

Sugar, Sound, Speed: “Area Code 869” and Sonic Fiction

IT WAS UNEXPECTED BUT NOT unusual when the message my cousin Darnel sent me on WhatsApp was just a download link to a file-sharing website. I was excited to hear the newest releases for the St. Kitts and Nevis Sugar Mas Carnival of 2019–20 but had not yet done my regular cyberpilgrimage to YouTube and Facebook to watch snippets of Carnival action from my home in Chicago. The shrunken sound of “Area Code 869” made the iPhone’s speaker vibrate in my palm. The synthesized bells ricocheted through a circular pattern with the kind of urgency one might hear in the introductory music to a “breaking news” report on a local TV station. Striking a different register from other Carnival songs, “Area Code 869” sounded serious. The gritty voice at the beginning of the track declared, knowingly, “Everybody in this world got a place called home.” With the rhythmic dexterity of a seasoned *singjay*, he repeated this line, adding, “whether yaad or inna foreign leh we come, rep your area code.”¹ I accepted the invitation. The beat dropped and the weight of the dense riddim shook me from the inside out. I stood up from the table where I was quietly responding to emails and started on a different kind of work. I jumped up and down in the dining room, arching my back and moving my waist as if the energy I exerted was the power necessary to keep the song going. I began to *wuk*.

It was unexpected but not unusual that, on an otherwise mundane weeknight, I found myself winding my body into a sweaty, breathless frenzy. My husband silently raised his eyes to watch me over the edge of his laptop screen. The lyrics of the song affirmed the spectacle I was creating and legitimized the out-of-the-ordinary nature of my dancing there and then.

ABSTRACT This essay presents the song “Area Code 869,” an example of a Caribbean genre known as “wilders” or “pep,” as a form of what Kodwo Eshun calls “sonic fiction.” By focusing on sonic bodies as “bodies touched by sound,” the essay suggests that “869” offers a reimagination of the historical relationship between sugar, sound, and speed in the Eastern Caribbean island of St. Kitts, a former British sugar colony. *REPRESENTATIONS* 154. 2021 © The Regents of the University of California. ISSN 0734-6018, electronic ISSN 1533-855X, pages 23–34. All rights reserved. Direct requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content to the University of California Press at <https://www.ucpress.edu/journals/reprints-permissions>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2021.154.3.23>.

Come rep your place, rep your flag, where you from who you are
 The world is stage so showcase like a star
 We little but we bigging up, we come from far
 Then we take it to the world—zoom [race car sound heard here]—like a race car
 That's how we roll yeah
 That's how we roll
 High performance any time we touch the road, yeah
 That's how we roll, that's how we roll
 When riddim buss inna we head, like we under a spell
 Anywhere that we go, people watching and they asking what you know
 Why the hell we get on so?
 And I tell them, must be the place we born and grow
 Got me, got me hyperactive, we hyperactive
 We come from St. Kitts so sugar in we system
 We don't have to practice
 I say we got this
 Carnival we lock this
 We real and we no plastic
 Check me area code
 Everybody know
 Anywhere me go
 You know me touch the place like this
 Gyal dem a wine dem waist like this
 Dem riddim and bass like this
 Come big up the 896
 Straight outta St. Kitts

“We from St. Kitts so sugar in we system” was such a simple but acute explanation for my behavior and, I imagined, for that of many others scattered around the world whose diasporic relations to St. Kitts as some version of a “homeland” are fastened by “pep.” A distinctive style of dance music, pep, or “wilders,” owes its sound to the interplay between riddim and bass: the sequenced lines of high-pitched, highly manipulated sounds played from the riddim box (the drum machine) and the driving kick of the bass drum, typically on an acoustic drum set.

Until recently, regional event promoters, DJs, and music producers dismissed this style as amateurish and parochial, citing its speed as a barrier to more widespread appeal.² Responding to this pattern of misrecognition, Gregory “Mr. Mention” Hobson, lead singer of the Nu Vybes band, emphasizes that unaccustomed listeners misunderstand pep because

The style of the riddim that's so drivey overrides the music [so] that they can't grasp the music. Because what grabs them first is what they're not accustomed to, which is the style of rhythm and the tempo. They just can't hear it, because what is so

amazing to them is the tempo. . . . They ain' gonna say "hey, your music is shit." They'll just say "This is different. It's really different."³

For some listeners, the tempo of pep inverts the hierarchy of the various elements of a song. Chord progressions and lyrics give way to the textural prominence of percussion and, ultimately, to speed. As Hobson notes, "It's fast but it also has a lot of music in it. It's not just a fast bit. It's music." To Hobson, an internalized endorsement of a "foreign" sonic perspective, from "everywhere—overseas, [and] other islands," is eroding a collective sense of Kittitian self that would otherwise help pep flourish as an art form and break into the Caribbean popular music industry. Hobson comments on how being misheard has allowed an alternative definition of pep, and thus of the history of Kittitian music, to proliferate: "We starting to believe we never had we own music. But how? You can't make something from nothing," he insists. "We need a culture shock! St. Kitts, itself. We need a culture shock to free us from what people think 'bout us so we can establish 'we.'"

Culture Shock

In an effort to counter conceptions of Anglophone Caribbean music in which pep is illegitimate, ephemeral, or unintelligible largely because of its speed, Hobson wrote "Area Code 869" as an entry for the 2019–20 Road March—an annual competition for the most popular dance anthem of the Carnival season. "I can't explain how our culture is in the music, but this song will illuminate everything I have been trying to say about who we are and what [the music] is," he commented. Released just before the Carnival season, "Area Code 869" characterizes pep as an inherently Kittitian style of music that sounds out the specificities of the island, and it is not merely a temporal distortion of music from elsewhere. The frameworks that would seem to upgrade stories to "History" often constitute the same "externally imposed regulations," to borrow a phrase from Fred Moten, that so much Afro-diasporic music resists.⁴ When Hobson insists, "We need a culture shock to free us from what people think about us so we can establish 'we,'" he is not calling for an emendation to an accepted historical narrative. He is advocating a sharp turn to something else. "Anywhere that we go / people watching and they asking, 'what you know?'" This disarms claims to authoritative history and affirms instead what is felt, heard, and known otherwise.

"Area Code 869" attests to Hobson's belief in the potential of the sensory and the sonic to precipitate epistemic transformations, to depart from "what people think." Showing and embodying an identity rather than

elaborating historical origins (“Riddim and bass like *this*”), “Area Code 869” might thus be understood via Kodwo Eshun’s concept of “sonic fiction.” Introduced in his 1998 *More Brilliant Than the Sun*, “sonic fiction” emerges as a term that encapsulates “a thick cultural amalgamation of meanings and practices, sensibilities and techniques” that, among other things, may be deployed against interpretations of sound that are exclusively grounded in historical, political, and social analysis.⁵ “Like a headmaster, theory teaches today’s music a thing or 2 about life. It subdues music’s ambition, reins it in, restores it to its proper place, reconciles it to its naturally belated fate,” writes Eshun.⁶ By contrast, sonic fiction, of which *More Brilliant Than the Sun* is itself an example, “crumple[s] chronology like a bag of crisps. . . . Here music’s mystifying illogicality is not chastised but systematized and intensified.”⁷ In this way, sonic fiction “paradoxically ends up with a portrait of music today far *more* accurate than any realistic account has managed.”⁸ Paul Jasen has since extended the idea to encompass “qualities of sound and tendencies in movement and perception (i.e. ‘tales of becoming’)”:

They report, in language, what the sonic body already knows or suspects about a given relation. They also become repositories of speculation on the potentials of bodies, sound, and machines.⁹

Drawing on Julian Henriques’s notion of the sonic body as “the body touched by sound,” Jasen’s extension and reinterpretation of sonic fiction posits the sonic body as a “site of *un*-knowing” through which “vibratory encounters can work to unravel self-certainty and recast our sensed surroundings, making us rethink what we can do and how we operate.”¹⁰

Following Jasen, I think of sound here not as an object or in terms of its “thingness” but as a relation, considering foremost its “capacities to affect and be affected.”¹¹ The bridge of “869” emphasizes the relationality of sound to other relational materialities that are especially pertinent to Kittitians. “We hyperactive / We from St. Kitts so sugar in we system,” runs the bridge of “869,” portraying sugar, sound, and speed as kinds of (hyper)active relations with, between, and in bodies that existing histories of the Caribbean and its music do not acknowledge. Caribbean music history, which has politically and socially contextualized sound into narrative blocs of past and progress, has traditionally positioned Kittitian music as a set of endnotes to a cardinal narrative, in part because of its islandness, smallness, and the blackness of the majority of its inhabitants.¹² The song “869,” which reintroduced pep to Kittitian audiences, elaborates an alternative sonic fiction in which Kittitian music is no longer evidence of a historical lack but instead sits at the center of a newly affirmative and agential set of relations between sonic bodies, sugar, sound, and speed.

Sugar

Extraction has been the predominant mode of engagement with the Caribbean by outsiders since the fifteenth century.¹³ In the early 1640s, the introduction of sugar to the island precipitated an increased demand for enslaved labor and St. Kitts, or “Sugar City” (called *Liamigua*, meaning “fertile land,” by its indigenous inhabitants), later became the first and wealthiest British sugar colony in the West Indies. By the beginning of the 1730s the entire island was divided into 350 sugar estates, and the 9,000 tons of sugar exported per year were planted, harvested, and processed by the more than 17,000 enslaved Africans on the 65-square-mile island. While slavery was abolished in 1834, sugar exportation continued to be central to employment, sustenance, unfathomable suffering, and incendiary uprisings.¹⁴

Described as “the pillar” of his career, “Sugar Children” by the Brazilian artist and photographer Vik Muniz is a set of portraits of the children of sugar factory workers in St. Kitts. In many respects, it is typical of how contemporary artistic practices have sought to represent and reckon with the painful histories of sugar production in the region. Drawn with granulated white sugar on black paper, then photographed and processed as gelatin silver prints, the individual portraits were taken when Muniz was vacationing in St. Kitts in 1995. He spent some of his brief stay playing with and taking Polaroid pictures of local children on a black sand beach. Later, before leaving the island, Muniz went to meet their parents, all of whom worked in the sugar factory that had been the main source of employment in St. Kitts since 1912. Muniz described these guardians as “worn, tired people,” in surprising contrast to their playful children.¹⁵ In an attempt to reconcile the sadness of the parents with the joyfulness of their offspring, Muniz asked himself, “What is it that disappears from the life of these really vibrant children to become those kinds of grown-ups?” He realized, “It was the product—sugar itself. The sweetest part of them is pulled out of them so we can use it.”¹⁶

The subjects of Muniz’s “Sugar Children” were the descendants of more than 350 years of Black people on the island for whom sugar was the source of labor and life. The “weary and bitter” parents who were the catalysts for “Sugar Children” would be the last generation of Kittitian sugar factory workers. In 2005, when the St. Kitts and Nevis government finally decided to close down the sugar industry after decades of financial loss, St. Kitts and Nevis was the last sugar monoculture in the Eastern Caribbean.¹⁷ After completing each piece, Muniz poured the sugar he had used to represent the children’s faces into what he called “urns,” and pasted the original Polaroids on the side, creating a poignant archive of the sugar itself

alongside his representation of the sugar workers and their children. Muniz thus participated in the extraction, collection, and museumification of St. Kitts and Kittitians: noting Muniz's use of so perishable a substance as sugar, one critic noted that the portraits suggest that the "Sugar Children" "are destined to be consumed, disposed of, and ultimately forgotten."¹⁸

Understood in the way Muniz's "Sugar Children" series presents it, sugar is an object with historical, cultural, economic, ethical, and ecological implications, especially given the extractive processes necessary for cultivating and exporting it (sugar from the cane and "sweetness" from the laborers). However, Muniz's representation of sugar, Sugar City, and its people says little about human subjects as they exist beyond the moment of his touristic infatuation and the voyeuristic encounters instigated by his portraits and their urns as they hop the global museum circuit. By contrast, as Carnival music, "Area Code 869" is able to shift our focus from sugar as a commodity to the interaction of sugar with laboring and living bodies: a relational and kinetic version of Kittitian history. This musicalized conception of the past and its connection to the present is necessarily different from the melancholic one prescribed by artists like Muniz or the monological official histories of a creolized, colonized, and consumed Afro-Caribbean archipelago. As Hobson recognized, Kittitian pep makes audible the "paradoxical culture" that Antonio Benitez-Rojo suggests Caribbean people know "more or less intuitively"—in this instance, the fact that a commodity such as sugar is at once produced by violently exploited labor and essential to Kittitians' inherited sense of island belonging.¹⁹

Wilson Harris writes that "history, in pursuing a continuous wall as its domain, in consolidating national or local political and economic self-interest, becomes the servant of a material vision of time."²⁰ Where "all knowledge . . . must show its competence by means of a fable of legitimation," externally created and consumed objects like Muniz's urns contribute to the "intolerable pile" of history that insists on a simplistic frame to create a fictively linear historical narrative "without an inner time."²¹ The paradox here, among the many that constitute the "repeating island" of the Caribbean, is the explicit and accepted disjunction between the truth telling of rational, monological history and the means of knowing and recounting that can be understood as inborn and meaningful to Caribbean people. Officialized histories, especially national narratives of development or progress, are forms of institutional knowledge that tend to supersede other claims to historical authority. As a tool of colonial domination, history validates and rehearses the modes of subjugation against which its others often resist.

The second verse of "Area Code 869" is the most explicit recasting of an unspecified past on a sugar plantation. "We full of stamina and energy now

for days / Two brothers on the plantation a cut through the cane / Ah so it come along and so it runs in our veins / In the 869 things, we real, it will never change.” Sugar, here, depicted as a live plant, reminds us that extracting exportable sugar is not the same as extracting sweetness, which is a relation to the human body. Sugar, highly perishable in its unprocessed state, demanded that workers move rapidly from field to crushing mill to boiling house in order to prevent the product from degrading beyond salability. Shifting between historical and musical temporalities, the song reimagines a past wherein the energy that was put into the labor of cultivating sugar and the sweetness ingested by plantation workers can still be tasted, heard, felt, and known through the sounds of pep and the energetic dancing bodies of listeners.²²

The metallic, quirky, high-pitched vibraphonic sound that propels “869” compels my own body to keep pace. At 163 beats per minute in the recorded version, and upwards of 174 beats per minute in live settings, its relentlessness forbids me from downshifting to a polite two-step. During the thickest moments of sonic accumulation, the Doppler-effect sample of a speeding car is met with the rhythmic knell of an ominous bell while syncopated synthesized tones sound repeated triplets over a persistent bass-line. The repeated snare rolls and heavy foot drum create a bottomless pocket. “That tempo, that riddim, it works together to create energy. . . . It’s a part of us.”²³ As a sonic fiction, “Area Code 869” is an “affirmation of the imagination against history.”²⁴

Speed

In the world of “869,” Kittitians have been on a sugar high for centuries, with no intention of coming down. Sugar has been pathologized as their permanent affliction: “Hyperactive / We hyperactive!” “When riddim buss inna we head / Like we under a spell.” As Hobson asserted, “When you look at Kittitians, we jam like no other. It don’t look like it’s driving them crazy?” This musical pathology is palpable, especially in the cartoonish highs of the riddim. In the context of live performance, the highest pitches of the riddim often play alone for some time, looping eight bars of a buoyantly chromatic melody, sometimes at half speed. Preempting simple correlations between musical speed and the energy of pep, Hobson ends the song by saying, “It no matter if the music fast or slow / Hyperactive / We hyperactive.” Even as individual dancers experience their own sugar crash, slowing their movements to a simple walk, the sticky sweet anticipation and rhythmic possibility sounded by the exposed loop inevitably lures them back in. The beat drops and the cycle begins again.

Hobson explained to me that the speed of the music was not an exclusive function of the tempo as specified by the beats per minute. Instead, it was the interaction between what he called “the elements,” the multiple sequenced lines of manipulated sounds that are stretched, condensed, and repeated, creating a sense of deep and infinite rhythm from the inside out. A guiding principle for producing a pep or peppy riddim is “just add it in.”²⁵ The conga drum, iron rod, cowbell, steel pan, banjo, cuatro, and bajo have all been important in various styles of Kittitian folk music since the seventeenth century, and Kittitian producers consider these timbres and their associated rhythmic characters as essential to a contemporary Kittitian sound. That many of these sounds happen at the same time, and are “stacked” to create a newly manipulable sound, creates a feeling of drive and acceleration that, in dance music, tends to be experienced as speed, “a material phenomenon attested to by subjective insight,” as Simon Glezos puts it.²⁶

As one producer, Leonard “Jam Crew” Lestrade, note, “We are always playing with the timing. It’s riddim all the way down.”²⁷ In the early 1990s, when accessible keyboards came with preset sounds, producers and sonic experimenters would compress the period between repetitions so that repeats happened so quickly they created a sound just short of a sustained pitch, taking on the bumpy sonic texture of the rolling ball in a pea whistle. These techniques, which have become more complex as technology has made procuring sounds easier and as hardware-based setups have transitioned to software, allow musicians to create the sense of acceleration that sounds *sweet*. The deep pulsating foot drum, heard against the synthesized sounds, creates additional layers of tempo, microtemporal events that, combined, create the signature feeling and peppy sound.

These features mark Kittitian music as errantly fast in comparison to its closest generic relatives. Foremost among these is mainstream soca music. The accepted history of soca treats it as a product of Trinidadian multicultural nationalism. In the early 1970s, a Trinidadian calypsonian, Ras Shorty I, combined the rhythmic patterns of Indian drumming, brought to Trinidad by indentured Indian workers in the early twentieth century, with elements of Afro-Creole calypso to create a new genre that he called sokah, or the “soul of calypso.” This new, party- and dance-oriented genre appealed to a younger audience after the calypso craze of the previous decades had waned. In such varied forums as academic texts, online chatrooms, and corner rum shops, Caribbean people have expended a great deal of effort trying to distinguish calypso from soca. As Shannon Dudley has noted, the difference typically boils down to one of “kinetic bodily feel.”²⁸ Other genres that blur the line between calypso, as a lyrical and structured genre, and music that is made explicitly for dancing, are also understood as soca or, at

the very least, would be welcomed in a soca DJ's set as sonically—kinetically—appropriate. Soca is now an umbrella term for English-language Afro-Caribbean Carnival music.

However, as a style that draws heavily on the rhythmic patterns and timbral cues from traditional and folkloric Kittitian musical practices stretching from the eighteenth century, with European military rudiments, through the mid-twentieth century, with the signature “ping pong” sound of the steel pan, pep is more than a sped-up imitation of a mainstream norm. This is thematized in “869”'s bridge, which alludes to the historical relationship between St. Kitts and its big-island neighbors and continental counterparts: “Anywhere that we go / People watching and they asking, ‘What you know?’ / ‘Why the hell we get on so?’ / And I tell them, ‘must be the place we born and grow.’” People in the small Caribbean islands have a long history of this kind of misrecognition as they are often at odds with their larger-island counterparts, under whose cultural and historical banners they are repeatedly subsumed.²⁹ The more tangled history of US invasion in Trinidad and meddling in Jamaican elections in the 1980s adds another layer of conflict within the music recording industry, which bears the mark of these political legacies even in the absence of explicitly political lyrics. Where Kittitian musicians desire to be differentiated from but recognized in conjunction with other styles of Black dance music, especially other Caribbean styles, their tools for asserting their distinctiveness and thus sounding resistance are culled from a necessarily broad diasporic palette. In this way, “869” references Jamaican patois alongside hip-hop's propensity for deploying area codes as alternate markers of place and belonging—the West Coast's hip-hop supergroup 213, rapper Drake's infatuation with “The 6” (short for his Toronto area code, 416), and pioneer New Orleans hip-hop group, 504 Boyz, for instance.

The bridge's lyrics also respond directly to local critics on St. Kitts who point to outside influences to explain why pep, and the behavior it prompts, feels and sounds unintelligible or peculiar. Where former Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis Dr. Denzil Douglas described the period during which wilders flourished, the late 1990s and early 2000s, as being characterized by “un-Caribbeanlike behavior,” “869” doubles down on its rootedness in island histories of cane cultivation, sugar, sweetness, and centuries of sugar rush. In its musical reformulation of the past, “869” traces sweetness and sugar through the bodies and sounds of the cane cutters, through the sounds of the Nu Vybes Band, known affectionately as the Sugar Band, to the eager listeners and dancers throughout the diaspora. At one point, a race car whooshes past the listener, driving, it seems, from speaker to speaker, as Mr. Mention sings, “We take it to the world—zoom—like a race car.” From where? The song's chorus borrows from N.W.A's “Straight Outta

Compton,” which served as its own kind of anthem to a regional style in 1988. From a different shore, more than twenty years later, “869” answers, “Straight Outta St. Kitts!”

Many of the seminal Caribbean thinkers of the twentieth century wrote extensively about history as fiction, myth, and fable. Extant chronologies, explanations, and descriptions of the Caribbean were, it seems, incommensurate with the lived experiences and desired futures of its people. As Sylvia Wynter writes, plantation societies, like those on St. Kitts and across the expanse of the Americas, “came into being as adjuncts to the market system; their peoples came into being as adjunct to the product . . . the sugar cane—which they produced.”³⁰ Caribbean history, especially before the 1970s, in its focus on politics, colonial dynamics, domination, and inherited trauma, represented Caribbean people, especially those descended from enslaved Africans, as passive and paradoxical inheritors of suffering. However, as Kamau Brathwaite notes, any accurate and meaningful historical treatment of Caribbean people must recognize them as “agents of change” within the realms of the “spiritual, material, [and] technologic”—and, here, sonic fiction may lend a hand.³¹ With a focus on multiple scales of agents and their affects, then, sonic fiction is one means of describing and marking the series of techniques that constitute what Eshun reluctantly calls “black culture” through sonic experience.³² Sonic fiction, as a heuristic that allows for new forms of musical historicity, aligns with the longer-standing Caribbeanist injunction against the “prison of history” and invests, instead, in the “imagination as necessity, as invention.”³³ Unconcerned with a formal recognition of Kittitian legitimacy through traditional historical narratives, Gregory “Mr. Mention” Hobson’s attempt to create a “culture shock” through “Area Code 869” stands in the drafty space between official histories and the pasts that bodies know through sound.

Notes

1. “Yaad” is the Jamaican patois word for “home.” “Foreign” refers to places afar (generally off-island), especially diasporic centers such as the United States and England. A singjay is a type of vocalist who blends melodic singing with toasting, a form of rhythmic rhyming and chanting. In Jamaica, the singjay style of vocalizing gained prominence in the 1980s with the emergence of dancehall music.
2. See Jessica Swanston Baker, “Small Islands, Large Radio,” in *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Towards New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations*, ed. Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Michelle Stephens (Lanham, MD, 2020), 383–402.

3. I have called this rapid-tempo style “wilders” elsewhere, but Mr. Mention expressed his desire to brand the style differently and to use “pep” instead. Gregory Hobson, telephone interview by author, October 2019.
4. Fred Moten, *Black and Blur* (Durham, NC, 2017), 115.
5. Holger Schulze, *Sonic Fiction* (New York, 2020), 2.
6. Kodwo Eshun, *More Brilliant Than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* (London, 1998), -004; the first section of this book, numbered “00,” is paginated with negative numbers.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., -002.
9. Paul C. Jasen, *Low End Theory: Bass, Bodies, and the Materiality of Sonic Experience* (London, 2016), 14.
10. Julian Henriques, *Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques, and Ways of Knowing* (London, 2011); Jasen, *Low End Theory*, 3–4.
11. Jasen, *Low End Theory*, 3–4.
12. See for example Daniel J. Crowley, “Toward a Definition of Calypso (Part I),” *Ethnomusicology* 3, no. 2 (1959): 57–66, and Daniel J. Crowley, “Toward a Definition of Calypso (Part II),” *Ethnomusicology* 3, no. 3 (1959): 117–24. See also Franklin Knight’s introduction to Gordon K. Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (Kingston, 2004).
13. For more on extraction and consumption in the Caribbean see Mimi Sheller, *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom* (Durham, NC, 2012).
14. The enslaved were still mandated to work without pay for an additional four years after the abolition of slavery during the “apprenticeship” period (1834–38), when plantation owners were compensated by the British government for their “loss” of human property.
15. Vik Muniz, quoted in “Sugar Fixed,” *New York Times*, November 28, 2004, section 2, 4.
16. Ibid.
17. Vik Muniz and Lesley A. Martin, *Reflex: A Vik Muniz Primer* (New York, 2005), 59.
18. Vanessa Silberman, “Vik Muniz’s *Ten Ten’s Weed Necklace*,” *Gastronomica* 7, no. 3 (August 1, 2007): 7–9.
19. Antonio Benitez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC, 1996), 166.
20. Wilson Harris, “History, Fable, and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1970): 1–32.
21. Benitez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, 167; George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953; reprint, London, 1970); Harris, “History, Fable, and Myth,” 14.
22. As Elizabeth Abbott notes in *Sugar: A Bittersweet History* (Toronto, 2008), the enslaved on sugar plantations were “perpetually hungry” and had little access to the finished product for which they toiled. However, some did steal rations of granulated sugar to sell in Saturday markets alongside provisions they had grown themselves. Others were given cane liquor *instead* of food by their enslavers. For the starved and enslaved on sugar plantations, sugarcane was the most accessible sustenance and was stolen and eaten regularly.
23. Hobson, interview.
24. Carmen Beatriz Llenín-Figueroa, “Imagined Islands: A Caribbean Tidalectics,” (PhD diss., Duke University, 2012), 70.
25. Leonard “Jam Crew” Lestrade, video interview by author, January 2020.

26. Simon Glezos, *The Politics of Speed: Capitalism, the State and War in an Accelerating World* (London, 2013), 20.
27. “Jam Crew,” interview.
28. Shannon Dudley, “Judging ‘By the Beat’: Calypso versus Soca,” *Ethnomusicology* 40, no. 2 (1996): 269–98.
29. See Baker, “Small Islands, Large Radio,” 383–402.
30. Sylvia Wynter, “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation,” *Savacou* 5, no. 1 (1971): 95–102.
31. Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “Caribbean Man in Space and Time,” *Savacou* 11, no. 12 (1975): 7.
32. Eshun, *More Brilliant Than the Sun*, 191.
33. Harris, “History, Fable, and Myth”; Derek Walcott, “The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies* 16, no. 1 (1974): 6, quoted in Edward Baugh, “The West Indian Writer and His Quarrel with History,” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 16, no. 2 (38) (2012): 60–74.