibly a result of his exposure to and his influence by them. This, then, is the man whose footprints in the Virgin Islands "sands of time," loom larger than most because he was J. Antonio Jarvis. A thorough understanding of his works, then, requires an examination of his life, his poetry, including his Caribbean pastorals, his Harlem pieces, and his race conscious poems, as well as his legacy as a major architect of the Virgin Islands literary scene of his day.

This complex man, J. Antonio Jarvis, was born in St. Thomas on November 22, 1901 to Joseph W. Jarvis, an African Methodist Episcopal minister and Mercedes Duvergee, a Roman Catholic. He was raised by his godmother, Mary Hughustein, a descendant of a Dane and an enslaved African, who was influential in shaping his early thinking about his African heritage. According to Jarvis' biographer, Addelita Cancryn, the offsprings of Danish/African unions considered themselves superior to the unmixed natives and generally held everything Danish in high regard (5). Consequently, people such as Mary Hughustein transferred to any child over whom they had some influence, a love of the Danes. In Cancryn's estimation, "growing up in the home of a Negro who thought like a Dane had its influence on young Antonio" (5-6). Certainly, Jarvis' image of Africa and Africans evident in poems such as "Bamboula Dance" and "Atavistic" reflect this influence.

Jarvis' thinking was also shaped by his early education which began at the St. Anne's Roman Catholic School. Because opportunities for education beyond elementary school were not easily accessible, he continued his education through private tutors and correspondence courses, eventually earning a bachelor's degree from McKinley-Roosevelt College in Chicago. He also attended graduate classes at Columbia University. His love of reading was instrumental in his acquiring a job at Taylor's Bookstore, a job which would later facilitate his literary efforts (Cancryn 6-7, 13).



At the age of twenty-two, Jarvis left his job at the book store to become an apprentice at the St. Thomas Mail Notes, a newspaper, and a year later became a certified teacher. Jarvis' teaching career began at the St. Thomas Academy, a private school attended primarily by white American children and the children of natives who could afford the tuition. Even in this venture, he stood apart from his peers because some people looked askance at his willingness to teach at a predominantly white institution. His teaching career included a tenure at the Abraham Lincoln School, the largest elementary school on the island at the time. Later he moved to the Charlotte Amalie High School where he spent ten years. In 1942 Jarvis returned to the Abraham Lincoln School as principal, a position which he kept for the remainder of his career (Cancryn 7).

One of Jarvis' outstanding characteristics was his concern about his home and about the welfare of others; thus, he did not limit his teaching to the traditional classroom. For example, when the young men returned home from World War II, he served as an instructor in the Veterans' Program and contributed to the veterans' efforts to convert from soldiers to civilians. He also served as an instructor to persons interested in becoming hotel workers in the newly developing tourist industry and was responsible for establishing and supervising the first adult education program in St. Thomas (Cancryn 9). By providing these services, Jarvis aided those in need of education, and at the same time, contributed to the community's needs in these three areas.

Jarvis' career encompassed several areas. In addition to teaching, he was the co-founder of the Daily News, still the major newspaper in the Virgin Islands today, and wrote two collections of poems, Fruits in Passing (1932) and Bamboula Dance (1936). His other works of literature include two plays, The King's Mandate and Bluebeard's Last Wife and several other works: The Virgin Islands Guide Book (1930); The Three Islands (1935); A Brief History of the Virgin Islands (1938); The Virgin Islands and Their People (1944); Camille Pissarro (1947), a brief biography of the painter who was born in the Virgin Islands; and The Virgin Islands Picture Book with Rufus Martin (1948). Additionally, Jarvis was founder of the Virgin Islands Magazine and later revived the defunct labor newspaper, The Emancipator, changing the format and converting it into a weekly magazine, The Record. Among the proudest

moments of his life was the receipt of the Selective Service Medal, presented at the White House in 1946 by President Harry S. Truman, for his service on the Selective Service Board ("J. Antonio Jarvis" 15-16).

In addition to writing and publishing, Jarvis was a painter. His works have been exhibited in New York and have been purchased by both European and American collectors. So impressive is his art, that his "Woman with Pears" is included in Contemporary Art of 79 Countries, a publication of the display sponsored by the International Business Machines (IBM) Corporation in 1939. In the introduction to the publication, which includes artists such as Salvadore Dali of Spain; Thomas J. Watson, President of IBM Corporation, notes that to his knowledge, the collection is the most comprehensive to ever be shown in one gallery. He continues:

Painting is one of the truest records of a people. When we see what painters reveal, it increases our hope for better understanding among the people's of the earth. We believe that all who view these paintings will recognize, through the many different forms of expression, traits common to all men which bind humanity together in universal kinship. (IBM)

Jarvis' artistic accomplishments reveal that despite the lack of opportunities, the aptitudes of the people of the Virgin Islands have not atrophied. In fact, in Watson's estimation, much ability is discernible (IBM).

Fortunately, for many young men in St. Thomas, Jarvis recognized these abilities. He rendered assistance to young men who had the potential, but not the means to pursue educational opportunities. Jarvis provided them with both an atmosphere which stimulated intellectual growth and with financial assistance which allowed them to pursue their academic endeavors. However, Cancryn believes that Jarvis' most important contribution to these young men was that he "raised their level of educational expectations," and inspired them to seek opportunities beyond their "native homes" (10-11). It seems, though, that Jarvis' efforts transcended his desire to help a few unfortunate young men. He was, in fact, creating the atmosphere conducive to the development of a Virgin Islands literati. For instance, one beneficiary of Jarvis' benevolence, Ernesto Vanterpool, recalls that a group of young men regularly gathered at Jarvis home, "Tivoli," to discuss the thoughts of the day,

as well as ancient, medieval, and some modern history. However, there was no discussion of black history. At these gatherings, Jarvis fostered the arts by encouraging his young scholars to play the violin or piano, instruments associated with "the cultured." He also shared some of his verses that were in progress and solicited critiques from his young audience (Interview).

Another young man to benefit from Jarvis' guidance is his adopted son Franklin Jarvis, who in a 1980 article tells of being adopted by the unmarried, childless Jarvis, who wanted a son to carry on his name. The younger Jarvis provides some insight into the kind of man his father was, recalling how Jarvis was always around when his son needed him, even though he spent endless hours helping other youngsters. The article continues that Jarvis found time to play the violin, mandolin, and piano. Franklin Jarvis adds that the atmosphere which Jarvis created at his home was also replicated at his book store on Main Street. As the only book store on the island, it served as the meeting place for young intellectual Virgin Islanders. According to Franklin Jarvis, the discussions begun at the book store, often carried over late into the evenings at "Tivoli" as these young men continued their quest for knowledge (Franklin Jarvis A-97). Jarvis' encouragement and stimulation of this intellectual atmosphere is reminiscent of the early days of the Harlem Renaissance when Alain Locke and others stimulated interest in the arts in what became the mecca of black intelligentsia.

The success of Jarvis' efforts at shaping the lives of promising young men is evident in the many whose accomplishments can be traced to his influence. Among that number are ambassadors, congressional delegates, journalists, and musicians. Perhaps, the most outstanding is Terrance Todman, recently retired from a forty-one year career in the United States Diplomatic Corps. Todman, who achieved the status as highest ranking black diplomat, was raised by Jarvis after he, Todman, moved to St. Thomas from the neighboring island of Tortola during his formative years. Todman's education at the Puerto Rico Polytechnic Institute and the Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, are directly attributable to Jarvis' role in his life ("J. Antonio Jarvis" 19-20). Of Jarvis, Todman says that he was a highly cultivated man who devoted himself to the pursuit and presentation of truth

and beauty and encouraged others to drink deep of the spring of learning as he had. Todman continues:

He was at his best as a teacher, both in and out of the classroom, always encouraging, inspiring, motivating, challenging others to stretch, to reach out, to dig deeper, to grow - each in his own way. . . . What made 'Jarv' so different and special was his willingness and ability to share his knowledge, exquisite taste and enthusiasm with others in a way which could inspire and motivate them. He had an uncanny ability to discern potential or talent in others and to be tireless, imaginative and patient in his efforts to assist in their development. (Unveiling 10)

Another Jarvis protégé, Attorney Victor Frazer, recently elected as the Virgin Islands Delegate to the United States Congress says that Jarvis never said " 'read this or listen to that. . . . His way of teaching was to put out a buffet rather than serving you (sic)' " (Hatfield 20). Jarvis' legacy lies in the success of these men and the reverence and respect they still hold for him and what he did for them.

Jarvis' influence is certainly not limited to the fatherly guidance he provided to men such as Todman and Frazer. Indeed, he was probably the most influential person in Virgin Islands literary circles during the nineteen thirties and forties. His son, Franklin Jarvis, in an interview, notes that he influenced then aspiring island poets such as Valdemar Hill, Erica Lee, Isidor Paiwon, and Cornelius Emanuel, all of whom have found a place in Virgin Islands literary history. On this matter, Rufus Vanderpool notes that anyone who wrote during the 1940s and 1950s took their work to Jarvis for evaluation, for "he was the divining rod" (Interview). In addition to his interaction with local poets, Jarvis consorted with poets of national acclaim, including Edna St. Vincent Millay and Langston Hughes who visited him at his home on separate occasions. Additionally, Adolph Gereau in a tribute on the occasion of the unveiling of a bust of Jarvis and the dedication of the J. Antonio Jarvis Memorial Park, writes that many foreign authors and students doing research on the islands frequently consulted with him and received his advice on Virgin Islands matters in addition to quotations from his publications (Unveiling 23). Yet another facet of his literary influence is manifested through his role as a publisher. As co-owner and editor of the Daily News, which not only provided all the printed news on the island, but

was also the outlet for the creative efforts of Virgin Islands writers, Jarvis facilitated the publication of much Virgin Islands talent. Additionally, the role of his Art Shop, an arm of the Daily News, in publishing his and the works of a number of other writers provided him the capacity to help shape the Virgin Islands literary climate and its perception by the outside world.

A shaper of destinies is only one aspect of Jarvis, the multi-faceted artist. As a poet, Jarvis is influenced by two distinct traditions - the Caribbean pastoral and the Harlem Renaissance. However, while his poems evince aspects of each tradition, they also clearly demonstrate Jarvis' unique artistic abilities and his departure from the practices of his contemporaries. Of note in Jarvis' diversion from the norm is his identification with concerns and developments of black America, unlike his contemporaries. Jarvis, by adhering to both poetic traditions, best exemplifies the duality of the Virgin Islands, a territory at once Caribbean and American. However, in that dual adherence, he still carves his own path and makes his own way.

The one tradition of which Jarvis is a part, the Caribbean pastoral, as defined by Caribbean critic Lloyd Brown, extols the beauty of the Caribbean landscape to the exclusion of any perceived Caribbean experience and often manifests a patronizing, self-indulgent view of the folks as exotic "swains and 'servants of choice' " (20). The tradition also includes patriotic verse, attention to natural disaster, and other stock-in-trade poems, which pay tribute to small, apparently insignificant facets of nature, exemplified by Guyanese poet, Egbert Martin's "Sorrel Tree" and "The Wren" (23).

While Jarvis conforms to certain aspects of this pastoral tradition, including his Romanticism, he differs from it in several meaningful ways. For instance, there are no natural disaster poems in his body of work, and unlike Creque and Gimenez, he has no patriotic poem in praise of Denmark. Additionally, Jarvis' abilities as a painter and playwright inform his verse, adding depth to several landscape pieces. Thus "Caribbean Morning," not only addresses the natural beauty of the awakening day, it also embodies erotic and dramatic elements which heighten its poetic appeal. As the starlight fades, the speaker of the poem stares at the majesty of the hills clothed in the royal colors of purple, gold, and green. The pageantry of awakening sees the hills disrobing as "Day," which is capitalized, "flames

their form to array" with his magic flames. He brings their forms to life and arouses them. The flames here are phallic as they rise "warmer, high and higher." The verbs "spilled" and "rising" are symbolic of erection and ejaculation, just as "wakens" and "strewing" symbolize arousal. With the stimulation of the sun's rays, "[d]ay's magic flames," the sea comes alive and dances to the light of the new day. The dew drops on the tips of leaves and blades of grass continue the sexual imagery in the poem, as does the pregnancy of the last two lines which suggest the end result of coition, the promise of new life. In this portrayal, Jarvis employs personification to display the brilliant colors of a Caribbean morning and to articulate the sensuality of the morning. More than this, he captures quite vividly the sparkle of the sunlight on the water as a "treasure rich and rare" which sparkles "in the morning air."

This Caribbean morning is not specific to St. Thomas. Unlike Creque, who writes specifically of the beauty of the islands of the Virgin Islands or A. J. Seymour who extols the beauty of Guyana, Jarvis deviates and writes of a Caribbean beauty which is applicable to any of the many islands of the region, for they are all equally rich with the intermingling of "purple hills, gold washed in green," "sparkling waters," and "enchanted light." The richness of the Caribbean morning is enhanced by the poet's use of phrases such as "Rich jewels from his diadems" and "Dew diamonds." The brilliance of the Caribbean morning is heightened in the contrasting images of life and death as "The purple hills" "Their shrouds of mist discard," and waking and sleeping as the "Dull ocean wakens strewing gems." None of the hardships of life are evident in this poem. It gives praise and glory to the beauty of creation and expresses the speaker's joy at being able to witness it daily and know that each day brings promise.

Another poem which combines Jarvis' artistic abilities is "Tropic Dawn," in which his talents as a dramatist are clearly evident. The poet again uses the rich colors purple, gold, and silver to illustrate the majesty of a new day. However, he couples his visual images with the sounds of the trumpet and the spangling of the heavens. The phrase "star spangled heavens," possibly an allusion to the "Star Spangled Banner," carries with it the pomp of a new beginning. The poem proceeds like a pageant, led by the heralding of

the heavens "muted trumpets." Next on stage are the shapes of the hills and housetops making up the city's skyline. The clouds stand at attention as the stars pass in revue. Then the shadows and silhouettes are brought to life as "the brushes of the Painter / Charm the canvas of the mist." There is deliberate attention to the transitional words "first," "then," and "while," insuring that the reader is aware of the chronology of the events that precede the coming of dawn.

The poem, however, is not only chronological, it is also spatial as Jarvis, the painter employs artistic techniques and uses the brush of his imagination to give height and depth to his description of the dawn. He employs words such as "etched" and "fades" to provide gradations of shapes and colors. He effectively contrasts the semi-light of dawn with the bright glory of the day washed in sunlight. There is also reverence for the Creator as the whole scene becomes a canvas on which the "Painter" splashes His colors.

While the poet still reveres nature, in "Mountains," nature becomes a refuge and provides solace. The majesty of the previous poems gives way to mountains being "high places / Where I can go to look down on / the futility of struggle." Whereas in the previous poems, the speaker is an observer, in this instance, the speaker becomes one with the environment, sharing its grandeur and perspective. From the vantage point of the mountain top, "cities look like pictures;" therefore, they are not real. The weight of life is so great that humans need to distance themselves from it, at least once in a while. At such a distance, the speaker is removed from the struggle and can find peace. Clearly, not every one can make it to the mountain, for

Only strong trees grow on mountains  
And damp moss covers the sharp rocks.  
Men crawl like weary ants to reach where  
they can look down

And see other ants crawling about. (Bamboula Dance 33)

While the poem manifests a respect for nature as represented by the mountain, the poet makes clear the fact that not everyone can achieve his vantage point on the mountain. The strength of the trees on the mountains signifies the kinds of humans who will survive the slippery, moss covered rocks to look down on others. Further, the height and strength of the trees are contrasted with the lowliness of the moss. The view from the mountain

puts everything, including the futility of struggle in perspective. Additionally, from the new perspective, cities cannot compare with mountains, for humans cannot supersede the beauty of the Creator's work.

There is an attitude of superiority in this poem, for the one who is able to make it to the top has earned the right to bask in his own accomplishments. However, the poem also suggests other steep mountains of life which the strong struggle to overcome. Whether it is acceptance of one's writing or one's lifestyle, life presents many moss covered sharp rocks. In alluding to these human concerns, Jarvis uses nature as a vehicle for commenting on humanity. For the strong person, who is able to withstand criticism, the view from the top is even more pleasurable.

One area of the pastoral which Jarvis shares with other Caribbean writers is its Romanticism. In fact, his biographer, Addelita Cancryn identifies him as Romantic and compares him to Wordsworth, Goldsmith, and Gray. However, even here he differs from other exponents of Romanticism, for Cancryn calls him untidy in meter and versification. She adds, "He seems restless. An atmosphere of haste prevails in his poetry. There is not much time devoted to any one thought. As an idea is conceived, he at once commits it to paper, and moves on. Hence the number of very short poems which characterize his poetic works" (34). Issue may be taken with this assessment, for while there are over ten three and four line poems in Jarvis' collections, they are anything but frivolous. Poems, such as "Elimination," which addresses intra-racial prejudice and "C'Est La Vie," which looks at the inevitabilities of life, although short, express poignant sentiments on significant issues.

Again, in following the Caribbean pastoral tradition, Jarvis writes several poems including sonnets which reflect the Romantic influences prevalent in the Caribbean at the time. Jarvis also acknowledges that much of his work is patterned after Longfellow and Byron, so in essence, his writing reflects the tradition in which he had been educated (Richards. Interview). University of the Virgin Islands English professor, Gene Emanuel, notes that most of Jarvis' work is Romantic, often with sentimental and, in some cases, monotonous language. He adds that like Tom Redcam of Jamaica and Frank Collymore of Barbados, Jarvis depends heavily on overt descriptions of



nature, classical allusions, constantly refined vocabulary, and an adherence to classical forms and language in his sometimes stilted versifying. Emanuel further admits, however, that there is a very tough underpinning of social feeling in Jarvis' poetry and an active concern for many of the issues prominent today: the quest for man's identity, the role and treatment of women, and the importance of race and culture in one's life. He also notes that Jarvis makes a conscious effort to wed social discontent to the particular descriptions of his environment and sometimes of nature (Lecture).

This social consciousness entwined with nature, of which Emanuel speaks, is evident in Jarvis' juxtaposition of the beauty of the skyline with the toil of the coal carriers in his poem "Coal Carriers," one of the topics he shares with Creque and Gimenez. In language reminiscent of the silhouettes and shadows of early morning in his "Tropic Dawn," Jarvis paints a portrait of the coal carriers who are up long before the sun. Jarvis the painter is at work in this portrait of black and white and silver and gray. In his composition, the coal carriers, black by birth and blacker still from the coal dust of their trade, become another part of the early morning portrait which includes the moon, the road, and the outline of the ship anchored at the dock. For these hard working people the shadows of "foreday morning" do not represent jumbies or some other supernatural beings. They have no time to be afraid of the many shadows that people the early morning because their livelihood is at stake. However, this poem is more than a black and white portrait of workers on their way to perform their daily labor. It presents a vivid portrayal of the routine of their work, from the system of awakening each other, to the long walk down the road to the dock, to the conveyor-like motion of their coaling, "from coal to ship to shore." This image along with the following line which proclaims that "dawn is hailed with song," is not unlike that presented by Charles Edwin Taylor in his book An Island of the Sea, for he describes the coal workers running along the gangplank of the ship, each with a basket of coal on her head, emptying the basket and running back to refill it again. He also notes, "Most striking is this scene at midnight, when they sing songs in a quaint minor key, never ceasing their labor until the huge steamer is properly coaled" (34). The poet reveals his knowledge of several customs reflective of his heritage, which is the same as that of the coal carriers. First of all, the

calling out to each other as they go to work reflects the cooperative nature of these people. Each is responsible for the other. Secondly, the custom of singing to make the work easier is a practice which can be directly traced to Africa. Their reverence for the morning is evident by their not shouting but whispering their call as they go to work. This is reflective of the African respect for nature carried on in the Caribbean. However, there is another aspect of life revealed in the penultimate line of the poem. The importance of their wages is evident in that the dollars earned are "a welcome boon" to these earnest hard working people.

In speaking of this poem, Gene Emanuel says that Jarvis calls on his skills as a painter to paint the social realities of the time because the coal carriers caused one of the first labor revolts on St. Thomas. He continues, explaining that "foreday morning" is their time and that they are the voices of the new day. Emanuel adds, "Jarvis, in this poem, uses the landscape excellently, but he uses it to push the "double rap" - mad moon, sombre shadows, fearless workers" (Lecture). In addition to the alliterative quality noted by Emanuel, the poem also offers a variation of sounds, particularly in the first stanza, reflective of the sounds of early morning. These sounds underscore the fact that the workers' day begins and ends while others sleep. There is a "whispered call," a "careless cry," a "double rap," a "smothered snore," as the workers begin their day. As their work is almost over and sunrise is eminent, they fill the air with song. Jarvis also provides a subtle contrast of colors in the last stanza where the sunshine becomes eminent. The workers hurry off the scene so as not to let the sun catch them at their work and so as not to break the somber nature of the early morning grays and blacks and whites that characterize their time of day.

Thus, even in this portrayal of Virgin Islanders at work, Jarvis differs from others such as Creque and Gimenez, whose poems capture the severity of the coal industry. Jarvis' attention to the labor of the coal carriers, on the other hand, romanticizes their work. In the characterization provided, the coal carriers become a part of the environment. The poet's use of the phrase "passing by" minimizes the importance of the coal industry to the Virgin Islands economy. Because the coal carriers work occurs in the early morning hours when the rest of the community sleeps, their toil is neither seen nor

appreciated by the majority of the people. They are "willing toilers" who talk in whispers, and who get in and out before the rest of the world awakens. This scenario sets them totally apart from the rest of society, as a phenomenon to be admired from afar, but as something with which the rest of society does not have to become involved.

In assessing Jarvis, Gene Emanuel asserts that although Jarvis and other early Caribbean writers adhere to the classic British structures of the tradition in which they were educated, they were nevertheless attempting to organize a whole experience and to seek some code for their own domestic ideas. However, Emanuel maintains that while Jarvis held some concepts, such as the treatment of nature and love, in common with his contemporaries, his poetry had dimensions which the works of other writers lacked. Specifically, there was, in Jarvis' writing, a deep reflection of social consciousness. This, coupled with his firm connection to the Harlem Renaissance period and his literary identification with the tradition of Langston Hughes, a tradition which paid attention to the struggles with images of Africa and self and a dedication to concerns of the working class, set him apart from other writers (Lecture).

Jarvis' connections to Harlem, alluded to by Emanuel, are several and illustrate how he differs from his contemporaries. Associates and former students of Jarvis indicate that he especially liked the works of Countee Cullen and Paul Laurence Dunbar. In fact, Ernesto Vanterpool, in an interview, relates that Jarvis quoted Dunbar, "at the drop of a hat." Rufus Vanderpool also tells of Jarvis using the opening lines of a Cullen poem in the valedictory address of the Charlotte Amalie High School class of 1928 when he assisted the valedictorian in writing his address. The lines as Vanderpool, a member of that class, recalls are, "We have tomorrow bright before us like a flame / But yesterday came before . . . ." (Interview).

However, Jarvis' Harlem connections are even more specific. His having lived in Harlem in the early nineteen thirties might account for the presence of three Harlem specific poems in his collection. According to Rufus Vanderpool, one of Jarvis' paintings won third prize at a Harlem exhibit, sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s. This he believes was the catalyst for Jarvis' decision to move to New York to see if he could become a part of the

artistic movement in the mecca of black America. However, Jarvis' sojourn in New York was curtailed by his inability to secure meaningful employment. He reportedly also experienced some health problems, so he returned to St. Thomas, which eventually proved providential for the literary life of the Virgin Islands. In addition to his presence in Harlem, Jarvis had at least two poems published in the black American journal, Opportunity and several others in the NAACP magazine, Crisis. His publications in these two prestigious journals affiliated with the Harlem Renaissance, coupled with his poetic tribute to Dunbar and his response to Cullen's "Yet I Marvel," attest to the second side of Jarvis' dual consciousness - his interest in and influence by the literary pulse of African America.

His poem, "Paul Laurence Dunbar," speaks of Dunbar as "one who waves a signal light." The poem testifies that Dunbar has accomplished much in his short life and has left a legacy for others to follow. In the final stanza, Jarvis clearly is aware of the hardships and prejudices that blacks have encountered and acknowledges that, despite the obstacles, they have made great strides. He suggests that the progress of the race is due in part to the efforts of Dunbar who "left the gates ajar!" The final stanza reads:

Dark angel of the wistful song,  
 You left the gates ajar!  
 Despite the weary road -- and Wrong ---  
 Black folks have travelled far. (Fruits in Passing 83)

Another manifestation of Jarvis' interest in the poetry of African Americans is his response to Countee Cullen's "Yet Do I Marvel," a poem which wonders how God could "make a poet black and bid him sing!" (Barksdale and Kinnamon 531). Jarvis' poem, "I Marvel," segues from the title of Cullen's poem by beginning, "Yes; I marvel that you wonder / At the urge within to sing." Jarvis establishes his belief that God did not err in giving the same desire to blacks as well as other races. Noting that God is responsible for the elements that produce the natural music of nature, like "the thunder," "the birds," and "the waving trees," he asks if it is not this same God who "bids you bring / Your fresh voice to join the choir?" Jarvis' poem speaks of the gift of song being given equally to human races, as well as to the elements of nature, blessing "sinner" as well as "them that keep the

word." "I Marvel" can be seen as a defense of God's plan because God gives the same capacity for release of emotions to the black man that he does to the white. It appears that in Jarvis' view, all people are the same regardless of race. All share the same passions and are provided with the same means of expressing those passions. Thus the ambivalence seen in other poems by Jarvis, such as "Bamboula Dance" and "Africa Whence I Came," is not evident here. Rather, this poem, in response to one which expresses some doubts, which he has felt, is assertive and positive. Possibly, "Yet Do I Marvel," fired in Jarvis a desire to defend that part of his heritage which even he at times castigates. However, it is really not so much the Africanity he defends as the fact that blacks belong to the human race and as such are equal even in singing with a poetic voice.

However, despite Jarvis' recognition of blacks as equal practitioners of the poetic art and his acknowledgment of the accomplishments of blacks, he does exhibit an "ambivalent attitude toward questions of racial identity," which Keneth Kinnamon and Richard Barksdale, editors of Black Writers of America: A Comprehensive Anthology claim Cullen also expresses in his poems "From the Dark Tower," "Yet Do I Marvel," and "Heritage" (473). One aspect of that ambivalence is a struggle with the image of Africa, clearly evident in "Bamboula Dance," which is the title poem of a collection. The title is misleading as the poem is a far cry from the jovial, rhythmic actions of the poetic portrayals of the other two writers studied. For Jarvis, the bamboula is a symbol of Africa, a place identified in his mind with wild, cavorting, "sad buffoons / Who ape ancestral circumstance." Of the African survivals in Virgin Islands culture, the bamboula dance and the accompanying bamboula drum are probably the most earthy, most authentic representation of the pulse of Virgin Islanders' Africanity. However, for Jarvis, it is a survival that is shameful because it threatens to "recall Nigerian play / And drown out later dignities."

The poet acknowledges his African ancestry, for the second stanza reads:

I still can feel, when drumbeats call,  
The pulsing blood new rhythms take;  
As garment-like refinements fall

Unconscious longings spring awake! (Bamboula Dance 3)

Although recognizing the heritage, it is something over which he claims to have no control. The dual parts of the speaker's heritage stand in contrast to each other, with the African, the "unrefined," being the less desirable. For the speaker, there is no pride in imitating the dance of others who claim to pay tribute to their African heritage. It is difficult to ascertain the meaning of the ambiguous couplet which says "Few naked tribesmen yet remain / To dance the sacred dance for rain." Possibly, the speaker is lamenting the disappearance of a culture; or he might be rejoicing that only a "few" unrefined "tribesmen" remain to carry on tradition. While Jarvis' history and his poetry are separate genres, the history, at times, informs the poetry. Certainly, his account of the bamboula dance in The Virgin Islands and Their People characterizes the dance as something with which Jarvis would not be associated, an attitude reflected in the poem. Noting that Bamboula dances have disappeared from the Virgin Islands, Jarvis describes the bamboula:

The last genuine bamboula dance in St. Croix probably took place just prior to the slave rebellion, for historical reports of drums beating indicate that the Negroes did have a meeting somewhere in the hills. At these dances, a girl begins slowly, with the rhythm of the tambours, to disrobe as she dances before a group of men around a fire. When she is naked, the music grows faster and she dances more wildly until she seizes a tame snake and holds it before her often using its tail as a phallus. When everybody is thoroughly excited the sacrifice is ready. It might be a child, or an animal, but the blood is smeared on everyone who is bound to keep whatever compact has been made. (127)

Jarvis acknowledges having acquired much of his data from the journals and diaries of Europeans who inhabited the islands during the early days, and possibly their fear of the enslaved Africans led them to pen these horrific inaccuracies. Nonetheless, in incorporating them into his history and allowing such negative images to inform his poetry, Jarvis does a disservice to the glory of a dance which was a celebration and an opportunity for enslaved people to relax from their labors and enjoy themselves for a moment. In fact, Glenn Davis, a Virgin Islands historian and culturalist calls the bamboula, which survived into the early 1960s, a choir in motion. The people sang as they danced. They organized functions and protests by using bamboula, which was performed only with percussion accompaniment (25).

In his treatise on Virgin Islands poetry, David Gershator says that the title of Jarvis' second collection, Bamboula Dance, clearly indicates his concern with origin (409), but for Virgin Islands critic, Marvin Williams, the title poem of that collection displays an ambivalence toward the African heritage:

Clearly the bamboula's energy, rhythm, and maroon voice does not enter into (sic) to counter and so extend the linguistic boundaries of the form. And though the poem marvels at the vital power the African heritage continues to exert on the conscious and subconscious, it worries that this force, miscast as a curse, might ambush 'And drown out later dignities' that European education and manners confer on the well-schooled. (7-8)

Similarly, Gordon Rohler in the introduction to Voice Print: An Anthology of Oral and Related Poetry of the Caribbean indicates:

This title would have led one to expect the shaping influence of the bamboula drums, of Congolese origin, with their warlike rhythms, which were known throughout the Archipelago both before and after Emancipation. One might also have expected Jarvis to draw on the bamboula songs, whose function in St. Thomas had once paralleled that of the Kalinda chants and satirical banter songs of mid to late nineteenth century Trinidad and Martinique. This is not the case. Bamboula Dance is standard hymn-book stuff, whose culturally biased content explains its formal limitation. (4)

The sentiments expressed in "Bamboula Dance" are replicated in "Jubilee Hall" where the closeness of the dancers is termed "a sacrament of sin." Similarly, in "Atavistic," the African part of his heritage threatens to arouse his "tropic fire" "When nice brown girls venture near." Fortunately, however, the speaker has "within me Nordic blood / Pulsing like the tide at flood," which cools his "tropic fire" "to virtuous fear."

A similar attitude of misgivings about his African heritage is obvious in "Africa Whence I Came," but the poem differs from "Bamboula Dance" in that it articulates the universality of the race. The speaker acknowledges his African origins and admits that although he is far from the original source, as he is "[f]lung wide from the great ancestral tree," he still dreams of the soil, sun, river, and thunder of Africa. However, these sounds are distant like "The Noise of an empty church / Felt more than heard." Africans have been widely dispersed by enslavement and because of the years of separation, the

African origins are a distant, hollow memory. The sense of Africanity is unreal, residing below the surface of the conscious. Thus the speaker recognizes that although he is "fostered" by Africa, he truly comes "From the slime and the mud of the race / Which is man!" Possibly, these closing lines of the poem allude to the Biblical account of creation which portrays human beings as being formed from the earth. Another interpretation of those lines might be that the speaker comes from a race which wallows in hatred, prejudice, and other "slimy" aspects of life. However, when considered alongside "I Marvel," discussed earlier, it would appear that the universal origin of the human race is the overriding interpretation. The sentiment expressed here is that although Africa was the nurturing agent, his origins are universal.

In his ambivalence to race, Jarvis is close to several writers of the Harlem Renaissance, including Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay. However, beyond that commonality, he shares an affinity for Harlem extant throughout the African diaspora. This affinity for Harlem can be explained by the perception of playwright and critic, James de Jongh, that Harlem was a mythic landscape in which the African inheritance was being reclaimed for the diaspora. He adds that not only was this mythic view affirmed by the New Negro writers of the United States, but it was taken by writers in the Greater Antillies, West Africa, and the Caribbean, "as a portent of the primacy of their own perceptions over the prominence of European culture" (210). Indeed, Jarvis' poems, "Harlem Comedy" and "Harlem Tragedy," are included in de Jongh's twenty-five page "Checklist of Black Harlem in Poetry" in his book, Vicious Modernism: Black Harlem and the Literary Imagination.

The two poems indexed by de Jongh are companion poems, "Harlem Comedy" and "Harlem Tragedy," both satirical accounts of male/female relationships and jealousy in the mecca of black life. "Harlem Comedy" is anything but a comedy for it tells of the downfall of a woman who has been used to having affairs with "Two-timing men." However, when one "West Indian took to heart / Her evidence of charm," his jealousy leads to a change in her life. He believes her pure and "made for him alone," until he overhears a telephone conversation which reveals her true nature. At first



he resolves to kill her, "But when he saw the price she earned / He took his share instead." In a tragi-comic turnabout:

Today he walks in raiment fine,  
All Harlem knows the game;  
She toils, but never does he spin . . .  
And yet she bears his name. (Bamboula Dance 9)

From some perspectives, the poem might be a comedy as the woman might be perceived as getting what she deserves. However, the tragedy lies in the way humans treat each other. There is deception initially in the relationship, but once the man realizes the situation he turns his anger into revenge. In turning his wife into his prostitute, he becomes a conspirator in her deception of other women and contributes to behavior by which he was once offended. The abuse in this poem comes from his never working, but his using his wife to earn his living. In images reminiscent of Claude McKay's "Harlem Dancer," Jarvis portrays the reality of life in Harlem. His use of a West Indian male as the person who captures the woman's heart and then completely prostitutes her being, might be a commentary on the nature of the West Indian male or the relationship between Harlemites and Caribbean people who migrated to Harlem in large numbers in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Obviously, the woman has been successful in her previous relationships with two-timing other men, but once she runs into a West Indian the rules change. In selecting the characters that he does, Jarvis clearly utilizes both his environments, further undergirding the duality being discussed.

Moreover, in this poem, Jarvis employs several literary devices which add to its texture. For example, there is irony in the woman as bread winner for a West Indian male who comes out of a tradition that supports the man as provider. While she is the provider, he owns her, for "She toils, but never does he spin . . . / And yet she bears his name." Additionally, the poem is satirical. Once the man discovers that he can profit from his wife's activities, he accepts her lifestyle. There is no longer a need for him to "fill them both with lead" because she is now "worth her weight in gold." There is further satire in his use of the word "pure" in the second stanza, for it is the opposite of what she truly is, a prostitute. There is foreshadowing in line two which

indicates that although the woman has engaged in "two-timing" practices for some time, she "never came to harm." The line foreshadows her near death and the "harm" she now experiences from prostituting her body for someone else's gain. Additionally, the rhythm of the first two stanzas with the phrases "Two-timing" and "Quick-dating" suggest the hurried, transitory nature of the woman's relationships. However, the pace changes in the final stanza where her situation as her husband's property becomes permanent. The quickness of the earlier relationships is gone as "he walks in raiment fine." "[W]alks" here can be read "struts" or "parades" for "All Harlem knows the game."

The companion piece, "Harlem Tragedy" is a tragedy on all fronts as it tells of a man who kills his wife when he catches her in an embrace with another man. The penalty for his crime is death to which he willingly goes:

Quite unafraid he took his seat  
And let them burn him dead ...  
'Twas cheaper thus to go as he  
Had sent his wife ahead ! (Bamboula Dance 10)

There is a different kind of retribution in this poem, for although Harlem's ways are devious, "Who kills must lose his life." This is the flip side of "Harlem Comedy." In the first poem, the woman is discreet about her extra-marital relationships but is discovered nevertheless. In "Harlem Tragedy" the woman does not hide her unfaithfulness. In fact, "she hurt his [her husband's] pride / By loving men who laughed at him / And turned their steps aside." This husband carries out his plan to execute his wife so that "She can not now be paramour / For any other man." He will have her all to himself in death. The tragedy lies in his having killed his wife and in turn his being executed. No one survives this wife's unfaithfulness, whereas in the preceding poem, while both live, the husband has the last laugh. In "Harlem Tragedy" "'Twas cheaper" for him to die than to seek revenge in some other way. The use of the word "cheap" recalls the financial outcome of the other poem. There is no profit for the husband in "Harlem Tragedy" while the woman's activities turn out to be a bonanza for the husband in "Harlem Comedy." The intensity of emotion is evident in the poet's use of the words "drilled" and "burn." There is no doubting the husband's intentions, for "He

drilled his mate with seven shots" and he in turn "let them burn him dead," so that they both become victims of a "Harlem Tragedy."

Like the poets of the Harlem Renaissance, Jarvis addresses other issues affecting African Americans. Indeed, he writes a poem about the inequities of justice and the horror of the Ku Klux Klan in "Scottsboro and Other Places." While the poem refers specifically to the 1931 case in which nine black youths in Scottsboro, Alabama were accused of raping two white women, it also addresses racial injustice wherever it exists. He writes of justice as blind, as in the Scottsboro case, but also tells of cases that never go to court, for "Quite often rope and flame / Are jury men by night." While "Blind justice holds a sword," the Klansmen hold a rope and flame. Regardless of the court, "Negroes bear the blame." The outcome is always the same for the black man, whether justice is clothed in the black robes of the court or the white robes of the Klan.

His sensitivity to race is also expressed in a poem entitled "Comment," addressed to another group who wear robes, the Catholic clergy. This poem, according to both Rufus Vanderpool and Ernesto Vanterpool is Jarvis' response to the Catholic hierarchy's treatment of the black children attending the Catholic school in St. Thomas. The poem offers satirical commentary on Catholicism and those who are ordained to preach love and tolerance. However, the speaker of the poem warns the "sons of night" against those who "say they preach the love of God . . . ." He says "They'll take your cash and bar you out / Because their God is white." It would be expected that as "men of the cloth," the priests would go to heaven, but ironically, their treatment of blacks places them in hell where they:

Have little wish to trace  
The streak of black, or grudge a flame,  
Or snub this hated Race! (Bamboula Dance 6)

The speaker clearly believes that retribution will come to those who despise blacks solely because of color. Like his previous poem, "Comment" clearly demonstrates Jarvis' displeasure with racial injustice regardless of the social stratum from which it emanates.

However, Jarvis' sensitivity to issues of injustice did not prevent him from enjoying a spring day in New York, but the spring makes him nostalgic

for his home, and he writes yet another poem reminiscent of Claude McKay. Jarvis' "On Spring in Harlem" is in many ways like McKay's "The Tropics in New York" as both poets exhibit nostalgia for their respective Caribbean homes. While for McKay the nostalgia is triggered by the sight of tropical fruits on display in a window, Jarvis' is inspired by the bare trees in spring just before they bloom. His nostalgia is short lived, though, as once the trees turn green, "Soon Harlem held both love and Spring / And life became a joyous thing."

Once again, Jarvis, the painter, comes to the fore in "On Spring in Harlem" as he paints word pictures of "the green of tropic trees" and "The azures of Caribbean seas." He uses alliteration and onomatopoeia in the second line of stanza two to illustrate the blossoming of spring as the buds burst forth. There is a contrast of life as "an empty thing" in the first stanza and its having "become a joyous thing" in the closing couplet of the sonnet. The experience for the speaker of Jarvis' poem is a joyous one, unlike the speaker of McKay's who laments: "And, hungry for the old familiar ways / I turned aside and bowed my head and wept." In Jarvis' poem, the blossoming of the trees "brought the tropics back again." This speaker has found his tropics in Harlem. "On Spring in Harlem" again clearly demonstrates the dualities found in J. Antonio Jarvis, for he identifies at once with both Harlem and the Caribbean and illustrates that he is at home in both.

Characterizing or categorizing J. Antonio Jarvis is not easy. He was a man who, on one hand, embraced European ideals but spoke vehemently against racial injustice, a man who was such a strict disciplinarian that he evoked fear in students when he walked the halls of Abraham Lincoln Elementary School, but still was loving, kind and attentive to the many young men he took under his wing, nurtured, and educated. Jarvis was a man vilified by some but revered by others. He was a man who at age thirty wrote a poem about growing old and not having accomplished anything in his life; but on his sick bed thirty years later, he wrote a poem about youth. He walked apart from his contemporaries, yet had one foot planted in each poetic tradition.

This, then, is J. Antonio Jarvis a true "Renaissance man," painter, publisher, poet, violinist, historian. The themes of his poems are many and

varied. He writes about love, nature, life in Harlem, the importance of the press, tourists, racial inequality, and Africa which figures prominently in his writing like a giant shadow looming over his shoulder. It is a shadow that very often seems menacing - something he wants to escape, to avoid, to deny - but it is ever present. Always he employs the artist's brush to paint a picture of the environment surrounding his topic, whether to enhance or shadow in silhouette. This is the man of whom Cornelius Emanuel, one of the poets inspired by Jarvis, writes expressing sentiments shared by many:

J. Antonio Jarvis

First man of letters of this Virgin earth!  
First to confirm that timeworn platitude:  
Of prophets not receiving gratitude  
Or recognition in their land of birth.

Ungrateful Isles - that not one public place,  
Nor street, nor road, nor building bears the name  
Of one whose world-wide literary fame  
Gave to the world the talents of our race.

Despite his personal idiosyncrasies,  
(Which ones of us have none of these to hide?)  
His writing, art, and teachings spurred our pride -  
Extolled our worth and possibilities.

Shall we deny that great prolific mind  
A place of honor in our history?  
A namesake to remind posterity  
Of one who strove to teach - to aid his kind? (Emanuel)

Despite the criticism expressed in this poem, Jarvis received recognition, although most of it posthumously. Ironically, each incident of recognition required some action by the Virgin Islands Legislature, the same branch of government which had earlier castigated him. In 1962, one year before his death, Jarvis was awarded a legislative grant of two thousand dollars to research Virgin Islands history in the archives of Europe, preliminary to writing a school textbook (Unveiling 7). In 1970 the legislature of the Virgin Islands passed a resolution renaming the Abraham Lincoln School, the J. Antonio Jarvis Elementary School in recognition and

appreciation of the twenty-one years he had served as principal of that institution (Moolenaar, Profiles 122). In 1978, legislation was once more passed in reference to Jarvis. This time it was an act authorizing the establishment of the J. Antonio Jarvis Memorial Park and the placement of a bronze bust as a tribute to Jarvis for his outstanding contributions to the Virgin Islands. The foreword to the booklet of the Unveiling Ceremonies notes, "The memorial expresses the hope of the committee that the life and work of J. Antonio Jarvis may serve as an incentive to present and future generations."

The sentiments of that tribute seem to capture what Jarvis himself articulates about his own ambitions in the second stanza of "Unhappy Island." According to his biographer Addelita Cancryn, these words were the philosophy by which he lived and which he imparted to those under his tutelage:

I try to make my sojourn here  
A useful interlude  
With whence my wanderings start and where  
They will conclude. (Bamboula Dance 38)

Jarvis' legacy, etched in the words which he wrote, the pictures he painted, and the lives he shaped, is testament to his "sojourn here" having indeed been a "useful interlude."

## CONCLUSION

### BUILDING SAND CASTLES: BEYOND THE EXCAVATION OF THE WORDS BENEATH THE SANDS

Excavating the words of Virgin Islands poets Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis, from beneath the sands of obscurity has been both rewarding and intriguing. This study has revealed poetry which runs the gamut from serious to comical, sonnet to limerick, and stilted Romantic English to Virgin Islands Creole. It has revealed Creque, a writer at various stages of his artistic development, working diligently to hone the skills of versification. It has revealed Gimenez, a poet giving voice to the people of the Virgin Islands but ignored because he elects to speak in the language of the masses. It has revealed the sensitivity of a man, Jarvis, who to many is an enigma, but who truly represents the dual facets of Virgin Islands existence. The study in essence has revealed that critic Gordon Lewis' assessment of Virgin Islands poetry is totally inaccurate.

Lewis, in his 1972 publication, The Virgin Islands: A Caribbean Lilliput, categorizes the work of local poets as "couched in a feeble neo-Tennysonian Gothic style, quite ignoring the possibilities of the rich picturesque speech of the masses" (172). However, Cyril Creque's descriptions of nature, his attention to the plight of the coal carriers and sugar cane workers, while written in the style of the Romantics, is more than mere imitation. In artistically giving attention to issues close to the hearts of the Romantics, he demonstrates that he is of that tradition. Similarly, Gimenez's use of the Virgin Islands vernacular in his works to articulate the plight of workers and bring to life the cultural beliefs evident in the folklore, contradicts Lewis. Indeed Gimenez capitalizes on the rich picturesque speech of the masses in his portrayal of coal carriers, unfaithful mates, and jumbies. Likewise Jarvis, is anything but Tennysonian in using his skills as a painter to capture the beauty of the Caribbean dawn.

Unfortunately, the scope of this study did not permit examination of all the works of these men. Indeed, what is available suggests that complete

studies can and should be done of each individual poet. Beyond his Romantic attention to nature and the plight of the individual, Creque has poems which reveal his humor, poems which reveal the importance of certain individuals to him and the community, and poems which address sentiments affiliated with holidays. These, as well as his musical compositions must be studied. Additionally, the impact of his courses in versification taken through the Home Correspondence School in Springfield Massachusetts is worthy of further examination. J. P. Gimenez, on the other hand is much more than a poet who uses the vernacular. In fact, his mystical poetry constitutes the bulk of his work and begs to be examined. Also worthy of further study are the changes in his style over the twenty years that he writes. Like Creque, Gimenez's musical compositions must be examined, at least in relation to his poetry. In the case of J. Antonio Jarvis, his plethora of love poems reveal aspects of the artist not addressed by this study, and, along with his drama, are deserving of study. Another issue relevant to Jarvis which requires further examination is his attitude toward women.

The works studied have shown all three writers utilizing the formal style of the British, in which they were trained, to bring to life the realities of the Virgin Islands in the 1930s and 1940s. Additionally, the examination has revealed the impact of other aspects of the poets' lives on their poetry. For instance, Jarvis' poetry is informed by his abilities as a painter and a dramatist, just as Creque's musical ability informs his poetry. In a somewhat different manner, Gimenez's occupation as a businessman provides the substance for his vernacular poetry.

Certainly, Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis are not the only poets writing in the first half of the twentieth century, but they are certainly the earliest and in many ways set the tone for others to follow. Other early writers include Wilfred Hatchett, Gerwyn Todman, Isador Paiwon, Valdemar Hill, Sr., Erica Lee, Aubrey Anduze, and Edward Richards, all of whom have published at least one volume of poems. These later writers were all influenced by the first writers. As the excavation of words beneath the Virgin Islands literary sands continues, much more artistic ability will be unearthed because those younger poets who followed in the footsteps of Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis have also proven to be gifted artists.



Of those poets, Edward Richards is included in a number of mainland anthologies. Additionally, he is included in a late 1940s edition of the NAACP magazine, Crisis, which also features Guyanese, A. J. Seymour and Jamaican, Vivian Virtue. Langston Hughes' note at the introduction of the article underscores the obscurity of Caribbean writing: "There is among the Negro poets of the Caribbean a poetic richness of which most of the rest of the world is unaware." He notes that while some of the writers have been published in London, "none of them is known in the United States" (Richards. Personal papers). The sentiment expressed by Hughes in 1948 or 1949, still to a large degree applies to the United States Virgin Islands, for although the territory is known to American tourists for its beauty and rum, little is known of the writers who captured that beauty in verse or used their poetic voices to lament the conditions which produced that rum in the early years. Similarly, while there is much interaction between the Virgin Islands and other islands of the Caribbean, anthologies of Caribbean poetry still fail to include the work of Virgin Islanders. This neglect is partially resultant from the dual existence of the Virgin Islands, for while that duality enriches the creative efforts, the perception of its Americanness by Caribbeans and vice versa facilitates the exclusion from either tradition.

Nonetheless, the future of Virgin Islands poetry is promising. Over the years, Virgin Islands poetry has changed, manifesting greater diversity than the works of the early poets. For example, Cornelius Emanuel, while following the vernacular tradition started by Gimenez, provides a different picture of the every day life of the Virgin Islands in poems such as "The Legend of 'Tampo' " and "The 'Downtown' Senate (Bar Normandie in Frenchtown)." Using a formula which places the subjects of this study in the Virgin Islands' early poetic period, critic, Marvin Williams, places Emanuel in the middle (15). In making this assertion, Williams, cites David Gershtator who says that Emanuel "is caught between the old and the new and tends to indulge in outworn poetic stance and language. However, humor and dialect bring his muse down to earth" (Gershtator 412). Emanuel's poems reflect a transition from the stylistic conservatism of Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis to a lighter, sometimes experimental form. Some of his works can be classified in

the Caribbean pastoral tradition, while others boast the overt rebellion of some of the poets of the 1970s.

Some of the later poets, in particular Althea Romeo and Bertica Hodge, received their poetic initiation as students at the then College of the Virgin Islands, in the 1970s, where their work impressed poets, Judson Jerome and Allen Ginsberg. Of the period that produced these writers, David Gershator says, "The tension today between Americanization and West Indianization provides fertile ground for the poets of the '70s. These poets are aware of the complexities of West Indian life and the economic, cultural, and political cross-currents in and around the islands" (412). Significantly, the duality of which Gershator speaks is the same double consciousness which shapes the work of the early twentieth century Virgin Islands poets.

Two conditions which impact on the growth and development of a literature are access to publication and criticism. Jarvis sought to provide both - the publishing through the Art Shop and the Daily News and the criticism through the scholarly gatherings held at his home. Over the years a number of magazines have served as outlets for poetry in the Virgin Islands, but there has been no one consistent vehicle devoted to highlighting this area of creativity. Among the magazines which have featured poems are Virgin Islands Forum, Virgin Islands View, and The Voice. However, none of them is any longer in publication. Nonetheless, University of the Virgin Islands students today have an outlet in the student literary magazine, Sea Moss and other members of the academic community contribute to the Caribbean Writer, so there are some avenues available to poets desirous of getting their work in print.

Fortunately, there is more attention being given to the literary works of the Virgin Islands and certainly the upcoming anthology of Virgin Islands poetry will go a long way in helping to showcase the writers of the Virgin Islands, as it covers the early writers, Creque, Gimenez, and Jarvis, as well as present day poets, such as Wanda Mills and Carol Henneman. On the island of St. Croix, retired prison warden, Richard A. Schrader has published a collection of poems and has been involved over the last five or six years in producing several small anthologies of works by St. Croix residents.

Despite growing avenues for the publication of Virgin Islands poetry, there is one aspect of the literary activity still lacking; that is the critical arm. Jeannette Allis Bastian, Director of Libraries, Museums, and Archives in the Virgin Islands, notes in her study West Indian Literature: An Index to Criticism, 1930-1975, the invaluable role scholarly journals such as Bim and Kyk-Over-Al played in the development of West Indian literature. In a recent interview, she asserts that today, as well as in the early part of the century, when Creque, Gimenez and Jarvis were writing, the second half of the literary activity, the criticism, was and remains missing. She further maintains that because there is no organized critical climate and writers get no response or recognition, there is not the needed impetus to continue. This supports my contention and identifies part of the impetus for this study.

A similar sentiment is offered by Marvin Williams, editor of the upcoming anthology of Virgin Islands poetry. According to him:

If the poetry is to reach full maturity, however, we need to develop a body of criticism to nurture it along. It is the paucity of critical assessment that in part accounts for the publication of numerous sophomore books/chapbooks of poems in the territory. Our writers need honest judgments not the usual fare of deaf and blind encouragement that leads to mediocrity nor the cloakroom snickers that show a lack of courage. We have to get beyond the smothering fear of offending our neighbors that small communities such as ours engender; and we cannot continue to be impressed by the mere fact of publication. Criticism is invaluable - not just for writers, but for consumers and teachers of literature as well. (22)

The University of the Virgin Islands, in its expanding role in the Caribbean, housing the Center for Eastern Caribbean Studies, is in a prime position to nurture this critical movement. However, its efforts must go beyond offering courses in Virgin Islands literature. Virgin Islands and other scholars need to present papers at conferences and publish articles on the works of Virgin Islanders. A number of faculty of the University of the Virgin Islands are members of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA), an organization which promotes Caribbean scholarship. While papers on the Virgin Islands environment, sociology, health, and politics have been presented, little has been done, at least in the last five years, on Virgin Islands

literature. Certainly CSA is one forum at which Virgin Islands scholars can showcase the Virgin Islands.

Recent critical efforts such as Adelbert Anduze's master's thesis and the upcoming anthology of Virgin Islands poetry seek to verify that there is, in fact, a Virgin Islands poetry. Both works also highlight a large number of writers, giving credence to their assertions that people have been and are writing. However, it is necessary to go beyond that and analyze the quality of that work to verify that it is indeed worthy of inclusion in both the Caribbean and American poetic canons. To that end, this study has sought to provide much needed criticism on three neglected but worthwhile writers of the territory. Hopefully, it will provide the impetus for others to take a closer look at what was written earlier in the century and create an appreciation for talent extant at that time and provide the incentive for the works of these three writers to be republished. The completion of this study, provides scholars, both in the Caribbean and African America some insights into a body of work which has been largely ignored. More significantly, however, this study should be valuable to the University of the Virgin Islands in providing critical information which should enhance its current Virgin Islands and Caribbean literature courses. Now that some of the words beneath the sands have been unearthed, others will probably surface and the Virgin Islands will become a significant attribute to both traditions of which it is a part - the Caribbean and the United States.

## WORKS CITED

## Primary Sources

- Creque, Cyril. Folder, ms. Unpublished poems and letters.
- . Panorama. Wauwatosa, Wisconsin: Kenyon, 1947.
- . Trade Winds. Newport: Franklin Printing House, 1934.
- Gimenez, J. P. Caribbean Echoes. New York: Galleon, 1934.
- . Deep Waters. San Juan, P.R.: Padilla Printing Works, 1939.
- . Virgin Islands Folklore and Other Poems. New York: n.p., 1933.
- . Voice of the Virgin Islands. Contemporary Poets of Dorrance. 440. Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1952.
- Jarvis, J. Antonio. Bamboula Dance and Other Poems. 1935. Germany: Kraus-Thomson Organization Ltd, 1970.
- . Fruits in Passing. St. Thomas, V.I., The Art Shop, 1932.

## Secondary Sources

## Books

- Allis, Jeannette B. West Indian Literature: An Index to Criticism, 1930-1975. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981.
- Anduze, Adelbert. "Literature of the United States Virgin Islands, 1900-1970." Thesis. Howard U, 1975.
- Baa, Enid M. Doctoral Dissertations and Selected Theses Accepted by Universities of Canada, United States and Europe, from 1778-1968. St. Thomas, V. I.: Bureau of Public Libraries and Museums, 1969.
- Barksdale, Richard and Kenneth Kinnamon, eds. Black Writers of America: A Comparative Anthology. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Bornn, Hugo. Resources for a Program in Music Study. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1965. 108-115. in Project Introspection. European and African Influences on the Culture of the Virgin Islands. U. S. Virgin Islands: Department of Education, 1973.
- Bough, James A. and Roy C. Macridis, eds. Virgin Islands, America's Caribbean Outpost: The Evolution of Self Government. Wakefield: Walter F. Williams, 1970.

- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry. London: New Beacon Books, 1984.
- Brown, Lloyd. West Indian Poetry. Boston: Twayne, 1978.
- Burnett, Paula, ed. The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Cadaval, Olivia. "Folklife of the U.S. Virgin Islands: Persistence and Creativity." Festival of American Folklife, 1990. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990. 18-26.
- Cancryn, Addelita. Man of Vision: A Biography of Jose Antonio Jarvis. St. Thomas, V.I.: Val-Hill Enterprises, 1975.
- Cobb, Martha. Harlem, Haiti and Havana: A Comparative Critical Study of Langston Hughes, Jacques Roumain, Nicolás Guillén. Washington: Three Continents, 1979.
- Cooper, Wayne F. Claude McKay: Rebel Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1987. New York: Schocken Books, 1987.
- Creque, Cyril. "Team Manager's Guide." Notes for radio program, 1955.
- Davis, Arthur P. From the Dark Tower: Afro-American Writers, 1900 to 1960. Washington: Howard UP, 1981.
- De Jongh, James. Vicious Modernism: Black Harlem and the Literary Imagination. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Dillard, James H. "Fourteen Years of the Jeanes Fund, 1909-1923." South Atlanta Quarterly 22.3 (1923): N. pag. Rpt. as Fourteen Years of the Jeanes Fund, 1909-1923. Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Dookhan, Isaac. A History of the Virgin Islands. St. Thomas, V.I.: Caribbean UP, 1974.
- Emanuel, Cornelius. Reflections, 1967." St. Thomas, V.I.: V.I. Printing Corp., 1967.
- Evans, Walter. "Monster Movies: A Sexual Theory." The Popular Culture Reader. Ed. Christopher D. Geist and Jack Nachbar. 3rd. ed. Bowling Green: Bowling Green U Popular P, 1983. 337-47.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Grayson, E. Blanche. "Annual Report of the Jeanes Supervisor of St. Thomas and St. John, Virgin Islands, 1938-1939 School Session." Arthur Howe File, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

- Guirty, Geraldo. Harlem's Danish-American West Indians, 1899-1964. New York: Vantage, 1989.
- . Sixtonian: Vignettes 'bout "Amalia." New York: Vantage, 1991.
- Hill, Valdemar A., Sr. Rise to Recognition: An Account of Virgin Islanders from Slavery to Self-Government. St. Thomas, V.I.: St. Thomas Graphics, 1971.
- Jarvis, J. Antonio. Brief History of the Virgin Islands. St. Thomas, V.I.: The Art Shop, 1938.
- . The Three Islands. St. Thomas, V. I.: The Art Shop, 1935.
- . The Virgin Islands and Their People. Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1944.
- Krigger, Marilyn F. "Introduction: 1917-1954." Yellow Cedars Blooming: An Anthology of Virgin Islands Poetry. ms. Ed. Williams, Marvin, 1994.
- Lashley, Cliff. "On the Political Context of West Indian Literature." Sargasso-Special Issue- West Indian Literature and Its Political Context: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference on Caribbean Literature, 25-28 March 1987. Ed. Lowell Fiet. Rio Piedras, P.R.: University of Puerto Rico, 1988. 7-11.
- Lewis, Gordon K. The Virgin Islands: A Caribbean Lilliput. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1972.
- Long, Richard A. and Eugenia W. Collier. Afro-American Writing: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry. University Park: Penn State UP, 1989.
- Louis, James, ed. The Islands in Between: Essays on West Indian Literature. London: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Mack, Maynard, et al., eds. The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces. 6th ed. Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 1992. 2 vols.
- Millward, C. M. A Biography of the English Language. Fort Worth: Harcourt, 1989.
- Moolenaar, Ruth. Profiles of Outstanding Virgin Islanders. 3rd. ed. St. Thomas, V.I.: State Media Library Services, 1992.
- Moore, Gerald. "The Language of West Indian Poetry." Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism. Ed. Edward Baugh. New York: St. Martin's, 1978. 130-36.
- 150th Anniversary of the Dedication of Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church. St. Thomas, V. I.: Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1943.
- Rivera, Eulalie C. Growing Up on St. Croix: Recollections of a Crucian Girlhood. St. Croix, V. I.: Antillies Graphic Arts, 1987.
- Roberts, Peter A. West Indians and Their Language. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.

- Rohlehr, Gordon. Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad. Port of Spain, Trinidad: Gordon Rohlehr, 1990.
- . Introduction. Voiceprint: An Anthology of Oral and Related Poetry from the Caribbean. By Stewart Brown, Mervyn Morris, and Gordon Rohlehr, eds. Essex: Longman, 1989.
- Rosenthal, M. L., ed. Selected Poems and Two Plays of William Butler Yeats. New York: Collier, 1962.
- Schrader, Richard A., Sr. St. Croix in Another Time. St. Croix, V. I.: Richard A. Schrader, 1990.
- Somé, Malidoma Patrice. Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman. New York: Putnam's, 1994.
- Taylor, Chas. Edwin. An Island of the Sea: Descriptive of the Past and Present of St. Thomas, Danish West Indies. St. Thomas, D. W. I.: Chas. Edwin Taylor, 1896.
- Tracy, Steven C. Langston Hughes and the Blues. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1954.
- Unveiling Ceremonies: J. Antonio Jarvis Memorial. St. Thomas, V.I.: The Virgin Islands Legislature, Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs, J. Antonio Jarvis Memorial Committee of the St. Thomas Historical Trust, 1980.
- Watson, J. R. English Poetry of the Romantic Period 1789-1830. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1992.
- Williams, Marvin, ed. Yellow Cedars Blooming: An Anthology of Virgin Islands Poetry. ms., 1994.

#### Articles

- Blackman, Peter. "Is There a West Indian Literature?" Life and Letters and the London Mercury 59 (1948): 96-102.
- Clark, Conrad. "Around Town." The Daily News 19 August 1977: 8.
- "Coaling Ships by Basket." Daily News, 60th Anniversary Ed. 1 Aug. 1970: 13.
- Creque, Cyril. "Radio Address by Cyril Creque Over Station WSTA - A Music Week Tribute." The Daily News 6 May 1952: 2.
- Davis, Glenn "Kwabena." "V. I. Music: How Sweet It Is." V. I. Voice 1 (1989): 24-26, 32.
- "4 Great Sheroes in the Struggle for Freedom." The Voice 4.2 (1993): 34-35.
- Gershator, David. "Poetry of the Virgin Islands: Past and Present." Revista



Interamericana Review 2 (1972): 408-14.

Hatfield, Hal. "J. Antonio Jarvis: A True Renaissance Man." Virgin Islands Daily News 1 February 1993, Black History Month Supplement: 20.

"J. Antonio Jarvis." Virgin Islands View 1.5 (1965): 9-21.

Jarvis, Franklin. "J. Antonio Jarvis: The Man and His Vision." The Daily News, 50th Anniversary Ed. 1 Aug. 1980.

Jacobs, Elaine Warren. "The Impact of Virgin Islands Folklore on Virgin Islands Literature." Summer Institute on Culture, University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, August 1993.

"Joseph Giminez Mystic Poet; Dies at 61." Daily News [Charlotte Amalie, VI] 17 Aug. 1953.

Thompson, Thelma. "Their Pens, Their Swords: New Jamaican Women Poets and Political Statement in Nation Language." Studies in the Literary Imagination [Georgia State U]. 26.2 (1993): 45-62.

Watson, Leona Brady as told to Daisy Holder LaFond. "Cariso Woman: Leona Brady Watson." The Voice 2.2 (1991): 49-52, 60.

## Interviews

Bastian, Jeannette Allis. Personal interview. 31 August 1994.

Creque, Lauritz. Telephone interview. 21 January 1995.

Creque, Marvin and Marilyn. Personal interview. 13 August 1994.

David, Gaveston. Personal interview. 2 January 1995.

Emanuel, Gene. Personal interview. 15 August 1994.

Guirty, Geraldo. Personal interview. 18 August 1994.

Jarvis, Frank. Personal interview. 27 August 1994.

Kean, Aline. Personal interview. 29 December 1994.

Kean, Orville. Personal interview. 11 August 1994.

Michael, Elizabeth. Personal interview. 30 December 1994.

Miller, Aida. Telephone interview. 29 August 1994.

Moolenaar, Ruth. Personal interview. 29 August 1994.

Richards, Edward. Personal interview. 29 December 1994.

Simmonds, Ralph. Telephone interview. 16 November 1994.

Simmonds, Viola. Telephone interview. 16 November 1994.

Torres, Irene. Telephone interview. 20 January 1995.

Turnbull, Charles W. Personal interview. 5 January 1995.

Vanderpool, Rufus. Personal interview. 28 December 1994.

Vanterpool, Ernesto. Personal interview. 30 December 1994.

#### Lectures

Emanuel, Gene. Class lecture. University of the Virgin Islands. St. Thomas, Summer 1994.

#### Videotapes

Poets in Paradise. Videotape. Eddie Donahue. WTJX Channel 12, 1986.