

CHAPTER 13

An Empire of One's Own
*Individualism and Domestic Built Form
in Twenty-First-Century Jamaica*

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The twenty-first century seems strangely attached to the past. [...] A long-standing legacy of violence, compounded by new disasters, has engendered a set of rites – both individual and collective – that have taken many forms: the reconstruction of past histories, the retrieval of lost communities, [...] and a quest for origins. (Hirsch and Miller 2011: xi)

On a recent research trip to Jamaica I travelled as a passenger through many of its rural areas. For many tourists these long drives would be magnificent experiences due to the dramatic, sweeping green landscapes intermittently interrupted by mountains and the sea. For a design historian however, they also produced exceptional fodder for musing in the form of a new feature within rural housing. Planning permission is not required for domestic building projects in most rural areas provided the land tax is paid. This freedom has enabled the production of dream-houses that appear truly original and these creations, interspersed with more modest dwellings, are dotted across the landscapes of rural Jamaica.

They leave an impression of vibrant colour. As in many tropical places where concrete has been adopted as the dominant building material, painted houses turn the hills into a rainbow of brightly coloured speckles on a wash of green. In their colours as well as in the sprawling size of many, these houses are comparable to those in some in parts of India, for example. However, what stood out for me as being unique to Jamaica was the ubiquitous presence of columns reminiscent of the ancient Greek orders, most commonly the elaborate Corinthian columns as described by architectural historians (Shaw 1852: 99; Chitham 1985: 24–83;



Figure 13.1 Hillside house with columns. In this example, the top floor has recently been added to an existing single-storey house, and the fashion for elaborate columns has been included in the later part of the design. Photograph by Davinia Gregory, July 2013.

Rykwert 1996: 317–349). At first I suspected that they were confined to a particular locale, but as I traversed the length and breadth of Jamaica I spotted them everywhere, attached to brightly coloured country houses.

I remembered that such columns had not been present in the countryside on my last visit, in the late 1990s. My uncle confirmed this as he drove: ‘No, it’s a 21st century style my dear. You know how Jamaica likes to make and follow fashion’ (Walker, interview 2013). This uncle, a furniture designer and house builder in Jamaica for over forty years, could not tell me any more than that. His only and repeated explanation was that the columns were ‘style’ and this vagueness was repeated by everybody else I questioned, whether or not they approved of the design feature. Nevertheless, the popularity of classical-style columns in Jamaica cannot have appeared from nowhere; what in the collective consciousness of the Jamaican people is drawn to these symbols of grandeur, and why now? This chapter aims to decode these columns; to delve into the meaning that they have as objects of pastiche from colonial buildings in the Caribbean and into the multiple meanings that they assume when read by people of various backgrounds. The title intentionally nods to Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*.

Almost every writer who has practiced his art successfully has been taught it [...] by about eleven years of education – at private schools, public schools and

universities. He sits upon a tower raised above the rest of us, a tower built first on his parents' station, then on his parents' gold. It is a tower of the utmost importance; it decides his angle of vision; it affects his power of communication. (Woolf 1957 [1917]: 169)

Feminism and postcolonial studies shared methodologies to great effect in the latter half of the last century. This chapter examines a phenomenon which, in many ways, makes a claim of ownership similar to Woolf's. 'An Empire of One's Own' is less a manifesto in itself than an analysis of a tacit call to action that has already happened and perhaps been missed in scholarship. The reclaiming of space and power that Woolf encouraged in the women of Newnham and Girton colleges in 1917, has been paralleled almost a century later in the postcolonial world through material gestures like the domestic adoption of these columns. This chapter asks how far this assertion of individual power can be considered a conscious one among Jamaica's rural residents; how far it can be considered universally relevant amongst them, and how deeply runs the collective aspiration to greater cultural and economic balance more than fifty years after the end of British rule. Through these questions the study of design becomes a vehicle for revisiting Stuart Hall's identification of the Caribbean as uniquely useful for understanding diasporic identity formation because so vast a proportion of its population has migrated from elsewhere (Hall 1995: 6).

By exploring the unique aspects of the Jamaican case this chapter also highlights the continued importance of national frameworks in writing design history. In an age of globalization in which the migration of people, objects, design features and ideas has become a worldwide phenomenon, and nostalgia for simpler pasts is common, a study set in twenty-first-century Jamaica can shed light on the nature and growth of increasingly creolized design as the inevitable product of increasingly culturally hybrid nations.¹

Neoclassicism and Jamaican Identity

The ancient orders of classical columns arrived in the British Caribbean as symbols of imperial power within Georgian and Regency neo-classical architecture. Here, as in Britain, they represented a power not shared by everyone. By harking back to ancient Greece, the modern empires of Europe used columns to declare a successful political structure, which supposedly represented and worked to the benefit of all citizens. Reflecting grand governmental and cultural edifices of Europe at this time, official buildings and some large country houses in Jamaica were designed to include columns as statements of imperial power, their grandeur creating and reinforcing the concept of British leadership and superiority in a colonial outpost. Vic Reid writes of 'an age of opulence and oppression, much and little, few in-betweens', acknowledging that 'while sugar built, for field hands, stacks of ugly shacks to disfigure the countryside,

the same commodity was causing castles for private and official use' (Reid 1970: 28). The tradition of sprawling architecture began during the age of sugar slavery and Reid uses houses to illustrate the resultant chasm that existed (and still exists in many respects) between rich and poor in Jamaica. The same can be said of many countries whether they have been colonies or not; however in non-European colonies like Jamaica class was also racialized (Gregory 2013). This visible and irreversible sign of difference made social mobility next to impossible for individuals until change could be effected on a national scale. This was the difference between the colony and the metropolis, and the imperial order responsible was visually represented by neoclassical columns.

So, in Jamaica columns came to represent British imperial supremacy. Part of that meaning has faded since independence in 1962 and the concomitant disintegration of imperial leadership, leaving the columns with an abstract semi-otic residue of former power; a banal stateliness that still represents the cultural capital and refinement that Europeaness has come to evoke in the Caribbean. While it is widely accepted in rural Jamaica that 'Foreign' is an imagined place standing for wealth in general, I have found it interesting that Jamaicans can identify me as Black British as opposed to African American before I speak. When I ask what it is that marks Britons out (which is in reality likely to be a range of subtly different ways of dressing and gesticulating), people invariably find it difficult to articulate. In interview, relatively well-travelled young professional Marie Hayden of Brown's Town, St Ann attributed it to an elusive attribute, 'refinement', claiming 'British people just look cultured' (Hayden 2013). Such is the strength of the stereotype that Britishness carries in the region. Similarly, among the white Jamaican interviewees from the *Tale of Two Houses Project* (2013) was formidable octogenarian, Montego Bay resident, and daughter of its former governor, Diana De Lisser.² As she led me around her home, she pointed out many displayed items. In a room formerly used as an amateur art studio she had displayed an array of paintings given to her in the 1960s by artist friends, noting Jamaica's former links to Europeans involved in what she deemed high culture, who holidayed in Montego Bay during its heyday. In pride of place on a coffee table was a thick guide to the Louvre, its cover bleached by the sun. Its spine was smooth and upon moving it slightly the surrounding dust confirmed its ornamental purpose. De Lisser extolled the virtues of the Louvre and its 'truly European works'. This reading of Europeaness, fostered by cultural imperialism, has always been latent in Jamaica's identity as has Europeaness itself. This was evident in mid-twentieth-century writings about its architecture, such as those of Arthur J. May, A.R.I.B.A (1933), who observed that 'most of the West Indian towns have their characteristic English squares with their large town houses, which might have been brought out intact from some English country town, so closely do they resemble Georgian town houses'. He acknowledged the workmanship of the stone entrances and pointed out: 'Somehow it does not seem out of place in this tropical island,

though many of its neighbours are of wood. It expresses a quiet dignity which is truly British' (May 1933: 125). This quiet dignity – now the aforementioned 'banal stateliness' – has become one of Jamaica's 'multiple roots' (Weil 1949: 43), the acknowledgement and expression of which are symptomatic of contemporary Jamaica's cultural sensibility.

The aesthetic Afrocentrism of 1970s Jamaica was a prominent element of the national identity forged after independence to represent a pronounced break from the Europeaness of British rule (Gregory 2013). However, to borrow a useful play on words from James Clifford's seminal work on diaspora (Clifford 1997), by the twenty-first century it has been nuanced in an acknowledgement of the country's multiple *roots*, as well as of many simultaneous and sometimes painful *routes*. These are the routes that have been and are still being taken to transform the country from a colonial outpost mechanized by a divisive, imperially imposed class system based on gradations in skin tone (Smith 1961) into a place whose people are able to visualize the future realization of its equalizing national motto: 'Out of Many, One People'. Temporal distance from British rule has enabled an acceptance of its symbols as part of the country's hybrid identity. In domestic architecture, this acceptance is not passive. The negotiation of conflicting identities has resulted in a visual language that balances all by changing each; for example, by taking the 'quiet dignity' of a symbol of perceived Britishness and painting it green and peach to suit its tropical surroundings. To project ownership of that dignity, homeowners make its stateliness part of individual selfhood. Hirsch and Miller acknowledge that an attempt to return to the origin is often, on some level, an attempt to map a loss, redress an injustice, or assert a right to personal acknowledgement (Hirsch and Miller 2011: 7; 18). The customization of classical columns in Jamaica can be read accordingly: in the process of self-fashioning they are not simply a statement of economic arrival. Customization bridges the gap between two identities considered opposites in long-established systems of thought, yet inhabiting the same cultural space in the British Caribbean and its peoples.

The columns are not an attempt to assume Britishness from Britain. Rather, they are an attempt to reify the abstract stateliness inherent within Jamaican culture, left behind by British rule. Therefore they can be read as symptoms of cultural return rather than mere adoption. They, and the process of customizing them, are a departure from the statement made by Edward Said (1993: xiii), that returns like these, which identify and 'include a refining and elevating element, each society's reserve of the best of what has been known or thought', are necessarily essentialist and very often xenophobic. Said sees them as being accompanied by 'rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behaviour that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophies as multiculturalism and hybridity'. In the Jamaican context there is no native claim to land and no indigenous culture to hark back to, the native Arawaks having been wiped out during the period of Spanish rule. The culture

that is being returned to is piecemeal, consisting of bits of this and fragments of that; a creolized jigsaw which, semantically, does not speak of exclusivity and xenophobia but of the very hybridity and multiculturalism that an overt reclamation of a symbol of tradition or heritage in another country's twenty-first-century environment may oppose.

Personal Motivations: Aspiration, Social Mobility and the Columned House

So far this study has offered an analysis of subconscious, collective motivation for cultural return: columns as roots, looking backwards. It is necessary, in addition, to examine conscious personal motivations for building with columns, namely aspiration toward social mobility: columns as dreams of moving forward. In Clarendon, I was accompanied by a taxi-driving cousin, Mitchie Davis, who was uncannily reminiscent of the driver described in Daniel Miller's essay 'The Christian and the Taxi Driver: poverty and aspiration in rural Jamaica' (2009).³ His position within the Jamaican system of aspiration and acquisition is relevant here. Mitchie was proud of having bought himself a taxi, but he made it clear that his aspiration was to have a working fleet, with the goal of eventually acquiring a house like those with columns. Each time we passed a house with Corinthian columns Mitchie would point it out as 'another nice house' and stop driving, encouraging me to photograph it. When asked what he meant by 'nice', he would describe its size and grandeur; however, all houses highlighted as impressive had ornate columns, while those acknowledged as OK but modest, did not. It was evident that in Mitchie's eyes columns signified a status to which he aspired, the ultimate statement of arrival.

Because of the way in which individualism is constructed in Jamaica, the idea of living in a planned community with similar plots in the style of many new-build housing developments leaves many Jamaicans indifferent. Such developments often offer security, and a concierge to deal with maintenance, but they cannot satisfy the need for individualism, agency obtained through the ownership of land and customization of that land through the design of a house. Daniel Miller (Horst and Miller 2006) has identified these needs, pointing out that Jamaican individualism is unique in that it does not come from isolationism but rather originated as a coping mechanism during slavery as a means of maintaining personal identity, and therefore salvaging partial freedom. He recognizes that its expression is concomitant with the creation of a sense of self which is 'seen not so much as an "inner" deep persona, but rather emerges through others' response' (Miller 2006: 79). Individualism was firstly a form of resistance to dehumanization, then, following slavery's abolition, a process of healing effected through customization in many forms of self-expression including dress and the naming of children. This was only

heightened by a postmodern focus on hybridity as opposed to assimilation. Expressions of personal taste have long replaced expressions of ‘good’ taste as desirable, not only in Jamaica but globally. However on the island, individualism is also one of the routes to reclaiming roots that were lost to the majority of its citizens during the history of Empire.

The concept of affiliative self-fashioning, developed within the field of diaspora studies, comes from a reluctance to glorify the idea of roots and a desire to avoid the racial essentialism invited by an uncontested acceptance of root-seeking as a process (Gilroy 1993; Nelson 2011). The performative individualism mentioned by Miller can be seen as part of this and the cycle of aspiration and acquisition exemplified by Mitchie can also be accounted for as part of this system of ‘see and be seen’ selfhood formation. In this practice of representing the self, Corinthian columns are most sought after largely because they sell for the highest price. Some roadside vendors have told potential customers that they have been priced thus because they are more functional and will last longer, which is questionable. Homeowner Kemoy Downer is



Figure 13.2 Columns being advertised on the roadside. Photograph by Marie Hayden, November 2014.

a teacher in her early thirties with a young family. She and husband Hendin were not deceived by stories of increased efficiency, but she nevertheless purchased the style and had the columns which now adorn the veranda of their dream home moulded on site. Descendants of working-class rural Jamaican families, the Downers' custom design for their house does not recall the small-roomed, wooden houses of that class but, rather, harks back to a different Jamaican vernacular. Its layout is typical of houses historically inhabited by the upper-middle classes. Indeed, the sprawling mansions of twenty-first-century rural Jamaica almost uniformly seem to reflect an aspiration toward that type of house, between the Plantation Great-House and the regular middle-class house in grandeur. These houses were described by May as having been characterized by a large central living room of thirty or more feet in depth, with bedrooms opening directly from it and a surrounding veranda. May identified the design as a remnant from Jamaica's 161-year Spanish occupation (May 1933: 125). Of the contemporary houses with columns that I have visited, the vast majority, including the Downers', are built according to this specification or similar. The dream house, therefore, can be read as part of a system of affiliative and aspirational self-fashioning that has taken a physical form specific to Jamaica's architectural history.

Elaborate columns are an addition so important that many people start their building projects with them. A common sight in the Jamaican countryside



Figure 13.3 Metal column molds on a building site. Photograph by Marie Hayden, November 2014.



Figure 13.4 Abandoned columns near Maypen, Clarendon. Photograph by Davinia Gregory, July 2013.

is that of a simple wooden or zinc house filled with people, on a plot of land also containing a structure consisting of a concrete foundation and columns alone. Poignantly many of these are now overgrown with foliage like ruins in reverse, with structures having never been built around them. The unaccompanied columns represent the unrealized dreams of the people in the wooden houses. Since the beginning of the global financial crisis, paid farming work has all but disappeared in many parts of rural Jamaica. Many of those who would rotate seasonal farming between Jamaica and the USA have found entry to the latter country far more difficult to gain in recent times (McFarlane, interview 2013). The columns not only represent a quest for roots; they also encapsulate dreams, hopes and goals, and then become statements of wealth and achievement.

The Rejection of Columns and the Diasporic Returnee

Not every contemporary rural house features elaborate columns. This chapter has so far examined columns as vehicles for cultural return, but it is also necessary to consider the aesthetic choices of the physical returnee from the Jamaican diaspora abroad, who builds her or his dream house most frequently in retirement. Many Jamaicans emigrated in response to the British government's post-war call to colonial subjects to help rebuild that country's infrastructure following the blitz. Their dream houses represent a lifetime of working and

yearning in the hope of an improved standard of living upon their return to Jamaica, and the long-deferred justification of their decision to leave (Phillips and Phillips 1998). For many slightly younger returnees, the eldest children of those who chose to move, this return does not justify a choice but is an attempt to rectify a move that was thrust upon them.

For returnees, the myth of 'foreign' has been debunked. They have lived and worked in a very different system and been changed by it; Europe does not represent a distant refinement to them. Their reasons for building are not entirely different from those of the rural Jamaican; the house is still a long-awaited reparation for disenfranchisement. However the deracination is from place and family more immediately than from linear heritage and historical roots. Because it has occurred within the returnee's own lifetime the loss is more immediate and therefore the process of rectification is more conscious. To them the house represents reparation for sacrifices of culture, home, belonging and comfort. What is longed for in this case is Jamaica itself; intricacies of cultural history are often less important than the overarching idea of Jamaica as 'home'. To the returnee from Europe, columns are symbols which are out of place here, signifiers of what they have left behind rather than of what they miss about the island. In addition, where the returnee is retired there is less need for a statement of power or social mobility. Their work has been done overseas, inequality and injustice have been experienced there, not here. It is expected that they will be reconciled by relocation 'back home'. Location and house size (the latter particularly for returnees from UK cities where space is at a premium) are expected to make the years of economic and social and struggle abroad worthwhile.

Two such houses are being built next to one another atop Spur Tree Hill on the border of two parishes: Manchester and St Elizabeth. They are owned by brothers-in-law Launsby Hayden and Randolph Walker, the latter of whom is the uncle mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Uncle Randolph is not a typical returnee; he and his wife Rose (both Jamaicans) began married life in 1960s Jamaica and then moved back and forth between the island and the USA for much of their lives, holding citizenship of both countries. They live both in the Jamaican hilltop house and in their family home in Florida. Launsby Hayden is the archetypal returnee, having been 'sent for' by his postwar migrant parents as a child and having lived in the UK since. Over the past fifteen years he has spent more and more time in Jamaica and as retirement approaches he has been building his house remotely from Derby, England, with Uncle Randolph as his project manager. Neither house uses columns in its design. Each is designed to be outward-looking; the central focal point is not a living area inside the house, as with the Downers' home. Instead rooms are situated so as to usher inhabitants toward a rear balcony in one case, and large rear picture windows in the other. Both offer dramatic views over the precipice of Spur Tree Hill, and this focus is telling. The view is more important than the



Figure 13.5 Inside the building site: large rear windows overlooking hill precipices are focal points in houses like these. Photograph by Davinia Gregory, July 2013.

interiors and certainly more important than the fronts of the houses, which are quite simple. These houses are primarily about two things: being in Jamaica at last and working life being over, leaving the returnees time to enjoy the view. Uncle Randolph attests to spending most of every day on his balcony looking out. Launsby Hayden has often made clear that the flat roof of his house will eventually be a balcony for barbecues and gatherings. It is the feature that he is most proud of, and he is most careful in overseeing it remotely. It offers a bird's-eye, breezy view of picturesque Jamaica, away from the heat and mosquitoes found at sea level.

Uncle Randolph's house is more akin to a modernist box on pilotis than a Jamaican great-house with columns. Split-level but with only one floor visible from the road, it appears far more modest from outside than inside. He was keen to mention that there is no trouble on the hill for returnees because of the lofty location. Indeed safety is paramount for a 'foreigner' in Jamaica and displaying one's wealth acquired abroad is not a priority, especially if the owner is overseas for part of the year, leaving the house partially unattended. Ostentatious columns therefore go against the purpose of a house like this on a very practical level. Many returnees live on Spur Tree Hill, partly for this pragmatic reason and partly because the Jamaica imagined by the returnee is far more akin to the Jamaica of fifty years ago than to the country experienced by the contemporary citizen. In the 1960s people aspired to owning a hilltop

house for exclusivity as well as safety. Diana De Lisser pointed out: ‘Oh we didn’t live down here by the sea then. In those days if you lived next to the water you got malaria. So we lived up on the hill’ (Interview, 2013). Indeed the 1969 edition of *Jamaica and West Indian Review* featured an article simply entitled ‘Montego Bay’ which mentions one of her family’s homes: ‘Montego Bay was crowded in mid-February [...] However the crowds did not worry us as we hardly experienced them. We stayed as usual with Gary and Dick De Lisser in their lovely house on the Rose Hall estate, perched at exactly the right height above the Caribbean’ (Chapman 1969: 47).

The author goes on to describe the house of a friend of the De Lissers’, president of the Casa Blanca Company, Stanley Vaughan. Vaughan’s new flat featured a swimming pool that had been hewn out of the cliff face. The guest was impressed by the excess of combining water, one of the joys of the seaside, with the exclusive perspective of the hill: ‘I have always thought a two-seater Rolls-Royce, with all that lovely wasted power, the height of luxury; Stanley’s abode runs it a close second’ (Chapman 1969: 47). It is true that hills in places near to the ocean were the territory of the wealthy few in mid-twentieth-century Jamaica, when many poorer citizens were migrating. Nowadays, descendants of these old, white creole families and international celebrities have properties by yacht clubs near the sea, leaving large houses in the hills as the preserve of retired returnees who had fixed in their minds through years of working abroad the image of a large, safe house on a hill with a view over the world and infinite leisure time in which to enjoy it. Corinthian columns as symbols of social movement are irrelevant to them – for them the return itself is the apex of social movement, as is the view. They are concerned with being inconspicuous but looking out on a world that brings them peace. The citizen is concerned with distinguishing themselves and looking in on a home that brings them pride. The returnee has no need for an empire of his or her own anymore; that need was quashed upon living in the metropolis. What they want is a Jamaica of their own. That is the difference between the two experiences of the island.

Conclusion

The image of the returnee on the hill is persistent, reminding me of the tower described by Virginia Woolf. Relocation abroad was, to the postwar migrant, the equivalent of starting a taxi business for Mitchie, or the pursuit of higher education and professional careers for the Downers. It was the commencement of a journey to chase the particular vantage point of privilege described by Woolf. Just as *A Room of One’s Own* demanded for women the freedom to write – essentially to learn and work – as equals, so the process of laying claim to a little empire of one’s own demands the freedom to live as equals in an unequal world.

Post-war migrants attempted to achieve this by moving to England, thus following everything deemed desirable that had been produced in Jamaica prior to independence, Jamaica having been colonized to be an export centre (Phillips and Phillips 1998: 17). Just over fifty years after independence, increased opportunities for education and work domestically have made it possible for many more Jamaicans to achieve at home what the migrants had travelled to chase, then having achieved it, to adopt symbols of power and wealth in the customization of property. But to what extent is this process successful? The adoption of columns might imply a vicious circle. Hirsch and Miller (2011) acknowledged attachment to the past as a characteristic of the contemporary world. I would complicate the suggestion of simple attachment by using another reference to Woolf. *A Room of One's Own* has been described by Elizabeth Eger as often having 'been read as a history of the woman writer's lack of agency, arguably contributing to the frustrating state of affairs in which women are forever in the process of rediscovering their foremothers' (2008: 144). Could a similarly frustrating state of affairs be the end result for diasporic peoples seeking completion, belonging and home? On the surface it might seem that the formation of a progressive identity and sense of national and individual pride may be hindered by constantly looking to the past. However this article has explored the elaborate and subconscious reasons for neoclassical pastiche by Jamaican individuals, and its findings have suggested that this is not the case. The motivations of the post-war migrant and the contemporary country house builder are similar, but the age difference between them is striking. In their mid-thirties, homeowners like Kemoy Downer have not experienced the double displacement of being firstly part of an African diaspora removed by slavery, then a Jamaican diaspora removed by migration. The modes of achievement available to them mean that the process of social mobility is quicker and less likely to cause rifts and transformations on the scale experienced by post-war migrants in their comparable endeavours. In this way, the columns represent progress in Jamaica's ability to facilitate affiliative self-fashioning.

While in Clarendon I attended a primary school graduation in which the headmistress, Marlene Ayton, made it clear to the children that having attended a tiny rural school in a village not on most maps would not stand them in good stead for making their mark on the world. Her emphasis was on proving the world wrong and returning to Elgin Primary at graduation time to inspire future generations to do the same. I thought of my father who had attended that school as a child. At ten years old he was sent to inner-city London to make his mark on a world very different to, and much larger than, his own, never to return. Looking at these children I was struck by how much more achievable belonging, stability and status in Jamaica are for them than for his generation. New methods of claiming an empire of one's own in which to live, such as the adoption of Corinthian style columns on middle-class homes, are more effective than migration was. They represent a simplification

in the performance of social mobility, which now involves adapting symbols and customs that have become Jamaican since independence, in an important transfer of cultural power. The educational, economic and social healing process that has enabled and is still enabling this shift has been subtle in places and not universally successful. Nevertheless, as a phenomenon that has left such a striking visual mark across the whole island, it should not be overlooked. Columns serve as evidence of its importance.

Notes

1. Here, Creolization refers to the complexity, hybridity and resultant restructuring of peoples, languages, cultures and cultural expressions like art and design as the result of colonialism and subsequent globalization. 'Creole cultures – like creole languages – are intrinsically of mixed origin, the confluence of two or more widely separated historical currents which interact in what is basically a centre/periphery relationship. [However,] the cultural processes of creolization are not simply a matter of constant pressure from the centre toward the periphery, but a much more creative interplay. [...] Creole cultures come out of multi-dimensional cultural encounters and can put things together in new ways' (Hannerz 1992: 164–165). Because the many ethnicities, languages and traditions that constituted plantation culture are still mixed there, the Caribbean was acknowledged by Stuart Hall (2003) to be an ideal crucible for the study of creolization. Jay Edwards (2001: 86) has examined the relations between architectural creolization and the other forms of creole culture, making the link between concepts of creolization and built form.

2. Because of creolization and the echoes of plantation culture, Jamaica's class system is subtle and intricate. Marie Hayden and Diana De Lisser's contrasts are representative of the way that subtle gradations of ethnicity and occupation can still be as important indicators of class as family economic history and personal wealth in Jamaica. Marie is a medium fair-skinned black woman who worked as a teacher and now holds a senior post in the Jamaican government's Ministry for Education. She is well respected both in her small community and for her occupation, across the country. She is a lone parent with modest personal wealth and is a first generation professional. Diana De Lisser is a white Jamaican woman from a former slave-owning family. The historical bedrock of white West Indian identity and its tensions not only with black West Indianness but also with white Europeaness have been explored by David Lambert in *White Creole Culture* (2005), and De Lisser is subsequently referred to as a white creole in this chapter. Her personal wealth has been depleted over the years, yet her ethnicity and inherited home in Montego Bay enable her to retain her status as one of the country's elite class.

3. Mitchie Davis represents members of the economically deprived rural class. Much of the extended Davis family, formerly farmers, have emigrated and those who are left struggle to find work in the remote areas they inhabit now that agriculture is not a sustainable career. As a taxi driver, Mitchie has established himself as a lynchpin of the community, see Miller (2009).

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