

**Printing the West Indies: Literary magazines and the
Anglophone Caribbean 1920s-1950s**

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Abstract

This thesis uncovers a body of literary magazines previously seen as peripheral to Caribbean literature. Drawing on extensive archival research, it argues for the need to open up the critical consensus around a small selection of magazines (*Trinidad*, *The Beacon*, *Bim* and *Kyk-over-al*), to consider a much broader and more varied landscape of periodicals. Covering twenty-eight magazines, the thesis is the first sustained account of a periodical culture published between the 1920s and 1950s. The project identifies a broad-based movement towards magazines by West Indians, informed and shaped by a shared aspiration for a West Indian literary tradition. It identifies the magazines as a key forum through which the West Indian middle classes contributed to and negotiated the process of cultural decolonisation which paralleled the political movement to independence in the 1960s.

Chapter One explores the broad ways in which the magazines envisioned a West Indian literary tradition, before focusing on the tensions between the oral folk tradition and emerging print culture. Chapter Two moves to a closer focus on the middle-class West Indians publishing the magazines and the Literary and Debating Society movement. It argues that through their magazines these clubs sought to intervene in the public sphere. Chapter Three considers the marginalised publications of three key women editors, Esther Chapman, Una Marson and Aimee Webster and identifies how the magazine form enabled these editors to pursue wider political agendas linked to their cultural aims. Chapter Four returns to a broader focus on the magazines' paratextual elements including advertisements and commercial competitions, to explore the business of magazine publication and the ways in which this shaped their contents and compilation. Overall, the cultural and material history of the magazines mapped by this thesis sheds new light on what remains an under-explored but critical period of Caribbean literary history, on the cusp of cultural decolonisation and formal independence.

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Chapter One - General Introduction

What you have for me today? Magazine? Everybody in Trinidad bringing out magazine these days.¹

So says Basdeo the printer to Ganesh his customer in V.S. Naipaul's satirical novel *The Mystic Masseur* (1957). Many real life printers across the British West Indies could have uttered just such a sentiment in the early to mid-twentieth century. Magazines produced by individuals or groups, financed by advertisements from West Indian businesses and compiled and produced at local printers such as Basdeo's, were widespread across the islands and territories of the British West Indies between the 1920s and 1950s. This thesis is in many ways a response to the questions which Naipaul's fictional exchange raises for contemporary critics: who is the 'everybody' bringing out these magazines, and why? What type of magazines are they creating and for what purpose? How does the magazine form shape its content? What does 'bringing out' a magazine in these decades entail? And finally, the questions which were the impetus for this particular project; if 'everybody [is] bringing out' magazines, such publications must be numerous: how many are there, where might we find them, and why have they been neglected within Caribbean literary studies? This thesis, the result of substantial archival research, seeks to answer these questions.

The thesis uncovers a significant body of magazines which have previously been seen as peripheral to the canon of Caribbean literature, or not seen at all. This corpus consists of some publications which have been lost in the decades since their publication and others which have been critically marginalised, and this project brings these into consideration with the handful of titles more widely acknowledged in critical accounts of Caribbean literature at the beginning of the twentieth century including *Trinidad* (1929-1930), *The Beacon* (1931-1933), *Bim* (1942-1996) and *Kyk-over-al* (1945-1961).² Within the group of twenty-eight magazines covered by this project there is a great deal of variety; it includes magazines which published a couple of issues as well as those which were published regularly over four decades.

¹ V. S. Naipaul, *The Mystic Masseur* (London: Heinemann, 1978), p. 90.

² See for instance: Norval Edwards, 'The Foundational Generation: From *The Beacon* to *Savacu*', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 111-123.

Some are small and cheaply reproduced, the personal ventures of particular editors; others are substantial, glossy publications produced by a committee of editors and supported extensively by local businesses. They cover a whole gamut of political perspectives, from supporting colonial rule, to socially progressive and anticolonial magazines. Some are purely literary, publishing short stories and poems with the occasional article. Many more are lifestyle or leisure titles, publishing literary work alongside articles and features such as society pages, discussions of business, homemaking, local news and competitions. What they all share, to a greater or lesser extent, is an engagement with literature and an aim to encourage and facilitate the development of a West Indian literary tradition through their pages. This thesis is the first sustained account of a key periodical culture that was at the heart of West Indian literature in the 1920s-1950s, a literary culture which formed the roots of Caribbean literature on an international stage.

This project focuses on the islands and territories of the British West Indies between 1920 and 1959, the decades leading up to political independence and the end of direct British rule in the region.³ These decades were a time of key social and political changes, and also crucially a period of important cultural developments. The 1950s saw the emergence of the first wave of West Indian novelists on the international stage, a pivotal moment for Caribbean literary studies as it crystallised into a distinct field.⁴ The publication of these novels, primarily in London, was a watershed moment, but as critics such as Alison Donnell (2006), Leah Rosenberg (2007) and Evelyn O’Callaghan (2003) have demonstrated, there is a longer history

³ My focus is specifically on the Anglophone Caribbean, and my use of the terms “West Indies” and “West Indian” throughout this thesis are a reflection of the status of the islands and territories as British colonies during the period in consideration. This is terminology that was widely used in the magazines themselves, often alongside and interchangeably with other national signifiers such as Trinidadian and Bajan. My use of this terminology to refer to the region, people and the literary tradition is deliberate and designed to mirror this historical usage. When discussing the region in contemporary terms, or the field of critical literary studies I use the term “Caribbean”. For a history of the uses and shifting meanings of the term ‘West Indian’ see Catherine Hall, ‘What is a West Indian’, in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 31-50.

⁴ Kenneth Ramchand, in his foundational study *The West Indian Novel and its Background* notes that 97 novels were published by West Indians between 1950 and 1964, 85 of which were first published in London (Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), p. 63). This explosion of writers onto the international literary scene included many who had been active in the early magazines including Roger Mais, Samuel Selvon, George Lamming and Ralph de Boissière.

of writing from the Caribbean stretching further back into nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵ Through its focus on the decades leading up to the moment in the mid twentieth century in which this first wave of novels were published, this thesis shows that such works emerged from an existing local literary scene. Many of the central concerns of this later period were already in circulation in the preceding decades. In this study I am interested in the period in which West Indian literature, the production and consumption of literary texts *by* and *for* West Indians, was bound up in the specificities of a local print culture. This thesis moves beyond the metropolitan novel which Kenneth Ramchand, for example, focused on when tracing the rise of Caribbean literature, shifting critical attention to the late colonial period and highlighting the significance of the local and regional literary magazines.⁶ The first publishing house in the West Indies was the Pioneer Press, established in Jamaica in 1949. Prior to this there were three options open to West Indian writers who sought to publish and have their work read locally: newspapers, magazines and self-published collections. The print space of the newspaper or magazine encouraged shorter literary works, poetry or short stories; as such both these modes of writing and the print spaces of the newspaper and magazine dominated the literary culture of the period. Literary pages carrying short fiction were included in West Indian newspapers, and of particular interest in this study, a plethora of locally produced magazines appeared on bookstands. Whilst there were foreign paperbacks and magazines sold on the islands during these years, the West Indian magazines were the key vehicle through which writing by and for West Indians circulated and consequently these periodicals became central to the cultural life of the region.⁷

⁵ Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London: Routledge, 2006); Evelyn O'Callaghan, *Women Writing the West Indies, 1804-1939: A Hot Place, Belonging to Us* (London: Routledge, 2003); Leah Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). The University of the West Indies Press has republished four early Trinidadian novels through its Caribbean heritage imprint: Stephen N. Cobham *Rupert Gray* (1907); E.L. Joseph Warner, *Arundell: The Adventures of a Creole* (1838); Mrs Wilkins, *The Slave Son* (1834); and the anonymously penned *Adolphus, A Tale* (1853).

⁶ Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

⁷ Advertisements from the period list numerous foreign magazines and books for sale including genre fiction such as adventure stories by H. Rider Haggard and Emma Orczy, westerns by George Owen Baxter and B. M. Bower, romantic fiction by Concordia Merrel and Charles Garvice, thrillers by Edward Phillips Oppenheim and American pulp magazines ('Novels! Novels!', *The Gleaner*, 7 July 1928, p. 2.; 'Your Favourite Papers', *The Gleaner*, 17 April 1929, p. 4.). In contrast to these works by

The decades on which this thesis focuses saw significant demographic shifts in West Indian society. These social changes, in particular the growth of the middle classes, are an important context for my analysis of the literary magazines. Leah Rosenberg has noted that ‘in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the region’s social structure and its social groups were in key ways more diverse and fluid’ than before, as population increase, coupled with a growth in education, economic advancement and migration changed the make-up of the region.⁸ In particular, the size and racial diversity of the middle classes increased over these decades. The growth in the number of primary school educated West Indians in turn led to greater numbers continuing into further education. Sought-after secondary school scholarships ‘enabled the poor to attend [secondary school] and gain the preparation that moved a small but steady stream of the lower classes into the middle classes’.⁹ For black and coloured West Indians in particular secondary schooling opened up opportunities for white-collar jobs as teachers, clerks, minor civil servants, printers and journalists.¹⁰ A much smaller proportion of the middle classes secured tertiary education, through highly competitive higher education scholarships for universities in Britain or North America, and returned to the islands

predominantly British and American writers the magazines were one of the few places in which work by West Indians were published. A few writers self-published their work locally, including Edgar Mittelholzer (*Creole Chips*, 1937) and Seepersad Naipaul (*Gurudeva and other Indian Tales*, 1943). These self-published works were costly for the writer to produce, and consequently these were limited runs. There were some works by West Indians published abroad, such as C.L.R. James’ *Minty Alley* (1936) and Alfred Mendes’ *Pitch Lake* (1934) and *Black Fauns* (1935), which circulated in the region, but these were not as accessibly priced or numerous as the literary magazines which carried short fiction and poetry. The prevalence of these magazines, and the relationship of many of them to the wider cultural scene through the literary and debating societies (see Chapter Three), made the publications a central part of the islands’ cultural life.

⁸ Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, p. 7. For instance between 1861 and 1921 in Jamaica the census shows the population doubled. Between these dates the percentages of black and coloured Jamaicans remained largely consistent, with a halving of the proportional percentage of whites, with new immigrants (mainly from India) accounting for 3% of the population by 1921 (Brian Moore and Michele Johnson, *Neither Led Nor Driven: Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica, 1865-1920* (Kingston: UWI Press, 2004), p. 7).

⁹ Franklin W Knight, ‘Race, Ethnicity and Class in Caribbean History’, in *General History of the Caribbean: Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, 6 vols (London: UNESCO, 1999), VI, pp. 200-232 (p. 220). The competition for these scholarship was fierce and the preparation for these was often, Franklin Knight notes, more than an individual’s effort becoming a family or even whole village affair.

¹⁰ Some magazines contemporary to the ones in this study, such as *The Teacher’s Journal* in Trinidad, sought to represent and articulate the aims of these groups through their professional roles. My interest lies in the broader publications for which literature was key, so I am not considering these professional magazines, although there will have been a crossover in readership and a similar pattern of publication.

to pursue careers as doctors, barristers and solicitors. These middle-class occupations were open to a broader range of West Indians than in previous generations, and this in turn led to a growing group of West Indians aspiring to middle-class status, seeking out opportunities for social and career advancement. The middle classes were a heterogeneous group that were differentiated internally, as Moore and Johnson note, on the basis of 'wealth, education, occupation and culture'.¹¹ Small business owners and store clerks, for example, were both part of the middle classes but within this had differing levels of social status.¹² Race also played a significant role; black middle-class West Indians, for instance, were 'not quite accorded the same degree of respect as whites with equivalent qualifications'.¹³ The complexities of social status were further overlaid, in countries such as Trinidad, which had a significant proportion of East Indians, with ethnic, religious and cultural factors.¹⁴ The small but significant number of other immigrants, such as Chinese and Syrian traders, also added to the mixed group who made up the West Indian middle classes.

Though a varied group, in these decades across the West Indies a distinctive middle class grew and began to impact on wider society. Anne Spry Rush suggests that by the early 1960s 'anywhere from five to twenty-five percent of British West Indians [...] considered themselves and were considered by others to be middle class or aspirants to that status'.¹⁵ Though still a small part of West Indian society, Spry Rush argues that as a group and 'by virtue of their leadership roles in society' as teachers, preachers and government employees, the middle classes played a disproportionately significant cultural role over the decades leading to decolonisation.¹⁶ It is this cultural role which is key to this thesis and its focus on the literary magazines. As Bridget Brereton has argued:

[The middle classes] attached so much importance to culture because they had no other valuable and valued possession to hold on to [...] They had no vote, no voice in government,

¹¹ Moore and Johnson, pp. 8-9.

¹² Moore and Johnson, pp. 8-9.

¹³ Moore and Johnson, p. 9.

¹⁴ Knight, 'Race, Ethnicity and Class in Caribbean History', p. 222.

¹⁵ Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 11.

¹⁶ Spry Rush, p. 11.

no political influence. They were not for the most part, employers of labour. They did not control the economy. But they had one attribute which the mass of the population did not have, and which the society as a whole, valued: that was cultural and intellectual skills.¹⁷

In these decades the middle classes did not hold positions of power within the colonial regime. The suffrage qualifications were determined on the basis of an individual's wealth and required the ownership of substantial property which meant few West Indians had the vote and fewer still were eligible to stand for election to the legislative councils.¹⁸ Therefore they sought to influence society through other routes, including professional bodies, by forming literary and debating societies and, of key importance for this thesis, by contributing to and publishing magazines. These publications provided the middle classes with a voice in the public sphere, through which they could engage with, reflect and shape the emergent regional and national discourses and assert their place in wider society. Specifically this thesis is focused on magazines which saw the project of building up a West Indian literary tradition, part of a broader movement of cultural nationalism, as theirs to further. Leah Rosenberg has argued for a broader understanding of West Indian nationalism than the model of revolutionary anti-colonial nationalism seen in the strikes and protests of the 1930s.¹⁹ She argues that these moments of political agitation should

¹⁷ Brereton, p. 94.

¹⁸ The 1922 Wood Commission Report recommended the introduction of an elected element within the Legislative Councils of the British West Indies, which led to some, albeit very limited, political reform. This was not, however, a fully elected body and the franchise was exceptionally narrow due to the income and property qualifications. By the late 1930s only 5% of the population of Jamaica could vote, this was slightly higher in Trinidad where 6.5% of the population could vote, and significantly lower elsewhere: St Lucia 2.2%, British Guiana 2.9%, and Barbados 3.4% (Derek O'Brien, *The Constitutional Systems of the Commonwealth Caribbean* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2014), p. 68). Qualifications were even stricter for candidates standing for election. In Trinidad, for instance, although both men (over 21) and women (over 30) could vote, only men who could read and write English could stand. They were also required to reside in their constituency for a year and own land and property valued at \$24 000 or more and have an annual income of \$19 000 or above. Furthermore, seats on the legislative council were unpaid positions, ensuring only those of independent means could stand for election (Scott B. MacDonald, *Trinidad and Tobago: Democracy and Development in the Caribbean* (New York: Praeger, 1986), p. 53). Middle-class West Indians were in effect disenfranchised until the introduction of universal adult suffrage in 1944 in Jamaica, which gradually spread across the region.

¹⁹ Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, p. 5. As Rosenberg notes in reference to Jamaican nationalism, it 'has traditionally been defined as the anti-colonial nationalism or the mid-twentieth century, which is often seen as the culmination of a teleological series of slave, peasant and worker rebellions' (Leah Rosenberg, 'The New Woman and "The Dusky Strand": The Place of Feminism and Women's Literature in Early Jamaican Nationalism', *Feminist Review*, 95 (2010), pp. 45-63 (p. 49)).

be seen as the 'products of a nineteenth century tradition of cultural nationalism' which laid the ideological roots of the later political actions; this longer movement saw the development of a national arts as necessary for providing 'evidence of the people's cultural legitimacy and political competence'.²⁰ This thesis productively extends Rosenberg's broader view of nationalism with a detailed consideration of the literary magazines published between the 1920s and 1950s, a twentieth-century articulation of this movement. Through a focus on a specific section of society this research uncovers a broad-based cultural nationalism, to which middle-class West Indians across racial and political divides sought to contribute through the literary magazines.

This thesis argues that the burgeoning literary magazine culture was intimately linked to the growth of the middle classes in this period; it was this section of West Indian society that produced and bought these periodicals. By creating, editing, contributing to and reading literary magazines such as these, West Indians sought to both acquire and display cultural capital and to actively cultivate a local West Indian literature. This thesis argues that this expansion of magazine culture, and the parallel literary and debating society movement, were the result of what I term a 'do-it-yourself' imperative among middle-class West Indians. In the absence of a professional and commercial publishing infrastructure, West Indians took it upon themselves to create a space which could host and encourage the literary tradition they hoped to see emerging from the region. This do-it-yourself ethos, I suggest, was bound up with values of agency, autonomy and cultural independence that in some ways are mirrored in the emergent political nationalism of the region. Often amateur rather than professional projects, most of the individuals who founded or ran the magazines had no previous experience of undertaking such work and did so alongside their full-time jobs as, for example, teachers, businessmen, hoteliers or journalists. The magazines were not large-scale publications emerging from established publishing houses but small, predominantly local, publications which grew to be collectively, and in some cases individually, significant. The 'do-it-yourself' nature of this magazine culture meant the editors and publications needed to be enterprising, as can be seen in the turn to advertising to provide revenue

²⁰ Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, p. 3.

explored in Chapter Five. As individuals or groups they drew upon the resources available to them, such as the colonial education they had received and the privileged place of culture within society. Through their magazines West Indians sought to gain cultural autonomy for themselves and the wider region. The literary magazines were both a site for class construction and a reflection of middle-class West Indians' aims and ambitions into wider public discourse. The West Indian literature, which was encouraged and facilitated by these magazines, reflects its specific genesis among these middle class West Indians. In producing the magazines middle class West Indians were both printing *in* the West Indies, and producing *their* West Indies in print form.

This thesis maps a cultural and material history of the magazines and the editors and contributors who produced these texts, and in doing so opens up our understanding of the literary culture of the region in the early twentieth century. Through a focus on the magazine as a form, it explores the ways in which middle-class West Indians contributed to and negotiated the process of cultural decolonisation which paralleled the political movement to independence for the former British colonies in the 1960s. In doing so it challenges the existing singular characterisations of literary writing in these decades and sheds light on an underexplored literary and print culture.

1.1 Parameters and Methodological Approaches

This project focuses on magazines published between the 1920s and 1950s, the decades in which there was a particularly rich nexus of literary magazines.²¹ However, they were part of a longer West Indian tradition of print culture. Magazines such as *Plummer's Magazine: A Jamaica Literary Magazine* (1913) were published before this corpus of magazines, an earlier articulation of the literary and debating society movement occurred in the nineteenth century, and literary magazines also continued to be published into the 1960s and 1970s. Both *Bim* and

²¹ All of the magazines in this study began and most also ceased publishing in these years. A small number continued into the 1960s; *Pepperpot* was published until 1969 and *Kyk-over-al's* last issue was in 1961 though it was subsequently revived in 1984 by A. J. Seymour and Ian McDonald, with McDonald continuing to publish the magazine infrequently until 1998.

The West Indian Review, magazines I focus on in this thesis, continued to be published throughout and beyond the 1960s.²² The 1960s saw a new generation of magazines emerging which responded to the social, cultural and political context following the end of British colonial rule. The political movement to independence led to a shift from a regional to a national identity, which was paralleled in the cultural sphere and brought with it a consolidation of the emergent literary culture. This is reflected in the institutional settings out of which a number of the second generation of magazines emerged; *Kaie* (1965-68) was the official organ of the Guyanese National History and Arts Council and the Institute of Jamaica published the *Jamaica Journal* (1961-ongoing). Smaller magazines also emerged in these years such as *Voices* (1964-68) edited by Clifford Sealy and *Opus: A Review* (1960) edited by John Wickham.

This second generation of magazines emerged from a different cultural context and although there are points of continuity between these generations, an exploration of the longer magazine culture of the West Indies falls beyond the remit of this thesis. The scope of this project is designed to distinguish the first generation of magazines published in the decades prior to West Indian independence. By focusing on publications published between 1920 and 1959 this thesis draws critical attention to the print spaces in which the emergent literary tradition was formed, contested and celebrated, prior to the later acts of consolidation. By doing so it uncovers the central role the West Indian middle classes played in initiating and shaping this literary culture. These decades saw a wide range of magazines which varied in their politics, types of contents and size of readership, yet had in common a collective cultural aim. By focusing on this first generation of magazines this thesis challenges the partial narratives of cultural development which privileged the small number of magazines, such as *The Beacon*, *Bim* and *Kyk-over-al*, which most clearly

²² Both magazines had a long history of publication. *Bim* was published consistently between 1942 and 1973 under Frank Collymore's editorship. After this John Wickham published the magazine with less regularity until 1992. In 2009 a new magazine following in its footsteps was launched, *Bim Magazine: Arts for the 21st Century*. *The West Indian Review* was published between 1934 and 1974, largely regularly, though its format changed a number of times, at points being a weekly and a quarterly publication, though for most of its life it was a monthly magazine.

aligned with nationalist politics.²³ Looking beyond this nationalist framework highlights the breadth of publications which contributed to the cultural decolonisation of the West Indies. The 1920s-1950s were a significant period for Caribbean political history as the anti-colonial movement built momentum and West Indians sought to gain political control. The decades of this project encompass the widespread labour unrest across the region of the 1930s, the establishment of political parties and introduction of the West Indian Federation of 1958, stopping short of its dissolution in 1962 and the granting of independence for many of the colonies in the West Indies. By focusing on the literary magazines produced between the 1920s and 1950s this thesis traces a key part of the cultural movement which anticipated, paralleled and contributed to these political changes. The attention to these decades in this thesis foregrounds an alternative narrative of West Indian nationalism, one which focuses on the active role of the middle classes and the importance of the cultural and literary spheres.

This project has been informed by available criticism on modernist magazines which have become an important feature of twentieth century literary studies, particularly in the British and American contexts. This magazine movement slightly predated and paralleled that of the West Indian magazines, and although I do not draw parallels directly in this project, my methodology draws on the critical work undertaken in relation to these magazines.²⁴ I have found the approach advocated

²³ For examples of this critical privileging see: Reinhard Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties', in *West Indian Literature*, ed. by Bruce King (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 38-50; Helen Tiffin, 'The Institution of Literature', in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: English- and Dutch-speaking regions*, ed. by A. James Arnold, 3 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001), I, pp. 41-68; Laurence A. Breiner, *An Introduction to West Indian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*.

²⁴ It has not been within the scope of this project to explore connections between these magazines and those published in America or Britain, nor to explore other comparisons between the Anglophone Caribbean magazines and Francophone, Hispanic and Lusophone Caribbean periodical cultures. These may provide fertile avenues for further research. Some of this work has been undertaken: Emilio Rodriguez gives an overview of magazines from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s, including key magazines from the Anglophone Caribbean alongside magazines from Puerto Rico, Martinique, Haiti, Cuba, Suriname, Aruba, the Dominican Republic and magazines published in Paris, most notably *L'Étudiant Noir* (1934-1935) founded by Aimé Césaire (Emilio Rodriguez, 'An Overview of the Caribbean Literary Magazines: Their Liberating Function', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 31.1 (March 1985), 83-92). For more specific studies of magazines from the region see: Wim Rutgers, 'Literary Magazines and Poetry in the Netherlands Antilles', in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: English- and Dutch-speaking regions*, ed. by A. James Arnold, 3 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001), I, pp. 563-568. Eric Bulson is currently undertaking some interesting work drawing links between little magazines across the world, specifically exploring the links between modernist

by critics such as Scholes and Wulfman (2010), Bornstein (2001) and Beetham (1989), of considering the magazine as a text in its entirety, analysing the paratextual elements (covers, advertisements, format and layout for instance) as signifiers of meaning, an illuminating one.²⁵ In his discussion of magazine publishing George Bornstein delineates a series of codes which are incorporated in a text or object. These material elements, which Bornstein calls the 'bibliographic code' include the semantic features of its material instantiations including: cover design, page layout, spacing, prefaces, notes, dedications and the other work in the periodical which affects the reception and interpretation of the work.²⁶ Bornstein advocates considering these elements of the text alongside other facets such as the contextual code (the sequencing of material in an issue), as a framework for critically approaching periodicals in their original form. These parts of the magazines, which are focused on most directly in Chapter Five, provide a wealth of information about how the periodicals were constructed, read and circulated, and this informed my decision to undertake, wherever possible, first-hand research to consult original issues of the magazines.²⁷

Whilst critics such as Peter Kalliney have become increasingly alert to the crossovers between canonical modernism and late colonial literature this thesis avoids

and postcolonial magazines, and there is the potential for an expansion of the substantial *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines* edited by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, which currently has three volumes covering Britain and Ireland, North America and Europe, to include little magazines across the globe (Eric Bulson, 'Little Magazine: World Form', *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. by Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 267-287).

²⁵ Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Margaret Beetham, 'Open and Closed: The Periodical as a Published Genre', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22.3 (1989), 96-100.

²⁶ Bornstein, p. 6.

²⁷ These paratextual elements, both those that are part of the original publication and those that sit alongside them, can provide information. For instance loosely enclosed in a copy of *The Trinidadian* held in the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) collection at Cambridge University, I found a card providing the editor's contact details, and noting that the issue is sent with the editor's compliments. This card is suggestive of the process through which this publication became preserved; sent to the society at the editor's behest it was incorporated into their library which has since been archived and as such these original copies have survived over 60 years. The contemporaneous Trinidadian magazine, *The Beacon*, does not appear in the RCS collection in its original form suggesting *The Trinidadian* has a particular affinity with the Society; a point which reflects and reinforces the publication's positioning as sympathetic to colonial rule.

applying the undifferentiated terms of the former to the latter.²⁸ With regard to terminology I have not adopted the term “little magazines” though this is used by other Caribbean literary critics.²⁹ Although I began this project with that term in mind, as I undertook the archival research I found it to be a restrictive, rather than an enabling lens for the West Indian context. This is in part because of the contested nature of the term; even within Modernist studies there is no single agreed definition of a “little magazine”, with physical size, circulation, longevity, content, attitudes to mass culture and commercialism, and political radicalism all factors in critics’ inclusion or exclusion of publications from their defined corpus.³⁰ More specifically, the term fails to capture the range of magazines in this study which vary greatly. Implicit in the modernist use of this term is a distinction between highbrow literary publications and the mass magazines, which is unhelpful to reproduce in the West Indian context. For instance, the correspondence of *The Beacon’s* editor Albert Gomes shows he was in communication with, and actively pursuing links with club magazines and more general lifestyle titles in Barbados. Within the specific historical context of the West Indies in these years, creating a distinction between the “little magazines” and these other publications would be an artificial one, just as designating these all as “little magazines” would be misleading. Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, key modernist magazine critics, have argued that the term has been pervasive as the ‘*lit* in *little* suggests literariness in the context of the magazines’.³¹ I believe it is this, rather than specific modernist connotations, that critics are responding to when defining this group of West Indian publications as “little magazines”. Rather than retrospectively applying a critical terminology developed in a different context, which has specific and contested connotations, throughout this thesis I use the term “literary magazine” instead. This

²⁸ Peter Kalliney, *Commonwealth of Letters: British Literary Culture and the Emergence of Postcolonial Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²⁹ The use of “little magazines” in reference to the West Indian publications is commonplace, for instance it can be found in the work of Eric Bulson, in his article ‘Little Magazines, Word Form’ as well as by Raphael Dalleo (‘The Idea of the Literary in the Little Magazines of the 1940s’, in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 609-615).

³⁰ For a detailed discussion of the shifts in use of the term ‘little magazines’, the ways in which this has shaped the corpus attended to by librarians and researchers, and the problems this poses for the field, see the chapter ‘Rethinking Modernist Magazines: From Genres to Database’ in Scholes and Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines*, pp. 44-72.

³¹ Scholes and Wulfman, *Modernism in the Magazines*, p. 56. Emphasis in original.

term reflects and brings to the fore the common cultural component which links the magazines in this study.

Although the project is broad in its characterisation of the types of magazines to be included, the only criteria being an engagement with literature, my approach is not all-encompassing. Take for instance *Public Opinion*, which due to the changes in its format I consider only in its opening years. *Public Opinion* began in February 1937 as a weekly magazine, initially the product of a group of individuals; upon the formation of the People's National Party by this group in August 1938, it became the party's magazine. It reduced significantly in size during 1942, before growing in 1943, and in April 1944 *Public Opinion* became a daily newspaper, at which stage its literary content had ceased.³² *Public Opinion* is included in this study, but my discussion of it is largely confined to the first seven years of its publication, when it was a magazine rather than a newspaper.

Unlike many of the other critics who have written on or documented these magazines, I also exclude the Jamaican publication *Focus* from my study.³³ *Focus* at first glance shares many similarities with the magazines; the same size as a number of them and printed with a soft cover by the City Printer in Kingston, it has a similar aesthetic. Furthermore, the four issues of *Focus* (1943, 1948, 1956 and 1960) published work by many of the same writers. However, it is an anthology not a magazine, a distinction that is significant. Supported by the coterie around Norman and Edna Manley and subsequently the University of the West Indies, *Focus* did not face the same financial constraints of the magazines; it is not littered with the characteristic advertisements that mark the support of local businesses. Intended to be an annual publication, within the four years of issues that did appear, *Focus* sought to collate and define the year in question. The act of anthologising is a

³² There is some confusion about *Public Opinion's* format, Raphael Dalleo, frequently refers to it as a newspaper throughout its life and as a journal (Raphael Dalleo, 'The Public Sphere and Jamaican Anticolonial Politics: *Public Opinion*, *Focus* and the Place of the Literary', *Small Axe*, 32 (July 2010), 56-82). For the purposes of this study, I consider *Public Opinion* as a magazine in its first seven years of production, and its inclusion in this study reflects its focus on literature in these opening years.

³³ See for instance: Reinhard Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties', pp. 38-50; Hyacinth M. Simpson, 'Patterns and Periods: Oral Aesthetics and a Century of Jamaican Short Story Writing', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12.1 (2004), 1-30; Louis James, *Caribbean Literature in English* (London: Longman, 1999).

retrospective one, responding to new writing that has emerged, and in doing so elevating the work between its covers as representative of the literary culture in that moment. This act of anthologising differs from that of the magazines; whilst one has implications of stasis (*the work of 1943, the most important pieces of the year collected together*), magazines were engaged in an ongoing process, contesting and shaping the literary culture through their pages and encouraging this new writing. Manley herself took offence to *Focus* being characterised as a magazine, writing in a letter to Henry Swanzy at the BBC to whom she had sent a copy, 'It is not a periodical & we would be unhappy for it to be regarded as such'.³⁴ Manley's concerns reflect the transience of magazine publications; printed frequently, magazines invite consumption but not necessarily retention, their price and presentation mean they do not have the permanence of books. For *Focus* permanence was key. It referred to itself as a book and in its first issue set out its intention to mirror on paper the 'great and irrevocable changes' which had swept Jamaica in the preceding years, both for posterity and as a foundation for future cultural change.³⁵ Previous critical accounts have, by placing *Focus* within or alongside a list of magazines, elided these differences, and by design or default suggested that it was the same type of publication.³⁶ Manley was not alone in turning to an anthology to further bolster the emergent literary culture; Gomes followed a similar path in compiling an anthology *From Trinidad* (1937), which drew on his links with a number of magazines, but was published as a separate publication.³⁷ These publications from Manley and Gomes circulated in parallel to the literary culture which this thesis maps.

³⁴ University of Birmingham Special Collections, Henry Swanzy papers, MS 42/1/5/17.

'Correspondence between Edna Manley and Henry Swanzy, February 2th 1949'. Emphasis in original.

³⁵ Edna Manley, 'Foreword', *Focus* (1943), 2.

³⁶Erika Waters, for instance directly links the two forms in her account of Caribbean literary anthologies, where she also terms *Focus* a magazine: 'Little or literary magazines, which may be viewed as a type of anthology' (Erika J. Waters, 'Anthologising the Caribbean', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 575-584).

³⁷ *From Trinidad: A selection from the fiction and verse of the island of Trinidad* ed. by Albert Gomes (Port of Spain: Frasers Printery, 1937). These forms are not completely separate, as within the magazines there were specific issues or sections designed to showcase particular work. *Kyk-over-al* has a number of special issues which are positioned as anthologies, using the print space of the magazine to enact a similar aim. This is done, however as part of, rather than distinct from, the broader magazine.

1.2 Accessing the Archive

In the course of this research I have undertaken a number of UK research trips: to Oxford University, Cambridge University, the British Library and British Library newspaper archive, Leeds University, the National Library of Scotland, Birmingham University, Warwick University and the National Archives. I also undertook a month-long research trip to the Caribbean in January 2013. In Jamaica I worked primarily in the National Library and in the Mona campus library of the University of the West Indies (UWI). In Trinidad I undertook research at the St Augustine campus library of UWI, the National Archives and the public library in addition contacting a relative of a key editor in Port of Spain to consult a currently unarchived body of magazines. Visiting libraries and repositories in person and consulting this material first-hand was important for understanding how these texts were constructed and operated, as well as gauging their material properties. This first-hand research has been supported by an extensive email correspondence with a number of librarians and archivists in the UK, Trinidad and Jamaica, as well as in the wider Caribbean including Barbados, St Lucia, Guyana and Grenada, and by employing the skills of a research assistant to access material in Barbados' National Archives and the UWI Cave Hill campus library. Online repositories such as the Digital Library of the Caribbean (DLoC) and a website, www.newspaperarchive.com, which has digital records of Jamaican newspapers, have also been key sources. The DLoC cooperative project, administered by Florida International University, and with partners across the Caribbean and North America, is a hugely rich repository; the digitalisation of *Kyk-over-al* has been of particular use for this study, and there are plans for the future inclusion of other titles, including *The Cosmopolitan*.³⁸ In addition to these online sources I have made extensive use of the collections in the New York Public Library through their interlibrary loan systems and exchanged emails with a number of other American archives and libraries, filling in gaps in my material or seeking specific information about publication runs and dates.

³⁸ The Digital Library of the Caribbean can be accessed at www.dloc.com.

Through these visits to and interactions with a wide range of repositories, I have been able to build up a picture of the magazines that were circulating in the period, their format, contents and concerns. The substantial connections between these magazines became clear as I worked; this research highlighted links between editors, shared advertisements, reprinted material and writers who were associated with a range of magazines. This archival work has been cumulative; initially drawing on the lists of magazines produced by librarians and critics, and moving on to following up leads within the publications themselves and drawing on archivists' knowledge of their collections to identify previously critically unknown titles, along with a dose of researcher's luck.

Within this body of magazines there are a number which have the same title, and the titles of several more parallel each other. The confluence of similar titles highlight the common cultural roles that the magazines sought to have. There is, for instance, a Barbadian magazine, *The Outlook* (1931-2) and also a Jamaican magazine *The Outlook* (1933). This title is suggestive of both the act of looking which is also seen in the title of *The Observer* (1941-1948), and specifically of looking forward, a sentiment paralleled in the titles of *The Cosmopolitan* (1928-1931) and *The Beacon* (1931-1939), with the latter evoking a light to navigate into a currently unilluminated future. The image of the pepperpot was also used by a number of publications. *Pepperpot: A Magazine depicting mainly the personal and lighter side of Jamaica life* edited by C.T. Stewart and R. M. Murray was published in 1915, and only one issue remains in libraries worldwide. It appears from advertisements in *The Gleaner*, however, that this title was still being produced in 1922 although I have not been able to find surviving copies of these later issues.³⁹ Elsie Benjamin Barsoe also utilised the title for her Jamaican annual, *Pepperpot: Annual Jamaican Potpourri*, published between 1951 and 1969. These are unlikely to be the only instances of publications which drew on the image of the Jamaican stew in their title. According to Karina Williamson, Roger Mais, a prolific contributor to a significant proportion of the magazines in this study, produced a publication by this name with an Irishman in the 1920s. Copies of Mais' *Pepperpot* seem to have

³⁹ See: 'Pepperpot', *The Gleaner*, 4 March 1922, p. 4.

not survived the intervening years.⁴⁰ A number of other publications, however, similarly foreground their West Indian nature through recourse to culinary images such as the pepperpot stew, for instance *Pimento* (1927), Jean de Boissière's *Callaloo* (1941-1949) and Herbert de Lisser's *Planter's Punch* (1920-1944). These images of food and drink nod towards an alternative type of consumption, whilst grounding the publications in the West Indies. The image of both the punch and stew evoke a sense of a mixing of elements, which echo the magazine's multiplicity of voices, and are suggestive more broadly of an inclusionary, rather than exclusionary outlook.

The sense of a geographical specificity is achieved more directly by a large group of the magazines' titles, which reference the island or region: *The Jamaica Forum* (1934-1935), *The Jamaica Review* (1925-1927), *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928), *Bim* (1942-1996), *Trinidad* (1928-1929), *The Trinidadian* (1932-1935), *The West Indian Review* (1934-1975), *The West Indian Enterprise* (1931-1937), *The Caribbee* (1932-1938), *Caribia* (1945-1949) and *The Caribbean Post* (1946-1950). In particular, the titles referencing the West Indies or Caribbean highlight their interest in bringing the wider region together culturally, enacting through their titles the regional aim of their contents. Lily Lockhart, the editor of the *West Indian Enterprise*, plays with the multiple meanings of its title; it referred to itself as a regional enterprise and profiled other "West Indian Enterprises", cross-island business ventures.⁴¹ Furthermore, implicit in the *West Indian Enterprise's* discussions about the region and calls for a collective literary tradition, is the notion of another larger enterprise, that of the West Indies itself. These magazines both reflected and contributed to the forging of links between the British colonies, which would find expression in the West Indian Federation in 1958. A number of the magazines such as the Bajan publication, *The Forum Quarterly* (1931-1945), position themselves as forums, spaces for the discussion of ideas, and the numerous

⁴⁰ Karina Williamson's research and conversations with Roger Mais' friends and family brought to her attention the monthly magazine Mais produced in 1925 with 'a plausible Irishman called Pat', which contained news reports, articles, stories and poems, and ran to several issues despite being a two-man effort. According to her findings this enterprise collapsed when Pat absconded with the takings. Both Williamson and I have been unable to find any extant copies of this magazine (Personal email correspondence with Karina Williamson, 20.5.2013).

⁴¹ 'A Few Introductions To Other West Indian Enterprises', *The West Indian Enterprise* (November 1935), 4-5.

instances of the term 'review', including *The Minerva Review* (1941-1944), echoes their function as evaluators of quality.⁴²

These similarities in the magazines' titles illuminate the roles that the publications envisioned for themselves, highlighting the cultural function they played. For the researcher, however, working from scant records or passing references within other magazines to find these publications, these likenesses add to the difficulties of archival research. The catalogue entries which I have consulted through the course of this research, from a wide range of libraries and archives across the world, vary a great deal in the amount of detail that they provide; information about the editors, place of publication, and dates and issue numbers which are necessary to untangle these similarities and distinguish one title from another, are not always recorded.⁴³ When it has been possible to contact librarians to try to find out this information, on occasion the archival practices of the library, such as binding issues together or removing cover pages, have caused further impediments to acquiring these details.

This process of archival research has identified a loose group of twenty-eight publications which this project considers collectively, with a particular focus on sixteen of these magazines in the chapters which follow. Beyond this group there are a number of other magazines which I have consulted and excluded from this study due to their lack of literary content or period of publication, and a further group which I am aware of from references within the other magazines but have

⁴² *The Forum Quarterly* had a few small changes in its title over the years of publication. It began life as *The Forum Quarterly* changing to, *The Forum: A Quarterly Review*, after the first few issues. There was a break in publication between 1934 and 1943, after which it reappeared under the shorter title *The Forum* until the final issue in 1945. For convenience and clarity I refer to this publications as *The Forum Quarterly* throughout this thesis.

⁴³ The manner in which the twenty-nine magazines in this study organised their issues varied, with some changing approach within their run of publication. Some were organised into volumes, with a regular number of issues making up each volume, and a new volume starting annually. For others the number of issues held within each volume was not consistent. Some provided a volume number, but did not number individual issues, whilst others provided only a date of publication. This date might only specify the year, or provide both a month and on a few occasions, a day of publication. Others divided the year by seasons, for instance *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* used descriptors such as 'Spring Quarter 1935'. *The Caribbean Post* gave each issue a theme, such as the 'Industrial Issue' or the 'Emancipation Issue', but did not consistently provide a volume or issue number to accompany these. In addition some of the magazines that I consulted had errors or inconsistencies in their numbering or dating. Therefore, in the footnotes and bibliography I provide as much detail in the references as possible including, where given, issue numbers or other identifying subtitles, to clearly identify the issue of the magazine from which the quotation is drawn.

been unable to trace or consult. This latter group point to one of the key issues for a project such as this: whilst I have endeavoured to be thorough in the research undertaken, this thesis can only provide a partial picture of the print culture of the time. The archival holdings of these magazines represent only a part of the magazines in circulation during the period in question, both due to incomplete runs of the publications which are archived, and in particular the absence of some publications from archives entirely.⁴⁴ Furthermore, it is not possible to accurately gauge what proportion of the whole this body of publications I have accessed. In particular many of the small, local, and cheaply-produced publications may not have survived; a number of the publications I consulted were fragmenting and crumbling, and their bindings were no longer holding the pages together. Contemporary publications may have been produced in similar conditions and with the same low quality paper, but have not received the attention of librarians and archivists in a timely manner and have simply disintegrated. Others may never have been collated and archived; although national and university libraries now actively collect and preserve this material, this was not always the case.

Magazines as a print form sit somewhere between the disposability of newspapers and the permanence of books; as they are periodicals, with a new issue coming the next week, month, or quarter, readers may not have retained the previous issue. The collection of magazines I have managed to consult is in part thanks to readers choosing to resist this potential disposability. A number of the magazines that have found their way into archives bear traces of the routes that they took, which in turn give a sense of the haphazard and contingent nature of this process. *The West Indian Enterprise* for instance was sent directly to the Royal Empire Society by its editor, who solicited a subscription for their library through a handwritten note on the first issue; when the society dissolved in 1992 Cambridge University bought

⁴⁴ An example here can perhaps best illuminate this issue of incomplete publications runs, and the difficulty of ascertaining whether a run is complete. *The West Indian Enterprise*, published by Lily Lockhart in Castries, St Lucia appeared in November 1931. It describes itself as a monthly publication and the latest issue I have been able to trace was published in May 1937 (issue number 67). Of these 67, presuming that the numbering was consistent, I have only been able to trace fourteen issues scattered between Cambridge and Port of Spain. Furthermore, the absence of issues after May 1937 does not necessarily mean this is the last issue; without an announcement of cessation, such as in the August 1927 issue of *Pimento*, it is impossible to know if any further issues of *The West Indian Enterprise* were published.

their material and it became part of their Rare Books collection.⁴⁵ Port of Spain's public library received a donated copy of the second issue of *Trinidad* which includes a stamp which notes that this came from Colonel Dow in May 1966; the issue has been bound and preserved, but is not catalogued and the significance of the donation is now unknown.⁴⁶ The National Library of Jamaica's collections include magazines personally donated by Frank Cundall which bear his name written neatly at the top of the front cover.⁴⁷ These examples highlight the key role that individuals have, perhaps unknowingly, had in preserving the only remaining issues of magazines from these decades. The only full runs of *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Society* and of *The Quarterly Magazine* are in the possession of a relative of Austin Nolte, its editor. While I was able to make contact to consult these, without the family donating these to a library or archive it is likely that these magazines, which printed some of C.L.R. James' first works, will not become accessible to researchers. It is possible that other individuals or family members across the region or beyond may currently be in possession of further magazines, or additional issues of magazines already archived, which may in time find their way into library collections, enabling the scope of this research to be widened further. Within the limitations on this project, however, I have sought to undertake research with as broad a reach as possible, to gather together many relevant magazines produced in the period.

1.3 An Underexplored Print Culture

This brief account of the process through which the research was undertaken, and the issues with the archival holdings of these magazines, illuminates some of the reasons why this thesis is the first sustained account of West Indian periodical

⁴⁵ By 1922 when this material was purchased the Society was known as the Royal Commonwealth Society. The collection at Cambridge is extensive, consisting of 300,000 printed items, around 700 archival collections and over 100,000 photographs relating to the British Empire and Commonwealth.

⁴⁶ The library was unable to provide details about Colonel Dow, this bequest, or other material which may have been gifted at the same time. This copy, which I inadvertently stumbled across whilst requesting other titles at the library, does not appear to be catalogued nor was the significance of this magazine known to the staff. To the best of my knowledge this is the only copy of *Trinidad* in a library or archive, whilst others may exist in personal collections, this is currently the only copy I could trace worldwide.

⁴⁷ Frank Cundall was the librarian at the Institute of Jamaica, however, these magazines appear to have been gifted in a personal capacity.

culture. Archival work requires a period of dedicated time to complete, such that doctoral study provides, and the resources to be able to visit numerous repositories. There are also broader reasons for the absence of many of these magazines' inclusion in existing histories of Caribbean literature, which become clear when considering the current partial field of criticism surrounding these publications. The literary magazines are often referred to in historical accounts of Caribbean literature such as Louis James' *Caribbean Literature in English* and Kenneth Ramchand's *The West Indian Novel and its Background*.⁴⁸ Within the critical texts a consensus of sorts emerges around the magazines most regularly referred to: *The Beacon*, *Bim*, and *Kyk-over-al* and the anthology *Focus*.⁴⁹ These magazines are generally mentioned alongside each other, and the narrative told is a chronological one, with *Trinidad* (1929-1930) noted though not often discussed in detail as a forerunner to *The Beacon*, and the later magazines linked to *The Beacon* but compared more directly to each other.⁵⁰ Hyacinth Simpson, in an article challenging the critical dominance of these titles, uses the term the 'big four' to refer to *The Beacon*, *Bim*, *Kyk-over-al* and *Focus*; whilst I disagree with the privileging of these magazines (and the mis-reading of the anthology *Focus* as a magazine), this term does give a sense of the ways in which these publications are often positioned as having central significance even when a more expansive list of magazines is given.⁵¹

This partial narrative elides the wider periodical culture. Some critical accounts list magazines beyond this dominant group; for instance Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh draw links between the central five publications and later publications including *Kaie* (1965), Clifford Sealy's *Voices* (1964-1966), *Caribbean Quarterly* (1949-ongoing) and *Jamaica Journal* (1961-). Helen Tiffin lists both the

⁴⁸ Louis James, *Caribbean Literature in English* (London: Longman, 1999); Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

⁴⁹ See for instance Norval Edwards, 'The Foundational Generation'.

⁵⁰ See for example: Reinhard Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties'.

⁵¹ Hyacinth M. Simpson, 'Patterns and Periods: Oral Aesthetics and a Century of Jamaican Short Story Writing', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12.1 (2004), 1-30 (p. 12). For instance Reinhard Sander, contributing to a chronological survey *West Indian Literature*, lists fifteen magazines but closes with the statement: 'The most significant of these magazines were *The Beacon*, *Bim*, *Kyk-over-al* and *Focus*'. This is reinforced by the subsequent critical analysis which focuses solely on these magazines and a handful of contemporaneous novels (Reinhard Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties', p. 41).

later titles and earlier ones including *The West Indian Review* (1934-1974).⁵² Gail Low also expands further including less well known or discussed magazines such as Jean de Boissiere's *Picong* (c.1940) and *Callaloo* (1941-1939) and *The Quarterly Magazine* (1927-1935).⁵³ More expansive lists also emerge from bibliographical works such as Alvona Alleyne's overview, which includes lesser known titles including *Plummer's Magazine: A Jamaican Literary Magazine* (1912), *The West Indian Review* (1934-1974), *Pepperpot* (1912) and *Pimento with a dram of common sense* (1927).⁵⁴ These bibliographies offer a longer list of works, though they are not necessarily complete. No single critical account has drawn together as large a number or the specific group of magazines which are considered here.

These overviews primarily provide bibliographic details, rather than detailed considerations of the magazines, though they and wider critical accounts do position the magazines as the key forum for the publication and development of literature in these decades. The magazines are positioned as central for leading to the prominence of the short story form within the wider literary tradition.⁵⁵ Lucy Evans, for example, notes that the literary magazines 'performed a foundational role in forging connections between island cultures, generating a readership which extended across the archipelago, as well as building up a tradition of short story

⁵² Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, '1950-65', in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 206-221; Helen Tiffin, 'The Institution of Literature', in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: English- and Dutch-speaking regions*, ed. by A. James Arnold, 3 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001), I, pp. 41-68.

⁵³ Gail Low, 'Local and Metropolitan Publishing', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 616-525 (p. 619-20).

⁵⁴ Alvona Alleyne, 'Literary Publishing in the English-Speaking Caribbean', in *Twenty Years of Latin American Librarianship: Final Report and working papers of the twenty-first Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library*, ed. by Louella Weatherbee (Austin: SALALM Secretariat, 1978), pp. 222-48. See also: S.B. Bandara 'Caribbean Short Fiction: A Bibliography', *World Literature Written in English*, 18.1 (1979) 181-234. This is another extensive bibliography of magazines, anthologies and collections of short fiction from the region, however, it does not include either *Public Opinion* or *The Cosmopolitan*.

⁵⁵ Poetry was central to a small number of the magazines, such as *Kyk-over-al*. More generally across the magazines short stories outnumber the poetry, though all published both forms. Some critical accounts focus on the role of the magazines in publishing West Indian poetry, such as Laurence A. Breiner, who discusses the role of *Bim*, *The Beacon* and *Kyk-over-al* played in developing a poetic tradition (Laurence A. Breiner, *An Introduction to West Indian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)).

writing within the Anglophone Caribbean region'.⁵⁶ This foregrounding of the short story in accounts of the magazines is matched in some broader accounts of Caribbean literature; Kenneth Ramchand for example, posits the short story tradition as *the* primary literary tradition of the region.⁵⁷ Elsewhere the short story form, and with it the magazines that published these works, are seen as significant for having provided an apprenticeship of sorts; positioning the short fiction and magazines as the place where West Indian writers cut their teeth, before progressing to the longer novel form and sites of metropolitan publication.⁵⁸ Such narratives both limit critical understandings of the different function and role of short fiction, and can indirectly suggest that the local literary culture of the magazines was only of significance for having provided a pool of material and scope for writers to develop prior to reaching metropolitan literary audiences.⁵⁹ In its specific focus on the West Indies this thesis pursues a different path, purposely keeping its focus on the local nature of the magazines' literary culture and the ways in which these publications and the literary work they published circulated within, rather than beyond, the West Indies.

Critics have also noted the broader cultural and political significance of the magazines. Helen Tiffin, for example, notes that these West Indian literary magazines were:

crucial to the establishment of Caribbean literary traditions by encouraging local writing both through publication and reviews and by

⁵⁶ Lucy Evans, 'Introduction' in *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives* ed. by Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt and Emma Smith (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2011), pp. 11-25 (p. 14).

⁵⁷ Kenneth Ramchand, 'The West Indian Short Story', *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, 1.1 (1997), 21-33 (p. 21). Emphasis added.

⁵⁸ See for instance Louis James, 'Writing the Ballad: The Short Fiction of Samuel Selvon and Earl Lovelace' in *Telling Stories: Postcolonial Short Fiction in English*, ed. by Jacqueline Bardolph (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 103-108 (p. 103). This narrative of writers beginning with the short story and moving on to novels is based on the example of numerous Caribbean writers best known as novelists, whose first works were shorter fiction including V. S. Naipaul, Roger Mais and Samuel Selvon. However, this does not necessarily imply a hierarchical relationship between the two forms or that a writer has "graduated" from the short to the longer form.

⁵⁹ A focus solely on the short story form in the West Indian context lies beyond the remit of this thesis, which takes the magazines as its central focus. Other critics are, however, undertaking this work; see the edited collection: *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives* ed. by Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt and Emma Smith (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2011).

creating a climate in which literature was a part of the national or local scene and an integral part of the political agenda of independence.⁶⁰

Tiffin's linking of the magazine form and the later politics of independence is not incidental; the prevalence of the "big four" magazines within critical histories is due to the associations between these and the nationalist political movement. The focus on this narrow corpus reflects the moment in which the critical field of Caribbean literature was formed. In her work *Twentieth Century Caribbean Literature* Alison Donnell identifies and challenges the dominant narratives of Caribbean literary history, citing a series of critical moments which led to the shaping of the field.⁶¹ In particular, she challenges the notion that Caribbean literature appeared spontaneously in the 1950s, and questions why work prior to this moment has not received a similar level of critical attention. Donnell identifies three interconnected reasons for these absences, of which the third is most pertinent for the magazines: the tendency for the first acts of canon formation to draw on the foundations laid by critics of the 1960s who were acting in response to their own contemporary cultural and political situation.⁶² These early acts of canon formation privileged work (and magazines) which in content, style or form responded to the cultural politics of the moment, and as Donnell notes, 'editors and critics working at the moment construct[ed] the pre-1950 period by recourse to a consistent but limited archive'.⁶³

This limited archive included *The Beacon*, characterised as a magazine in which colonial mimicry was railed against and working class West Indian characters and settings took centre stage, and *Bim* and *Kyk-over-al*, literary magazines which were politically engaged, either overtly or indirectly through their actions, in developing a West Indian collectivity. This handful of titles published some of the key writers of the newly formed West Indian canon, which in turn reaffirmed their places within this nationalist narrative. The reprinting of *Bim* and *The Beacon* in the 1970s made these titles more accessible, further shoring up their position. The focus on this

⁶⁰ Tiffin, 'The Institution of Literature', p. 61.

⁶¹ Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 11.

⁶² Donnell, *Twentieth-Century*, pp. 14-15.

⁶³ Donnell, *Twentieth-Century*, p. 36.

small group of magazines, however, both elides the breadth and multiplicity of magazines circulating in these decades, and limits our understanding of the complex cultural politics at work prior to independence. The existing critical accounts of literary magazines ascribe a narrow understanding of cultural decolonisation onto these decades, one which was most closely tied to the political nationalist movements. This project explores the breadth of magazines undertaking work which, by accident or design, contributed to the cultural decolonisation of the West Indies; many of which, such as the *West Indian Review* focussed on in Chapter Four, do not fit within this nationalist framework. Although the existing critical field has established the significance of the magazines in broad overviews of a Caribbean literary history, the recourse to a limited number of these publications has meant that the West Indian literary magazines culture, whilst noted, has been critically underexplored.

These broad statements about the magazines' significance have been productively extended by a small number of works which engage more substantially with the magazines, and their contexts and contents. Reinhard Sander's study of two magazines *Trinidad* and *The Beacon*, is the only book-length consideration of West Indian literary magazines. *The Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties*, is a foundational text for the study of these magazines.⁶⁴ Sander was a central figure for the recovery of these two publications, and alongside offering a detailed history of the magazines and the group of writers associated with them, he facilitated the reprinting of *The Beacon*.⁶⁵ Sander positioned the *Beacon* group of writers as key to the emergence of West Indian literature on an international scale, identifying in their work some of the thematic concerns which would go on to dominate future generations. In particular, he identified the strand of social realism in both their short fiction and novels, and an interest in working-class West Indian lives, and helped to define these decades of literary writing as significant for the barrack-yard fiction that these writers produced. By linking this

⁶⁴ Reinhard Sander, *The Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties* (New York: Greenwood, 1988).

⁶⁵ Sander facilitated the reprinting of *The Beacon*, *Bim* and *Focus* by the Kraus Reprint company in the 1970s, and compiled indexes to accompany the reprints of *The Beacon* and *Bim*. These reprints have made these publications accessible to a wider audience of readers and researchers.

earlier generation of writers to the novelists of later decades through their thematic links and interest in the folk, Sander consolidated the position of these two magazines in the newly formed canon of Caribbean literature. Whilst Sander's exploration is broader than a sole focus on barrack-yard fiction, offering a detailed account of the life and work of three contributors in addition to a wider consideration of the fiction published in these magazines, it is this element of his work which is most frequently replicated in other critical responses.

Following on from Sander there has been a substantial amount of critical interest in *The Beacon* in particular, with much of this focusing on the wider politics of the publication.⁶⁶ The political significance of, and critical interest in, writers such as C.L.R. James has led to some limited consideration of selective literary pieces against the backdrop of his personal political concerns and a historical account of the magazine. Scholars of C.L.R. James, including Paul Buhle and Kent Worcester, have as part of their analysis of his ideologies and motivations turned to his fictional writing.⁶⁷ These accounts of the magazine, however, are limiting; their focus on the points of convergence between the fiction and James' experience and beliefs (as evidenced by his actions and often his later work) leads to a privileging of *Minty Alley* (1939) and short stories such as 'Triumph' and 'La Divinia Pastora', which most clearly display an interest in the barrack-yard setting. The distillation of Reinhard Sander's work has led to this framing of *The Beacon* as of interest largely due to the barrack-yard literature that appears in its pages, marginalising the breadth of literary work in the magazine, a point I return to in Chapter Three. Furthermore, the focus on James' work in *The Beacon*, rather than more broadly in a number of magazines, reiterates a selective approach to his short fiction; the focus in Chapter Two on other work by C.L.R. James seeks to broaden perspectives on this key writer.

More recently the singularity of this narrative of *The Beacon* has been challenged by Raymond Ramcharitar, who in a collection on the Caribbean short story, argues

⁶⁶ See for instance Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁶⁷ Kent Worcester, *C.L.R. James: A Political Biography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 15-26; Paul Buhle, *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (London: Verso, 1988), pp. 26-37.

against the dominant narrative of *The Beacon* group, which considers them the vanguard of an indigenous Trinidadian literature. Ramcharitar argues that *The Beacon* was a vehicle for conversation between the colonial expatriates and the Trinidadian creoles, which far from radically changing Trinidadian literature and perceptions of society, reinforced the colonial discourse. Furthermore, he argues that the reception of this writing has placed thematic limitations on Trinidadian writing to the present day.⁶⁸ Ramcharitar's reassessment of a body of work for which a strong singular narrative has emerged is a model of critical enquiry which reiterates the possibility of alternative perspectives on the early decades of Caribbean literature.

Other interesting and innovative work has been done by Raphael Dalleo in his consideration of *Bim*. He sees a distinction between what he terms the 'free-wheeling' newspapers such as *The Beacon* and *Public Opinion*, which 'brought together political, economic and social commentary alongside literature under one umbrella' and the magazines such as *Bim*, *Focus* and *Kyk-over-al* which were more literary minded.⁶⁹ However, he does not accept the assertion that these magazines were apolitical; in 'the 1940s "little magazines" put forward an ideology of the literary which was no less political, but achieved its political effect by figuring the literary as detached from the everyday arguments about the shape of the nation in which *The Beacon* and *Public Opinion* participated'.⁷⁰ Identifying an 'ideology of the literary' within these magazines, namely an attention to aesthetics and literary form, he shows through a close reading of *Bim* how this enabled a more subtle critique of society.⁷¹ This slight but significant re-conceptualisation of nationalism in this period, and the magazines' differing relationships to the public sphere, offers a model for comparing and noting parallels between publications which initially seem very distinct. Dalleo's work here is one of few instances in which critics have looked across a number of magazines, though his focus is limited to the magazines already

⁶⁸ Raymond Ramcharitar, 'The *Beacon* Short Story and the Colonial Imaginary in Trinidad', in *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt and Emma Smith (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2011), pp. 59-76.

⁶⁹ Dalleo, 'The Idea of the Literary', p. 609.

⁷⁰ Dalleo, 'The Idea of the Literary', pp. 609-610.

⁷¹ Raphael Dalleo, *Caribbean Literature and the Public Sphere: From the Plantation to the Postcolonial* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), pp. 96-212.

part of the critical consciousness.⁷² Dalleo's reading of the social critiques enacted through the literary work in *Bim* has parallels with Chapter Two, in which I identify short stories from across a broad range of magazines, which draw on the literary form to comment on middle-class West Indian life.

Kenneth Ramchand, reflecting on his foundational text *The West Indian Novel* thirty years after its publication noted that the 'major omission in *The West Indian Novel*, was the failure to notice the existence in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s of newspapers, magazines, and literary societies dominated by persons of Indian origin'; an omission which he notes Sander repeated in *Trinidad Awakening*.⁷³ Arguably Sander's text, by becoming a foundational critical account of this period, has reinforced and perpetuated this idea as subsequent scholars draw on existing work in the field rather than the archives of the periodicals. This critical neglect is in part addressed by Kris Rampersad's *Finding a Place: IndoTrinidadian Literature 1850-1950*, which tells a narrative of the development of IndoTrinidadian literature and of a distinct linguistic formation, 'coolie English', through close analysis of a series of newspapers and periodicals produced by and for the East Indian population of Trinidad.⁷⁴ Rampersad argues that the antecedents for IndoTrinidadian literature are the journals and non-literary newspapers such as *The Koh-i-noor Gazette* (1898-1899), *The East Indian Herald* (1919-1924) and *The East Indian Weekly* (1928-1932). In large part the publications Rampersad discusses are not literary in their content, though she draws attention to a few overlooked magazines, and her work is important for uncovering a whole body of publications which have received very little critical attention. Her argument regarding the importance of these newspapers and reportage to the fictional prose is an important one, and one which echoes the work of others such as James Procter,

⁷² The work of Suzanne Scafe and Hyacinth Simpson offer further examples of critical accounts which, through a focus on Jamaican short fiction, move away from a single periodical and instead find points of connectivity in short stories from a range of magazines, collections and anthologies (Suzanne Scafe, 'The Lesser Names beneath the Peaks: Jamaican Short Fiction and its contexts 1938-50' in *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt and Emma Smith (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2011), pp. 44-58.; Hyacinth M. Simpson, 'Patterns and Periods: Oral Aesthetics and a Century of Jamaican Short Story Writing', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12.1 (2004), 1-30).

⁷³ Kenneth Ramchand, "'The West Indian Novel and its Background" - Thirty Years Later', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 31:1 & 2 (2000), 351-373 (p. 366).

⁷⁴ Kris Rampersad, *Finding a Place: IndoTrinidadian Literature 1850-1950* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2002).

who has drawn connections between the fictional work and journalism of Seepersad Naipaul, and the delimited print spaces of the newspaper and short story.⁷⁵ Although it is broad in its material, considering both literary and non-literary magazines and newspapers, Rampersad's focus remains on a narrow section of Trinidadian publications. This thesis, focusing specifically on the literary magazines she identifies, brings these Indo-Trinidadian publications into conversation with a broader Trinidadian and West Indian periodical culture, rather than considering them in isolation.

Within the existing critical field, accounts of single magazines are most common. *Bim's* longevity and the relationship between the magazine and the BBC have resulted in a small body of critical literature around the publication. Articles such as Sonji Phillips' '*Bim* and the Development of a West Indian Literature' and Edward Baugh's '*Frank Collymore and the Miracle of Bim*' give an account of a periodical that George Lamming described as an 'oasis in that lonely desert of mass indifference' of colonial Barbados.⁷⁶ The editor of *Bim*, Frank Collymore, was a highly respected individual among the literary community of the West Indies, and in 1973 a special edition of *Savacou* was brought out to commemorate what would have been his eightieth birthday; more recently a biography by Edward Baugh has been published.⁷⁷ *Kyk-over-al*, although similarly published for a significant period, 1945-1961, has not received the same kind of critical focus, though it is often discussed alongside *Bim* in general overviews of the magazines, and in discussions about the magazines and BBC.⁷⁸ Una Marson, as a poet and cultural figure, has

⁷⁵ James Procter, 'To See Ourselves As Others See Us! Seepersad Naipaul, Modernity and the Rise of the Trinidadian Short Story', in *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt and Emma Smith (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2011), pp. 155-168.

⁷⁶ Sonji Phillips, '*Bim* and the Development of a West Indian Literature', in *Remembering the Sea – An Introduction to Frank A. Collymore*, ed. by Philip Nanton (Bridgetown: Central Bank of Barbados, 2004) pp. 105-119; Edward Baugh, '*Frank Collymore and the Miracle of Bim*', in *On the Canvas of the World*, ed. by George Lamming (Port of Spain: Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies, 1999), pp. 281-285; George Lamming, '*The Occasion for Speaking*' in *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Pluto, 2005), pp. 23-50 (p. 41).

⁷⁷ *Savacou* (January-June 1973). Edward Baugh, *Frank Collymore: A Biography* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2009).

⁷⁸ For example in: Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties' and Low, 'Local and Metropolitan Publishing'. For a discussion of the relationship between Seymour and Henry Swanzy of the BBC see: Philip Nanton, '*Political Tension and Caribbean Voices: The Swanzy Years, 1946-54*', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 585-590.

received personal critical consideration; her magazine *The Cosmopolitan* is also increasingly garnering wider attention.⁷⁹ Delia Jarret-Macauley's biography of Marson dedicates a chapter to the magazine, which provides a contextualisation of *The Cosmopolitan* focusing on the link to the Stenographers' Association, the publication of the Poetry League of Jamaica's works and the eventual financial difficulties that *The Cosmopolitan* faced.⁸⁰ Leah Rosenberg's article 'Modern Romances' offers a substantial literary analysis of a selection of short stories published within *The Cosmopolitan*, arguing for the consideration of these pieces of short fiction as examples of Caribbean modernism, and the need to consider this writing alongside that of the later generation of writers such as George Lamming.⁸¹ Belinda Edmondson has also included an analysis of *The Cosmopolitan* in her discussion of Caribbean middlebrow culture.⁸² A handful of articles from *The Cosmopolitan* have been reprinted in Veronica Marie Gregg's anthology of non-fiction writing by women, *Caribbean Women* (2005), making the passionate political and social debates conducted within its pages more accessible to readers and researchers.⁸³ Chapter Four of this thesis, which focuses on Marson and *The Cosmopolitan* alongside two fellow women editors and their publications, is, however, the first work to consider the wider publication, political agendas and literary material together, and to do so as part of a broader critical account of other contemporary publications by women.

⁷⁹ See for instance Erika Smilowitz, 'Una Marson: Woman before her Time', *Jamaica Journal*, 16.2 (May 1983), 62-68; Honor Ford-Smith, 'Una Marson: Black Nationalist and Feminist Writer', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 34 (1988), 22-37; Alison Donnell, 'Una Marson and the Fractured Subjects of Modernity: Writing across the Black Atlantic', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 22:4 (2011), 345-369; Alison Donnell, 'Una Marson: feminism, anti-colonialism and a forgotten fight for freedom', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 114-132; Leah Rosenberg, 'The Pitfalls of Feminist Nationalism and the Career of Una Marson', *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 159-180; Leah Rosenberg, 'Una Marson's 'Pocomania' (1938): Class, Gender, and the Pitfalls of Cultural Nationalism', *Essays in Theatre*, 20.1 (2001), 27-42; Anna Snaith, 'Little Brown Girl in a White, White City: Una Marson and London', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 27.1 (Spring 2008), 93-114.

⁸⁰ Delia Jarret-Macauley, *The Life of Una Marson* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

⁸¹ Leah Rosenberg, 'Modern Romances: the short stories in Una Marson's "The Cosmopolitan" (1928-1931)', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12.1/2 (November 2004), 170-183.

⁸² Belinda Edmondson, *Caribbean Middlebrow: Leisure Culture and the Middle Class* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁸³ Veronica Marie Gregg, *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of Non-Fiction Writing, 1890-1980* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

In recent years the critical neglect of some of the lesser known magazines has also been addressed by a series of articles, which have begun to lay a foundation for further critical work. Key to this is Carl Wade whose articles on *The West Indian Review*, and *The Forum Quarterly*, are the only texts which focus in such depth on these magazines.⁸⁴ Despite this expansion of criticism, however, a significant number of magazines in this study have previously received no critical attention, and a number are not, to the best of my knowledge, included in any bibliographical lists. The critical works on periodicals which are currently circulating are important foundations, but constitute a partial account of the culture of literary magazines in this period. There is a narrow focus on a small selection of magazines, which conceals the wider connections between these magazines. By considering a wider range of these texts, and seeking to bring the less well known and less accessible publications into critical discussion alongside these more prominent texts, this thesis will address this imbalance. The approach in existing critical work of focusing on a single periodical has led to a relatively disconnected account of periodical culture. This thesis is the first sustained account of the literary magazines of the Anglophone Caribbean drawing together a wide and diverse body of publications to provide an overview of this print culture, opening up dialogues and extending narratives across periodicals.

The specific geographical lens of this project, focusing on magazines produced in the West Indies, written and read by West Indians, is a deliberate one. This is not to suggest that these magazines, and the groups producing and reading them, were isolated from wider literary and cultural circles. There are traces of an interest in contemporary Anglo-American literature in a number of magazines, and Trinidadian magazines in particular register an interest in Indian writers and poets. There is also some engagement with a wider international magazine culture in *The Beacon* in the 1930s, and more substantially in *Bim* in the 1950s and 1960s, during which the editorials regularly acknowledge receipt of magazines from America, Canada and Nigeria. Most significantly a point of connection between the West Indian magazine

⁸⁴ Carl Wade, 'A Forgotten Forum: *The Forum Quarterly* and the Development of West Indian Literature', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 50.3 (September 2004), 63-73; Carl Wade, 'Re-Imagining a Community: *The West Indian Review*, 1934-1940', *Wadabagei*, 11.3 (2008), 3-27.

culture and the wider literary sphere is the relationship between these publications and the 'Caribbean Voices' radio programme at the BBC, which itself facilitated connections to metropolitan publishing houses. This relationship was initially through Una Marson, the programme's creator, and later between Henry Swanzy and Frank Collymore of *Bim* and A. J. Seymour of *Kyk-over-al*. *Bim's* role in shaping the radio programme and facilitating the careers of a number of writers, is often referred to in accounts of the BBC's cultural work in this period.⁸⁵ There is scope for further work on these and other wider links, but this is not within the remit of this thesis which focuses on the role that the magazines played in shaping the local literary and print culture of the West Indies. In its local and regional focus this work offers a counterpoint to an increasingly internationalist field of study. In contemporary literary debates we are *au fait* with thinking about West Indian literature emerging from London, New York or Toronto, and considering the diasporic networks of readers and writers. Recent critical work has foregrounded the links between the Caribbean and wider literary movements, such as modernism, or newer fields of enquiry such as ecocriticism, or have focused on the Caribbean diaspora and West Indians' engagement with, and centrality to, metropolitan and transnational networks.⁸⁶

In this project the focus is on the literary geography of the West Indies, and the creation and circulation of magazines within this space. This focus on the local and

⁸⁵ For example see Philip Nanton, 'Political Tension and Caribbean Voices: The Swanzy Years, 1946-54', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 585-590.

⁸⁶ Scholarship on the links between modernism and postcolonialism is a growing field, particularly in the Caribbean context: Key works include: Mary Lou Emery, *Modernism, The Visual, and Caribbean Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); J. Dillon Brown, *Migrant Modernism: Post-war London and the West Indian Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013); Leah Rosenberg, 'Caribbean Models for Modernism in the Work of Claude McKay and Jean Rhys', *Modernism/Modernity*, 11.2 (2004), 219-38. Postcolonial critics have more recently engaged with the emerging field of ecocriticism with the foundations of this being laid out in: Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London: Routledge, 2010). More specifically to Caribbean literary studies: *Caribbean Literature and the Environment*, ed. by Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée Gosson and George Handley (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005); Chris Campbell and Erin Somerville, *What is the Earthly Paradise: Ecocritical responses to the Caribbean* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007). West Indian-metropolitan connections are explored in Bill Schwarz ed., *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Peter Kalliney, *Commonwealth of Letters: British Literary Culture and the Emergence of Postcolonial Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

regional allows me to explore the ways in which the debates and literary work of these earlier decades provided, or influenced, the models for metropolitan Caribbean literary culture which followed. In Chapter Two, for instance, I explore the ways in which the 'local colour' debate, which has been associated with Henry Swanzy at the BBC in the 1950s, was initiated in the decades before this by West Indians in their magazines. This necessitates a shift in our understanding of the model of influence between the metropolitan centre and the regional literary culture. Whilst the radio programme and Swanzy's articulation of 'local colour' were certainly influential in shaping Caribbean literary culture, this thesis shows that this was not a straightforward example of a metropolitan imposition on colonial cultural traditions, but rather one of the metropolitan responding to, and paralleling, an existing debate. Throughout, this thesis moves us away from a model of thinking in which metropolitan institutions, be this the BBC or publishing houses, acted as gatekeepers and arbiters of West Indian literature, to one in which we see West Indians themselves initiating and undertaking this role in the early twentieth century.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter Two focuses on the ways in which the magazines encouraged and articulated the need for, and shape of, a West Indian literary tradition from the late 1920s into the 1940s. It firstly considers the centrality of these literary aspirations to the publications' wider agendas and the consistency of such aims across differing magazines. It uncovers the magazines' active solicitation of literary work and their interventions into the cultural sphere, debating 'local colour' and shaping the concept of a West Indian literary culture. This chapter then moves on to a consideration of the ways in which writers and magazines dealt with existing West Indian cultural material and traditions, including oral folk tales and characters. The short stories published in the magazines which this thesis has uncovered, including an early work by C.L.R. James which was previously critically unknown, highlight the process of experimentation that writers undertook. Through a focus on a pair of short stories by C.L.R. James and a selection of work by his contemporaries, this chapter explores the difficulties that this type of folk material posed for writers. This

chapter points to a range of framing techniques, found both in the construction of the magazines' pages and within the written narratives, which distance the narrative voice and the reader from the superstitions depicted. Chapter Two argues that the respectable middle-class literary culture to which these magazines aspired resisted the straightforward inclusion, and celebration of, this existing cultural material. This chapter highlights the tensions between the position of the middle classes within colonial society, from which the writers, readers and producers of the magazines were drawn, and the claims for a West Indian literature which these publications register. This destabilises the centrality of the folk narrative, the thematic concern which has been privileged in critical accounts of these decades, by uncovering the ambivalence registered in the magazines' and writers' incorporation of folk characters and traditional stories.

This focus on the middle classes is expanded in Chapter Three, which focuses on a sub-section of the magazines which were the product of literary and debating societies. These magazines include *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* (1924-1929), *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928-1929), *The Forum Quarterly* (1931-1945), *The Outlook* (1933), *The Minerva Review* (1941-1949), *Bim* (1942-1996), *The Weymouth Magazine* (1943-1949), *Kyk-over-al* (1945-1961) and *The St George Literary League Magazine* (1946). It argues that the literary and debating clubs, which were widespread in this period, were the result of a parallel 'do-it-yourself' movement in which West Indians turned to such associations to better their own intellectual development, represent their interests and gain influence within the public sphere. This chapter uses the magazines produced by these groups to open up this previously unstudied club scene as an insight into the wider culture of the middle classes. It challenges the characterisation of these clubs as conservative and colonial in their outlook and promotion of literature by exploring some of the ways in which British literature and its appreciation in wider West Indian society was used to establish a local literary tradition. This chapter furthers the idea of the middle-classes' 'do-it-yourself' approach, by highlighting the way in which they drew on the cultural resources and influence available to them, and navigated their position between the colonial elites and general population, as exemplified through their relationship to the British

Council. By exploring a broader body of literary work this chapter challenges the critical assumptions made about this period, including the dominance of the barrack-yard fiction narratives and folk aesthetic, highlighting an alternative group of short stories which focus on the middle classes. In its specifically literary focus on the middle classes and their relationships to the British colonial regime and British culture this chapter furthers the work of historian Anne Spry Rush (2011).⁸⁷

Chapter Four turns to a smaller selection of the magazines, providing an overview of key women involved in the print culture of the 1930s and 1940s, and focusing in detail on the magazines of three editors: Aimee Webster (*Caribbean Post*), Una Marson (*The Cosmopolitan*) and Esther Chapman (*The West Indian Review*). This chapter recuperates these three magazines, suggests reasons for their marginalisation in literary histories of the period, and situates these women in the narrative of magazine culture which this thesis writes. The chapter explores the ways in which these three editors used their publications to further their own political agendas. By focusing on the role of the editor this chapter highlights the ways in which ‘do-it-yourself’ culture of magazine publication provided these women with scope for autonomy, and a print space through which they could address and debate wider social concerns. Marson and Webster advocated for women’s issues and contributed to an emerging feminist tradition in the West Indies; Chapman explicitly politicised her magazine and sought to use it to support the continuation of British colonial rule. The final section turns to the literary material in the magazines, and explores how these editorial agendas were contested by the fictional work. This highlights how the multi-authored space of the magazine resists singular narratives, challenging even well-established editorial agendas such as Chapman’s.

Chapter Five broadens its focus to the whole corpus of publications to explore the material conditions of editing, publishing and reading literary magazines in the West Indies in these decades. It focuses on the ways in which the magazines sought to build and retain a readership and the involvement of readers in the broader venture

⁸⁷ Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

of developing a literary tradition. This chapter then moves on to account for the substantial engagement of the magazines with the world of commerce through advertisements and a range of initiatives designed to garner financial support from local businesses. Through a close consideration of the paratextual material published alongside and in the magazines this chapter explores the ways in which middle-class West Indians were able to utilise commerce in pursuit of their cultural aims. Having highlighted the importance of this peripheral material in the magazines for informing our understanding of how these publications circulated and were read, this chapter argues against the process of anthologisation, which decontextualizes the literary work and articles from the site and conditions of their production. It closes by raising the implications of a text-centred approach for the ongoing process of archival preservation that these magazines are currently undergoing.

This thesis concludes with a consideration of the avenues for future research which the project has raised. These include the expansion of a detailed consideration of West Indian literary magazines to incorporate the later generation of publications, broadening the scope of the research to include contemporary magazines from the non-Anglophone Caribbean. The focus on the magazines form also opens up scope for research which reaches further afield to consider the parallels between the West Indian titles and literary magazines from other colonial territories.

Chapter Two - Building a West Indian Literature

In June 1928 the aspiring writer C.L.R. James received a letter from Hulbert Footner, a Canadian writer and publisher's agent, offering advice. Footner had met James and his contemporary Alfred Mendes on a visit to Trinidad, where he read a number of their literary works which he was interested in placing in American magazines.¹ Footner's letter following the visit offers James both praise and suggestions for development:

I read the barrack-yard story ['Triumph'] to myself on ship board, fearful that I might have been a little carried away by the viva voce rendering. But not at all. It afforded me a complete artistic pleasure. In that field I am sure lies your best material [...] In the barrack-yard you are unique and unrivalled. Consider what advantages that gives you. The barrack-yard is all your own artistically. If you write another tale of superstition try it in the words of your cook or nursemaid, and see if it is not more exciting. It will be much more difficult, but that is good for you!²

Footner's advice having read 'Triumph', the barrack-yard story, and 'La Diabliesse', the tale of superstition, is to use the 'best material': the settings, characters and superstitions indigenous to the West Indies.³ It was this uniquely West Indian material which Footner considered the most interesting and original work, material which would help James in the process of becoming a successful writer. James and Mendes were at the forefront of a broader movement across the region which saw the educated and culturally-engaged middle classes turn to literary writing. These writers sought to reflect the world around them in literary form, using the 'unique and unrivalled' material of Caribbean society to build a body of West Indian literature, experimenting with tone and narrative structure, and practising their

¹ I am grateful to the scholarly work of Michèle Levy, who has uncovered this link between James, Mendes and Footner, and from whose article ('C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"') I discovered this letter. In this article Levy refers to Footner as 'Hubert' Footner, this is likely, however, to refer to 'Hulbert' Footner, who was Canadian though often mistaken for an American (as in Levy's article) due to him living and working in America for a number of years. Hulbert Footner published numerous short stories in American magazines, such as *The Argosy* and travelled extensively including to the Caribbean where he met with Mendes and James.

² Michèle Levy, 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 9.2 (April 2001), 1-3 (pp. 1-2).

³ Levy identifies the two stories that Footner discusses as being, 'Triumph' and 'La Diabliesse'. Footner's letter came after the publication of 'La Diabliesse' in *The Quarterly Magazine*. 'Triumph' was published a year later in the first issue of *Trinidad* (C.L.R. James, 'La Diabliesse', *The Quarterly Magazine*, 6 (Second Quarter, 1928), 12- 14; C.L.R. James, 'Triumph', *Trinidad*, 1.1 (Christmas 1929), 31-40).

art.⁴ This process was an active one, openly called for and discussed in the magazines of this study, and for many their central aim and purpose as publications. C.L.R. James acted upon Footner's suggestion to develop 'La Diabliesse', rewriting this 'tale of superstition' as 'The Strange Experience of Mr Eugene Constant'.⁵ This second version retains the *diabliesse* character who seduces the central male protagonist and drives him mad; the identity and victim and the narrative positioning, however, is changed. I found this second, previously lost, short story during my archival research in one of the few remaining copies of a small magazine local to Port of Spain in Trinidad.⁶ It is a reminder of the transience and fragility of the literary magazines outlined in the general introduction. More specifically within the context of this chapter, it reveals the magazine's role as an important site for the mediation of what Footner calls a 'unique' folk culture as writers experimented with turning traditional oral stories into written literary work.⁷ This pair of short stories by C.L.R. James, to which I will return, is indicative of the central part magazines played in developing a distinctly West Indian literary voice during the 1920s and 1930s. These two stories and accompanying correspondence do not just illuminate the early years of James' career, they echo a movement to build a literary tradition which is reflected in and borne out across these publications, as this chapter explores.

This chapter focuses on the magazines' key role of calling for, and contributing to the development of, a West Indian literary tradition. It begins by considering the centrality of these literary aspirations to the publications' wider agendas and the consistency of such aims across differing magazines. It uncovers the magazines'

⁴ Levy, 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"', p. 1.

⁵ C.L.R. James, 'The Strange Experience of Mr Eugene Constant', *The Quarterly Magazine*, 2.1 (September 1928), 9-12.

⁶ No critical accounts of James' life and work mention this short story. In his doctoral thesis Reinhard Sander prints part of a letter from James to himself, dated 25th January 1979, commenting on a short story of James' which both he and Sander were unable to trace and providing a long summary. The plot very closely parallels that of 'The Strange Experience of Mr Eugene Constant', although no title for the short story is given. James' recollection of the story's plot was strong, but he did not remember where he had placed it for publication. In this section of his thesis Sander notes there were a number of other works by James which he had been unable to trace, describing these as lost, something that reflects the ephemeral nature of these publications (Reinhard Sander, 'The Trinidad awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1979), n.7. pp. 212-213).

⁷ Levy, 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"', p. 1.

active solicitation of literary work and their interventions into the cultural sphere, debating and shaping the concept of a local literary culture. In their use of, and debates around, “local colour,” these magazines can be seen to be pre-empting later articulations of this notion, primarily from metropolitan publishing houses and the BBC. This chapter argues that West Indians did not passively receive such notions, rather they were actively engaged in shaping these terms in the 1920s-1940s. This chapter then moves on to a consideration of the ways in which writers and magazines dealt with existing West Indian cultural material and traditions, including oral folk tales and characters. These folk tales were one way in which magazines could bring “local colour” into the literary print culture. Through exploring the magazines’ engagement with anancy stories and the ways in which folk characters were brought into written literary form, this chapter considers how the respectable middle-class literary culture to which these magazines aspired often resisted the straightforward inclusion, and celebration of, folk material. By specifically focusing on one facet of this process of building a local literature (the use of folk traditions), this chapter highlights the tensions between the position of the middle classes within colonial society, from which the writers, readers and producers of the magazines were drawn, and the claims for a West Indian literature which these publications register. Finally, this chapter highlights how the clear aspiration for a West Indian literature with which these magazines opened were not straightforwardly achieved; the process of creating the West Indian literary tradition which they sought was a contingent process of ongoing construction, bound up in the social and political structures of the islands.

2.1 Local colour and ‘the birth of a literature essentially West Indian’

On its arrival in September 1943, *The Weymouth Magazine* (1943-1949, Barbados), placed its literary aims at the centre of its agenda. The editorial announced:

“The Weymouth” comes [...] to take its place in the history of local literature. Its objects are to offer the Public a magazine which is both educative and entertaining, to discover any literary talent lying latent

in this island and to provide for such talent a medium [...] These, we think, are objects not unworthy [of] a magazine of this kind.⁸

Reiterating these aims in the second issue the editor goes on to state: ‘there are talents which only need direction and cohesion [...] and] the sincere pursuit of art’, which they hoped to foster, would ‘assuredly pave the way to the achievement of an object which many of us have so long desired – the birth of a literature essentially West Indian’.⁹ *The Weymouth* took an interest in literature and local writing, and like many of these publications clearly saw itself as key to developing this in the region. All of the magazines in this study sought to affect such aims, shaping and contributing to a West Indian literary tradition, and where this was explicitly stated there is a remarkable amount of consistency in the manner in which such statements are phrased. *The Outlook* (1933-1934, Jamaica) announced in its first issue that ‘the main policy of the magazine [is] to develop literary merit and taste for literary subjects’.¹⁰ Every edition of *The Forum Quarterly* (1931-1945, Barbados) included the statement: ‘*The Forum Quarterly* aims chiefly at providing a field for the discussion of West Indian affairs and for the literary development of West Indians at home and abroad’.¹¹ *The West Indian Enterprise* (1931-1937, St Lucia) notes in its opening issue that ‘the Compiler and the Publisher are of the hope that [the magazine] will fill a long-felt want in opening an avenue of expression to West Indian talent’.¹² In the same year *The Outlook* (1931-1932, Barbados) stated its hope that the magazine ‘may be the means of developing literary talent by providing opportunity’; it saw its role as providing both opportunities for current talent and encouraging new writers.¹³ The cluster of similar sentiments, and turn to magazine publishing to achieve such aims in this period, is characteristic of the aspirant middle classes’ desire for an active engagement in the development of a literary culture. These statements register both the desire for a body of literature coming from the region and the assumption that the potential for this is present, and it simply requires a medium, a space for development: the magazines.

⁸ ‘Editorial’, *The Weymouth*, 1.1 (September 1943), 4.

⁹ ‘Editorial’, *The Weymouth*, 1.2 (April 1944), 3.

¹⁰ ‘Looking Out’ *The Outlook*, 1.1 (July 1933), 5. Emphasis added.

¹¹ *The Forum Quarterly*, 1.2 (March 1932), front cover.

¹² ‘Announcement’, *The West Indian Review*, 1 (November 1931), Inside front cover.

¹³ ‘Editorial’, *The Outlook*, 1.1 (October 1931), 5.

There was a literary culture in the West Indies prior to this explosion of literary magazines, the beginnings of what we now refer to as Caribbean literature. However, this was very limited in size and included many works by non-West Indian writers.¹⁴ It was the West Indian provenance that was of importance to the writers and editors of the magazines, as *The West Indian Enterprise's* subheading 'A Monthly Magazine of West Indian Authorship for West Indian Readers' makes clear.¹⁵ The existing body of local literary writing, though significant, was small; a few of the nineteenth-century magazines printed local literary work, and in Jamaica the *All Jamaica Library*, a novel series published cheaply for local readers, was introduced by Thomas MacDermot in 1903.¹⁶ This significant, albeit limited, literary culture continued into the twentieth century with the larger newspapers printing some literary work including the Trinidad *Guardian* and *The Gleaner* in Jamaica, and there were novels from well-connected West Indian writers such as Herbert de Lisser.¹⁷

In this context the growing middle classes saw a need for a broader literary culture and identified the potential for magazines to provide this space. Unlike newspapers, which just published work, these magazines were created to uncover new writers,

¹⁴ Early novels include the anonymous *Hamel the Obeah Man* (1827), Frieda Cassin's *With Silent Tread* (1890) and Stephen Cobham's *Rupert Gray* (1907). British expatriates also produced a body of work about the region, including Michael Scott's novel, *Tom Cringle's Log* (1836), and James Grainger's poem, 'The Sugar Cane' (1764), as well as accounts of their work as plantation overseers or colonial administrators, and their lives in the West Indies. Lady Nugent's journal, an account of the governor's wife of Jamaica between 1801 and 1805, is a source frequently cited by historians. There is also a tradition of travel writing about the Caribbean including Charles Kingsley's *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* (1885), and James Anthony Froude's *The English in the West Indies* (1888), which led to the riposte *Froudacity: West Indian Fables by James Anthony Froude* (1889) by the Trinidadian John Jacob Thomas. For a further detailed consideration of travel writing, and early fictional works by women, see: Evelyn O'Callaghan, *Women Writing the West Indies, 1804-1939: 'A Hot Place, Belonging To Us'* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004). See also: Anthony Boxill, 'The Beginnings to 1929', in *West Indian Literature*, ed. by Bruce King (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 11-26; Louis James, *Caribbean Literature in English* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 9-20.

¹⁵ *The West Indian Enterprise*, 1 (November 1931), front cover.

¹⁶ Louis James, *Caribbean Literature in English*, p. 47. MacDermot wrote under the name Redcam. For more on MacDermot's life and influential role in developing a national literature see the chapter, 'The Accidental Modernist' in, Leah Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 33-62.

¹⁷ The Jamaican Herbert de Lisser published 25 novels and novellas between 1913 and 1945, several of which were serialised in his magazine *Planters' Punch* (1920-1944). As Rosenberg notes, de Lisser was a hugely significant character in the world of Jamaican print media, political debate, and national literature, through his roles at *The Gleaner* and as chairman of the board of the Institute of Jamaica (Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, p. 63).

encourage their work and contribute to a wider improvement in the literary culture of the day. Without recourse to a publishing house in the region a number of writers opted for the route of self-publication; commercial printing companies, often based at the major newspapers, would produce collections of poetry or short stories, for a fee.¹⁸ Magazines, however, could provide amateur and emerging writers with a chance to have their work read, without the costly expense of self-publication. The lack of an accessible and established publishing infrastructure placed magazines in a particularly prominent position, able to have a direct effect on the literary culture of the islands. Magazines such as *The Outlook* (Barbados) identified this potential:

It is [...] to the further development, improvement and concentration of this literary art and this literary merit, so abundant in this island of Jamaica, and which at the present time, in some respects, seem either to be left dormant or latent, or, in other respects, left to be allowed to run to waste **for want of a proper suitable regular, systematic, and organised outlet**, that THE OUTLOOK will be devoting its efforts.¹⁹

The regularity of this outlet was not necessarily borne out in the issues which followed as *The Outlook* folded after six months. However, these public declarations of intention are indicative of the ways in which these magazines conceived of themselves. They are suggestive of the wider role the magazines and their editors saw that they could play in shaping the cultural life of the islands and wider region.²⁰

In many of the opening statements quoted above, the editorials talk about their literary agenda in terms of ‘development’, developing the literature, literary talent, and even developing the West Indians reading the magazine; this continues in the editors’ critiques of the work submitted and wider debates within the magazines. The rhetoric of development has a number of resonances both innocuous and, as

¹⁸ So called “vanity presses” required authors to pay for the publication; Arthur H. Stockwell, a publishers based in Ilfracombe, Devon was advertised widely across a number of the magazines in this study.

¹⁹ ‘Looking Out’, *The Outlook*, 1.1 (July 1933), 5. Emphasis added.

²⁰ Some of the magazines only produced a few issues, folding before they could make a substantial cultural impact; others carried a very small proportion of literary material. *The Minerva Review* (Trinidad, 1941-44) for instance, was intended to be a quarterly publication though only seven issues were published over three years, and within these only a handful of the works published were short stories and poems.

Peter Kalliney notes, in the colonial context, political; both of these resonances are reflected in the use of this terminology in the magazines.²¹ In part, and at the most straightforward level, these statements explicitly refer to the literary culture's small volume, calling for growth in the body of work. They also suggest a judgement on quality, a desire for literature of the highest standards however this may be characterised. In the use of this term there are also implications of a need for a development within the literature itself, a move perhaps from amateurism to professionalism. For many of the magazines, particularly those linked directly to Literary and Debating societies and other social organisations, which are explored more fully in Chapter Three, the development of the people was part of a wider movement of "uplift" of their members socially, culturally and educationally.

This term, however, has a broader significance for the region during its time under British colonial rule which are implied in its specific usage by some of the magazines. As Kalliney notes, '[b]y the 1940s, the terms of imperialist reference had shifted subtly but definitively: the civilising mission of the nineteenth century and the trusteeship of the early twentieth century had given way to the concept of development as inextricably linked to the viability of self-determination'.²² The colonial rhetoric of development was known in the Caribbean; it is, for instance directly reflected in Esther Chapman's pro-imperial articles in the *West Indian Review* (1934-1975, Jamaica), in which Chapman argued that the region was not sufficiently developed economically or socially for independence.²³ This rhetoric, however, was also adopted and utilised by those seeking to bring about self-determination or a greater degree of West Indian rule. For instance Marson notes that *The Cosmopolitan* (1928-1931, Jamaica) aimed 'to develop literary and other artistic talents in our island home, [for] a country may be unmistakably judged by the standard of the literature she produces'.²⁴ The opening issue of *The St George's Literary League Magazine* notes that they 'hope that this Magazine may prove to be one of [Grenada's] brightest beacons along the road' into 'the dawn of a new light'

²¹ Peter Kalliney, *Commonwealth of Letters: British Literary Culture and the Emergence of Postcolonial Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²² Kalliney, *Commonwealth of Letters*, p. 150.

²³ For a broader discussion of Chapman's pro-British stance see Chapter Four.

²⁴ 'Our Debut', *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1928), 1.

and a more democratic future.²⁵ A. J. Seymour, the editor of *Kyk-over-al*, opened the first issues with the statement ‘*Kyk-over-al* we hope will be an instrument to help forge a Guianese people, and to make them conscious of their intellectual and spiritual possibilities’.²⁶

Although there is no single political aim which unifies the magazines, for many of the publications the cultural developments they sought were discussed alongside and as part of broader social and political developments. *The Weymouth*, though primarily focused on literature, saw in its pursuit of art the potential that the ‘fraternisation of people of varying shades of culture and opinion would be productive’ for ‘bind[ing] men together [...] strengthen[ing] them and foster[ing] in them the spirit of self-reliance [...] understanding and tolerance, or increased awareness and unity of purpose’.²⁷ The third issue makes these wider claims even more explicit stating that they hope to ‘infuse the ideas of West Indian unity and federation into our literary consciousness’.²⁸ The aim of a West Indian literature was often refracted through, or reflected back onto the movement towards political unification and the West Indian Federation through the language and allusions of the editorials. This can also be seen more directly in the actions of the magazines’ editors, a number of whom sought to collaborate in order to build links across the region, or who by seeking and publishing work from other islands facilitated a regional rather than island specific literary culture. Alfred Gomes was one such editor. He was keen to develop inter-island relationships and envisioned his magazine *The Beacon* as part of a collective movement. In a letter to the editor of the Bajan magazine *The Forum Quarterly* in 1932 he wrote: ‘I am anxious to cooperate with you. A West Indian circulation is what we must fight for. An insular literature is not a West Indian one’.²⁹

Numerous connections could be mapped between the magazines; in addition to Gomes at *The Beacon*, *The Forum Quarterly*’s editor Gordon Bell had links to a

²⁵ Arthur Grimble, ‘Foreword’, *The St George’s Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 7.

²⁶ A. J. Seymour, ‘Editorial Notes’, *Kyk-over-al*, 1 (December 1945), 27.

²⁷ ‘Editorial’, *The Weymouth*, 1.2 (April 1944), 3.

²⁸ ‘Editorial’, *The Weymouth*, 1.3 (October 1945), 4-6.

²⁹ ‘From our Newsbag’, *The Forum Quarterly*, 1.2 (March 1932), 28.

number of other Trinidadian publications and *The West Indian Enterprise* in St Lucia. *The West Indian Enterprise* was itself connected to *The Caribbee* (1932-1938, Trinidad) and published work by the same writers as *The Quarterly Magazine* (1927-1935, Trinidad). *Bim* (1942-1996, Barbados) and *Kyk-over-al* (1945-1961, British Guiana) were linked by the friendship of their two editors, forged through their parallel cultural projects, and both magazines published work from across the region.³⁰ These magazines and the networks of editors, writers and readers paralleled and contributed to the move towards political unification. Edward Baugh has noted that '[o]ne of the arguments which used to be advanced in support of the idea of a federation of the West Indies was that there were already outstanding examples of West Indian unity'; Baugh cites the West Indian cricket team, University of the West Indies and magazines such as *Bim* where there was 'for an appreciable time one of the liveliest pieces of "federal" territory'.³¹ The "development" of a West Indian literature that these magazines sought, by design or effect contributed to the emerging sense of a regional identity which in turn led to a shift in political power. The British sought to use the rhetoric of development as part of an imperialist narrative justifying colonial rule but as these magazines highlight these terms of reference were co-opted by West Indians themselves. West Indians utilised their cultural capital through the magazines they edited and contributed to, in order to provide evidence of cultural development to pull this debate towards very different ends.

These literary magazines were more, therefore, than the passive recipients of literary work, they were actively engaged in a wider cultural movement at the heart of which was the work they published. They encouraged new literary work through a combination of approaches including direct solicitations. The Christmas 1931 issue of *The Quarterly Magazine* (1924-1929, Trinidad), for instance, contained an invitation to readers direct from the editor: 'Why not make some extra money

³⁰ There are numerous other connections which I could include here, in particular between Jamaican magazines. These include connection between the editors (see Chapter Four for the links between the three women editors who worked together and separately), some shared material and contributors in common.

³¹ Edward Baugh, 'Frank Collymore and the Miracle of *Bim*', in *On the Canvas of the World*, ed. by George Lamming (Port of Spain: Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies, 1999), pp. 281-285 (p. 282).

writing Short Stories?', with a note 'I favour Local or West Indian subjects'.³² Many of the magazines also hosted a number of short story and poetry competitions, in which the commercial and cultural aims of the publications intersected.³³ These competitions offered a structured route by which material could be solicited, with the added incentive for entrants in the form of feedback, and in some cases a financial prize. The competitions served both ideological and commercial purposes for the magazines; they provided an influx of literary material for publication which could be, for example, published in a bumper Christmas edition priced higher than the normal issues. Editors were able to tie their encouragement of new writing to a tangible outcome for the entrant the publication of the winning story in the next issue. Such contests led to the naming of a winner, or series of winners, but the emphasis of the contests was not on developing a competitive literary culture, but rather on encouraging new writers and writing more broadly. These open competitions gave writers the chance to seek publication without requiring the greater confidence, or commitment, of sending material unsolicited to the magazines for regular publication. Several of the magazines posited their contests as a starting point for a longer career; *The Caribbee* (1932-1938, Trinidad) for instance, announced its May 1935 literary competition with a preamble:

It is a well-known fact that many famous authors earned their first guineas in literary competitions, and I am hoping that young West Indian writers will find in these competitions the encouragement and the experience they need before going on to do big things in the literary world.³⁴

At *The Cosmopolitan*, Una Marson positioned her literary competition as a route into publication, in this instance beyond the Caribbean:

There are some excellent short story writers in Jamaica and we are very anxious that they should meet with greater success and recognition not only here but abroad, and an interested Jamaican who has been abroad for some time [...] is willing to help and has offered a \$10 prize. We

³² 'Why not make some extra money writing Short Stories?', *The Quarterly Magazine* (Christmas 1931), 38.

³³ The commercial competitions, discussed further in Chapter Five, were often designed to promote sales or retain advertisers' interest. As explored in the final chapter some of these short story competition entries had to be accompanied with a ticket, taken from an issue, ensuring that those entering also bought a previous issue of the magazine, driving up sales.

³⁴ 'Literary Competitions', *The Caribbee* (May 1935), 14.

sincerely trust writers will take advantage of this as the conditions are such that it may be a means of selling your short stories abroad.³⁵

The Jamaican reader of the magazine, who was living in America, sought to support *The Cosmopolitan's* cultural aims in a very direct way by financing a competition.³⁶ The recognition that could be gained was both for the individual writer and, Marson's comment implies, for Jamaica as it gained a reputation for literary work abroad. Writers in Jamaica would have been familiar with the format of literary competitions. In 1899 *The Jamaica Times* began a weekly short story competition designed to 'create a class of writers and a reading public in colonial Jamaica'.³⁷ In the intervening decades, economic and educational developments had developed this reading public, though there were still relatively few writers from the region having their work published. The competitions hosted by these magazines three decades later took up this model as a way of soliciting new writing.

The terms of these competitions made clear that entries should be not just by, and for, West Indians, but also specifically of the West Indies, reflecting the place and the people, a literature they hoped would be 'essentially West Indian'.³⁸ *The Caribbee's* editor A.T. Pollanais' call stated that stories 'should have a West Indian setting' and poems a 'West Indian appeal'.³⁹ This is paralleled by the call in *The Forum Quarterly* for a West Indian setting and *The Quarterly Magazine* called for 'West Indian Flavour'.⁴⁰ *The West Indian Review* specified 'West Indian in background or character' as the editor explains 'the setting should be West Indian, or the incidents relate to West Indians settled in some other part of the world'.⁴¹ Across all of the magazines contributors were generally encouraged to submit material with a local flavour, and about local subjects, or if not explicitly laid out in the competition rules, it was seen as positive to do so. The ubiquity of this type of terminology led to a debate on the nature and necessity of "local colour" in

³⁵ 'Short Story Competition', *The Cosmopolitan*, 2.6 (October 1929), 192.

³⁶ No record remains as to whether this offer of assistance with selling stories to foreign publications was taken up, or successful.

³⁷ Rosenberg, *Nationalism*, p. 49.

³⁸ 'Editorial', *The Weymouth*, 1.2 (April 1944), 3.

³⁹ 'Literary Competitions', *The Caribbee* (May 1935), 14.

⁴⁰ 'Why not make some extra money writing Short Stories?', *The Quarterly Magazine* (Christmas 1931), 38.

⁴¹ 'Ten Pounds for a Short Story', *The West Indian Review*, 1.1 (September 1934), 14.

literature conducted over five subsequent issues of *Public Opinion*, with the instigator V. A. Coke arguing that it placed unhelpful limitations on Jamaican writers.⁴² However, as one respondent in this debate E.J.H. King, made clear such an insistence was not designed to limit, rather to broaden writers' remit:

Hitherto in Jamaica the potential writer has been hampered because it had been generally expected that his subject matter, style and imagery should be based on an imitation of the masters of other countries with whose inspirational experiences he has never had any contact and whose emotional background is very different from his own. He is taught to think of whiteness in terms of driven snow (which he has never seen) of redness in terms of roses (which never attain nor show their deepest colouring under tropic skies) [...] The champions of local colour must continue their fight for it; it is a fight for the emancipation of the local artist and such it was intended to be.⁴³

King's argument is part of a broader movement against the imitation of colonial culture, something I explore further in the next chapter, and also more positively seeks to elevate West Indian life and landscapes in the imagination of writers in a broader sense. Here King posits "local colour" as working in opposition to, or against, colonial culture, although as Chapter Three explores further this was not necessarily the case. The insistence on "local colour" was more than just one of aesthetics but of a broader cultural nationalism, an invigoration of the creative potential of West Indian life and customs.

These debates conducted in the magazines require a shift in our conceptualisation of "local colour". The work of critics such as Philip Nanton and Gail Low highlight the gatekeeping practices of Henry Swanzy at the BBC and his now famous insistence on "local colour".⁴⁴ Swanzy's specific articulation of "local colour" is one which favoured island-specific locations, content and characters reflecting the 'simple annals of the poor'; as such he was particularly drawn to a narrow body of the

⁴² V. A. Coke, 'Local Colour', *Public Opinion*, 7.44 (December 31 1943), 3.

⁴³ E.J.H. King, 'Local Colour', *Public Opinion*, 7.48 (January 29 1944), 2.

⁴⁴ See: Philip Nanton, 'What Does Mr. Swanzy Want - Shaping or Reflecting? An assessment of Henry Swanzy's contribution to the development of Caribbean Literature', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 46.1 (March 2000), 61-72; Philip Nanton, 'Political Tension and Caribbean Voices: The Swanzy Years, 1946-54', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 585-590; Gail Low, 'Local and Metropolitan Publishing', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 616-525.

writing in this period.⁴⁵ Swanzy's radio programme is the context in which critics are most familiar with the term; however, as these magazines show, such articulations were being formed in the decades preceding 'Caribbean Voices', and were not just the imposition of an outside metropolitan force. The magazines' emphasis on "local colour" was a proactive response to the dominance of colonial culture, enacted by West Indians and for West Indians. Swanzy and his focus on "local colour" would become influential in shaping the work which reached foreign audiences; however, these earlier, indigenous conceptualisations of "local colour" shaped the literature that local audiences read. Through these debates, and the competitions explicitly designed to encourage work with "local colour", the magazines and their contributors directly engaged in the process of building up a literary culture. Although this would be furthered by the later work of the BBC, with a narrow conceptualisation of what this "local colour" consisted of, the roots of this movement lie in the magazine culture of the island.

In the magazines the discussion around "local colour" were broad, particularly in the earlier titles, the desire for "local colour" was often expressed without a clear expression of what this should entail, or how this was intended to be understood by contributors. In some respects this focus on local characters and settings is merely presented as pragmatic advice. *The Cosmopolitan's* reviewer for its 1930 competition for instance, critiques the entries for 'savour[ing] the stereotyped cheap novelette in vogue twenty years ago [...] If I might suggest a criticism – write about what you know – and try to be natural in your descriptions and cut out the melodramatic'.⁴⁶ The reviewer's comments lay emphasis on writers drawing on their own personal experience, whilst also registering distaste for cheap novelettes and melodrama, the implication being that these forms did not align with the publication's aim to develop a respected, and respectable, literary culture. This judgement on literary quality is not expanded on in the reviewer's response, giving entrants few directions beyond that of focusing on their own experiences. An

⁴⁵ In a letter to Gladys Lindo in 1947 Swanzy, reflecting on a rejected contributor, wrote: 'I am sure the author may think I have a bias towards low life, but this is not really the case. The fact is that such a great deal of local colour does creep into the simple annals of the poor and a story of the upper classes often loses this particular quality' (University of Birmingham Special Collections, Henry Swanzy papers, MS42/1/3/39. 'Letter to Gladys Lindo 4th September 1947').

⁴⁶ 'Results of Christmas Competitions', *The Cosmopolitan* (January 1930), 299.

editorial in *Bim* similarly advises contributors: 'Above all, in writing, regard things from your own viewpoint and experience. Why worry to write about the rigours of the Alaskan winter when you can spend the month of February in St Joseph's parish? And you don't have to travel all the way to Chicago to find crooks. No...'.⁴⁷ In these examples the advice to remain within the sphere of their experience for their literary inspiration suggests the need for a familiarity with the topic. Given the tenor of these editorials it is not surprising that much of the work published in the magazines focused on middle-class West Indian lives, settings and characters, as I will explore further in Chapter Three.

The magazines published many of the short stories and poems submitted to them and the advice and commentaries relating to these and the competition entries offer an insight into whether these calls from the magazines for a West Indian literature incorporating "local colour" were met.⁴⁸ Once again, over a range of different magazines strikingly similar comments are found and these illuminate the difficulties that magazines found in procuring material and the editors' views on the shape this literary work should take. These comments provide a counterpoint to the editorials with which the magazines opened, which claimed that the 'literary merit, so abundant' in the region' was only wanting an 'outlet'.⁴⁹ The responses to the material that the magazines were sent suggest that they perceived a need to improve the standards of the work they received; the editors' critiques on style for instance are designed to improve the standard of future submissions. For example, *The Cosmopolitan* in March 1931 calls the poetry submitted disappointing and notes that: 'Competitors frequently used words which are incongruous in poetry. Wrong accenting, lack of thorough observation as shown in descriptions and the use of similes that are not apt were among the chief faults'.⁵⁰ Though not complimentary, the provision of such feedback is indicative of the desire for an improvement in the

⁴⁷ 'Editors' Comeback', *Bim*, 1.4 (April 1944), 1.

⁴⁸ What would be a really useful insight into these magazines would be to see what material they rejected and compare it with that which was published. Unfortunately many of these magazines were so ephemeral I have been lucky to find copies of the published versions still in existence, let alone the archives surrounding them. More established titles, and editors, such as Collymore and Mendes have kept papers, though these tend to be letters rather than unpublished submissions. As such this body of supporting material, if it existed, has not been possible to consult.

⁴⁹ 'Looking Out', *The Outlook*, 1.1 (July 1933), 5.

⁵⁰ 'Results of Christmas Competitions', *The Cosmopolitan* (March 1931), 27.

standard of the material submitted. It also betrays a perception on the part of the editor Una Marson, herself a poet at this stage with one published collection, that there is an accepted aesthetic for poetic expression. These comments suggest that Marson was looking for a certain type of work, or poetic register, though without more extensive commentary and the original poems she received, exactly what type of poetry she is advocating is not clear. She did not publish these rejected poems, effectively utilising the same gatekeeping practices that Swanzy is accused of; determining which of the poems she deemed reflective of the West Indian poetic aesthetic. A similar tone is found in the Judge's report from the competition in *Public Opinion* in 1939:

The entries for the short story competition were in many respects disappointing. Although all of the entrants displayed 'good writing' many of them failed to grasp the essentials of a short story: characters around whom a sole plot, preferable episodic, is woven. Others allowed their story to ramble aimlessly, much in the vein that the more incidents you can get in, the better. Still more of them kept shifting the focus of the story so that at times, we found it difficult to identify the particular character through which the story was being unfolded. But, it was consoling to find that with but one exception all the stories dealt with the lives of simple everyday Jamaicans whom we can meet at any time.⁵¹

Whilst we might question the rigidity of such a characterisation of short stories, this list is indicative of perceived shortcomings in the entries, and perhaps more tellingly of the desire of editors to offer constructive criticisms. This work, though not deemed suitable to publish, is not dismissed entirely, as the magazines sought to act upon their stated aims of assisting with the development of the literary voices of West Indians. These critical appraisals, though brief, anticipate some of the later more extensive critical work which was published in the magazines, in particular *Bim* which published the first articles of what would become the critical field of Caribbean literary studies.⁵²

⁵¹ 'Judges' Report', *Public Opinion*, 3.10 (April 22 1939), 6.

⁵² See for instance: E. McG. Keane, 'The Contribution of the West Indian to Literature', *Bim*, 4.14 (June 1951), 102-6; Stewart Hall, 'Laming, Selvon and Some Trends in the West Indian Novel', *Bim*, 6.23 (December 1955), 172-178; Edward Braithwaite, 'The New West Indian Novelists', *Bim*, 8.31 (December 1960), 199-210; Edward Braithwaite, 'Jazz and the West Indian Novel', *Bim*, 11.44 (June 1967), 275-284.

A handful of the magazines were more explicit about the type of literature they envisioned for the West Indian literary tradition, and in these instances the critiques of the material they received were not limited to the style of the work. One oft-noted commentary from *The Beacon* takes direct umbrage at the content of the submissions it received. In characteristically blunt fashion Gomes stated in response to the short story competition of 1932:

We regret to write that few good stories have been received for the Competition [...] Several of the stories we have received read like advertisements for the enhancement of our tourist trade; others like anecdotes from the Good Book [...] We fail to understand [...] why anyone should want to see Trinidad as a miniature *Paradiso*, where grave diggers speak like English MPs [...] We advise the local writer [...] to spend less time on florid descriptions of our hills, valleys and the moonlight.⁵³

The expectations that this comment lays bare speak volumes about *The Beacon's*, or more precisely Gomes', conceptualisation of what Trinidadian literature should involve. For Gomes, quality literature should eschew the pictorial and pastoral in favour of the reality of Trinidadian life; this literature should be politically minded but should not engage in biblical moralising or reduce the island to an exotic paradise. *The Beacon's* focus on the "authentic" Trinidadian existence and speech habits serve a political aim, which becomes clear in the answer he provides to the question posed above:

The answer is obviously that the average Trinidad writer regards his fellow-countrymen as his inferiors, an uninteresting people who are not worth his while. He genuinely feels (and by this, of course, asserts his own feeling of inferiority) that with this people as characters his stories would be worth nothing.⁵⁴

Railing against the internalisation of British colonial culture and racist ideology, Gomes' manifesto of sorts for Trinidadian literature reiterates that literary work should adopt realist conventions and focus on the urban and rural poor. Gomes' position in *The Beacon* has a precedent in the earlier magazines *Trinidad*, which put forward a similar view in response to the charges of obscenity levelled at the magazines following its first issue. Alfred Mendes, the editor, claimed that 'he who is sincere about his literary work [...] cannot stop to consider how much ugliness

⁵³ 'Local Fiction', *The Beacon*, 1.10 (January-February 1932), 1-2 (p. 1).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

there is in the matter that comes his way'. He argued that the lives and inhabitants of the barrack-yards should be written about for 'the literature of fiction brings to the doors of people who otherwise would have known little or nothing of these things, the burden of this truth: our social organisation [...] is diseased'.⁵⁵ These articulations of the need for, and desirability of, a socially engaged literature bringing to middle-class West Indians' attention the lives of the working classes would find echoes in two later publications: *Kyk-over-al*, where A. J. Seymour's advice for writers was to undertake the 'objective regard of social problems around him' and *Public Opinion*, in which Roger Mais called for 'realism' and writing which 'captures the spirit of the time'.⁵⁶

These specific pronouncements on 'local colour' were, however, rare within the wider periodical culture. Moreover these were not necessarily reflected in the body of work which was published in the magazines; only a small proportion of the works produced in *Trinidad* and *The Beacon* for instance fit the criteria Mendes and Gomes detailed above.⁵⁷ Across the magazines a broad range of work was published. The anthologisation of Gomes' editorial in particular, removed from the pages of the magazine, has given this aspirant manifesto a particular prominence which is not borne out in the rest of the publication nor the wider magazine culture.⁵⁸ I will return in the next chapter to the ways in which the critical prominence of *The Beacon* have led to a partial recovery of the literary writing of this period; more broadly, however, the relative prominence of statements such as this can suggest the impetus behind the magazines' calls for a literary tradition were singular, calling for politically-driven realistic fiction. The magazines of these decades, though clear on their broad aspiration to create and support a West Indian

⁵⁵ Alfred Mendes, 'A Commentary', *Trinidad*, 1.2 (1930), 64-70 (p. 64-5).

⁵⁶ A.J. Seymour, 'Open Letter to West Indian Writers', *Kyk-over-al*, 2.9 (December 1949), 23-27 (p. 25). Roger Mais, 'Why Local Colour', *Public Opinion*, 7.45 (January 8 1944), 3-4.

⁵⁷ Sander notes that the barrack-yard stories, which are those most closely aligned to the ideal Gomes outlines, account for 12 of the roughly 80 stories published in *Trinidad* and *The Beacon* (Reinhard Sander, *Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), p. 55).

⁵⁸ See for example the re-publication of this section in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature* and *From Trinidad* ('Local Fiction', in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 172; 'Local Fiction', *From Trinidad: An Anthology of Early West Indian writing*, ed. by Reinhard W. Sander (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), pp. 26-28).

literary culture, were not singular about, nor specific in, the form that this should take. Nor does the work published fit with any singular articulations of “local colour”. When placed back and read in context of the magazines these statements, and the editors’ responses to the competition entries, illustrate the ongoing process of construction taking place in the magazines in these decades. The points of disconnect between the enthusiastic calls for, or claims about, the literary talent in the region and the body of work which the magazines received and subsequently published, highlight the centrality of the magazines’ pages to this process of contestation. The magazine form, predicated on periodicity, continually moving on to the next issue the following week, month, or quarter, was a print space well suited to this process. It enabled experimentation on the part of writers, space for regular reflection, encouragement and advice from editors and scope for the debate around the nature of West Indian literature to emerge slowly, with each magazine or issue building on those before.

2.2 Folk culture and the literary magazines

I now wish to turn more specifically to a group of existing cultural forms which writers experimented with drawing upon the oral storytelling tradition. When developing their short stories, writers drew upon oral storytelling and cultural traditions, which provided a wealth of indigenous West Indian material, or ‘local colour’. In his unpublished autobiography C.L.R. James notes that the story of ‘La Divina Pastora’ (1927) was originally told to him by his grandmother, and he ‘set out to make a literary short story of it’.⁵⁹ Here James exemplifies this impetus to use an oral source as a springboard for written literary work. Most notably, the phrase ‘set out’, gives a sense of the conscious act of, and determination to, create a body of literary work from this oral tradition. The anancy stories and folktales of the West Indian oral tradition, and practice of obeah, provided characters and customs clearly embedded in the West Indian context. This direct way of incorporating “local colour” in West Indian literature did not go unnoticed; in the debates surrounding

⁵⁹ C.L.R. James, ‘Autobiography 1932-38’, Columbia University Rare Books and Manuscript Library, C.L.R. James Papers: Box 4, Folder 7. (p. 26); cited in Aaron Kamugisha, ‘C.L.R. James: Twentieth Century Journeys’, in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 43-49 (p. 44).

this emergent literary culture these folktales and customs were advocated for at cultural club meetings. Charles Archibald speaking at the Trinidadian Queen's Royal College Literary society argued that:

There is a wealth of romance associated with the Caribbean sea, tales of pirates and treasure troves, and what is still more important for West Indian purposes, there are the myths of the Caribs, our own folk-lore and superstitions, our native customs and peculiarities all inexhaustible sources of inspiration... there lie everywhere around us here in the West Indies sources which are only waiting to be tapped and which are capable of inspiring a literature [...] These green islands [...] must by our own hands be set in a literature of our own [...] so that the day may soon come when we shall enjoy the privilege of seeing poetry and prose on West Indian subjects by West Indian authors taught in our schools and colleges.⁶⁰

Archibald's call for the use of folk-lore and superstitions to build a literary tradition is echoed by Amy Bailey in Jamaica in the same year; Archibald emphasised the educational and cultural benefits of this, whereas Bailey saw in such a movement a political edge. In her address to the Quill and Ink Club in Jamaica, Bailey envisioned the need for a programme of cultural rejuvenation for the full emancipation of black West Indians. Likening the cultural mind-set many Jamaicans were in to 'mental slavery' she called for a revaluing of indigenous culture: 'let [Jamaicans] take pleasure in our homes, pictures of local scenery, in our proverbs and "anancy" stories and digging match songs; let us revel in our native lore, which was all part and parcel of ourselves'.⁶¹ Bailey and Archibald's enthusiasm for these cultural forms, however, was not, as I will explore, matched by the magazines or the literary work which they published, particularly in publications from the earlier decades which display an ambivalence about this material.

In her article 'The Jamaican Short Story: Oral and Related Influences' Hyacinth Simpson makes a claim for a continuity of indigenous cultural forms and local storytelling traditions in written literary work from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s.⁶² This body of traditional cultural material, Simpson argues, was utilised

⁶⁰ Charles Archibald, 'West Indian Writing in the Infant Days: Scope and Horoscope', *The Royalian*, 2.1 (September 1933) reprinted in, *Tapia*, Sunday January 30 1976, 10.

⁶¹ 'Quill and Ink Club Honour Wilberforce', *The Gleaner*, 31 July 1933, p. 8.

⁶² Hyacinth M. Simpson, 'The Jamaican Short Story: Oral and Related Influences', *The Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, 4.1 (2005), 11-30.

and reimagined in various written ways across the decades. Simpson's article clearly points to an interest in this material in the nineteenth century, though this is largely anthropological, and correctly highlights the incorporation of these tropes and characters into literary work over the longer period of her consideration. However, it does not reflect some of the tensions and complexities that writers in the late 1920s and 1930s faced in dealing with these indigenous cultural forms. The contemporary calls for these cultural traditions to be drawn upon for literary and political purposes by Archibald and Bailey were in some respects, ahead of their time.⁶³ Bailey's evocation of black West Indian cultural forms, the anancy stories and community music, would find purchase decades later in the privileging of what Brathwaite termed the 'little tradition' but contemporaneous publications did not value such material in the way envisioned by Bailey.⁶⁴ As rich a resource as these forms were in the construction of a West Indian cultural voice, very few of the magazines of my study responded to these in any substantial manner; where these forms are evident the literary work they published simultaneously draws on, but also curtails, the beliefs they portray. These middle-class publications register their contributors' and readers' ambivalence and concerns in their approach to indigenous cultural forms, forms which were associated with the working classes. This earlier generation of magazines highlight the changing relationship between the middle-class consumers and producers of culture and the working class cultural traditions which would come to be privileged in later debates.

If we take one example, that of the anancy tale, the difficult relationship between the folk oral tradition and the literary construction of a West Indian voice becomes clear. Anancy (also written Anansi) the spider, is a Caribbean trickster folk hero

⁶³ As Simpson notes in the decades following these magazines there was a 're-emergence of oral emphases', in particular on 'Caribbean Voices' with the section on Jamaican folklore and contributions by Louise Bennett; the radio format was well placed for such work. In subsequent decades further literary explorations of oral tales were undertaken by Andrew Salkey, in his rewriting of anancy stories, and Olive Senior who utilised the trickster figure (Simpson, 'The Jamaican Short Story', p. 21).

⁶⁴ Drawing on the work of Robert Redfield, Brathwaite developed a theory of two cultures, the little tradition of the people and the great tradition of the European coloniser, positing that the artists and the intellectual pass between the two and facilitate the ongoing process of creolisation. The Caribbean Artists Movement through its activities and publication *Savacou*, sought to examine seriously folk culture and position it as the central cultural tradition of the region. It is not incidental, for instance, that the first work considering Louise Bennett was published in *Savacou's* pages.

whose roots lie in West Africa; his exploits are grounded in the Afro-Caribbean culture of the islands and he is a well-known figure in the oral storytelling tradition.⁶⁵ These oral anancy stories were popular across the region, but only a handful of magazines in my study published these tales, and there are only very limited attempts to use the trope of the trickster in early literary work. Esther Chapman's influential and long-running title *The West Indian Review*, which was published in Jamaica during the period of Amy Bailey's address to the Quill and Ink club, was one magazine which did publish anancy stories. Well-funded and published consistently over several decades, this was a magazine well placed to bring the oral folklore traditions into the written literary realm. Over the first three years (1934-1936) of its publication the *Review* printed an anancy story in most issues; written by Wona, a pseudonym for Una Jeffrey Smith, they had originally been published in an 1899 collection *A Selection of Anancy Stories*.⁶⁶ Despite their regular appearance in these first few years of publication, Chapman's *Review* does little to present these as valuable cultural sources, and her inclusion of these stories would not fulfil Bailey's call for West Indian cultural practitioners to 'take pleasure in [their] local lore'.⁶⁷ Smith's stories are reproduced in the magazine with no contextual information, thirty years after their initial publication. Furthermore, these anancy tales were the product of an anthropological collection rather than part of an indigenous literary culture attributed to, and authored by, a West Indian. Like many of the collectors of anancy stories in the late nineteenth century, Una Jeffrey Smith was a white middle-class woman, and as Emily Zobel Marshall notes, '[collectors'] Euro-Christian values unavoidably influenced the content of the collections they chose to assemble'.⁶⁸ As such they are a mediated form of the stories.

⁶⁵ For critical work on the anancy figure see: Emily Zobel Marshall, *Anansi's Journey: A Story of Jamaican Cultural Resistance* (Kingston: UWI Press, 2012); Emily Zobel Marshall, "'The Anansi Syndrome": A Debate Concerning Anansi's Influence on Jamaican Culture', *World Literature Written in English*, 39:1 (2001), 127-136.

⁶⁶ Wona, *A Selection of Anancy Stories* (Kingston: Aston W. Gardner, 1899).

⁶⁷ 'Quill and Ink Club Honour Wilberforce', p. 8.

⁶⁸ Emily Zobel Marshall, *Anansi's Journey*, p. 143.

best. When evening comes they are all asleep. Bacchus has conquered.

"Christmas! Christmas!" shouts a big rosy-faced man. "All you ain't know it is Christmas?" He starts to sing as he staggers onward.

"Ah bet any man ah pint ah rum, ah can't find me way to go home. Well sho' me de way to go home." He collapses into the drain, where his wife runs to try to get him out.

"Ain't it Christmas?" sings another staggerer. "Christmas comes but once a year . . . hic . . . and every man must . . . hic . . . have his share!"

So all through the day the corks are popping and glasses are clinking. Yet there seems to be an inexhaustible supply of the "giver of good cheer." What of tomorrow? Oh! let tomorrow take care of itself. This is one way to spend a Merry Christmas. Chin! Chin!! Cheerio!!

ANANCY STORIES OF JAMAICA.

ANANCY AND THE CRABS.

By WONA.

ONCE upon a time Anancy sat down in his house and thought very hard. As usual his thoughts were on food, and alas! there was nothing to steal in his immediate vicinity. He must go further afield, and it was imperative that he go in disguise.

"Mek me see," he mused, "de man dat go ebery-where an' people less t'ink bad is parson. Parson is a man get easy money! Him preach, him don't work. A t'ink parson is de bes' man fe me form."

Therefore Anancy parted his hair, put on a long gown, rolled his eyes, and with a big book under his arm set out for crab country. Crabs have no brains, and Anancy believed that he would have an easy time with his converts. But their very lack of intelligence proved his stumbling block. In vain he expounded and pleaded; the crabs just flattened their little green eyes in their sockets and went to sleep during the preaching, much the same as certain people do during sermon-time. He tried raising his voice and gesticulating, but this alarmed his hearers, and away they scurried to their holes. He suggested their coming for help and advice, but waited vainly. Their self-appointed spiritual adviser found he could make no headway with them; neither he nor his preaching appealed to their imagination.

"Crab hab no sense," said Anancy to himself in great disgust. "Dem don't eben grateful fe all de time a spen' 'pon dem, and not eben one crab a get fe nyam. Dis yah bisness don't suit Anancy bwoy! You must go way, so t'ink pon something else."

So Anancy told the crabs he would be leaving them for a time, but that on his return he hoped they would give him a better hearing.

The crabs lifted their little green eyes but they made no promise about listening to him—may be

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Figure 1. Wona, 'Anancy Stories of Jamaica: Anancy and the Crab', *The West Indian Review*, 1.4 (December 1934), 61. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Pages from Jane's Diary

By E. M. CAMBRIDGE.

BEING persuaded in a weak moment by Aunt Augusta—and Aunt Augusta can be distressingly persuasive at times—to accompany Uncle Edgar and herself on a West Indian cruise, I have decided to write a diary of the cruise, and send it to you, Jerry Belton.

Aunt Augusta, in her heart of hearts, hates the idea of wasting her charming niece on such a flighty irresponsible young newspaper man (out at all hours, writing gruesome details of murders and street accidents; besides, red-haired men are *always* bad tempered!)—so you see, Jerry, you were directly responsible for the cruise. The least I can do is to dedicate the account of it to you. Particularly as you encouraged Aunt Augusta by remarking how thin and pale I looked.

Not that she really needed encouraging. Before I truly realised what I had let myself in for, Mr. and Mrs. Baring-White and Miss Jane Chittering were passengers on the "Oranis", rolling about on the horribly unsteady Atlantic. Jerry, darling, it was terrible. I was sea-sick—horribly sea-sick—and Aunt Augusta and the stewardess begged me, in bracing tones, to rouse myself and drink soup—perfectly dreadful soup. Aunt Augusta even went so far as to state firmly that sea sickness was merely imagination, and all I wanted was fresh air and plenty of food. In the end she dressed me and dragged me on deck. Then picture me, swathed like a mummy in rugs, lying in a chair on a slanting deck, shutting my eyes every time the ship rolled and the sky rushed down to meet us. I warn you solemnly, Jerry, that if we cruise for our honeymoon, and I am sea-sick, you must be frightfully sympathetic. I want someone to hold my hand and put eau-de-cologne on my brow. If you mention fresh air, food or imagination, I shall divorce you. The rest of the voyage was uneventful, but lovely. Blue seas and an enormous golden moon, and flying fish and long streamers of brown sargasso weed floating in the water. Porpoises tumbling, and a whale blowing in the distance—everyone tremendously excited.

But I wanted *you*, Jerry. Couldn't you write articles about porpoises and whales instead of murders and fires and street accidents? Of course, Aunt Augusta and Uncle Edgar chummed up with the most correct people on board, and I made friends with the ones Aunt Augusta thought didn't wear respectable bathing suits, but I managed to live it down.

Aunt Augusta had a row with the steward because her morning apple was overripe, and, one day, Uncle Edgar's chop was underdone. Having lived with them from babyhood, I survived.

We rowed ashore at Barbados in a small boat called the "Lily Bell", and having landed, we drove out to the Aquatic Club. All the coral roads were dazzlingly white, and hibiscus and oleanders grew along the way. The market women swung down the road balancing huge trays of fruit on their heads. We stopped to buy oranges, and an immense black woman in a large straw hat addressed Uncle Edgar as sweetheart. Aunt Augusta immediately swallowed a poker, and Uncle Edgar looked as nearly confused as I have ever seen him. I managed to restrain my unseemly laughter.

We drove out into the country right out to the other side of the island. Part of the road was shaded with huge trees, some queerly bearded with long hanging roots, past tall green canes and windmills. If you shut your eyes, the country reminded you of Holland. I suppose the windmills and the flat green fields did it. Then suddenly a cane field came into view or a tall black woman balancing a basket of fowls or bananas, and Holland vanished in a flash!

Anyway, I've found out something Aunt Augusta couldn't do! Balance a basket of fowls on her head! Could you, Jerry?

At last on the other side of the island we came to Bathsheba. What do you think of when you say "Bathsheba" to yourself? I used to think of a very tall opulent lady, with black hair in lovely waves, and a diamond brooch, and golden bracelets and a red velvet gown. I never shall again. Think of huge Atlantic rollers coming steadily in, and breaking green and white on black rocks and white sand, and then a roaring wind, tumbling your hair and almost lifting you off your feet. We saw the fishing fleet come in laden with flying fish, shining and silvery against the nets. Don't flying fish sound romantic? Almost as romantic as angels on horseback! When I was seven I longed violently and passionately to eat angels on horseback. At last, one day cook was persuaded to send them up for lunch. And when I discovered they were merely oysters and homely bacon, I lay on the floor and yelled and kicked!

Anyway, we had flying fish for lunch, and they were lovely!

Figure 2. E. M. Cambridge, 'Pages from Jane's Diary', *The West Indian Review*, 1.4 (December 1934), 65. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Of particular note is the specific print space in which these anancy stories were printed; namely in the section of the magazine entitled the 'West Indian Miscellany'. The section of the *Review*, which is also the location of other aetiological Trinidadian folktales, is described by Chapman as for 'sketches, articles and stories of a light or humorous nature not quite suitable for the main body of the REVIEW.[...] All material for this section must have a distinctive West Indian atmosphere'.⁶⁹ Given the *Review's* aim to publish West Indian writing, the decision to separate this section is an interesting one. The short stories in the main body of the *Review* and those in the miscellany were both required to be 'West Indian in background or character'; distinguishing between these therefore suggests it is the specific form of the folk tales which separates these from the other literary material.⁷⁰ This material in the miscellany is 'not quite suitable' as the specific articulation of West Indian culture does not fit with the 'literary, artistic and cultural plains' which Chapman's *Review* sought to build in the region.⁷¹ The first issue of the magazine includes a few paragraphs at the start of the 'Miscellany' giving a brief overview of the characters and traits of Anancy, Compère Monkey and Compère Cock, and of the 'most outrageous superstitions' that 'with a childlike faith in God, these people combine a firm belief in'; a section which both anticipates an outside reader but more significantly seeks to distance the magazine from the beliefs portrayed in the work in this section.⁷² Within the 'Miscellany' these literary works were afforded a less prominent position (see figure 1) than the short stories of the main body of the same issue of the magazine (see figure 2); the anancy story is crowded by the advertisements and its small heading does not draw attention as clearly as that of

⁶⁹ 'A West Indian Miscellany', *The West Indian Review*, 1.1 (September 1934), 49-55 (p. 49). The West Indian Miscellany also printed several Trinidadian folktales by Madeline Sellier, several of which are featuring another trickster figure, Compère Lapin; these aetiological stories use the rabbit character to entertain and instruct.

⁷⁰ This distinction between literary short stories and folk tales is not limited to the *Review* nor the early twentieth century; as recently as 2001 Stewart Brown and John Wickham made a distinction between the two when compiling their anthology, *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories* (Stewart Brown, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories* ed. by Stewart Brown and John Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. xiii-xxxiii). Whilst there is credence to these arguments, what is of interest here is the way in which the marginalisation of the anancy stories speaks to the type of literary culture which the magazines sought to develop and how this illuminates the assumptions and prejudices of the time.

⁷¹ 'A West Indian Miscellany', *The West Indian Review*, 1.1 (September 1934), 49-55 (p. 49).

⁷² Ibid.

the short story in figure 2. The West Indian nature of these anancy stories is confirmed by their presence in the *Review*, but their associations, and the lack of respectability of these folktales, leads to their marginalisation within the magazine's pages.

In a similar way an earlier publication *Pimento* (1927 Jamaica), which was published over four issues in 1927, also reproduced the texts of written anancy stories. Unlike the Jeffrey-Smith tales, which were written in standard English, these tales are written in dialect. *Pimento* printed one of these tales in each of its four issues, the author of these was not attributed though they were later published in a collection by Dorothy Clarke entitled *The Adventures of Brer Nancy* (1943).⁷³ Clarke was a Jamaican teacher and her stories reflect this in their composition, paralleling more closely the oral tales in their use of language. Once again, however, within the print space of the magazine these stories are distinguished. In *Pimento* these stories are placed within decorative borders which grow in complexity with each issue. The first of these (see figure 3), separates the folk tales from the rest of the magazine; this border, the only one in the issue, presents the story as distinct from, rather than part and parcel of, the cultural missives of the publication. The border and the print layout, centred in the page with hanging indents, make this work prominent in the magazine's pages, but emphasises its aesthetics rather than content. The more complex border of the later issue (see figures 4a and 4b) takes this further, aligning the anancy story with literature for children. The illustrations which dominate the first page provide a visual point of reference for the written story emphasising anancy's importance through his relatively large size and, by presenting him clothed and walking upright, giving prominence to his human features. The anancy tales, although formulaic, are also humorous and often carried morals and social commentaries; this presentation emphasises the pedagogical elements of the story by anticipating a child reader.

⁷³ Dorothy Clarke, *The Adventures of Brer Nancy: As told to Dorothy Clarke* (Kingston: Jamaica Welfare Commission, 1943).

ANANCY AND BROTHER TIGER NO. 1.

One day Annancy an' Bredda Tiger go a ribber fe wash dem kin.
 Annancy say to Bredda Tiger:—"Bredda Tiger, as you such a big man, if you fo in a de blue hole wid you fat you a go drowned, so you fe teck out you fat an' lef it yah."
 Tiger say to Bredda Annancy:—"You mus teck out fe you to."
 Annancy say: "You teck out fus, a ' me wi teck out after."
 Tiger fus teck out fe him.
 Annancy say:—"Go in a hole Bredda Tiger, an' meck me see how you swim light."
 Bredda Annancy nebba go in de hole.
 As Tiger was a pay attention to de swimmin, Annancy teck up him fat an' nyam it.
 Den Annancy wen so friten fe Tiger, him leave the river side an' go a Big Monkey Town.
 Him say:—"Bredda Monkey, me hear dem sing a sing a ribber side say:—
 "Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat,
 "Yesterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat,
 "Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat."
 De Big Monkey dribe him way, say dem don't want fe hear no sing.
 So him leave an' go a Little Monkey Town, an' wen him go him say:—
 "Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat,
 Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat."
 Den Monkey say:—"You mus sing de sing meck we hear.
 Den Annancy begin fe sing.
 Monkey love de sing so much dat dem meck a dance a night an' hab de same sing playin.
 So wen Annancy hear de sing was playin, him glad fe go back a bredda Tiger.
 Wen him go a ribber, him see Tiger a look fe him fat.
 Tiger say:—"Bredda Annancy, me can't fine me fat a tall."
 Annancy say:—"Hey! Hey! Bidybye me hear dem sing a Monkey Town
 "Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat,
 Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat."
 Bredda Tiger, if you tink se me lie, come mek we go a Little Monkey Town."
 So him an' Tiger go.
 Wen dem reach to de place, Annancy tell Tiger se dem mus hide in a bush.
 Den de monkey dem was dancin an' playin de same tune.
 Tiger hear.
 Den Annancy say:—"Bredda Tiger wha' me tell you? You no yerry me tell you say dem a call you name up yah?
 An de monkey dem nebba cease wid de tune:—
 "Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat,
 Yeshterday dis time me a nyam Tiger fat."
 Den Tiger go in de dance an' ax Monkey fe him fat.
 De Monkey dem say dem no know nuttin name so, 'tis Bredda Annancy learn dem de sing.
 So Tiger could manage de Little Monkey dem, an' him want fe fight dem..
 So de Little Monkey sen way a bearer to Big Monkey Town, an bring a lot of soldier, an' flog Bredda Tiger an' Annancy.
 So Bredda Tiger have fe teck bush an' Annancy run up a house-top.
 From dat Tiger lib in a wood till now, an' Annancy in de house-top.
Jack Mantoro me no choose any.

Figure 3. 'Anancy and Brother Tiger No. 1', *Pimento*, 1.2 (July 1st 1927), 26.
 Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

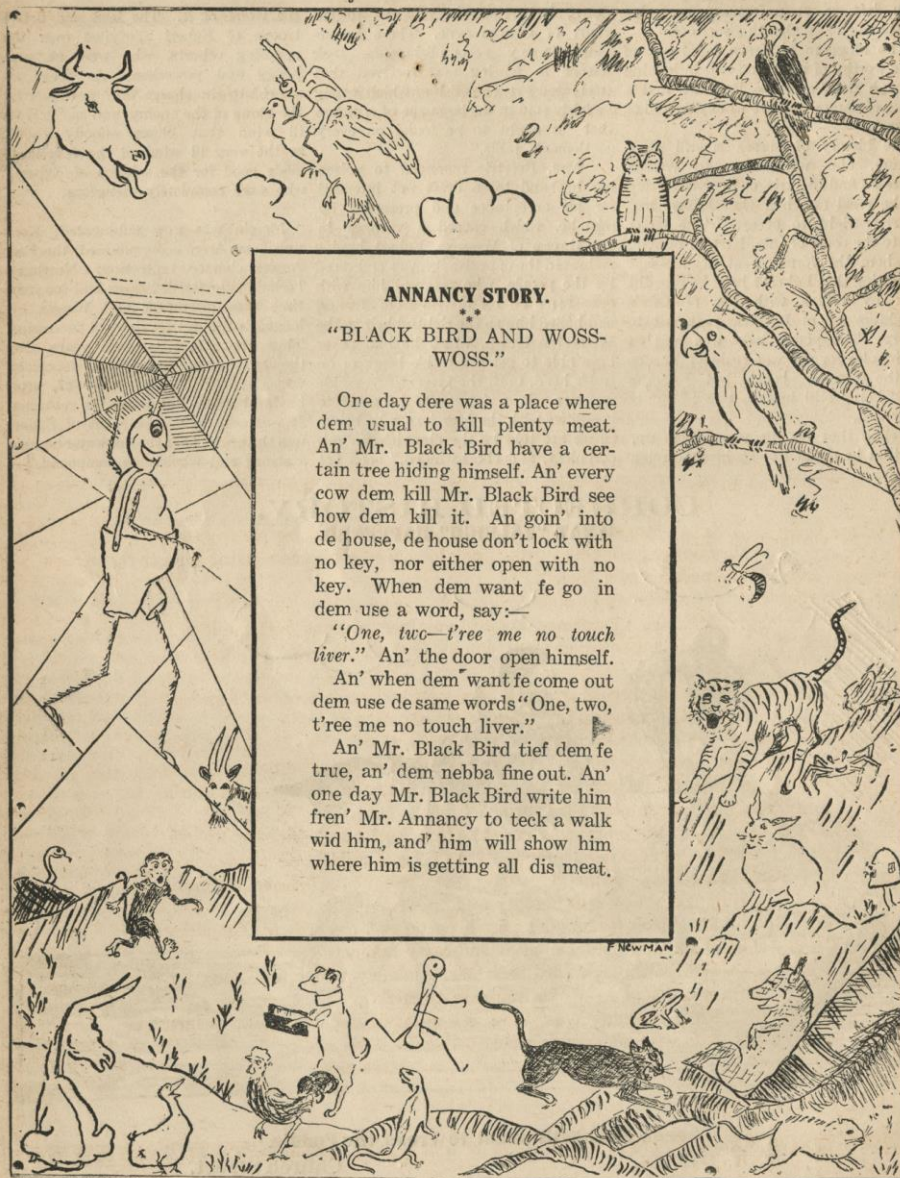


Figure 4a. 'Anancy Story: Black bird and Woss Woss', *Pimento*, 1.4 (August 1st 1927), 82.
Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

An' when him is goin' him tell Mr. Annancy all de rule that when him go pon de tree him mus' listen and him will hear what dem say to open de door.

What Mr. Annancy do, when him see de butcher dem was passing wid de meat, Annancy was tremblin' an sayin' "Look a meat, look a meat."

"Bredda Annancy hush you mout,' you go a meck dem shot me."

When de butcher dem gone, Mr. Black-Bird come down, he and Mr. Annancy, an go inside de house de very same a de butcher dem do, say, "One, two, three me no touch liver," As dem go in a de house Black Bird tell him dat him mus' teck no liver. An' Mr. Annancy teck liver and put in a him bag. An' when Black Bird started out with de same word Mr. Annancy lef' inside was tying him bag.

Now Mr. Annancy ready fe come out of de house, count "One, two, three me no touch liver," an' by dis time him have liver in a him bag. De door won't open. Mr. Black Bird call him "Come on."

Him say "De door won't open."

Then him count more than what he was to by get so frighten.

Him say:—"One, two, three, four five six, seven eight, nine, ten, me no touch liver."

The door won't open.

Mr. Black Bird say "Look in you bag you mus' be have liver."

De fellow so sweet mout' say in a cross way, "No!" Black Bird leave him.

When Black Bird go home him look and can't see Mr. Annancy so him fly a bush an' get up a whole regiment of soldier.

Who these soldier was, was Woss-Woss. Mr. Blackbird was General, march before. When dem reach to de place dem was just in time, for de butcher was takin' Mr. Annancy fe go tie him on a tree to cut him with hot iron.

Word of command was given from Mr. Black Bird, and by de time de butcher dem come to de door wid Annancy, de whole world of Woss-Woss was come down on dem. Dem have fe leggo Mr. Annancy not one of dem butcher couldn't see.

Mr. Black Bird soldier gain de battle and get 'way Mr. Annancy Dem teck all de butcher meat and carry home.

Den Mr. Black Bird teck Mr. Annancy under him wing an' all him soldiers an' fly to him own country.

From that day Woss-Woss is a great fighter until now, so bird never do without dem fe guard dem nest.

Jack Mantora me no choose any.

Figure 4b. 'Anancy Story: Black bird and Woss Woss', *Pimento*, 1.4 (August 1st 1927), 83.
Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Over a decade later *Public Opinion* also printed Dorothy Clarke's anancy stories, though in a very different format. Between September 1939 and August 1940 *Public Opinion* regularly published Clarke's stories, with a story in nearly every issue. Initially these were given a small space, fitted between other features in the magazine, but within a few issues, this space was expanded, and these stories were presented on full pages with their own main headings. Unlike their presentation in *Pimento*, in *Public Opinion* these stories were not visually marked out as different from the magazine's other content. *Public Opinion* did not present these as works for children, nor does it marginalise them within its wider social and cultural offerings.⁷⁴ This magazine's presentation of these anancy stories is reflective of a broader shift that occurred by the 1940s, and in particular *Public Opinion*'s political stance. *Public Opinion* was a key magazine for proclaiming the wider political significance of cultural work and the gradual change in the print space which it gave to these stories is indicative of a growing confidence over the magazine's first six months of the importance of this project. The wider shift, particularly in Jamaica, occurred in part through the work of Louise Bennett, whose public performances of anancy stories in the late 1930s led to *The Gleaner* printing her work in the early 1940s, and subsequently a published collection in 1950.⁷⁵ This process was, however, a gradual one. Simpson notes that Bennett 'braved the displeasure of members of the Establishment and the Jamaican middle classes' when performing anancy stories and her own verse in dialect, and for many decades she was not recognised as a writer nor was her work afforded the respect given to literary fiction.⁷⁶ These examples from *The West Indian Review*, *Pimento* and *Public Opinion* refer to the direct inclusion of anancy stories, but this is not the only way in which writers could, to use Archibald's words, draw on these as 'inexhaustible sources of inspiration'.⁷⁷ Anancy's trickster character could have provided a model for short

⁷⁴ These stories, however, continue to be treated as a discrete entity within the magazine's print space by Raphael Dalleo. In his 2010 article 'The Public Sphere and Jamaican Anticolonial Politics', Dalleo lists each of the 'Stories, poetry, and plays' published in *Public Opinion* between February 1937 and April 1944, but chooses not to list the 38 Brer Nancy stories, indicating that he does not see these as literary stories (Raphael Dalleo, 'The Public Sphere and Jamaican Anticolonial Politics: *Public Opinion*, *Focus* and the Place of the Literary', *Small Axe*, 32 (July 2010), 56-82).

⁷⁵ Louise Bennett, *Anancy Stories and Dialect Verse* (Kingston: Pioneer Press, 1950).

⁷⁶ Hyacinth M. Simpson, 'Patterns and Periods: Oral Aesthetics and a Century of Jamaican Short Story Writing', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12.1 (November 2004), 1-30 (p. 17).

⁷⁷ Charles Archibald, 'West Indian Writing in the Infant Days', 10. An isolated example of this, in the magazines of my study, is Lilly Perkins's short story 'Two's Company' published in *The Outlook* in

fiction, especially given the focus on a central character and on action – two elements that the editorials found lacking in the short stories they received. Later generations of writers would bring anancy into their literary work, most noticeably Andrew Salkey in his rewritings of Anancy stories and Olive Senior's use of a trickster figure, but for writers in 1920s-1950s, tentatively formulating the boundaries of a field of literature, anancy stories were problematic cultural sources.

In her account of the oral influences on literature Simpson does note that there was a relative paucity of this type of material in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, a tendency she attributes to the end of the war: 'The war years helped to stir up latent Empire loyalties [...] the resurgence of Empire rhetoric and colonialist sentiment resulted in a shift in attitude away from local oral lore, customs and traditions; writers became condescending and patronising, sometimes even openly hostile'.⁷⁸ This drawing away from such forms, however, cannot be so simply attributed to colonialist sentiment, as these same decades saw the emergence of anti-colonial thought; rather it can be attributed to a change in social position from which these writers were drawn. The examples of anancy story collections Simpson draws on from the 1890s through the first decade of the twentieth century were penned by members of the white, colonial and expatriate communities, such as Pamela Colman Smith, Walter Jekyll and Una Jeffrey Smith. There is a significant shift in the racial and class background of the writers who Simpson cites later on in the decade such as Louise Bennett and Andrew Salkey and a different political context. Between the earlier and later group of writers there is a gap, the decades in which middle-class magazines and newspapers were the only local publications. Edmondson has described the story of the middle classes as one of 'striving to reconcile their origins in a black-identified culture with its aspirations for social ascendance and international recognition'.⁷⁹ For many members of the middle classes, traditions

1933. This story translates the trickster figure of anancy into two children who play a trick on their mother in order to get the money they wish to have for treats. Fooling both their mother and the neighbour, with whom she was quarrelling, by dressing up as a duppy (ghost) the children, nicknamed Anancy and Pity-me-little, succeed in their plan. To my knowledge this is the single direct attempt to transform the traditional tales into a literary short story (Lilly Perkins, 'Two's Company', *The Outlook* (July 1933), 8-9, 12, 20, 31).

⁷⁸ Simpson, 'Patterns and Periods', p. 9.

⁷⁹ Belinda Edmondson, *Caribbean Middlebrow: Leisure Culture and the Middle Class* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 2.

such as these would be familiar, but inconsistent with their self-identification with the colonial classes and aspirations for the future, making such cultural forms points of anxiety. This anxiety was, for example, evident upon the introduction of a series of new textbooks by Captain J. Cutteridge, initially in Trinidad in the late 1920s then across the islands, which utilised folk tales as reading material, causing protestations from middle-class parents.⁸⁰ Their complaints were two fold. Firstly that students would be disadvantaged and should continue to use texts which provided the familiarity with British culture which was necessary for success in the British exams and their future social ascendancy. Secondly 'African folk-tales were considered by middle-class West Indians to be degrading, for they were part of lower-class black culture'.⁸¹ Both the push and pull factors around respectability came together in the rejection of these textbooks.⁸² Against such a context the absence of a multiplicity of anancy stories, or anancy-inspired literature, in magazines produced by and for the middle classes, becomes clear. Bailey's specific articulation of a black consciousness and pride, was not one which was shared more widely, in 1933 her call to the Quill and Ink Club was somewhat ahead of its time. The magazines of the 1920s and 1930s reflect an ambivalence of a class of readers and writers torn between the respectability of literary culture, and the widespread popularity of anancy stories and their associations.

This issue of respectability informed and shaped many of the elements of the magazines. There is, for example, some ambivalence about the use of creole or patois in several of the editorials. In its early years *Bim* called for stories in 'good English, or Bajan' but the qualifier 'good' indicates a stylistic rather than written phonetic use of dialect.⁸³ Una Marson makes clear in the conditions of a competition entry in *The Cosmopolitan* that 'Dialect stories, unless exceptionally

⁸⁰ Carl C. Campbell, *The Young Colonials: A Social History of Education in Trinidad and Tobago 1834-1939* (Kingston: UWI Press, 1996), pp. 99-100.

⁸¹ Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 91.

⁸² Even in later decades Anancy's role in education has been a matter of controversy, with a proposal as late as 2001 to ban Anancy as a folk hero at the Caribbean Union of teachers conference, something that Zobel Marshall attributes to the continuing 'tensions between celebrating a cultural tradition and the demands for social conformity' (Emily Zobel Marshall, "'The Anansi Syndrome', p. 127).

⁸³ 'Editors' Comeback', *Bim*, 1.4 (April 1944), 1.

good, will not be [accepted]'.⁸⁴ Very few stories in the 1920s, 30s and 40s were written in anything other than standard English, and the use of dialect within written conversations varied enormously. This policing of the literary voice is also a comment on the content; Marson's use of the term 'dialect stories', rather than stories written in dialect, alludes to the content of the story as well as its language, suggesting in particular a rejection of stories emanating out of oral folk tales. This particular tension between the content and literary voice in written folk tales is apparent in *Kyk-over-al* too. As relatively late as 1959, A.J. Seymour attaches a disclaimer of sorts to his publication of a folk tale 'Lulu and the Camoodi' which had won a History and Culture Week Literary Competition, because this tale was written in 'Creolese'.⁸⁵ His editorial preface notes: 'I would encourage readers to persevere through any difficulty they may find for the surprising sophistication of feeling and thought so subtly shaded in the story'.⁸⁶ There is an implication here that readers would be unfamiliar with reading dialect, and potentially unprepared to consider it an effective literary voice. Articles in *Bim* and *Kyk-over-al*, including Frank Collymore's long running 'Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect', indicate an academic interest in the lexicography, rather than the literary potential, of dialect.⁸⁷

Dialect, with its association with the working classes, was not seen as a respectable literary register; as the elocution competitions of the literary and debating societies indicate, the middle classes were concerned to distance themselves from the working classes. The case of Louise Bennett highlights the position afforded to dialect. Bennett's dialect poetry in the first few decades of her work was considered humorous entertainment, rather than literature. Commenting on this period in 1968 she noted:

[I] have been set apart by other creative writers a long time ago because of the language I speak and work in. From the beginning nobody ever recognised me as a writer. "Well, she is 'doing' dialect;" it wasn't even

⁸⁴ 'Short Story Competition', *The Cosmopolitan*, 2.6 (October 1929), 192.

⁸⁵ A. J. Seymour, 'Comment', *Kyk-over-al*, 26 (December 1959), i.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Collymore's interest in language was longstanding; the first part of this glossary was published in the seventeen issue of *Bim* (December 1952) and it was added to twelve more times over the following 20 years. See also: D. A. Westmass, 'On Writing Creolese', *Kyk-over-al*, 7 (December 1948), 16-17; D. A. Westmass, 'Some More Aspects of Creolese', *Kyk-over-al*, 11 (October 1950), 20-22.

writing you know. Up to now a lot of people don't even think I write.
They say "Oh, you just stand up and say these things!"⁸⁸

It was only with a critical interest in Bennett, initiated by Mervyn Morris, that her work was perceived to have cultural and literary value.⁸⁹ By ascribing Bennett to the realm of comedy, and performance, her work was termed suitable for consumption, but separated from that of "proper" literature. Her work does not appear in the Jamaican magazines of the time. As Edmondson notes 'Creole [had] been so firmly established as the antithesis of English that to an emergent middle class, for whom the acquisition of "proper" grammar was an essential characteristic of class identity and an article of faith in the armament of social identity, to identify with creole speech beyond the realm of the apparently superficial or none-serious entertainments of the comic play would have been unthinkable'.⁹⁰ Several of the magazines did have pages which published humorous works, such as *The Outlook*; creole was for example used extensively in E. M. Cupidon's comedic observations on Jamaican life and people such as 'Ebery Puss Hab 'Im Four O'Clock'. These, however, are not presented as literary works, as the subtitle 'conversation overheard at a Kingston Grass Market' signifies.⁹¹ Furthermore, these are printed on a page alongside 'Funnyisms by Ackee', distinguished from the fictional work. These works are marked out as humour, and their place in the contextual code of the magazines reflects this, separating them from the more serious literary works. In such a context it is perhaps not surprising that middle-class anxieties around dialect led to most of the literary submissions being written in standard English.

These anxieties, I argue, also informed and shaped the content of many of the literary works which drew upon a wider tradition of oral storytelling, particularly earlier works from the 1920s and 1930s. Nancy was not the only character from oral traditions popular at the time; other oral stories, with less formulaic structures and pedagogical undertones were well known, such as the spirits and characters of superstitions and folk tales. It is just such a figure that C.L.R. James utilised in his story, 'La Diabliesse', read by Hulbert Footner and mentioned in the correspondence

⁸⁸ David Scott, 'Bennett on Bennett', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 14.1-2 (March - June 1968), 97-101 (p. 98).

⁸⁹ Mervyn Morris, 'On Reading Louise Bennett, Seriously', *Jamaica Journal*, 1.1 (1967), 69-74.

⁹⁰ Edmondson, *Caribbean Middlebrow*, p. 91.

⁹¹ E.M. Cupidon, 'Ebery Puss Hab 'Im Four O'Clock', *The Outlook*, 1.4 (October 1933), 22.

with which I opened this chapter. The figure of the *diablesse* is common in Trinidadian folklore, a woman of enticing figure and dress, who though she gives the illusion of beauty hides her face with a hat or veil. She has one cloven hoof hidden by her skirts, and entices male victims with the promise of sex, before leaving them raving mad. James had a clear interest in the *diablesse* character and he subsequently published two short stories, with a similar central theme, in *The Quarterly Magazine* in 1928.

The first of these stories, 'La Diablesse', tells the story of Henry Lamarre whose 'terrible experience deprived him first of his reason and ultimately of his life'.⁹² 'La Diablesse' is a tale of warning given directly to the reader, who is addressed in the opening line. The content of the story is prefaced by a long preamble discussing the commonplace nature of such tales: 'if in any part of the country you sit with half-a-dozen men, it will be easy to find one at least who will confess that he has had or has been near to a similar personal experience'.⁹³ This section convey locals' warnings about 'liaisons with lower-class women from Martinique and Grenada', evoking the spectre of the African continent: '[i]n Grenada more than in any other West Indies Island you will find black people who have preserved the secrets of their ancestors, [...] and have remained to this day feared and potent'.⁹⁴ This opening foregrounds superstition as a thematic concern. The explanatory nature of these opening paragraphs, outlining the popularity of the tales, would appear to anticipate an outside reader unfamiliar with Trinidadian life, although the magazine in which it was published was a small publication local to Port-of-Spain. Although the story directly addresses the reader, by marking them as somehow outside the world of the story, the reader is distanced from the account of the *diablesse*. The story goes on to recount how the young, 'handsome [and] debonair' solicitor Henry Lamarre had a relationship with a Grenadian woman, Louisa, of whom he tires, and she is forced to return to the barrack-yard and make money from doing laundry.⁹⁵ One evening, having once again spurned Louisa, Lamarre goes to a dance where he

⁹² C.L.R. James, 'La Diablesse', *The Quarterly Magazine*, 6 (Second Quarter, 1928), 12- 14. Reprinted in *The Journal of West Indian Literature*, 9.2 (April 2001), 4-7 (p. 5.) All quotations are taken from this later reprint and the pages numbers refer to this version.

⁹³ C.L.R. James, 'La Diablesse', p. 4.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ C.L.R. James, 'La Diablesse', p. 5.

sees an attractive woman and ‘with the impudence of the man accustomed to intimate relations with a variety of women, [...] walked up to her and asked her for a dance’.⁹⁶ Following the dance they walk out into the night as he attempts to seduce her, ‘[b]ut at that moment some diabolical metamorphosis occurred in the woman. She seemed to shrivel in his arms, and instead of the soft lips of the beautiful Mrs. Gregory, Lamarre felt himself kissing [...] a cold and grinning skeleton’.⁹⁷ This closing section is, we are told, the result of Lamarre’s own confession, though he is now in the ‘oblivion of madness’.⁹⁸

The narrative voice stops short of confirming both the account and the superstitious beliefs through the inclusion of asides such as ‘(so I have heard recently)’ in parentheses.⁹⁹ James’ story is told as a reported incident uncovered after the fact: ‘From his ravings, and during a solitary lucid interval [Lamarre’s] friends were able to learn the conclusion of the terrible experience’ and retold by the narrator thirty years later.¹⁰⁰ It is recounted in the manner of a newspaper report of a crime, with notes made of stories being corroborated by others. This presentation of the tale, with a general discussion of the *diabliesse* and regional superstitions more broadly, provides a context to the story at the cost, however, of the dramatic tension. Having already learnt of his fate in the opening paragraph the circumstances of Lamarre’s downfall are less compelling. Published in a Trinidadian magazine and for a local audience, the title of this story forecloses the sense of mystery which the story attempts to develop. Noticing a guest at the dance the narrator notes: ‘It seemed strange to him that she should be neglected, for she was a pretty woman, with a light-brown skin, black hair, and a tall, full figure such as he admired’; contemporary readers would identify this as the *diabliesse* of the title and her attraction to him alone, being a result of her supernatural abilities.¹⁰¹ This is not to suggest that James’ story is devoid of surprise or literary merit; James skilfully utilises the brevity of the format to leave the final chilling image foremost in the readers’ mind: ‘with its arms still locked behind his neck, he held in his embrace,

⁹⁶ C.L.R. James, ‘La Diabliesse’, p. 6.

⁹⁷ C.L.R. James, ‘La Diabliesse’, p. 7.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ C.L.R. James, ‘La Diabliesse’, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ C.L.R. James, ‘La Diabliesse’, p. 6.

and had been pressing his lips against, a cold and grinning skeleton'.¹⁰² The structuring of this story, and the narrative voice, however, does limit the extent to which a reader can engage with the characters, and the development of these characters beyond simple tropes. It is this story which caused Footner to suggest James should, 'try it in the *words* of your cook or nursemaid, and see if it is not more exciting'.¹⁰³ Footner suggested a change in the narrative framing, vocalising the story through the cook or nursemaid, namely a narrative voice invested or believing in the supernatural elements, rather than the dispassionate report of the story to an outsider where the truth of the story is questioned. As Footner's advice implies the distancing of the story's framing, its structure, and the lack of veracity for the tale garnered through the narrative voice, limits the effectiveness of the story. Footner's advice, and specifically the use of 'cook or nursemaid' as a shorthand for a working class character, may be problematic, but he does highlight the issue of the disjuncture between the narrator's position and the story's drama.

In her article 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"' Michèle Levy posits that it was Mendes, rather than James, who took up this advice. Through my archival work, however, a second story by James on this theme has emerged.¹⁰⁴ Published in the same magazine a few months later, 'The Strange Experience of Mr Eugene Constant' appears to be a direct response to Footner's comment.¹⁰⁵ In this short story James returns to the image of a man, taken in by a *diabliesse*, and left mentally deranged by the experience, and he once again uses the setting of the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain. Unlike the earlier story, the opening paragraph of this tale and its title do not hint at the nature of Constant's "strange experience". James moves immediately into the story, enabling a more detailed

¹⁰² C.L.R. James, 'La Diabliesse', p. 7.

¹⁰³ Michèle Levy, 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"', p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Levy, unaware of this second story, suggests Mendes (to whom James had passed on Footner's letter) was the one to take up his advice in his short story, 'La Soucouyante', narrated by an elderly Barbadian cook (Michèle Levy, 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diabliesse"', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 9.2 (April 2001), 1-3). Another figure in Caribbean folktales, La Soucouyante, is a night spirit who sheds her skin, and flies in the form of a ball of fire, to find animals and humans and drink their blood. Elsewhere in the region she is known as 'Ole-Higue'. This story by Mendes was posthumously published in: Alfred Mendes, *Pablo's Fandango and other Stories*, ed. by Michèle Levy (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997), pp. 153-160.

¹⁰⁵ C.L.R. James, 'The Strange Experience of Mr Eugene Constant', *The Quarterly Magazine*, 2.1 (September 1928), 9-12 (p. 9).

characterisation of Constant, for whom the reader is told 'the chief avocation of his life was the unremitting and indiscriminate pursuit of women'.¹⁰⁶ In this short story James' narrative follows, though it is not voiced through, Mr Constant's perspective giving the reader an insight into his arrogance: 'He could not remember having seen her before, but he was not in the least surprised that to her he was no stranger: nearly everybody in Port of Spain knew him'.¹⁰⁷ James' description of the woman allows a subtle nod towards her true identity, the wide brimmed hat hiding her face, and her appearance alone at night on the Savannah.¹⁰⁸ However, the description of her house implies that Constant is correct in his assumption that she is 'some middle class, respectably bred woman who had fallen into immoral habits', keeping open the possibility of other explanations for her strange appearance at night on the Savannah.¹⁰⁹

Having described Constant arriving at her rooms, and taking a seat on the bed, awaiting the sexual liaison he has come to expect, the narrative shifts to the omniscient narrator describing the actions of the following day. By telling the narrative chronologically James builds up the sense of intrigue, from the uncharacteristic failure of Constant to arrive at his place of work, to the reports of him having been seen walking alone along the streets of the city the night before, introducing uncanny elements to the tale. This break from the action of the previous night to the reactions of the next morning, leaving the precise events of the interaction between Constant and the woman untold, maintains this sense of mystery. Mr Constant is found unconscious and recovers sufficiently to tell his tale, but he too was left with the effects of that night and 'was never the same man again [... he] died almost an imbecile haunted to the last moment of his life by the memory of his strange and terrible experience'.¹¹⁰ Constant has, like Lamarre, fallen foul of a *diablesse*. Once again, however, this is never explicitly stated by the narrator, rather James voices this through the reactions of the locals:

¹⁰⁶ C.L.R. James, 'The Strange Experience', p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ La Diabliesse is often found walking on grass to disguise the sound of her cloven hoof.

¹⁰⁹ C.L.R. James, 'The Strange Experience', p. 10.

¹¹⁰ C.L.R. James, 'The Strange Experience', p. 12.

Some there were who thought his brain had been unhinged by his illness, but that did not account satisfactorily for the almost inaccessible position in which he had been found. Other suggested that he had been mad from the minute that he had left the house. And this was the general opinion of the educated people. But all over Trinidad were men who could relate experiences not dissimilar, and the tragic death of Henry Lamarre was recalled. Of the mysterious woman – *la diablesse*, as the creoles call evil spirits of her type – no one ever found the slightest trace'.¹¹¹

This reference to local men all over the island relating similar experiences is a reworking of the same idea from 'La Diablesse' and within both of these short stories the central character of the other is mentioned. Lamarre is referred to at the close of 'The Strange Experience' and Constant is mentioned in the opening paragraphs of 'La Diablesse', further linking these two stories. The reference to the 'general opinion of the educated people' provides the reader with a response they too can adopt to the events of the story.¹¹²

This second story of C.L.R. James' engages the reader by building up the dramatic tension; were these two pieces linked as I am suggesting, the changes in the form and structuring of these stories would indicate that James was trying out different ways to present folk material in a written short story form. The first story presents this material explicitly framed through a narrator reporting the story, while the second is more directly told, though similarly retaining narrative ambiguity as to the cause of the character's insanity. In the light of Footner's letter it is possible to speculate that this second story is a revision of 'La Diablesse'. Magazines such as *The Quarterly* gave writers like James the opportunity to publish a number of works in quick succession, developing ideas. The magazine can be seen as a multi-issue work; it does not have the stasis of the novel, nor a single final version. Instead the magazine through its fluidity of publication encourages experimentation. Interestingly, James did not fully follow Footner's suggestion to write the story in 'the words of your cook or nursemaid'; the shift in structure and form is not coupled with the additional voicing of this tale by a working class narrator.¹¹³ Unlike James' later short stories, published in *The Beacon*, and novel *Minty Alley* (1936), both

¹¹¹ C.L.R. James, 'The Strange Experience', p. 11.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Levy, 'C.L.R. James, Alfred H. Mendes and "La Diablesse"', p. 2.

these short stories notably almost entirely avoid using dialect in dialogue. Footner's advice, however, is not only suggestive of the potential use of language, but also the position of the narrator to the stories' content; by choosing to narrate 'The Strange Experience' through an omniscient narrator, rather than as a character involved in the story, James' story does not fully commit to the supernatural explanation. Though there is some development from the earlier story 'La Diabliesse' where the framing of the story as a told-tale directly introduced scepticism, in this second story James is still tentative in his literary rendering of this well-known folk character.

As Sander has noted in several of these earlier short stories James uses the narrative device of reportage and reproduced conversations as literary tools, techniques which embed a distance within the story.¹¹⁴ In fact we can see a progression of sorts in the manner in which James does this over a series of short stories. In 'La Divina Pastora', commonly known as his first work, which as noted above was first told to James by his grandmother, the opening section still bears the traces of this:

Of my own belief in this story I shall say nothing. What I have done is put it down as far as possible just as it was told to me, in my own style, but with no addition to or subtraction from, the essential facts.¹¹⁵

This opening, and the references to 'women's rights [and] Ibsenic theories' not only present the story as a reported narrative but also mark the narrator as educated, at a distance from the cocoa-picking characters.¹¹⁶ The opening of 'La Diabliesse' the following year is less marked, 'I leave it to others to explain why almost every village in Trinidad can offer you a variant of the following tale', though the narrative voice is once again an outsider, and there is a similar inclusion of scepticism in the opening sentence and subsequent passage.¹¹⁷ In both these stories the reader is addressed directly, situating these as told-tales, and distinguishing the narrator as separate. In 'The Strange Incidence' James uses an omniscient narrator rather than

¹¹⁴ Sander, *Trinidad Awakening*, pp. 92-93.

¹¹⁵ C.L.R. James, 'La Divina Pastora', in *The C.L.R. James Reader*, ed. by Anna Grimshaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 25-28 (p. 25). 'La Divina Pastora' was originally published in 1927 in *The Saturday Evening Review*.

¹¹⁶ C.L.R. James, 'La Divina Pastora', p. 25.

¹¹⁷ C.L.R. James, 'La Diabliesse', p. 4.

the framing previously used; although this brings the reader closer to the story, as there is not the additional distancing of the told-tale, the narrative voice remains outside of the action, observing the events. These changes in narrative positioning over these stories, some of James' earliest works, are suggestive of the process of experimentation. James' return to the *diablesse* idea suggests an interest in the traditional tales of Trinidad and the potential of these for literary short stories, however, his presentation of these in these two pieces of short fiction is indicative of an uncertainty of how to reimagine this material in a written form.

James is not alone in using this narrative device of reportage; this approach is common amongst the short stories of these magazines, most notably in the earlier decades of my study, when dealing with obeah. Another short story taken from *The Quarterly Magazine*, 'Black Magic' by Edgar Jackson, also utilises the tale within a tale; the narrator, another visitor to the island, tells the story his friend conveyed to him of a woman cursed by obeah.¹¹⁸ The narrative voice, in a similar manner to James' first story, goes into a relatively lengthy description of the popularity and nature of the superstitions in which the townsfolk believed. The woman, the wife of the Director of Education, whose husband had got into a fight with her neighbours was previously 'a very temperate woman [...] but inside three months she was drinking like a fish'.¹¹⁹ The cursing of the woman by the neighbour's mother is alluded to through the report of the belief of the local people, though the narrator remains distant, leaving an ambivalence. The structuring of the story, and the visitor status of the narrator, allows Jackson to convey the possibility of obeah without endorsing such an explanation. The explanatory section gives context to the beliefs it portrays and, as in James' 'La Diablesse', sets up a distinction between the "them" who believe in the supernatural and the "us" (the narrator, and by extension writer and reader) who do not.

In Leonard Archer's 'What Are They' the told-tale narrative is used for comedic effect. In this story the distinction between these two groups, those who believe in the supernatural and the rational protagonist, becomes blurred; the protagonist

¹¹⁸ Edgar Jackson, 'Black Magic', *The Quarterly Magazine* (Christmas 1930), 10-15.

¹¹⁹ Edgar Jackson, 'Black Magic', p. 15.

finds himself swayed by the superstitions, only to discover the 'rattle of chains' he heard was merely four mule carts passing.¹²⁰ Wallace Donovan's 'The Rise and Fall of Samuel Prescott' is similarly framed as a told-tale, and the narrative of Prescott's business success and subsequent ruin is linked to the power of Ma Dublin, the obeah woman.¹²¹ Once again the conversations between the narrator and the character telling the tale, leave space for disbelief and ambiguity as to the causes of the action. Commenting on the short story he considered lost, fifty years later in a personal letter to Reinhard Sander, James' noted 'The whole point of writing is to make the events as realistic as possible until you come to the end which can only be explained by the supernatural'.¹²² For James, and the writers of these other two stories, however, the endings of their stories stop short of the supernatural explanations being confirmed. The introduction of ambiguity at this stage, I would suggest, is part of this wider hesitation as to how literary short stories, and their middle class authors, could draw on the folklore without aligning themselves too closely with the content and beliefs of the characters. This narrative framing retains some orality, without using first-hand accounts and preserving for their work the respectability of written literature. There is a clear interest in these folk tales, which comes through both the literature and the non-fiction work which the magazines produced, and both seem concerned to keep a distinction between this and the reader, either through the narrative framing or by making the material a topic of study. Articles such as Dennis Mahabir's 'Strange customs of our Trinidad folk' published in *The Minerva Review* defamiliarised the folk tales, presenting them as abstract objects of study or curiosities, a "respectable" form of written narratives about folk customs.¹²³

2.3 Conclusion

These oral folktales and cultural traditions are only one small part of the movement towards an indigenous local literature. However, the direct calls in magazines for

¹²⁰ Leonard Archer, 'What Are They', *The Forum*, 2.4 (September 1933), 36-7.

¹²¹ Wallace Donovan, 'The Rise and Collapse of Samuel Prescott', *The Quarterly Magazine* (Christmas 1930), 35-41.

¹²² Sander, 'The Trinidad awakening' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1979) n.7., pp 212-213.

¹²³ Dennis Jules Mahabir, 'Strange Customs of our Trinidad folk', *The Minerva Review*, 1.2 (July-August 1941), 15, 25.

such material to be utilised by contemporaries at the time, and the broader movement towards “local colour” brings a focus to these existing cultural traditions. I have chosen to look specifically at this one facet here as it highlights some of the ambivalences and contradiction at work in this period. The magazines and the literary culture shaped around and through the publications was inflected by the concerns of those who produced it. The aspirations of these middle-class West Indians for a West Indian literature, in turn, met their concerns and anxieties around their own social position and desire for respectability. As I have sought to suggest through my discussion of anancy and the use of creole in literature, this was the beginning of a period of change in the wider political landscapes as colonial rule came to an end. However, for the magazines of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s black-identified culture and creole language was an ambivalent heritage on which to draw.

Victor Ramraj has argued that ‘the indigenous progenitor of the Caribbean short story is the oral traditions of storytelling’ citing the three main ‘cultural constituencies’ of Caribbean folktales, the traditional stories of the ‘Arawak and Carib Indian, African slaves, and the East Indian indentured labourers’.¹²⁴ This narrative, however, elides some of the complex forces at work in these decades. Closer consideration of the magazines shows that the creation of a local literature was a process of negotiation. The simple, enthusiastic and aspirant claims with which the magazines’ opening editorials began belie some of the difficulties which these publications were to find themselves facing in fulfilling their aims. In contrast to many of the exuberant messages about the literary potential of the region, or the exciting literary and cultural developments which editorials across the region proclaimed, the work published and their critiques of their competition entries highlight the reality for many editors. Although they were clear in their aims of having an indigenous literature, the form this should take, or how this could be achieved, was something that the magazines struggled with over this period. These magazines display a real desire for a West Indian literature, distinct from, but building on that of the colonial power. This was a complex process, however, and

¹²⁴ Victor Ramraj, ‘Short Fiction’, in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: English- and Dutch-speaking regions*, ed. by A. James Arnold, 3 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001), I, pp. 119-223 (p. 201).

one fraught with difficulties due to their social position, something I explore more in the next chapter. The picture of literature which emerges through closer consideration of these magazines, and specifically the editorials, competition entries and the judges' commentaries is one which was contested even as it was constructed; both enthusiastically called for and slow to emerge.

Chapter Three - Middle-Class Ventures: Literary and Debating Societies and Magazines

*The literary-club idea is a sort of popular malady in Trinidad - like Typhoid Fever or Influenza.*¹

A significant number of the magazines within this study were attached to literary and debating societies including: *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* (1924-1929 Trinidad), *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928-1929), *The Forum Quarterly* (1931-1945 Barbados), *The Outlook* (1933 Jamaica), *The Minerva Review* (1941-1949 Trinidad), *Bim* (1942-1996 Barbados), *The Weymouth Magazine* (1943-1949 Barbados), *Kyk-over-al* (1945-1961 British Guiana) and *The St George's Literary League Magazine* (1946 Grenada).² This was not a coincidence, as these groups were very popular for a number of decades from the 1920s. This broad movement of clubs across the British West Indies emerged from the middle classes and combined social, political and cultural facets in their programmes.³ This club movement happened in parallel to and often, as in the case of the club magazines, in conjunction with the broader movement towards magazines which this thesis identifies; at the heart of both is a similar 'do-it-yourself' impetus with middle-class West Indians gaining cultural autonomy and drawing on their personal interests and utilising their limited resources effectively.

The literary and debating societies and the magazine culture of these decades are the work of middle-class West Indians creating a social and cultural space within colonial society, a physical meeting point or a textual space, through which they could influence wider society. By considering the club scene and magazines together in this chapter on the club magazines, I elucidate a broader understanding of the motivations behind this turn to literary and debating societies and magazines, and explore some of

¹ 'The Literary Club Nuisance', *The Beacon*, 2.11 (May 1933), 1-2 (p. 1).

² There will, I am sure, be numerous other magazines associated with such groups that this study has been unable to identify, or locate. Many of the existing records that I have been able to trace, within magazines or in newspaper reports, make mention of other local groups' intentions to produce a club magazine or report that such actions were already in place. Similarly literary and debating societies located within educational establishments often produced publications, several of which I know about including *The Royalian*, but have been unable to trace.

³ Literary and debating societies of this type are not solely found in the Caribbean, similar social and cultural spaces, and communal organisations existed in many colonial countries. For example, in addition to West Africa, similar social and political formations can be found in New Zealand, Australia and India.

the ways in which West Indians drew upon their cultural resources and limited social influence to enact their aim of developing a West Indian literary tradition. This chapter, and Chapter Four, argue that this aim was combined with and inflected through wider concerns.

The chapter opens with an exploration of the ways in which the literary and debating societies and magazines contributed to a process of class formation for newly middle-class West Indians as they sought to consolidate their social position. It goes on to explore the clubs' engagement with canonical literature, its privileged place within the literary and debating societies' programmes, and the ways in which this was utilised in the pursuit of a West Indian literary tradition. It also addresses the ways in which these West Indians drew on the resources of the colonial regime through the association with The British Council, utilising the local iterations of this metropolitan network to pursue their aims. This chapter contributes to a broader picture of the complicated relationship between the colonially educated but increasingly culturally nationalist middle classes and the British. The understanding of 'club culture' which this chapter develops illuminates the position of, and often contradictory influences on, the middle classes, which the clubs and magazines navigated. The chapter closes with a brief insight into a body of literature which has been marginalised in critical accounts, fictional work which reflects and comments on the West Indian middle classes in these decades of social change.

By considering the parallel spaces of club and magazine as overlapping public spheres, this chapter highlights the middle-class milieu out of which both emerged. It accounts for the seemingly contradictory positions inherent within this literary scene, which celebrated colonial culture whilst actively developing a West Indian literature. These contradictions have broader resonances with Caribbean history and literature: as this chapter shows, the transition to a West Indian literary tradition in these years did not occur neatly, nor did it only occur within the explicitly politicised nationalist quarters on which Caribbean historiography has traditionally focused. By focusing on the literary and debating societies, a selection of less well known publications, and an alternative body of literary work, this chapter provides a broader understanding of the

ways in which middle-class West Indians navigated their social space and engaged with cultural developments in the early twentieth century.

In this chapter I am primarily accessing the discourse around the literary clubs through the records of the societies printed in the magazines: notices of events, club notes and articles espousing the benefits and, on occasion, detriments of membership. These provide us with an insight into club life, albeit a mediated one as these texts and the magazines are constructed presentations of the groups written with an audience in mind. They do, however, provide a wealth of information about the clubs and their activities. These magazines were part and parcel of club culture and vice versa; for a few publications, club-related material made up a significant proportion of their content. The magazines which a selection of these clubs went on to produce were seen as vehicles for enacting the societies' aims on a wider scale; The Forum Club in Barbados for instance, saw the role that a publication could play as 'the *further* broadening of the education standards of the youth of this colony', providing many of the benefits of club life to those not in attendance in person.⁴ Addresses or talks given to the societies, or accounts of the debates, were reprinted for the readers' engagement and listings of forthcoming events were published to encourage attendance. Within this club culture, a relatively insular affair defined by attendance and membership, the magazines were also an outward facing iteration, sold to the general public and promoting their work.

Though my starting point is the club magazine, these publications were not the only print space that the literary and debating societies utilised. I am also drawing on reports and articles in the newspaper press which give additional information about the number and spread of these groups and the competitions and networks which emerged from these. Through this research I have found very few additional archives of papers or records which could further illuminate the work and memberships of these groups; it is not clear what material if any, beyond the magazines, has survived. My analysis of these literary and debating societies has a particular interest in their cultural activities and use of the magazine form and it is these elements on which I focus. These clubs were, however, popular and as many of them did not produce

⁴ 'Editorial', *The Forum Quarterly* (December 1931), 5. Emphasis added.

publications or focussed more on the debating rather than the literary element in their activities, there is scope for more work to be done by critics on the broader club movement.⁵

3.1 Literary and Debating Societies: Respectable Middle-Class Leisure Activities

Literary and debating societies were not a new phenomenon for the West Indies; such groups ‘thrived following the emancipation of slaves in 1838 [where they] served as an early source of quenching the thirst for knowledge and education which formal liberation had generated among members of the black and coloured population’.⁶ Early examples of such organisations included the Trinidad Literary Association, founded in 1846 and operating for 5 years, which Selwyn Cudjoe argues played a significant role in the developing literary consciousness on the island.⁷ In Jamaica, the Jamaican Local Literary Association was formed in 1898 by Claude McKay’s brother, Uriah, and Thomas MacDermot and operated until 1915.⁸ The heyday of these literary and debating societies, however, was the 1920s and 1930s during which they were popular across the region.⁹ Anson Gonzalez notes that ‘[at] one time there were literary clubs associated with practically every village and community group, and persons who wanted to occupy themselves with worthwhile activity in their community were usually associated with a literary and debating club’.¹⁰ Sir Hugh Springer, a former member of The Forum Club in Barbados, recalls that these clubs were the only real form of local entertainment.¹¹ They were, however, more than just social spaces, as an alternative name adopted by some groups, Mutual Improvement Society, attests. Through their programmes of debates, lectures, exhibitions and events, they sought to encourage the ‘intellectual and cultural uplift of [...]

⁵ There has been no focused critical attention to these groups in the West Indian setting. Stephanie Newell’s account of such groups in West Africa, however, offers a suggestive model for this type of work (Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: How to play the game of life* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

⁶ Gary Lewis, *White Rebel: The Life and Times of T.T. Lewis* (Kingston: UWI Press, 1999), p. 35.

⁷ Selwyn Cudjoe, *Beyond Boundaries: The Intellectual Tradition of Trinidad and Tobago in the Nineteenth Century* (Wellesley: Calaloux Publications, 2003), pp. 114-115.

⁸ Leah Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 39-41.

⁹ *The Minerva Review* notes that in 1941, twenty-five literary and debating societies were affiliated with the Trinidad and Tobago Literary League down from 40 in 1938 (‘The Trinidad and Tobago Literary League’, *The Minerva Review: A Quarterly Literary Magazine*, 1.1 (April-June 1941), 44-49).

¹⁰ Anson Gonzalez, ‘Race and colour in the pre-Independence Trinidad and Tobago novel’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of the West Indies (St Augustine) 1982), p. 73.

¹¹ Lewis, p. 36.

members'.¹² A number of societies were focused on young men; however, it is pertinent to note there were a number of mixed groups and a parallel movement of groups specifically for women.¹³ Literary and debating clubs were often associated with, or grew out of, existing institutions such as schools, colleges and churches. Some of these groups were based around geographical locales, the village, town or even suburb in which they were based. For others, the context for their emergence was a specific racial or cultural group; for example The Minerva Club was an Indo-Trinidadian organisation and The Forum Club was formed by predominantly black and coloured Barbadians. Others were racially mixed and emerged informally from groups of friends. Through these clubs different sections of West Indian society met, either within clubs or through the meetings or debates between clubs. For example, literary and debating societies drawn from the East Indian community met and debated against black Trinidadian clubs.¹⁴ The connection between all the literary and debating societies was their emergence from within the middle classes; social class or class aspirations provided the shared identity for West Indians in these social and educational clubs, and it was this that in turn informed the clubs' activities.¹⁵

The rise in the proportion of educated West Indians was key to the growth of these middle-class clubs; as Carl Campbell notes literary and debating societies were 'the accumulated intellectual outcome of two or three generations of primary schools since emancipation'.¹⁶ Formal education may have provided aspiring West Indians with a way into the middle classes after this; however, the literary and debating societies played an important role in shoring up an individual's place. As Bridget Brereton notes

¹² For example, the Heritage Mutual Improvement Society and St Paul's Mutual Improvement Society, both of Grenada. The aim quoted here is taken from an account of The St Andrew's Literary Society, Grenada, however, this is echoed by many of the other groups ('St Andrew's Literary Society', *The St George's Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 39).

¹³ There is scope for more work on these groups, their memberships and activities, in order to ascertain the proportion of male only groups. It is clear that women did play a key role in the club scene, the idea of developing a Trinidad and Tobago Literary Club Council for instance, arose from a conference of eight clubs meeting under the auspices of the Young Ladies Association, and its founder in 1925 was Mrs M. Archibald. Some groups, such as the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association, created an associate membership for women, as women were not allowed to be full members.

¹⁴ Campbell, p. 170.

¹⁵ An exception to this would be the Arts Club, in Jamaica, formed by Esther Chapman through her magazine *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928-9) whose membership came from the expatriate and Creole elites.

¹⁶ Carl C. Campbell, *The Young Colonials: A Social History of Education in Trinidad and Tobago 1834-1939* (Kingston: UWI Press, 1996), p. 170.

‘the lines dividing the sectors of society were not only lines of race, colour, or wealth’; significantly there was also ‘the ability to command the dominant culture, which was European culture’.¹⁷ It was the latter which the newly middle-class West Indian sought to gain through their membership of such societies. Particularly for the ‘coloured and black middle class, command of European culture was the essential qualification for membership [of the middle classes], rather than wealth or lightness of complexion’.¹⁸ Restricted by their colour, which in turn affected their careers and subsequent wealth, black and coloured West Indians were not similarly restricted in gaining this ‘essential qualification’. Culture, and the display of culture, was particularly important for the middle classes, for as Brereton notes:

[The middle classes] attached so much importance to culture because they had no other valuable and valued possession to hold on to [...] They had no vote, no voice in government, no political influence. They were not for the most part, employers of labour. They did not control the economy. But they had one attribute which the mass of the population did not have, and which the society as a whole, valued: that was cultural and intellectual skills.¹⁹

Brereton’s characterisation of the value of culture here points to the dual function the literary and debating societies and their accompanying magazines played for middle class West Indians: firstly displaying the cultural capital gained through formal and self-directed education and reasserting its importance to themselves and within West Indian society. The emergence of such groups, however, was also an act of class formation; meeting and forming small groups with people of similar backgrounds and aspirations, creating a collective identity as a distinct middle class and distancing themselves from working class West Indians. As discussed in Chapter One, creating a distinction between themselves and the mass of the population was a central concern for middle-class West Indians, particularly those who were only a generation away from a working class background. Attending and contributing to the life of the club,

¹⁷ Bridget Brereton, *Race Relationships in Colonial Trinidad 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 4. Brereton here is talking more specifically about Trinidad, whose social structure was further complicated by the white elite consisting of both French and English Creoles, ‘who did not necessarily share the same cultural complex’. However, her assessment of the importance of culture, either European more broadly, or more specifically British, is applicable across the West Indies and even within Trinidad, as the influence of the French Creoles waned, and British culture became more dominant towards the end of the nineteenth century (Brereton, p. 4-5).

¹⁸ Brereton, p. 5.

¹⁹ Brereton, p. 94.

either as an ordinary member or by taking up one of the myriad of committee positions available, was a marker of middle-class status, and a way of consolidating their position in wider West Indian society.

In addition to acting as a means for class consolidation these clubs provided a platform for middle-class West Indians to voice their opinions in the public sphere. The manner in which many of these groups began make this aim for a public prominence clear. Stephanie Newell, in a study of similar middle-class organisations in colonial Ghana notes that in West Africa, literary and debating societies were dominated by clerks and teachers who, 'in an effort to establish their visibility and legitimacy as a social group, appealed for patronage among the local elites'.²⁰ A similar tendency is reflected in some of the West Indian literary and debating societies, such as The St George's Literary League whose magazine opened with a foreword by Sir Arthur Francis Grimble, the incumbent governor of the Windward Islands.²¹ The Jamaican magazine of the eponymous club *The Outlook* drew on a number of endorsements; a full opening page was given to messages from the Acting Colonial Secretary and the Custos for Kingston, in addition to another message from the Director of Education for Jamaica.²² Other magazines sought to imbue their periodicals, and by extension their clubs, with the gravitas of important local figures; the opening address for *The Minerva Review* was written by Reverend J. A. Scrimgeour, the principal of the Presbyterian Theological College.²³ The Indo-Trinidadian magazine *The Observer* went further, and sought international validation, through an opening message from Dr Pandia, a member of the Indian National Congress who was visiting Trinidad at the time.²⁴ In each instance, these assertions of value and the implicit endorsement of figures that held positions of significance for the magazines' readership, were designed to lend weight to the groups.

The presence of these endorsements is suggestive of anxiety around the groups' social positions particularly when they were first established; whilst these clubs acted as a

²⁰ Newell, p. 39.

²¹ Arthur Grimble, 'Foreword', *The St George's Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 7.

²² W. D. Battershill, [Untitled], *The Outlook*, 1.1 (July 1933), 3; B. H. Easter, 'An International Outlook Wanted', *The Outlook*, 1.1 (July 1933), 6.

²³ J. A. Scrimgeour, 'Foreword', *The Minerva Review: A Quarterly Literary Magazine*, 1.1 (April-June 1941), n.p.

²⁴ Durai Pandia, 'Dr Pandia's Message', *The Observer*, 1.1 (December 1941), 1.

site for the consolidation of cultural capital, there was a perceived need to secure this by deference to prominent figures in society. By garnering this support and displaying it prominently the groups and their magazines drew on political and social power and values such as education to present their wider social worth. Through utilising the social hierarchy for their own ends these groups demonstrate an understanding of its machinations, an awareness of their place within it, as well as their aspirations to have an influence beyond their small local communities. Without representation in parliament, the literary and debating societies took alternative paths to influence public policy on a wide range of issues. The Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association, for instance, took an interest in social welfare matters and advocated bodies such as the Child Welfare League and the building of suitable and sanitary houses by the city council.²⁵

Literary and debating societies offered members an opportunity to continue gaining academic knowledge and the social advantages deemed necessary to succeed. As one Grenadian club notes:

The aim of the society is to fit young men and women for the position they are likely to take up in life – to complete in a practical way that education which was stressed in theory while they were at school – to train them up therefore physically, intellectually, morally, socially and culturally.²⁶

The clubs' programmes combined social events, sporting events, debates and literary and cultural talks. The records of these programmes in some of the magazines give an insight into the environment out of which the magazines, contributors and their understanding and articulations of culture emerged. A report on the activities of the St David's Cultural Club notes that two nights a week were used for a range of sports and games including chess and checkers, and lancers dancing, whilst the third was set aside for 'purely literary work which includes [...] impromptu speeches, lectures, debates, mock trials [and] intelligence tests'.²⁷ For such clubs, the designation 'literary' is a broad one referring to a range of activities with literacy at their heart; others, however,

²⁵ 'Literary Clubs: Their Utility', *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* (September 1926), 3-4.

²⁶ F. W. R. Cruickshank, 'The St Paul's Mutual Improvement Society', *The St George's Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 39.

²⁷ Cynthia Clyne, 'The St David's Cultural Club', *The St George's Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 37.

focused on literature. The Grenadian St Andrew's Literary Society for instance hosted talks on poetry, short stories and prose and collated a library 'which caters in some measure for both Literary and non-Literary fiction'.²⁸ As recorded in *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association*, in September 1925 the Trinidadian Century Club's most recent meetings included a paper, given by a member, on Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861) and a debate on the continuation of rent restriction.²⁹ Also included was a notice of a forthcoming debate arguing 'the formation of a West India Literary League is an essential preliminary to a federated West Indies'.³⁰

Political, social and cultural concerns came together in these groups, refracted through their members' contributions and the social setting of meetings. Debates were a central part of many clubs' programmes; several position themselves as a 'sort of training ground for politically conscious individuals'.³¹ The opening issue of the Grenadian Literary League magazine, for instance, makes an explicit link between the nurturing of previous improvement societies and those who went on to secure democratic advancement for the island, and notes that by following this model it seeks to encourage 'Grenadians to shoulder their responsibilities'.³² The debates held within and between clubs were designed to develop the oratory and debating skills in those who could potentially take up roles in public office. The Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association, for instance, staged debates on current affairs by recreating a 'miniature parliament', discussing new laws and resolutions.³³ Prepared talks and staged debates, as well as impromptu speeches were included on the societies' programmes to develop the members' confidence, diction and delivery. Not all members would find a need for such skills within their everyday lives, rather it was

²⁸ Dorry Hall, 'The St Andrew's Literary Society', *The St George's Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 39.

²⁹ 'Club Notes', *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association*, 1.4 (September 1925), 26.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Campbell, p. 170.

³² 'Editorial', *The St George's Literary League Magazine*, 1.1 (May 1946), 9.

³³ For instance, a debate in November 1938 on the introduction of a divorce law in Trinidad was constructed as a parliamentary debate, complete with opposing sides and a speaker of the house. Divorce was a controversial and divisive issue on the island at the time ('Club Notes', *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* (December 1938), 2-3).

seen as an 'asset to [their] refinement and grace' and a signifier of their education and social standing.³⁴

The broader desire to cultivate public speaking that is evident in the club movement, however, was linked to a desire for representation in wider society in these decades before universal adult suffrage; for some members such "training" became increasingly useful in the years that followed. The future that these clubs imagined and sought, one in which their members were elected representatives, key figures in public office and socially influential, was realised as the movement for political change gathered pace. The 1938 unrest and subsequent emergence of political parties saw many former members of these clubs go on to prominent positions as public figures, political candidates and elected officials in later decades. Robert Alexander and Eldon Parker note, for instance, that it was as part of the Kingston and St Andrews Literary and Debating Society that Ken Hill's oratorical abilities were honed.³⁵ In the years prior to the establishment of trade unions and political parties in the West Indies, these clubs operated as proto-political spaces for middle-class West Indians; organisations through which socially, politically and culturally engaged West Indians met with shared aims and pursued a future for the West Indies and their place within this future. These groups were not necessarily explicitly politically driven nor were they unified in their political ideology, even within specific groups viewpoints and political stances differed; a link can be drawn, however, between these literary and debating societies and the emergence of political parties in the region.³⁶ In Trinidad for instance Gordon Rohlehr, has argued that the literary clubs and debating societies of the previous generation came to fruition in the establishment of the People's Education Movement in 1950, which was itself absorbed by its offspring, the People's National Party in 1956.³⁷ These groups were not radical or anti-colonial, but sought to use the advent of party politics

³⁴ 'Literary Clubs: Their Utility', *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* (September 1926), 3-4.

³⁵ Robert Alexander and Eldon Parker, *A History of Organised Labour in the English Speaking West Indies* (Westport, Praeger, 2004), p. 31.

³⁶ The Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association, for instance, claimed it was not a political organisation because of the variety of perspectives of its members. Its actions, however, were not apolitical.

³⁷ Gordon Rohlehr, 'The Culture of Williams: Context, Performance, Legacy', *Callaloo*, 20.4 (1997), 849-888 (pp. 851-2).

and democratic enfranchisement to transition from British to West Indian rule, initially through federation and then full independence.

The activities which these societies engaged in included inter-club competitions which were on occasion formalised and sponsored, such as the Hopkins Debating Cup. The multiplicity of societies led to the creation of a higher level of administration linking the clubs. A Trinidad and Tobago Literary Club Council was created in 1925, a move the editors of and contributors to *The Quarterly Magazine* were instrumental in bringing about. It had 40 different groups under its wings in 1938 and continued to operate for a number of decades celebrating its Silver Jubilee in 1950. The St George's Literary League began in 1946 drawing together a wide range of smaller groups in Grenada. There was a Kingston and St Andrew's Literary and Debating Association in Jamaica, and a council of societies was mooted in Barbados. Just as writers published material across a number of magazines, connections between the literary circles and members of clubs within and between islands developed. There was a degree of cross-island connection through speakers from clubs visiting and lecturing clubs on other islands; C.L.R. James, for instance, delivered a lecture to *The Forum Club* in Barbados on Trinidad's Crown Colony government.³⁸ These connections were supported through the magazines, and articles and advertisements were also exchanged from publication to publication. This was happening in the context of growing calls for the political federation of the British West Indies, an issue which the clubs vigorously debated. A number of clubs saw themselves as part of this move toward regionalism and expressly linked the possibility of political unification to the success of clubs' facilitation of cultural connections between and within the islands.³⁹

³⁸ Chamberlain notes that this visit caused some concern for the British authorities, who thought James could be acting as a channel for communication between the islands and Britain encouraging anti-imperialism; the police made a report on James' visit in 1932 (Mary Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-building in the Caribbean: Barbados, 1937-66* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 128).

³⁹ Many articles and debates were held over the question of federation, with a general consensus of support across the magazines (with the noted exception of Esther Chapman's pro-colonial *West Indian Review*). The need for a regional cultural perspective was shared by many groups, whose actions through the magazines sought to build this. The Richmond Street club's debate positing '[t]he formation of a West India Literary League is an essential preliminary to a federated West Indies' is indicative of a more substantive way in which the clubs were envisioning their role in this move towards regionalism, making institutional and personal connections across the British West Indies ('Club Notes', *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association*, 1.4 (September 1925), 26).

These clubs and the records of their events highlight the organisation of leisure time by, and for, members of the middle classes and illustrate some of the concerns and interests they held. They uncover a series of aspirational class aims centred on the pursuit of respectable leisure activities and furthermore highlight the cultural resources upon which they drew; Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, Alfred Tennyson and the Romantic poets feature in their programmes. Members, visiting speakers from other groups, British Council representatives or teachers would give lectures on a particular work or the writer's oeuvre. Such lectures were not only delivered at meetings, many of the magazines also had written articles, including a whole series by Alfred Mendes on poets over several magazines, which gave a combination of biographical information, an overview of their work and some literary criticism.⁴⁰

These talks combined educational elements, the knowledge and familiarity with the texts that the audience gained, and benefits for the speaker who was given the chance to analyse the text, display their own knowledge, and practise public speaking. Appreciation evenings combined these talks with readings, plays or dramatization of individual scenes, and other creative responses to the texts such as renditions of the music from Shakespeare's works.⁴¹ Public events were often open to non-members, who through these would be exposed to literature, familiar perhaps from their schooling, though in a very different context. Elsewhere, the educational element came to the fore, as in an inter-club general knowledge competition hosted by the Trinidad and Tobago Literary Club Council, which asked questions including:

Section A. 1. What characters in fiction (a) Asked for more (b) Never grew up (c) Ran away to join the gipsies [...]

Section B. 1. Who wrote: (a) Frankenstein (b) Murder in Trinidad (c) Kim [...] (h) Far from the Madding Crowd.⁴²

This competition and the questions it asked show some of the writers with which members of the societies were familiar, or with whom there was an expectation of

⁴⁰ Mendes' published articles of this type in a number of issues of *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* and in the magazine *Trinidad Presbyterian*.

⁴¹ For the latter of these, a more unusual response, see: 'With Shakespeare', *The Gleaner*, 22 February 1930, p. 15.

⁴² 'Literary Clubs in Council: A Forum for Literary Trinidad', *Trinidad Guardian*, Tuesday 5 November 1935, p. 16.

familiarity, including Dickens, Eliot, Shelley and Kipling. 'Section B' of the quiz went on to ask competitors to identify the works that a number of characters came from, including novels by Thackeray and Dickens, and plays by Shakespeare and Thomas Morton. The admonishment from the marker further reinforces the assumption that a particular body of work should be familiar to club members: 'Section B was almost perfectly done by one or two clubs but it seems clear that quite a few clubs must set about improving their general stock of literature'.⁴³ The societies' programmes were in many ways shaped by the formal education, colonial in its nature, which members had received and these records highlight the privileged place which British literary culture held in the period. The clubs' literary programmes, however, were not constrained to canonical British literature, some also responded to contemporary African American works, for instance the magazine of the Bajan Forum Club carried articles and reviews on the work of Langston Hughes, and the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association in Port of Spain profiled the work of Countee Cullen, who it praised as a poetic genius.⁴⁴

3.2 Hero Worshipers and Mimics?

It was, however, largely British literature and culture around which the literary and debating societies' programmes focused, a tendency which attracted the critique of *The Beacon*, whose editorials ran a scathing account of the 'literary club bug', 'a sort of popular malady in Trinidad – like Typhoid Fever or Influenza'.⁴⁵ Gomes's attacks in *The Beacon* went on to cause ripples through Trinidadian society and bears consideration at some length. His initial complaint focuses on the popularity of such clubs: 'it is only a slight exaggeration to say that there are in Trinidad more members of literary clubs than there are grains of sand on the sea-shore in Manzanilla'.⁴⁶ Such clubs are, he argues, 'detrimental to the artistic development of the island [...] the "literary-club-attitude" [...] is nothing but a puffed chest. It is artificial, false, in a word; it is a sort of

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Gordon O. Bell, 'Langston Hughes: Negro Poet and Novelist', *The Forum Quarterly* (December 1971), 7-10.; Alfred Mendes, 'Three Contemporary Poets', *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Literary and Debating Society* (June 1928), 3-14 (p. 3).

⁴⁵ 'The Literary Club Nuisance', *The Beacon*, 2.11 (May 1933), 1-2 (p. 1).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

smug and complacent belief in one's sense of importance'.⁴⁷ Interestingly, Gomes makes a distinction between clubs which have magazines, to which he accords an exception, and those without: 'DO literary clubs publish magazines? *The Queen's Royal College Literary and Debating Club* does but then it is the exception not the rule. *The Forum Club* of Barbados is another example of a useful literary club, but then a *Forum Club* comes once in a life-time'.⁴⁸ This distinction appears to be on the grounds that the clubs with magazines are more 'useful'. He goes on to ask:

DO literary clubs run circulating libraries? DO any of them ever discuss anything of a truly literary nature? What do they really do when they are not listening to Sunday-afternoon sermons from lawyers, doctors, social workers, society ladies and energetic spinsters? Perhaps some bright young 'Bohemian' will be willing to enlighten us?⁴⁹

Gomes' accusation of a lack of utility among most of these groups, suggesting that they are self-congratulatory, pompous and have little real literary engagement or artistic development, is passionately argued. Amongst the bluster, it is apparent that his frustration is with the groups' insularity. Running circulating libraries or producing magazines, through which wider society could be actively engaged, would be the way to effect cultural development in the region, the latter a model he took himself in *The Beacon*. His objections, however, primarily lay in the content of the club's activities, their anglicised nature and focus on colonial literary culture and traditional canon. As he goes on to argue in the following issue's editorial: '[a]s far as we can see their very existence constitutes a flagrant prostitution of the word "Literature" [these are] childish pranks', the work of 'pretentious and artificially-spirited young men and women' whose act of 'dissecting Keats [...] is the very antithesis of artistic or literary'.⁵⁰ His decision here to use Keats is not incidental, as he clarified in a third article, it was the 'crust of formality and hero-worship' to which he objected, and the Romantic poets were often revered in particular.⁵¹ The appreciation evenings, which

⁴⁷ 'The Literary Club Nuisance', p. 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ 'Literary Clubs', *The Beacon*, 2.12 (June 1933), 2-4 (p. 2).

⁵¹ Albert Gomes, 'The Approach to Art', *The Minerva Review: A Quarterly Literary Magazine*, 1.1 (April-June 1941) 19. Laurence Breiner discusses in more detail the significance and influence of Romanticism on West Indian poetry, and in particular the charges of imitation that arise. As he notes, 'much West Indian poetry before about 1940 is dismissed as imitation Wordsworth' (Laurence Breiner, *An Introduction to West Indian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 148).

Gomes saw as hero-worship, did not encourage new writing, experimentation, or the development of a local literary culture. Instead he suggested, '[l]et us cease to regard tradition as a frozen pond and begin to think of it as a river flowing eternally eroding its banks frequently to absorb new arteries of water, new shapes and contours'.⁵² Gomes' objection was a part of a wider criticism of the hallowed place in which he perceived 'tradition', namely British culture, to be held by those circles. This in turn, he argued, led to 'bad manuscripts by nondescripts' who aspired to mimic the English literary tradition.⁵³ He bemoaned an absence of original literary talent, originality which would be the 'new waters' that would carve out a creative path for West Indian writing. For Gomes, the literary and debating club 'malady' was supporting the privileging of British culture to the detriment of the nascent Trinidadian culture: 'the sooner we throw off the veneer of culture that our colonization has brought us the better for our artistic aims'.⁵⁴ *The Beacon's* sense of antagonism towards the work of these groups was not shared by others, though, as I shall explore, several other writers also send up the middle-class pretensions that flourished in these settings.

Within the broad range of clubs there were those which subscribed to the model that Gomes attacked, venerating European writers and holding up literary tradition and by association, British colonialism. The Frankfield Shakespearean Association in Clarendon Jamaica is an example; it focused singularly on the bard as emblematic of the 'great and glorious empire'.⁵⁵ Gomes' attack on the way in which some of these societies operated as a mark of acquired cultural capital, rather than as active and engaged producers of West Indian culture, is for some groups accurate. They did, however, play an important social function if not a cultural nationalist one; groups like the Frankfield Shakespearean Club, gave their members in rural Jamaica a sense of status and a space for the continuation of informal education. The literary and debating societies, however, were not a single homogenous mass; many were actively engaged in calling

⁵² 'Literary Clubs', *The Beacon*, 2.12 (June 1933), 2-4 (p. 2).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ The Frankfield Shakespearean Association grew out of a collection of teachers, was founded in 1914 and still active in 1925. Its activities included a programme of debates and lectures as well as an annual trip on Shakespeare's birthday, visiting picturesque scenery and areas of importance for Jamaican history, 'whilst at the same time contemplating on the writings of Shakespeare'. The engagement with Jamaica and its history came second to the study and appreciation of the plays and poetry of Shakespeare ('Annual Celebration of the Frankfield Shakespearean Club', *The Gleaner*, 4 May 1925, p. 13).

for and creating a West Indian literature. The club was a contradictory formation, celebrating British culture and literary works while also striving for autonomy and difference and encouraging West Indian writing. Although many of these literary and debating societies and their associated magazines did not have the radical stance which Gomes sought to develop through *The Beacon*, their response to British culture was not necessarily as passive as the charges of mimicry, the 'conscious aping of another man's culture', and hero worship suggest.⁵⁶ Gomes' proclamation of the inadequacies of the literary and debating societies, though compellingly argued, is simplistic. Harvey Neptune describes the literary and debating society scene as 'Arnoldian to the core, [they] took culture to be virtually synonymous with an idealized Victorian literariness; it was "the best of which had been thought and said in the world" expressed in English literature and essential to the civilising of all non-European people'.⁵⁷ Here Neptune identifies the literary and ideological significance that such groups placed in canonical works. West Indian education from the nineteenth century and throughout the colonial period was an 'immersion in Britishness'; children would receive a British-style academic education and exposure to European culture, a system which consolidated British influence and colonial rule; the literary societies programmes reflect this education.⁵⁸ Neptune's characterisation of the clubs, however, does not give scope for exploring further the ways in which this privileging of culture, and specific engagement with colonial culture, was drawn on by the literary and debating societies more broadly; the encounters between these groups and colonial culture were not merely passive and celebratory.

In her study of the ways in which Britishness was constructed, inculcated and transformed in the Caribbean context, Spry Rush argues that 'middle-class West Indians were not passive recipients of a British imperial culture. Instead, they shaped it to fit with their own (dark-skinned, colonial) circumstances and used it for their own purposes'.⁵⁹ It is this process of reworking, reappropriation and creolisation of European culture to which these magazines both consciously and unknowingly

⁵⁶ 'A West Indian Literature', *The Beacon*, 2.12 (June 1933), 2.

⁵⁷ Harvey Neptune, *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 27.

⁵⁸ Spry Rush, p. 22.

⁵⁹ Spry Rush, p. 10.

contributed. This process, though a slow one, was taking place in these decades through these groups and their publications. The magazines and reports of the literary and debating societies retain traces of this, which though slight, are significant. Take for instance The Jamaican Young Woman's Christian Association's "An Evening with Shakespeare" in February 1930.⁶⁰ The programme included a number of features, many of which could arguably fall into Gomes' designation "hero worship", a synopsis and extracts from *Hamlet* and recitations from *Julius Caesar*. The 'dissertation on the works of Shakespeare' by Mr Scott, however, sought not only to familiarise attendees with *The Merchant of Venice*, but also argued that Shakespeare's depiction of Portia and her position as a barrister 'contributed very materially to the uplifting of women'.⁶¹ Bringing the discussion to the current day, he made connections between the play and the changing social attitudes in Jamaica and increased career choices West Indian women faced, seeking inspiration within the play to reinforce the change. In her study of Ghanaian literary and debating societies Newell notes that 'British "great masters" were appropriated through the act of reading and assimilated into local settings. Far more than successful 'borrowers' these local readers were demonstrating their cultural sophistication and fluent knowledge of English literature *in combination with and with reference to* local values, reusing the forms to suit their own purposes'.⁶² It is this bringing together of the literature with local issues and contexts, which is at stake in Scott's linking of the play and women's liberation in a West Indian context, using the play as a spring-board for a discussion of local gender politics to a room of Jamaican women.

Una Marson's reworking of Shakespeare's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy, which I return to in Chapter Four, similarly reuses the form and status of the canonical playwright for her own purposes.⁶³ This type of active engagement can also be seen in literary articles which, while drawing on canonical figures and work from English literature, did so for their own aims. The opening issue of *The Minerva Review* published an article called 'The Poets, Poetry and Us', reproducing at length work from a range of poets including

⁶⁰ 'With Shakespeare', *The Gleaner*, 22 February 1930, p. 15.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Newell, p. 37. Emphasis in original.

⁶³ Una Marson, 'To Wed or Not to Wed', *The Cosmopolitan* (August 1929), 137. See also her reworking of Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If', published in her collection *Tropic Reveries* (1930).

William Blake, Percy Shelley and John Keats.⁶⁴ The article's content and title, 'The Poets, Poetry and Us' clearly present these as an inspiration for West Indian poets.⁶⁵ Rather than negating the local readership, or significance of their location, the article presents these poets as applicable in the West Indian context through their mastery of the form. Within the same issue the editor proclaims that it wants 'original reviews, stories and poetry [... for] The West Indies must not merely reproduce the life of other lands'.⁶⁶ These two impetuses, drawing on Romanticism and building an indigenous literature, are not presented as in tension in any way; the magazine both sought to forge a new literary path and used the strength of an earlier tradition as literary inspiration. These groups did not see a contradiction in hosting talks on Shakespeare and debates on the need for, and path to, a local literature within the same programme of events, for both were part of the social and cultural fabric of middle-class life.

More broadly, however, the value attributed to British imperial culture enabled West Indians to articulate and assign value to the emerging West Indian literary tradition; these established notions were used by the literary and debating societies to encourage new literary work from the region. The notion of a local literature was not just discussed in abstract terms in these meetings; as the clubs became more established there was a response to writing emerging from closer to home. Here we see the format and function of the literary and debating societies being brought to bear on West Indian writing. A meeting of the Darliston Literary, Social and Improvement Club in May 1936 included a talk on the 'shining lights' of literature by U. T. McKay. This gave an insight into the work of William Wordsworth, John Milton, Alexander Pope, John Dryden, Francis Bacon, William Shakespeare, Robert Burns and significantly, the Jamaican novelist Herbert de Lisser praising in particular his 1928 novel, *The White Witch of Rose Hall*.⁶⁷ In this instance, the literary and debating society meeting and the lecture format were used to give prominence to a Jamaican writer,

⁶⁴ 'The Poets, Poetry and Us', *The Minerva Review: A Quarterly Literary Magazine*, 1.1 (April-June 1941), 15, 29. Emphasis added.

⁶⁵ 'The Poets, Poetry and Us', p. 15. Emphasis added.

⁶⁶ J. A. Scrimgeour, 'Foreword', *The Minerva Review: A Quarterly Literary Magazine*, 1.1 (April-June 1941), n.p.

⁶⁷ 'Mr U.T. McKay gives talk to Literary Club: Audience at Gayle Theatre thrilled with address on English Literature', *The Gleaner*, 18 May 1936, p. 26.

associating him with other key literary figures. By placing de Lisser at the end of the lecture the speaker suggests a teleology of sorts between these earlier writers and the contemporary novelist and ensured that the discussion of English literature came up to the present and moved geographically to the West Indies. The speaker, U. Theo McKay, known for being educated and having a particular interest in literature, utilised his position as a well-known and respected figure in the literary and debating club scene to encourage the audience members to take an interest in de Lisser's work. Furthermore, his talk was explicitly encouraging in its approach, suggesting there is an 'open field of literature, where whoever will may enter', and ending with a call for someone who can enter 'the world of letters [and] be able to transfer the thoughts and aspirations of Jamaica to paper'.⁶⁸ McKay, whose brother Claude is frequently mentioned in the magazines and club reports as a forefather of just such a movement, used the speech to call for more writers from the region.⁶⁹ The significance of this particular meeting of the Darliston club, an event celebrating the anniversary of their founding, and the invited speaker's prominence led to it being covered in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner*. Short club reports were commonplace in this instance, however, a long account of the meeting was printed in the newspaper detailing much of the content and conclusions of McKay's talk. This press coverage enabled a wider audience to hear about and engage with the talk, and for McKay's words to reach across the island.

This meeting signalled a shift for the Darliston Club, one which is registered in the following years' anniversary address which claimed:

There is an awakening in Jamaica at the present time, Citizen's associations, Literary clubs, Debating clubs, are springing up all over the island. Their existence is an expression of the new dawn. A New Era is developing. Our people have begun to realise that they have a place in the sun. Young Jamaica is determined to develop a National background a culture

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Claude McKay was by this stage living in America but his career was followed by a number of magazines who published articles and reviews of his work. See for instance: J. M., 'A Talented Jamaican: Claude Mackay' [sic], *The Cosmopolitan* (August 1928), 124; A. D. Mackie, 'Is He Exploiting His Race? An Appreciation of Claude McKay', *The Cosmopolitan* (July 1929), 95.

peculiarly Jamaica [...] National consciousness, the love and respect of things Jamaican, is coming.⁷⁰

This expression of a cultural national consciousness was in part expressed through the literary and debating clubs themselves, and along with their magazines, were one of the visible presentations of this movement. In Jamaica, the Quill and Ink club, founded by Rupert Meikle who was a key contributor to magazines across the West Indies, led the way by instigating regular 'Jamaica Evenings' within its programme. These events, begun in March 1933 and held every few months, involved a range of lectures on writers such as Claude McKay and Tom Redcam, poetry readings, folk songs and activities such as petitioning the Board of Education to include the study of Jamaican poetry in school curriculums, all designed to 'build up some definite background of Jamaican culture'.⁷¹ This model of club meetings spread to others on the island and local literature became a feature of club programmes in a range of ways, either as the subject matter or the medium through which they conducted their activities, as in the YMCA's 1933 oratorical contest which used only Jamaican poetry as its reading material.⁷²

The format of the literary and debating society was a conservative one, predicated on the premise of a select body of work, knowledge of which was essential to be educated or cultured, "respectable" activities, and lectures given by an educated individual to uncritical and appreciative audiences. Gomes' critique of the club scene, given his own more radical approach, is not surprising. It is precisely through this conservatism, however, that many of these clubs contributed to a building of a movement of support for a local literary tradition among West Indians. Within the clubs' specific activities we can see an active engagement with imperial culture, using this material to encourage literary work. More broadly, we see these West Indians using the respectability of the literary and debating club movement and its central place within West Indians' social and cultural world as a vehicle to give local literature prominence. Inherent in the literary and debating societies was a valuing of culture, a privileging of

⁷⁰ 'Anniversary of Darliston Literary Club Celebrated', *The Gleaner*, 20 September 1937, p. 13. Emphasis in original.

⁷¹ 'The Quill and Ink Club does Good Work', *The Gleaner*, 24 July 1933, p. 20.

⁷² The Merl Grove Club adopted the Quill and Ink club's format of a Jamaica Evening ('Impressive Address by President of Quill and Ink Club', *The Gleaner*, 8 August 1934, p. 30).

literature as a mark of respectable society. The starting point for such clubs may have been the mastery of colonial culture as a marker of status to enable members to progress within colonial society, but the same rhetoric enabled these groups to begin to articulate the desirability of a West Indian culture. This was furthered by the magazines which solicited and printed literary works by West Indians, and the clubs who discussed and celebrated this new writing. These two elements - the celebration of British culture and calls for a West Indian culture - are not in conflict for both arise from the same impetus.

In these parallel and overlapping movements, the magazine culture and club scene, we can identify a resourcefulness of sorts. I wish to return here to the characterisation of the middle classes by Brereton who stated that, '[t]hey had no vote, no voice in government, no political influence. They were not for the most part, employers of labour. They did not control the economy'.⁷³ In such a context, she argues, they turned to culture. This turn to culture emerged out of these specific social circumstances, but rather than be constrained by its limitations they exploited its possibilities. These middle-class West Indians, members of literary debating societies and producers of magazines, had backgrounds which were steeped in colonial education, values and culture; they sought to use these to create an indigenous culture of their own, consolidate their social status, and gain influence within West Indian society. Through their education and appreciation of culture, middle-class West Indians came together in small local groups, eventually developing networks of literary and debating societies across and between islands. Others became involved by writing, compiling and printing magazines through less formalised means. These parallel, and in places overlapping, movements of West Indians shared a 'do-it-yourself' attitude, taking the initiative to create social and print spaces which reflected their class identity and through which they could pursue a range of social, political and cultural aims. Wishing to influence public affairs, but lacking the financial resources for newspapers or political connections, they turned to magazines, which could be produced relatively inexpensively and circulated in person or through local booksellers. These magazines were self-financed through advertisements arranged with local businesses and a number of more creative ways (see Chapter 5) giving the groups flexibility in the types

⁷³ Brereton, p. 94.

of publications they produced. The clubs and magazines drew upon the patronage of well-connected West Indians to raise their profile and expand their reach, building networks between publications to grow their readerships. They monopolised on their inculcation into British values and culture, limited social connections and sought out spaces through which they could gain a voice in wider society.

3.3 The British Council

The relationship between the West Indian middle classes and British colonial culture and education was a complex one. Their relationship with colonial power was similarly so, as can be clearly seen in the literary and debating societies' relationship with part of the British government itself, its cultural wing, the British Council. Formed in 1934, the British Council set out '[t]o promote abroad a wider appreciation of British culture and civilisation, by encouraging the study and use of the English language and thereby, to extend a knowledge of British literature'.⁷⁴ The British were relative latecomers to this type of directed and coherent foreign policy, using cultural propaganda to support their political aims; although such work was central to the imperial project, this was the first time it was used more broadly in foreign policy and had operated from a single government body. In the first decade the Council grew rapidly, working across the world in a wide range of countries, initially from the British Institutes in European countries and across the Middle East. Within the first seven years the Council started expanding into British colonies.⁷⁵ Having been formed to promote the British Empire abroad, it became clear during the 1930s, that the Council could be well placed to do the same work from within, supporting British rule across the Empire.⁷⁶ This was a

⁷⁴ Initially the organisation began under the title of 'British Committee for Relations with Other Countries', before replacing the 'committee' with council, and then in 1936, adopting the shorter moniker, The British Council (Frances Donaldson, *The British Council: The First Fifty Years* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1984), p. 1). Throughout this chapter I am using the contemporary name, British Council, though in the period in question the definite article 'The' would have been added.

⁷⁵ Germany, France and to a lesser extent Italy had 'treated [such work] as an important part of foreign policy since the latter half of the nineteenth century' (Donaldson, p. 2). The annual budget in 1935 was £6,000, drawn from public money. By the year 1944-45 this had increased to £3,500,000 (Harold Nicholson, 'The British Council 1934-55', in *Report on the Work of the British Council 1934-33* (London: The British Council, 1955), pp. 4-30 (p. 6)).

⁷⁶ The Chairman of the British Council, Sir Malcolm Robertson, addressing the House of Commons acknowledged: 'The British Council was originally formed in order to project the British Empire to foreign countries and to make its outlook on life better known. Certain Members of this House asked about the Colonies, and we looked into that, with the result that the British Council is now starting work in the Colonies' (Hansard HC Deb 26 November 1942, vol. 385 cc905-76 (c.955)).

response to the growth of anti-colonial sentiment and movements for self-government among colonies which were gathering pace in the 1930s. The West Indies was one of the first regions into which the British Council expanded their work and by 1945, the Council's headquarters for the region in Trinidad employed the second largest number of staff of all the colonial territories in which the council had a presence.⁷⁷ The British Council placed representatives in Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados and British Guiana, with other Caribbean islands receiving British Council support through distributed materials. The British Council's model of working was broadly the same across the world, working within existing cultural organisations, supporting library services, providing lectures and news of Britain, and scholarships for students to study in the United Kingdom, whilst monitoring and responding to specific local and regional issues.⁷⁸ In the Caribbean in particular, where American influence had been growing since the war, there was a particular need to reiterate British culture, be this film, literature or art.⁷⁹ The British Council was inward looking, promoting Britain within the colonies and at home, and outward looking, responding to changes in global influence following the war.

Literature and literacy were key components of the British Council's remit. A significant proportion of the council's work was focused on providing books and other reading material, setting up library systems and training librarians. The literary focus was partly on canonical works and writers who embodied British values, but they also sought 'to afford [people] opportunities of appreciating contemporary British work in literature,

⁷⁷ Hansard HC Deb 17 December 1945, vol. 417, cc1085-6W. In 1945 Palestine had by far the largest British Council presence with 78 members of staff, Trinidad's was the next largest at 20, larger than the Gold Coast at 17. The Council did not begin work in India during its time as a colony, moving into the newly partitioned India and Pakistan in 1948.

⁷⁸ A report in 1944, for example, registered the concerns that the British Council should concentrate efforts on the Leeward Islands where poverty, low employment and housing issues were manifesting in a 'malaise of strikes'. In addition to, and exacerbated by, the potential political and labour unrest the British Council representative notes that increasingly residents were looking to America, and the 'U.S.A [is] often lauded at the expense of Great Britain'. He urged 'that the Council should embark on active cultural work in the Colony in order to help to enhance knowledge of Britain and its prestige and enable it to hold its own against the feeling [...] that tends to exalt everything American to the detriment of everything British' (London, National Archives, British Council Records, BW 17/4. 'Correspondence from Sir Harry Luke to Sir James Gillian, 12th June 1944').

⁷⁹ The growing dominance of American films in cinemas across the region, for example, led to the Council using a range of measures, including appointing agents from British film distributors, to enforcing a quota of British films in British Guiana (London, National Archives, British Council Records, BW 17/4. 'Confidential Memorandum on the position of British Films in the West Indies, June-July 1945').

the fine arts, drama and music', through concerts, travelling exhibitions, writers' tours, talks and lectures.⁸⁰ The Council sought to work through existing networks and cultural organisations in the West Indies and these included the literary and debating societies.⁸¹ The literary and debating societies' programmes paralleled the breadth of work of the British Council, with interests in a range of subjects and cultural forms. Council representatives sought out these clubs to work alongside, and within, to reinforce British rule in the region. The relationship between the British Council, and by proxy the metropolitan government, and these literary and debating societies was not, however, as straightforward as this characterisation suggests. These groups were not passive recipients of the cultural propaganda that the British Council promulgated, as a closer look reveals.

The involvement of the British Council in the literary and debating societies, and through them the magazines, is best articulated through the work of Harold Stannard who was based in British Guiana, one of the first British Council representatives in the region. Stannard had previously been a journalist for *The Times*; in this capacity he toured the region in 1938 for four months. Stannard approached the British Council following this trip and made recommendations for the work they should be undertaking, work he ended up contributing to when he returned in 1942 and took up an appointment with the Council.⁸² Despite some initial reservations about Stannard, he went on to be very influential in his role in the British Council, particularly in British

⁸⁰ London, National Archives, British Council Records, BW 151/1. 'The British Council Report by The Rt. Hon. Lord Eustace Percy, of activities from 1st April 1936 to 15th July 1937'.

⁸¹ Literary and debating societies were not the only groups with whom relationships were developed, in Trinidad for instance the British Council worked with the Royal Agricultural Society and in Jamaica links were made with the Jamaican Historical Society and the Institute of Jamaica.

⁸² These recommendations, made before he was in post, interestingly parallel the Council's later work; Stannard notes the need for literature and books in the region, the predominance of American films and the need for a quota of British films. These similarities could suggest that Stannard's recommendations were taken up by subsequent representatives. Stannard also noted that the Empire Broadcast programmes were not suitable for a West Indian audience (though no reasons are given in the extant memorandum); marginalia on the archival record suggests this issue was put on the backburner, though not dismissed. Stannard's note about the broadcasts predates, anticipates and may even have contributed to the introduction of radio programmes designed specifically for the West Indies such as 'Calling the West Indies'. The relationship between the British Council and the BBC is one for further detailed research, however, there will have been crossover in their work (London, National Archives, British Council Records, CO 1045/155, 'Memorandum to Mr Everett (Chairman The British Council) from Mr White, 23rd September 1938').

Guiana although he also forged links with the Institute of Jamaica.⁸³ Well known and respected by West Indians, Stannard developed relationships and a programme of work for the Council to pursue in subsequent years. In his role Stannard gave lectures, organised film showings and distributed reading material.⁸⁴ Stannard proposed and led the setting up of the British Guiana Union of Cultural Clubs (UCC), which brought together the literary and debating societies in British Guiana. In this role he worked closely with A. J. Seymour. Seymour's magazine *Kyk-over-al* (1945-1961) emerged from a collaboration between the UCC and the British Guiana Writers' Association. The Union and the wider club environment were therefore central to the magazine's development. Seymour spoke and wrote on a number of occasions about the significant support that Stannard gave to the UCC and his effect on the cultural life in the colony. When Stannard died, Seymour proposed and subsequently gave the inaugural Harold Stannard Memorial Lecture in 1951.

The Union of Cultural Clubs was a reaction to Stannard's frustration with the insularity of the numerous literary and debating societies in the colony and the precariousness of their existence, which were often reliant on the energy of a single or small handful of members without which they ceased to function. By bringing the clubs together and creating an over-seeing committee, the UCC supported these smaller groups, promoting their work and providing a space for inter-club competitions and unified action. *Kyk-over-al* was both the product of this unification of cultural clubs and in turn was sustained by it, enabling the magazine to continue its publication of new literary writing, particularly poetry. The support and involvement of the British Council could suggest that the UCC and *Kyk-over-al* were politically conservative, or that their wider aims fitted with the Council's remit to ensure stability for colonial rule and British cultural dominance, but this was not the case. Though not a radical organisation, the Union of Cultural Clubs challenged colonial rule in limited ways. It was described by Seymour as 'an instrument to help build a community in British Guiana' and to develop 'intellectual life'. This life included debates on the West Indian Federation and the end

⁸³ In a personal letter written to Sir Arthur Richards (the archived copy of which remains unsigned) on the occasion of Stannard taking up the position, the correspondent notes that he is 'not the typical British Council senior representative' noting his unprepossessing habits, biting his nails and a 'mode of speech [which is] at times un-English' in its frankness (London, National Archives, British Council Records, CO 1045/155, 'Correspondence, 30th July 1942').

⁸⁴ *The British Council: Report for 1944-45* (London: British Council, 1945), p. 18.

of British colonial rule, as well as reading Dr Eric William's *Slavery and Capitalism* (1944). The magazine went further still; *Kyk-over-al*, noted in its opening issue that it sought to 'forge a Guianese people' and over its publication period it became increasingly supportive of, and invested in, the end of colonial rule. *Kyk-over-al* published some of the first works by Martin Carter, a fervent anti-colonial critic and Marxist poet imprisoned twice by the colonial government for his involvement in the Guyanese independence movement, establishing his voice as a protest poet. The magazine and UCC were engaged in a movement towards cultural independence, one which paralleled and contributed to movements towards political independence.

Mary Chamberlain, speaking more broadly of the period has noted that:

It is [...] one of the ironies of the West Indies that, from the late 1930s, both West Indians and their metropolitan masters were engaged simultaneously in nation-building projects, albeit with widely different resources and competing agendas – independence and nationhood for one, dependence and citizenship for the other.⁸⁵

In the work of Stannard and Seymour and the UCC we see one such example of a 'nation-building project'. Furthermore, both parties were contributing to the same project. Stannard and the British Council supported the intellectual and cultural actions of these groups, perceiving in these the opportunity to pursue their own aims of shoring up British influence and political power in the region. These groups, drawing on the British Council's support and resources, sought out an alternative future for the West Indies, utilising collective and personal 'self-improvement' through the club activities and publications to advocate for and bring about change. In these literary and debating societies, the aims of both the British and the West Indians came together, and though seemingly in parallel, both were pulling towards very different ends. The Literary and Debating Society movement appears at first to be a collection of staid groups, celebrating and reinforcing British culture and education. Closer consideration of their genesis, activities, publications and organisation, however, show the reality to be a more complex one. These groups utilised the resources available to them: their colonial education, appreciation of English literature and support of the British Council, in order to shape their societies and own self-image. The literary and

⁸⁵ Chamberlain, p. 10-11.

debating societies emerged in the 1920s and 1930s as they provided middle-class West Indians with a way to proactively respond to their own position and engage with creating the West Indian future that they sought.

Whilst the turn to magazines by middle-class West Indians arose out of the specific practicalities of their context, it is perhaps, not incidental that the magazine form seems so well suited as a vehicle for these middle-class concerns. Within its pages a multiplicity of voices and perspectives, influences and issues come together, bound within the same covers. As I have explored through the literary and debating societies, middle-class West Indians in the 1920s and 1930s occupied a social space that was positioned between many competing interests which they sought to navigate. The magazines and literary club records show that this included drawing on European literary traditions and reasserting the privileged position of colonial culture. Alison Donnell commenting on one element of this colonial influence, literary mimicry, notes that this should not be seen in pejorative terms, the fault of the writer or of the publication. Instead it should be seen as an 'inevitable consequence of a historically and culturally specific situation'; the choice of writers to utilise English styles, diction and form 'cannot be taken merely as the vestiges of colonialism, [rather they are] clearly located in the social fabric of the Caribbean'.⁸⁶ This chapter has been concerned with the clubs and magazines' wider engagement with colonial culture, rather than specifically exploring the issue of literary imitation in writing of the period, but Donnell's evocation of the 'social fabric' of the region is a useful one here.⁸⁷ Throughout this chapter I have highlighted the ways in which the social fabric of the West Indian middle classes held side by side both a valuing of colonial culture, and claims and aims for a West Indian literary tradition. What is more, these values and traditions were used by West Indians in order to shore up the emergent local literature through reference to, and appreciation alongside, established canonical literature. The 'historically and culturally specific' context of these years meant these two impetuses were not placed in a simple opposition, rather there is a more complicated relationship

⁸⁶ Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 53.

⁸⁷ For critical work which engages more substantially with the charges of imitation levelled at writing from the Caribbean see: Mary Lou Emery, 'Exile/Caribbean eyes 1928-1963', *Modernism, the Visual and Caribbean Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 100-179; Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature*, pp. 19-129.

between the emergent West Indian and existing colonial literary cultures. This relationship was enabled by the magazine form. Just as fabric is woven of numerous threads, the magazine, constructed of a multiplicity of voices, opinions and perspectives, is a form which holds together and enables interactions between seemingly contradictory impetuses and influences.

3.4 Literary Voices

Anson Gonzalez has argued that 'very few early West Indian writers expressed any concern for middle and upper class themes', a view that is not supported by a broader analysis of the literary works published in the magazines of this period.⁸⁸ Before moving to a more detailed analysis of this literature, I wish to consider in more detail Gonzalez's statement and the critical assumptions it makes. Writing in 1972, Gonzalez's statement reflects a wider focus on a specific part of the literature written in the 1920s-1940s which was critically privileged in the decades following independence in the region. Reinhard Sander was key to the recovery, reprinting and critical analysis of two of the magazines in particular, *Trinidad* and *The Beacon*. His 1988 monograph, which remains the only book-length study of Caribbean literary magazines, made a compelling argument for the particular originality and significance of a group of short stories termed "barrack-yard stories".⁸⁹ These stories place the working class inhabitants of the barrack-yards at their centre, and have thematic links with a number of the novels produced by the same writers.⁹⁰ Through collating this body of work, arranging a reprint of *The Beacon* and publishing an anthology of pieces from both publications, Sander established a narrative of these decades in Caribbean literary histories in these terms. What is more, his monograph linked the subject matter of these works of short fiction to the later generation of novelists whose celebrated works consolidated Caribbean literature internationally and as a field of

⁸⁸ Anson Gonzalez, *Self-Discovery through Literature: Creative Writing in Trinidad and Tobago* (Diego Martin: Trinidad, 1972), p. 7. cited in, Reinhard Sander, 'Introduction: *The Beacon* and the Emergence of West Indian Literature', in *The Beacon* (Millwood, New York, Kraus Reprint, 1977), pp. xv-xxv (p. xxv).

⁸⁹ Reinhard Sander, *Trinidad Awakening* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988). Sander arranged the Kraus reprint of *The Beacon* and also of *Bim* in the same year. These facsimile reproductions of the magazines have enabled wider access to readers and critics.

⁹⁰ The barrack-yard stories are sometimes also called yard fiction. In Sander's analysis these short works published in the West Indian magazines, are read alongside a handful published elsewhere in the UK and America and the novels, C.L.R. James' *Minty Alley* (1936) and Alfred Mendes' *Black Fauns* (1935).

critical study. Sander stated 'the emergence of West Indian literature is intimately linked with the interest which early writers took in the folk culture'.⁹¹ This literary teleology further reinforced the position of these literary works and the writers associated with them, particularly Alfred Mendes and C.L.R. James, as representative of the early decades.

The critical privileging of this specific type of work was in part ideological, but the relative inaccessibility of other work, due to its location in magazines which were not preserved, collated and reprinted also contributed to this partial critical account. Sander's work continues to be influential and the barrack-yard genre was an important part of the writing in this period. It was, however, only a small proportion of the work in these two magazines and subsequently an even smaller part of the broader literary culture of these decades. Sander himself notes that these stories are not 'as numerous [...] as is sometimes assumed', counting 12 of the 80 or so stories in *Trinidad* and *The Beacon* as belonging to this subsection.⁹² This seems to have been overlooked by subsequent critical accounts which do not focus in detail on the period. This has led to a number of characterisations such as Melanie Murray's, which argued 'Barrack-yard fiction and the theme of the peasant were popular in the 1930s and 1940s'.⁹³ The focus on this relatively small part of the literary work that was written and read at the time, overlooks many of the other literary short stories.⁹⁴ In the remainder of this

⁹¹ Sander, *Trinidad Awakening*, p. 2.

⁹² Sander, *Trinidad Awakening*, p. 55.

⁹³ Melanie A Murray, *Island Paradise: The Myth. An Examination of Contemporary Caribbean and Sri Lankan Writing* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 46. The chapter covering the 1930s and 1940s in Bruce King's edited chronological account *West Indian Literature* (1995) for instance again largely focused on the yard fiction in *The Beacon* and *Trinidad* and the novels of the Beacon group, giving a detailed account of the sub-genre. A number of other locally published works (predominantly short story collections) are listed, but not discussed, and the only other short fiction mentioned briefly in the chapter was Seepersad Naipaul's *Gurudeva and Other Tales* published in 1943 (Reinhard Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties', in *West Indian Literature* ed. by Bruce King (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 38-50).

⁹⁴ More recently there has been a broader range of works and writers receiving critical attention, either contemporaneous with these magazines or earlier. See: Evelyn O'Callaghan, *Women Writing the West Indies, 1804-1939: A Hot Place, Belonging to Us* (London: Routledge, 2003). Where there has been critical attention on writers contemporary with (and often very involved in) the magazines, for instance Una Marson or Frank Collymore, this has tended to focus on their single authored collections of poetry or prose which may contain some works initially published in a magazine, but the focus on a collection has obscured this genesis. This type of single-writer study, and the handful of articles considering a single magazine have broadened literary accounts of these decades substantially, but a significant proportion of the literary work in these magazines has not received such attention. For examples of these single-magazine studies see: Carl Wade 'A Forgotten Forum: The Forum Quarterly and the Development of West Indian Literature' *Caribbean Quarterly*, 50.3 (September 2004), 63-73; Carl Wade, 'Re-Imagining a Community: *The West Indian Review, 1934-1940*', *Wadabagei*, 11.3 (2008), 3-27.; Leah

chapter I wish to look at the broader body of work produced by contemporary writers and published in these magazines. In the pursuit of their aims, to create a local literary culture for the West Indies and establish their own place within wider society, the middle-class producers of these magazines wrote and printed a range of literary work much of which was set in or commented on middle-class life. This work has been overlooked due to a critical focus on literary work with folk or peasant themes and aesthetics. These works are, however, a key facet of the literary culture of these decades. Just as the magazine publications were actively constructed to reflect the interests, concerns and aspirations of the middle classes within the broader public sphere, the literature they contain illuminate many of these concerns and highlight the ongoing process of class consolidation.

Gomes' critique in *The Beacon* of the Literary and Debating Society scene took umbrage with the pomposity and self-congratulatory nature of the groups, and he was far from the only West Indian to point out such tendencies. In Jamaica, an article written under the pseudonym Richard Roe in *The Gleaner*, titled 'Let's Keep Jamaica Low-Brow: Spare us from the Intellectual Snob' brought similar charges against the literary clubs of that island; this led to a fierce debate between its author and Esther Chapman, editor of *The West Indian Review*, at whom the accusation of snobbery was aimed.⁹⁵ This led to an exchange of articles printed in the newspaper's pages by Roe, Chapman and readers discussing these groups' pretentiousness. Roe, like Gomes, objected to the stuffiness of the literary and debating club movement, their limited literary outlook and the seriousness with which the clubs approached the literature they read. Within the magazines themselves a number of literary works also responded to this, using it as material to send up the middle classes. Frank Collymore's short play, 'An Evening with the Poets', published in the fifth issue of *Bim* when it was still associated with the Young Men's Progressive Club, is one such piece.⁹⁶ There were only a small number of plays published in the pages of *Bim*, and this is one of only two by Collymore, the magazines' editor, a keen amateur dramatist and central member of

Rosenberg, 'Modern Romances: the short stories in Una Marson's "The Cosmopolitan" (1928-1931)', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12. 1/2 (November 2004), 170-183.

⁹⁵ Richard Roe, 'Let's Keep Jamaica Low-Brow: Spare us from the Intellectual Snob', *The Gleaner*, 16 July 1935, p. 6.

⁹⁶ Frank Collymore, 'An Evening with the Poets: A Play in One Act', *Bim*, 2.5 (February 1945), 33-35, 67-88.

the Bridgetown Players.⁹⁷ The scene opens to the house of Norman Hillcrest, who is described as looking 'literary in a sort of vague way [...] you can see he rather fancies himself'.⁹⁸ Here he is accosted by Fellowes, 'who you can see at a glance is one of those successful businessmen, the sort you always pity a bit secretly...out of the office they look so lost', the man whose wife, Julia, he is having an affair with.⁹⁹ The piquancy of Collymore's stage directions which describe the characters, suggest an awareness of the text being read rather than performed, and nods towards the stereotypes which he utilised to bring humour to the scene. The confrontation is a heated one, with Fellowes pulling out a gun and declaring, 'I've always wanted to kill you, you finnickin literary humbug! What have you ever known but pleasure and idleness? Running off with men's wives and writing stories about it?'.¹⁰⁰ The theme of the feckless literary sort and the rational businessman who does not know how to express his feelings is continued through the scene, as the plot becomes more farcical.¹⁰¹ Brandishing the gun, Fellowes hides as his wife enters, warning Hillcrest not to give away his position. Collymore stages a humorous scene in which Julia, unaware of her husband's presence, demands Hillcrest seduce her through poetry:

Julia: What is it about?

Hillcrest: (opening the book again and looking): Er...daffodils

Julia: Daffodils? It doesn't sound very exciting.

Hillcrest: It isn't very exciting, I must admit.¹⁰²

The mention of daffodils, a reference to William Wordsworth's poetry, suggests the criteria on which Hillcrest chooses his poetry is one of literary status, rather than interest, for even he finds the daffodils unexciting. Collymore shows Hillcrest and Julia's appreciation of poetry to be largely a performance, posturing and displaying a cultured demeanour, as they embrace whilst quoting Robert Herrick's poetry. Julia's

⁹⁷ I have been unable to ascertain whether Collymore's dramas published in *Bim* were written for immediate performance, or if this piece in particular was performed by the group at the time of its writing. It was, however, performed three decades later as part of a revue celebrating Frank Collymore's life and work in 1978, by actors formed from the former Green Room Theatre group that Collymore and his wife Ellice had been part of for a number of years (Edward Baugh, *Frank Collymore: A Biography* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2009), p. 264).

⁹⁸ Collymore, 'An Evening', p. 33.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Collymore, 'An Evening', p. 35.

¹⁰² Collymore, 'An Evening', 83.

husband, having witnessed their display, confronts them together but his anger dissipates as he acknowledges, 'I've discovered...my soul!':

As you read that poem to Julia, it was as though a new world had unrolled itself before me. It was as though the aching void in my life was filled. Roses seemed to sprout around my....You understand what I mean don't you?¹⁰³

Bemoaning his lack of literary education at his commercially minded school, the curtain falls as Fellowes sets aside his gun mindlessly, thoughts of revenge lost, and demands Hillcrest reads poem after poem aloud. Collymore's humorous one act play sends up the literary coteries that he himself was part of, through the hyperbolic dialogue and characterisation he satirises their pursuit of spending an evening 'with the poets'.

Ivy Achoy's article 'The Culture Mania' published in *The Beacon* similarly uses humour to attack the earnestness of the literary and debating societies' pursuit of a West Indian cultural tradition. In an allusion which echoes Gomes' diagnosis of the 'literary-club bug', she diagnoses a 'culture rash' which has broken out among Trinidadians keen to celebrate anything that can be determined to be West Indian culture, a 'hectic courtship of culture [...that] would be very pathetic if it were not amusing'.¹⁰⁴ Her critique of Trinidadian society focuses on the hypocrisy of their celebration of the art of Mr Vasieleff and the facile likening of his work to Paul Gauguin. Achoy notes that were Gauguin to have painted the 'beauty of the [Trinidadian] tropics' these would have been complete with 'beautiful and buxom Negresses [...] just as he has portrayed the women of Tahiti' and questions whether the 'sudden culture rash would have possessed the respectable inhabitants of [the] island' in that instance.¹⁰⁵ Achoy's article though humorous, is caustic in its characterisation of Trinidadian society, distancing herself from the crowds who valued Vasieleff's work, many of whom may have read *The Beacon*. In other works, such as the short story 'The Beam in Thine Own Eye', penned under the pseudonym Frere, the connection between the potential reader and the characterisation of West Indian society in the work was used as the basis for the humour. This short story which critiques the hypocrisy of the literary club

¹⁰³ Collymore, 'An Evening', 87.

¹⁰⁴ Ivy Achoy, 'The Culture Mania', *The Beacon*, 2.6 (October-November 1932), 31.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

scene's posturing opens with a debate at the "Questioners' Debating Society" and the story is published in the magazine of the Bajan Forum Club, a society similar to that depicted.¹⁰⁶ The humour of the story is predicated on the readers' familiarity with the types of character in the story. Mr Smart, for whom there was nothing better 'than feeling important', is contributing to a debate on the West Indian Federation, where 'he was in great form. Whether the views he was putting forward were original or not there is no gainsaying the fact that his delivery was magnificent'.¹⁰⁷ Smart argues that 'we must sink our insular prejudices [...] forget that we are Barbadians, St Lucians and, Trinidadians as the case may be, and only remember that we belong to the great fraternity of West Indians!' and congratulates himself on 'doing his little bit towards spreading the feeling of brotherhood among these islands'.¹⁰⁸

Frere divides the story into three acts, each progressively longer which focus on Smart systematically breaking down this fraternity; he argues with a St Lucian about which islands' inhabitants better appreciate good literature, and a pair of Trinidadians over the merits of Barbadian cricketers over Trinidadian players. Smart's immediate and argumentative recourse to a sense of national pride has a disastrous effect when one of the Trinidadians; a cricketer on the West Indian team recalls the argument during the test match against England and starts to work against, rather than with, his Barbadian team mate subsequently losing the match. Smart, unaware that he planted the seed of this discontent, scoffs at their pettiness; his lack of perception and arrogance is sealed by his comment to two club members: 'I never lose an opportunity [...] to do my bit towards trying to stamp out the little island prejudices which are so prevalent in our neighbours'.¹⁰⁹ Frere characterises the ironically named Mr Smart and the Questioners' Club as more concerned with bombast than genuine rational debate or encouraging unity across the islands, and their debates as 'depart[ing] further and further away from facts' with each rhetorical flourish.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Frere, 'The Beam in Thine Own Eye', *The Forum Quarterly* (September 1933), 20-22.

¹⁰⁷ Frere, 'The Beam', p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Frere, 'The Beam', p. 22.

¹¹⁰ Frere, 'The Beam', p. 20.

Humour is used very effectively in a number of the short stories to highlight the absurdity of West Indian society; Mendes' 'At the Ball' published in both the Bajan *Forum Quarterly* and the Trinidadian *The Quarterly Magazine*, for instance uses the tight frame to focus on a Trinidadian society ball at which Jean de la Roche is keen to be seen socialising.¹¹¹ Jean 'knew that somewhere in the early days of his ancestors settling on the island, a negress had somehow or other got mixed up with the family' but was adamant about denying this heritage and trying to pass for white. This manifests itself in a self-conscious adopting of 'eh what' in his conversation, 'which told his listener that he was educated in England', ignoring any 'coloured' acquaintances and the overt racism he voices in conversation.¹¹² Jean's arrogance, however, is his social demise; keen to be acknowledged by the most popular man in the hall, the iconoclastic MacDonald, Jean snubs his own wife to ask MacDonald's date for a dance. Jean is confused by the whispers and looks he receives as he dances with the woman until St Hill, the 'clever coloured barrister' that Jean has previously snubbed, so as to not be associated with him, delights in asking Jean, 'Don't you know that every young man, *every young man*, in town knows intimately the young woman with whom you just danced?'.¹¹³ The short story ends on this question, St Hill gets the last laugh, as does the reader of *The Forum Quarterly* in which it was published, the magazine of a club formed by black middle-class professionals like St Hill.

In Edgar Mittelholzer's 'Mr Jones of Port of Spain', the air of gentle mocking is turned on the socially ambitious Joneses, who are newly moneyed but 'not much of a family socially speaking'.¹¹⁴ Concerned about announcing the forthcoming marriage of their daughter to a laundry man, they try to find a way of disguising his occupation. Mr Jones eventually summons the courage to ask their neighbours for an alternative term and his delight at the ironic suggestion of "Raiment renovator" is played out for the

¹¹¹ Alfred Mendes, 'At the Ball', *The Forum Quarterly*, 2.4 (September 1933), 8-9. This story was originally published the year before in *The Quarterly Magazine* under the name Hubert Alfred ([Hubert Alfred], 'At the Ball', *The Quarterly Magazine* (December 1932) 7-9). Mendes published numerous works in *The Quarterly Magazine* and its predecessor, *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Literary Association*, many under his name or the pseudonyms, Hubert Alfred and A. H. Seedorf. In one issue of the *Quarterly Magazine* (September 1931) two works appear by Mendes under two different pseudonyms. All subsequent quotations from 'At the Ball' and the corresponding page references are from the later publication in *The Forum Quarterly*.

¹¹² Mendes, 'At the Ball', p. 8.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 9.

¹¹⁴ Edgar Mittelholzer, 'Mr Jones of Port-of-Spain', *Bim*, 3.11 (Dec 1949), 185-90.

amusement of the reader. Mittelholzer's humorous short story, like Mendes' and other work by Collymore, highlights the pretensions of the socially ambitious and the precariousness of their position, one in which the semantics of a newspaper announcement is a matter for serious concern.¹¹⁵ These stories identify and send up middle-class anxieties about maintaining a façade of social respectability and critique the self-congratulatory impulses of educated West Indians keen to display knowledge and cultural capital (however fleeting this may be) to demonstrate their social worth. The prevalence of stories which adopt a satirical tone in their depiction of middle-class society across a range of magazines is suggestive of a wider ambivalence about the contested position that the middle classes found themselves in and the precarious collective class identity under construction. The often ironic humour of the stories serves on the one hand to distance the narrative voices from the people it depicts, but the success of this is itself dependent on an intimate knowledge of the type of characters and the contradictions among the middle classes that are being ridiculed. The humour of these stories is predicated upon the readers' identification with, for instance, Mr Jones and the understanding of the importance of his son-in-law's occupation, not bringing into question the Jones' middle-class status.

Other short stories are similarly centred on the middle classes, but do not use humour in their exploration of this, as such the anxieties around the middle-classes' social position which shape the work are more clearly apparent. In particular, there are a number of pieces involving encounters between middle-class and poorer West Indians that comment on the class divide. R.A.C. de Boissière's, 'The Woman on the Pavement' published in *The Beacon*, opens with a collision between a boy on a bicycle and Mr Edgehill, 'a man of the middle classes [whose] shoes were polished [and] trousers well creased'.¹¹⁶ These sartorial class signifiers bring a group of onlookers hurrying over, and they pick him up and take him to a drugstore to recover. The boy is taken by a gruff policeman until Edgehill proclaims that the accident was his own fault. Throughout the story the notable repetition of the term gentleman, 'Everybody felt that the gentleman was a good man', 'The assistants smile, glad to see that the

¹¹⁵ For another later story of this type of social satire see: Frank Collymore, 'RSVP to Mrs Bush-Hall', *Bim*, 9.35 (July-December 1962), 199-217.

¹¹⁶ R. A. C. de Boissière, 'The Woman on the Pavement', *The Beacon*, 1.8 (November 1931), 4-5 (p. 4).

gentleman was well and could laugh again', reiterate his social position, and the deference and care with which he is treated.¹¹⁷ This does not go unnoticed; as Edgell returns home, 'He told his family of the accident and said that the world was a kinder place than people thought, and how would we live without brotherly love and compassion'.¹¹⁸

The collision with the boy, which initially seems to be the central drama of the short story, is contrasted against the incident involving the eponymous woman on the pavement, which Edgell witnesses a few days later: 'Edgell heard a cry [...] a long shuddering cry of someone in agony [...] a plump black peasant woman was having a fit on the pavement'.¹¹⁹ De Boissière focuses yet again on her clothes, 'her dress had got rolled up, exposing her one filthy undergarment. Her old hat had fallen off' and the physicality of her fit, 'her whole body shuddered and jumped like some animal that had just been beheaded, her naked thighs slapping loudly on the pavement'.¹²⁰ This vivid description and the likening to an animal dehumanises the woman, reflecting the response of the 'clerks and clerkesses [who were] looking at the woman' but not helping her.¹²¹ In contrast to Edgell's accident, the middle-class people on the street look on, making jokes or discussing their weekends, as does Edgell: 'he knew that he must do something, but the longer he stood there, and saw others look on, the more did he become as paralysed'.¹²² A few people, a black porter, a 'white woman who had gone down in the world' and a black woman, go and help the woman: 'And Mr Edgell felt ashamed. He knew that this was what he should have done, but what he had been unable to do, because of the people looking on, people of the middle classes like himself'.¹²³ De Boissière makes the social commentary of his story clear, the hypocrisy of the middle-class onlookers who on a Sunday go to church and talk about brotherly love, but seem to have 'not understood that that was really a human being on the pavement'.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² de Boissière, 'Woman on the Pavement', p. 5.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

A similar construction, an event which leaves the central character pensive, is used in Jan Williams' 'The Shilling', published in *Bim* involving an interaction between an old black woman collecting firewood and a middle-class white woman, who passes most days without acknowledging the older woman's presence.¹²⁵ One morning the older woman breaks the physical distance between them by reaching out and touching the younger woman to ask for money, which causes the younger woman to consider their differences and her own fortuitous position. Her emerging social consciousness causes her to give the woman a shilling, but without any genuine interaction, hurrying on her way to work but continuing to think upon the incident. Upon returning for lunch she passes the same street and comes across a crowd of school children around a blood stained half-demolished wall, the older woman had been hit and killed by a speeding car. The middle-class woman leaves in silence, shocked by the incident and the speed with which the street had returned to normal, as if the old woman had never been there.

In W. G. Ogilvie's 'Yard Boys aren't decent' published in *Public Opinion* the encounter between Mrs Limander and her yard-boy Theophilus in the public space of the cinema has the opposite effect; far from leaving her considering their similarities the meeting entrenches Mrs Limander's desire to show their distinction. Mrs Ranting, her companion, is shocked to see Theophilus acknowledge her friends' presence, 'I saw that nigger fellow bow to you dear, and you nodded back. I didn't know that you knew any of those people?'.¹²⁶ Mrs Limander is surprised by the fine clothes which he was wearing, and the implicit suggestion that dressed as he was and in the same theatre as her, they are social equals, so is determined to prevent such an occurrence again. Fixating on the suit of clothes she decides he must have been stealing from her to buy such a suit on his salary of eight shillings a week. Mrs Limander's reaction is juxtaposed against that of Theophilus and his date, who suspect the women's whispers are in pleasure at seeing the gardener so well turned out and might therefore raise his pay. The young couple's conversation reveals the lengths to which he has gone to save for the suit. The next payday, he is summoned by Mrs Limander who tells him 'I don't approve of my servants squandering money in trying to dress like their betters', as she

¹²⁵ Jan Williams, 'The Shilling', *Bim*, 1.3 (December 1943), 1-3.

¹²⁶ W. G. Ogilvie, 'Yard Boys Aren't Decent', *Public Opinion*, 2.11 (April 30 1938), 11.

reduced his pay to ensure he does not transgress the social boundaries again.¹²⁷ These short stories use the social encounters, particularly those in public spaces, to comment on the social stratification of the West Indies, and highlight the anxieties of the middle-class characters who seek not to be associated with working class people. The discomfort they, or the reader, feel in these encounters raises questions about the extent to which the middle classes, in shoring up their own position in West Indian society, are complicit in the poverty and hardships that others face. These are just a short selection of a much larger body of work published in these magazines which through its settings and characters respond to and depict the lives of middle-class West Indians. Through the literary work, just as occurred in the broader text of the magazines, these groups of readers and writers sought to reflect their lives in the literature they read.

3.5 Conclusion

As this chapter has shown through its focus on the literary and debating societies and club magazines, the middle classes were key to West Indian literary culture of the early twentieth century. These clubs and publications were middle-class ventures and the literary culture which emerged from these in turn reflected this genesis. Central to these ventures was the impetus felt by this newly enlarged social class to have a wider influence in society, to consolidate their own position and effect developments in the spheres open to them, namely the cultural realm. In enacting these aims, these groups drew upon the resources, the colonial education and the limited social connections, available to them. The literary and debating society movement by consolidating their social position and reinforcing the position of culture enabled these groups, who were initially colonial in their cultural outlook, to begin to articulate the importance of a West Indian literary tradition. Closer consideration of these clubs and their publications shows that this movement was not as conservative or colonial as it appears, as some groups used their engagement with British cultural traditions as a foundation to inspire West Indian writers, and the platform of the club meeting to garner widespread support among their middle-class memberships. This in turn led to a broad range of literary work reflecting the social milieu out of which it emerged.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

These clubs and magazines are not the anti-colonial and nationalist spaces and groups which have previously been seen as key to the emergence of Caribbean literature on an international stage; they were, however, significant for leading to a broad movement of support and creating a generation of readers and writers who saw the project of producing a West Indian literature as theirs to further. The critical consensus which has emerged around *The Beacon* group and barrack-yard literature has obscured much of the culture of literary production and types of work which was circulating in the West Indies at the time. Removing this distorting lens opens up a middle-class literary culture which emerged from, and expanded beyond, the magazines of the early twentieth century.

Chapter Four - Editorial Agendas: Women magazine editors in the West Indies

Frank Collymore, Arthur Seymour, Alfred Mendes and Albert Gomes; when we think of magazine editors in the West Indies, these are the names that are most frequently cited.¹ Add in Henry Swanzy, editor of the influential 'Caribbean Voices' radio programme and you have a list of the most frequently cited key literary editors of the 1920s-1950s. All of them male. There were, however, numerous women involved in the literary culture of these decades: as readers, contributors, and editors of the literary magazines. Cultural organisations and literary groups were populated by both men and women, and 'Caribbean Voices', a programme so often framed as central to the success of the 1950s generation of male novelists, was originally conceived of and run by a woman, Una Marson. With the obvious exception of Marson, the focus on the small group of male editors listed above has tended to obscure the wider role that women played in West Indian magazine culture, particularly in the central role of editor.

In this chapter I focus on an alternative, loosely connected, network of female magazine editors, predominantly based in Jamaica.² As well as Marson (editor of *The Cosmopolitan* (1928-1931), these included Esther Chapman, who had a series of titles: *The Jamaica Review* (1925-1927) which was replaced by the short lived *Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928) and finally *The West Indian Review* (1934-1975). Aimee Webster edited *The Caribbean Post* (1946-1950) and Elsie Benjamin Barsoe, another Jamaican journalist, ran the annual *Peppercot* between 1946 and 1970.

¹ See for instance: Erika J. Waters, 'Anthologising the Caribbean', in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 575-584; Reinhard Sander, 'The Thirties and Forties', in *West Indian Literature* ed. by Bruce King (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 38-50; Veronica Gregg, 'Introduction', *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of Non-Fiction Writing, 1890-1980* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp. 1-69 (p. 46); Victor Chang, 'West Indian Poetry', in *A Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry*, ed. by Neil Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 235-248.

² The women listed here were mostly from and working in Jamaica, with the addition of Lily Lockhart in St Lucia. This is not to suggest that there were no women in editorial positions at magazines elsewhere in the West Indies, merely that this study has not uncovered their work. More may come to light as papers and collections are donated to national and university libraries. The predominance of Jamaican titles here is reflected in this project as a whole. Jamaica, particularly Kingston, had an established newspaper sector with the associated structures which were useful for supporting magazines such as the printing presses and existing readership; this could explain the predominance of Jamaican magazines. A number of the Jamaican editors listed here were employed as journalists at these newspapers; this could suggest a link between employment of this form and the skills, connections and desire to produce their own publications.

Barsoe's colleague on *The Gleaner*, Helen Violet Ormsby Marshall, set up *Madame* (1946-7) with Terry Burke acting as literary editor.³ Alongside these female magazine editors in Jamaica sits Edna Manley who undertook an analogous role in her editorship of the *Focus* anthology between 1943 and 1960.⁴ Slightly earlier, in St Lucia, Lily Lockhart edited and published *The West Indian Enterprise* between 1931 and 1937. Many of these women, particularly those in Jamaica, knew each other and moved within the same cultural and literary circles. Ormsby set up the Jamaican branch of the PEN club, of which Barsoe and Burke were members.⁵ Several of the women were members of the Poetry League of Jamaica and worked within the same field of journalism.⁶ There were also some professional links between these women through their magazines; Aimee Webster worked with both Marson on the final few issues of *The Cosmopolitan* and for a brief period with Chapman on *The West Indian Review*. These women were all part of the middle classes, although they came from different sections: Marson, Webster and Barsoe from the black middle classes, Lockhart, a cousin of Jean Rhys, a white creole, and Chapman a British expatriate. Together these women are evidence of a wide network of female magazine editors active in the 1920s-1950s.

Most of these publications edited by women have been overlooked in accounts of this period; some of the work they published has been anthologised but its genesis in the magazines obscured. The women who conceived of the publications and whose editorships shaped them have similarly been marginalised. Una Marson is a notable exception: she and aspects of her working life have been recovered by critics.⁷ Marson was a key figure in Jamaican cultural and literary circles; a published

³ Terry Burke was a woman.

⁴ Although the anthology form differs to that of the magazine, as argued in the introduction to this thesis, there are parallels between these magazine editors and Manley's editorship of the anthology. Particularly in the first issue in 1943 Manley provided the personal impetus behind the project and shaped its aims and aspirations.

⁵ '1962 awardees to be highlighted at Musgrave Awards', *The Sunday Gleaner*, 6 October 2002, p. 7.

⁶ Elsie Benjamin Barsoe worked for the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner*. Helen Ormsby Marshall was a feature writer for both *The Jamaica Standard* and *The Gleaner* between 1938-1940 and Chapman wrote for the *Jamaica Times* and for a number of years wrote a regular column for the *Gleaner* and edited the "Women's Page". Aimee Webster also wrote for the *Jamaica Times* prior to running her magazine, *The Caribbean Post*, then in later years worked for *The Gleaner* where she specialised in horticulture.

⁷ Erika Smilowitz, 'Una Marson: Woman before her Time', *Jamaica Journal*, 16.2 (May 1983), 62-68; Honor Ford-Smith, 'Una Marson: Black Nationalist and Feminist Writer', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 34

poet, playwright and member of a number of arts and cultural groups. Marson also edited a popular magazine and set up the first West Indian publishing house, The Pioneer Press.⁸ Upon moving to London she was involved in the League of Coloured People and took a formative role in shaping the BBC's West Indian cultural output. Marson was noted by her contemporaries as a significant cultural player; however, in the decades following her death there was little substantial critical engagement with her work and cultural activities. Aside from her presence in a number of anthologies she was somewhat lost in the folds of Caribbean literary history. Her magazine and plays were not reprinted and few copies remain today, and her poetry was seen as critically unfashionable. Marson was remembered, albeit briefly, in connection to the BBC but has been overshadowed by Henry Swanzy in accounts of 'Caribbean Voices'. The Pioneer Press, a significant development in regional literary production, remains a footnote in a wider history.

Since the 1980s Marson has attracted a growing body of critical work, initiated by Erika Smilowitz (1983) and substantially built upon by the recuperative work of Donnell (2003, 2011), Ford-Smith (1988), Jarrett-Macauley (2010), Snaith (2008) and Rosenberg (2007). Marson's life has proven, and continues to prove, ripe for critical work; she has been variously cast as a modernist, Caribbean literary forerunner, leading feminist, proponent of black consciousness and romantic poet. Much of this criticism, however, has focused on her later years and time in London. Una Marson's role as the founder and editor of *The Cosmopolitan* is mentioned in passing, but both the magazine and more specifically Marson's editorship have

(1988), 22-37; Alison Donnell, 'Una Marson and the Fractured Subjects of Modernity: Writing across the Black Atlantic', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 22:4 (2011), 345-369; Alison Donnell, 'Una Marson: feminism, anti-colonialism and a forgotten fight for freedom', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 114-132; Leah Rosenberg, 'The Pitfalls of Feminist Nationalism and the Career of Una Marson', *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 159-180; Leah Rosenberg, 'Una Marson's 'Pocomania' (1938): Class, Gender, and the Pitfalls of Cultural Nationalism', *Essays in Theatre*, 20.1 (2001), 27-42; Anna Snaith, 'Little Brown Girl in a White, White City: Una Marson and London', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 27.1 (Spring 2008), 93-114.

⁸ For a detailed consideration of Marson's life see: Delia Jarrett-Macauley, *The Life of Una Marson, 1905-65* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010). A selection of Marson's poetry has recently been reprinted: Una Marson, *Selected Poems* ed. by Alison Donnell (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2011).

received relatively little critical attention.⁹ Furthermore, the critical framings of Marson have, through their focus on her life, tended to consider her in isolation.¹⁰ Though no longer absent from histories of this period, she has, through the criticism itself, been subject to a different kind of marginalisation, positioned as somewhat separate from the Jamaican context in which she spent most of her working life. This recuperative work is important. A singular focus on Marson, however, can indirectly create a narrative of uniqueness around her and her work. This is of limited use for understanding the literary culture of this period, and it also belies the collaborative nature of much of Marson's work.¹¹ The wider picture of women editors this chapter uncovers shows that Marson was not unique in being a culturally and politically engaged woman who contributed directly to the literary and social development of the region. By moving beyond a singular focus on Marson this chapter explores the ways in which the magazine culture of the 1930s and 1940s provided a fertile ground for women to intervene in the public sphere.

In this chapter I explore in detail the ways in which three of these West Indian women editors, Una Marson, Aimee Webster and Esther Chapman, utilised the magazine form in pursuit of their own cultural and political agendas.¹² These three women were contemporaries, publishing their magazines in the 1930s and 1940s in Jamaica, and were journalists and writers of poetry or prose themselves.¹³ The turn

⁹ Leah Rosenberg considers a selection of the literary contributions in 'Modern Romances: The Short Stories in Una Marson's "The Cosmopolitan" (1928-31)', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12:1/2 (November 2004), 170-183; and Donnell's article 'Una Marson and the Fractured Subjects of Modernity' engages in part with the editorship of the magazine in a wider discussion of Marson's articulations of modernity and female empowerment, but these are the only critical accounts of some length which look at the magazine.

¹⁰ Arlene Griffin draws parallels between Marson and Grace Molisa from Vanuatu and July Sipolo from the Solomon Islands, a rare comparative consideration of Marson's poetry. There is, however, no similar critical work considering her poetry at length alongside other Caribbean poets (Arlene Griffin, 'Women speak out in literature: Pacific and Caribbean voices', *Wasafiri*, 12:25 (1997), 22-24).

¹¹ With the exception of her own self-published poetry collections, her involvement in various magazines, cultural organisations and broadcasting roles were not singular, personal ventures. Marson's work bringing together a West Indian community at the BBC was similarly the result of an investment in collective working.

¹² For brevity in this chapter I, on occasion, shorten the titles of these three publications, removing the definite articles from *The Cosmopolitan* and using *Post* for Webster's magazine and *Review* to refer to Chapman's *The West Indian Review*, her third publication, which is the focus of my analysis when considering her editorship. References to other magazines in this chapter, as well as Chapman's other two titles (*The Saturday Review of Jamaica* and *The Jamaica Review*) will be given in full throughout.

¹³ As noted above Webster and Chapman were professional journalists writing for the *Jamaica Times* and *The Gleaner*. In addition to her work as a journalist Chapman wrote a number of novels

to editorship (as opposed to authorship) suggests a desire to shape the literary culture of which they were a part more profoundly; their magazines provided these women with a platform into public debate and a different type of authorial space. This chapter has three connected aims: to explore the ways in which these three editors used their publications to further their own specific agendas, to recuperate these three critically overlooked magazines and to suggest reasons for their marginalisation in literary histories of the period.

I begin by considering the specific function and influence of the editor's role in literary magazines, identifying the varied responsibilities and types of editorship which these women undertook. The second section moves to a closer consideration of the editorship of Una Marson at *The Cosmopolitan* and Aimee Webster at the *Caribbean Post*, to explore how each used her magazine to advocate for gender issues, shape public discourse around women and contribute to the emerging feminist tradition in the region. I then focus on Esther Chapman, considering her third publication *The West Indian Review* and its specific vision for West Indian culture. The chapter charts Chapman's politicisation of the magazine and the ways in which she reached out beyond the publication and curated the print space to support the continuation of British colonial rule in the West Indies. In its focus on Marson, Webster and Chapman this chapter emphasises the role of women as producers, founders and editors of the literary magazines, and highlights how magazines were also used by women editors for specific personal and political agendas.¹⁴ The final section complicates this by a turn to the literary material in the magazines; it explores how the fictional work in *The West Indian Review* and *The Cosmopolitan* engaged with and responded to these central agendas. It considers the literary work written by Marson and Chapman and published in their magazines

published under the name Esther Hyman: *Punch and Judy* (London: n.pub., 1927); *Study in Bronze* (London: Constable, 1928); and later *Too Much Summer* (London: Chantry, 1953). She also wrote a number of non-fiction works: *Development in Jamaica* (Kingston: Arawak Press, 1954) and *Pleasure Island* (Kingston: Arawak Press, 1961). Marson would go on to be a regular columnist for the newspaper *Public Opinion*. Marson published three poetry collections, *Tropic Reveries* (1930), *Heights and Depths* (1931), *The Moth and The Star* (1937) and two plays which were staged in Kingston, *At What A Price* (1932) and *Pocomania* (1938).

¹⁴ The existing critical accounts of these magazines often note the Beacon group's overt political motivations, or the nationalist agendas underpinning *Kyk-over-al*. As this chapter demonstrates, these male editors were not alone in the turn to magazines as a tool to pursue political and social agendas.

which supported their editorial positions, before moving to other fictional work in the magazines which challenged these positions and contributed to a broadening of the magazines' debates. This section of the chapter considers the ways in which the multi-authored space of the magazine enabled ideas to be contested and debated. By returning to a focus on the form of the magazine this consideration of the literary voices highlights how the print space resists singular narratives even in publications with a clear editorial stance.

4.1 Editing the West Indies

Before I move to a closer consideration of the three magazines and editors, I wish to consider in more detail the figure of the editor and the varied role and associations of this position. The role of the magazine editor is a complicated and multifaceted one which combines artistic or ideological concerns and more pragmatic and commercial decision-making. Depending on the size of the magazine the editor may be responsible for a wide range of tasks including: deciding on and shaping the magazines' remit and ideology, soliciting material to be published, commissioning articles, arranging financial support from benefactors and advertisers, constructing the individual pages for typesetting, editing the magazine's content, advertising the publication and arranging subscriptions and distribution.¹⁵ The position which the editor occupies, particularly that of the founding editor, is similarly complex; central to both the magazine's formation and continuation, the editor can also be somewhat in the background while facilitating the work of others, or act more assertively as a gatekeeper.

In some magazines the work of the editor is clearly visible, the prominent editorials and letters pages and even advertisements may contain direct references to, or from, the editor. In other magazines, however, the editor's work is all but invisible, the first few issues of *Bim* for instance have no named editors or editorials and only the Young Men's Progressive Club's insignia give a sense of the nature of its genesis. The extent to which the editor is associated personally with the magazine also

¹⁵ A significant number of the magazines in this study were run by a single editor, upon whom all the duties listed here, and more, would fall.

varies. Chapman was a prominent editor and the *West Indian Review* is firmly associated with her. On the other side of the spectrum lies the *The Minerva Review*, where the editorial presence is far less apparent; in this magazine there were regular changes in the editorship which mean there is no equivalent clear identification between an individual and the publication. Some of the magazines in this study had numerous editorial positions or a committee of people who collated, edited and produced the publications, while others, such as Marson's *The Cosmopolitan* and Lockhart's *The West Indian Enterprise*, were personal ventures. The role of the editor, therefore, is not a singular one. Both across the magazines of this study and even within a single publication, the nature, influence and responsibilities of the role vary.

Matthew Philpotts, drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, has sought to produce a typology of editorship, noting traits which become clear when considering the interactions between the 'personal habitus of the editor and the institutional habitus of the journal'.¹⁶ Philpotts uses Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', the attitudes and dispositions that shape an individual's practices, to explore the varied ways in which an editor navigates the social, economic and artistic relations which come together in the magazine, positing that there are three types of editorship: charismatic, bureaucratic and mediating.¹⁷ These are not discrete categories; they can operate in combination and also vary over a magazine's life. Philpott's categories and his wider exploration of the editorial role were devised with reference to the modernist little magazines; they are, however, useful in the West Indian context for they identify the combination of social and cultural capital on which an editor draws, alongside the managerial, administrative and commercial skills required to keep a magazine afloat. Philpott's categories of the charismatic and bureaucratic editorships in particular are illuminating for the three editors under consideration in this chapter. Broadly speaking the charismatic editor has a

¹⁶ Matthew Philpotts, 'The Role of the Periodical Editor: Literary Journals and Editorial Habitus', *The Modern Language Review*, 107.1 (January 2012), 39-64 (pp. 42-3).

¹⁷ Bourdieu characterises habitus as 'systems of durable transposable dispositions' which shapes an individual's practice and perceptions (Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Richard Nice (trans.) (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), p. 53). For a more detailed exploration of Bourdieu's notion of habitus see: Karl Maton, 'Habitus' in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. by Michael Grenfell (Durham: Acumen, 2012) pp. 48-64.

clear specific editorial vision which shapes the magazine's ethos, there is a personal identification with the publication and the social and cultural capital of the editor drives the magazine. As such, these magazines are predisposed to be short-lived and unlikely to be successfully transferred to another editor. The bureaucratic editorship forms an institutional structure in which the cultural and social capital resides, rather than resting with a single individual. Often structured with numerous editorial roles, this type of editorship focuses on the 'professional, administrative and commercial' dimensions of the role, predisposing the magazine to longevity and a succession of editors.¹⁸ As this chapter will explore in more detail, Marson, Webster and Chapman's editorships parallel the charismatic form of editorship, these women shaped their magazines' direction and ethos. In Chapman's *West Indian Review* and Webster's *Caribbean Post*, this charismatic editorship was combined with elements of bureaucratic editorship which provided the commercial support and infrastructures which led to these publications' longevity.

4.2 The Age of Women

Prior to starting *The Cosmopolitan* Una Marson cut her editorial teeth working as an assistant editor on the *Jamaica Critic*, a 'socio-political' monthly journal, edited by Dunbar Wint. As her biographer Delia Jarrett-Macaulay notes, it was here she learnt the skills she was to utilise throughout her working career.¹⁹ On the *Critic*, however, Una had 'no room for creative freewheeling and had to restrict herself to supposedly 'feminine' subjects'.²⁰ Jarrett-Macaulay suggests Marson was biding her time on the *Critic*, working for Wint whose anti-feminist views were the opposite of her own.²¹ When two years later, at the age of 23, she launched her own magazine, it took a very different direction to her previous work. As editor Marson had much greater freedom in the choice and direction of her magazines, as well as the types of contributions which she herself made. Her strident editorials, prominently

¹⁸ Philpotts, p. 53. The three types of editor are explored in more detail in Philpott's article in which he posits the third category, the mediating editor, as the ideal. The mediating editor combines both approaches, mediating between the two as required. Philpotts argues that the combination of 'intellectual and economic dispositions in a single literary editor' is rare, although he identifies T. S. Eliot's editorship of *The Criterion* (1922-1939) as indicative of this approach (Philpotts, p. 55).

¹⁹ Jarrett-Macaulay, p. 26.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

positioned on the first page of the magazine, articulated a future for Jamaica based on her own political ideals and the magazine gave voice to her own generation of young professionals. Marson's *Cosmopolitan* began as the official organ of the Stenographer's Association, and although the association did not last, the magazine continued to carry the inscription, 'a magazine for the business youth of Jamaica', throughout its life.²² This section of middle-class West Indian society was growing over this period, as young West Indians were increasingly taking up professional careers and young educated women were increasingly able to move beyond the domestic realm. As Rosenberg notes, '[i]n the 1920s, the doors were open for Afro-Jamaican women to enter stenography and similar "respectable" and "modern" jobs in Kingston businesses'.²³ The magazine sought to support young business professionals, particularly the new and growing group of working women; as the opening editorial states:

We shall always take a specific interest in the business youth of our island for in their hands lies the future [...] There seems to be a great lack of self-confidence especially among the fairer sex and it is our desire to inspire and enthuse our readers.²⁴

In addition to advocating for the rights of working professionals, the magazine sought to bring about a more cosmopolitan Jamaica, something it conceived of in cultural terms. As its opening editorial stated, it aimed: 'to develop literary and other artistic talents in our island home, [for] a country may be unmistakably judged by the standard of the literature she produces'.²⁵ In many respects Marson's magazine is a direct extension of her own world; she was a stenographer herself, was already writing poetry and was also involved in the cultural life of the island; her vision for Jamaican progress coalesced around these aspects of her life and that

²² The Stenographers Association, which was three months old when *The Cosmopolitan* was first published in May 1928, only lasted a year (Jarrett-Macauley, p. 32).

²³ Rosenberg, 'Modern Romances', p. 170. As Alice Colón and Rhonda Reddock acknowledge the West Indian economies which were modernising in the early twentieth century 'offered increasing, although still limited, positions in commercial and office activity, such as in retail trade establishments or as typists, stenographers and telephone operators'. In addition, 'educated woman became part of a slowly but steadily increasing number of teachers, nurses, social workers and other professionals [and a few emerged into] male-dominated professions such as law and medicine'. These they state can be seen as the 'first identifiable cohort of professional women' (Alice Colón and Rhonda Reddock, 'The Changing Status of Women in the Contemporary Caribbean', in *General History of the Caribbean: Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, 6 vols (London: UNESCO, 1999), VI, pp. 465-505 (p. 469)).

²⁴ 'Our Debut', *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1928), 1.

²⁵ Ibid.

of the emerging culturally, politically and socially aware middle classes. Philpotts notes that charismatic editorship is driven by the social capital of the editor, who draws on their own networks, something Marson did with her magazine.²⁶ Marson drew directly on her links with the Poetry League of Jamaica of which she was a member, publishing numerous works by the League's members.

The charismatic editorship is driven by an editorial purpose, a 'sense of mission'; this is clearly visible in Marson's magazines' opening statements.²⁷ *The Cosmopolitan* gave Marson a chance to communicate her ideas and aspirational vision for the region to a wide range of readers: 'We [the magazine] desire to be used as a medium to broadcast to thousands of our people the sentiments, convictions, and suggestions of all our talented Jamaicans'.²⁸ *The Cosmopolitan* positioned itself as a direct intervention in the 'general awakening of the island' with which it identified.²⁹ Marson characterised this awakening as the inclusion of young people in social welfare movements, a growing interest in literary work, changes in the social demographic and a general 'thirst for knowledge' in Jamaicans. Although not explicitly political or nationalist in this sentiment, her words in some respects anticipate the political awakening which would come to fruition in later years. As I have explored throughout this thesis, magazines provided the middle classes with a route to engage in public discourse. For the emerging middle classes who were 'systematically denied financial capital and political rights' the cultural capital derived from, and displayed through, ventures such as the magazines became all the more significant.³⁰ This is all the more pertinent for women, whose political rights were further reduced by the absence of universal suffrage and whose professional careers were often curtailed by marriage. Property and income qualifications restricted those who could vote and stand for election under the Crown Colony government, and women could not stand for local elections in Jamaica until 1930, or general elections until 1944, the year that universal suffrage

²⁶ Philpotts, pp. 44-45.

²⁷ Philpotts, p. 47.

²⁸ 'Our Debut', p. 1.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Leah Rosenberg, 'The New Woman and 'the Dusky Strand': The Place of Feminism and Women's Literature in Early Jamaican Nationalism', *Feminist Review*, 95 (2010), 45-63 (p. 46).

was introduced.³¹ Women's influence was generally restricted to social work, charitable and self-help organisations. As Veronica Gregg notes, '[s]ocial work was the means by which black women of the middle strata sought to gain political and social visibility'.³² Marson was involved in such work herself; later in her career she would go on to set up the Jamaican Save the Children Fund, and she saw the magazine as a complement to this type of work stating: 'The columns of the *Cosmopolitan* are free for as much propaganda work as is required'.³³ Through the print space, the magazine provided a platform for such organisations and their work, publishing reports from women's conferences and groups' meetings and allowing them to champion their causes.³⁴ Marson identified that a self-published magazine open to a wide readership provided women such as herself with a public forum, one which she utilised herself in pursuit of her concerns.

The magazine was originally perceived to be the 'organ' of the collective movement she hoped to inspire; Marson arranged public meetings on stenographers' rights, however, they did not receive the support she had hoped and the association folded within its first year.³⁵ Marson's response was to refocus the magazine more generally on the world of business and to continue to call for workers across Jamaica to take group action to improve their circumstances. Marson's interest in the 'business youth' was not confined to women, with articles addressing both genders. *The Cosmopolitan*, however, was particularly significant for making the relatively new body of professional business women visible. Her editorials simultaneously celebrated their presence and called for greater collective action:

Forty years ago the business girl was a rarity in Kingston and
not known in the country parts. Today there must be over

³¹ Women's political engagement was often manifest in, or coupled with, an involvement in magazines. Beatrice Grieg, one of the most prolific female contributors in Trinidadian magazines, was one of the first to put herself forward for election to the Port of Spain council in 1936, though her papers were rejected (Rhonda Reddock, 'The Early Women's Movement in Trinidad and Tobago 1900-1937' in *Subversive Women: Women's Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean* ed. by Saskia Wieringa (New Delhi: Kali, 1995), pp. 101-120).

³² Veronica Gregg, 'Introduction', *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of Non-Fiction Writing, 1890-1980* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp. 1-69 (p. 48).

³³ Una Marson, 'Jamaica's Victory', *The Cosmopolitan*, 2 (June 1929), 66-67 (p. 67).

³⁴ See for instance a printing of an address given by the President of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship ('The Women's Movement and the tasks that are ahead', *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1929), 31).

³⁵ Jarrett-Macauley, p. 32.

800 in the city alone. Rapid progress we would call that. But this is only as far as numbers go: how have we progressed otherwise – as far as business ethics [...] a living wage, providing for the days of sickness and unemployment, securing positions for needy girls [...] this is our age – we have won the freedom we have been fighting for, let us use it to the full advantage.³⁶

This interest in professionals and their lives is evident throughout the magazine, in advertisements for secretarial schools and business attire, and even on at least one occasion through a front cover, which showed photographs of the staff and offices of a motor car company, depicting rows of desks with women and men working side by side (see figures. 5 and 6).³⁷ Whilst other contemporaneous magazines carried articles deploring the ‘modern girl’, Marson sought to encourage women’s aspirations arguing it was the ‘age of women’ and that ‘it is now a case of “what man has done woman may do”’, articulating a hope for a progressive future for Jamaica.³⁸

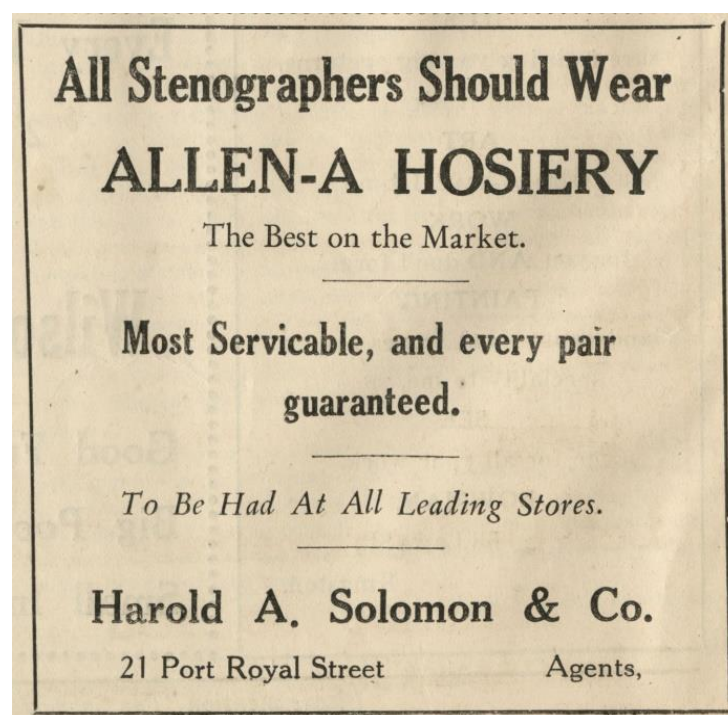


Figure 5. *The Cosmopolitan*, 1.1 (May 1928), 12. Advertisement directed at Stenographers for Allen-A Hosiery. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

³⁶ Una Marson, ‘Editorial: Women Workers’, *The Cosmopolitan* (October 1930), 111.

³⁷ *The Cosmopolitan* (June 1928), front cover.

³⁸ ‘Editorials – The Age of Women’, *The Cosmopolitan* (March 1929), 65.

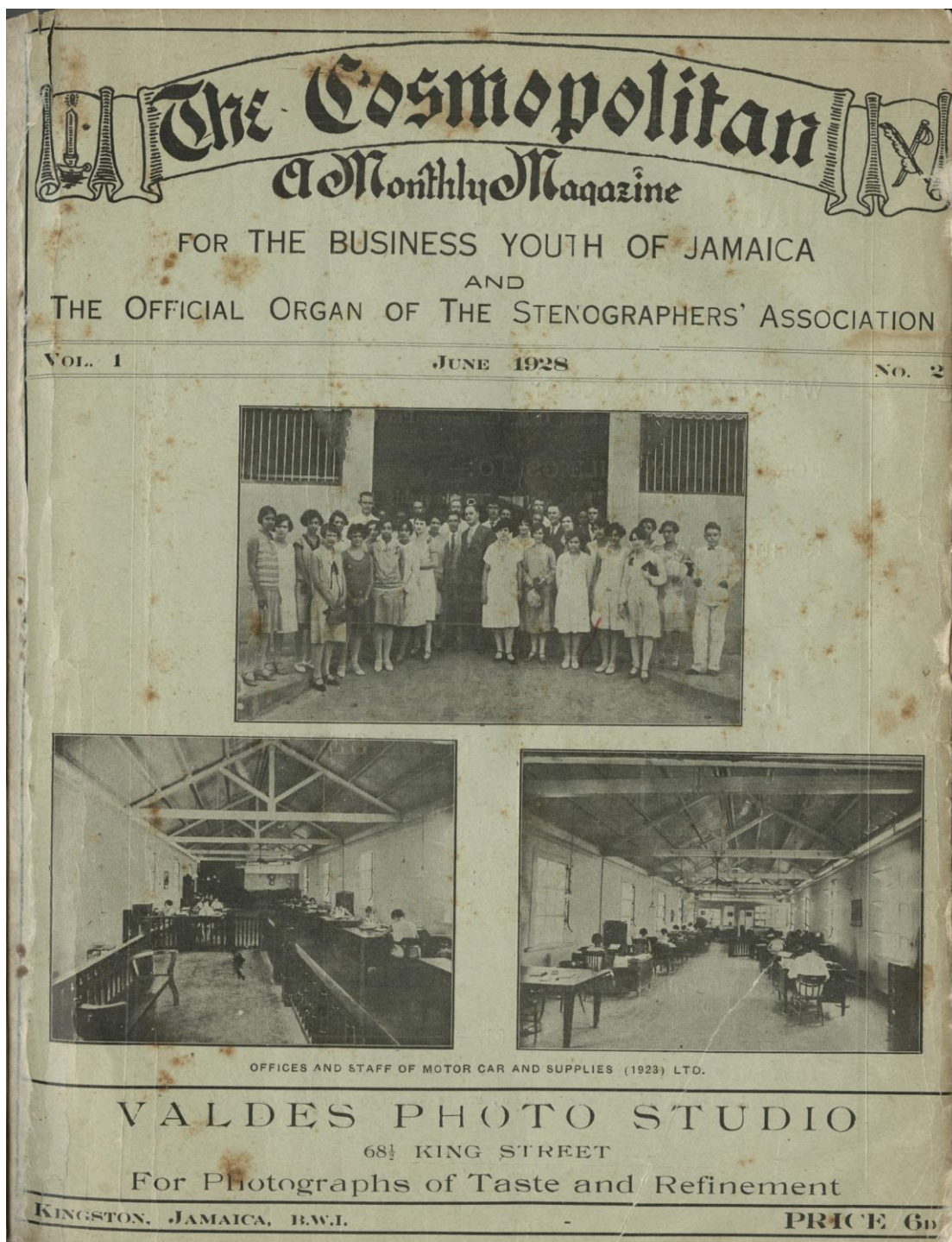


Figure 6. *The Cosmopolitan*, 1.2 (June 1928). Front cover depicting the offices and staff of Motor Car and Supplies Ltd in Kingston. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Similar preoccupations with the position of women can be found in Aimee Webster's *Caribbean Post*, a decade later. Webster edited the final few issues of *The Cosmopolitan* with Marson, re-launched after a month's absence under the new title, *The New Cosmopolitan*. Their working relationship was at times a strained one, but Webster seems to have shared a vision for the modern Jamaican spirit and an interest in women's position in society which she carried into her new venture. Webster's *Caribbean Post* began in January 1946, and despite an initially rocky start, was published regularly on a monthly basis for the following four years. Its subtitle, 'The magazine that mirrors the West Indies', and opening editorial, make clear its regional and forward-thinking approach, noting that the West Indies' future 'is not to be found among the colonial empires' but rather among the 'qualitative forces' in the region, its 'life and personalities'.³⁹ Webster was the managing editor, and with a small team including Percy Miller as literary editor, pushed forward this vision for the magazine. In this editorial structure we can see elements of Philpotts' notion of bureaucratic editorship. The *Post* is distinct from the predominantly one-woman venture of *The Cosmopolitan*, with a number of editorial positions, including news editors from across the region and individuals responsible for the photography; as such it was more secure and not reliant on the energy and creativity of one person. Having been part of *The Cosmopolitan* in its final months, before the breakdown of the relationship between the editors and financial pressure led to its demise, Webster approached her own magazine in a very different way.⁴⁰ The business-like approach of the magazine and its small staff meant the *Post* was able to attract a greater amount of financial support from advertisers, and as such it did not suffer the same financial pressures and produced large and substantial publications with glossy pictures and colour printing. Webster, however, retained control of the magazine as the managing editor, providing direction for the magazine's content and writing a substantial number of the pieces it published. Furthermore, central to

³⁹ 'Announcement', *Caribbean Post* (January 1946), 3.

⁴⁰ As Jarrett Macauley notes toward the end of 1930 '[t]he *Cosmopolitan* was in trouble. Sales had fallen off, advertisers [...] were backing away' and 'what was chiefly harassing Una was the terrible workload and her own shortage of money'. Webster shouldered half of the financial burden when she joined Marson, but upon the breakdown of their relationship and the issuing of the final month of the magazine, Marson collected from the advertisers and used the money for her personal bills, leaving Webster with the magazine's costs (Jarrett-Macauley, pp. 38-39). Having experienced the personal risk of an editorial structure like *The Cosmopolitan's* it is not, perhaps, surprising that Webster's approach differed with her own publication.

the *Caribbean Post*'s pan-West Indian approach was a substantial tour around the West Indies taken by Webster, which informed the contents of many of its articles.

An important element of this mirroring of the region which the *Post* undertook involved reflecting on and celebrating the advances of women; for example, in noting the 'swift and persistent inroads that women in Jamaica [were] making into terrain once held exclusively by the men'.⁴¹ In a similar way to *The Cosmopolitan*, Webster's *Caribbean Post* sought to raise the visibility of women's professional achievements, publishing several articles on inspirational women in a range of fields, including in one instance Una Marson.⁴² Webster also used the magazine to support the advancements of women in business although the articles were more measured and less overtly celebratory than Marson's. The article 'Career Girls Have No Mad Money', for instance, profiles a clerk and a typist who talk about the reality of their new-found freedom and the financial constraints of their salaries.⁴³ The article's description of typical familial situations, such as supporting the education of younger siblings and paying for boarding in Kingston, give an insight into the lives of these working women. The breakdown of the two women's budgets, printed below the article, are clearly designed to advise others seeking such employment. This practical support is similarly reflected in the types of advertisements that the *Caribbean Post* printed, such as ones for secretarial schools (see figures 7 and 8); these reflect both the readership's perceived needs and reinforce the wider interest in business in the *Post*'s pages.

⁴¹ Aimee Webster, 'Women Pace-makers, Jamaica', *Caribbean Post*, 2.1 (February-March 1947), 28-29 (p. 28).

⁴² Aimee Webster, 'What's behind the talk?', *Caribbean Post*, 5.5 (1950), 26.

⁴³ Avis Robotham, 'Career Girls Have No Mad Money', *Caribbean Post*, 5.6 (1950), 17.

JAMAICA SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
130 EAST STREET. 'PHONE 24162

SUCCESS *BREEDS* **SUCCESS**

Enrol with a progressive Institution. The Principal and the Staff alike have to their credit:—

- The Scholastic Attainments
- The Business and Teaching Experience
- The Social and Business Contacts
- The Professional Prestige

That's why Government Departments and Businessmen inquire if you were trained there.

DAY AND NIGHT CLASSES.

Particulars from:—

EDWARD E. GAYLE F. B. I., F. C. I., ETC.
PRINCIPAL.

Figure 7. *Caribbean Post*, Emancipation Number (1946), 29. Advertisement for the Jamaica School of Commerce. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

The West India College
93 East St., Kingston, Ja.
Phone 2904
(The Home of Good Training)

This is not a matter of may or might but it is the concensus of opinion; — if at all you want to achieve whether in Commercial or Secondary Education, **you must attend "Westicol"**

DAY CLASSES
NIGHT CLASSES
CORRESPONDENCE
TUITION
BOARDING OPTIONAL

With a staff of qualified teachers we give **the best**.

If it's commercial subjects (all branches) our Staff is an authority in that line.

If it's Cambridge Examinations, Higher Schools and London Matric, we specialise in them.

If it's Jamaica Locals and Courses in General Education, we are unbeaten for efficiency.

Be a student of this college **today**.

"The only person to qualify the unqualified is the qualified"

For full particulars apply to the Principal:—

H. E. A. THORPE
F.C.I., F.C.S.A., A.T.C.
Tea. Dip. Econ. Admstn. & Com.
Hdmr. West India College

Figure 8. *Caribbean Post*, Emancipation Number (1946), 29. Advertisement for the West India College. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Webster's own articles also sought to give prominence to women, such as the leading feature for the July 1947 issue, entitled 'The West Indian woman: She is educated, emancipated – why can she not be effective?'.⁴⁴ It states that women currently concentrate their interests 'within the wholly feminine sphere of home, man and child' but that in such a space 'she is almost futile'.⁴⁵ Rather Webster suggests women's skills and abilities should be put to work in other realms, including business, legal and political roles. Her article acknowledges the ongoing prejudice women faced, citing examples such as the Colonial Secretary in British Guiana's dismissal of the need for women jurors, but uses this to encourage more women to enter the legal sector. In this editorial Webster sets up a clear opposition between the domestic sphere, a place where she sees women's skills as wasted, and the public sphere, where women can be 'effective', the final stage for the emancipated and educated woman.

In advocating for, and supporting the rights of, women to go out to work and make a living, Marson and Webster's publications ran against the grain of a society where marriage, which would be the end of a fledgling career, was seen as the only respectable path for women. This logic was enshrined in colonial policy following the 1938 labour unrest, with the Moyne Commission recommending the promotion of 'the dependent housewife [and] male breadwinner and as a means to this end, the promotion of 'stable monogamy', preferably marriage,' to address the dual issues of male unemployment and unstable family set-ups.⁴⁶ This policy was effective; as a result there was a reduction of women in the labour force from 219 000 in 1921 to 163 000 in 1943.⁴⁷ In promoting women's employment outside of the home, these two magazines went against this trend. Women's entry into and success in professional careers was a highly politicised issue, one in which both these publications intervened. The parallels between the two magazines not only indicate a similar editorial approach and shared concerns, but they are also

⁴⁴ Aimee Webster, 'The West Indian Woman: She is Educated, Emancipated – Why can she not be Effective?', *Caribbean Post* (June-July 1947), 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Joan French, 'Colonial policy towards women after the 1938 uprising: The case of Jamaica', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 34 (September/December, 1988), 38-61 (p. 39).

⁴⁷ French, p. 39.

indicative of a continuity of issues facing women almost a decade apart, and the tenacity of the rhetoric of feminine domesticity.

Taken separately, Webster's and Marson's strident editorials can be seen as articulating an emerging Jamaican feminism, responding to the specific challenges of the period. Particularly in *The Cosmopolitan*, Marson's evocation of British and American feminist successes suggests she envisioned this happening in conversation with the international women's movement.⁴⁸ Within these magazines, however, there are a multiplicity of voices, perspectives and discourses at work, even in a single issue or page. Some of these may seem contradictory, for example, Webster's vocal support of women's business aspirations were published alongside reports from the magazine's own beauty contest. The *Post* ran an annual beauty contest, positioned as a way of bringing the region together through a unifying event; however, it was an event which focused on women's looks, rather than abilities.⁴⁹ Marson's declaration of 'The Age of Women' was published in the same issue as a longer article on 'The Modern Girl' by Agnes St Aubyn.⁵⁰ Aubyn similarly celebrates womanhood, but through the argument that, in a line inherited and unbroken from Eve, women's virtue lies in their loyalty and hope. She goes on to conclude that she hopes men will begin to see that there are other women besides their mothers whose 'eyes can shine with the light of love, and whose hearts give undemanded the virtue which God gave women- Loyalty'.⁵¹

Aubyn's article is indicative of the continued presence of notions of respectability, passivity and suitability for marriage in discourses around the 'modern' Jamaican woman; precisely the issue that Marson is responding to in her editorials. By giving both positions a voice in their publications, Marson and Webster initiated a dialogue between them, challenging the reader through their contradictions.

⁴⁸ 'The Women's Movement and the tasks that are ahead', *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1929), 31.

⁴⁹ The editorial of the May-June 1948 issue explains this decision, noting both the material benefits for the region's economy and tourist industry, and wider ideological aims: '[the] *Post*'s publishers nursed a great spiritual aim [...] to find and establish a major means of fusing West Indians in a single people', suggesting that the contest combated insularity and contributed by 'federating *people* as opposed to *territories*' ('Beauty and Federation: The Meaning of *Post*'s Miss British Caribbean Contests', *Caribbean Post* (May-June 1948), 4-6 (p. 4)).

⁵⁰ Agnes M. St. Aubyn, 'The Modern Girl', *The Cosmopolitan* (March 1929), 83.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Several of Marson's pieces have been removed from the context of the magazines and anthologised, placing these pieces within a narrative of black feminist thought.⁵² Such an approach is undoubtedly productive, but it also privileges a single and decontextualized understanding of the more messy ways in which the text operated. Within the magazine print space, for which these pieces were originally written, the text of the article is in contact with a range of other material which may have contesting positions. Retaining the specific context in which they were published can be productive as it highlights the other contemporary discourses both alongside, and against which, Marson and Webster placed themselves and their agendas.

I will return to the magazines' contradictory narratives when I consider in more detail the literary work later in this chapter. Here, however, I want to consider in more detail what is lost in this process of decontextualisation through an example from the *Caribbean Post*. Removing a specific article from the context of its publication obscures the textual encounters, both between the article and other editorial copy in that issue, and between the article and the magazine's marginalia. The placement of the article on a page and within an issue or to utilise Bornstein's terminology, the text's contextual code, is one way in which the magazine's meaning is ascribed and through which editors contributed to the wider public discourse.⁵³ This can be seen if we look closer, for instance, at the ten advertisements printed on the same page as the article 'Women Pace-Makers Jamaica' in the *Caribbean Post*.⁵⁴ This article celebrates the achievements of women in the judiciary and business world and offers them as a model for other women. It is placed at the centre of ten advertisements which reflect the domestic sphere which these women have left behind (see figures 9a and 9b). With the exception of one advertisement for a marble worker, and a second for the *Caribbean Post* itself,

⁵² Veronica Gregg reprints Marson's articles 'Jamaica's Victory' and 'The Age of Women', along with a selection of her contributions to *Public Opinion* over a decade later in *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of Non-Fiction Writing, 1890-1980*.

⁵³ George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 6.

⁵⁴ 'Women Pace-Makers Jamaica', *Caribbean Post*, 2.1 (1947), 28. This article, one of two with this title, reports on: Louise Bennett's achievements on the stage, television and in education, Hazel Abrahams the first woman to sit on a jury for the Home Circuit Court and Veda Menzies a health therapist who has received international training.

the remaining eight advertise: fabric dyes, soap, jewellery, a free trial of a new margarine, perfumes, a haberdashers, make-up and a bookseller that lists titles of interest including 'Home Nursing with Confidence' and a 'Manual of Smart Housekeeping'. Webster supported the magazine through attracting advertisers, yet in her construction of this page, she uses this financial support to directly challenge the marginalisation of women into the domestic realm which these products represent. The positivity of the term, pace-makers, suggests an alternative future for the next generation of women who, this placement implies, can transcend such banal prospects as a life of 'smart housekeeping'. Alice Colón and Rhonda Reddock have noted that in these decades the modernising civic institutions and the social work organisations through which middle class women could pursue a form of activism, led to a change in the status of women; however, they 'did not challenge the sexual division of labour in the home'.⁵⁵ These societal expectations remained largely intact, with women's professional accomplishment occurring in parallel with, rather than replacing, their domestic work. These pages of the *Post* reflect the dual roles women took on. Beyond this, however, the construction of the page itself is suggestive; by placing the article about women's careers in the centre Webster elevates its message of encouragement for others to follow in the pace-makers' steps above the domestic concerns of the advertisements.

⁵⁵ Colón and Reddock, p. 472.

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1947

All-fabric
TINTEX
DYES EVERY FABRIC



9d Per Pack.

AGENTS
ALBERT CHANG & CO. LTD.
93 KING ST. PHONE 3058

MICHAEL S. WHEATLE
THE MASTER MARBLE WORKER
WILL NEVER PRODUCE AGAIN
but
Edgar Wallace
STILL CARRIES ON

31 EAST ST. KINGSTON
A FEW DOORS ABOVE TOWER ST.

Your home test can bring you
**SOFTER,
SMOOTHER SKIN**
in just 14 days!



Compare your complexion with your shoulders. You'll find your shoulders look 5 or more years younger. Why? Because shoulder pores are kept clean by your regular Palmolive Soap baths—and so, able to breathe freely. But face pores, clogged with dirt and make-up, can't breathe freely and soon your complexion loses its flexible softness and ages before its time. That needn't happen to your complexion. Palmolive offers an easy way to keep it radiant lovely.

You can look younger in 14 days! Wash your face 3 times a day with Palmolive, and each time, with a face-cloth massage Palmolive lather into your skin—for an extra 60-seconds! This easy Palmolive Massage stimulates the circulation, clears the pores to help your complexion regain its flexible softness, become softer, smoother in just 14 days!



WOMEN PACE-MAKERS JAMAICA

Numerous were the people who wondered what direct bearing it would have on the ordinary life of the country, when the British Council awarded Louise Bennett a scholarship in 1945, packed her off to London to study the dramatic art. Louise went, studied, returned in October last year; by smooth and convincing acting in W. G. O'Gilvie's 3-act stage comedy, 'One Soja Man,' stole the whole show, although she carried only a minor part; left on-lookers convinced that she personally had benefitted by the BC's munificence but still more curious than ever about the direct bearing it would have.

Wesley Powell, progressive head of privately-run Excelsior College, took on to show the way how. Onto his faculty he promptly drafted Louise as a mistress assigned her to teaching each and every student, at least twice a week, such unusual subjects for the ordinary secondary school as voice, culture, poise and the other outward manifestations of culture.

A humorous versifier in native dialect who could also take a turn on the stage, Louise in London did television-broadcasting over the BBC, in addition to the plain sort achieved with just the microphone. Scene above is from a television broadcast at BBC House last year.



← Indicative of the swift and persistent inroads that women in Jamaica are making into terrain once held exclusively by the men, was graceful Hazel Abrahams' sitting on the Home Circuit jury last February 13. Other women had sat on other Supreme Court juries since the passage of enabling legislation 2-3 years before; but the Home Circuit Court in the capital was a fortress that had withstood all the assaults of feminine lure. Hazel's presence as part of the Court not only put Judge, registrar, counsel for the offense and defence and her brother jurors on their drawing-room behaviour; the foreman actually admitted afterwards that the feminine viewpoint was a real help in coming to a well-balanced verdict.



FASCINATING!
To The Eye...

DAZZLING • SCINTILLATING

JEWELLERY

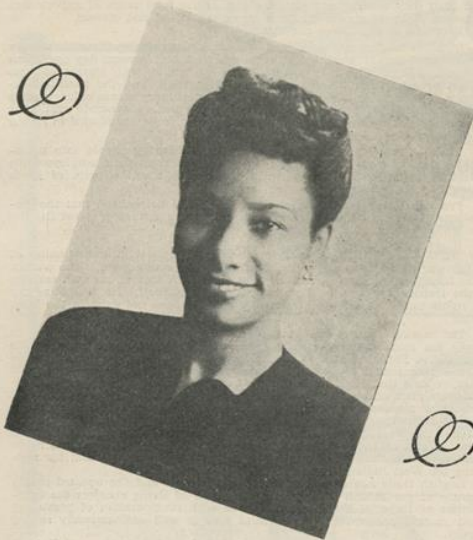
FOR A LOVELIER YOU

- NECKLACES
- BRACELETS
- WATCHES
- EARRINGS
- BROOCHES

All At—
WRIGHT'S
JEWELLERY STORE

107 KING STREET. ABOVE NORTH PARADE 107

Figure. 9a. 'Women Pace-makers', Caribbean Post, Industrial Number, 2.1 (1947), 28. First page. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica



THERE'S
LOVELINESS
THAT IS
FRESH & REAL
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Figure 9b. 'Women Pace-makers', *Caribbean Post*, Industrial Number, 2.1 (1947), 29. Second page. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

4.3 *The Cosmopolitan* - A magazine for women?

In histories of this period *The Cosmopolitan* is often called ‘the first women’s publication of Jamaica’ or ‘a monthly magazine for women’.⁵⁶ Positioning *The Cosmopolitan* as a women’s magazine, however, obscures some of the ways in which Marson used the magazine space to intervene in debates about the place of women. Unlike other publications, for instance *Madame* (Jamaica 1946-47), which both through its name and tag line ‘the first West Indian Woman’s Magazine’, made clear it was directly aimed at a female readership, *The Cosmopolitan* did not explicitly position itself as a magazine for women.⁵⁷ Rather it placed its focus on ‘the Business Youth of Jamaica’.⁵⁸ By placing “business” at its heart, but also taking a specific interest in women, *The Cosmopolitan* engaged in a debate about the implicit gendering of this term, challenging the singular association of business with men. It did not, however, solely concern itself with businesswomen. The critical assumption that this was a women’s magazine is in itself illuminating. It may be reliant on a straight-forward association of stenography with women, and the Stenographer’s Association with the magazine’s readership, though the Association was outlived by the magazine. Alternatively these critical accounts may reveal the assumption that a magazine which takes an interest in women must have been aimed specifically at female readers, as presumably it would be of little interest to male readers. Though it is likely that this characterisation has come about as critical shorthand, particularly in works which do not return directly to the text of the magazine itself, it is indicative of a positioning of the male reader as the norm for magazines with a political and social agenda. This is not only a retrospectively applied assumption. In *The Cosmopolitan* Marson effectively uses this assumption in

⁵⁶ Selwyn Cudjoe, ‘Introduction’, in *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference*, ed. by Selwyn Cudjoe (Wellesley: Calaloux Publications, 1990), pp. 5-48 (p. 21); Gail Low, ‘Publishing Histories’, in *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature* ed. by Shirley Chew and David Richards (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 204-228 (p. 209). In a similar vein Louis James calls *The Cosmopolitan* ‘the first Jamaican magazine devoted to women’s writing and interests’, a simplification of the magazine’s wide interests and varied contributors (Louis James, *Caribbean Literature in English* (London: Longman, 1999), p. 52).

⁵⁷ The only remaining issues of *Madame*, 14 issues in total published between 1946 and 1947 are in Jamaica and I have been unable to consult these in the same detail as other publications in this study.

⁵⁸ This in later issues was shortened to ‘A magazine for the youth of Jamaica’ though within the magazine there remained a focus on young professionals.

two key ways to direct discourses around the role of women in the period; through her placement of articles on women's issues within the main body of the magazine and by curating spaces within each issue that were explicitly gendered as for women.

It is clear from both the remaining issues of *The Cosmopolitan* and the ways in which the magazine was advertised that Marson did not limit her prospective readership to women. In part this is a commercial decision, as attracting a wide range of readers placed the magazine in the best position for selling copies. Advertisements in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner* titled 'Are you Bored?', for instance, argue for its suitability and attractiveness for all readers.⁵⁹ This wide readership enabled the first approach through which she challenged the marginalisation of women by placing articles which engaged with the position of women within the main body of the magazine where they could be read by all. In Jamaican society, where men dominated the political and business spheres, Marson needed to engage men in the debates she was sparking and she does this both through editorials which focus solely on women and in ones which had a broader range of content. Throughout the publication Marson talks inclusively about both genders. For instance, in one issue an editorial which called for more opportunities for both men and women to be involved in sports; although each instance seems insignificant in isolation, these have a cumulative effect.⁶⁰ Though not an overtly radical approach, Marson's insistence on representing the position of women, celebrating their achievements, and advocating for their needs throughout the publication, firmly placed Jamaican women in the heart of the wider discussions around the 'modern' Jamaica she sought to imagine. This quiet insistence on the place of women was an attempt to ensure their inclusion in the public discourses of the day.

The second way in which Marson utilised the gendered assumptions around current affairs through the magazine space is more visible: the creation of a specific page for women. The inclusion of the 'Ladies' Page' could be seen as problematic, a

⁵⁹ 'Are you Bored?', *The Gleaner*, 8 June 1928, p 2.

⁶⁰ Una Marson, 'Editorial: Sport', *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1928), 1.

reiteration of the assumption of the normalised male reader positioning the female reader as somehow unusual. In Marson's magazine, however, this is not used to marginalise women readers, but rather she exploits it as an opportunity to direct women's attention. The section was titled 'Gentlemen! No Admittance- Ladies Only', a humorous attempt to mark out a private space for women-only conversations, and it printed a range of material, much of which was related to the domestic sphere.⁶¹ Within this page, however, Marson also printed reports from international women's conferences and provocative articles. The June 1929 issue, for instance, printed an article from Harper's Bazaar, 'Why so many women hate men', suggesting more women than men display 'manly' values; the previous issue's Ladies' page carried an article on 'The women's movement and the tasks that are ahead'.⁶² As they are printed alongside articles which emphasise women's domesticity or features which focus on fashion and beauty, such pages can initially seem 'uneven', as Donnell describes them, with a range of visions 'jostling' for attention.⁶³ This "jostling" had a key effect. This page is delineated from the rest of the magazine by its borders and it printed shorter features making it a visually different print space. In this space Marson curates a compilation of features reflecting women's lives. These 'fractions', as Donnell terms them, are not necessarily 'colliding', this page instead reflects a broad understanding of women's lives and concerns; the inclusion of articles on housekeeping and fashion do not 'undermine [the] agenda of women's rights', as Donnell suggests.⁶⁴ Rather, by bringing these different elements together on one page and addressing it specifically to women readers, Marson asks them to identify with the page and its contents. This in turn brings the reader's attention, and consideration, to the articles questioning the role of women in wider social and political change.

⁶¹ Donnell notes this title evokes the image of a 'Gentlemen Only' social club, albeit as a textual equivalent for ladies (Donnell, 'Una Marson and the Fractured Subjects of Modernity', p. 357). There is certainly a form of conviviality curated in this space through the use of the exclamation mark in the title, and the authorial attribution in the contents page, Daisy, which personifies the page and its conversations.

⁶² Ada Patterson, 'Why do so many women hate men?', *The Cosmopolitan* (June 1929), 75; 'The Women's Movement and the tasks that are ahead', *The Cosmopolitan* (May 1929), 31.

⁶³ Donnell, 'Una Marson and the Fractured Subjects of Modernity', p. 357.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Marson's editorial practice moves between these positions of overt opinion-led direct addresses and more subtle articulations, utilising both the prominence of the editorials and the specifically-gendered space of the Ladies' Page, to effect her aims. Edmondson notes that 'middle-class black-identified magazines such as *The Cosmopolitan* [occupied a] middle ground, poised between [...] racially progressive politics and conservative public discourse'.⁶⁵ This is a useful way of also thinking about Marson's gender politics in relation to the magazine. In *The Cosmopolitan* Marson's effective engagement with women's issues arose from finding this position of balance, using a wide range of techniques and registers, drawing on elements of the existing conservative public discourse, whilst also offering alternative visions for Jamaica's future. Editing a magazine, rather than just contributing, as Marson would to *Public Opinion* in later decades, gave her more freedom. As editors both Marson and Webster had a series of tools at their disposal to shape the discussions their magazines contributed to, such as the content and tone, the compilation of features and their placement, and the readership they attracted. Both Aimee Webster and Una Marson used their positions as editors to represent their own lives and aspirations. Both were well-connected journalists, whose move to editing magazines enabled them to give young middle-class Jamaican women political and social visibility through their publications.

4.4 The wrong side of history: Esther Chapman and *The West Indian Review*

Esther Chapman, a contemporary of Marson and one-time colleague of Webster, was also a journalist who used her experience and connections to establish a series of magazines. Within the network of editors that this chapter identifies, Chapman stands out. She is notable for the longevity of her magazines; *The West Indian Review* was published regularly over four decades. Her magazines regularly published literary work, encouraging both new and increasingly established writers, and the work of many well-known writers of the period appear in their pages. Despite these factors Chapman is notably conspicuous by her absence from narratives of this period; Chapman and her publications are generally mentioned

⁶⁵ Belinda Edmondson, *Caribbean Middlebrow: Leisure Culture and the Middle Class* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 45.

only in passing by critics; Ivy Baxter for instance noted *The West Indian Review* was 'one of the strongest forces in the direction of the Caribbean cultural exchange', but did not explore further its content or its wider cultural contribution.⁶⁶ The only detailed engagement with the magazine, an article by Carl Wade, considers it in isolation.⁶⁷ Wade keenly notes that the *West Indian Review* often found 'itself on the wrong side of history where matters of national development were concerned'; we can also think of this as a comment on Chapman herself.⁶⁸ As I will explore, further Chapman was a divisive figure in her time, using the *Review* to pursue a clear pro-colonial political agenda, one which was increasingly out of step with wider public opinion as the region moved towards federation and independence. Chapman and her publications' absence from critical discourse are indicative of how the critical and cultural politics of these later decades shaped analyses of the literary culture of the early twentieth century.⁶⁹

Esther Chapman's three magazines, *The Jamaica Review* (1925-1927), *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928-1929) and *The West Indian Review* (1934-1972), each built upon the one before. *The Jamaica Review* was a monthly venture publishing a wide range of material, much of which was written by Chapman. Chapman left the magazine in October 1927 passing on the role of editor, however, without her at the helm the publication soon folded. Chapman's second venture *The Saturday Review* the next year printed similar content but as a weekly publication. It had a more substantial interest in literary work, producing a Christmas fiction supplement in 1928; however, it also often resorted to serialised novels by non-Jamaican writers and Chapman's own contributions to provide sufficient material each week. This magazine also folded upon Chapman's departure; a single issue was produced by the new management but bereft of her connections it was a shadow of its former presentation, printed on poor quality paper. Chapman's centrality to these publications, a characteristic of the charismatic editorship, and the absence of

⁶⁶ Ivy Baxter, *The Arts of an Island: The Development of the Cultural and of the Folk and Creative Arts in Jamaica, 1494-1962* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1970), p. 100.

⁶⁷ Carl Wade, 'Re-Imagining a Community: *The West Indian Review*, 1934-1940', *Wadabagei*, 11.3 (2008), 3-27.

⁶⁸ Wade, 'Re-Imagining', p. 18.

⁶⁹ See the introductory chapter for a more detailed discussion of the ways in which some magazines have been marginalised by critics in the post-independence period.

structures for support or independent income, meant these two publications were not successfully continued once she left. Chapman's third magazine built upon the previous ventures, keeping some of the same aims and features with some notable developments. Better financed through advertisements, *The West Indian Review* was more substantial and attractive, including more pictures and a wider range of features and contributors. In the *West Indian Review* Chapman returned to a monthly output and broadened the remit of the magazine to a regional reach.⁷⁰ It is this magazine which encapsulates Chapman's editorial focus and combination of both charismatic and bureaucratic editorship styles most clearly, and it is the *West Indian Review* which I shall continue to discuss in most detail.

Chapman's *West Indian Review* was one of a number of magazines which sought to unify the region, but it was unique in looking beyond the Anglophone Caribbean, hoping to join 'English, Spanish, French and Dutch speaking people' in 'bonds of intellectual unison'.⁷¹ The opening editorial of the *West Indian Review* makes much of the similarities across the region, and positions itself as able to bring the region together by providing a vehicle for communication. This stated aim excited some of the readership, who saw in the Pan-Caribbean approach the suggestion of political unification. The next issue contains a letter from a reader asking: '[m]ight not the review in breaking down the barriers of insular prejudice which in a way estrange the British Colonial communities break down as well those barriers which exist to British West Indian Federation?'.⁷² Chapman responds directly that the magazine 'cannot adopt the principle for British West Indian Federation or any other political platform' and that the *Review* 'has other ends to serve'.⁷³ The political potential of the *Review's* pan-Caribbean approach was forestalled by Chapman's insistence on a purely cultural and intellectual union. In a period in which many similar publications were directly concerned with local and regional politics, Chapman's insistence on avoiding regional politics is notable. Despite her protestations, Chapman's *Review*

⁷⁰ This periodicity did change; the *West Indian Review* was published quarterly between March 1944 and August 1949 followed by a period of weekly production until October 1955, before returning to a monthly cycle.

⁷¹ 'The Birth of an Idea', *The West Indian Review*, 1.1 (September 1934), 7.

⁷² "Sylvester", 'Correspondence: The Birth of an Idea', *The West Indian Review*, 1.2 (October 1934), 5-6.

⁷³ 'Forward: A Federation of Ideas', *The West Indian Review*, 1.2 (October 1934), 11.

was not apolitical; the 'other ends' which it served were still politically-orientated. Both implicitly, and increasingly more explicitly over the years of publication, the magazine showed itself to be in support of British colonial rule, initially rejecting and then critiquing, both the federation and independence movements.⁷⁴ This underlying political agenda is key to understanding the *Review* and its critical marginalisation, and one to which I will return.

Chapman's pan-Caribbean approach was supported by an infrastructure in the region; it was edited and compiled in Jamaica, but there were articles, news pieces and literary work from writers located across the West Indies. The magazine's aim to unite the region across linguistic borders, however, was never fully realised.⁷⁵ Within a few years of publication the majority of its contributors were from, and the contents predominantly focused on, the British West Indies. The *Review* did however, have the widest reach of the magazines in this study; by the third issue in November 1934 there were readers from Trinidad, St. Vincent, Haiti, Jamaica and further afield including London and America.⁷⁶ Chapman appointed agents to sell the magazine right across the region and professionalised the publication by introducing the roles of advertising and circulation manager, elements of the bureaucratic editorship Philpotts identifies. Six months into its publication the foreword of the February 1935 issue proudly noted '[w]e have subscribers in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain and Soviet Russia' in addition to 'thousands of readers in the West Indies'.⁷⁷ The speed with which the *Review* spread, and its focus on foreign readers, were the result of the concerted effort of the editor, part of her business-like approach. Chapman actively sought readers for her third magazine,

⁷⁴ This anti-Federation stance of Chapman's is also reflected in her earlier magazines, where she critiqued the cost of the conferences debating the ideas, claiming that there was not 'widespread and fervent desire for intercommunication or federation' ('The Week-A Commentary', *The Saturday Review*, 2.33 (November 17 1928), 2). Though she changed her mind on the former, and saw a need for communication, Chapman retained an anti-federation position.

⁷⁵ Although the *Review* was published in English there was the inclusion of some work in other languages. The July 1935 issue introduced 'La Page Francaise', a page of news stories and poems from the Francophone Caribbean which was joined five months later by 'El Rincón Espanol' providing a similar space for the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. These sections were included for a few years, although they did not appear in every issue and rarely appeared together.

⁷⁶ An advertisement in the fourth issue called for applications from prospective agents to join those already established in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, St Lucia, Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados, St Vincent, Cayman Islands, Turk's Island and the Panama Canal Zone ('West Indian Review Agents', *The West Indian Review*, 1.4 (December 1934), 14).

⁷⁷ 'Foreword: A West Indian Arts Group', *The West Indian Review*, 1.6 (February 1935), 11.

sending copies to cruise liner companies, and drawing on her own international links. This in turn helped to attract advertisers, whose support enabled her to continue the magazine. Chapman's *Review* trod a line between being a publication for West Indians and one through which the West Indies was consumed by foreign readers. In this regard it differs from some of the other specifically local magazines.⁷⁸ Esther Chapman's business-like approach to the publication, informed by the magazines she previously produced, enabled her to pay contributors and pursue her own interest in encouraging literary work. It is these cultural aims and accomplishments that make *The Review*, and Chapman, of interest for literary critics. Aimee Webster, in her own later publication *The Caribbean Post*, included Esther Chapman in an article discussing influential women. She notes:

I make no apology for introducing Mrs Chapman into the line-up of Jamaican women, because the identification of her best working years has been with Jamaica. She might be out of harmony with the people, dislike them, despise them, yet in the dreary years before English and United States publishers ever had heard of Jamaica, let alone that Jamaicans had a literature, Esther Chapman nourished that literature. There is scarcely any recognised writer in this country today who at one time or another has not submitted manuscripts for her magazines [...] I cannot enjoy her novels, I abominate her politics – but I applaud the strong individual courage of her journalistic career.⁷⁹

Webster makes a distinction between Chapman's editorial and journalistic work, and that as a novelist, and in the former finds grounds for supporting her work, particularly her nourishment of writers in the 'dreary' years.⁸⁰ Chapman ran literary competitions with substantial monetary prizes and paid one pound for all published short stories.⁸¹ In addition, the Arts Club, which she founded alongside the *Jamaica Review*, provided a space and a library for young writers and she also gave

⁷⁸ Parallels could be drawn between the *West Indian Review* and *The Trinidadian* (1932-35) which also sought the tourist readership. *The Trinidadian* was directly funded by the government, and promoted the island as a place to visit. Chapman's *Review* was not directly funded by the government, however much of its financial support came from the tourist industry which is reflected in its advertisements and content.

⁷⁹ Aimee Webster, 'The Cat's Meow', *The Caribbean Post* (April 1948), 8, 25 (p. 25).

⁸⁰ These facets of Chapman's work were not entirely separate and came into contact in the *Review* where *Study in Bronze*, Chapman's novel which had overt racist tones, was serialised.

⁸¹ The first of her annual competitions for instance paid ten pounds to the winner ('Ten Pounds for a Short Story', *The West Indian Review*, 1.1 (September 1934), 14).

addresses on writing to other societies and groups.⁸² By presenting writing as a respectable profession and financing it, Chapman provided encouragement and support for writers and through this support the *Review* contributed to the development of writing in the region. As Aimee Webster notes, many writers, who later went on to wider recognition, submitted work to her magazines.⁸³ Roger Mais, Ralph de Boissière, Ernest Carr, Claude McKay, Alfred Mendes and Samuel Selvon all published work in the *West Indian Review*.

The Review also published a substantial amount of work from a wide range of lesser-known writers, including Elma Napier, E. M. Cambridge, Constance Hollar, Clara Maude Garrett and Ethel Rovere, who had some local prominence and publishing success but did not receive the same international recognition.⁸⁴ Some of these writers may at first seem unusual contributors to a conservative magazine; Mendes and de Boissière, for instance, are associated with the politically engaged *Beacon* magazine. Roger Mais was a politically radical Jamaican whose politics seem incompatible with the magazine's pro-Imperial conservative stance. Writers like Mais, however, lived by their pen and needed to publish work to live. Although he is often associated with *Public Opinion*, the location of his most trenchant journalism, we also see Mais' work in numerous magazines, including *Bim*, *Kyk-over-al*, *Pepperpot*, *Caribbean Post*, *Weymouth* and *The Jamaica Forum*. The short form of the literary material which magazines published encouraged writers to seek publication widely, and to find audiences and payments wherever they could, and as the *Review* did not insist on previously-unpublished work, writers could also republish work.⁸⁵ For instance Alfred Mendes took the opportunity to revisit and reframe five sections of his novel *Black Fauns* (1935) as separate short stories for republication in *The West Indian Review*. It is this nourishment which Chapman and her magazine provided; the impetus and encouragement for new writers in the

⁸² See for instance *The Gleaner's* review of her talk on 'The Craft of the Writer', delivered to the Kingston YMCA ('Literature and the Local Platform', *The Gleaner*, 4 August 1928, p. 26).

⁸³ Webster, 'Cat's Meow', p. 25.

⁸⁴ The exception to this is Elma Napier from Dominica, who had two novels published internationally, *Duet in Discord* (London: Arthur Barker, 1936) and *A Flying Fish Whispered* (London: Arthur Barker, 1938) during her lifetime.

⁸⁵ For instance Claude McKay's autobiographical story 'When I Pounded the Pavement' was published in the *West Indian Review* in July 1936, four years after its first publication in his collection, *Gingertown* (1932).

competitions and a print space and financial support for established writers. Given the magazine's investment in literary writing and the prominence of some of the writers in its pages, it is surprising that the *West Indian Review* does not have a higher profile in critical accounts of West Indian literary culture. This is a result of one of the magazine's strengths, its editor Esther Chapman also becoming its downfall. The literary agenda of the *Review* has been overshadowed by Chapman's political agenda for the magazine. The close association between Esther Chapman and the magazine has meant judgement of her and her politics has tarnished the reputation of the *West Indian Review* as well.

4.5 A personal political agenda

In her 1948 defence of Esther Chapman's contribution to local literature, Aimee Webster acknowledged that Chapman was 'out of harmony with the people', but she nods towards more serious concerns in her comment that she 'abominate[s] [Chapman's] politics'.⁸⁶ Over the period of Chapman's magazine activity, 1925-1970s, Jamaica and the West Indies underwent enormous political, social, and cultural changes. Chapman's response, however, was to become more entrenched within her conservative politics and to seek ways to shore up British colonial rule. As a relatively wealthy, white British expatriate Chapman had little sympathy with working-class trade unionism and black West Indians' struggle for political and social change over these decades, despite her support for West Indian literary culture. It is clear from her editorials and the 'society' pages of her publications that Chapman moved within the social circles of the British expatriate and colonial elites. Her association with the colonial government, however, goes beyond social acquaintance; she directly sought out contact and influence both within Jamaica and during her visits to England. The unrest across the Caribbean in 1938 was an important moment for the politicisation of the magazine, and Chapman's motivation for moving to an overtly pro-imperialist stance. The July 1938 editorial openly acknowledges a change in policy, in direct response to the trouble:

The *West Indian Review*, like its editor, has endeavoured through the whole of its existence to keep aloof from politics and what we may call affairs [...] Sometimes, this premise

⁸⁶ Webster, 'Cat's Meow', p. 25.

fails [...] active participation in current affairs was forced upon [us] by the needs of the case. Jamaica is a small country and it is experiencing a big trouble.⁸⁷

This change in policy was inaugurated with a series of articles entitled 'The Truth about Jamaica', which were subsequently republished together as a pamphlet, and read widely in the West Indies in addition to being circulated in Britain.⁸⁸ This series of articles were unequivocal in their pro-Imperial stance and reiteration of colonial rhetoric and ideology. Unlike Marson and Webster, whose editorial agendas were clear from the first issue, Chapman's, though not new, became all the more visible following this issue.

Chapman did not confine her work directly to the pages of the magazine; she also utilised her social connections to assist her political aims. During the Royal Commission of Inquiry which followed the riots, Chapman was in contact with Ralph Assheton, a Conservative MP and member of the commission. The following year she arranged to meet him once again in the House of Commons, to impress on him the need for 'good British propaganda' in Jamaica.⁸⁹ Chapman suggested that her position as editor of the periodical could be utilised in this manner. Assheton in turn put Chapman in touch with Lord Lloyd, the Chairman of the British Council, to discuss these matters, and they met in person to discuss her suggestions for how this could be done.⁹⁰ Records of a subsequent meeting in 1940 between Chapman and the representative of the British Council in Jamaica remain in the Council's archive and show some of the ways in which she sought to use the magazine as a voice for the British government.⁹¹ Chapman requested that they send suitable

⁸⁷ Editor, 'Foreword: Our Change in Policy', *The West Indian Review*, 4.10 (June 1938), 13.

⁸⁸ The series of articles were reproduced as a pamphlet as Chapman claimed they could not keep up with the demand for back issues. The pamphlet of the articles was also read and recommended by the British Council representatives in Jamaica to those in the UK. Chapman's magazine acted as a conduit for information and viewpoints, in both directions between the West Indies and UK.

⁸⁹ London, National Archives, British Council Records, BW 8/2, 'Correspondence from Ralph Assheton to Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, 12th July 1939'.

⁹⁰ The documents that remain in the British National Archives make reference to a meeting between Chapman and Lord Lloyd, but there is no record of their discussion in the files. A working group in 1953, however, were tasked with the job of sorting through the British Council's papers, and one of their terms of reference included '[t]o destroy all documents whose retention is not in the Council's interest' with a number of files and their contents being destroyed in 1954. It is not possible to know whether any documentation of this meeting had existed and if so, whether it was amongst those destroyed, but few records of meetings of any type remain in the collection.

⁹¹ This document makes reference to the meeting with Lord Lloyd and notes that Chapman gave more specific ways in which this British propaganda could be used in her magazine. Unfortunately

books for review, which would subsequently be sent on to the Institute of Jamaica, in addition to information on current affairs and the war and their own publication *Britain Today*. Chapman also asked for information and advice from the British Council about the Imperial Policy Group, an anti-communist grouping of right-wing Tories, who sought to preserve the British Empire, which she described as ‘sending out some very good stuff’, giving an indication of her own political position.⁹²

This cultural material, the novels for review and non-fiction news sections sent by the British Council, indirectly shaped the position of the *Review* on current and cultural affairs. In addition to this Chapman also overtly directed the perspective of the magazine through politically-charged articles and direct comments on colonial policy and Jamaican politics. Through her substantial editorials which regularly focused on these issues and the content which she curated, she sought to inform and influence public opinion. One such clear example is a double page spread commissioned from the editor of ‘Britain Today’ titled ‘Imperialism’ in 1946. This article argued that ‘[t]he meaning of Empire has changed with the time. To-day it is an anachronism to identify it with jingoism and lust for power’; the writer sought to recast British colonial rule as a benevolent force, assisting in the development of the colonies so that they may in time earn their independence, something that would naturally progress and should not be led by force.⁹³

the records do not reveal what these were (London, National Archives, British Council Records, BW 17/5, ‘Notes of an interview with Mrs Esther Chapman, 13th November 1940’).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ ‘Imperialism’, *The West Indian Review*, n.s. 3.3 (Third Quarter, 1946), 18-19. The article makes a distinction between India and the West Indies, in an attempt to stymie attempts to look east for a model of political agitation.

This article was published in the same issue as the cartoon below (see figure 10) which parallels the narrative of the article in suggesting that Jamaica is yet to graduate from its period of 'tutelage' under the British. Cartoons were infrequent in the *Review*, although there were numerous photographs; this type of visual political comment was rare and its inclusion here is of note. The ball and chain holding Jamaica back reiterates some of the same rhetoric: Jamaica's economy and 'low production', political apathy and disharmony, and a lack of social unity, will prevent such a change. The figure of 'Old Jamaica', already exerting itself, cannot reach the

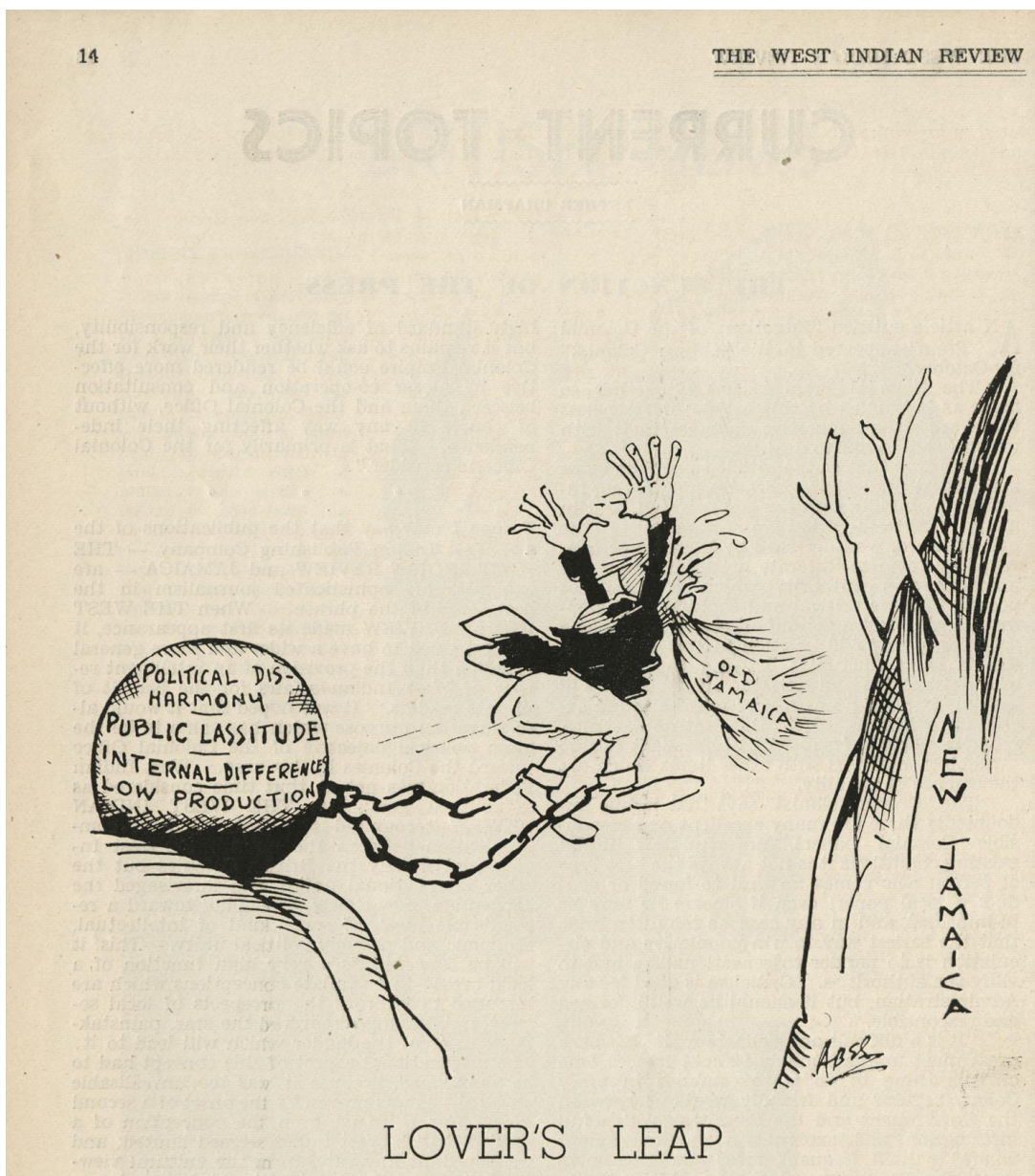


Figure. 10. Carl Abrahams, 'Lover's Leap', *The West Indian Review*, New Series 3.3 (Third Quarter 1946), 14. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

other side. The fragility of the lifeless twigs on the opposing side, which represent the “New Jamaica”, and the sheer face of the cliff, further emphasise the pitfalls that the cartoonist sees Jamaica facing.⁹⁴ The benevolence of British rule, the magazine suggests, will be the only way to combat the issues which make this an ill-fated ‘Lover’s Leap’. These views are found in many of the spaces in the *West Indian Review*. In her own editorials Chapman, while keen to encourage cultural unity, regularly called into question the feasibility of the economic and political elements of the West Indian Federation, echoing the view that Jamaica and the region are not yet sufficiently developed.⁹⁵ Very few opposing views are printed in the pages of the *Review*; criticisms of the magazine and its politics were very rarely reproduced and where this was so, it was merely to acknowledge and dismiss them, reiterating the position previously stated.

Chapman and the *Review* were politically divisive both at the time and subsequently, due to her editorial agenda. Chapman’s close association with the British government, and her direct appeal for her own magazines to be used for propaganda purposes, make her a difficult person to reconcile within the domestic scene of burgeoning nationalism and growing anti-colonial thought in Jamaica. Her vocal distrust of the People’s National Party (PNP), criticism of the West Indian Federation, and independence, put her out of step with political developments in Jamaica. Her anti-universal suffrage stance and personal and social associations differed widely from those of several of the other key editors in this study. Chapman’s move to an overtly political agenda which supported the continuation of British rule, placed her in direct opposition to contemporaneous Jamaican magazines such as *Public Opinion*, the magazine of the PNP and the anthology *Focus*. It is these factors which have led to the critical marginalisation of Chapman and of her magazines in the literary histories of the period. As Alison Donnell notes, the formation of the critical field of Caribbean literary studies occurred in the 1960s and 1970s and as such was intimately concerned with the political and cultural agendas of that time. In the post-independence period, nationalist agendas shaped the

⁹⁴ Carl Abrahams, ‘Lover’s Leap’, *West Indian Review*, n.s. 3.3 (Third Quarter 1946), 14.

⁹⁵ See for instance ‘Federation: A Cautionary Note’, *The West Indian Review*, n.s. 4.3 (Third Quarter 1946), 13-15.

discussions and 'editors and critics working in this moment contract[ed] the pre-1950 period by recourse to a consistent but limited archive'.⁹⁶ It is not incidental that, of the magazines in this earlier period, it was titles such as *The Beacon*, with its explicit calls for an indigenous literature focusing on the black working classes, and the anthology *Focus*, which was associated with the PNP and nationalist movement, which were given prominence in the narratives of literary history. These publications paralleled the critical agendas of the day. Chapman's *Review* did not fit within this narrow archive and little attention was paid to it. Later critical work has reproduced these politically-motivated selections, relegating the *West Indian Review* to passing comment. There is, however, a significant distinction to be made; just as Webster could see both the intense negatives in her appraisal of Chapman, she also made space to acknowledge the positives which emerged from her career and publications.

Chapman's investment in West Indian literature, both with regard to financial support and through the print space of the magazine, was substantial. For its role in the local literary culture alone, there is scope for critical recuperation. However, Chapman's *Review* is also significant for the way in which it rejects any simple characterisations of the literary culture of this period. It explicitly sought to develop a regional literature but without the specific racial and class focus of *The Beacon*. It was a magazine which opposed federation and reiterated imperialist attitudes, whilst also seeking to unify the region culturally. The breadth of its vision for cultural and intellectual unity speaks to an attempt to locate West Indians within a broader regional space, and shared history of colonial rule; its ambition in doing so highlights the perceived, if unrealised, potential felt at the time for social and cultural connections to be forged through the exchange of ideas and writing. It published a wide range of writers and material, bringing together politically disparate works within the same covers, highlighting how it was not just ideology but also the prosaic economic concerns of writers which shaped the region's literature. The *Review* poses a challenge for critical rehabilitation due to the attitudes underpinning Chapman's political agenda; however, because the

⁹⁶ Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 35-6.

magazine does not neatly fit with some of the assumptions around writing in this period it forces critics to challenge these assumptions and broaden their perspectives.

4.5 Literary voices

Esther Chapman, Aimee Webster and Una Marson drew on their magazines to pursue specific political and social agendas, using the publication space to intervene in public discourses. Although the nature of these personal and political agendas were very different, both the progressive aims of Marson and Webster, and the conservatism and colonial agenda of Chapman were pursued by these editors through their involvement in magazines. As editors they utilised the print space, selection and placement of material, and in particular the prominent editorials, to advocate for these issues. These magazines combined their common cultural aim, the development of a West Indian literary tradition, with these broader social and political concerns. These two facets, however, did not necessarily operate separately from each other, as I will go on to explore through a closer consideration of the literary work published in Marson's *Cosmopolitan* and Chapman's *West Indian Review*. The editorials, articles, cartoons and advertisements that I have so far discussed in this chapter explicitly engaged with and contributed to the editors' political agendas; these agendas, however, are also inflected or challenged by some of the literary work. Furthermore, whilst these non-fiction elements allow for some contradictory perspectives, as explored through my analysis of the advertisements in *The Caribbean Post*, the extent and scope for this type of challenge to the editor's position is far greater in the fictional work. In particular, in the *West Indian Review* Chapman did not invite wide debate and differing perspectives in the non-fiction pieces in the magazine; even within symposia on a specific topic perspectives are generally well-aligned in their political viewpoints. In such a context the short stories' engagement with alternative perspectives is notable for broadening the magazine's narrative.⁹⁷ Although both these magazines clearly display a political agenda, directed by the editor, they do not and cannot, present completely singular

⁹⁷ See for example, 'What's wrong with Jamaica: A Symposium', *West Indian Review*, 4.11 (July 1938), 14-21.

narratives. Prominent and persuasive though these editor's positions might have been, magazines as multi-authored spaces incorporate a range of voices. For the remainder of this chapter I want to consider the ways in which Chapman and Marson used literary work of their own to further their agendas, before considering a broader range of work which engages with and challenges these positions. In doing so I explore the ways in which the magazine form is one which both enables, and resists, the imposition of a singular editorial position.

Marson used her own literary work to contribute to the debates which her magazine encouraged; in this instance employing humour in her poem 'To Wed or Not to Wed'.

To wed, or not to wed: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The fret and loneliness of spinsterhood
Or to take arms against the single state
And by marrying end it?⁹⁸

Marson's irreverent take on Hamlet's soliloquy critiques the institution of marriage which many of the women readers would either have, or would be expected, to join.⁹⁹ This parody deftly sends up the rhetoric around marriage for a middle-class reader, the heroic language undercut by a knowing informality: '[...] To wed, to match:/To match, perchance to mismatch: aye, there's the rub'.¹⁰⁰ The parody provides a space for Marson to suggest an alternative path for young Jamaican women and to suggest some of the reasons why they are increasingly choosing single life. The poem highlights the inadequacies and difficulties of marriage in a manner which differs widely from her strident journalism, but one which supports the position Marson takes elsewhere in the magazine. Marson's placement of this poem, within the Ladies' page, indicates an understanding of the ways in which literary work could similarly be used for political purposes. Poems in *The Cosmopolitan* were usually printed on a specific poetry page; however, Marson places this poem alongside other pieces which had a female readership in mind, so

⁹⁸ Una Marson, 'To Wed or Not to Wed', *The Cosmopolitan* (August 1929), 137 (l. 1-5).

⁹⁹ This approach is paralleled in another poem by Marson, published originally in her collection *Tropic Reveries*, rather than the magazines, which reworks Rudyard Kipling's 'If' into another critic of matrimony (Una Marson, 'If', *Tropic Reveries* (Kingston: The Gleaner 1930), 83-4).

¹⁰⁰ Marson, 'To Wed or Not to Wed', l. 9-10.

as to directly engage with and address female readers. This humorous critique of marriage is paralleled by Philip Sherlock's 'Item-A Wife' which takes a similar approach.¹⁰¹ Sherlock's contribution is a historical account, though fictionalised, of an exchange by a British merchant in Jamaica who 'treated affairs of love just as he did his business' and commissioned a suitable wife from a trade associate.¹⁰² The woman is traded like chattel; her age, background and looks are the conditions laid down by the merchant, and she embarks on the '[stormy] seas of matrimony' as she has no fortune or means of subsistence.¹⁰³ Her character was attested to by a series of men, the curate giving an account of her piety, her neighbour accounting for her modesty and chastity, and four doctors attesting to the 'goodness of her constitution'.¹⁰⁴ Sherlock portrays marriage as an economic transaction and the woman as a commodity; this comparison sits starkly against the romance stories which he alludes to in the final paragraph: 'they lived happily ever after, like the lovers in the fairy tale'.¹⁰⁵ His piece takes a satirical tone, applauding the match for 'being like good mustard – to be recommended with tears in the eyes'; using humour and the historical framing of the story to highlight and critique the economic and social transaction at the heart of marriage. Sherlock and Marson's works engage with the ideas and expectations around marriage in a different way to the editorials and articles found elsewhere in the magazines. They use the fictional form to entertain the magazines' readers and in doing so also sought to be thought-provoking.

Chapman was a published novelist by the time she began *The West Indian Review* and she also wrote short stories and a number of plays. A significant proportion of the material published in her first two magazines *The Jamaica Review* (1925-1927) and *Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928), were written by Chapman, though often published under a pseudonym. The proportion was much smaller in the *West Indian Review*, but nonetheless this later magazine printed a notable number of her own works, in particular a number of short stories which engaged with similar concerns

¹⁰¹ Philip Sherlock, 'Item-A Wife', *The Cosmopolitan* (February 1930), 313, 328.

¹⁰² Sherlock, 'Item-A Wife', p. 313.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. The latter is a clear nod to her virginity.

¹⁰⁵ 'Item-A Wife', p. 328.

to the broader magazine.¹⁰⁶ Chapman's short stories focus on the upper class and colonial expatriates, and reflect the anxieties around the social and political changes in the region, which are more explicitly evident in the editorials where they provide the grist for Chapman's pro-colonial stance. Her fictional work is less politically clear-cut, focusing on the ambivalent position of the colonial classes in a period of social change. 'The Morning and the Evening', for instance, focuses on the dissatisfaction of a planter, Mackintosh, who finds expatriate life testing and realises one day that 'he was utterly and completely sick and tired of his life'.¹⁰⁷ His increasing concern with his children's 'tawny brown' complexions and social interactions, and anxieties about the family's respectability, leads to a yearning for his homeland of Scotland.¹⁰⁸ The story ends with him purchasing a single one-way ticket home, preparing to leave his family without notice for his own self-preservation. Published in the same issue as one of the 'Truth about Jamaica' articles, Chapman's racist response to the 1938 political unrest, this short story encapsulates some of the concerns of the colonial classes as well as the conflicting pulls, seen here in the decision between family and homeland. These economic, racial and social issues led some to respond by leaving the region.

'Mr Billingham's Good Fortune' similarly focuses on the ambivalent relationship between the central character and Jamaica. This story charts the unease felt by an expatriate businessman in Jamaica, promoted beyond his experience and capabilities in order to lead the furnishing firm's Jamaican business.¹⁰⁹ The story focuses on the tensions between his good fortune, which it is expected he should revel in, and the anxieties that working in the Jamaican office uncovers. The move makes him question his competencies, and then subsequently his marriage, and he starts to resent the island. Unable to reconcile himself to this perceived failure, or admit his own feelings, Mr Billingham remains, stymied by his own indecision. Chapman's fictional explorations of the colonial mind-set implicitly reinforce the

¹⁰⁶ These include a serialisation of her novel *Study in Bronze* and the only print version of her play *The West Indian* which was performed to critical acclaim in Kingston in 1936.

¹⁰⁷ Esther Chapman, 'The Morning and the Evening', *The West Indian Review*, 4.10 (June 1938), 29-31 (p. 30).

¹⁰⁸ Chapman, 'The Morning and the Evening', p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Esther Hyman [Chapman], 'Mr Billingham's Good Fortune', *The West Indian Review*, 1.1 (September 1934), 39-41.

message of her editorials about the need for the British to stay in, and continue to control, the region, despite the personal concerns that such a path raises for Mr Billingham and Mackintosh. Implicit in these stories is a notion of the characters' duties more broadly as British subjects in the colony, such as the duty to uphold standards and control evident in Mackintosh's insistence on silence from his children every morning, and the need to professionalise Jamaica as seen in Mr Billingham's promotion.

Chapman's concerns are similarly echoed in Penn Morris' 'The Voice', also published in the *West Indian Review*, which also conveys the anxieties of the colonial classes.¹¹⁰ The story focuses on an elderly woman in the final days of her life in a 'crumbling house' who hears her dead husband's voice.¹¹¹ The old colonial plantation house and woman are haunted by their former glory; all that is left of this are 'fabrics that were like cobwebs hung around her', as she sits immobile.¹¹² The house and its inhabitant fear losing hold of the past and resent the intrusion of the professionals, the doctor, attorney, clergyman and their wives who hang round the place, representative of the growing middle classes which precipitated the social and political change of the time. Rendered helpless, she is unable to challenge the attorney's wife, as she walks the rooms, reimagining them updated, restored and sold on after the woman's death.¹¹³ The old woman slips into the past, remembering the former prosperity of the land and house, reimagining her husband in the room and grounds. As the story progresses, however, her memories of her husband are revealed to be false. Their marriage, and the possibilities that the house represented, such as children running around its rooms and years of wedded life together, were rendered impotent by a fever which killed him within their first year of marriage. Morris' revelation of the premature death of the husband, voiced by the attorney's wife as she picks over the house's possessions, is swiftly followed by the woman's death. The haunting presence of the husband and

¹¹⁰ Penn Morris, 'The Voice', *West Indian Review*, 4.8 (May 1938), 18-21.

¹¹¹ Morris, 'The Voice', p. 18.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

whispers of a time long since passed, are fragile 'ready to fall to pieces at the slightest touch'; the attorney's wife talking of change is all that is required.¹¹⁴

Chapman awarded this story first prize in the annual competition, praising it particularly for the evocation of a West Indian setting; noting the house itself reflected the West Indies.¹¹⁵ Published in 1938 during a period in which the magazine's non-fiction contributions most clearly reaffirmed and reiterated the ongoing importance of colonial rule, this story offers an alternative, albeit indirect, perspective on the colonial classes' fear of change. Chapman's affirmation of the West Indian nature of the story, draws attention to the ways in which it can be seen as a metaphor for British rule in the region. The thwarted marriage, cut short by death, reflect concerns about the end of the colonial relationship between Britain and the West Indies, and the sick and fragile woman unable to live in the present mirrors the position of the British rendered helpless by the contemporary social unrest. Just as the overtly political commentaries in the *Review*, in their tone and fervour, register some of the anxieties of the time about the political and social changes in the region, literary works such as 'The Voice', in a quieter way, reflect similar concerns.

The literary work published in *The West Indian Review* does not all parallel Chapman's perspectives or concerns; elsewhere there are short stories which challenge the politically-motivated, reductive accounts of West Indian society that are evident in her strident editorials and articles. For instance, the series of articles, 'The Truth about Jamaica', were clear in their characterisation of the unrest as being the work of 'a handful of people', 'hooligans and ex-criminals who seized on the occasion to loot and terrorise'.¹¹⁶ These articles argue that 'the Jamaican', and here she is speaking of black, working class Jamaicans, 'loves a spree' and is 'emotional, under educated [and] easily led'. Chapman denied that there was a 'general state of discontent' which led to the labour unrest.¹¹⁷ This rendering of the

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ 'Competition Results', *The West Indian Review*, 4.8 (May 1938), 22.

¹¹⁶ Esther Chapman, 'The Truth about Jamaica', *The West Indian Review*, 4.10 (June 1938), 13-18 (p. 13).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

unrest as an aberration, led by a troublesome few, in an otherwise content colony, is not borne out by the history or elsewhere in the magazine itself. Numerous short stories highlight the racial tensions or economic inequalities which led to these riots. Eric Walrond's short story 'Inciting a Riot', for instance, offers a more nuanced perspective on communal violence.¹¹⁸ Walrond's fictionalised account of a local riot in the Panama Canal Zone focuses on a shop keeper, a migrant from Spain, whose actions stir up tensions between the different national and racial groups. The shopkeeper's internalised racist hierarchy, his 'mental bias [...] regarding the merits and "rights of priority" of non-Latin Blacks and mestizos', causes him to wrongfully accuse a woman of stealing and a male customer of causing trouble.¹¹⁹ Walrond deftly paints a backdrop to his story: the migration of numerous groups to the region, the rush for employment on the canal, the financial concerns of the shop's customers and the shopkeeper's distrust. These provide a context for his characters' actions and an atmosphere of tension and underlying struggle, which erupt into racial violence as the shopkeeper attacks a black customer, and is subsequently set upon by a group in response. The shopkeeper, who is offered protection from the constable, is not condemned or punished for shooting the two labourers.

This story is not based upon the specific rioting which Chapman's article responds to, however, it speaks more generally to the underlying racial and economic tensions in the region. Walrond's work does not centre on a clash between employer and trade union members; however, within the microcosm of the story, the economically advantaged shopkeeper has power, both over the food on sale and the shop's customers, and through the protection of the police. His sense of superiority, and outsider status, and his original move to Panama to exploit the resources of the region, invites parallels between the shopkeeper and the colonial classes. For the readership of the *Review*, who we are repeatedly told responded enthusiastically to the 'Truth' articles, Walrond's story acts as a counterpoint of sorts to the rhetoric elsewhere in the magazine.¹²⁰ This story, one of the longest

¹¹⁸ Eric Walrond, 'Inciting to Riot', *The West Indian Review*, 6.1 (October 1939), 25-28.

¹¹⁹ Walrond, 'Inciting to Riot', p. 25.

¹²⁰ In this period there are numerous congratulatory responses to the series printed in the correspondence section of the magazine, and Chapman notes on several occasions the popularity of the series and calls for these to be reprinted.

fictional works printed in the magazine, complicates a straightforward condemnation of group anger and violence, implicating the shopkeeper in the events which led to the disturbance.

Walrond was not the only writer whose work indirectly challenged the assumptions and claims published elsewhere in the magazines. In other issues of the *Review*, articles and statements like 'Can the African Make Good?' are quietly challenged by short stories which, in focusing on black West Indians, move beyond the simplistic homogenous characterisations.¹²¹ These include the vignette 'Hot Patties' by R.L.C. Aarons, and the short story 'Good Red Earth' by Elizabeth Barker, which take as their subject matter hardworking characters and the social and economic hardships they face.¹²² Carl Wade draws particular attention to the short fiction of William Ogilvie in the *Review*; arguing that his work 'valorises folk culture and beliefs and offers a sensitive inscription of the [black and peasant] characters'.¹²³

One of Ogilvie's short stories in particular, expressly engages with some of the negative terminology found in elsewhere in the magazine, using humour effectively as a critique of this rhetoric. In 'Wise and Otherwise' the arrival of a new teacher to the village causes consternation among a group of men drinking in the rum shop.¹²⁴ The reader is told that the 'simple minded natives, [are] incapable of rising to [...] heights of mental jugglery' and are unable to understand the reasons for a new teacher arriving.¹²⁵ This intrusion of a narrative voice early in the story sets up the assumption about the group's ignorance, in relation to the 'wise' and educated teacher. Throughout the story, however, the teacher's wisdom is undercut; he is shown to be ignorant, about the people and their customs, or naive, when he impregnates a villager. This group of men respond to the problem of this pregnancy and the attempts by the teacher's assistant to anonymously report the circumstances, by concocting a story in which one of them, rather than the teacher

¹²¹ Lord Olivier, 'Can the African Make Good?', *The West Indian Review*, 2.3 (November 1935), 20-24.

¹²² R.L.C. Aarons, 'Hot Patties', *The West Indian Review*, 2.8 (April 1936), 59; Elizabeth Barker, 'Good Red Earth', *The West Indian Review*, 2.9 (May 1936), 20-22. See also Elizabeth Garner's short tale, 'Materia Medica: a tale of Dominica', *The West Indian Review*, 4.5 (January 1938), 18-19, and the work by Alfred Mendes and Claude McKay.

¹²³ Wade, p. 12.

¹²⁴ W. G. Ogilvie, 'Wise and Otherwise', *The West Indian Review*, 5.5 (January 1939), 31-33, 40-46.

¹²⁵ Ogilvie, 'Wise and Otherwise', p. 31.

is the named father and they collectively provide for the mother and her unborn child. The parson and school inspectors arrive to investigate the rumours and apply sanctions, but the men's plan is successful, the teacher is not dismissed and their story believed. Although they are 'otherwise' in comparison to the 'wise' teacher, this group of men utilise their social knowledge to manipulate the situation and colonial officials, and bring about the dismissal of the meddling teacher's assistant. Ogilvie's story not only highlights the village's community spirit, it explores the men's understanding of the racist assumptions put upon them, and the ways in which these can be utilised for their own ends.¹²⁶ The story plays with the notion of 'wisdom' and ignorance and the characterisation of black West Indians as 'simple-minded' with which it opened, to critique these assumptions.

In *The Cosmopolitan* the literary work also, on occasions, offers very different perspectives to the editor's viewpoints; some of the short stories published in Marson's magazine mirror a conservatism not dissimilar to the work in *The Review*. In particular, many of these stories focus on the place of women, or centre on marriage, and take a very different position to Marson's editorials. An example is the winning story in the January 1930 competition hosted by *The Cosmopolitan*, 'Maggie's Wedding', by Grace Judah.¹²⁷ Maggie, though 'determined to be married' provides an untypical model of femininity – forthright. She 'always called a spade a spade, without beating about the bush or mincing manner'.¹²⁸ She regularly argued with men and what is more, 'prided in her sharp tongue, gimlet-like eyes, and tall angular figure'.¹²⁹ Having determined to marry, in order to achieve a home of her own, Maggie seeks out a suitable bachelor, fixing her sights on Mr Luther. Luther, having returned from the war with shell shock, is described as passive and simple, caring only for playing the violin. Though the title and subject matter purport to be a love story, in this opening half marriage is portrayed as a financial and social

¹²⁶ Three of Ogilvie's short stories, published in nearly successive issues of the magazine, focus on the same set of characters; although the stories are not linked directly they do build up a sense of a community in each subsequent story. These short stories were published in 1938-9, the period in which the *Review* was becoming more explicitly conservative, and during which many of the most divisive articles were published. In this context these linked stories, which each in turn focus on the positive community spirit and collaboration between characters of a rural village, act as a counterpoint to the negative portrayal of black West Indians elsewhere in the magazine.

¹²⁷ Grace Judah, 'Maggie's Wedding', *The Cosmopolitan* (January 1930), 295.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

contract, a functional tool through which social status is prescribed. The parallel marriage of Mr Murray, an old aristocrat of seventy to a humble country girl of twenty, reinforces this notion of matrimony. Marriage is portrayed as desirable, but a process which follows specific social and racial norms, which Murray, who 'flouted his young uncultured wife', has ignored.¹³⁰ Having married Luther, Maggie set out 'to make something of him by the sheer power of her superior will pitted against his'.¹³¹ Judah's portrayal of Luther is of a stereotypical hopeless Jamaican man, whom Maggie must 'train up' to take up his new role as her husband and financial support. His passivity ends, however, when Maggie attempts to stop him playing the violin, he responds like a 'wild thing, grasp[ing] the violin out of her hands, and started to play the strangest music she had ever heard'.¹³² The potential for subversion in the characterisation of Maggie, and critique of marriage, is overturned by this ending. The music he plays transforms them both, she becomes soft and humbled, 'raving for her husband's love', and he through her love fully recovers, becoming a 'man among men'.¹³³ Marriage, and most importantly, a husband and the birth of a child, have transformed the independent and forthright Maggie.

Rosenberg argues that this story 'revolutionizes and modernizes the standard narratives about Afro-Jamaican sexual and family practices', by demonstrating that matrimony, not promiscuity and polygamy, was the norm in rural Jamaica.¹³⁴ This analysis, however, seems overwrought, especially as no allusion is made to such stereotypes in Judah's characterisation of Grace prior to her marriage. Instead her disavowal of normative femininity, independence and self-sufficiency, are presented as the negative traits over which 'love [...] triumph[s]'.¹³⁵ The model of Jamaican femininity, and masculinity, which 'Maggie's Wedding' promotes is a particularly conservative one. The consolidation of Maggie and Luther into

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Rosenberg, 'Modern Romances', p. 175. Rosenberg sees this portrayal of rural Jamaican life as modern in comparison to the stereotypes of the eighteenth century, seeing it as a demonstration of the 'respectability' of the rural classes. Whilst this is the case, it does not necessarily follow that in 1930s Jamaica this is a revolutionary approach given the discussions elsewhere in the magazine about women's independence.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

normative gender roles and heterosexual marriage is celebrated as 'natural'; once warlike and angular, Maggie becomes softened and sweetened. Judah's reiteration of the social and personal significance of marriage for a woman is in many ways at odds with much of the rest of the magazine. As Marson fervently called for a better future for women, and Jamaica – and these two futures are in her mind entwined – Judah's story depicts a patriarchal system unchanged by the revolution Marson notes.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored in detail the work of three magazines edited by women in the West Indies. The focus on these publications has sought to provide some balance in literary histories which include numerous male editors, but tend to overlook the women involved West Indian literary magazine culture. It has also recuperated three magazines which, with the exception of Marson's *The Cosmopolitan* perhaps, have not been afforded a place in critical accounts of the region. Beyond its specifically gendered focus, this chapter has sought to illuminate the role of the editor more broadly, focusing on their editorial practice and the effects of this on our understanding of the wider text. This chapter, through its close analysis of three magazines has explored the ways in which editorial practice was brought to bear on the pursuit of wider social and political aims. The close analysis of the ways in which Marson, Webster and Chapman curated the print space, their placement of articles, advertisements and cartoons and prominent editorials furthers our understanding of the ways in which meaning was ascribed in the magazine form. More specifically, it has demonstrated how these three women, Una Marson, Aimee Webster and Esther Chapman, had clear social and political aims driving their publications; each used their position as editor to shape their publication and influence their readership. Bringing a number of magazines and editors together allows us to think productively about the broader magazine culture; a singular focus on one magazine reinforces narratives of uniqueness. Through the parallel consideration of three very different types of publications, in style, longevity and political position, I have sought in this chapter to highlight points of connection in editorial practice and encourage a less restrictive consideration of the

magazines. In its focus on *The West Indian Review* this chapter has sought to account for the publication's critical absence, highlighting both its problematic political associations and its significant cultural work. The focus on these three editorial agendas highlights the ways in which the magazines provided a platform for West Indians to intervene in the public sphere, a key function of the literary magazines, which can get lost in a focus on their purely creative outputs. Finally, and most significantly, the consideration of the literary work with which this chapter closes acts a counterpoint of sorts, highlighting how the magazine form through its collectivist nature resists a simplistic or singular narrative. Whilst the magazines enabled Una Marson, Aimee Webster and Esther Chapman to pursue their personal politics, these did not wholly dominate the print space, which in its breadth of material simultaneously furthered and challenged these editorial agendas.

Chapter Five - The Business of Magazines

In June 1959, after seventeen years of publication, the editors of *Bim* (Barbados 1942-1996) announced the magazine's farewell:

We regret to announce that owing mainly to the rising cost of production, we can no longer continue the publication of *Bim*. For quite some time now we have struggled on, hoping that a fairy-godmother in the guise of some well-disposed person or institution might come to the rescue; these hopes having failed, *Bim* now makes its farewell.¹

By 1959 *Bim* was one of the longest running of the magazines in the region, having outlived many of its contemporaries; however, it was not immune to the financial insecurity all these publications faced. Reliant on subscriptions and advertisers, with printing and paper costs rising, running a magazine was not easy or financially rewarding.² *Bim's* fairy-godmother did appear, in the guise of Mr Oliver Jackman, a Barbadian diplomat who gave the magazine a donation and in December 1959 *Bim* was once more on sale. Grateful as the editors were, however, they made no secret of the continued precariousness of their financial situation: 'our demise has been postponed. For how long? That will depend on whether we can get sufficient subscribers to help us pay our way'.³ The financial pressures that the literary magazines faced were endemic. Low circulation figures meant there was a limited income from the cover price, contributors fees, where paid, needed to be met and the cost of printing and paper rose throughout this period; a one off payment could not sustain the publication indefinitely.⁴ The literary magazines required an

¹ 'Notebook', *Bim*, 7.28 (January-June 1959), 187.

² Alfred Mendes, however, in an interview in 1972 stated that issue one of *Trinidad* was published to help fellow editor, C.L.R. James, out of financial difficulties (Reinhard Sander, 'The Turbulent Thirties in Trinidad', *World Literature Written in English*, 12.1 (1973), 66-79 (p. 66)). This was not the case with the second issue and I have not come across any other instances of these magazines making enough per month for their editors to earn a living. Indeed most held full-time jobs alongside their editorial duties.

³ 'Notebook', *Bim*, 3.29 (June-December 1959), 1.

⁴ Indicative of these raised costs are the increases in price which some of the magazines demonstrate – particularly those published over a number of years such as *Bim*, whose cover price rose from one shilling in 1942, to 36 cents for the ninth issue. It rose again with the twelfth issue in 1950 to two shillings, amounting to a doubling in price over the first three volumes. *Bim's* candid editorials and letters written by Frank Collymore, attest to some of the difficulties of rising costs, see for instance: 'Notebook', *Bim*, 7.26 (January-June 1958), 66; 'Notebook', *Bim*, 6.21 (December 1954), 1. These practical problems were exacerbated by the war; an editorial in *Bim* notes that 'owing to Hitler and one thing and another, it is impossible at the time of going to press to obtain the material necessary to reproduce [illustrations]' ('Editor's Preamble', *Bim*, 2.5 (February 1945), 1). *The West Indian Review* suspended publication during the Second World War for, in the words of the editor,

investment in their future from regular subscribers and sustained advertising relationships with local and regional businesses. All the magazines sought to attract and retain this support and they did so through a variety of approaches. This chapter examines the ways in which the literary magazines sought to secure their financial positions in order to be able to pursue their cultural aim of building a West Indian literary tradition. It focuses on three key elements: attracting and retaining readers, advertising and the hosting of commercial competitions. By focusing on these three concerns I explore the ways in which the form of the magazine brings together the commercial and cultural, and consider how these become enmeshed on the pages and through the reader's consumption of the magazine. These commercial relationships enabled middle-class West Indians to initiate and continue to publish their personal and group magazine ventures. The business relationship and commercial facets of the publications provided the resources which supported the wider cultural aims, and were therefore central to the success of the magazine culture of the West Indies.

The business relationships that this chapter explores in detail are brought to the fore when the magazines are considered in their entirety; the traces of these commercial relationships remain in the paratextual elements of the magazines. These were relationships primarily enacted in the in-between spaces of the magazine text, the advertising pages, subscription forms, competitions, entry coupons, and the advertising indexes and directories. Within the existing scholarly work on the West Indian literary magazines, very little consideration has been given to this material or the magazines' commercial lives, beyond general comments about the support of advertisers and precariousness of the magazines' continued publication.⁵ The absence of a critical focus on this type of material is partly due to the factors touched upon in the introduction to this thesis: in particular the focus on

'[t]here was little paper. There was no advertising, in fact there was nothing to support life' ('Pity the poor publisher', *The West Indian Review*, n.s. (Spring 1948), 13).

⁵ For instance Sander only briefly mentions that advertisers were pressured by the Catholic Church and the editor of *The Beacon* had to rely on his father's financial assistance (Reinhard Sander, *Trinidad Awakening: West Indian Literature of the Nineteen-Thirties* (New York: Greenwood, 1988), p. 33.). Carl Wade links *The West Indian Review's* ability to pay well for contributions to the 'substantial financial support from the business sector in the form of elaborate advertisements' but does not elaborate further on the extensive and broad relationship of this title to the business community (Carl Wade, 'Re-Imagining a Community: *The West Indian Review, 1934-1940*', *Wadabagei*, 11.3 (2008), 3-27 (p. 4.)).

a single magazine in the current body of critical work does not leave scope to illuminate the common commercial elements across a number of magazines. This is exacerbated by the relative inaccessibility of original copies of many of the publications. Many of the archived copies of magazines and in particular the physical and online reproductions, have had elements such as the advertisements removed. Some processes of reproduction have led to the magazines' material qualities, such as the feel and quality of the paper, being lost.⁶ Furthermore, the anthologisation of some of the contents of these magazines, removing them from the context of their initial publication, has reinforced a tendency to focus on the discrete short stories or articles rather than the broader magazine form for which these works were originally written.⁷ The approach that this project has taken throughout differs from existing critical work, taking as its study a wide range of magazines across their publication runs and placing the magazine as the primary focus of the study. This chapter draws particularly on the methodology developed by scholars of the modernist little magazines of considering the magazines as texts in their entirety. It includes identifying the paratextual material as central both to the magazines' internal codes (the construction of the magazine, dialogue and placement between the different elements) and as representative of their external

⁶ For instance the Kraus reprint of *Bim*, the most accessible and widespread version of this important West Indian magazine in libraries, has removed most of the advertising pages in the process of reproduction. In the Kraus edition reproduction was only of numbered pages. A few advertisements remain as in the first seven issues of *Bim* these pages were numbered. From the eighth issue, however, the advertisements were grouped at the front and back of the magazine and these pages were not numbered and subsequently have not been reproduced. This omission changes both the act of reading the magazine and removes the link to business that the editorials attest to having been key for the magazine's survival. Advertising was visibly a substantial part of *Bim*'s revenue in the first seven issues, its absence in the reprint after this can give the impression that other forms of income, donations or magazine sales, played a larger part in financially supporting the magazine than they did in reality. The wholesale removal of these pages completely obscures any traces of the relationship with businesses, and only recourse to the few remaining original copies can testify to the importance of advertisements in the magazine.

⁷ A number of the key works from a selection of magazines have been anthologised in: *From Trinidad: An Anthology of Early West Indian Writing*, ed. by Reinhard W Sander (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978); *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London: Routledge, 1996); Veronica Marie Gregg, *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of non-fiction writing, 1890-1980* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). Furthermore, the proliferation of anthologies of Caribbean short stories, whilst useful and informative in and of themselves, mean that is unusual for readers, students and critics of Caribbean literature to return to the site of their first publication. See for instance in *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories* ed. by Stewart Brown and John Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); *The Penguin Book of Caribbean Short Stories* ed. by E. A. Markham (London: Penguin, 1996) and numerous collections from single authors.

relationships such as those with business.⁸ This chapter's attention to the paratextual elements of the magazines and external commercial relationships parallels this approach, focusing in particular on the ways in which being attentive to this material can inform our understanding of the readership, circulation and financial lives of these West Indian literary magazines.

5.1 Building and maintaining readerships: '...will you, dear readers, try to get us some new subscribers?'

Attracting and retaining a readership was a central concern for all the magazines, particularly for the smaller and less well-connected publications. As Chapter Three explored in detail, a significant number of the magazines in this study grew out of organisations and societies which provided an existing pool of readers. These initial readerships supported the growth of the magazine beyond the confines of the club and into wider circulation. For magazines without this initial group of readers, the need to quickly acquire and expand their circulation was all the more important. The literary magazines of this study were only a small proportion of all the magazines available for sale in the West Indies during these decades; they were in competition with other local publications as well as foreign magazines. An advertisement in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner* for The Times department store in Kingston in 1928 lists one hundred and thirty seven titles on sale, a mix of weekly, fortnightly and monthly magazines, newspapers and fashion magazines, the majority of which were imported titles.⁹ Against this plethora of magazines on sale, local publications had to compete for their share of the literary magazine market.

The front covers of the magazines themselves point to a range of ways in which the editors sought to attract potential readers perusing the newsstands and bookstores, and retain them over the life of their publication. For example the bright covers of

⁸ Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, for instance, discuss the ways in which the internal and external periodical codes are connected in the space of the advertisements (Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), I, pp. 1-23 (p. 6.)). For indicative work on the advertising in periodical studies see Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman, 'Modernism's Other: The Art of Advertising', in *Modernism in the Magazines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). pp. 118-142; and Ellen Gruber, *The Adman in the Parlour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁹ 'Your Favourite Papers!', *The Gleaner*, 17 April 1928, p. 4.

The Caribbee (1933-1938) and attractive artistic and photographic designs on the front pages of *The Trinidadian* (1933-35) hoped to catch the potential reader's eye (see figures 11 and 12). Some magazines such as *Bim* (1942-1996) and *The Outlook* (1933-1934) prominently displayed contributors' names or the key features of the issue on the front cover, to encourage the browser to make a purchase. Others made a point of their specificity, for example, *The Observer* (1942) which directed itself specifically to the Indo-Trinidadian population stated this through its subtitle 'An Organ of Indian Opinion'. A number of the magazines produced special editions, often around Christmas, and sought to visibly distinguish these issues. *Kyk-over-al* (1945-1961), for instance, whose covers were generally monochrome and simple, consisting of the title and outline drawing of the former Dutch fort after which it was named, took a different approach with the Christmas 1955 issue using red and green ink, an illustrated heading and an image of a poinsettia bush to indicate the issue's seasonality and stand out on the bookshelves.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Kyk-over-al* was a former Dutch colonial fort constructed in the early 1600s on the banks of the Essequibo River. Its name comes from the Dutch for 'see over all'.

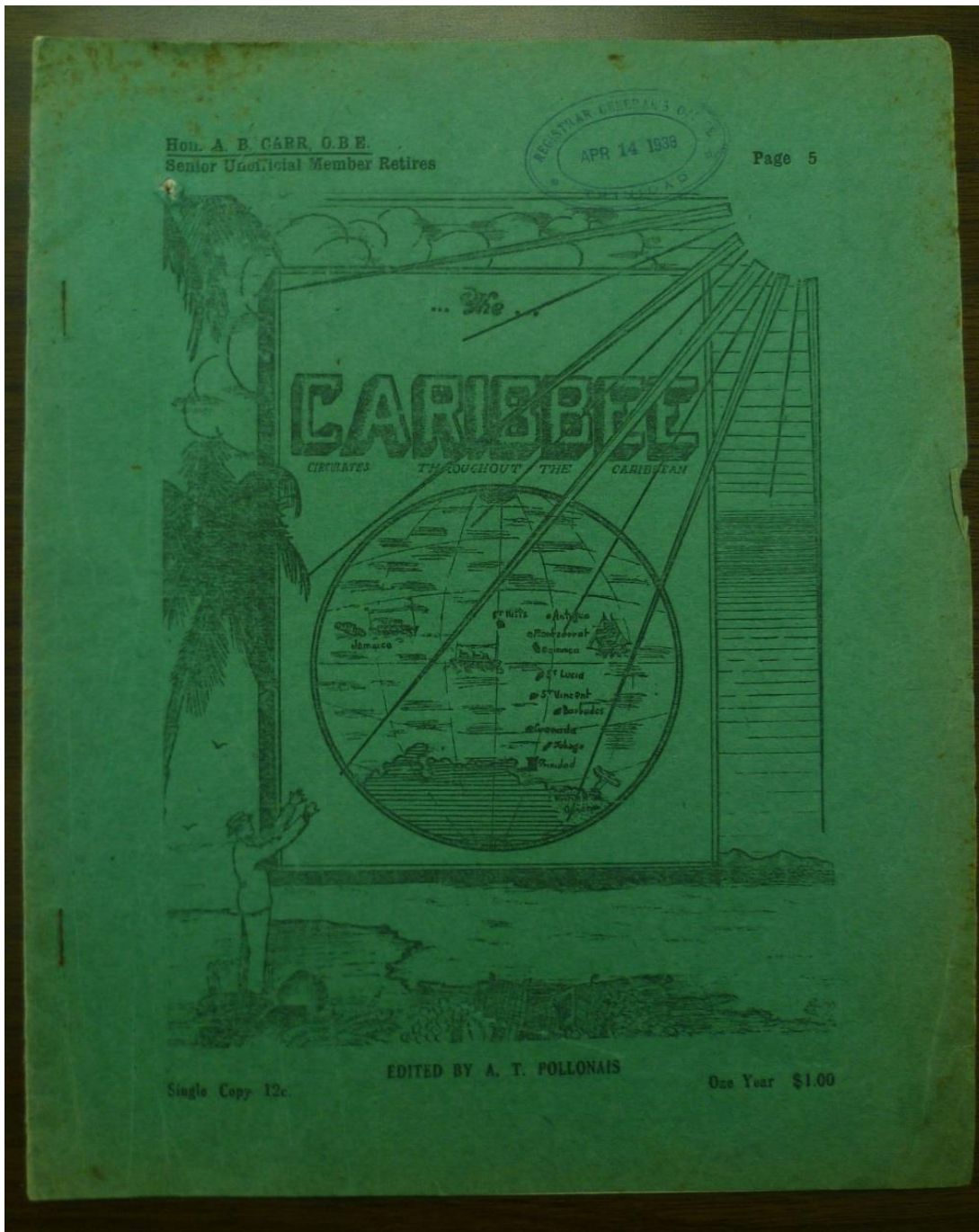


Figure 11. *Caribbee*, 6.2 (February 1938), front cover.

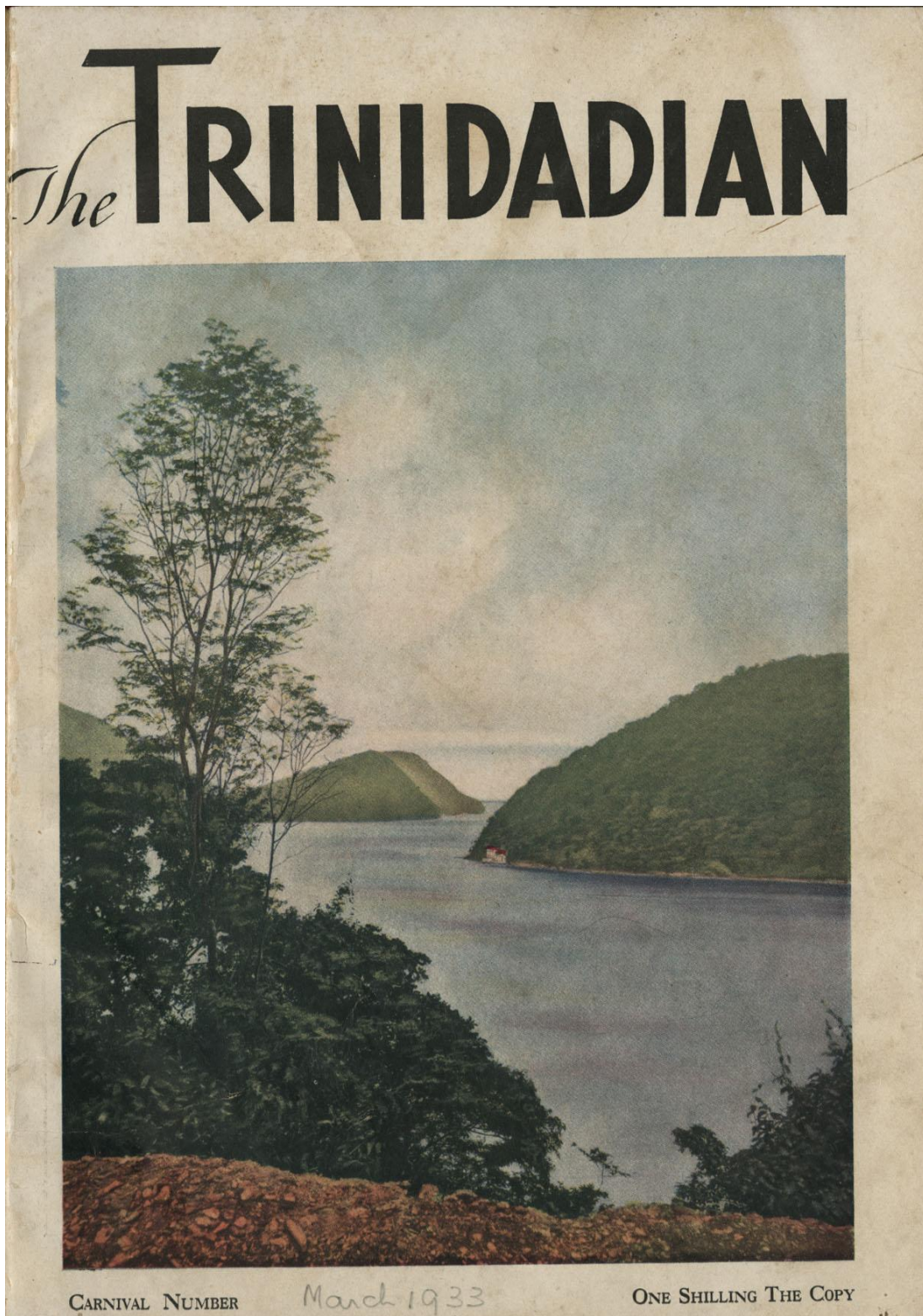


Figure 12. *The Trinidadian* (March 1933), front cover. Courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

Some of the magazines also utilised a range of more direct methods in their pursuit of readers, including advertising themselves in other print spaces, forging connections between publications and seeking to attract the other publications' readers to expand their own readership. This approach included placing advertisements within other contemporary literary magazines; these advertisements and the accompanying letters between the editors are indicative of links which stretch across the region. Lily Lockhart's *West Indian Enterprise* (1931-1937) from St Lucia, advertised itself in both the *Bajan Forum Quarterly* (1931-1945) and the Trinidadian *The Caribbee* (1933-1938). *The Outlook* (1931-1932) and *The Beacon* (1931-1933) similarly encouraged their readers to seek out the other publications both directly, by advertising these in their pages, and indirectly through editorials praising their fellow magazine's work.¹¹ Newspapers also carried advertisements for a number of the periodicals. The *Caribbean Post* (1946-1950) placed several medium-sized advertisements in *The Gleaner* over the years of their publication, as did *The Jamaica Forum* (1934-1935) (see figure 13) and Esther Chapman's three magazines *The Jamaica Review* (1925-1927), *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* (1928-1929) and *The West Indian Review* (1934-1975). These advertisements for the magazines were placed and paid for by the editorial teams themselves. An advertisement for *Planters' Punch and Pepperpot* (1951-1974) printed in *The Gleaner* in 1922 highlights another approach (see figure 14). Here the advertisement is placed by the department store, displaying the magazines as one of the commodities it sold. The reference to the shop where the publication was sold links the magazine to the broader commercial geography that the advertisements, for a range of products printed within its pages, map.

¹¹ See for instance: 'From our Newsbag', *The Forum Quarterly*, 1.2 (March 1932), 28; 'Our Bookshelf', *The Forum Quarterly*, 1.4 (September 1932), 30-32; 'Editorial Notes: Anniversary Number', *The Beacon*, 1.11 (March 1932), 10.

PLANTER'S PUNCH

Now 6d. Each.

We are now in a position to offer the Publishers' Remnants to clear the edition at the above price. Do not miss this opportunity—they are going fast.

Full of humour for young and old, rich and poor, small and great.
We will mail a copy direct, to any address abroad sent us, if you will send us 7½d. to cover postage.

PEPPERPOT

Now 1/ ea. p.f. 1/1½.

A magazine depicting mainly the personal and lighter side of Jamaica Life, edited by C. Thornley Stewart and R. M. Murray. Illustrated by C. Thornley Stewart.

Other Jamaica Stories are:—

Susan Proudleigh by H. G. Delisser	Price 1/6, p.f. 1/9
Constab Ballads by Claude McKay	Price 1/6, p.f. 1/8
Spring in New Hampshire by Claude McKay	Price 5/, p.f. 5/11½
Old Leaves from an Adventurers Log by Harry Morgan	Price 1/, p.f. 1/3

The Times Store, 8—12 King Street, Kingston.

Figure 14. *The Gleaner*, 22 March 1922, p.4. Advert for the Times Store.

THEY SAY!

“They” are always saying many things, and only the other day “they” said that a book or motion picture labelled “for adults only” drew the largest crowds. “They” are not always right however.....

The JAMAICA FORUM is very much the magazine for family, the entire family — and each month is making a larger circle of readers... and definitely is here to stay.

The
Jamaica Forum
70 King St., Kingston.

Figure 13. *The Gleaner*, 15 November 1934, p.2. Advert for *The Jamaica Forum*.

The larger advertisements for magazines in *The Gleaner* placed by the *Caribbean Post* and Chapman's succession of magazines are indicative of their ability to afford high visibility advertising space. Though comparatively costly, these spaces enabled the magazines to design their own advertisements, using their chosen fonts and spacing to make their words stand out on a page which held multiple advertisements. Several of the other magazines in this study also placed advertisements in *The Gleaner* though notably these are in the small ads section. The comparative wealth and size of the publications is reflected in the types of advertisements that they placed in the newspaper. This small ads feature appeared regularly in the newspaper and was utilised by the Jamaican titles *The Cosmopolitan* (1928-1931) and *Planters' Punch* (1920-1945) and the Bajan magazine *The Outlook* (1931-1932). For this limited space, buried among the adverts for 'help wanted', 'tenants' and 'miscellaneous' objects placed for sale by the newspaper's readers, the magazines paid a rate of 5/- per five lines, with a discounted rate of 2/- for businesses who took on yearly contracts. Despite their own limited funds these magazines saw small advertisements as an investment, drawing in new readers by raising awareness of their publication and its range of content. The terms which some of the more extensive and detailed advertisements used to recruit new readers demonstrated their broader ideologies. An example of this is the advert for the *Caribbean Post* pictured as figure 15. Taken from *The Gleaner* in 1946, the first year of the *Post*'s publication, the exhortation 'Read your own Literature' can be seen to be responding directly to the challenges faced by this new magazine in a market which already carried numerous competing foreign titles. In response to this the *Caribbean Post* used its locally and regionally written material as a selling point to attract buyers, drawing on an emerging West Indian nationalist sentiment and encouraging the reader to purchase, and buy into, the 'living literature of the West Indies'.¹² This advertisement, and the sentiment it embodies, captures the combination of the magazine's literary ideology and commercial concerns.

¹² For a more thorough discussion of the magazines' advocating for, and creation of, a regional West Indian literary and cultural consciousness see Chapter Two.



Figure 15. *The Gleaner*, 15 August 1946, p.4. Advert for *Caribbean Post*.

In addition to these advertisements in other magazines and newspapers, editors also promoted forthcoming issues within the pages of the magazine itself. Readers who bought one issue would not necessarily repeat the purchase and retaining readers was important for the magazine's survival. *The Beacon*, for instance, regularly placed advertisements for the next issue, including titles of forthcoming content or names of contributors, designed to pique readers' interest in upcoming issues and to encourage them to continue to purchase the magazine. The serialisation of stories or articles was a technique also used by some of the magazines as it encouraged repeat purchases; in a few instances this included the serialisation of a whole novel over a substantial number of issues.¹³ *The Forum Quarterly* (1931-1934) regularly advertised itself in its own pages, with a half page piece entitled 'Why YOU should Read The "*Forum Quarterly*"' claiming 'No matter where you live – in the West Indies, United States, England or Africa – there is always some article [...] of especial interest to you'.¹⁴ This Lord Kitchener-esque use of the 'YOU', personalises the advert and echoes the call to arms in order to recruit readers who in turn would contribute to the magazine's literary, rather than

¹³ *The West Indian Review* serialised Esther Chapman's own novel *A Study in Bronze* (1928) and *The Saturday Review of Jamaica* serialised *The Earthen Lot* (1928) by Bradda Field.

¹⁴ 'Why YOU should Read the *Forum Quarterly*', *The Forum Quarterly*, 2.3 (June 1933), 34.

military, campaign. Listing its principal contributors from across the region and internationally it goes on to state that further articles from many of these will appear in subsequent issues and the reader should therefore 'Be West Indian minded. Buy the "*Forum Quarterly*" and post a copy to your friend'.¹⁵ The evocation of a West Indian consciousness and linking of this to the reader's active involvement, conveys the magazine's view of the role it played of hosting 'the discussion of West Indian affairs and the interchange of ideas between West Indians at home and abroad'.¹⁶ *The Forum Quarterly* posited that the reader enacted this 'interchange' through their purchase, emphasising the personal contribution that the reader was able to make. In a similar manner to the advert for the *Caribbean Post* discussed above, here the act of buying the magazine is linked directly to the emergent nationalist West Indian sentiment. The magazines' aim of developing a West Indian literary tradition can be seen to be achieved both by printing new writing *and* through developing a readership for this local literature. These advertisements suggest that buying a magazine is an act which both financially supports the publication and invests in the region's cultural development.

Matthew Philpotts' account of the role of the editor notes that the success of the literary magazine relies on the volume of social capital possessed by the editor and their ability to marshal this to establish and nurture networks.¹⁷ This element of the editorial role can be seen in a number of magazines where the editors sought out readers personally, the evidence of which remains on the periphery of the magazines' contents. *The West Indian Enterprise* archived in the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) collections contains a handwritten note dated 3rd December 1931 from the editor Lily Lockhart sending a copy with her compliments and enclosing her address for all correspondence.¹⁸ The Society's members were identified as potential readers and this copy sought to introduce her new magazine to them, providing her address for subsequent subscribers to get in contact. The choice of the Royal Commonwealth Society, an organisation operating both within

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Matthew Philpotts, 'The Role of the Periodical Editor: Literary Journals and Editorial Habitus', *The Modern Language Review*, 107.1 (January 2012), 39-64 (p. 45).

¹⁸ The RCS collections are housed at Cambridge University.

the colonies and in London, whose members were colonial administrators and expatriates, is indicative of the magazine's social and political positioning. As noted in the previous chapter, Esther Chapman also forged personal business connections to grow her readership by sending copies of the *West Indian Review* to cruise liner companies. Chapman wrote a regular commentary column for *The Gleaner*, titled 'It Seems To Me' under the pseudonym Peter Simple which she also used to promote her magazines. In one of these articles, in 1948, she used this platform to refute a claim made by Robert Herring in an editorial in *Life and Letters* which stated that there was no local outlet for writing in Jamaica.¹⁹ Chapman suggested *The West Indian Review* and commented that it both published and paid for new writing. Though her comments betray her familiarity with the publication she did not acknowledge her role as its editor, using the platform provided by the column to promote her personal magazine venture under the disguise of the pseudonym.

Once established many of the magazines went on to develop subscription packages, providing themselves with a steady income and confirmed readership. These subscriptions were promoted by magazines such as *The Trinidadian* and *The Cosmopolitan* as excellent Christmas gifts, reinforcing their dual role as both cultural missives and commodities to be bought. Many of the original copies of *The West Indian Review* still retain a short subscription form loosely bound in the pages, designed to be torn out and completed by new subscribers; these slips are a regular reminder for scholars of the magazine's aim to continue to grow its readership and the close relationships between the magazine, commerce and commodity. Subscribers, whilst providing a regular and predictable income for the magazines, brought with them another factor for consideration; the need for the magazine to continue publishing and honour the subscriptions. In its early years *Bim* received numerous enquiries from overseas readers about the possibility of an annual subscription to which the editors responded 'we cannot guarantee continuance. In these circumstances we prefer not to accept subscriptions'.²⁰ Realising the risk of accepting subscriptions could itself mitigate the likelihood of *Bim* failing, the decision was made two years later to introduce a two tiered subscription which

¹⁹ 'It Seems To Me', *The Gleaner*, 19 February 1948, p. 10.

²⁰ 'Notebook', *Bim*, 5.17 (December 1952), 2.

allowed Bajan readers to collect copies in person and for readers further afield to elect for their issues to be sent out by post for a higher subscription.²¹ *Bim's* tentativeness in introducing this service was not a baseless concern; the prospect of a magazine folding and being unable to fulfil subscriptions became a reality for *The Jamaica Forum* which began in January 1934. The twelfth issue in January 1935 gives little indication that this was to be its last; the editorial mentions an article on the banana industry forthcoming next month. Just a few weeks after the appearance of this issue, however, the magazine had a downturn in its fortunes. A notice in *The Gleaner* states that *The Jamaica Forum* was to be discontinued and the unexpired portion of subscriptions would be fulfilled by *The West Indian Review*.²² The speed with which the *Jamaica Forum* closed is indicative of the precarious finances of the smaller publications and the problem of an over-reliance on a few individuals. In this instance the relationship between these two magazines, which carried very similar material and had many contributors in common, meant that these subscribers were able to continue to receive a monthly magazine and the editors did not have to find financial recompense for the unfulfilled quota of the subscriptions. This type of statement of closure is rare. There is very little information available about the circumstances in which many of these magazines ended, so it is not known what arrangements, if any, other publications put in place to fulfil the subscriptions or return money to the subscribers. With the exception of circumstances such as this, however, in general the subscription model was a useful one for the magazines. In addition to providing financial support, regular subscribers gave the publications a sense of a network of supporters, which for a number of magazines moved beyond a local or island specific readership, stretching across the region and even further afield.

In addition to being sold in bookshops, drugstores and on newsstands, many of the magazines were sold through a system of agents, which meant they could circulate across the islands and be on general sale for new readers. This system of agents was not necessarily a formalised one. In its early days *Bim* was sold beyond Barbados by

²¹ Subscriptions for four numbers cost 4/-2d post free, or £2.00 for postal subscriptions ('Notebook', *Bim*, 6.21 (December 1954), 1).

²² 'Subscribers to the Jamaica Forum', *The Gleaner*, 17 January 1935, p. 2.

friends of the magazine, including writers George Lamming and Edgar Mittelholzer who received several copies of each issue and sold them in Trinidad.²³ Other magazines such as *The West Indian Review* formalised this system. The *Review*, in characteristic business-minded style, explicitly recruited agents to provide a physical presence for the magazine, both selling issues and dealing with correspondence. An advertisement in the December 1934 issue states '[w]e require representation by gentlemen of established position where not already represented', requesting agents to join those already named from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, St Lucia, Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados, St Vincent, Cayman Islands, Turk's Island and the Panama Canal Zone.²⁴ The *Caribbean Post* similarly employed agents, and displayed the details for these in their advertising material. An advert circulated in Jamaica for the *Caribbean Post* lists the parishes and towns on the island where the magazine was sold and names the businesses and individuals charged with selling the magazine (see figure 16).²⁵ This gives critics a sense of the magazine's expansion and reach beyond the capital; within six months of its appearance the *Caribbean Post* was being sold across Jamaica, confirming that its readership was not confined to Kingston. In addition to these Jamaican agents the *Caribbean Post* notes they also have representatives in several other West Indian colonies, which may have followed a similar structure with local advertisements circulating around each island detailing their contacts. The listing of individuals by name is suggestive of the networks that grew around these magazines. This advertisement is built around the assumption that within the town the individual named would either be known to the potential reader or easily identified, such as 'Teacher Davis' in Alley, Clarendon.²⁶ The network of *Caribbean Post* readers were called upon in March 1946 when the magazine faced difficulties in printing the number of copies required. The imposition of newsprint restrictions meant there were insufficient copies within each of the territories; the editorial asked readers to kindly pass their copies on to friends once read, to counteract this shortage and continue the expansion of the magazine's readership, which was in its

²³ Edward Baugh, *Frank Collymore: A Biography* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2009), p. 195.

²⁴ *The West Indian Review*, 1.4 (December 1934), 14.

²⁵ 'Advertisement for the Caribbean Post', *The Gleaner*, 4 July 1946, p. 2.

²⁶ 'Caribbean Post Advert', *The Gleaner*, 4 July 1946, p. 2.

early stages.²⁷ *Bim* similarly called on its readers directly, just prior to its announced (but not fulfilled) demise with which this chapter opened, noting: ‘Unfortunately we are compelled to end our notebook with the oft-repeated chorus: costs continue to rise and *Bim* continues to hover too near extinction [...] will you, dear readers, try to get us some new subscribers?’.²⁸

The BIGGEST shilling's worth!
The Magazine that mirrors the West Indies.
Caribbean Post

In This Issue

CRICKET TOURS—OF WHAT VALUE?—Ivan Barrow
WEST INDIAN EL DORADO BECKONS YOU—
EVERY WOMAN CAN KNOW HER CHANCES IN
MARRIAGE—

Romantic Stories — Pictures, Pictures — Topical Articles
Caribbean Post 1/- on all City Newstands and

CHRISTIANA—Miss Bailey	ALLEY—Teacher Davis
MANDEVILLE—Mandeville Book Room & Haughton Drug Store	FALMOUTH—H. L. Arnett
ORACABESSA—Miss V. L. White	SPANISH TOWN—Miss H. Chambers
MAY PEN—Dr. A. G. McKinley	MORANT BAY—Wilson's Drug Store
BLACK RIVER—W. B. Frankson	SPALDINGS—G. O. Atkinson
LUCEA—M. L. McFarlane	ST. ANN'S BAY—Henry A. Miller
PORT MARIA—H. O. S. Melkle	MONTEGO BAY—Henderson's Drug Store Joselyn McKenzie, 8a Strand St.
SAV-IA-MAR—Geo. Paul Sing Store	ORANGE BAY—Fred E. Johnson
FROME—Mc Drug Store	CHAPELTON—I. E. A. Burke
OLD HARBOUR—Stanley Vaz	FRANKFIELD—W. D. Linton
CLAREMONT—Dr. I. S. Lloyd	SPANISH TOWN—C. White
PORT ANTONIO—Percy Crawle	SPANISH TOWN—V. Cameron

Figure 16. *The Gleaner*, 4 July 1946, p.2. Advert for *Caribbean Post*.

Collectively these advertisements and editorial comments build up a picture of a network of readers, complemented by a network of formal or informal agents, through which the magazines circulated. The relationship between the reader and magazine was not a passive one. Readers wrote into the magazines' letters pages and submitted material for publication through which they shaped its internal contents, and through their purchase or subscription to the magazines they actively contributed to the publications' circulation around the West Indies.²⁹ Here the

²⁷ 'Editorial', *Caribbean Post* (March 1946), 3.

²⁸ 'Editor's Notebook', *Bim*, 9.34 (January-June 1960), 1.

²⁹ *Bim's* transition from a local publication to a regional one, was precipitated by one such reader. Edgar Mittelholzer, the first non-Barbadian contributor to the magazine, happened upon *Bim* whilst on holiday on the island. An aspiring writer from British Guiana, at this point living in Trinidad, he subsequently sought to place work in the magazine, sending a number of short stories which were

relationship between the magazine and the reader moves beyond a simple one of buyer and commodity; readers were an integral element of the magazines' venture. Whilst on one level the purchase of a magazine was a simple financial transaction, this transaction had a reciprocal element. The reader's purchase provided the magazine with financial capital, and they in turn acquired the cultural capital (as explored more fully in Chapter Three) from owning and reading the magazine. Through their purchase and consumption of the magazine, the reader reinforced the significance and desirability of the publication's cultural aims and ensured that the literary tradition the magazines were developing fulfilled a key element; not only fictional work *about* and written *in* the West Indies *by* West Indians, but also a literature that had a West Indian readership. *The West Indian Enterprise's* subheading 'A Monthly Magazine of West Indian Authorship for West Indian Readers' placed both elements side by side, presenting them as central to the enterprise.³⁰ The importance of a West Indian readership, within any given magazine's island location and across individual islands and territories, is evident in the magazine culture more broadly; the pursuit of a local readership was both a pragmatic financial decision and one driven by the publications' ideologies.

There is very little information about the circulation figures for these magazines; few of the editorials mention specific numbers although several mention in general terms the breadth of their reach regionally and internationally. Alfred Mendes writing in the second and final issue of *Trinidad* in 1930 notes that four hundred copies of the previous issue had been sold in Port of Spain, and in a subsequent interview in 1972 places the number of copies of each issue of *The Beacon* at around 1000.³¹ Several decades after publication of *The Beacon* ceased, Alfred Gomes claimed that at the height of its popularity it sold as many as 5000 copies per issue. There is clearly a disparity in these numbers, possibly in part due to the time which had elapsed between the publication and date of recall for both Mendes

published before the editors realised that their small club magazine had inadvertently expanded its scope. Five issues after the first work by Mittelholzer appeared in print, the magazines published work from four Trinidadians, the start of its consciously regional outlook ('Editor's Notebook', *Bim*, 4.14 (June 1951), 1).

³⁰ *The West Indian Enterprise* (November 1931), front cover.

³¹ Alfred Mendes, 'A Commentary', *Trinidad*, 1.2 (1930), 64-70 (p. 68); Reinhard Sander, 'The Turbulent Thirties in Trinidad', *World Literature Written in English*, 12.1 (1973), pp. 66-79.

and Gomes. It is impossible to know the exact number printed and purchased. Furthermore, as the advertisement in figure 14 (above) indicates in reference to *Planters' Punch*, the numbers printed may have exceeded the numbers sold, leaving unsold copies. Some of the larger and more established magazines which had a significant readership beyond the region may have circulated in much larger numbers; *The Trinidadian*, for example, noted that its first issue in 1933 sold 4000 copies locally and, in addition to this, 5 000 copies were distributed abroad; these figures may have grown over its years of publication as the editorial notes receiving interest for more copies from other organisations.³² The readership of many of these magazines, particularly the less established ones and those from smaller territories, however, is likely to have been small, as would the income which they could generate from sales. Edward Baugh in a biography of Frank Collymore, *Bim's* longstanding editor, notes that, '[t]he volume of subscriptions was never such as could have kept any journal alive for very long'; the role that local businesses played, and that of Collymore who 'worked tirelessly to solicit [their] support', was therefore crucial.³³

5.2 Advertising

All of the magazines within this study carried advertisements; local businesses provided much needed funds and a relatively stable source of financial support, unlike sales which were susceptible volatility.³⁴ Such was the centrality of advertising to the process of producing a magazine that several of the publications had a designated advertising editor. A newspaper notice informing the readership that the Kingston YMCA had motioned to begin an 'excellent magazine [...] for members and friends' of the club, notes tellingly that a committee was appointed 'to go into the matter of obtaining suitable manuscripts and for obtaining

³² 'Editorial Comments', *The Trinidadian* (March 1933), 7.

³³ Baugh, p. 185.

³⁴ There is one exception to this that I found, in an earlier title. *Plummer's Magazine* (Jamaica 1913-4), carried no advertising and seems to have been very much the product of its editor, Oscar Plummer. The magazine only produced two issues (December 1913 and January 1914), the second of which was not released to the public, before Oscar Plummer discontinued it. An obituary for Plummer, who died in 1918, states that the magazine 'did not prove a financial success and had to be abandoned'. Advertisements could have been a useful inclusion for this venture ('Death of Mr Oscar Plummer', *The Gleaner*, 16 September 1918, p. 14).

advertisements'.³⁵ Having material to publish, and through the advertisements the funds with which to be able to print this material, are presented as of central and immediate primacy for enabling the YMCA's endeavour. Addressing both commercial and literary concerns were central to the magazine's genesis. Unusually *The West Indian Enterprise*, initially appeared without advertising though with a note stating 'Advertisements are solicited. Rates obtainable from "THE VOICE" OFFICE, Castries'.³⁶ Lockhart was successful in acquiring these and later issues of the *Enterprise* carried several pages of advertisements grouped at the end of the publication.

Though several of the magazines refer to their advertising rates being available on request, only the Jamaican annual *Pepperpot* (1951-1977) published these openly. The table of rates reprinted in each issue provided the costs for different sizes: in 1953 a two inch strip advertisement cost £10, a quarter page cost £15, a full page £50, the inside cover £75 and the back cover £100.³⁷ These rates clearly show the importance of advertising to *Pepperpot's* finances, each copy of which sold for 2/-. One advertisement covering a third of a page and costing an advertiser £18. 10s, would be the equivalent of selling 185 copies of the magazine. Given the high rates for cover advertisements and the significant number of smaller advertisements in the inner pages, it is clear that for *Pepperpot* advertising was an excellent income generator. This, however, did not come without significant effort on the part of the editor, Elsie Benjamin Barsoe. In a similar manner to Collymore at *Bim* and Gomes for *The Beacon*, Barsoe personally approached businesses for their support and advertisements; an obituary notes how Barsoe 'each year [covered] the whole island in search of advertisements and through sheer hard work, grit and pertinacity, was highly successful'.³⁸ This success is reflected in the magazine's large format, in its proportions and number of pages, both of which were costly with regard to paper and printing costs and its inclusion of colour printing.

³⁵ 'Current Items', *The Gleaner*, 24 November 1939, p. 2. I have been unable to find any remaining copies of this magazine, though it is possible it did not go on to be produced.

³⁶ *The West Indian Enterprise*, 1.1 (November 1931). Inside front cover.

³⁷ 'Pepperpot Rates', *Pepperpot* (1952), 5.

³⁸ Harry Milner, 'Elsie Benjamin Barsoe: One of a Kind', *The Sunday Gleaner*, 17 November 1974, p. 5.

The support of advertisers, once obtained, however, could also be retracted as Albert Gomes, editor of *The Beacon* discovered. *The Beacon's* controversial stance led to attacks by more conservative sections of society who, recognising the importance of advertising revenue, damaged the magazine by attacking its relationship with its advertisers. In his autobiography Gomes' recalls a month where a well-organised campaign by the Catholic Guild led to nearly every advertisement being withdrawn in the penultimate hour before printing. Pressure from the Church and other opponents continued to affect their ability to attract advertisers and the magazine suffered from a 'chronic lack of funds' forcing Gomes to continue to ask for his father's support.³⁹ As Gomes found, the cultivation of good relationships with the local businesses that provided the advertising support was important. A retrospective look over the magazines and the companies who published adverts in them shows that many of these were long-term relationships. The same companies and products are advertised across a number of issues and many appear across the different magazines. The magazines' front covers, some of which carry an advertisement for the same business over many months and year, attest to the longevity of the advertisers' support. For *The West Indian Review* these were Beacon's matches, Gold Flake cigarettes and Machado Cigars; these front covers and recurring advertisements in the late 1930s and early 1940s reflect the growth and affluence of the tobacco industry in Jamaica. The front covers were particularly desirable advertising spaces due to their high visibility, though not all of the magazines utilised these, with a number restricting advertising to the internal pages and back cover.

Even within the magazines' internal pages certain spaces provided businesses with a more attractive spot for their advertisement. *The Jamaica Forum* responded to this desirability, changing the space allocated to advertising over a number of issues. In four successive issues of *The Jamaica Forum* the space provided for advertisements on the contents page grew. Between the October 1934 issue and that of January 1935, the contents listing reduced from a whole page to a quarter of a page, as the magazine capitalised on the advertising potential of this valuable space on the first

³⁹ Albert Gomes, 'Through a Maze of Colour', in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 166-171 (p. 167).

page the reader turned to. *The Forum Quarterly*'s response to the particular marketability of this space changed the magazine's bibliographic code and the overall aesthetics of the page. The impact of the contents listing is lessened and the emphasis instead falls on the commercial content. Considering the magazines over the span of their publications, rather than a single issue, highlights the shifts in the relationships with the business sector, a key facet of magazine publishing.

This relationship went two ways, and in addition to the magazines responding to the businesses' needs, we also see the advertisements responding to the broader contents of the magazine. Advertisements such as one for Excelsior biscuits, printed in Marson's *Cosmopolitan* in 1928 responded to its location in the magazine by including the tag line 'The "Cosmopolitan" Biscuits of Jamaica'.⁴⁰ More substantially, a regular advertisement from *Kyk-over-al* draws on the content of the magazine itself to align its insurance with the magazines' ideology (see figure 17). The Colonial Life insurance company identifies the 'literary and cultural independence' pursued by *Kyk-over-al* and links this to the development of West Indian financial infrastructures; quoting from the magazine's stated aim of linking together the 'mass of West Indians', the advertisement suggests insurance policy holders would be furthering their 'personal and national independence' through accessing their services.⁴¹ The businesses producing advertisements such as these saw the magazines as influential, and identified an opportunity to use this to further their own sales by aligning themselves with the publications' values.

⁴⁰ 'Excelsior Biscuits Advertisement', *The Cosmopolitan* (June 1928), 41.

⁴¹ 'Another "Professor" Speaks', *Kyk-over-al*, 3.11 (October 1950), 90.

ANOTHER "PROFESSOR" SPEAKS :

"The West Indian is creating a literature of his own.... He is writing his own poems and novels and plays and his own histories....He is perceiving the need to write his own school books.... He is working on the problem of dialect trying to make it answer the need of a unique expression *that will link him to the mass of his fellow West Indians....* the Great Literary Adventure is on, that will one day help him to find himself part of a nation."

A. J. SEYMOUR, "Kyk-over-Al" April, '50.

QUITE RIGHT "PROFESSOR" SEYMOUR.

And side by side and perhaps even more important than this effort at literary and cultural independence, West Indians are developing *their own financial institutions* owned and operated by themselves.

In this connection COLONIAL LIFE stands in the forefront.

Every new policyholder "link(s) him(self) to the mass of his fellow West Indians" for progress, personal and national independence.

**COLONIAL LIFE
INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED**

HEAD OFFICE :
Port-of-Spain, TRINIDAD

Represented at : TRINIDAD, BRITISH GUIANA, GRENADA,
ST. LUCIA, BARBADOS, ST. VINCENT, ANTIGUA,
ST. KITTS, ARUBA.

A CARIBBEAN INSTITUTION.

Figure 17. *Kyk-over-al*, 3.11 (October 1950), 90. Advertisement for Colonial Life Insurance Company.

The placement and number of advertisements and the construction of the page can be informative, illuminating both the publication's financial position and affecting the way in which the editorial copy of the magazine is read. Jean de Boissière's *Callaloo* (1941-1949), for instance, is one of the smallest and shortest magazines in this study, however, it contains one of the highest proportions of advertisements. The quantity of adverts is indicative of the small circulation of this Trinidadian magazine and its need for financial support as a personal, rather than club venture. The magazine contents were primarily written by de Boissière himself with the occasional appearance of work from other contributors. The number and placement of advertisements in *Callaloo* is such that the magazine's articles and features sometimes appear to be subsumed as can be seen in the double page spread taken from the July 1949 issue (see figures 18a and 18b). James Procter notes that the short story, published in magazines, newspaper or on radio programmes, is a 'tightly bound or enveloped narrative' and this notion of restriction and envelopment is an apt one for the relationship between the magazine's contents (both literary and non-literary) and the advertisements.⁴²

In *Callaloo* the editorial content and the advertisements are bound by the limited space on the page and both jostle for attention. The article is enveloped by the markers of business and is not privileged over the advertisements. In this instance it is not clear where the article continues and which block of text is part of the advertisements. The placing of advertisements at the top and bottom of the page divided by a line rather than being boxed means these pages, upon first glance, could consist of advertisements entirely. This is particularly true of the right-hand page where the title of the article 'Talking to Think' uses the same font and letter size as the advert below, meaning there is no aesthetic distinction. The effect of this placement of advertisements within and between the articles is a blurring of the distinction between these types of material. At the same time, and in the same print space, the reader is invited to consume the literary and intellectual material of the article and the commercial texts, which in themselves reflect, reinforce and

⁴² James Procter, 'The Short Space', paper delivered as the 7th Distinguished Edward Baugh Lecture, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica (November 2013).

encourage the consumption of domestic material goods and services. This layering of several orders of consumption reiterates the commodification of literary work when it is located in a magazine. This example highlights the extent to which the advertisements and the written features of these magazines were intertwined within the print space of the magazine. Though not necessarily sharing the same pages as closely as here, within the magazines as a whole both advertisements and editorial copy sit side by side, coexisting within the same print space.

VEE'S

SNACKS—LIGHT MEALS—ICED DRINKS—FULL
COURSE LUNCHEES & DINNERS, COURTEOUSLY
SERVED AT ANY TIME

CAFETERIA AND RESTAURANT
ABERCROMBY STREET

of the local theaters from being in the category of "The Ante-chambers of Hell" Why not relief from duty on store equipment that might relieve some of the local shops from looking like Petticoat Lane in a high wind? Perhaps the answer is that the restaurants, bars, theaters and other paraphernalia patronised by tourists have not got the proper lobbying technique in the corridors of the Red House.

That state aid is necessary to improve the existing network of public

hostels and places of entertainment goes without gainsaying. But it should be given only with the most stringent safeguards to see that it will accomplish its purpose. If a subsidy is to be given to any private hotel monopoly by a government that government must insist that one of its appointees sit on the directorate to watch the interests of the public whose money has been invested in the business. Otherwise it would be more proper to call it a grant-in-aid than a subsidy to an industry.

FERRARI'S

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

RUMS

Caroni, Cocktail Fine Old xx Special Old
Xx Special Old, xxx Special Rums

WINES

Italian & French Vermouths Champagnes
Piedmontese, Marsala Hiantic

Sole Importers of Fine Italian Wines From

FILLI GANCIA & Co.,

22 & 24 Charlotte Streets

42 Queen Street

Figure 18a. *Callaloo* (July 1949), 6. Page showing editorial content and advertisements.

HEAVENLY FOOD

Prepared by Celestails called and chosen by

GEORGE AFONG

At his new Ideally Situated Chinese Restaurant

KIMLING

St. Vincent Street

above Empire Theatre

Talking To Think

TALKERS, that is to say people who talk much, may be roughly divided into two classes, namely, those who think in order to talk, and those who talk in order to think. It may be true, and in a sense it undoubtedly is true, that everybody is thinking except when asleep; but with many people much of such thinking is vague, desultory, and effortless. Perhaps few would confess that they never

or seldom concentrate their thoughts on a single subject without a personal, and generally a selfish, object; but such is probably the case with more people than might be supposed. What shall I wear? What shall I buy? What shall I eat? are all definite and selfish—not wrongly selfish—objects of thought. Definite and unselfish objects are—How can I help that poor man? How can I please my

The Builder

PHONE : 8911.

Who keeps appointments;

Who keeps Costs Down;

Whose Clients, when erect-

ing additional Houses, return to

ANGEL ACOSTA

Figure 18b. *Callaloo* (July 1949), 7. Page showing editorial content and advertisements.

For many of the magazines there appears to be no specific placement of advertisements for particular products or businesses on certain pages, the advertisements appear throughout the magazine and in a variety of positions. Occasionally, however, there are indications that advertisements are deliberately sited as can be seen in *Bim*. Very few advertisements appeared amongst the short stories and poems in the pages of *Bim* after the first few issues. The full page, or large half-page advertisements, with big captions and pictures were grouped together on advertising pages at the beginning and end of the magazine. Where advertisements do appear in the body of the magazine, they are of a different style, appearing as small boxed text-based advertisements (see figure 19). What is particularly notable about these advertisements is they are all for forthcoming books and poetry collections, bookshops and other literary and cultural ventures. These are not numerous and do not appear in every issue, though some issues have several, but where they appear they do correspond to the magazine's contents. Issue twelve in June 1950, for instance, has four of these advertisements, one for *Caribbean Quarterly*, the review published by the Extra Mural department of the newly established University College of the West Indies. The other three advertisements were for forthcoming literary works, Derek Walcott's *Henri Christophe*, 'bound either in paper, \$1.00, or Cloth \$1.50', V. S. Reid's *New Day* and Edgar Mittelholzer's novel *A Morning at the Office*.⁴³ All three of these works were reviewed in that issue. The placement of these advertisements is suggestive of the magazine's wider investment in encouraging the development of a West Indian literature and individual writers and a readership for their texts. Readers of the magazine, having read the review, were reminded and encouraged to buy the book themselves by the advertisement. In these seemingly insubstantial advertisements we see the magazine's ideology at work, the articulation and encouragement of West Indian literature enacted through the advertisements themselves.

⁴³ 'Caribbean Quarterly', *Bim*, 3.12 (June 1950), 294; 'Derek Walcott', *Bim*, 3.12 (June 1950), 298; 'V. S. Reid', *Bim*, 3.12 (June 1950), 324; 'Edgar Mittelholzer', *Bim*, 3.12 (June 1950), 335.

"I very nearly didn't" I told him.

It was unexpectedly easy now to speak frankly and without bitterness and the air was cleared between us. There was no pretence.

"I have my second novel coming out in the autumn", he said and I smiled at the Englishness of the definition of the time of year. My smile hurt him and he said, "I'm sorry." He went on to speak quickly.

"I would like to dedicate it to you and Cassia," he said, "would you mind? I don't think that Cassie would."

I had not expected this. All the years fell away in a moment and Cassie and Reuben and I were revealed in all the nakedness of our youth. I could not speak. People came and went in the room but all I could see were the pictures of Mr. Thompson's round table, the Brereton quadrangle and cricket field and Cassie waving goodbye across the misty water. In my heart I cried out for Cassie for he alone of us would have known what to say and how to say it.

"I did not expect this, never; never this kindness from you," I said.

"Why?" Reuben asked.

I could not answer. The years seemed full of misunderstanding. For why indeed did I not expect it? I could not bear to think of my own blindness, my own uncharity.

"Why," he asked again, "why did you not expect kindness from me?"

What could I say? Why does one man not expect kindness from another? Could I tell him that in all the years I had never known him do anyone a kindness? That would be now no answer. Could I say to him that he was not the sort of man to do a kindness? There was so much that I did not understand. "I do not know," I said, humiliated past the thinking of it.

He said nothing at all but sat staring through the window at the people walking in the street below.

"London was never like this," he said, irrelevantly but kindly.

I looked at his face, the same face I had hit and Cassie had hit: the sharpness was still there but I could see no signs of the aggressiveness and cruelty I had known.

"It is very kind of you, Rhubarb," I said, "it will make me very happy to see my name in print. Thank you very much." But the words had a poor quality and a shoddiness that I could not help.

We shook hands. "Let's have the drink I promised to buy," he said. I shook my head.

"Not now," I said, "another time." He nodded his understanding and I left him in the bar. There was nothing more to say and I was ashamed.

NOTES FOR
A GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND PHRASES OF
BARBADIAN DIALECT

2nd Edition

by

Frank A. Collymore

Advocate Stationery

\$1.25

Figure 19. 'Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect', *Bim*, 7.27 (July-December 1958), 177. In-text advertisement.

Whilst it is not possible to gauge the precise readership of any given magazine, the letters pages, contents and in particular the advertisements give a sense of the makeup of the readers. The advertisements give an insight into who the advertisers perceived the readers of the magazine to be and the products and services they required or desired. They had a financial imperative to target their advertisements selectively, and those in the corpus of magazines in this study reflect the material and social needs of the middle classes as well as their class aspirations. Though the magazines broadly carried the same types of advertisements, both in terms of style and content, it is possible to see variations. For instance the advertisements in *The Minerva Review* (1941-1944) reflect its Indo-Trinidadian readership. *The Minerva Review* was one of several to have a named dedicated Advertising Manager and the magazine carried advertisements for many prominent Indo-Trinidadian businesses. As discussed in Chapter Three, these magazines were middle-class ventures, and the types of advertisements reflect this: pharmacies, hotels, stationers, music tuition, tailors, hardware stores, varieties of rum and motor vehicles were all frequently promoted appear in the pages. These advertisements both responded to, and reinforced the aspirations of this group. Both the texts and images used by the advertisements convey and reiterate aspirational messages. An example is the advertisement pictured in figure 20 which was printed in *Bim* in 1961. The family pictured in the Morris Minor encapsulate the aspirations of the middle classes to own and drive their own vehicle, a luxury which is 'ideal' for shopping.⁴⁴ The desirability of the car is made clear through the caption, and the smiling face of the woman holding the child, and through it the implied race of the family. In Barbados in these decades the family's light skin and, in the mother's case fair hair, were shorthand for their higher social standing.

The advertisement for Bookers store (figure 21) utilises the full page space in *Kyk-over-al* to advertise two parts of the business and attract two types of readers - those interested in batteries and those interested in women's clothing.⁴⁵ The bottom advertisement for the 'ready-to-wear morning and afternoon frocks' draws on notions of distinction and taste and suggests a life in which a woman has dresses

⁴⁴ 'The Ideal Shopping Car', *Bim*, 8.32 (January-June 1961), n.p.

⁴⁵ 'What is Elegance?', *Kyk-over-al*, 3.13 (1951), 259.

for certain times of day and the wherewithal and time to be elegant and impeccably groomed. The final comment, noting the low prices, highlights the aspirational element which informed the advertisement's message; the implication is that Bookers clothing can give customers the means to acquire an appearance of wealth and good taste without the price tag.⁴⁶ The advertisement on the previous page similarly uses language to evoke an upper class life, describing the Humber as the 'aristocrat of all bicycles'.⁴⁷ Advertisements sought to sell products to the magazines' readers by selling the desirability of the lifestyle they embody and appealing to social aspirations was a way to achieve this.

The advertisements that the magazines carried were for both local businesses, products and services and for national and international products. A couple of the magazines such as *Trinidad* and *Bim* relied, at least initially, on businesses known to the editors personally; both Mendes' father's leather store and W. Therold Barnes' hardware business regularly appear, whereas other publications cast their nets wider.⁴⁸ Many of the advertisements for products, particularly regional or international products, were coupled with the details of 'agents' from whom they could be bought. These details, which often included an address, provided a local point of contact. For example in figure 22 there is an association between the product Acme Paints, an American brand, and the provisions store I. Delevante of 75 Barry Street, Kingston, serves both of their purposes; promoting the brand and giving credence to and reiterating the international reach of the store.⁴⁹ The advertisements for international products such as Coca Cola, which would be familiar to readers of the magazines from across the region, simultaneously locate each issue of the magazine on the island where it was published by providing the name of the local shop and act as a link between the communities of readers. Through the addresses of the agents the business districts of the island are indirectly mapped for the reader. The same roads appear in many of these advertisements; for example the July-December 1958 issue of *Bim* features

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ 'Now in Stock Humber Cycles', *Kyk-over-al*, 3.13 (1951), 258.

⁴⁸ Barnes was one of the editors of *Bim* in its early days, though his name continued to be listed, in effect the editorial workload was carried by Frank Collymore alone, with Barnes continuing to contribute short stories and frontispieces until his death in 1965.

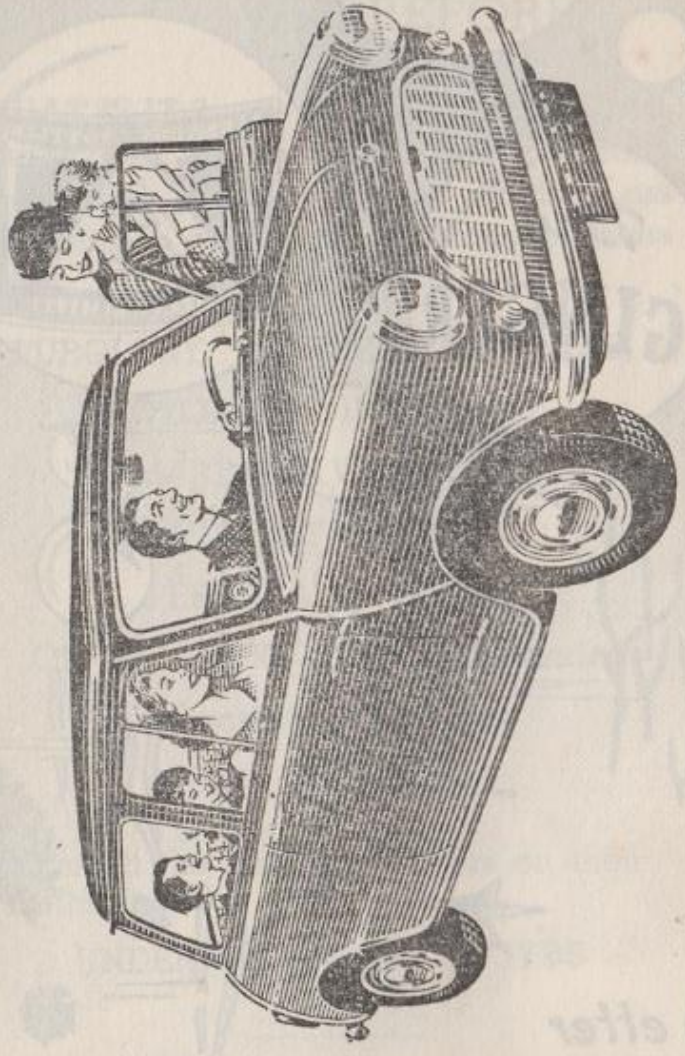
⁴⁹ 'Acme White Lead and Color Works', *The Jamaica Forum* (January 1935), 1.

advertisements for four agents all located on Broad Street, showing this as the location of the commercial centre of Bridgetown. These advertisements indirectly highlight the locations of clusters of businesses for the reader, who, given the reach of the magazine, may be unfamiliar with the city themselves.⁵⁰ A feature in *The Trinidadian* did this more directly for businesses in Port of Spain. The regular article 'Up and Down Frederick Street' profiled the businesses and products for sale on and around the city's main shopping thoroughfare. The magazines stated its intention of distributing copies on cruise ships and regular line steamers, 'so that visitors will know something of the island before landing'; for the editors of *The Trinidadian*, it is clear that this 'something' would include the commercial world of the island.⁵¹ These advertisements contributed to the image of the islands and region which these magazines constructed, both consciously and unintentionally, for the reader. The advertisements for new innovations and internationally traded products located the region within an international trading arena, whilst retaining the specific Caribbean locale of the stores and agents selling the products.

⁵⁰ On a personal level, whilst undertaking research in Trinidad I was surprised at how many of the streets of Port of Spain I had unconsciously become familiar with by reading their names on the advertisements in the magazines.

⁵¹ Editorial Comments', *The Trinidadian* (March 1933), 7.

The Ideal Shopping Car— **The MORRIS MINOR**



St. Michael's Row

—

FORT ROYAL GARAGE

Figure 20. *Bim*, 8.32 (January-June 1961), n.p. Advertisement for Morris Minor car.

You want the best
from your battery

Consult your



LUCAS

OFFICIAL SERVICE AGENT

BOOKERS ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT

*What is
ELEGANCE?*

ELEGANCE

comes from much more than
"being in the fashion." *It
is the look of distinction cre-
ated by taste expressed in an
attractive ensemble and im-
peccable grooming.*

You too may obtain the
envied poise of elegance. In-
spect our ready-to-wear
morning and afternoon
frocks: they will please you
with their fashionable styling
....and their low prices.

**BOOKERS
DRY GOODS.**



Figure 21. *Kyk-over-al*, 3.13 (1951), 259. Advertisements for Bookers store.

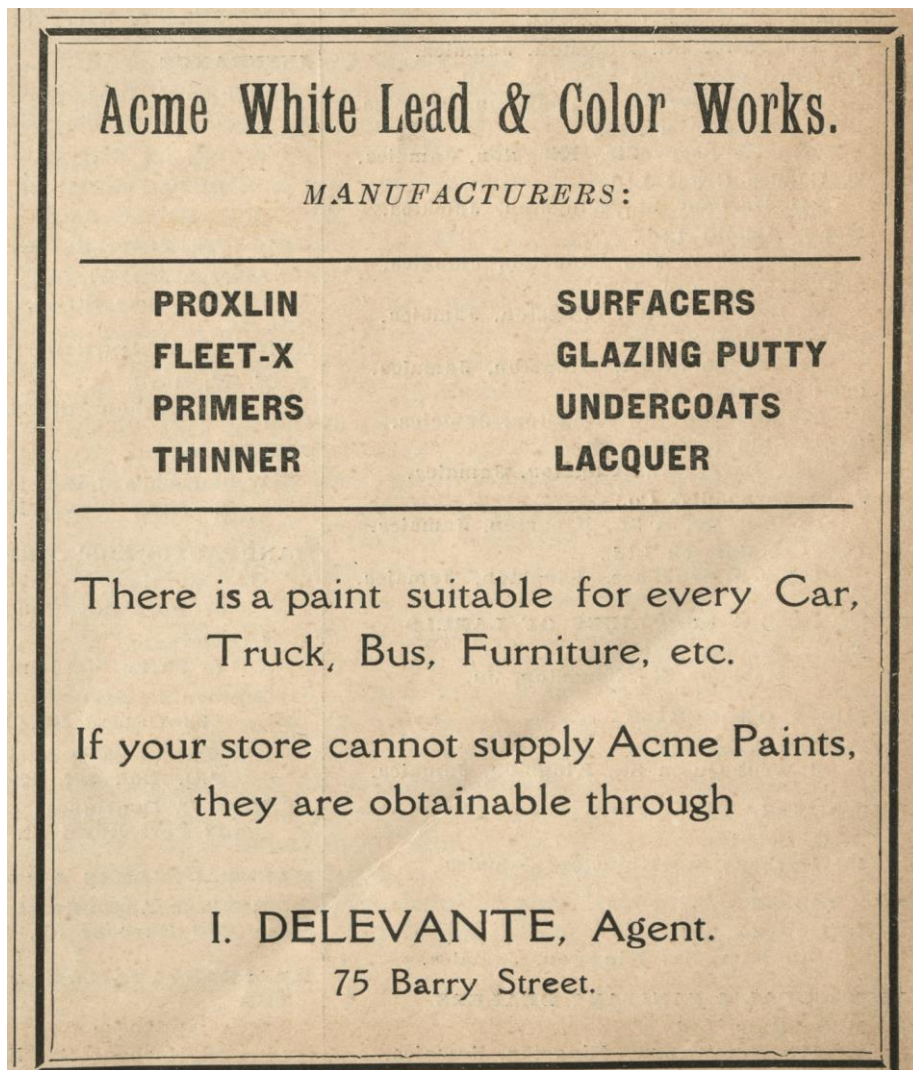


Figure 22. *The Jamaica Forum* (January 1935), 1. Advertisement for Acme White Lead and Colour Works highlighting relationship to agent I. Delevante.

5.3 Commercial competitions

The editors had a financial imperative for their readers to both read and act upon the advertisements in their pages. Regular reminders appear in several magazines to encourage the reader to note where they saw the product advertised, to reinforce to businesses the benefits of advertising in their pages. The magazines' engagement with the world of business, however, was not limited to the direct advertisements; close attention to the regular competitions across a selection of these magazines highlights another level of their involvement. Many magazines ran short story and poetry competitions, as discussed in Chapter Two. Some of the

other contests hosted by a selection of the magazines, however, were more commercially minded. Philpotts notes that successful bureaucratic editors would draw upon a number of 'active entrepreneurial strategies' in order to support their magazines financially; these competitions are one such strategy, one which moved the magazines' relationships with business beyond straightforward advertising.⁵² In its first issue *The Outlook* announced a 'jumbled ads competition'.⁵³ Readers were required to read the advertisements in order to find the jumbled up letters in the advertisements, which spelled OUTLOOK, and send their solution with a subscription for the next issue of the magazine.⁵⁴ The editors awarded a prize of 2 guineas for the winner of the competition. This competition made financial sense; an annual subscription was 5s 6d, so only four entries sent in by new subscribers were needed to cover the cost of the prize money. In offering such a reward readers were encouraged to read each of the advertisements; this, the magazine hoped, would help prove their assertion that 'Advertising in *The Outlook* pulls Business'.⁵⁵ *The Outlook's* strategy of including advertisers in the competitions can also be seen in the pages of *The Jamaica Forum*. *The Jamaica Forum* incorporated several rounds of an advertising competition which required readers to complete a letter by selecting phrases from the advertisements and then list the companies in the correct order. These competitions were popular. In their November 1934 issue the editors noted that '[a] large number of entries came in for this competition' but many with minor mistakes in either the letter or list; the award of 7/6 was eventually awarded to Miss M. H. Campbell.⁵⁶

These advertising competitions took some effort on the editor's behalf to arrange, furthermore, the cost of the prize money which provided the incentive to enter would need to be covered. However, this time and effort would, they hoped, lead to an increase in revenue to their advertisers and subsequently a continuation of the relationship between the business and the magazine. Furthermore, every entry to the competitions had to be accompanied by a coupon, one of which was printed

⁵² Philpotts, p. 52.

⁵³ 'Jumbled Ads Competition', *The Outlook*, 1.1 (July 1933), 25.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ 'Ourselves', *The Outlook*, 1.5 (November 1933), 6.

⁵⁶ 'Christmas Competitions', *The Jamaica Forum* (November 1934), 15.

in each issue. Through this system *The Jamaica Forum* used the competitions and the draw of their prizes to directly encourage more sales. The business acumen of the editors, linking the competitions, advertisements and subscriptions shows an awareness of the needs of each party. They included the readers' need to be entertained, the businesses' to convey a message about their goods, and the magazine's own to sell copies. The editorial role went beyond compiling and commissioning articles for publication, the inclusion of this type of material highlights the various stakeholders in the magazine and the editors' role of balancing these interests.

The commercial competitions in *The Jamaica Forum* and *The Outlook* are minimal in comparison with those of *The Cosmopolitan*, another Jamaican magazine published a few years earlier. The editor Una Marson, utilised commercial connections in numerous ways in the magazine's annual Christmas competitions. In November 1929, seven of the eleven competitions were sponsored by businesses that in turn utilised the subject matter for their own gain. Several of the competitions ask competitors to write limericks to promote goods and the winning entries, for The Popular Jewellery Store and Desnoes and Geddes respectively, were printed in full in the January 1930 edition. In a similar vein B. S. A. Motor cycles offered a first prize of £1/1/- and a runners up prize of 10/6 for the best new slogan to promote their motorbikes. The benefits for the companies, both in promoting their goods and in gaining new advertising material, are clear. Marson notes that there were 'many entries for this competition and several of the other efforts were of a fairly high standard'.⁵⁷ Not all of the 1929 competitions proved so popular, H. Macaulay Orrett's competition for the best article on 'How to popularise Radio in Jamaica' received few entries and was subsequently extended. These competitions also, on occasion, asked readers to submit long prose responses. One, which asked reader to answer the question 'Why is the London Store the most popular store in Kingston?' was won by Aimee Webster, who later went on to edit the *Caribbean Post*. Her entry, printed in full in the January 1930 edition, is a sophisticated piece of marketing on behalf of the store; its opening paragraphs read like a piece of fiction, 'A tea-party was in progress. A late arrival and a stranger too, he approached

⁵⁷ 'Results of Christmas Competitions', *The Cosmopolitan* (January 1930), 298-9.

somewhat timorously [...]'.⁵⁸ Here, in a more substantive way than the example of the advertisement from *Kyk-over-al* discussed above, we see the distinction between the advertising and editorial copy blur, as the tone of the essay competition entry is similar to that of the magazine's short stories. Across the years the competitions in *The Cosmopolitan* followed a similar format, with the sponsors and details of the contests changing but the engagement with local businesses continuing.

Marson's approach was very pragmatic, the advertisements played an important functional role for the magazines, whilst at the same time entertaining readers; this functionality becomes clear when the range of competitions *The Cosmopolitan* ran are considered. A notable competition in the December 1930 issue asked readers to 'look carefully through the advertisements in this number and state which they think is the best and why', offering a prize of £1. 1s for the 500 word article.⁵⁹ Notably this competition was not sponsored and the prize money was set by the magazine itself. The announcement of the winner, several months later in March 1931, makes clear its purpose; unlike the limerick competitions where the winning entries were printed, this result merely states the winner.⁶⁰ Unlike the company-sponsored competitions, where the publication of the answer constitutes additional advertising for the sponsor's business, this open competition had succeeded in its aims just by attracting entries. Unlike other essay competitions this one was not designed to educate the reader or develop the writer's skills but purely to encourage the reading and consideration of the advertisements, and therefore the publication of the article was not necessary.

These types of sponsored competitions were another element in the magazines' relationship with the commercial world. Given the difficulties and costs associated with printing and distributing these texts around the region, the ability to attract and retain the interest of businesses, and readers alike, become all the more important. As the cost of printing and paper rose, increased advertising rates

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 299.

⁵⁹ 'Christmas Competitions', *The Cosmopolitan* (December 1930), 177.

⁶⁰ 'Results of Christmas Competitions', *The Cosmopolitan* (March 1931), 27.

offered a way for the cover price to be buffered from the keen edge of these rises.⁶¹ The advertisements, which to a modern reader can seem somehow peripheral to the written contents of the magazines, were far from insignificant; the relationship between the magazines and businesses was central to the magazines' ability to fulfil their cultural aims.

This is highlighted particularly well by *The Quarterly Magazine* (Trinidad, 1927-35) in their Christmas 1931 issue. Austin Nolte was a particularly business-minded editor. Originally involved in *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* (Trinidad 1924-1929) as the business manager, he began his own periodical, *The Quarterly Magazine* in 1927.⁶² These two magazines ran concurrently for a number of issues. Nolte had been responsible for making the advertising contacts at *The Richmond Quarterly* and he took several of these with him when he left the magazine, a factor which may have contributed to *The Richmond Quarterly's* demise as its new editorship struggled to maintain its production.⁶³ When *The Richmond Quarterly* ceased publication in 1929, Nolte's revenue for his own magazine increased significantly. The later issues attest to the effects of this increased income, they are larger, more attractive and with double the number of pages of earlier issues. Both the quality of paper and the print was improved and, financed by Nolte's inclusion of more advertisements, it was able to pay contributors for their work. Austin Nolte continued to pursue advertisers, however, and in the Christmas 1931 issue included a pseudo-article 'Advertising Then and Now'.⁶⁴ Purporting to be a piece on the historical development of

⁶¹ In a letter to Henry Swanzy, Frank Collymore notes that he had raised the price for advertisements in *Bim* to absorb the increased costs of printing (University of Birmingham Special Collections, Henry Swanzy Papers, MS42-1-4-95. 'Personal correspondence Frank Collymore to Henry Swanzy, 25th September 1948').

⁶² There was some form of a disagreement between Nolte and the new editors of *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association*. Nolte's involvement seemed to have ended with the change of editors from W. H. Dolly to E. B. Grosvenor at the end of 1926. Oblique references to this occur in the first issue of the new *Quarterly Magazine*, the appearance of which Nolte notes, marks the end of his involvement with *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association*. For brevity and clarity in the passage which follows I have shortened the name of *The Quarterly Magazine of the Richmond Street Literary and Debating Association* to *The Richmond Quarterly*, an abbreviation that I use in this chapter only.

⁶³ I am grateful for this information from Austin Nolte's son, also called Austin Nolte, who provided me with access to and information about the magazines during my visit to Port of Spain in February 2013.

⁶⁴ Austin Nolte, 'Advertising: Then and Now', *The Quarterly Magazine* (Christmas 1931), 38.

advertising, tracing the etymology of the word and its use from the Roman empire to the nineteenth century, the purpose of his piece become clear in the final paragraphs. Here Nolte, who signs off the article with the title 'Advertising Manager' and his contact details, lists the companies who already advertise in *The Quarterly Magazine*. Using bold print and capitals letters to emphasise his point, he stressed the benefits of publishing in the magazine, citing its circulation and influence beyond Port of Spain.

Alongside this there is also, notably, another advertisement for and on behalf of the *Quarterly*, noting the opportunity to 'make some extra money writing Short Stories' for the magazine, for which the editor will pay, though prospective contributors are told he 'favour[s] Local or West Indian subjects'.⁶⁵ Accompanying both these advertisements are two small annotated illustrations depicting soldiers; the first proclaims '[w]e steadily advance the interests of the people' and a second, depicting soldiers crossing a bridge '[u]ndaunted – we bridge over all difficulties'.⁶⁶ These motifs which utilise the imagery of jingoistic military propaganda give a sense of the editor's and magazine's approach to what it sees as 'the difficulties' they bridge. These difficulties are both practical, the financing of the magazine, and conceptual, the development of a West Indian literary aesthetic. The juxtaposition of these advertisements, one soliciting business support and the other literary contributions, which are connected by the illustrations, is representative of the dependence between the financial support of the advertisers, and the magazine's cultural and literary aspirations. As this page conveys, the relationship between these two types of material, the advertisements and the fiction, and the two groups, the advertisers and the consumers of the magazine, is reciprocal. The advertisements enabled the magazine to run and to publish new writing 'to advance the interests of the people' and in turn the draw of this material brings readers into contact with the companies and their products.

⁶⁵ Nolte, 'Advertising Then and Now', 38.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

5.4 Conclusion

As this chapter has shown the paratextual elements of the magazines provide a wealth of information about the material conditions of writing, reading, printing and publishing in the West Indies, which in turn shape our understanding of the literary culture of the 1920s-1950s. The prevalence of advertisements in all of the magazines, and range of commercial competitions hosted by a number, highlight the close relationship between the literary magazines and the world of business. The covers, editorials and advertisements for the magazines placed within and beyond their pages, highlight the importance of gaining and retaining readers for the publications' survival and wider aims. Through studying these magazines as texts in their entirety it is possible to identify traces of the networks of readers, agents, editors and magazines which spread across the region through which the magazines and their contents circulated. The literary culture developed in and through the magazines was a collective one and this collectivity goes beyond the inclusion of numerous writers within any given issue, and encompasses these wider networks and the local businesses who supported the magazines. This model of literary culture is intimately linked to the magazine form. Though individual writers gained prominence through these publications, they are very different textual spaces to the novel or a poetry collection, forms which are predicated upon a single writer. Bringing critical attention to the magazine as a whole broadens, and questions, our understanding of authorship and literary significance; the magazines were authored by, and through the interactions between, many contributors. These include the writers and essayists, but also the editors, advertisers and readers. The wider significance of this literary culture lies in the magazines and the broad movement, rather than solely with the individual writers whose work they published. The magazines facilitated a culture of writing, reading and publishing in the West Indies which was the foundation of Caribbean literature on an international stage.

This chapter has focused on the magazine as a meeting point between the cultural and the commercial spheres; within this relationship, however, it is has sought to

illuminate the ways in which the commercial was marshalled in pursuit of the wider cultural agenda of creating a literary tradition for the West Indies, written and read by West Indians. It is this use of the commercial world which is key to our understanding of how and why the literary magazine became popular in these decades, and found itself as the key literary forum in the West Indies. By being attentive to the in-between spaces of the magazine the structures which enabled middle-class West Indians to intervene in the public sphere become clear. As Chapter Three explored in detail, the literary magazine movement was borne out of a desire to effect social and cultural change; the middle-class West Indians who ran, edited and contributed to the magazines did not have the financial resources, political power or social capital to do so directly. Through magazines, which were funded and supported by the commercial sector, they were able to gain a voice in wider society and bring about the establishment of a West Indian literary tradition. In the 'do-it-yourself' culture of magazine publishing which this thesis has tracked, the ability of these West Indians to draw upon the limited resources available to them, and implement entrepreneurial strategies such as the competitions, was key.

Conclusion

This thesis has uncovered a significant body of magazines which have previously been seen as peripheral to Caribbean literature. It has substantially expanded beyond the small group of magazines which have been associated with West Indian literary culture of the early twentieth century, and brought these into conversation with a larger body of previously unknown or underexplored publications which had parallel aims. In doing so it has shown that a wide range of magazines contributed to the development of a West Indian literary tradition, and affirmed the centrality of the magazine form to this process. This thesis has situated this corpus of magazines as the key print space in which local literary work was published and read in the West Indies between the 1920s and 1950s and considered the magazines' wider cultural significance for West Indian literature.

The thesis has also argued for the central role that these magazines played in calling for, initiating and facilitating the process of cultural decolonisation which saw the emergence of a book-based West Indian literary tradition. The print space of the magazines was used by writers and editors to negotiate and experiment with the form that this literary tradition would take, and through the magazines a readership for a local literature was created. I have argued throughout that middle-class West Indians were at the heart of the literary magazines and that the publications and the literature they printed was informed by their position in society. The magazines, and the parallel literary and debating society movement, emerged from the newly expanded middle classes and the publications and clubs were a response to the challenges they faced. As Chapter Three argued, through the clubs and the magazines middle class West Indians utilised their access to culture and the privileged place it held in West Indian society to build a literary tradition and shore up their own class position; demonstrating their respectability and gaining a platform through which they could intervene in the public sphere. This autonomy, which was enabled by editing their own publications, was, as Chapter Four explored, used to pursue a number of social and cultural aims. By focusing on the magazines as a text in its entirety I have explored the ways in which this unique print space was well suited to the purposes for which it was used. The magazines' pages

brought together a multiplicity of voices and political opinions, creating a space for debate and discussion. Its periodic publication meant the magazine form could respond to and reflect shifts in the wider cultural and social sphere and through its articles, editorials and readers' pages the magazines contributed to shaping these debates. At the same time its transience and disposability made it an unthreatening space for new writers to publish their first works or, as Chapter Two highlights, to experiment with and explore ways of translating the West Indian oral tradition into a written form. The act of building a West Indian literature was coupled with that of forging a West Indian readership for the local literary tradition. The magazine form, cheap to buy, distributed by post and passed on to friends was able to circulate new writing around the region; through this, and the connections forged between magazines, a reading community for this local literature within and beyond the West Indies was formed. Through its combination of cultural and commercial elements, the magazine as a print form enabled amateur middle-class West Indians, who financed their magazines ventures through advertisements, to directly shape West Indian literary culture. As I explore throughout this thesis, the literary magazines of the West Indies were the result of a do-it-yourself mind-set, which led to West Indian writers and editors initiating and claiming autonomy for a broad movement that helped build a West Indian literary tradition.

Through its focus on the middle-class West Indians producing and reading literary magazines and by tracing the connections between publications, this thesis has highlighted the collectivity at the heart of this literary culture. It was the broad based movement, which drew upon the contributions of editors, writers, readers and advertisers to produce the magazines through which this literary aim was achieved. These print forms, and the literary and debating societies, were popular in these decades as they enabled middle class West Indians to be the agents of personal and social change; these included broadening their education, acquiring social capital, contributing the region's culture, and pursuing respectable leisure activities. My deliberate focus on local magazines and the people associated with them, has foregrounded the agency of West Indians in shaping the Caribbean literary culture of the early twentieth century. Whilst metropolitan sites of publication such as the BBC radio programmes, British publishers of the novels of

the 1950s, or later book series such as Heinemann's Caribbean Writers series, were highly significant for the establishment of Caribbean literature as a field of study and for garnering an international readership, in this thesis I have been keen to balance these with a detailed consideration of the print culture in the West Indies itself.

Bringing together this group of twenty-nine magazines has highlighted that the process of cultural decolonisation was happening in a wide range of print locations in parallel; it was not the preserve of the politicised, purely literary magazines which have been established in critical accounts as the key sites for this literary development, but also in the broader lifestyle and club magazines. In doing so, this research has highlighted how the pursuit of a West Indian tradition happened alongside, but not solely within, the nationalist political movement. This subtle shift and broadening of our understanding of nationalism enables Caribbean literary critics to delve further into these decades and approach material which, whilst politically difficult, is culturally significant. This material has been marginalised in critical accounts as a result of its political associations or close parallels with European literary style or forms. Chapter Four's focus on Esther Chapman and *The West Indian Review* which highlighted the magazine's significance at the time but its critical neglect in the decades following, demonstrated the limitations which may emerge from a narrow understanding of cultural nationalism as solely a facet of anti-colonial movements. This chapter in turn offers a model for cultural recuperation of marginalised texts such as Chapman's. By being attentive to the networks of editors, writers and readers between magazines and islands, this thesis has explored the ways in which this print culture developed as a broad movement among middle-class West Indians. More generally, this project, by uncovering and critically situating a number of previously unknown magazines has broadened the corpus of West Indian literary magazines known about, and highlighted the ways in which the field of periodical studies informs and can continue to contribute to Caribbean literary studies.

As I outlined in the introduction I have chosen to focus on magazines produced and circulated in the West Indies, specifically considering the first generation of

magazines published between 1920s and 1950s. There is, however, scope to extend this research in a number of key ways, all of which could extend our understandings of West Indian literature and periodical studies more broadly. The longer history of West Indian literary magazines could be explored by widening these dates to incorporate the second generation of magazines which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, tracing how these respond to the social and political changes in these decades and how the articulation of a West Indian literary tradition develops as it become critically established. Whilst I chose to focus on magazines circulating in the West Indies, the publications of the West Indian diaspora offer another route for further research. This could include *The Keys* (1933-1939) the magazine of the League of Coloured Peoples which Una Marson worked on in London following her time editing *The Cosmopolitan*, and Claudia Jones' *West Indian Gazette* (1958-1964). There are traces of connections between a handful of the magazines in this study and W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Crisis* (1910-), and between other American, Canadian and Nigerian literary magazines, which also provide scope for future exploration. Literary magazines are a form of publication found all over the world and this study of the West Indian magazines could fruitfully add to a much broader field of periodical studies. In particular, the focus on the role of middle-class West Indians throughout this thesis, and Chapter Three's consideration of the literary and debating society movement, have scope to be extended through a consideration of similar contemporary magazines and clubs across the colonies of the British Empire. Beyond literary studies, the magazines that this study has uncovered offer a wealth of material for further research in other disciplines of Caribbean studies, including history, sociology and politics.

Beyond these avenues for future research, this project also has implications for the archival practices and preservation of the few remaining copies of these important literary magazines. These texts are by their nature ephemeral, and eighty years from their first publications many are showing their age. As Chapter Five has explored through its focus on the advertisements, covers and competitions, the magazines' paratextual elements and material qualities are key to understanding the conditions of publishing, writing and reading in this period. The existing copies of the magazines, many of which are in a poor condition, need preserving but this

process should seek to retain as full a copy of the text as possible. In the course of undertaking this research I saw a number of practices which have damaged the magazines, such as removing covers, or advertisements, binding issues together or, in one instance connecting several issues with a butterfly clip which meant they could not be fully opened. Digital editions such as those produced by the Digital Library of the Caribbean, though limited by their inability to reproduce the texts' material qualities, offer a way of making the whole text of the magazines available much more widely. Online editions, however, should aim to balance this loss of materiality by seeking original copies as the source material and providing additional information (such as measurements) and descriptors of the material qualities which can productively add detail to the digital image. The scattered holdings of these magazines, and the partial nature of the existing corpus is similarly something that could be addressed by a concerted effort on behalf of national or university libraries and archives in the Caribbean. With each generation, additional copies of these magazines in private ownership become less accessible and the links to the West Indians central to their existence pass. Much of the literature of the 1920s-1950s was published in the literary magazines; they are a key part of the cultural and social heritage of the Caribbean, one which I hope will be preserved, studied and celebrated.

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