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BLURRED LINES

ABSTRACTS

“La carne repta entre Dajabón y Juana Méndez”: Manuel Rueda’s “Geography of Living Flesh” and the Borderland of Hispaniola – Maria Cristina Fumagalli

The Dominican Constitutional Court has recently authorised the government to review all birth registries from 1929 to identify people who had been (allegedly) wrongly registered as Dominican citizens. This attempt to denationalise Dominican citizens of Haitian descent is supported by anti-Haitian discourses which, in the Dominican Republic, have a long history. *Las Metamorfosis de Makandal* (1998) by the poet Manuel Rueda demonstrates the parallel but often disavowed existence of discourses which counter anti-Haitianism. Rueda’s focus is border relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and, in particular, the disruption of the borderland’s dynamic transnational way of life he experienced as a child. Triangulating the línea (the vertical interface between state sovereignties), the raya (the horizontal borderland which has traditionally kept Hispaniola’s internal circuits open) and the all-encompassing sea, Rueda reshapes official and unofficial memories whilst bringing to the fore occluded syncretic systems of belief such as Dominican Vodú. The rebel Makandal is the key figure in what Rueda has called “the heart-breaking epic of our border struggle”: his protean nature sustains the poet’s hope for better times whilst providing Rueda with the coordinates for a remapping of the island which celebrates and gains strength from across-the-border connections, mutual influences and shared empowering memories and experiences.

“Straighten up Yu Argument”: Language as Shibboleth of Jamaican Masculinity – Moji Anderson and Nadine McLean

This article explores the reaction of some young Jamaican men to transgressive masculinities. Through specific linguistic performances they have created a shibboleth of authentic Jamaican masculinity, demonstrating continuity with other Jamaican language use to articulate self and social commentary. The article reveals the function and context of this word play and combines various theoretical lenses – shibboleth; gender, sexuality and performativity; language as identity tool – to understand the phenomenon. It considers similar lexical expansion in the USA to suggest contributory factors to this use of language. Finally, the article considers the implications of this linguistic work for Jamaican masculinity(ies).

Gender and Trade Union Development in the Anglophone Caribbean – Lauren Marsh, Marva A. Phillips, and Judith Wedderburn

The study offers an exploratory analysis of trade union culture in the Caribbean region by examining the gender structure of 73 trade unions across 10 CARICOM states. In more developed democracies globally the literature illustrates a growth in female membership and an increase in their accession to leadership. In the Caribbean limited research has been done examining the progress of women in these organisations especially at leadership level. By

studying the gender structure of Caribbean trade unions we are able to understand their bargaining interest and identify the degree to which there is sensitivity to women's concerns. Interviews were conducted with prominent persons from trade union confederations, academia and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that work closely with trade unions within the Caribbean. Findings from the study indicate that women remain committed to trade union development across the Caribbean region. However the extent to which they are able to access positions of leadership is dependent on a combination of cultural, economic and political factors.

Mask-making and Creative Intelligence in Transcultural Education – Lowell Fiet

Through masks we give voice and presence to the shapes and processes of formation of rarely visible others that reside inside each of us. The arts of mask-making and mask-wearing foment questions of identities hidden or revealed, imagined or real, memories of dreams or projections of desires; questions that usually have multiple and complex as opposed to simple and obvious answers. Wearing a mask also means asking, what do I look like? A deer, an antelope, a bear, a raven, a wolf, a god, a hero, a spirit, a demon, an elephant, a monster, a wild woman, a foolish doctor, an arrogant politician, a maniacal street sweeper, a dragon? Or do I look like the imagination itself – forms, colours, features, perhaps mythical, but not necessarily a result of the imitation or literal representation of external perception?

The essay focuses on mask-making in education, where the carnival-like process of the workshop intends, first, to reinforce the need to transform the normative learning environment – its form, structure and perspective – to ensure that the classroom assumes a new identity and dimension as an open space of creative expression, even if only periodically and for brief periods. Second, the workshops urge teachers to take advantage of materials and resources that already form part of the students' everyday life and the immediate social conditions that surround them. Even at elementary and middle school levels, through research and fieldwork, students, teachers and key members of the community become living textbooks and actively participate in the writing or re-writing of curricula that evolve by integrating their personal and collective archives of images and experiences. The basic workshop materials are common corrugated cardboard, plastic gallon water jugs, newspapers, white glue, and acrylic paints, and the eco-friendly principle of re-use and recycling – including what remains unused – plays a significant role in the workshops. Examples come from workshops in Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Tobago, and Vieques and Culebra (Puerto Rico).

Theatre of the Rooted and Theatre of the Uprooted: Comparing Multiculturalism in African and Caribbean Theatre – Omotayo Olorunjoba-Oju

The parallel multicultural status of African and Caribbean theatres has long been established as an inevitable product of the regions' bound histories. However, theatre aesthetics in Africa and the Caribbean presents a paradox in which the two regions are united in history but are simultaneously separated in history and, within the context of this paper, in theatrical praxis. The established meaning of "multiculturalism" therefore undergoes a radical transformation when applied to theatre practice in the sister regions. Contending perspectives on multiculturalism, and identity, provide a plank for placing the theatres of the two regions on somewhat oppositional multicultural planes in this paper.

