'The Enigma of Survival': Travelling Beyond the Expat Gaze

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> Modernity in Trinidad, then , turns out to be the extreme susceptibility of people who are unsure of themselves and, having no taste or style of their own, are eager for instruction. In England and America there are magazines for such groups; in Trinidad instruction is now provided by advertising agencies, which have been welcomed by the people not only for this reason but also because the advertising agency is itself a modern thing.
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> There was a time when Trinidad had no agencies and the nearest we got to copy-writing was Limacol's 'The Freshness of a Breeze in a Bottle' and Mr. Fernandes's 'If you don't drink rum that is your business, if you do drink rum that is our business.' For the rest we made do with each store's list of bargains and the usual toothpaste sagas about bad breath. This has now changed. It has been said that a country can be judged by its advertisements, and a glance at Trinidad advertising is revealing. A man with a black eye-patch is used to advertise, not Hathaway shirts, but an alcoholic drink. Bermudez biscuits are described as a 'Family of Fine Crackers', with the 'Mopsy' biscuit for 'the young in heart', which is as puzzling as the slogan for Trinidad Grapefruit Juice: 'The Smile of Good Health--In a Tin'. 'Crix' (of the Bermudez family) is a meal in 'itself' . One examines the copy for the point; and it seems that this is to persuade Trinidadians that Bermudez biscuits are really 'crackers', American things which Americans in films and comic strips eat. Old Oak Rum was introduced with a Showdown Test...In this Showdown Test a number of laughing, well-dressed Trinidadians, carefully chosen for race, stood at a bar. None was clamorously black. A genuinely black man was used for the garage-hand in the 'I'm going well, I'm going Shell' advertisement; black faces are normally used only in advertisements for things like bicycles and stout.
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> This is the work of expatriate advertising agents, and Trinidad is grateful and humble. At a time when the whole concept of modern advertising is under fire elsewhere, Trinidad offers a haven: it is officially recognized that Trinidadians are without the skill to run advertising agencies.
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> V.S. Naipaul, "Trinidad", *The Middle Passage*

We refuse to be what you wanted us to be
We are what we are
that's the way it's going to be

(if you don't know)
You can't educate us for no equal opportunity
Talking 'bout my freedom
People, freedom and liberty.

(Marley, *Babylon System*)

> Internationally Marley was perhaps Jamaica's best-known ruud bwai. Notice his clear insight that "equal opportunity" is not some transparent, nonideological virtue to which it is self-evidently reasonable to aspire, as the middle class nationalist-moderns would like us to believe, but rather is a fundamental part of a regime of knowledge/power, part of a distinctive rationality of (liberal-democratic) government. This regime, he clearly understands, demands as a condition of his participation that he be "educated" for it, which is to say, transformed, made over into a liberal citizen-subject who knows how to leave his disreputable, unrepresentable difference behind when he enters the public realm.
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> David Scott, "Fanonian Futures", *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality*

It was in Barbados where the region's art critics were meeting at the first ever conference of the southern caribbean chapter of AICA in 1997 that I looked around the room and noticed the disproportionate number of expatriates making up the quorum of art critics and art historians arguing so passionately about art criticism, its language, and the language of art in the caribbean. A large number of these foreigners were white expatriates resident in the region who had all made careers in art here. As a foreigner myself I felt implicated in this peculiar predicament.

How were we to think of ourselves? As missionaries of the gospel of modern art? Ambassadors for art licensed by pioneer expats like Edna Manley? As Promethean light bringers to this area of darkness in the Caribbean? As cultural interpreters? Translaters? Advertising agents for bourgeouis enlightenment? What kind of gaze were we bringing to bear on art in the Caribbean? This paper is a partial attempt to address such issues.

I recently read a review of the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale which described an interesting problem. Citing the "hopelessly bourgeouis nature of the art world in general" the reviewer, Jen Budney, concluded that, "Hosting an international biennial with such a tiny leisure class merely emphasizes the problems of exhibition practices existing in all countries: questions about 'whose story is being told, whose history, whose religion, whose meaning, whose future', not to mention who gets to participate in the making of institutionalized culture and which audience benefits and how." Budney went on to describe the nature of the South African art community which he said was, "very small and rife with conflict, and a disproportionately large number of its more powerful members are white. With some of these people--the said museum directors, some critics, curators and artists--one gets the impression that South Africa is a setting, rather than a location, for them as well."[1] As someone who in recent years has been attempting to write about art in the Caribbean this was a scenario I recognized immediately. I had been making similar critiques myself about the art world in Jamaica. I remembered feeling amused when I read British critic Eddie Chamber's essay 'Whitewash' in which he castigates the British art establishment for its racism, claiming that at places like the Tate Gallery the only black staff to be found are those in security attendant's uniform. Had he ever visited the National Gallery of Jamaica or attended one of its board meetings I wondered?

In Jamaica a large proportion of practising artists also happen to be white. And a large proportion of these happen to be expats as well. Yet rarely, if ever, are these facts referred to or discussed. Other amusing contradictions prevail where the work of black Jamaican artists is often discussed in terms of identity, roots, culture and race but of course the work of white expats is never, can never, be discussed in such terms. They are simply and transparently making art.

In his remarkable study of white identity, *White*, Richard Dyer says that, "It has become common for those marginalised by culture to acknowledge the situation from which they speak, but those who occupy positions of cultural hegemony blithely carry on as if what they say is neutral and unsituated--human, not raced." I also agree with him when he says that, "As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people."

As a resident expat myself, though non-white (I am from India), I have often been struck by the privilege granted to foreigners by Jamaicans. I want to take this opportunity to suggest that Jamaica must be one of the most welcoming societies in this regard. At the same time we know that the reception the Jamaican meets when he goes elsewhere is far from welcoming. These are facts which must be explicitly stated and acknowledged. As an Indian trying to write about art in Jamaica I have found it difficult not to notice the racial composition of the art world.

I have been struck also by the discrepancy between the way race and nation are treated in the field of Caribbean literature where the legitimacy of white caribbean writers has traditionally

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[1] "Who's it For? The 2nd Johannesburg Biennale", Jen Budney, *Third Text*, Number 42, Spring 1998, p. 90.

been questioned. I am not talking here of white expats but citizens of Caribbean countries who happen to be white. The argument has been that white creoles were too separate and distinct a group to represent the spiritual world of the Caribbean which it was presumed was largely constituted by the Afro-Caribbean. White writers in the Caribbean, and I am not talking of foreigners, have had to fight hard to assert their legitimacy as writers in the Caribbean space. Why is nationhood or the Caribbean space so differently construed in the visual arts I wondered? Perhaps it had something to do with the racial make-up of those creating meaning and value for Caribbean art. As Ulrich Fiedler, a German doctor resident in Trinidad and Tobago in the 90s and a promoter of contemporary art in that country said, "Further investigations about Caribbean art, I shall have to leave to English art professors, American college students, European journalists (foreigners like me) who are doing research on the 'otherness' of these "cultural colonies", well supported with grants from their Alma Maters at home, actually like the Eurocentric anthropologists of the last century."

Since I fit into none of these categories I represent a new infusion into the brew of Caribbean art. I have no degree in art history, I am no specialist or expert, I have no pedigree of metropolitan modernity to enhance my curriculum vitae. I was born and brought up in India, in profoundly modern circumstances I should add, growing up on the campus of the first business school set up in India in collaboration with the Harvard Business School, the Indian Institute of Management. The campus buildings were designed by Louis Kahn, one of the high priests of modern architecture and the city I was fortunate enough to grow up in, Ahmedabad, the textile capital of India, was also the home of the National Institute of Design, the Space Research Organization and other such institutions signalling India's ebullient stride into the modern world. Many of the rich textile millowners had their homes designed by Le Corbusier and other Western architects. Already, however, Indian architects such as Charles Correia who adapted modern architectural style to local purposes, were beginning to make their mark on the landscape. When I started making collages as a teenager I never felt I was outside the tradition of visual art. I felt as entitled as anyone to be inspired by the legends of modern art and to think and make art. As Stuart Hall says, "The world is absolutely littered by modernities. It is littered by artists, practising artists, who do not regard modernism as the secure possession of the West, never regarded it as such but always regarded it as a language which was both open to them but which they would have to transform..." That in sum is where I am coming from.

The history of art and the history of anthropology have much in common. David Scott, in one of his critiques of anthropology says that, "European and American anthropologists continue to go where they please, while the postcolonial stays home or else goes West. One wonders whether there might not be a more engaging problematic to be encountered where the postcolonial intellectual from Papua New Guinea goes, not to Philadelphia but to Bombay or Kingston or Accra." This then is where and how I locate myself and my practice as a cultural/art critic.

After a few years of living in Jamaica and participating in the art world as an artist I gradually became enlisted in the job of reviewing art exhibitions in Kingston. In the process of doing this I found that I had little interest in searching for lofty universals or saleable representations of the collective unconscious. Neither was I interested in art which referred only to itself and a rather exclusive art history. Since these are the terms in which Jamaican art is usually discussed, and as a result often produced, I soon lost interest in the local art scene and started looking to places like Trinidad and Tobago instead. Having had the opportunity to see Christopher Cozier's show *Migrate or Meddle/Medal* in early '98 I realized that this was art that I could think and write

about, art whose relationship with the society in which it was made was complex yet easy to see. Over the last two years engaging with the work of artists like Cozier and others from the Eastern Caribbean has stimulated and developed my own ideas about art and society. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to discuss Christopher Cozier's work over the last few years culminating in his visit to South Africa and the work produced during his three month residency at the Bag Factory in Johannesburg.

Christopher Cozier was born in 1959, just a few years before Trinidad became independent. After studying painting and graphic design locally, Cozier went to the United States to further his education in art. By 1988 Chris had recieved his M.F.A. In Visual Arts from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. He studied art criticism with Leon Golub and was offered a slot in a prestigious programme at Stonybrook but decided to return to Trinidad in 1989 where he has been practising as an artist and critic ever since.

In the early 90s Cozier experimented with video and performance but more recently, feeling the need to return to basics, has restricted himself to pencil, paper and a few basic colours. "My work consists of a series of critical investigations of the construction of identity and nationhood in multi-cultural societies," explains the artist. In the process of doing this Cozier often illuminates the "slightly flawed modernity"of third world nation states. Cozier's methodology is a form of note-taking (taking note as opposed to taking notes) using a visual stenography with which he sketches his location and state of mind. Relatively simple everyday objects acquire metonymic significance such as a teacup or a blackboard which might stand in for colonialism and the educational system thereof.

His 1998 show *Migrate or Medal/ Meddle* first introduced the figure of the naked man, often running, 'in-flight', sometimes legless, sometimes winged, "Man running between two unspecific points" as one piece is called, running through a landscape of surgically severed limbs, menacing cones now signifying loudspeakers ('Announcement'), now representing mounds of cocaine ('Dunce Cap'), of red, black and white flags and blackboards. The blackboard imparts lessons on distinguishing between 'us' and 'them' while the loudspeakers issue the words 'vote for we'. A recurring image is that of a kitchen implement of indian origin, the swizzle stick, a kind of whisk used to blend cooked sauces. It is most commonly used to blend the Trinidadian soup called callalloo. In a typical cozierscape it appears jaunty and nuff (or overconfident) as they say in jamaica, topped by the red, white and black of Trinidad and Tobago, a "cultural mixer posing arrogantly as phallic symbol ejaculating nationalist icons". The crutch makes its appearance here and there, an innocuous enough object, signifying a kind of mobility, an aid for dismembered, injured people to manouever their severed bodies with. In Cozier's critique the crutch stands for Culture with a capital C. According to him "We define culture in politically expedient ways to the point that we represent ourselves as some injured/impure entity in comparison to healthy, allegedly pure cultures elsewhere. So we enter into an idea of a national self as ex-colonials, as wounded, as having some original injury like Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden, bewildered, with a passport, a flag."

As Cozier's compatriot V.S. Naipaul once said:

> Few words are used more frequently in Trinidad than 'culture'. Culture is spoken of as something quite separate from day-to-day existence, separate from advertisements, films and comic strips. It is like a special native dish, something like a callalloo...

> This talk of culture is comparatively new. It was a concept of some politicians in the forties, and caught on largely because it answered the vague, little-understood dissatisfaction some people were beginning to feel with their lives of fantasy. The promotion of a local culture was the only form of nationalism that could arise in a population divided into mutually exclusive cliques based on race, colour, shade, religion, money.

It was the job of artists, writers, dancers, singers -- the aesthetic corps of the country-- to "build"culture, literally to construct a national culture which of course was synonymous with high culture. Cozier belongs to a younger generation of artists who rebelled against this notion of cultural production. Artists such as Steve Ouditt, Eddie Bowen and Cozier have not the slightest interest in being construction workers in the Culture industry, of becoming what Naipaul contemptuously calls "culture-creators". In fact Cozier was more interested in turning the spotlights back on this 'nation' that had been created, in dissecting the culture of this nation and laying open to the public gaze the sinister scaffolding on which the national rests. He often uses the term 'cultural autopsy' in relation to his work.

There is a fluid intertextuality between Cozier's work and popular culture in Trinidad and Tobago. For instance the image of the running man which haunts Cozier's mindscapes is echoed in the lyrics of David Rudder, the eloquent calypsonian and poet who sings:

There is a black, a black man on the run,
Through a lonely Beijing street,

There he goes, my God, he's running again
This time through New York's Howard Beach
And there he goes again through
the streets of Soweto...

1990...will our children stand firm
Or will they keep running and running and running till the end of time...

And the naked, vagrant-like figure dodging in and out of Cozier's drawings is also a presence in the lyrics of young rapso singer, Ataklan who sings:

I like to walk naked
naked I like to walk,

Naked, away from wall street paintings

And poets buying yards of fabric, lawd

To make pretty their rhythmic talk...

Çoz the more I listen, is the the more I hear

But the more I learn, is the less I wear

And the more I feel, is the more I care
and the more them fakers dress it up
is the less I wear.

The role and nature of education comes under scrutiny in Cozier's blackboard series, which he visualizes as too often a divider between different classes of students. But in the story of the rising nation education was supposed to be the way out via "the blackboard with the enlightening white chalk marks". "The blackness, the nothing-ness was given form by these marks, these

messages about hygiene, manners and how to be decent in general. I was always fascinated by the almost ritualistic act or process of organizing the information on that black space--rectangle."

Ataklan too reflects on the nature of the postcolonial education he recieved from the nation.

They full me head with lead,
and pump me mind with ink,
tell me never to grow a dread
çoz that's the right way to think

They teach me foreign history
till I don't know nothing 'bout me
still rastas can't work in banks
and they call that equality.

At the time of independence Eric Williams, the nation's first prime minister had said that the future of the country lay in children's schoolbags. In recent years the postcolonial states of the Caribbean have developed parallel economies and governments revolving around drug and gun running. Education is no longer the route to social mobility. This transformation clearly alluded to in Cozier's drawings by the conical mounds of cocaine is best summed up by Rudder in his song, "Another Day in Paradise".

Long ago every mother and father,
Wanted their children to be doctors and lawyers,
So now we full up with doctor and lawyer,
knife in their hand or wig in they head sah
'The new Greeks,' the old leader say,

'Beat your books and let we break away.'

That was then but now is beast we creating...

'Cause when a gorgon shoot another gorgon
The doctor's job is to stitch up he organ
The lawyer's job is to keep him out of jail

Now he back on the streets...terror in you tail

Naipaul writing in the early 60s refers to the fact that, "The only professions were those of law and medicine, because there was no need for any other." But today it's "the day of the warlord".

In 1990 a new figure left his mark on the Trinidadian landscape. He was Imam Abu Bakr, head of the Jamaat-al Muslimeen, which tried to take over the government. Abu Bakr and his allies walked into parliament and took the cabinet hostage while pandemonium reigned in the country for days. Eventually he was persuaded to surrender under amnesty and is a free man today having sued the government for breaching the terms of the amnesty. On July 27th the tenth anniversary of the coup attempt Abu Bakr was interviewed on Jamaican radio and defiantly described the Caribbean region as a neo-colonial area where thirty plus years after independenceAfro-Caribbeans were still virtually in slavery. According to him the jails and madhouses were full of African youth while at the other end of the spectrum, in the ranks of the elites, there were hardly any black people to be found. This is a line of reasoning also followed by the new breed of reggae musician in Jamaica--the Bobo Dreads, djs like Anthony B with his incendiary song 'Fire pon Rome' and Capleton. Abu Bakr's diagnosis is that the political system

inherited from the colonial masters at independence is to be blamed, and as long as the system is in place nothing will change.

As Rudder sang, "tis strange, the more we change, the more we rearrange, everything stays the same." In his song 1990 he talks of the "unsound system" blowing all the children away. In Jamaica the sound systems of the dancehall signal an alternate discursive circuit in the nation space.

Working collaboratively with Rudder in 96-97 Cozier produced *The Madman's Chant,* a large multi-panelled work based on Rudder's brilliant song *The Madman's Rant* which definitively sums up the predicament of Caribbean nation states.

Vote for we and we'll set you free
Anywhere you turn somebody chanting to we
Somebody promising jobs for all
while some renting guns to make other people bawl
But then somebody promising more police cars
While somebody going to take the country far...

So the mortuary filled with little Trinidad boys
a bullet start to wine and put an end to their joy
Now they lying cold for their mamma to mourn
Their Nikes gone and their gold teeth pawned...

Meanwhile somebody clean out the weed well fast
But somebody letting the cocaine pass...

Somebody take "ONE LOVE" off the shelf
But then the one love boys start to sell out theyselves...

I've tried to show that Cozier is by no means alone in his critique of Caribbean postcoloniality. His hostility to the national agenda and cultural conventions places him in an awkward spot. As he put it, "...a history of art was coming into being that attempted to align my work to nineteenth century anthropological paintings of property and native types. There seemed to be some comfort with aligning oneself to those who render or display an 'us' rather than allowing an 'us' to express what in an individual sense one of the 'us'might be thinking."

South Africa

As indicated then Cozier's work is steeped in the culture and politics and history of Trinidad and Tobago. In that sense it is extremely local, the references specific to their location in the Caribbean. When Cozier was invited to take up a residency at the Bag Factory in Johannesburg last year a number of questions arose. How would Cozier's work translate itself in a South African context? How would it be translated? Could signs be transported from one location to another? How would signs and symbols mobilized in the Caribbean context, a visual syntax linked to local concerns translate themselves elsewhere? What kind of work would Cozier produce in South Africa? As it happened Cozier's work was very well recieved, critically as well as by viewers who came to the gallery. Now the question was what did this mean? What was the meaning being conferred on his work on the other side of the middle passage?

During his 3-month stint in South Africa Cozier spent time "organizing the load" as he put it. Realizing that he was on a journey of some sort he compared the experience to that of a traveller

trying to decide how much he could carry with him keeping in mind that he would be adding to his load in the new destination. Clearly not everything could travel with him. In the end Cozier said that his show in South Africa was the product of "things brought with things found on arrival."

The image of the crutch followed Cozier to South Africa as did the naked vagrant. But both were transformed in the process. The Culture crutch now became a weapon with the naked figure aiming the crutch in purposeful fashion at this or that target--often off the field of representation altogether. Now naked black bodies gracefully balanced teacups and empty blackboards on their heads while other black bodies, suited and booted, wielded cell phones. Now a guy holding a sign made his appearance, a vagrant of the kind you find at intersections,"There's always somebody standing at an intersection asking for food, asking for money, asking for something. To me he appeared symbolic of the artist, standing between places, pleading, begging for attention." Cozier said.

Cozier exhibited his work in a joint exhibition with two other artists, one from South Africa nd the other from the Cote d'Ivoire. But it was Cozier's work that excited the most interest and response both from viewers and critics. As one critic Alex Dodd, put it:

> Many drew comparisons to the work of internationally-acclaimed South African artist William Kentridge. One thing Cozier and Kentridge certainly have in common is a deep personal engagement with the socio-political worlds in which they find themselves, no fear in addressing issues like poverty, political and spiritual domination, the mining industry and seething resentments in the face of dark histories. But both seem to steer away from stock generalisations and easy political statements in favour of asking more quirky questions about individual human responses to the status quo.

According to Dodd, "the resonance in Cozier's drawings of mine shafts, men with begging boards and mini-bus taxis left one feeling like he'd been here for a long, long time.Cozier's penetrating eye looks through the local window dressings of culture to the core global equations. Beyond the bold and often messy aesthetics of reactive anger, his subtle images invite you into a space where he asks pointed but humble questions about humanity, about where you stand (or fall)."

Talking about a trip to Pretoria with Cozier to check out Heritage Day Dodd commented on the fact that "Cozier seemed to be reading our strangely layered landscape through local eyes."

> A far cry from the chaos of the great African metropolis of Johannesburg, the streets of Pretoria are always clean, the public parks well tended and lawns neatly mowed. It seemed like an ironic place to celebrate Heritage Day, one of the new ANC government's attempts at helping us to embrace our cultural diversity. I couldn't help appreciating Cozier's jadedness in relation to this new happy rainbow nation parade complete with Xhosa kids in animal skins, Indians in saris, Zulus dancing, drum majorettes, Afrikaner ox wagons, camouflage army outfits, guns, spears, balloons, trumpets, hot dogs -- you name it. Welcome to the new South Africa. Cozier seemed to have seen it all before.

> The thing is Trinidad and Tobago went through independence back in 1962. And they've come a long way since then. We're still going through the teething pains of new nationhood here. We're still all hot and sweaty and keen on blanket statements, only just emerging from the dire necessity of protest art. Over there they're cool and complex teenagers already. Caribbean cultural expression has had some time to find its nuances.
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> I guess Cozier's familiarity here is also less outlandish when you consider Trinidad and Tobago's African heritage which emerged most powerfully in the wake of the international wave of black consciousness during the 1970s, validating the strong religious, cultural and social associations between Africa and the Caribbean.

South African artist David Koloane sees in Cozier's work "a variety of symbols associated with colonial domination and its implication to third world countries."

Koloane thinks that the symbols and metaphors employed by Cozier in relation to postcoloniality become radically transformed in the post-apartheid landscape of South Africa. In some cases their resonance is amplified. Therefore:

> The symbolism of the blackboard is not necessarily about knowing or the lack of knowing or knowledge; it is rather about the denial of knowledge.
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> It is also about excluding and recommending an inferior level of education on the basis of race. The crutch is equally a symbol intended to perpetrate the dependency syndrome in rural and urban settlements. In 1957 the erstwhile nationalist government introduced the Bantu Education Act, which provided inferior education to black African schools compared to the white education system...The blackboard was the first site of resistance on which the unequivocal message "NO TO BANTU EDUCATION" was scrawled in giant letters. The writing was therefore on the blackboard for all to see and reflect upon.

Koloane reflects that South Africa is one of the "enigmas" of the developing world because of its colonial history and apartheid legacy "which attempted to impose different racial and ethnic homelands controlled and governed by a minority white rule. This manipulation of cultural and racial difference not only created a gross disparity of resources and living standards but also created a first world tier amids a third world periphery of sub-standard existence."

Based on the fact that "meaning is not a readymade, portable thing which can be 'carried over' the divide" the translatability of Cozier's work in the South African context may suggest underlying similarities with Caribbean society. While the postcolonial Caribbean was never officially an apartheid zone, in effect, even today a vicious kind of economic apartheid prevails. The racial embodiment of this economic apartheid produces a landscape chillingly similar to the South African one described by Koloane. The parodies of democracy that prevail in the Caribbean have also produced a first world tier in an impoverished third world setting. By and large minority elites control resources and political power while the impoverished proletariat is largely African in origin. As coup leader Abu Bakr puts it, this is not democracy but "the mockery that we see". One might invoke Bob Marley's language and say these are manifestations of the same 'babylon system' he sings about.

The common workforce of images mobilized by Cozier in Trinidad and William Kentridge in South Africa, images of teacups, television sets, loudspeakers, police brutality refers to common predicaments, common regimes of power/knowledge production and remarkably similar responses from artists with very little in common otherwise. Cozier was educated at the best art

schools in North America, Kentridge studied almost exclusively in South Africa. But both end up using drawing as the ideal medium for communicating what they want to say and signify their messages through common everyday objects. Both artists are making work in and about their local contexts but framing their personal responses to the status quo.

To quote William Kentridge:

> I am an artist. I live in Johannesburg. All of my work is about Johannesburg in one form or another...Thematically I suppose I work with what's in the air, which is to say a mixture of personal questions and the broader social questions...Often they're fairly broad questions but generally they arrive through quite a personal or particular starting point.

This is similar to Cozier's statement that, "My work is about me or people like me who grew up in these new nation states...Most of my work has been about asking questions about my self in realtion to the space in which I grew up and now reside."

I started by invoking the heavy expat presence in the apparatuses which create meaning for art in the Caribbean. This expat gaze has produced art worlds in the Caribbean dominated by the eurocentric narrative of modern art, in which the foreign expert/expat traffics in a certain 'expatese' with immense currency in Caribbean narratives about nationhood. As Cozier says, "The art space in the Caribbean is an owned space controlled by a comfortable alliance between an expatriate and local elite. It's all about building the 'nation' and protecting or preserving the 'culture'. In this national space alter-NATIVE artists like Cozier are treated as foreigners, as unwanted aliens.

After discussing Cozier's parodies of "the Caribbean obsession with modernity and national symbols" Veerle Poupeye, the Belgian author of the book, *Caribbean Art*, says that, "While Cozier is primarily concerned with local issues, other Caribbean artists have added a broader perspective to their social commentaries." This suggests that there is some inherent incompatibility between local concerns and international ones. It is an unfortunate handicap of the prevailing expat gaze that it has refused to take on board critiques contributed by a vibrant postcolonial discourse into which Cozier's work is very much inserted. I want to argue that it is this discourse which allows Cozier's signs and symbols to be transported successfully across the divide of the middle passage, across the dislocutions of national difference and into a new internationalism which takes note of local particularities.

In the 'scene of translations' that we are all involved in Cozier's South African experience suggests that there is much to be gained from swivelling the steadfastly northward gaze of the expat art critic/historian in a southerly direction. The danger inscribed in the expat gaze is that one might end up being coopted into nation narratives and thus miss the alter-NATIVES such as Christoper Cozier, Steve Ouditt, Irenee Shaw, Eddie Bowen and others. In privileging a discourse about 'the self and the other' exclusively, the expat gaze overlooks identities ostracized or exiled by the national. In between representations of the self and the other are lost a myriad of OUR SELVES who fall into the chasm between 'us'and 'them'. These are the untranslatables, , the alter-NATIVES, those who resist translation into the language of the nation.