celebrating cricket: the symbolic construction of Caribbean politics

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Cricket has suffered, but not only cricket. The aestheticians have scorned to take notice of popular sports and games—to their own detriment. The aridity and confusion of which they so mournfully complain will continue until they include organized games and the people who watch them as an integral part of their data.

(C. L. R. James 1963:191-192; emphasis in original)

The failure of art critics to appreciate the aesthetics of popular sport has been no less myopic than the failure of anthropologists to grasp its social importance. Although folklorists and protoethnologists of the previous century showed an interest in games—much of it inspired by E. B. Tylor's evolutionary and diffusionist speculations—the anthropology of play did not advance appreciably until the late 1950s (Schwartzman 1978:5). A great deal of the recent attention, however, has been directed at either children's play or at relatively small-scale games—a corpus pioneered by the early collaborative studies of Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962, 1966). A significant literature on mass ludic spectacles such as popular sports events and public celebrations is only now emerging, much of it inspired by the interest of Gluckman and Turner in "secular ritual" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977) and by Geertz's (1972) paper on the Balinese cockfight.

The seminal work of these latter figures converges on a conceptual approach to the relationship between symbolic and social phenomena. For Turner (1977), "liminoid" performative genres such as festivals and carnivals are "proto-" or "metastructural," generating cultural comprehension by abstracting and recombining—often in novel, metaphorical ways—a social structure's basic principles. For Gluckman (see Gluckman and Gluckman 1977), whose views were articulated in the last article published before his death, symbolic events such as sports attractions and theatrical productions differ from traditional religious rites in being an imaginative "presentation" of society rather than a "re-presentation" or

Cricket festivals are Bermuda's major public celebrations, aside from Christmas. This paper examines their social history, their carnivalesque character, and a prominent ancillary activity, gambling. It is proposed that these festivals symbolically depict both a reflexive, assertive sense of black culture and a stark awareness of black economic dependency on whites—a dramatic tension that is also the semantic context of Bermudian politics. Festival is thus a metaphorical map of the political system, a contention that appears generalizable to the Caribbean. [festival, politics, cricket, Caribbean, symbolic/cognitive analysis]

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copy of it. For Geertz (1972), the cockfight is a fictive story about its social context, a "metasocial commentary" on it that is analogous to a literary text in using the devices of aesthetic license to disarrange conventional semantic contexts and rearrange them in unconventional ways. Geertz also underscores a point that is less forcefully made by Gluckman and Turner: that symbolic forms are not only a reflexive interpretation of social life, but also a means through which people discover and learn their culture. The lesson for anthropology is that symbolic inquiry, besides laying bare a social system, can also tell us a great deal about the epistemological processes whereby that system is revealed to those whose lives it shapes.

Drawing from these positions, as well as other perspectives that have thrown light on public play and mass performance, this paper examines Bermudian cricket festivals. I focus on the social history of these festivals, on the manner in which they are celebrated, and on a highly significant side activity, gambling. My contention is that the total genre dramatizes a fundamental, racially oriented conflict between cultural identity and economic interest—a conflict that is generalizable to the Caribbean (and perhaps other decolonizing areas) and that underlies the region's political situation. Consistent with Cohen's (1979:87) observation that anthropology's chief contribution to the study of politics has been the analysis of nonpolitical symbols that have political implications and functions, I propose that celebration can provide a unique understanding of the conceptual parameters in which political awareness is developed and expressed.

blacks in whites

In the West Indies the game of cricket is played with elegant skill, studied with scholarly intensity, argued with passionate conviction, and revered with patriotic pride. Young boys with makeshift bats and balls play spiritedly in yards, fields, and beaches, learning the skills that in the past century have made West Indians among the world's outstanding cricketers. Organized competition begins in school and continues—often through middle age—in amateur sports clubs. Island-wide teams drawn from the clubs provide the Caribbean's premier sports attraction when they play annually in a touring series known as the Shell Shield. There is also a pan-West Indian team that represents the region in "test" (international) matches and that has been the outstanding exception to a catalog of failed attempts at West Indian unification.

One gleans the historical significance of the game in Beyond a Boundary, C. L. R. James's (1963) autobiography cum cricket analysis. A Trinidadian journalist, teacher, historian, political critic, and, above all, cricket devotee, James contends that in the West Indies cricket was traditionally seen as embodying the qualities of the classic British character ideal: fair play, restraint, perseverance, responsibility, and the moral inflections of Victorian Puritanism. Paradoxically, Afro-West Indians were taught to esteem those standards but were denied the means of achieving and demonstrating them. Cricket organizations—clubs, leagues, selection committees, governing bodies—conformed to the wider system of color-class stratification, and when the races occasionally played together, it was customary for whites to bat and blacks to bowl (St. Pierre 1973:7-12).

The phrase "put on your whites" is instructive. Literally, it means to don the several items—white or cream-colored—that make up a cricket uniform: shoes, pants, shirt, sweater, protective gloves, knee pads. Figuratively, it is a metonym of the black struggle in cricket, itself a metonym as well as an instrument of the more general black struggle under British colonialism. In cricket there were a succession of black goals: to get to bat, to gain

places on island-wide teams and regional tours, and, as recently as the 1960s, to be named vice-captains and captains of test teams, positions reserved for whites even after racial criteria had been virtually eliminated from selection procedures. Cricket successes brought recognition to Afro-West Indians both internationally and, more begrudgingly, in the upper strata of local society, gradually transforming the sport into a powerful symbol of black ability, achievement, and aspiration.

Bermudian cricket is a variation on these themes, but one that, like Bermuda itself, caricatures and often strikingly illuminates the Caribbean pattern. Lying a thousand miles and a climatic zone north of the West Indies, Bermuda has a five-month summer cricket season and therefore does not participate in most major West Indian tournaments, which are held during the winter. Nor do Bermudians take the game as seriously or as professionally as West Indians do. In the Caribbean, for example, festival games—occasions when a cricket match takes place in a setting of festive sociability—are relatively informal, localized, and of little general interest (James 1963:20–21). In Bermuda, however, festival games are both the highlights of the cricket season and, aside from Christmas, the calendar's most significant holidays. Bermudian festival cricket is the counterpart of Caribbean carnivals, but it enriches the spirit of celebration with the drama of a popular sporting classic.

The racial division of Bermudian cricket was shaped by an apartheidlike form of segregation, rather than by the West Indian system of color-class stratification. Introduced by British military personnel in the 19th century, the game was originally played in white sporting clubs. Blacks responded by forming neighborhood cricket clubs that have since evolved into the country's major centers of sport, entertainment, and sociability (Manning 1973). Through the clubs, blacks gained unquestioned superiority in cricket; when racial integration was nominally introduced in the 1960s, whites virtually withdrew from the game.

Two of the oldest black clubs, Somerset and St. George's, were begun primarily to promote an informal cricket contest held each August 1st in commemoration of the 1834 emancipation of slaves in British territories—an occasion marked by varied festivities throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean. Under club sponsorship the event developed into Cup Match, the oldest and most prominent cricket festival. Now held on the Thursday and Friday closest to August 1st, the game's historical identification with blacks is maintained by the white practice of observing the first day of Cup Match as Somers's Day, named after the British Admiral Sir George Somers who discovered Bermuda in 1609.

Besides Cup Match there are the Eastern, Western, and Central County Games, each involving four clubs in a series of three matches staggered between June and September. As these series progress there is a buildup of festivity and sporting interest, so that the final games—in effect, sequels to Cup Match—are like Cup Match as occasions of mass celebration. In white society the County Games are paralleled by summer yachting competitions, notably the renowned Newport-Bermuda race. Nowhere in the Caribbean is there a more striking example of the pluralistic segmentation that Smith (1965) attributed to British West Indian societies.

While Cup Match commemorates emancipation from slavery, the County Games celebrate diffuse aspects of the black tradition and life-style. The Eastern and Western series, the two most popular, reflect variants in the black situation that figure in the deeper-level meaning of festival cricket. Begun in 1904, the Eastern Games involve clubs that draw from old, demographically stable neighborhoods. In each neighborhood there is a core of black extended families, typically small property owners deriving modest incomes from family stores, trades, service jobs, and, in earlier generations more than now, part-time farming and fishing. The principle of family-neighborhood integrity is the basis of Eastern County selection rules. Eligibility is based on having been born in the club's neighbor-

hood—the usual and preferred criterion—or having been a resident of it for at least two years. Although in a number of cases current players have moved away from their ancestral neighborhoods and play for other clubs in league games, their return for the County Games makes each club roster a roll call of familiar surnames, re-creating the networks and reviving the sentiments of traditional social organization.

The Western County Games, begun in 1962, are a product of newer social influences. The Western parishes have grown appreciably since the time when the series started, as new luxury hotels have created employment and as the demand for housing among blacks short of middle age has been met by the conversion of large estates into fashionable residential subdivisions (Newman 1972:3). Reflecting these trends, the Western Games are touted not as neighborhood rivalries, but as slick, highly competitive all-star games. Clubs vie intensely for Bermuda's best cricketers, offering lucrative incentives that lure players from outside the Western parishes and that encourage opportunistic switching between clubs from one year to the next. The clubs have even extended recruitment into the Caribbean, scouting the region for prospects and arranging their immigration. In the mid-1970s, the final game of the Western series was extended from one day to two, a move aimed at raising the caliber of play, generating wider public interest, and boosting gate receipts. The emphasis on aggressive commercialism is also seen in other areas of club activity, notably entertainment. Two of the clubs involved in the series (as well as other clubs in the Western parishes) have built elegant lounges which remain open as late as 5 a.m., offering formidable competition to the area's hotels.

Underlying the varying inflections of the Eastern and Western County Games are changes in the terms of clientage, the basis of the black Bermudian socioeconomic condition. Traditionally, Bermuda was run by a white aristocracy whose relations to blacks were paternal in both a biological and social sense. Descendants of the original 17th-century British settlers, the aristocracy were seafarers until the 1870s, agricultural exporters from then until the 1920s, and more recently an interlocking establishment of merchants, bankers, and corporate lawyers. Functioning as a ruling class in an almost feudal sense (Lewis 1968:323), they used the instruments of patronage-jobs, loans, credit, mortgages, charity-to maintain the allegiance and even the endearment of blacks, who make up three-fifths of the population, as well as a white underclass consisting of old "poor cousin" families, newer immigrants from Commonwealth countries, and Azorean Portuguese imported as indentured agricultural laborers. Patron-client relations were typically transacted within neighborhoods and parishes and between extended families, reinforcing residential identity and producing alliances between black and white kin groups that crosscut the system of institutionalized racial segregation. The common Caribbean metaphor of island society as a single large family (Wilson 1973:47) was powerfully resonant in Bermuda, yielding a meaningful context in which patronage took the social form of a relationship between benevolent, although demanding, white patriarchs and filial black dependents.

Since the early 1960s, however, the power and prestige of the aristocracy have been substantially eroded. The tourist boom has made foreign-owned hotels the major employers and, along with the development of an offshore corporate business sector, brought to Bermuda a class of expatriate managers who wield an appreciable influence in local affairs. In addition, the buoyancy and expansion of the economy has allowed the aggressive rise of underclass whites, notably Bermuda-born Portuguese, and a handful of black professionals and entrepreneurs. Tellingly, many of the aristocracy's merchant houses on Front Street, the commercial frontispiece of Hamilton, are now dominated by whites whose rise to economic prominence has come about within the past two decades.

What these changes have done to the patronage system is alter its character and style while maintaining, and perhaps strengthening, its grip on the overwhelming majority of

blacks. The benevolent paternalism of the aristocracy has been replaced by the bureaucratic orientation of the new elite, and largess has been escalated to include company directorships, investment opportunities, business partnerships, and well-paid managerial positions. Blacks enjoy the life-style provided by an affluent economy, but at the cost of remaining in a position of clientage and subordination.

"We black Bermudians," an old man cautioned, "can easily fool you. We're laughing on the outside, but crying on the inside." This commonplace statement derives its impact from oxymoron, the figure of speech that combines conceptual and emotional antitheses. Viewed as a collectively enacted "text," festival cricket is also built on oxymoron. Overtly and purposefully, these games articulate the meaning of freedom, family, community, club, and, above all, cricket itself—symbols that manifest to blacks their identity, their solidarity, their survival. But the games also reflect, implicitly but no less significantly, the field of socioeconomic relations in which blacks are dependent on a white power structure that has lost its traditional character but preserved its oppressive force. In this juxtaposition—this dramatic oxymoron—lies the basis of both the political system and the political imagination.

food, liquor, clothing, and money

Soliciting a description of festival cricket early in my first Bermudian fieldwork, I was told it was the time "when we eat everything in Bermuda, drink everything in Bermuda, wear everything in Bermuda, and spend everything in Bermuda." Although popular interest in the game runs unusually high, festival cricket is an occasion of participation, not spectatorship. The festival ethos is one of hedonistic indulgence, gregarious sociability, histrionic exhibitionism, lavish hospitality, conspicuous consumption—behaviors that epitomize and celebrate the black Bermudian self-image. In Singer's (1955) terms, festival cricket is a cultural performance, a dramatic spectacle in which a people proclaim and demonstrate their sense of who they are.

Like Carnival, festival cricket involves a period of preparation that is considered nearly as much fun as the event itself. For weeks before Cup Match there is intense speculation about the selection of teams. Pundits offer their personal choices in letters to the editor, and the subject is heatedly discussed in bars, in buses, and on street corners. The principal centers of activity are the black clubs, where people go, in the words of one informant, "just to hear the arguments." The arguments peak a week before the game, when the club selection committees announce their picks to the membership at a meeting in which dramatic suspense, flamboyant and often fiery oratory, and uproarious entertainment combine ritualistically to induct chosen players into the club tradition. In the final days before the game there is a general buildup of festive sociability, a flurry of shopping activity for food, liquor, and clothing, and extended expressions of team loyalty through the display of club colors on cars and items of apparel. For County Games the scenario is similar, but on a smaller scale.

Game days begin early, as fans laden with coolers, umbrellas, collapsible chairs, and briefcase-sized portable radios arrive at the grounds several hours before the first ball is bowled at 10 a.m. Locations around the periphery of the field are carefully staked out, mostly by groups of friends who have made arrangements to contribute to a common supply of food and liquor. A more enviable location is in makeshift pavilions erected at the edge of the field or on surrounding hillsides. Wooden frames covered with canvas or thatch, the pavilions bear colorful names such as "Honey Bee Lounge" and often fly flags made of liquor banners or team insignia. Organized by club-based peer groups, the pavilions accom-

modate 10-20 couples who pay a set fee—as much as \$100² for the two days of Cup Match—for food, liquor, and other amenities. Most pavilions are wired to the clubhouse, enabling the use of lights, appliances, and stereos that typically have auditorium-sized electronic speakers.

In all groups there is emphasis on extravagance, sophistication, ostentation. Bottles of brand-name liquor ranging from the 40-ounce to the 1-gallon size are set out on coolers and tables, flanked by cherries, lemons, limes, angostura bitters, and more specialized garnishes and liqueurs for concoctions that gain popularity during a particular festival season (Scotch, milk, and grenadine was the favorite one year). Food is plentiful and of two kinds: the cherished "soul" dishes built around chicken, fish, and "hoppin" john" (black-eyed peas and rice); and festive specialties, notably cassava pie and a chicken and pork filling baked pastry made from shredded cassava). At the Eastern County Games one is also likely to see a number of festive seafood dishes, including mussel pie, conch stew, and hash shark. For those without enough food or liquor, there are at least 2 bars in the clubhouse and 2 or more bar concessions, along with 20 or more food concessions, on the grounds.

Liquor is a basis of hospitality patterns that link individuals and groups with the larger audience. People generously offer drinks to passing friends, whose visit is enlivened by joking, teasing, insult swapping, and other forms of verbal performance characteristic of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-American culture (Abrahams 1970; Kochman 1970). The visitor invariably extends an offer of reciprocal hospitality, creating an opportunity, and something of a social obligation, for the hosts to return the visit later in the day. In the pavilions persons are allowed to entertain two guests at a time, an informal rule that balances the importance of hospitality with a check against overcrowding.

The continuous traffic around the field is known as the "fashion show." Celebrants sport outfits acquired for the festival cricket season, occasionally handmade but more often purchased during the advertising campaigns that retail merchants mount in the weeks before Cup Match. Drawn from black American and West Indian trends, styles are valued for combining smartness with sexuality. A decade ago, for example, the style known in Bermuda as "black mod" was dominant. Women paraded in arousing "hot pants" outfits, suggestive two-piece ensembles, bell-bottom and two-tone slacks, close-fitting pants suits, wool knit skirts and jerseys, low-slung chain belts, bubble blouses, leather collars, suede fringed handbags, large round earrings, ostentatious bracelets and necklaces, pink and yellow tinted sunglasses, and "natural" coiffures. In the same period, men wore jump suits, silk shirts slit open to expose the chest, two-tone and wide-cuffed flair pants, bolero and ruffled shirts with dog-ear collars, and suede vests over the bare skin. More recent styles have been varied, ranging from "black disco" to "unisex chic." Women have adopted pleated balloon pants, terry cloth outfits, and "cornrow" coiffures elaborated with beads and braids-a style that can cost upwards of \$100 in Bermudian hairdressing salons. Men have taken to West Indian styles, notably shirt-jacs, kareba suits, and among youth, Rastafarian dreadlocks. The jewelry portfolios of both sexes center on a half-dozen necklaces of various sizes and designs. Designer jean outfits are in vogue, as are athletic shorts that are worn by women with halter tops, by men with athletic shirts, and by both sexes with inscribed T-shirts.

The popularity of T-shirts warrants special comment. The leading black dealer in the field estimates selling 1,000 to 1,500 shirts for Cup Match alone, many of them at the cricket grounds in a concession stand that he equips with his printing and dyeing machines. His most popular line is what he calls his "black" shirts—motifs about festival cricket, pan-African identity, racial solidarity, and black entertainment genres. Next in popularity, and sometimes combined with racial motifs, are sexual themes, most of them using slang double entendres for genitalia and copulation in conjunction with humorous inscriptions of in-

vitation, challenge, and braggadocio. The manufacture of T-shirts at the game epitomizes the rapid popularization of new styles and the ready satisfaction of customer demand for them, central values in black Bermudian fashion culture.

Performative and provocative, the fashion show is closely observed by radio commentators, who mix accounts of the cricket game with animated descriptions of fashion plates. Indeed, one of the major reasons fans bring radios to the game is to hear these accounts of themselves and their fellow celebrants. Like liquor, fashion is a medium of exchange that integrates an aggregate audience into a cultural community. It is also, again like liquor, what Sapir (1934) termed a symbol of condensation: it exemplifies what it signifies, namely an ethos of affluence, hedonism, sophistication, and display. An observable result of this symbolism is that fashion evokes the black conversational mode known as "rapping," a lewd and lively exchange between men and women aimed both at entertainment and at the initiation or enhancement of sexual partnerships. Like Carnival, festival cricket has a rich lore as a period of license and sexual hyperactivity.

Other modes of performance compete with fashion for public attention. Steel, brass, and rock bands play on the sidelines, stimulating impromptu dancing. Also present are Gombey Dancers, masked mummers who render a Bermudian version of the John Canoe dance to the rhythm of drums, fifes, snares, and whistles. High on surrounding hillsides are groups of Rastafarians, who smoke ganja, translate the festival ambience into poetry, and orate philosophically about a black millenium. A profane version of that millenium is enacted on adjacent waterways, where "boojee" (black bourgeois) yachtsmen display their boats and hold swank deck parties.

The cricket match concludes at 6:30 p.m., but festivities continue well into the night. The clubhouse is jammed with revellers who fraternize with the cricketers, replay and comically argue every detail of the game, and get very drunk as the evening wears on. Other fans extend their merriment onto the field and may remain there all night. Several clubs run evening events ranging from dances and parties to outdoor concerts featuring black American and Caribbean performers.

A final ancillary activity warrants separate discussion for both ethnographic and analytic purposes. That activity is gambling, which takes place during the cricket game on the periphery of the field in a large tent known as the "stock market." As festival cricket amplifies a mode of behavior that is manifest in less spectacular ways on a day-to-day basis, stock market gambling caricatures a general style of acquisition premised on calculated opportunism (Manning 1973:87–114), as well as a particular fondness for gambling that has put soccer pool agencies and off-track betting parlors among Bermuda's lucrative businesses and has, within the club milieu, given rise to regular bingo nights, organized card games, raffles, lotteries, and so on. The significance of gambling here is twofold: first, it explicitly symbolizes a relationship between culture and money that is represented more implicitly in other phases and spheres of festival cricket; second, at a deeper level, it dramatizes the culture-money relationship in a manner that qualifies and questions the meaningful thrust of the total festival. Juxtaposed to its own context, gambling illustrates the tension that pervades black political life.

the stock market

Framed with wood or tubular steel and covered with canvas or sheet plastic, the stock market is a makeshift casino for a dice game known as "crown and anchor." Played on boards set atop wooden horses, the game involves betting on one or more of six choices: the four suits of cards, a red crown, or a black anchor. Three dice are rolled, their sides cor-

responding to the choices on the board. Winners are paid the amount of their bet times the number of dice on which it is shown, while losers have their money taken by the board. If a croupier rolls a crown and two spades, for example, he collects the money on the four losing choices, pays those who bet on the crown, and pays double those who bet on the spade.

Like cricket, crown and anchor is a game of British origin that has gained immense popularity in the Caribbean, particularly at festivals. I have personally watched it being played by Antiguans at Carnival and by Jamaican Maroons at the celebration of Captain Cudjoe's birthday in the remote moutain village of Accompong.³ In Bermuda the game is distinguished by the amount of money that is displayed and bet. Croupiers hold thousands of dollars in their hands, and players are likely to hold several hundred. The minimum bet is one dollar, but only novices and casual players, mostly women, bet that little. Regular players tend to bet between \$10 and \$50 each time, although much higher bets are common. Some boards place a ceiling of \$100 on bets, but the larger boards—i.e., those with bigger cash floats—generally have no ceiling. An informant lighted on the ostentatious display of cash as the chief difference between festival cricket and Christmas, the calendar's two major holidays. At Christmas, he observed, money is spent; at festival cricket, it is both spent and shown.

Crown and anchor is marked by a peculiar paradox. Although the odds marginally favor the board, regular players say that an effective strategy is to bet on choices that have not come up for two or three rolls of the dice and are therefore "due" simply by the laws of probability. A more defensive tactic, and one that is easily combined with the above, is simply to double bets on the same item until it eventually comes up and all losses, as well as the initial bet, are recouped. The only limitation is lack of ready cash, but this is minimized by the substantial sums that players carry and by the ready willingness of the boards to accept personal checks and even to loan money.

In practice, however, players tend to bet erratically and lose, often substantially. In the parlance of the stock market, they succumb to "greed" and "lose their heads" in a futile attempt to "break the board." What is potentially a game of strategy—the type associated with mastering the environment—is in effect a game of chance—the type associated with divining an uncontrollable environment (Roberts, Arth, and Bush 1959). The following example from my field notes is representative of a pattern evidenced by the stock market's "high rollers":

Placing \$10 and \$20 bets unsystemmatically, a man lost his own money—about \$60—as well as \$50 that he borrowed from the board. He then borrowed another \$50 and increased it to about \$85 by winning a few small bets. He next bet \$70 on the club, which came up on three dice to add \$210 to his money. But although he owed the board \$100, he kept playing rather than pay back the debt and quit with a net winning. Within a half hour he had lost all his money, as well as a third loan of \$50. As he left the board he quietly told the croupier: "I owe you \$150. I'll see you Monday morning."

The familiar experience of losing is offset by the claim that gambling money is expendable. As one man put it after losing \$100, "If I have money to spend, I spend it. If I lose it, I don't give a fuck. I'll go back to work next week and get some more."

Although the overwhelming majority of bettors are black, the running of boards—the profitable side of the stock market—has been dominated by the Portuguese. In the 1930s, Manuel de Souza (a pseudonym), the teenage son of an Azorean-born farm laborer, watched crown and anchor being played in the segregated white section of the racetrack. Surmising the game's appeal to blacks, he started going to festival cricket matches with a dice cup, a small table, and a tarpaulin that he stretched between some trees to make a crude tent. De Souza's winnings put him on the road to acquiring a modest complex of businesses: a fleet of taxi cabs, several small farms, and a restaurant. "You can say that I owe what I have to crown and anchor," he acknowledged. "It gave me my start in life."

As de Souza's business and gambling profits grew, he began running more boards in partnership with other Portuguese. In the 1960s he was challenged by the clubs, which successfully pressed the claim that the stock market should be under their control. De Souza countered with patronage, supporting club building projects and occasionally contributing a share of his winnings. In return he was given first option on buying the entire gambling concession, an arrangement that gave the clubs a substantial cash flow to stock their bars for festivals and that made de Souza something of a "czar" or, better perhaps, "godfather," of the stock market. With his partners he ran a half-dozen tables and reports that his share of their net profits averaged \$30,000 per season. He made a further profit by selling the remainder of the space in the stock market, chiefly to a growing group of Portuguese who had acquired gambling reputations in private house parties.

Although de Souza and other Portuguese board operators were generally astute enough to hire black assistants, black gamblers gradually pushed the clubs for a bigger stake in the stock market, and ultimately for control of it. Their efforts have been partially successful; for several years the concession of Cup Match and the Western County Games has been sold to a syndicate of black businessmen, while in the Eastern County series one club continues to favor de Souza and the others run the stock market themselves. The change has resulted in more blacks and fewer Portuguese, although the new concession holders sell choice space (near the outside and sheltered from the afternoon sun) to the remaining Portuguese, including de Souza, who are respected in gambling circles and known to attract heavy bettors.

Yet the racial change in the stock market is less radical than it may appear. Many of the black-run boards, and a clear majority of those which have no ceiling on bets, are backed financially by whites, including Portuguese, or by racially mixed investment syndicates. The backers provide the cash float—as much as \$15,000 at some boards—in return for a 40 to 60 percent share of the winnings. The parallel between the stock market and the wider economic system is frequently observed: blacks are in visible positions and appear to be making money, but whites are behind them and in control. Reflecting on the situation, one black gambler observed: "You know, come to think of it, I don't know a single black person in this country who has made money without having a white sponsor."

Another parallel between the stock market and the broader Bermudian situation is observed in connection with mid-1970s legislation requiring the host club to pay \$500 for a one-day gambling permit and preventing the boards from taking bets later than one hour after the scheduled end of the cricket game. The cost of the permit has been passed on to the concession holders and, in turn, to individual board operators, while the time regulation has stopped boards from staying open to increase winnings, recoup earlier losses, or simply capitalize on late betting action—a restriction that has hurt mainly the smaller, black-run boards, which are on the inside and therefore wait longer for bettors. For blacks, these new statutes typify a pattern of reaction against black economic gain. As one black board operator put it, "When the stock market was run by the Portuguese, it was wide open. As soon as we boys started to get a little piece of the action, Government stepped in. That's the general trend in Bermuda."

Whatever the economic position of blacks in the stock market, their cultural presence there is highly visible and clearly dominant over whites—another correspondence, of course, to the larger society. The Portuguese play quietly and dress plainly, almost dourly. Their boards are about six feet long and staffed by two, or at most three, croupiers. They keep a supply of cold beer but do not offer it until a player has begun betting. They rarely socialize with bettors or other operators, viewing the gambling relationship as an exclusively economic transaction. As de Souza explained, "People don't play at my board because they like me. They play because they want to break me." The Portuguese leave unob-

trusively after the game and abstain from the evening festivities. I once went looking for de Souza after an Eastern County Game and found him working soberly in his restaurant. He said that he cleared \$1,800 from his three tables—"a day's pay"—but volunteered that his lack of emotion made it impossible for most people to tell whether he had won or lost.

The image of black gamblers, by contrast, is an ideal type of the highly performative, black-oriented expressive style that Wilson (1973:227-228) terms "reputation—the ethos that pervades the entire festival. Croupiers dress and behave flamboyantly, standing on platforms to increase their visibility, spreading their bills like a fan, throwing their dice cups high in the air, handing out one dollar bills to passersby to engage them in the game, and barking stock invitations to bet: "Get some money for your honey.... Come in here on a bike, go home in a Rolls Royce.... Take your hands out of your pocket and put your money on the table.... Wall Street slumps, but this stock market pays double...." The black tables average eight to ten feet, with sets of betting squares on each end and often with added decorations such as the signs of the zodiac. At the larger tables there may be a staff of six, typically a "house man" who shakes the dice and holds the \$50 bills, two or three assistants who collect and pay the bets, and one or two others who serve as bartenders and greeters. Both liquor and beer are freely offered to onlookers as well as bettors, and when a person's drink is half empty it will be wantonly thrown on the ground and replaced with a fresh drink.

Black gamblers extend and exploit the festival's sexual license. At least two black operators have reportedly imported prostitutes, a commodity virtually absent from Bermuda, from the United States. The more common practice is to give gambling money to well-endowed women in return for their appearing at the board in plunging necklines, loosely crocheted blouses, diaphanous T-shirts, tight shorts, and similar fashions aimed at attracting—and distracting—male gamblers. As a sequel to this gimmick, a few black operators have begun hiring female croupiers and even forming gambling partnerships with women. Conversely, women have increasingly become regular and sometimes heavy bettors, a trend that is particularly noticeable in the western parishes where a good number of well-paid hotel positions are held by women. The effort to attract—and hold—women bettors enlivens the barking calls with colorful exchanges.

A middle-aged woman was about to bet on heart, but withdrew the money. The operator countered: "Don't blame me if three hearts come up, lady. 'Cause you and I—I've been looking at you for a long time—I figure our hearts could get together. We don't need no crown and anchor, honey. Our hearts could really do something."

A woman was betting, and winning, on the black choices (spades, clubs, the anchor), which are all on the bottom of the board. The operator tried to persuade her to diversify her betting: "You gotta go topside. No woman in the world is satisfied on the bottom side."

A woman in her early thirties had been breaking even on small bets and drinking heavily. Towards the end of the day she put a double entendre to the operator: "All I want is a piece of you." He took up the challenge and carried on a series of lewd but playful insults that drew raucous laughter from those at the table. But she got the last word: "Knobby, you wouldn't know what to do if you tripped and fell on top of me."

Black operators indicate that their gambling success depends on establishing their reputations within a broader context of public sociability. One prominent operator spends several hours per day outside the bar that he owns in partnership with another black and two whites, engaging passersby in brief conversation, waving at pedestrians on the other side of the street, and shouting at passing cars. This strategy, he explains, provides the exposure that is needed to attract people to his crown and anchor board (as well as to his bar and to a nightclub that he owns with his partners).

A modern Bermudian proverb is at this point appropriate: "Black is black and white is white, but money is green." Culturally different and socially divided, the races nonetheless

come together for a common goal: the acquisition of money. There is no better illustration of this proverb than stock market gambling, which magnifies the unique black cultural identity that is celebrated in festival cricket at the same time that it brings the races together in a staged encounter aimed at fast and easy wealth. That scenario is a dramatic rendition of what Bermudian politics, at bottom, is all about.

festival and politics

Racial inversion underlies the dramatic form of festival cricket. Blacks dress up in "whites" to play a white game that they have transformed into a celebration of black culture. Blacks take a white gambling game and make it the setting for a hyperbolic performance of their social personality. Whites enter a black milieu and baldly demonstrate their superordinate position. Such inversion exemplifies the carnivalesque, a genre in which the characteristic multiplexity of symbolic expression is extended by the tendency for symbols to be used playfully and for primarily aesthetic effect. This tendency creates what Babcock (1973) calls a "surplus of signifiers," a Rabelaisian profusion of images and condensed metaphors framed in a mode of liminality.

While the range of significance is vast, fragmented, and often highly individualized, the exegete can take clues from recurrent and centrally placed symbols. A major, meaningful thrust of festival cricket, manifest in the tradition and style of celebration, is the relation of a reflexive version of black identity to hedonism, high style, and money. Turner's (1964:29-31) contention, that dominant clusters of symbols interchange social and sensory-material themes, is appropriate. Like similar symbolic formulations in the club milieu, festival cricket contributes to the multifaceted process whereby black Bermudians are rejecting a stance of social inferiority in favor of a positive and assertive sense of self-awareness (Manning 1973:149-183).

There is also an antithetical thrust of meaning, reminding blacks of their economic subordination and dependency on whites. The reminder is implicit in the overall emphasis on fashion and indulgence, for Bermudian blacks are acutely aware, even in festival, that consumerism keeps them in clientage. In the stock market, however, the message is explicit: big money and effective power are still in white hands. Blacks can commemorate their traditions and exhibit their ethos, but they must also deal with whites, who have the odds—mathematical and psychological—in their favor. If festival cricket is viewed as a dramatic form, the black gamblers are both heroes and clowns. In the former role they glamorize a social vision of black culture, while in the latter they enact an economic relationship in which the vision is transparently irrelevant. Like the ludic inversion of racial categories, this sense of juxtaposition and self-parody is characteristic of the carnivalesque.

As a formative feature of the black Bermudian experience, the culture-economics interplay has a variety of demonstrable references. The most clear and currently paramount, however, is the system of party politics. An arena of intense interest and extraordinarily high participation, Bermudian politics bears both a striking conceptual similarity and an uncanny ethnographic correspondence to festival cricket. Let us briefly consider this double relationship.

Party politics came to Bermuda in 1963 with the formation of the Progressive Labour Party (PLP) by black groups who had previously been active in the successful universal suffrage movement.⁴ In the election of that year, the party contested 9 of 36 parliamentary seats, winning 6 of them and clearly demonstrating the practical benefits of party organization. The aristocracy responded to the challenge a year later by forming the United Bermuda Party (UBP), which was initially joined by 24 of the 30 independents in the House of

Assembly, all but 1 of them white. For the remainder of the decade the UBP sought to coopt the issues pressed by the PLP, espousing, at least nominally, constitutional reform and
the bread-and-butter issues of universal free education, health and welfare benefits, and
the Bermudianization of the labor force. The UBP's trump card, however, was the promise
of a thoroughgoing "partnership"—the term used in campaign slogans—between blacks
and whites in the running of Bermuda. The partnership was demonstrated politically by
strenuous efforts to recruit black candidates in the 1968 and subsequent elections, a
general tactic of putting blacks in highly visible positions in both the party organization
and the Cabinet; the naming of a black premier between 1971 and 1975; the appeasement
of a black-dominated parliamentary "reform" group which forced the resignation of that
premier's white successor in 1977; and, from the late 1970s onward, the gradual implementation of demands put forth by an internal black caucus seeking greater leverage in both
the party and the national economy.

Rhetorically, the UBP presents the partnership as a guarantee of security as well as an opportunity for gain. Only through the visible demonstration of racial integration, it is claimed, can Bermuda continue to attract tourists and international companies, the sources of prosperity. The UBP couples this appeal with an emphasis on its traditional role as manager of the economy. In the 1980 election campaign, for example, Premier David Gibbons, a white who also holds the finance portfolio and whose family controls Bermuda's largest conglomerate, told an audience:

This election is not about personalities. It is about the conditions of people's lives. Day in and day out. People's jobs, income, housing. And, above all, the strength and stability of our economy, upon which all else depends.

Look to the United Bermuda Party's management of our economy. At a time when so many nations in the West are struggling and losing ground, Bermuda maintains one of the highest rates of per capita income in the world.... Stability, security. These are facts. And they've come to pass because of experience and prudent, efficient management.

The UBP gave its economic theme a dimension of grave urgency in a full-page newspaper advertisement published on polling day:

Today is the day when you vote . . . either to maintain Bermuda's economic growth and your own financial security and stability or . . . take a chance on the PLP. Think carefully and vote UBP.

The UBP's accommodations to black interests and its emphasis on economic security have given it an unbroken winning record at the polls, albeit by successively reduced majorities. The PLP's reaction, moderated in tone as its political position has improved, has been to emphasize its "true" blackness and therefore its legitimate and logical claim to black voter support. For the first decade of its existence, the PLP projected a posture of militant racial chauvinism, articulated through American and Caribbean "Black Power" rhetoric. In the middle 1970s, the PLP embraced the idiom of revivalist religion, a move aimed at making inroads among black church groups and, more generally, at appealing to racial consciousness implicitly rather than explicitly by stirring the powerful and pregnant association between revivalism and black culture. In the 1980 campaign, the PLP balanced the emphasis on religion with a more secular appeal to racial identity. The campaign slogan was "Xpress yourself," a black Bermudian colloquialism borrowed jointly from American soul music and Jamaican reggae lyrics and combining an allusion to the marking of a ballot paper with a slang encouragement for self-assertion. One television commercial showed a group of blacks, dancing funky style, while a singer chanted "express yourself" and an announcer extolled the merits of the PLP.

Whatever their stated differences on issues—and these have converged considerably in recent years as both parties have sought a center ground—the essential partisan distinction is racial. Recent surveys indicate that whites vote almost unanimously for the UBP, and

that four-fifths of the black votes go to the PLP—a division that crosscuts and overrides class, age, sex, ideological disposition, and other pertinent social factors (Manning 1978a:199-209). The choice for blacks remains what it has always been: cultural attachment or economic security, loyalty and commitment to blacks, or strategic alignment with whites.

The distinction between the parties is manifest ethnographically in the festival setting. Hodgson (1967:311), a black Bermudian historian and PLP polemicist, describes Cup Match as "the one and only true symbol and celebration of the black man's emancipation." Her enthusiasm, however, is offset by a skepticism that blacks will forsake such symbols in order to participate in white festivities that have now dropped the color barrier. This concern, while lacking empirical foundation, has prompted PLP politicians to present a high profile at cricket festivals, making the general environment one in which PLP supporters are familiar and welcome and UBP supporters are somewhat isolated and uncomfortable. The festival's partisan association is extended by the PLP's considerable efforts to court the club constituency (Manning 1973:210–249), a tactic exemplified by party leader Lois Browne-Evans's speech at a club dinner in 1978.

Your long and illustrious history . . . needs to be told. Essays ought to be held for your children to write what they think Daddy's club is all about

Let not economic strangulation be the cause of your enslavement. For I am convinced that you have a part to play in the Bermuda of the future, just as your forbears played a vital role in the Bermuda of the past.

You must continue working until your country is free from paternalism and patronage, free from all the shackles that we know. Do not remove one form of chains for another. You must avoid the tendency to be dependent. . . .

The stock market, however, presents a striking contrast to the overall festival milieu. The black table operators, like their Portuguese counterparts and white backers, are primarily UBP supporters. The coterie is informally led by a black UBP member of the House of Assembly, who is also renowned, on a few occasions scandalously, for the organization of invitational crown and anchor parties in private homes. At least two prominent backers also hold UBP seats in Parliament, and it is widely known that several black board operators are being groomed as future UBP candidates. Talking to me on the street, one of the blacks who operates a table on which there is no betting limit explained his support for the UBP as follows: "There is not one black person in Bermuda with any money who is PLP. Not one. . . . If the [white] man looks after you, then you've got to protect him. . . ." When a PLP member within earshot began to challenge him, the gambler yelled: "Shut the fuck up. It's niggers like you that are holding back motherfuckers like me."

PLP activists, on the other hand, tend to eschew the stock market, or at most to congregate outside or walk through without betting. Observing the action at a crown and anchor board, one PLP politician told me with a wink: "I only watch the stock market. I never invest." This avoidance is encouraged by the PLP's oft-stated position that gambling is functionally supportive of the status quo and by its general desire to adhere, publicly at least, to the strong moral condemnation of gambling made by the black churches.

Festival cricket, then, is a metapolitical commentary. It is a carnivalesque rendition of the semantic context in which Bermudian politics is conceived, institutionalized, and transacted. Through celebration, black Bermudians dramatize—and, indeed, define and discover—a fundamental aspect of their social position and its relationship, conceptual and ethnographic, to their political options. (Logically, of course, the argument is reversible; politics could be construed as a concordance for festival cricket. From a Bermudian standpoint, however, it is politics, not festival, that requires comprehension, choice, and commitment. Festival is merely for enjoyment, and perhaps profit.)

It is here that the relationship of symbolic to social phenomena, of festival to politics, is

crucial, and that the convergent positions of Turner (1977), Gluckman and Gluckman (1977), and Geertz (1972), attributing creative autonomy to ludic symbolic forms, are useful. Although festival cricket evidences myriad correspondences to the political system, it is no more a mere reflection of politics than it is a functional appendage of it. The festival version of black culture is not the ideological and instrumental type of racial awareness propounded by the PLP, but a comical caricature of the black life-style and a joyous fantasy that links racial identity to the material wealth and glamor promised by a white-dominated, consumer-oriented economy. Likewise, the festival version of biracial partnership is not the liberal and pragmatic plea for partnership advanced by the UBP, but a naked dramatization of white control that lays bare both the crass acquisitiveness of blacks and their continuing subordination to whites, and that further plays on these meanings in a burlesque of the whole patronage system that transforms money from an object of need to one of show.

In Durkheimian terms—which are the ancestry of much symbolic theory—festival cricket is a "transfiguration" of Bermudian political society (cf. Nisbet 1965:74). The semantic essence of festival cricket is that it throws the realm of politics into relief by disassembling its parts and reordering them in patterns consistent with the aesthetics of celebration, fun, and performance. Festival cricket reveals politics in the way that only an extended metaphor can—by creatively connecting disparate realms of experience in a manner that highlights the definitive features (in this case, the interplay of cultural identity and economic interest) on which the connection is predicated. To borrow Bateson's (1972:177–193) classic model of cognition, festival cricket is a map for the territory of politics—not a literal, drawn-to-scale map that merely replicates its referent, but a metaphorical map, an interpretive guide, that figuratively situates its referent and conveys social knowledge about it. It is this knowledge that makes Bermudian politics a comprehensible phenomenon.

conclusion

Like any venture into the analysis of symbolic forms as texts, the interpretation offered here rests ultimately on the anthropologist, who "strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they [the texts] properly belong" (Geertz 1972:29). In part, the validity and value of such an interpretation depends on whether it can be generalized, as a theoretical construct and heuristic device, to other cultures. Limitations of space and scope make it impractical to address that consideration here, but a few condensed examples from the West Indies may suggest the basis of a comparative approach.

The major festival genre of the eastern Caribbean is Carnival, which evolved in Trinidad but has diffused throughout the Windward and Leeward islands with minor changes in format. Like Bermuda's Cup Match, the historical referent of Carnival, for blacks, is emancipation from slavery. The festival's major performative symbols—from the canboulay parade, ritualized stickfighting, and gang warfare in earlier times, to calypso and steel bands in recent generations—make it unequivocally black. Naipaul (1973:364), one of the Caribbean's leading literary figures, describes Carnival as "a version of the lunacy that kept the slave alive... the original dream of black power, style, and prettiness... a vision of the black millenium." Calypsonians put it more simply, toasting Carnival as the "Creole bacchanal."

But the blackness of the Carnival ethos is confronted by a strong nonblack influence in the festival's economic organization. East Indian, Chinese, and Lebanese bandleaders predominate, as do white and mulatto choreographers, and, of course, the governmentcontrolled Carnival Development Committee—all of these groups striving, rather successfully in recent years, to make the event an international tourist attraction. Celebrants are exposed to the poignant contrast between the revelry of "jump-up" on the streets and the ribaldry of the calpyso tent, on the one hand, and a variety of scenarios that demonstrate the racially based socioeconomic class system, on the other hand: the judges' stand, the paid grandstand, the commercial nightclub scene, the maze of bureaucratic rules imposed by organizers and censors, and the presence of local elites, and even metropolitan tourists, in the privileged sections of masquerade bands.

Jamaica lacks a Carnival tradition but has the entertainment idiom of reggae music, a symbol system replete with religious and political significance (Barrett 1977; de Albuquerque 1979). One of the best indigenous artistic commentaries on the reggae milieu is Perry Henzell's (1973) film *The Harder They Come*. Its protagonist is a country boy who comes to Kingston to learn the fast side of Jamaican life. The voyage of discovery is twofold. He becomes a reggae star and a "rudie" (rude boy), mastering expressive styles that are quintessentially black, often in a militant, even revolutionary sense. But he also learns that the music industry is controlled by Chinese, mulattoes, and other groups deemed white from the black cultural viewpoint, and that the authorities—police, government, and international economic interests—are geared to crushing the challenge that he represents. Ultimately, he is shot down by their guns.

Are such symbolic forms a metacommentary on West Indian politics? Correspondences are harder to draw than in the Bermudian case, partly because, in the Caribbean, race is a figurative more than a phenotypical category. Virtually all local political actors are generically black, and whiteness is associated less with a visible local elite than with the abstractions of foreign ownership and imperial influence. In short, a racial analysis is a more complex and problematic task in the West Indies than it is in Bermuda.

Still, it is notable that, ever since the "Black Power" wave of the early 1970s, the most dynamic and ideologically intense political conflict in most of the West Indies has come from the challenge made to established political parties by radical movements, most of them extraparliamentary. These radical movements revive indigenous linguistic terms (Morris 1973), stress cultural affinity and social solidarity with Africa, and associate themselves with Afro-Caribbean religions, notably Rastafarianism, which has spread from Jamaica throughout the Caribbean and has become a cultural rallying ground and pervasive symbol for revolutionary politics (de Albuquerque 1980). Contrastingly, established politicians are villified as "Afro-Saxons" (Lowenthal 1972:278), imitators of white values who court foreign investment, sell out to multinational corporations, embrace the image promoted by mass tourism, and compact unholy alliances with metropolitan countries.

A litany of citations from academic, popular, and polemical literature could be introduced here, most of them familiar (and indeed, redundant), to scholars of the Caribbean. For present purposes, however, it is better to make two broad and general assertions. First, economic interest and cultural identity are often perceived in the West Indies as conflicting concerns. Second, the conflict is focused in racial symbolism, dramatized in festivity and other artistic productions, and current to political discourse. If these assertions are granted, they suggest an agenda aimed at integrating symbolic and political analyses of Caribbean societies, and perhaps of other areas that have undergone comparable historical experiences. The discussion of Bermudian cricket festivals offered here shows one direction in which such an agenda can proceed.

notes

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¹ I know of no other written sources on West Indian festival cricket, but am informed by a Jamaican student that "bush cricket" in Jamaica has the same general characteristics as James's example from Trinidad.

² The Bermuda dollar is at parity with the U.S. dollar.

³ I am told by Jeanne Cannizzo (1979: personal communication) that a version of crown and anchor is played at festivals in Sierra Leone. I have also seen it played at a number of fairs and amusement exhibitions in Canada, usually in booths where a wheel is spun, rather than dice thrown, to determine winning bets.

⁴ For a fuller discussion of Bermuda's recent political history, see Hodgson (1967), Manning (1973, 1978a), and Ryan (1973).

⁵ The most accessible general overviews of the Trinidad Carnival are those of Hill (1972) and Pearse (1956). Literature on other Caribbean Carnivals includes Abrahams (1970) on Tobago, Abrahams and Bauman (1978) on St. Vincent, Crowley (1956) on St. Lucia, and Manning (1978b) on Antigua.

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