CULTURE CONTACT: TRINIDAD "PRE-HISTORY", HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

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The narrative of events in this paper connects Trinidadian "pre-history" to present discourses on multiculturalism. This narrative form is chosen to help conceptualise how social groupings are made textually, how people(s) become essentialised, named, represented and who has/had the power to do this. This descriptive method is chosen to aid understanding of the way historical work contributes to Western colonial stereotypes and erases alternative pictures of the past. The paper considers the question of whether multiculturalism is simply a term that comes into existence in the 1960s and 70s as a form of government policy in white settler nations such as Canada, the USA and Australia, or if indigenous, non-legislative forms of multiculturalism can be established in the pre-historical era of the Caribbean too.

Keywords: Culture, Multiculturalism, Pre-history, Trinidad.

Introduction

"The English word *prehistory* was first introduced in 1851 by Daniel Wilson in the title of his book *The Prehistoric Annals of Scotland.* The French *préhistorique* has been used since the 1830s to refer to the time before the appearance of writing. In the archaeological literature, the precolonial peoples of the New World are routinely labelled as prehistoric, with 'prehistoric' generally referring to the time before written history. However, the dichotomy of prehistory versus history is really a product of Western linear time conception and is therefore not entirely applicable to a study of native societies in the Caribbean. Hastrup correctly argued that the Western views of the past and of time are clearly different from ancient or non-Western societies, but are in no way superior to them" (Reid 2009: 2-3).

The simple and erroneous story of Trinidadian pre-history begins and centres on the tale of two and only two local groups: the Caribs (war-like cannibals) and the Arawaks (noble, peace-loving farmers). This "dichotomized schema of indigenous" cultures in Trinidad (Sand 2002:284) is similar to what other authors have found in much of the literature of indigenous groups from around the world. Vine Deloria, Jr. (1969) recounted a similar story when discussing the mainstream US narrative of Native-American Indians who were either described as noble savages or fierce scalpers; while Christophe Sand (2002) provides an example of the divide between Melanesian and Polynesian societies that has been maintained in much of the literature on the Pacific. The Polynesia/Melanesia dichotomy Sand discusses demonstrates how lighter

skinned Polynesians were often portrayed by early Europeans as noble savages with a higher socio-cultural development while darker-skinned Melanesians were invariably presented as more primitive with strong cannibalistic tendencies. Sand goes on to demonstrate that recent archaeological research in the Pacific refutes these Western colonial stereotypes.

For Peter Hulme writing in the 1980s a binary picture of social relations in the past is not something one should be surprised or naïve about. It is a common trope throughout Western colonialism and its representation of historical actualities to divide populations into groups (Williams 1962) and most specifically two groups – good and bad. That such binary logic appears in local narratives is evidence of Western cultural imperialism familiar to, and of, post-colonial studies[i] (Chatterjee 1993). The binary tells of a cultural logic beset by "fear of difference," and race, racism and the production of inequality; a narrative where those who are benevolent, easy to control and deemed to be potential allies are seen as noble savages, while those less passive and who understood the initial encounter with Europeans in indigenous cultural terms, resisting, and challenging this new worldview, cast as cannibalistic and violent; textually othered, but also enslaved and murdered too. Such "othering," in addition to a simplification of difference puts colonial ideologies of race and ethnic hierarchy deep into the historical record. Such ideologies shape how the past is imagined, remaking potential forms of transculturation, ethnogenesis, multiculturalism, and the various strategies individuals used to cope with complex intercultural social situations, into tales of homogeneity, order and hierarchy (Moore 1994).

This paper does a similar job of refutation to Sand (2002) and Reid (2009), and aims to draw attention to recent archaeological fieldwork of the Caribbean and Trinidad that recasts local pre-history[ii]. In particular, the paper considers the question of whether multiculturalism is simply a term that comes into existence in the 1960s and 70s as a form of government policy in white settler nations such as Canada, the USA and Australia, or if by taking a culture-historical approach (Reid 2009:12) forms of multiculturalism such as transculturation and ethnogenesis can be established in the pre-historical era too. A culture-historical approach entails reimagining the history of different human groups based on "detailed local sequences of artefacts and information about their geographic distribution" (Reid 2009:12) alongside certain paleo-demographic information such as patterns of migration and ethnogenesis. In excavating the pre-history of Trinidad in this way this paper highlights that the cultural stereotypes imposed by white Europeans and incorporated into local culture and school curriculums is not supported by the archaeological record and suggests that forms of transculturation and multiculturalism are a more correct way of imagining the pre-historic past of Trinidad.

Key terms:

> **Ethnogenesis:** Traditionally, studies in human biodiversity define populations in the context of typological racial models. Such racial models are imprecise generalizations and social constructs that fail to capture important local patterns of human biodiversity (Jackson 2008). An ethnogenetic perspective dissolves assumptions about racial groups. They can no-longer be "bounded biological entities that move about or stay put while maintaining their constitution over time. Biologically, there has been a constant flow of people and genes over such variously constructed ethno-linguistic boundaries" (Hornburg

2005). The anthropologist William Sturtevant coined the term ethnogenesis in 1971 to describe the continual process of change that cultural identities undergo as a result of interaction with ethnic others in situations of both social conflict and social cooperation. In a similar mode to non-legislative multiculturalism, ethnogenesis is a constant process of reinvention where the identity of a particular cultural group is negotiated and re-negotiated in response to interaction and relationship with cultural others (Sperry 2007:9).

Transculturation: Transculturation was an improvement on the anthropological stalwart of the time, "acculturation," and its one sided connotation of cultural change (Newson 1976:4). Transculturation, implied far more give and take, it is a concept of process, implying that when different bodies of knowledge, ways of life and experience meet, over time they built, whether consciously or not new forms of culture and ethno-genetic relations. The point to acknowledge here is that transculturation is a process of mixture with the onus placed on a varied dialogical process (Bakhtin 1984): "to express the highly varied phenomena that…come about…as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture…real history is the history of its intermeshed transculturations" (Ortiz 2003:98). For Ortiz then, transculturation was not about acquiring another culture, adapting and assimilating certain ways, but rather it was about mixture and everything changing, perhaps very slowly, under such interaction.

Multiculturalism: In the contemporary political sense Multiculturalism can refer to the legislative protection and equal rights of various cultural groups. These rights and protections ensure the State's commitment to equality in national situations of multiple human differences and was a popular policy idea that moved from Canada in the early 1970s to Australia, Western Europe and elsewhere. Multiculturalism in this sense creates new forms of belonging to citizenship and country while protecting persons' cultural origins and diasporas (Modood 2007:49). The basic premise of multicultural legislation and/or policy in white settler nations such as Canada, Australia and the USA is that all cultures and their members are entitled to equal rights and protections. It is important to note that as legislation multiculturalism is best understood as accommodation of different groups rather than the integration of different groups – and as such this definition is problematic for many people and in many places (Modood 2007:50). Not least, in a world where not all cultures and persons accept the idea that all peoples and cultures deserve equal respect legislative multiculturalism is a better idea in principle than practice (Okin 1999:4). It often creates more problems than it solves.

In light of the dysfunction of multicultural legislation another definition of multiculturalism – a non-legislative one – has emerged and is useful for this paper (Charles 2001). In this other sense of the term the idea "less culturalism, more multi" is useful. In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, many researchers and much ethnographic data have demonstrated a successful, non-legislative form of multiculturalism in existence already (Stoddard & Cornwell 2001:32, Taylor 1993, Khan 1993). While the state does not legislate a multicultural law as White Settler nations did, the idea of multiculturalism in Trinidad and Tobago is enshrined in its national anthem of "every creed and race will find an equal place" and on the national coat of arms – "Together We

Aspire, Together We Achieve". While such symbols do not erase the inter-cultural tensions that exist in Trinidad and Tobago it is possible to describe a local form of multiculturalism outside of legislation where different cultural groups are treated with mutual respect by the State. In fact, as Premdas (1999) has pointed out ethnic conflict in Trinidad while apparent from time to time has never dissolved or erupted into ethnic violence. Rather, different cultural groups discuss, disagree and negotiate with each other to produce new forms of cultural identity and ethnicity. As Charles Tidwell points out "the most significant implication of Trinidad multiculturalism is the fact that it works" (2001). The negotiation demonstrates how multiculturalism in practice might best work – not as an accommodation of difference but as the creation of new entities. The ethnic label "dougla" – formerly a derogatory word for a person of East Indian and Afro-Creole descent – is a good example of this. The word is now used by people to self-identify and for many its negative connotations have been erased. It is this form of positive cultural interaction, multiculturalism and difference-making that this paper suggests has been erased by traditional historical descriptions of the Caribbean's past.

Erasure

The common narrative of pre-history discussed by many people in much of Trinidad ends with erasure of the native population (Forte 2004). This is a simple story where all Amerindian influence has been assimilated or eroded from local consciousness by the peoples and cultures of first colonialism and then capitalism. Such story-telling grew from and was inscribed in various texts written from the 1600s into the late 20th century that were accepted as the authority on the matter of Amerindian survivals in the Eastern Caribbean. As anthropologist Maximilian Forte notes, such colonial narratives conditioned the ability of many scholars and locals "to even perceive Amerindian survival and adaptation" (Forte 2004:2). Instead, colonial and archaeological texts reduced "cultural change to cultural loss and miscegenation to extinction" (Forte 2004:2).

Thankfully, there are numerous examples of Amerindian culture and people alive and well in Trinidad today that we can submit as evidence contra the erroneous writing out of Amerindian presence. There is the annual Santa Rosa Festival – a month-long series of events orchestrated by the local Carib Community that celebrates its 208th anniversary in 2012. There is the existence of numerous Amerindian words and place names in everyday parlance, not to mention cultural practices like hammocks, animal masquerades, crops, and medicinal knowledge attributed to localised Amerindian forms. There is the archaeology centre at the University of West Indies that is engaged in Amerindian research and reports its discoveries of important archaeological finds in the media. Lastly, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago established an Amerindian Project Committee in 2006 to report on matters relating to Amerindian Culture in Trinidad, and October the 14th each year is earmarked as Amerindian Day.

Viewing the erasure of local Amerindian populations as a practice influenced by institutionalised colonial and post-colonial history implicates earlier anthropologists, historians and archaeologists in the textual reproduction of problematic representations of the past, and present, is useful for understanding the modern historiography of Trinidad. It also raises the question that if entire populations have been erased in text what else may have been mis-represented? In this

light it is worth bearing in mind the observation made by Chaterjee (1993) in reference to Indian history[iii]: If history is an imagined community whose imagination is it? And who gains from one particular version of events over another?

To address this question of what forms of social interaction have been erased from the historical record and who benefits, the narrative of pre-colonial Trinidad presented next demonstrates a greater degree of cultural diversity and interaction in pre-history than is typically imagined. This interpretation of events in the historical and archaeological record lends itself as evidence of socio-cultural mixture and multiculturalism that can be used to refute more traditional accounts of fixed social groupings in the pre-historical record and the extension of such thinking into colonial history (Wright 1998). This alternative narrative also helps the reader to understand that on European arrival Trinidad was more complicated and culturally mixed than many think. As archaeologist Samuel Wilson argues:

> [I]n situations in which people with different ancestries and cultures live in close proximity and interact intensely, an individual or group gains little advantage by the strategy of clinging to old and conservative ways. Instead, invention and innovation is a better strategy for finding new solutions to problems and for attracting followers and allies. In looking at the modern situation, the cultural impact of the Caribbean on the world is far out of proportion to its size. With fewer than 40 million people (in 2003; Rand McNally World Atlas 2004), the entire population of the 30 or so Caribbean countries is less than that of Poland, Tanzania, or Colombia. But the region has disproportionate influence in terms of world music, art, literature, sports, and global cultural trends. I believe the explanation is that in multicultural situations there is more opportunity and indeed a great advantage to combining genres, styles, and ideas in new ways. This seems to have been the case in the prehistoric Caribbean just as it is in the region today (Wilson 2007:6).

This historical observation is important because it helps to frame and re-imagine the social history of multicultural Trinidad today as one that emerges from a legacy of cultural solidarity, differential acculturation (Crowley 1957) and transculturation (Ortiz 1993) between individuals and "social units[iv]", rather than one that is strictly the result of the social relations of a plantation colony with a subservient coloured population run by white management, which in any case is not accurate either.

Geostrategic Features

For Amerindian migrants who have come to be labelled in cultural waves such as the "Archaic, Saladoid, Barrancoid, Arauquinoid and Mayoid peoples" (Boomert 2000) Trinidad's geostrategic characteristics made it "an important 'gateway *community*" [italics mine]. For millennia Trinidad featured in the movement and migration, much of it circulatory, of various people from the South American mainland throughout the Caribbean archipelago and beyond (Curet 2005:27, Wilson 2007:1, Rouse 1986). Two specific features of the island's location contribute to this fact. The first is Trinidad's proximity to the South American continent to which it was once joined – today the island's north-western tip is only seven miles away and its southern-western tip only thirteen miles away – meaning it is and was visible from the South American mainland. The second

feature is a dense web of sea channels and rivers making southern Trinidad a part of the South American coastal zone and Orinoco delta (Boomert 2000:3).

These water passages and also the Northern Range of mountains (an outlier of the Andes mountains of Venezuela) acted as temporary barriers to population movement. Such features lend weight to the idea that a variety of distinct South and Central American social units that settled in the island were kept apart for long periods with little interaction and developed separately. At the same time, Trinidad's proximity to the mainland and other islands meant it formed part of an extensive Amerindian interaction sphere (Boomert 2000:1). It is possible to imagine in this early period that there was a diffusion of culture on the island while the mountains also ensured differential development between Amerindian units settling there. As Curet notes:

> The result was a rich mosaic of cultures and intercultural interactions between and among island groups, with the cultural fabric constantly renewed by new arrivals (or the departure of earlier settlers in back-migrations) and by ongoing changes among older, more settled groups (2005).

Ortoiroids[v] (5000 – 200 B. C. E.)

The oldest archaeological remains found in Trinidad – a bifacial chipped, stemmed spearhead – can be placed in the period postdating the Paleo-Indian big game hunters of the El Jobo complex (Late Pleistocene to Early Holocene times – around 12,000 years ago) and are indication that lithic hunter-foragers occupied Trinidad (Boomert 2000:49) when evidence suggests the island was likely connected to the mainland and a peninsula of South America not an island of the West Indies (Boomert 2000:40-41)[vi]. In anecdotal support of such a claim, the oral traditions of the Warao Indians of the Orinoco Delta who inhabited the Delta since at least the Early Holocene period still describe a time when – "the Serpent's mouth was dry land and a land bridge existed between Trinidad and the continent" (Boomert 2000:44).

Pre-ceramic hunters, fishers and food collectors from the South American mainland probably settled Trinidad by around 7000 to 6000 years ago (Boomert 2000, Reid 2007, 2009, Curet 2005, Wilson 2007:1). Banwari Trace in southern Trinidad was until recently the oldest archaeological site in the West Indies and scientists determined its early inhabitants were actively engaged in "hunting, gathering, and shell (mollusc) collecting" (Reid 2009:7). Recent archaeological research has revealed that St John, also in south-western Trinidad is as old as Banwari Trace. In fact, shell samples from St John produced radiocarbon dates of approximately 5000 B. C. E. "Banwari Man," is the oldest human remains found in the southern Caribbean and is the most substantive evidence of settlement in southern Trinidad[vii]. Discovered in 1969 (Harris 1978) the remains carbon-date to about 3,400 B. C. E. and under the imperfect classification system long established and used by Rouse for the entire Caribbean[viii] (Rouse 1992:31-3, 61) the site falls within a series called Ortoiroid.

The language, premises and epistemology of and inspired by Irving Rouse, a highly influential force in Caribbean archaeology, is impressive in its conclusions but lacks the theoretical nuance of the multiple dimensions of early migration that might speak to a situation of multiple groups

mixing socio-culturally as has been found to be the case with the La Hueca cultural group in Puerto Rico (Chanlatte Baik 1990, Curet 2005, Reid 2009, Wilson 2007). Thankfully, over the last few decades younger generations of Caribbean archaeologists such as William Keegan, Peter Sigel and Samuel Wilson have advanced alternative positions that emphasize a plurality of cultures and in the case of La Hueca have shown that at least two different cultural groups introduced the Ceramic age to Puerto Rico.

We can suggest that the majority of the earliest immigrant people of the Ortoiroid series likely came from similar environmental settings to Trinidad around the mouth of the Orinoco and what is today called Guyana (Boomert 2000). Rouse work went further geographically and using a range of linguistic, biological, cultural and archaeological evidence suggested the ancestry of Archaic settlers in the Caribbean can be traced to both Amazonian and Central American origins. With the former being the Ortoiroid that migrated to Trinidad and then northward and the Casimiroid being the latter, who probably migrated from west to east, possibly from Belize in the direction of Cuba (Reid 2009:14).

Defined as a singular culture by mid twentieth century archaeologists the Ortoiroid is said to have been a lithic culture defined by an absence of pottery and the presence of artefacts made of ground stone, shell and bones. Its various "social units" may have used wood, basketry, feathers, and other perishable materials. To colour objects and their skin people perhaps made rare decorative beads and ornaments by grinding and carving stone or shell and used red mineral pigment (red ochre). On arrival to Trinidad these people were semi-nomadic and pre-agricultural, their economy varying over time, shifting from gathering and hunting (Keegan 1994, Guarch-Delmonte 2007) to high dependency on marine-oriented subsistence, eating fish, shellfish, game, and wild plant foods (Harris 1973, 1978) to agriculture (Reid 2009:16).

These first settlers utilised bone projectile points as arrow tips and fish spears (Cruxent and Rouse 1969, Harris 1973:119), and animal teeth as fishhooks (Reid 2009, Boomert 2000). Given the proximity of many of their settlements to water and their ability to collect raw materials and foods from a vast variety of marine environments, archaeologists surmise that early in Trinidad's history the canoe was in regular use (Wilson 2007) and contact with the mainland was not a difficult feat[ix]. Such a picture permits us to imagine on multiple levels – individual, cultural, group – regular socio-cultural contact between the "social units" of the mainland and the island during this early period of habitation. Such contact might be read as leaning toward interaction and ethno-genetic; disrupting the singular culture ideas of mid-twentieth century archaeologists. The following description by Boomert can be interpreted as evidence of such a multicultural situation:

> The littoral subsistence orientation of the Bawari Trace people is consistent with the premise that the Early Archaic Mesoindians of Trinidad were skilled canoe-builders and competent navigators. Watercraft obviously formed an integral part of Banwarian society, as it did among most Archaic communities of the South American coastal zone and islands. This is illustrated by, for instance, petrographic analysis of the stone tools and unworked rock fragments found at Banwari Trace and St John middens, which shows that the Banwarian ground stone implements are manufactured of both Trinidadian and overseas rock material (Boomert 2000:67)

Radiocarbon chronology suggests the sea reached its present level 3000 years B. C. E. (Wilson 2007:56, Boomert 2000:57). It is possible by then that Trinidad had settlement, group differentiation, rudimentary trade relations and perhaps some type of "symbiotic" relationship from the interaction of hunter-gatherer and agriculturalist groups (Turnbull 1962). The period of settlement spanning from 4000 B. C. E. until 1000 B. C. E. are known as the Middle and Late Pre-Ceramic period or Late Archaic (Boomert 2000:75, Harris N.d.). It is noted for the presence of foreign stone implements indicating non-local groups spent time in the area (Harris N.d.) and for settlements in areas of sandy soil, where it is probable cashew trees, tobacco and other staple foods were grown indicating rudimentary social organisation. Sites found in east Trinidad for this period show residency patterns of long-lived settlement that lasted several generations.

Most interestingly the Archaic period has been defined by the absence of pottery. Recent studies, however, challenge this assumption by demonstrating evidence of pottery at least a thousand years before the arrival of another wave of what Rouse's classificatory system defined as singular culture – the Saladoids. As Reid goes on to demonstrate multiple Saladoid groups is a more accurate picture than any singular culture (Reid 2009:16).

 "Cultures do not migrate"

Generally, archaeologists of the Caribbean have dealt with issues of migration, cultural contact and social change in superficial ways, without engaging the complexity of the socio-cultural processes involved. Treated as "monochromatic" events (the "wave theory of migration"[x]) rather than adaptation and non-uniform development, Euro-American theories of culture contact and migration speak of culture, language and populations migrating together when it is highly likely autonomous societies, kin groups and even individual households interacted with other groups independently from the rest of the community. As paleo-demographers Anthony (1990:908) and Curet (2005:33) point out "'cultures' do not migrate. It is often only a very narrowly defined, goal-oriented subgroup that migrates" and "the decision to migrate is made at a level lower than culture, such as the individual, household, community or descent-group level."

In terms of migration as process and social phenomenon then, the archaeological evidence of both non-local groups, alongside long-lived residences and various temporary population movements, such as fishing or hunting trips, seasonal rounds and ritual peregrination can be read as indicative of socio-cultural dynamics that included transculturation, cultural diffusion, acculturation, alliances, ethno-genetic relations and multiculturalism (Curet 2005:33, Reid 2009:17). While much of the evidence of the Archaic period in Trinidad is circumstantial, it nonetheless, alongside the observation that population movements are complex phenomena, permits the belief that early in the island's human history different cultural groups and individuals regularly came into contact and mixed not in a one off short burst between eras, but often and over a prolonged period of time complicating Rouse's neat historical classifications and representations.

The Ceramic Age

From around 500 B. C. E. – 300 B. C. E. Rouse posits the Saladoid people arrived and settled in the island alongside Archaic culture (Rouse and Alegaria 1990; 63, Boomert 2000; 104, Reid 2009). The Saladoid may have been previous inhabitants of the flood plain of the Central Amazon before migrating to Venezuela (Newson 1976:15). This "wave" brought a distinct pottery sub series Rouse called the Cedrosan Saladoid. He named it after two sites, Saladero, on the Lower Orinoco where characteristic painted ware was found by itself, and Cedros in Trinidad where painted ware alongside zone-incised-cross hatched designs was found. This dual discovery in Trinidad of distinctive pottery styles can be interpreted as further evidence of transculturation, or at the least, interaction between different groups on the island (Reid 2009:17).

The Saladoid – traditionally understood as a singular group rather than the more recent groups Reid suggest (2004, 2009) – were manioc horticulturalists, who brought agricultural techniques and cultivation (Newson 1976:37), and probably existed alongside late Pre-Ceramic communities for at least 500 years. Rouse believed they displaced the late Pre-Ceramic groups gradually, by acculturation to Saladoid culture and their horticultural patterns of subsistence (Boomert 2003:152, Rouse 1986). The previous communities and households were absorbed and gradually replaced with new biological and linguistic contributions (Rouse 1986:103). Recasting this interaction in more culturally plural terms this initial situation could be described as a period of cohabitation and adaptation between various households and groups acting autonomously and independently to create mixed populations that over time mixed with other mixed populations in the creation of differently sized communities, villages[xi] and egalitarian social organisation as indicated from burial sites which do not indicate difference in status amongst those interred (Reid 2009:21). Concurrently, the diverse habitation pattern of the Saladoid as indicated by the many settlement locations found on the island[xii] suggests the Saladoids were not monolithic but rather multiple local groups (Reid 2009:21), with a certain level of autonomy and we might assume a level of ethnic differentiation depending on, among many other things, availability of land and other resources (Wiley 1976).

The wide variety of artistic shapes, ceramics and pottery styles, frequently decorated with white and red painting or with sculpted clay forms introduced by the Saladoid is further evidence of multiple local groups. These hard, well-fired and relatively thin pieces of pottery display highly symbolic design motifs, further implicating connection to a stretch of South American coastline running from southern Suriname to the eastern border of Venezuela, also known as the Orinoco Valley region, as potential continental antecedents (Boomert 2000:127-145, Boomert 2003:153, Rouse 1986:10-11). Over the next 500 years however, this connection to the mainland appears to diminish and "geographically distinct cultural sub traditions crystallis[e] in Trinidad and the east Venezuelan costal zone, the Guianas and the Lesser Antilles, respectively" (Boomert 2003:162).

Rouse and Division

In terms of archaeological approach and method, from around 2000 years ago to European contact approximately 500 years ago distinct cultural periods and population groups found locally in Trinidad have been separated and subdivided on the basis of different ceramic styles and other cultural signs (abstract ideas that can be physically identified in the archaeological

record in a structure called "modes") in a method conceived by Rouse (1986). Based on material culture not present in the islands before the Saladoid migration these ceramics styles are the main marker of Caribbean migrational periods. While these series, sub series and styles are a necessity for pre-historians to mark meaningful periods of change and innovation they are not ideal for consideration of how cultural identity was defined and negotiated in day-to-day interaction. For example, Rouse believed each spatiotemporal combination ought to contain a different people and culture (1986:7). Furthermore, in relation to the interaction between the Saladoid and the Archaic groups Rouse's use of ceramics tells us very little about transculturation, ethno-genetic relations, differential acculturation and multiculturalism.

In order to produce a bounded entity then, Rouse's divisionary model essentialised culture and implied homogeneity over a large area. This simplification erased the more likely scenario – based on Trinidad's location as an important hub in a large and established interaction sphere that has seen many different groups come and go long before the island's contact with the West – of ethno-genetic relations and cultural intermixture i.e. adaptation, non-conflictual interaction and cultural change (Guarch-Delmonte 2007:100). As Moore illustrates in his work on Native American groups of Montana, cultural groups change through their interaction and relationships with other groups through time. "Survival and persistence depended upon their ability to accommodate and incorporate the social, economic and political changes they experienced through interaction with cultural others" (Perry 2007:10). This definition is not unlike the non-legislative definition of multiculturalism in the present and recent past discussed by many authors (Regis 1999, Eriksen 1990, St Bernard 1999, McCree 1999, Charles 2001, Walcott 1998, Khan 1993).

Rouse's idea is problematic because it implies only one culture can be present in one region at one time. In ignoring population dynamics such as size, fertility, mortality, political strategies, the variability of resources, availability of labour and ancient political economies that would have occurred in communities across the island and produced variations in socio-cultural and political outcomes the hegemonic narrative of Trinidad's pre-history erases a situation where groups may not be eradicated or acculturated but instead settle and develop alongside and in combination with each other in multicultural ways.

Another problem recognised with Rouse's position stems from making each era appear as though it develops out of the previous one (Allaire 2003). As many note (Boomert 2003:145, Curet 2005) it is far more likely various periods have ancestries separate from the former traditions. These distinct ancestries trace throughout the central Colombian Andes and the Amazon basin including as far west as modern-day Peru and as far south as lower modern-day Brazil. The organisational contingency of Rouse's position also erases the identification of Trinidad throughout its pre-history, and particularly its late pre-history, as a site and corridor for various individuals, ethnicities, ideas, goods and cultural institutions that frequently adapted to one another (Pantel 2007). In sum, Rouse's tradition blocks the more likely situation that the Saladoids were not simply a monolithic bloc from South America but a multicultural society that developed on islands, and across the Caribbean, from 500 B. C. E. to 600 C. E. (Reid 2009:27). Boomert considers the tail end of this period as a scenario called the Saladoid/Barrancoid interaction sphere (2000:217).

Neoindian Period (ca. 1 C. E. – 1500 C. E.)

After 250 C. E. archaeologists of the Caribbean believe the Barrancoid people (Osgood and Howard 1943, Reid 2009; 29) of the Lower Orinoco, who perhaps centuries earlier encroached on the Saladoid[xiii] (Newson 1976:15), migrated down river toward the sea and crossed the body of water today called the 'Serpent's Mouth,' then settled in southern Trinidad (Boomert 2000:100-123, 217-221). Their appearance and further encroachment on the already developing Saladoid group settlements appears to begin at Erin Bay on the south coast where Barrancoid pottery has been found in Saladoid settlements. The constant evidence of encroachment, suggests from a paleo-demographic perspective that there was constant interaction between the Saladoid and the Barrancoid populations at least in a form of trade and differential acculturation (Reid 2009:30) and perhaps that elements of the Barrancoid population went to live in Saladoid villages. Boomert also suggest this in arguing pottery remains for the period of 250 C. E. – 750 C. E. show, "trade, intermarriage and other forms of dense interaction between both islands [Trinidad and Tobago] as well as the Lower Orinoco Valley" (1996:24). This viewpoint imagines sustained sociable interaction through the centuries possibly as a result of common ethnic or linguistic origin (Allaire 1997, Boomert 2003:162, Boomert 2000:253-267) and certainly indicates intense cultural contact.

Along the Orinoco between 400 C. E. and 800 C. E. Barrancoid communities faded or merged (Hornberg 2005, Reid 2009:32) and evidence points to expansion by a new group characterised as Arauquinoid. Elements of this population specifically 'the Macapaima,' whose pottery is known as Guayabitoid (Saunders 2005), and 'Nepoyo,' whose pottery is known as Mayoid, moved along the Orinoco river to the coast before crossing to settle first in Icacos and Guayaguayare, sites on the southwest and southeast of the island respectively (Allaire 2003) before dispersal both across and off the island. Over the next few centuries Arauquinoid settlement intensified and distinctly local exchanges and communication lines between the mainland and other islands established, developing the complexity and interconnection of Amerindian society in the region (Kipfer 2000, Delpuech and Hofman 2004).

At this time it is known much regional trading[xiv] is taking place on the South American mainland between many groups (Boomert 2000:491) while at the same time precise stylistic similarities with the mainland as might be evidenced in stone specimens, pottery and designs disappear (Alliare 2003). This period in Trinidad's past is referred to as one of 'insularity and regionalisation'. Between 600 C. E. and 1200 C. E. the exchange and communication networks allow the consolidation of independent local village polities across the Lesser Antilles, including Trinidad, and populations grow. Further evidence of population growth in Trinidad can be noted by a multiplication of sites, compared to previous eras. These are:

> Identified by the presence of middens, the variation in the depth and extent of the deposit indicating the temporary or permanent nature of the settlement…the archaeological evidence seems to suggest that sites in Trinidad were occupied continuously for long periods, although the sites of individual houses within the settlement may have been moved (Newson 1976:33)

This growth in population implies stability, non-conflictual cohabitation and adaptation between local groups.

Boomert notes this period sees the emergence of Taino cacicazgos, or chiefdoms, of the Greater Antilles and on the mainland (2000:219). A similar hierarchal system may or may not have emerged amongst Amerindians in Trinidad as discussions vary. Alliare states this is because the prehistory of the island occurs *in situ*, "first in relative isolation following the initial period of colonialisation which led to its…justification as a centre. Evidence then suggests that the Lesser Antilles, as their geographic positions exposed them, became peripheral to developing centres of more advanced cultures and societies in the Greater Antilles and coastal Venezuela" (2003).

This evidence can be interpreted as various forms of localised culture indigenous to Trinidad existed apart from groups on other islands. In this late period of Trinidad's pre-history, these native Amerindian groups related to one of three linguistic families Arawakan, Cariban and Waraoan, and form part of large regional island-to-island and island-to-mainland trading networks. We know for example that the Warao of Venezuela were frequent visitors (Highfield 1997). There is also physical evidence of cultural interaction between not only various groups in Trinidad and the mainland, but also across islands with intensified cultural ties between those in Trinidad and the Amerindians of Grenada, St. Vincent and Tobago (Boomert 2000:24).

Around 1300 C. E. a new group appears to have settled in Trinidad, and has been described as a population demonstrating the ability to absorb cultural influences from various directions (Alliare 2003:222). This reading can be interpreted in two ways; as already existent tribes involved in transculturation and adaptation, or the arrival and existence of a variety of groups with distinct cultural traits; both interpretations indicate cultural mixture. While this "new" group's pottery is related to the pottery of the Lokono (Arawakan speakers) and the Kalinago (Carib speakers) Europeans called this late group the Island Caribs. It is more accurate to describe 'Island Caribs' as the umbrella term used by Columbus for all the many different tribes he encounters. Columbus probably met a far more multicultural society than history would have us imagine.

To summarise the situation post 1000 C. E. : in the period immediately prior to contact with the Europeans, archaeological evidence, paleo-demographic theory and anthropological imagination posits there were three overlapping and related cultural and linguistic groups present in Trinidad showing increasingly structured social organization, with signs of more elaborate religious rituals and of elite class formation (Harris 1973, 1978):

> 1) those with a painted pottery tradition with origins in the central Orinoco region [Arauquinoid]; 2) those with pottery showing fine-line incised decorations, possibly originating from the Colombian coast or the Central Amazon [Saladoid]; and, 3) those using broad-lined incised and modelled pottery originating from the neck of the Orinoco delta, 'a strong centre with wide influence' according to Harris [Lokono, Kalinago and others] (Forte 2005)

This rigid picture can be also described with added emphasis on cultural combination:

> At the time of discovery both Trinidad and the Lower Orinoco Valley formed multi-lingual and multi-ethnic conglomerates of indigenous societies of varying

complexity, i.e. ranging from bands of hunters/fishers/collectors to typically tribally organised horticultural 'local groups,' often 'big-man collectivities, and, perhaps, nascent chiefdoms. Ethnic and linguistic fragmentation seems to be characteristic of the South Caribbean in early historic times…Clearly the socio-political, ethnic and linguistic fragmentation suggested by ethnohistorical sources, is not reflected in a similar cultural segmentation, at least not as concerns ceramics (Boomert 2000:493).

Summary

This paper has rethought the dominant archaeological narratives of ethnic separation, monochromatic migration and lack of cultural mixture in Caribbean pre-history. In many ways just as the Trinidad and Tobago state can be implicated in the erasure of Amerindian heritage in the present through a lack of census category for persons of Amerindian descent, the work of well-intentioned archaeologists of the 20th century can be classed as neo-colonial in the sense of producing clear racial and ethnic divisions where a situation of prolonged and constant differential acculturation and interaction was more likely. To paraphrase Susan Stryker in a discussion of social power, archaeologists have the social power to determine what is considered primitive and advanced, normal or savage or noble – "and thus to transform potentially neutral forms of human difference into unjust and oppressive social hierarchies" (2008:36). As such, it is important to rethink the established narrative; question what such thinking might be indicative of; and consider what is its legacy in terms of accounts produced by scholars on later periods? Is ethnic and racial division the only way to imagine and reconstruct the past? Is it a mode of thought best suited to the imaginations of Euro-American thinking and colonialism as seen through the eyes of the coloniser?

In the "colonial encounter" (Hulme 1986) mechanisms of difference-making, regardless of the presence of ethnic self-ascription are, as Forte has called it, the "original act of engineering[xv]" (2005:46). As Hulme notes of the power inherent in the colonial encounter: "colonial discourse may misrecognise, but it also has the power to call its categories into being" (1986:213). One group's definition runs *through time* while social variability is often *lost to time* as the colonial view of group boundaries and dynamics manufactured from the past becomes accepted locally.

This reproduction of colonial worldviews, replicates the power dynamics of colonialism maintaining them as forms of symbolic violence and neo-colonialism well into the modern era (Thomas and Clarke 2006). It is an intrinsic part and conduit of the discursive process that relates colonialism to capitalism – sustaining the relationship of domination and subordination. This myth or 'positivistic perspective' (Curet 2005:28) contaminates investigations of the continuity of transculturation, cultural mixture and the processual nature of migration, colonisation and cultural change, not just in pre-ceramic time but in modern ones too. It can also be viewed as a form of ideological racial-boundary policing that protects the integrity of a fabricated 'whiteness' and its essentialised 'superiority' (Robinson 1983) over discussion of cultural mixture, interaction and change. Recent attempts at re-engineering indigeniety into the island's history according to Forte (2005:215) do little to instil faith in historical accuracy. Forte notes a meeting of neoliberal dynamics and local politics (state patronage and capital accumulation for coherent cultural groups). Things should not be so neat. In and of itself such simplicity is an alarm bell for anyone seeking to better understand a modern multicultural society.

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[i] As Sharpe notes, we should recognise that post-colonial studies itself is a part of the colonial encounter and that Fanon and other anti-colonial writers, such as C L R James and Aime Cesaire, "were geographically and historically removed from the institutional development of postcolonial studies. Unlike the literature of decolonisation, which was bound up with Third World national liberation movements of the sixties and seventies, postcolonial studies is primarily a First World academic discourse of the eighties and nineties' (Sharpe 2000:114)

[ii] "Analysis of mitochrondial aDNA has been carried out and is ongoing on precolonial populations from several islands…This research is aimed at determining place of origin, affiliation, and migratory routes of people and more generally to identify the ancestors of…indigenous Caribbean peoples, as well as their routes of migrations and settlement" (Hoogland, and van Gijn 2008:14). See also Torres, doura, Keita and Kittles (2012) – 'Y Chromosome Lineages in Men of West African Descent'.

[iii] "I understand that Chatterjee's purpose of asking "Whose imagined community?" was to disrupt the interpretations of normalised processes of nationalism in the modern world. What was at stake of course, was assessing whose imagination was being considered in the making of the nation" – Chaturvedi (2007:3)

[iv] Following Curet (2005) and Anthony (1990) a 'social unit' covers a majority of instances including the individual, household, community, descent-group and culture

[v] In the Lesser Antilles the Archaic-age people (those who only used stone, shell, bone and wood tools) are called the Ortoiroids

[vi] Today archaeologists rely less on tools left by big game hunters as substantive evidence for dating so this initial period is anecdotal.

[vii] "Recent preliminary investigations of the Banwari remains indicated that the famous Banwari man could in fact be a woman" (Reid 2009:9) of between twenty five to thirty years old.

[viii] Even as we assert Rouse's broad classificatory approach we need to be mindful that within this broad stroke several local groups emerged

[ix] Evidence of continued and improved used of the canoe can be found in what are called Columbus' notes themselves, when he writes on his first glimpse of the island of Trinidad, sighting a large canoe with twenty-four 'Indios' in it (Columbus diary cited in Williams 1962:4). While Martyr in another translation of Columbus' diary says "On the morrow a canoe was seen in the distance carrying eighty men"

[x] "Migration of relatively large populations as a unitary, one-way event with a termination and an endpoint, to be followed some time later by another unitary, one-way event, in each case involving the resumption of the migration" (Curet 2005:6).

[xi] "Trinidad and Tobago, one of the first migratory stops for many Saladoid communities en route to the rest of the Caribbean, has approximately forty Saladoid sites, many of which are middens [see map pg 28 Reid]. Located in north Trinidad, the 2-ha (5-a) site of Marianne Estate in Blanchisseuse is generally considered as one of the largest

Saladoid sites on the island. The site has also been subjected to sporadic archaeological research from 1959 to 2008...Shovel test pits in 1999 suggested the presence of a village community centred around a central plaza at Blanchisseuse, which is typical of Saladoid village layouts throughout the Caribbean" (Reid 2009:27)

[xii] Thirty-seven Saladoid sites have been identified in Trinidad, and are located all over the island.

[xiii] The Saladoid and Barrancoid are social groupings derived from the pottery styles associated with the sites of Saladero and Barrancas. The labels essentialise and homogenise what were perhaps many different small groups into larger classification, which serves to cover epochs.

[xiv] "Ethnographic examples indicate that trade and exchange are often combined with the communication of news, and, more importantly, the passing of songs and rituals as well as the transfer of myths, tales, dances, shamanic incantations and secret spells" (Boomert: 2000:492).

[xv] While such a theory has its critics (Hassen 2000, Deleuze & Guattari 1983, Foucault 1978) it is a heuristic able to conceptualise transcendent violence and suggest violence's constitutive role in the foundation of society. Violence it can then be said is embodied in language, subsequently institutionalised in laws (Anderson 1991) and political institutions (Habermas 1983:180), and ultimately manifest in armies, deep lying structures of power (Bourgois 2001), everyday practices (Bourdieu 1977) and the knowledge system and spectacle that governs and allows society to function. As Kleinman (2001:238) makes clear "hierarchy and inequality, which are so fundamental to social structures, normalise violence."