
Editorial Preface

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As you can expect from any issue of the *Journal of West Indian Literature*, there is significant forethought in organizing the contents in an effort to highlight fascinating intersections across the submissions—sometimes those links are obvious, other times, they lie in wait to surprise. The latter, I think, is applicable to this issue, as the evidently eclectic research interests are in conversation with each other. We start with Victoria V. Chang, whose essay explores the negotiations of identity through gender, culture, and religion in Aliyyah Eniath's *The Yard*, which push back against stereotypical configurations of Islam and look towards redemptive notions of belonging. The importance of cultural influence, not so much for individual subjectivity but for aesthetic practice, propels Gavin Herbertson's attention to Derek Walcott's early writing, particularly his poetry, with a view to redefining the cross-cultural nature of Walcott's inspirations. In the vein of articulating unusual links, Cato Marks explores the tropes of Caribbean Gothic literature, especially zombification, colourism, and predatory politics, in Marlon James's *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. Each article seeks to unseat established or conventional expectations for engaging with these texts, and they share the approach of a close reading of the work to bring out what they see as their lesser-examined relationships. This attention to the lesser-examined elements of a writer's work is what informs Bénédicte Ledent's interview with Caryl Phillips about his radio plays, which looks towards the relationships across genres and themes in his oeuvre. Lisa Outar's conversation with the NGC Bocas Literary Festival founder, Marina Salandy-Brown, takes a similarly reflective look at the arc of the latter's career—from her work at the BBC (where most of Phillips' radio plays were broadcast) and the transformative effect she has had on Caribbean literary community. Both interviews in this *JWIL* issue offer insights on early influences by radio and on the important role radio and other non-scribal formats can play in furthering the life and development of Caribbean literature.¹

This issue is also significant as it brings together tributes to the late Jamaican professor and poet Edward Baugh (10 January 1936–9 December 2023) by several stellar scholars and cultural practitioners who are connected by his kindness, grace, and erudite stewardship as either mentor, supervisor, or inspiration. Professor Baugh had been a part of *JWIL*'s advisory board since our first issue, was a powerful presence in the life of the journal, and was honoured with a special festschrift issue in 2006. The main thread that runs through these offerings by John Robert Lee, Glyne Griffith, Asha Varadharajan, Evelyn O'Callaghan, Pamela Mordecai, and Ronald Cummings is love—it is a touching and delightful gift within these pages.

In the Book Reviews section, two reviews resonate with two of the scholarly articles on the topics of zombies and gendered identity. Lizette Gerber carefully unpacks the intersection of ecology, capitalism, and the Gothic body of the zombie in Kerstin Oloff's *Ecology of the Zombie: World-Culture and the Monstrous*, whereas the intersections appreciated in Linzey Corridon's review of the debut poetry collection *The Mother Island* by Jacinth Howard are those across motherhood, creativity, and the environment. Finally, Funso Aiyejina (whose contributions to the evolution of the Bocas Literary Festival are highlighted by Marina Salandy-Brown in her interview with Lisa Outar in the issue) offers a review of Earl Lovelace's novel *Is Just a Movie* which elegantly traces Lovelace's complex exploration of the negotiation of personal and group identities in a multicultural Caribbean nation. It is now left up to the reader (as it always is) to draw on these and other connections from this issue.

This issue follows in the *JWIL* tradition of highlighting the immense array of Caribbean artistic talent. For our cover art, we thank Jamaican visual artist Sana Rose for sharing with us her arresting collage, *Bloodline Series No. 13*. It is evocative of many of the themes explored in the issue. We also thank Charles and Wayne Chen for sharing with us Charles' aerial image of Titchfield High School in Port Antonio, Jamaica which visually conjures the landscape invoked so lovingly and thoughtfully by Edward Baugh in his poetry and traced with equal love and critical care by Ronald Cummings in our tribute section to Baugh.

Notes

- ¹ For more on the relationship of aurality to Caribbean literature, see *JWIL*'s 2017 special issue "Trans-Media: The Audio-Visual Platforms of Anglophone Caribbean Literature" edited by Glyne Griffith.