

INSTITUTE OF CARIBBEAN STUDIES

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WORK OF THE INSTITUTE



The Institute of Caribbean Studies continues to grow as an important teaching and research centre of the University. In light of this growth, it was necessary to be strategic about the future of the Institute. The ICS was able to maintain the full time opening hours of the office previously instituted by appointing, on contract, a full-time Administrative Officer, Mr. Winston Campbell, who had been assisting in the Department for the past three years. He was ably supported through the employment of temporary student assistants and by persons on Departmental Awards. The ICS was able to offer three Departmental Awards, as opposed to the two granted in the previous academic year. Mr. Miguel Williams was assigned to the Reggae Studies Unit and Mrs. Yvonne Douglas and Mr. Horace Williams were assigned to the Institute to assist with the administrative duties of the office.

Board Meetings

In the first semester, the ICS Board discussed the progress and projection of the ICS. At these meetings the place of Caribbean Studies and Reggae Studies were highlighted as areas of critical importance to the strategic repositioning of the UWI Mona Campus and the Faculty of Humanities and Education in particular. Professor Cooper continued with responsibility for Reggae Studies. With regards to the development of a regional taught MA in Cultural Studies, Dr. Sonjah Stanley Niaah has been in dialogue with her counterparts at the other campuses.

Film Series

In February, the ICS commenced a six week long **Jamaican Film and Documentary Series**. The first showing featured two documentaries: *The Bob Marley Story* and *Reggaementary*. Other films screened were *The Fighting Maroons of Jamaica*, *The Harder They Come*, *Third World Cop*, *Shottas* and *Smile Orange*. The film series was a popular one which saw an increasing number of patrons which each passing week (approximately 100 persons were at the last viewing on March 24).

Public Lectures and Visits

Through the management of funds from the Rockefeller grant, the ICS was able to support the visit of renowned Caribbean writers Olive Senior and Nalo Hopkinson in February and March, 2005, respectively. The itinerary of these visits was managed by the Philip Sherlock Centre and Literatures in English respectively.

On April 29, 2005, the ICS hosted a conference in association with the South African High Commission. The full theme of the conference was “**Quo Vadis – Post SA – AU – Caribbean Diaspora Conference: Jamaica in Perspective**”. It was held at the Rex Nettleford Hall Multipurpose Room at the UWI Campus. It was attended by dignitaries and noted ICS Fellow and Rastafari elder, Ras Mortimo Planno.

Beginners Amharic

This introductory outreach course on the Ethiopian language continues to be encouraged. The course is now linked to the forthcoming Minor in Rastafari Studies and may have a place in the future of the Institute. Greater effort, however, is needed with regards to the marketing and promotion of the course so as to make the move a viable and sustainable one.

New ICS Post

The ICS has been able to secure transfer of a vacant post from the Department of Modern Languages and this has been converted to a full-time lectureship in Cultural Studies. Our first PhD in the discipline, Dr. Sonjah Stanley-Niaah was selected to fill the post. She will continue to guide the graduate programme in Cultural Studies while coordinating the development of the undergraduate programme as well. She will also have responsibility for teaching some of the courses now being offered at the undergraduate level.

Dr. Niaah has also been selected to be the first Rhodes Trust Rex Nettleford Fellow in Cultural Studies, which would see her conducting comparative research on South African Kwaito and Dancehall of Jamaica. She was selected from a shortlist of five Caribbean nationals. Thus far interviews with Kwaito stars, practitioners, and producers have been conducted and these are being incorporated into a manuscript for publication in 2006. Dr. Niaah has published on Jamaican popular culture, particularly, Dancehall, in journals such as *Space and Culture*, *Discourses in Dance*, *African Identities* and *Proud flesh*, and has presented papers at several international conferences in the Caribbean, Asia, USA, UK, Europe, and Africa. She is working on two edited collections on Jamaican culture – a reader on Dancehall culture (with Bibi Bakare Yusuf, forthcoming 2006, UNISA Press), and the other on the production of celebrity. Dr. Niaah is an Associate Editor of *Wadabagei: A Journal of the Caribbean and its Diasporas*.

New Director

The ICS is to have a new Director for the 2005/06 academic year as the current Director will demit office with effect from the end of the 2004/05 academic year.

ICS Work Plan

Apart from some of the projects and initiatives previously highlighted, the ICS has drafted an **ICS Work-Plan** that will guide the work of the Institute for the next few years (until 2009).

An initiative of the work plan is the development of an **ICS Executive**. This would consist of the Director of the ICS (as Chair), the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education or a nominee, and 3 additional members selected from the Board, including at least one ICS staff member. It would help develop and guide the execution of policies and activities for the Institute.

The ICS is to continue in its attempt at outreach through the offering of non-credit courses, public lectures, conferences and publications production and archive development for public access. The plan also seeks to encourage further attempts to attract persons on Research Fellowships through the Campus Research Fellowship programme, as well as attempt to attract the funds or support necessary to acquire a larger space within which the Institute's activities can be executed.

Other areas of the work-plan include the development of the Rastafari Studies programme, the on-line delivery of the FD11A Course, the development of the regional MA in Cultural Studies and an Undergraduate Major in Cultural Studies.

ICS part-time staff and graduate students continue to play a critical role in promoting the UWI as an institution where enlightening and applicable research is being done through their continued participation in Conferences all over the world. Throughout the academic year, papers were presented in the UK, Africa and North America as well as throughout the Caribbean region.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Sonjah Stanley Niaah

- “Ritual and Community in Dancehall Performance”, 5th Leisure Studies Association Conference – ‘Festivals and Events: Beyond Economic Impacts’ – Napier University, Edinburgh, July 6-8, 2005
- “Dis Slackness Ting’: A Review of Dichotomizing Narratives in Jamaican Dancehall Culture”, Caribbean Studies Association Conference, Santo Domingo, May 30 – June 4, 2005
- ‘Mapping Kingston’s Dancehall Spaces: Toward a Performance Geography of the Kingston Metropolitan Area’, Brown Bag Seminar, Department of Geography, UWI, Mona, February 10, 2005

Jalani Niaah

- “The Canonization of Bob Marley”, 11th meeting of the International Society for African Philosophy and Studies, Bigard Seminary, Enugu, Nigeria, March 2005.
- “Death to Oppressors White and Black: A Festival of Word-Sound-Power”, 5th Leisure Studies Association conference, Festivals and Events: Beyond Economic Impact, Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 2005.

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

Dr. Sonjah Stanley Niaah

- .* “Making Space: Dancehall Performance and its Philosophy of Boundarylessness”, *African Identities*, 2:2, 2004, pp. 117-132.
- .* “A Common Genealogy: Dancehall, Limbo and the Sacred Performance Space”, *Discourses in Dance*, 2: 2, 2004, pp.9-26.
- .* “Kingston’s Dancehall: A Story of Space and Celebration”, *Space and Culture*, Vol. 7: 1, 2004, pp. 102-118.

Book chapter:

Jalani Niaah

- * “Absent Father(s) Garvey’s Children and the Back to Africa Movement”, in Negotiating Modernity, _____ Zed Publications, _____ 2005.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

CHASE Projects

The ICS has been able to secure funding for two archival projects that are currently underway. One is the **Archiving Rastafari Icons Project** and the other is the **Jamaican Music Video Archive Project**. Together both are valued at almost three million dollars and are critical to the further work of the ICS as a research-based institute. Currently, the Archiving Rastafari Icons project is being managed by Mr. Jalani Niaah and he is assisted by research assistants. Central to the project is the attempt to properly gather, document and store the work of the ICS’s Honorary Fellow, Ras Mortimo Planno. The Jamaican Music Video Archive project is being co-ordinated by the ICS

administrator, Mr. Winston Campbell and Ms. Kyisha Patterson-Campbell, a student in the Cultural Studies MPhil programme. It will seek to avail students (at the undergraduate and postgraduate level) with material to aid in the research of Jamaican music and dance(hall) culture.

INCOME GENERATION

An Evening of Black Magic

A major event for the year came in February, 2005. The ICS, in an attempt to generate much needed funds to assist the almost fifty postgraduate students in the Department with research grants, organized a major concert on the UWI Campus. The ICS was able to plan a series of events with Dr. the Hon. James Chambers, more popularly known as **Jimmy Cliff**. The ICS hosted the album launch of Cliff's latest album, "Black Magic", on January 18, 2005. The album launch was used to inform the media of the upcoming Jimmy Cliff show which was appropriately entitled "**An Evening of Black Magic**".

The Evening of Black Magic was held on February 4, 2005 and the surplus generated was \$468,989, which will be invested to assist the Cultural Studies postgraduates. The show also featured new talent such as Ghandi, C-Sharp, Steppa among others. The hosts for the night were Ibo Cooper and Mutabaruka. The series of events that led up to show and the show itself were drafted and executed by the students of the Cultural Studies Cooperative, with the Director as the executive producer. The students of the programme also played critical roles in the execution of the logistical arrangements.

Caribbean Studies Project

The ICS has embarked on a Caribbean Studies Project which is to be coordinated by Mr. Cecil Gutzmore. This project is a potential income earner. The plan is to "offer programmes in Caribbean Studies primarily to clients overseas, especially in the African & Caribbean Diasporas".

PUBLIC SERVICE

Sonjah Stanley Niaah

- Participant, Consultation on the strategy for developing a Jamaican Music Industry, Ministry of Education and Culture, Culture Division, October 2004

CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS

Undergraduate

While the ICS has grown over recent years to offer several courses at the Undergraduate level, what is offered to date is a Minor in Cultural Studies. The projection is to develop a Major by the start of the 2006/07 academic year.

The Minor in Cultural Studies continues to grow in popularity, even though it was advertised for only the second academic year running. We had our first student to graduate with a Minor in the discipline in November, 2004. Approval was granted for the addition of two new undergraduate courses in Cultural Studies in 2005/06. These are: Discourses in Cultural Studies (AR35A) and Deconstructing the Culture of Sport (AR25S).

The Institute is also to introduce three new courses which form part of the new **Rastafari Studies Minor**. These courses are:

- Introduction to Caribbean Folk Philosophy [AR20R],

- Rastafari in the Global Context [AR35R],
- Reggae Aesthetics and the Dialogue of African Diasporan Resistance [AR333] – it is proposed that this course would be a substitute /option for the current Caribbean Studies research paper.

All five new courses are to be on offer in the 2005/06 academic year.

Plans are afoot to present the Foundation Course, Caribbean Civilization (FD11A) on-line, which will provide greater flexibility in delivering the course at several locations to nearly two thousand students each year.

Course Registration

ICS Course registration numbers continue to be high. 2004/05 registrations were:

- Introduction to Caribbean Cultural Theory (AR25A) – 44 students,
- The Culture of Rastafari (AR25R) – 49 students,
- Caribbean Films and their Fictions (AR25F) – 37 students,
- African Religious Retentions in the Caribbean (AR25X) – 57 students,
- Caribbean Civilization (FD11A) – 1,821 students.

During Summer, 2005, the ICS offered:

- Caribbean Civilisation (FD11A) – 134 students,
- The Culture of Rastafari (AR25R) – 9 students.

Postgraduate

Cultural Studies Programme

In November, 2004 the ICS had its first PhD graduate from the Cultural Studies programme, Sonjah Stanley Niaah. Her thesis was “*Kingston's Dancehall: A Story of Space and Celebration*”. Other candidates have either submitted their thesis or are on the threshold of doing so.

The ICS had eight new students register for the MPhil/PhD programme during the past academic year. Some others either transferred out of the programme or sought to defer until the 2005/06 academic year. For the upcoming academic year, the ICS received twenty-four applications for entry and accepted seventeen.

Currently, there are forty-three students enrolled in the postgraduate programme. There are twenty-nine students pursuing MPhil degrees and fourteen in the PhD programme. A comprehensive graduate student’s database has been created, which will enable the Director to track the progress of the students enlisted in the programme.