Grace, Kennedy Lecture 2001

JAMAICA IN THE 21st CENTURY:

Contending Choices

Errol Miller

Jamaica in the Twenty-first Century

Contending Choices

Errol Miller

The Grace, Kennedy Foundation

The Grace, Kennedy Foundation was established in 1982 on the sixtieth anniversary of Grace, Kennedy and Company Limited.

The Foundation expresses, in a tangible way, Grace, Kennedy's commitment to Jamaica's development by making grants to deserving community groups, in support of its stated objectives, which are as follows:

1. to develop and promote the arts, health, culture, sports;
2. to establish and carry on programmes for the development of education and skills of people in Jamaica;
3. to develop programmes aimed at the upliftment of the spiritual well-being of individuals.

Guided by clearly formulated policies, the Directors have focused on assistance in three areas: Community Services; Our Heritage; and Education; the last receiving the greater emphasis. The Foundation's Scholarship and Bursary Programme is, therefore, an important component of its activity.

By supporting capable and talented people and those who contribute to the development of their communities, the Foundation works towards achieving its main purpose, the development of Jamaica's human resources on which our future as a nation depends.

The Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lecture Series

The Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lectures

The year 2001 marks the thirteenth presentation of the Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lecture Series. Every year since 1989, the Grace, Kennedy Foundation has invited a person of distinction to give a lecture on some important subject of economic or social concern to Jamaica. Over the years, the series has grown in acceptance and by now the annual lecture is an anticipated event in the calendar of a wide cross-section of Jamaicans.

Our Lecturers, all distinguished Jamaicans, have not only stirred discussions in our country but they have also had some of their ideas and suggestions implemented. For example, there was the recommendation that Professor Don Robotham made in the 1998 Lecture suggesting the introduction of a school-based voluntary programme starting at the tertiary level.

As always, the Foundation welcomes your comments, and thanks you for the support you have continued and, we hope, will continue to give to these lectures.

Patricia Robinson
Secretary/Executive Officer
Grace, Kennedy Foundation

Contents

The Lecture: Jamaica in the Twenty-first Century

Preface

Last year, the year 2000, Professor Patrick Bryan in his Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lecture took his audience through a highly appropriate subject, viz., "Inside Out and Outside In: Factors in the Creation of Contemporary Jamaica". It is appropriate, also, that in the following year in our series should focus on Jamaica in the twenty-first century, the subject of Professor Errol Miller's lecture.

In this wide-ranging dissertation he begins by bemoaning the level to which the previously high quality of Jamaica's education has fallen and, consequently, the fundamental effect on technological development. He identifies the factors which drive change in modern society as demographic, ecological, knowledge and technological development and societal.

In the great majority of states, governments are under pressure to downsize operations, decentralize decision-making and allow higher levels of citizen participation. Moreover, power relations have changed and shifted between societies: for example, nations now belong to an increasing array of global organizations created in the twentieth century; but some nations are more equal than others, for example, in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Professor Miller provides backing and a contest for speculating about Jamaica's future in the twenty-first century: looking critically at elements of the past; most with business as usual.

There are marginal nations, which will fall, and those, which will rise.

Professor the Hon. Gladstone E. Mills, O.J., C.D.
Chairman
Grace, Kennedy Foundation
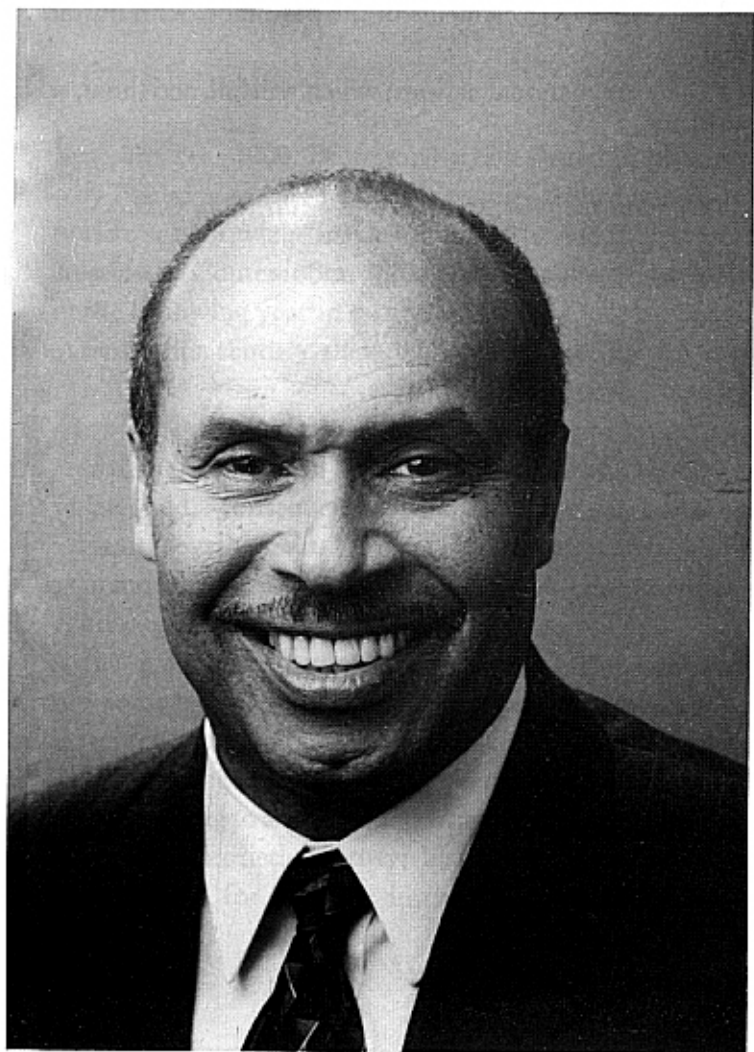
Professor Errol L. Miller

Grace, Kennedy Lecturer 2001

We are honoured to have as our 2001 Grace, Kennedy Lecturer Professor Miller: and I am extremely proud to have the privilege to introduce and welcome him into our midst. Indeed, I would have been very jealous of anyone who was given the privilege above me – because our relationship goes way back to our youthful days at the Calabar Institutions at Red Hills Road, operated by our Spiritual Mother, the Jamaica Baptist Union – he at the High School and I at the College.

Many a day we tested each other at the table tennis board from close of school till supper time and young Errol then had to find his way home, dripping wet. from the exertion.

Later on, in another dispensation and somewhat older, we tested each other on the domino table.

The camaraderie of games created a respect for each other's mettle which was to carry over into more serious enterprises. As President of the Jamaica Baptist Union, I was confident to call upon Professor Miller when I was assembling "Think Tanks" to process critical subjects relating to national problems. His incisive mind and intellectual thoroughness made him a very prized colleague at such times.

At a critical juncture in the modern history of this nation, we were together again in the closest collaboration. When the famous one-party parliament was returned to

Gordon House in 1983, the Calabar Institutions again came to the rescue: Dr Lloyd Barnett, Professor Errol Miller and your humble servant were among the invited eight who were asked to create an Opposition through the Senate. Those were exciting moments when men were called to show their mettle in serious matters. Errol stood tall. Indeed, he has proven himself the man for all seasons, as witness the outstanding work he has done in defence of the constitutional life of Jamaica through the labours of the Electoral Advisory Committee.

Those persons on whom you can call in moments of crisis, beyond just the performance of their professional job, constitute an important element of the nation's treasury.

In that category, I place Professor Errol Miller, author, broadcaster, educator, churchman, man of letters and man of action.

Please welcome our Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lecturer for the year 2001 AD, Professor Errol L. Miller, C.D., B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D.

C. Samuel Reid
Chairman
Grace, Kennedy Lecture Committee

Jamaica in the Twenty-first Century

Contending Choices

Introduction

Shortly after schooling came into being and scholars emerged from among those who practised the scribal art, the task of forecasting the future became an occupational hazard for scholars. This was largely because kings, the main employers of scribes, developed a great interest in finding out what the future would bring. Scholars who first dared to take up the challenge of foretelling that future searched for an uncontroversial empirical base upon which to construct their prophecies. In the context of the times, the inspection of the entrails of animals sacrificed to the gods was the uncontroversial empirical base. We are now very sure that inspecting the entrails of animals, even those offered to the gods, is absolutely no foundation on which to forecast the future. Those not kindly disposed to scholarly exertion would insist that while the empirical tools of prophecy have changed over the ensuing four millennia, forecasts of scholars have not lost their ancient connection with tripe.

It is against this background of hazard and accusation that I wish to thank the Grace, Kennedy Foundation for inviting me to deliver the Grace, Kennedy Foundation Lecture for 2001 and for assigning me the unenviable task of speculating about Jamaica's future in the twenty-first century. Keenly conscious of all the

pitfalls of attempting to peep into the future, well aware that there is no foolproof empirical basis upon which to rely, and mindful of the age-old charge of tripe lurking in the background, I have, for partial protection, added to the title "Jamaica in the Twenty-first Century" the subtitle, "Contending Choices". Further, I am more than cognizant of the tendency in Jamaica to tolerate and even embrace foreign tripe, but to be very sceptical and highly suspicious of even local sirloin. It is therefore with a deep sense of double jeopardy that I venture with much anxiety upon this daunting undertaking.

A great philosopher of both education and science, A.N. Whitehead, maintained in his important book, "Conceptual Activity", that if anyone wanted to know where any system of electrons would be in the future, it was critical to know two things about that system: first its past history and second the dynamic forces operative on that system at the time. If this is true about sub-atomic particles it is even more true in human society. While each individual human being has a genetic template that sets the broad parameters of her or his individual development over the course of the human life-cycle, actual development is not determined only by the genetic template but also by the dynamic interaction of the genes with the social, physical and cultural environment. There are no social genes that predetermine the nature and the course of human society. The nature and course of any human society are products of the individual and collective choices made by those who comprise the particular society. Choice, therefore, is the centrepiece in the construction of the future.

Because choice, individual and collective, is of critical importance in determining the future of any country or society, I will not attempt to predict or forecast what will be the state of

Jamaica in the twenty-first century but I will, instead, sketch three different scenarios of the future related to different choices we could make as a people and as a country. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to briefly examine some of the macro-factors impelling change in human civilization and society, to identify the broad parameters of those changes, and to locate Jamaica within the broad global spectrum of those changes.

I

Factors Driving Change in Modern Society

For more than one hundred and fifty years, Western scholarship has insisted that the future course of any society or civilization is determined by the relationships between labour and capital. The chief protagonists have argued the case with respect to ownership of and relation to the means of production or changes in the mode of production, worth in the marketplace, lifestyles and levels of consumption. When Moscow bought into the marketplace in the early 1990s, it appeared that the argument had been settled and that it was the functional relations and worth in the market that explained all the changes in the course of human society and civilization.

My argument is that to attempt to understand and explain the course of human history and civilization solely in terms of economic relationships is far too narrow in its conceptualization and simplistic with respect to the complexities involved. From my perspective there are, in addition to the economic, at least three other sets of interacting factors that are of critical importance to any understanding of the shifts and changes that are upon us. These are:

1. Demographic changes related to the growth of human populations. Planet earth is about the same size today as it

was when no more than about one million people lived in groups of fifty to a hundred people who had little or no contact among them.

Yet today, approximately six billion people inhabit planet earth. Not only are human populations exponentially larger than they were in human antiquity but also, on average, people are living longer, remaining healthier and having fewer children than at any other time in human history. The average human lifespan has increased from under thirty years to over seventy years. The most dramatic improvements have occurred in the twentieth century. As people remain healthier they are not only able to stay in the labour force longer but also have the capacity to enjoy their life's earnings. Consequently, the legacy being turned over to the succeeding generations is getting smaller and taking longer to be passed on than in previous times. Indeed, in some societies the legacy is one of debt that succeeding generations will be required to pay or there will be greater numbers of elders unable to care for themselves. The impact of these demographic changes is profound and not yet well understood.

2. Ecological changes related to growth in human populations and the resulting shifts in the ratios of land to person and the consequential implications for resources and governance. The living space available for increasing populations has shrunk considerably. People are living in larger groups and in closer proximity to each other than ever before. Increasing urbanization has created special demands on the essential services required for densely populated areas. Moreover, the standard of material comfort demanded by the larger populations of these areas far exceed what was previously the

norm. Conflict resolution by putting physical distance between one group and another by one moving away to unoccupied and uncontested territory has been considerably reduced, if not made totally impractical in some areas. Conflicts between groups literally require resolutions, where both groups remain in place. This has led to evolving concepts and forms of governance from the rights of the individuals within groups to the rights of people as groups or communities. The demand on resources to provide for both exponentially larger groups on planet earth, combined with the demand for ever higher standards of comfort and well being, poses considerable challenges to the concept of sustainable improvement in the human condition together with the preservation of the environment.

3. Knowledge and technological development have been expanding so rapidly that they have almost outstripped all other areas of human advancement. The first major advance is conventionally called the agricultural revolution through which humankind began to move away from a nomadic hunter/gathering existence into settled communities engaged in subsistence farming, growing of crops and domesticating some animals. The timing of this advance is about 10,000 BCE. (Before the Common Era, now replacing BC) The second major advance was the revolution in agricultural productivity around 4000 BCE. With this development came the growth of ancient cities, the creation of non-manual occupations, the establishment of kingdoms, the invention of the wheel, the metal plough, the ox-drawn plough and horse-drawn chariots of war, the invention of writing, and the birth of recorded history. The third major advance in knowledge and technology was the industrial revolution, which began in the

eighteenth century in England with John Kay's invention of the flying shuttle that cut the time taken to weave cotton cloth in half. This was to be followed by Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin, which cleaned cotton fifty times faster that the traditional methods. What this signalled was the move from cottage industries to factories as the major producers of manufactured goods. The steam locomotive transformed transportation in the early nineteenth century. Later in that century, the harnessing of electricity and the invention of the light bulb had an even more profound effect, as did such other inventions and developments as vaccination, the telegraph, the telephone, the internal combustion engine, the radio, and the discovery of X-rays. In the closing decades of the twentieth century, the fourth major advance occurred with the convergence of digital technology, satellite transmission, fibre optics and the microchip. The dawn of the information age and knowledge society is upon us. Information and communication technology is transforming most facets of society including, work, worship, entertainment, transportation, schooling, communications and government.

While each one of these areas of interacting factors changing society is of profound implications and impact in and of itself, when taken together they have rendered human society and civilization today almost unrecognizable to an inhabitant who was born and lived in 10,000 BCE. However, it would be erroneous in the extreme if we held to the notion that all the structures of human social organization that were fashioned at the dawn of civilization have disappeared. Many of the aboriginal features of human communities remain, deeply embedded

features of society, culture and political economy at the present time.

II

The Broad Contours of the Changes

Demographic, ecological and technological factors have affected almost all aspects of civilization. It is important to take a brief look at the interaction of these three sets of determining factors with respect to society, power and culture and at some of the directions of the changes that have already been brought about.

Societal Changes

In recognizing that the new has not completely swept away the old and that conservation and change are bedfellows in human history, it is necessary to sketch the broad picture of the societal changes which have been made by summarizing them in terms of polar opposites:

1. From lineage society where tens of thousands of small autonomous patriarchal kinship communes lived in virtual isolation from each other, and spoke thousands of different languages, to approximately two hundred nations, nine of which have populations in excess of one hundred million people and with five or six languages that could be described as being spoken globally.

2   From lineage society in which the kinship collective was the fundamental unit of social organization to nations in which the individual is the fundamental unit of social organization.

3. From lineage society predicated on rights in persons, any member of which could be alienated in the interest of the collective survival of the lineage, to nations recognizing the inviolable rights of each person.

4. From government owned by an extended family, whose occupation was rulership of the commoners, to government by elected representatives who are accountable to those who elect them by universal secret ballot. through constitutionally held elections

5. From the purpose of life being the perpetuation of the line, preferably through the birth and survival of sons, to the purpose of life being individual material progress.

6. From society based on intimate face-to-face contact as the main medium and channel of transactions and exchanges to impersonal and anonymous connections mediated through machines.

The Nation-State and Civil Society

The scope of this lecture does not allow a full treatment of each of these polar opposites to emphasize the fact that aboriginal and modern features continue to co-exist in societies today. It is instructive, however, to examine this coexistence as regards the notions of the nation-state and civil society.

Lineage society comprises isolated kinship communes evolved into nations over several thousands years. It has been maintained that the nation-state evolved by encompassing several ethnic communities into a single polity (Smith 1987). The

essential feature of ethnic communities is that they are composed of conglomerates of kinship collectives organized along patriarchal lines and claiming shared identity and common ancestry. Genealogy, gender and generation are the critical criteria defining and organizing ethnic communities.

Invariably nation-states today embody cities, countryside, diverse ethnic groups and different religions while claiming autonomy and sovereignty in their relationships with other nations. That is, it claims pre-eminence in allegiance and loyalty, over and beyond every other social and political entity.

With few exceptions, nation-states are premised on the utopian values of equality, human rights, social justice, and consent as the foundation of government. Further, the fundamental unit of national organization is the individual national, the citizen. Each national by virtue of nationality is entitled to equal treatment, enjoys the same rights, guaranteed the same justice and is empowered as an elector in determining the government. These utopian values are usually enshrined in constitutional law. Further, the State has become the principal mechanism and chief executive agency responsible for maintaining values of nationhood.

By virtue of a country's constitution, tribe, clan, caste, lineage, race and family are conceded as having only sentimental, nostalgic and cultural meaning. The family itself is reduced to a nurturing unit, stripped of its political and economic relationships that surrounded kinship collectives in previous forms of government. On the other hand, non-kin forms of association have positive political, economic and social meaning. These include the State replete with parliament, courts, military establishment, police force, and civil service bureaucracy. Apart from these are the political party, the corporation, the trade

union, the school, the club, the lodge and the church. All of these, by constitution and by law, are required to practise the utopian values on which the nation-state is predicated. They are not allowed to exclude persons on the basis of family background or race, gender or age.

At the same time, civil society within each nation carries the ancient legacy of tribal, clan and lineage society. Kinship allegiance, clan honour, perpetuation of the lineage and patriarchal obligations continue to be the supreme values to a greater or lesser degree. In several societies, the notion of kinship has been transposed to race, with the same assumptions of blood bonds, group solidarity and mutual obligations as in lineage society. In all versions of this type of society, the family, ordered on patriarchal traditions, remains the fundamental unit of social organization. The social reality of nation-states, therefore, is that of civil society organized on the traditional basis of kinship, patriarchal authority and filial obligations, while the State is predicated on the utopian values of equality, human rights, social justice and representative democracy in which sovereignty rests with the people. Further, civil society presumes the family to be the basic unit of organization while the State is based on the individual as the fundamental unit of its constitutional structure.

The national project, by definition, consists of transforming civil society from its ethnic roots, kinship structure and patriarchal traditions into a nation in harmony with its mandated utopian and transcendental values, espousing equality, justice, rights and consent. Indeed, the mobilization of the nation-state resides in the implementation of the utopian values of nationhood. The promise of material progress implied in nationhood, particularly to the masses of the dispossessed groups,

has added yet another element of meaning to the values on which nationhood is based.

The significant point here is that the formation of nation-states has been neither the inevitable result of social evolution nor the wholehearted embrace of the high ethical vision of nationhood. Nation-states have all been constructed through the processes of dynamic interaction among groups within civil society, where one or two groups become the "chief nationalists". While leading the construction of the nation on the utopian values of equality, individual rights and social justice enshrined in constitutional law, the "chief nationalists" invariably skew the construction of the nation in their image and garner substantial advantages to the groups of civil society to which they belonged. In this context the state, controlled by the "chief nationalists", becomes the major instrument of constructing the nation in the image and to the advantage of particular groups of the population. The greatest promise for the success of the national project, and threat to its realization, resides in the moral conduct, or lack of it, from those groups claiming and exercising leadership in the implementation of the mandate of nationhood.

It is this tension between efforts to construct nations from civil society rooted in ethnicity and kinship together with the acquisition and consolidation of advantage by those groups leading the construction of the nation that several important societal transformations have been brought into being. The essence of the transformation is from kinship to non-kinship forms of association and organization. The national ideal and creed is that nationals of all families and ethnic groups should have equal rights to participate in the parliamentary affairs of the state, to receive equal justice through its courts, and have equal access to the bureaucracy of the State, including the civil service,

military establishment, police force, schools, colleges, and statutory bodies. Further, all nationals, irrespective of family or ethnicity, should be free and unencumbered to become members of political parties, religions, corporations, trade unions, clubs and all other non-governmental organizations operating in the public sphere.

The practical reality is that the inequalities of civil society organized on the basis of kinship and ethnicity, together the asymmetry of the power implied in this inequality, are not automatically swept away by applying the national creed. Some of the factors fuelling resistance to the full implementation of the national vision can be listed as follows:

- The efforts of those groups in civil society that had held power, commanded considerable resources, had been accorded high esteem and whose culture dominated the society, to retain at least some of their former positions within the nation.
- The attempts of the newly empowered groups not only to play the leading part in the reconstruction of the nation but also to consolidate their position in the society and the nation. Indeed, the democratization of political power has invariably brought about more upward social mobility of those controlling and administering the machinery of the State than for the mass of the people themselves.
- The formation of alliances between the old and the new guard to their mutual benefit but at variance with the utopian values of nationhood.

At the end of the nineteenth century, great faith was placed in the belief that the state could correct many of the ills then

rampant in civil society. At the end of the twentieth century there has been disillusionment with the state and calls for non-government organizations and the civil society to become the new saviours. In this regard we have come full circle over the course of the twentieth century. We have, however, not come back to square one. Largely because of the corruption that has resulted from those in control of the state apparatus using state power and machinery to look after their own – ethnic group, party, religion or whatever – many nations have begun to implode as the state has collapsed. Of the nearly two hundred nations, forty-three are in crisis as a result of the partial or complete collapse of the state. Even in some countries in which the state continues to be in control of most areas of the nation, there are some areas in which alliances have to be struck with de facto leaders, even for law enforcement agencies to operate in those areas. In almost every nation, government is under pressure to downsize its operations, to decentralize decision-making, to deregulate, to make all of its processes more transparent and to allow higher levels of citizen participation.

On reflection, the state and civil society are not exclusive of each other. The nation-state represents the direction and the content of the changes that have been evolving over the history of civilization, driven by demographic, ecological, and knowledge and technology factors. Civil society contains the residue of the original structure of society as it was created in the special circumstances of antiquity. The two remain in dynamic interaction with each other. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is great ambiguity about the nature and future course of this interaction.

The societal changes outlined have had profound implications for and impact on the nature and structure of society and also on

the structure of power and on political economy. Three broad shifts in the nature of power can be readily identified (Miller 1991).

Changes in the location of power

Within the early small autonomous kinship communes of less than one hundred persons the patriarch, or his chosen successor, exercised sovereign and final authority. Power was internal to the group and therefore private. As kinship communes amalgamated into clans, clans into tribes, tribes and clans into kingdoms and kingdoms into nations, more and more of the powers of the kinship commune was transferred from the private sphere of the commune to the public sphere of clan, kingdom and nation. For example, the power to take life was once held by the head of the household. In the course of time, this power was transferred from the head of the household to the chief of the tribe, to the king, and finally to the courts of the nation. With the shift in power to the public sphere there came the shift in responsibilities. The kinship collective was progressively stripped of its power and executive responsibilities. Ritual defence became the responsibility of a priesthood or clergy. Physical defence has been divested to the military and police. Subsistence and occupation are now assigned to the economy and labour force in which there is no necessary succession between generations. Education and training are the responsibility of schools and colleges. The only responsibility that remains with the kinship collective, is that of nurturing and socializing the young and providing a mutual emotional support for its members. Ultimately, major decision-making relative to much of living has come to rest with the state

through its machinery which includes parliament, the civil service and the courts.

Changes in the distribution of power

When small isolated autonomous patriarchal kinship collectives exercised final authority in most matters, power was highly decentralized. With the amalgamation of communes into clans, clans into kingdoms and kingdoms into nations, power became increasingly centralized. In the first system, many persons exercised final authority over relatively few people. In the second, fewer and fewer persons exercised final authority over more and more people. Ironically, as the process of the centralization of power has continued apace, empowerment of the people has become a popular cliché. This is testimony to the fact that, in many aspects of human society, particular values are often being highlighted at the very time when they are being eroded or lost.

Changes in the idiom of power

Power invariably exists in two basic modes, personal and materialistic. Personal power is directly and clearly linked to the individual exercising it. It is open, honest, chivalrous and undisguised even as it is ruthless and brutal. Power in the remote mode is exercised and mediated through intermediaries and things. It is covert, disguised, almost anonymous and often impersonal. In the ancient past, power was marked much more by the personal than by the remote idiom. In more modern times, power is much more marked by the remote than the personal idiom. The mechanisms of the remote idiom of power are parliaments and its massive array of laws; public and private

bureaucracies and their heavy reliance of regulations and rules; courts their reliance on procedures and precedents, and markets manipulated by buyers and sellers. In the materialistic idiom, it is easy to blame intermediaries, for the powerful to sympathize with their victims and claim innocence, while ordinary citizens feel hopeless and unable to influence any outcome.

Implications resulting from change for gender-related power

The changes in power relationships had, on the whole, a different impact for men and women. In the earliest societies, elder males of the kinship commune exercised final authority in ensuring the survival of the group. This patriarchal arrangement meant that men were centralized and women were marginalized. Because length of life is uncertain, the younger men were treated as the heirs of their seniors. This mitigated the marginalization of younger men who, given the prospect of succession, would usually wait their turn. Women's marginalization however, was more permanent.

As power has shifted from the private to the public sphere to become centralized in fewer and fewer hands, many men have lost the prospect of succession. The shift in both the location and distribution of power has resulted in many men being marginalized although male socialization continues to be based on the old patriarchal assumptions of male authority as protector of and provider for the kinship collective and in society generally.

Another critical point is that the changes in the structure and organization of society and the shifts in the location, distribution and idiom of power are not taking place in isolation but rather in dynamic interaction. Hence, it is the older men of those ethnic

and social groups holding power in society who can continue to operate under the old patriarchal assumptions. Likewise, it is the males of those ethnic and social groups that have been historically disadvantaged in particular societies who are being increasingly marginalized.

In many instances, the young men, as young bucks, have resorted to the personal idiom of power within certain localities by using violence as the main means of establishing their authority It is in this context of the interaction between changes in societal and power relations, that violent territorial gangs of young men, often competing among themselves for dominance, need to be understood.

For women, the situation has, on the whole, been different. Most women have been marginalized since antiquity. The shifts and changes in power relations have not had the same negative effects on women as they have had with many men. On the contrary, the democratization of opportunity in the nation-state has provided unprecedented opportunities to women in education, occupation, income and ownership. Such opportunities have created a positive and assertive psychology among many women, especially those from the traditionally disadvantaged ethnic and social groups.

Many women who previously would have had to rely on men for their well-being and who sought to ensure and secure themselves through having children for their men, inside or outside marriage, can now liberate themselves from this age-old cycle of dependence by grasping educational opportunities, translating educational credentials into employment opportunities and income sufficient to ensure a measure of economic independence. Traversing this new path to economic independence involves delaying child bearing and having fewer

children than women in previous generations or of contemporaries who did not benefit from the educational opportunities then available

III

Globalization and Political Economy

No discussion of changes in power relations can confine itself only to shifts occurring within nations and society. It is imperative to briefly examine power relations as they have changed and shifted between societies.

From the sixteenth century, religious empires began to give way to nation-states from China to Austria via Turkey and the Vatican. In the emerging nation-states, religion retreated in the face of the advance of science as revelation yielded the high ground to reason as the prime basis for interpreting, understanding and explaining human origins, experience and actions. At the same time the geopolitical centre shifted from the East to the West, from the Mediterranean littoral to western Europe, as the Iberians completed their connection of the several different worlds that, for the most part, had operated in varying degrees of isolation from one another. These transformations changed civilization fundamentally. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, religious empires have long disappeared. Close to two hundred nation-states replete with flags, anthems and national pledges now cover the globe. These nations now belong to an increasing array of global organizations created in the twentieth century. These include the United Nations and its agencies – UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA – the World

Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Court of Justice and, most recently, the World Trade Organization (WTO). Indeed, almost every profession and religious body is a part of some global association drawing membership from across the globe. Never before has there been greater connectedness among the peoples living on planet earth.

While all nations claim sovereignty, with equality of passion, they are not all, by any means, equal in the ability to prosecute their own interests. Some nations are far more equal than others. Size of population, size of economy, size and strength of armed forces are all dimensions of inequality in the global market place of nations. Representation in the various world bodies reflects this inequality. In the United Nation itself, in which all nations are supposedly equal. While all nations are equal members of the General Assembly, only a limited number sit on the Security Council. Five nations occupy permanent seats on the Security Council and possess the right of veto.

Yet it is not in the political global forums that inequality is most marked but rather in the financial and trade institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. Stripped of all the trappings, it is the creditor nations with the largest economies that determine the terms of trade and the conditions of lending. It is their power that runs things. These nations set the price of their goods and services to other nations while also setting the prices at which they will buy from them. For the weaker nations, debt is almost the inevitable consequence of these unfavourable terms of trade. To turn the screws even tighter, the conditions sets for loans invariably involve conditions that increase the access of the lending nations to the markets of the borrowing nations. At the same time, all kinds of non-tariff barriers block or highly restrict access to the markets of the lending nations.

The most perverse part of the exercise of geopolitical power is its modus of claiming the moral high ground, its assertions of competence and its assumptions of superiority of management and administration. In clothing naked geopolitical power in the jacket of morality, the pants of competence and shirt of superiority of management and administration, the victims of the exercise of that power are blamed for causing their plight by virtue of their corruption, incompetence and mismanagement. It is little wonder therefore that in the first flush of the globalization of trade, of financial markets, and banking systems there has been a massive transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich nations.

These aspects, issues and outcomes of globalization are sufficiently well known and so often articulated that they should not detain us here. What is most important to note is that the shift in power from the private to the public sphere, the centralization of power and the changes in the idiom of power taking place within nations and societies are not unrelated to the political economy of globalization.

Business Week magazine of April 24, 2000 critiqued the globalization phenomenon from an American perspective in the aftermath of the protests and riots at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle. The main elements of that critique were as follows: The positive side of globalization is that

- Productivity grows more quickly when countries produce goods and services in which they have a comparative advantage.
- Global competition and cheap imports keep a lid on prices, thus keeping inflation low.

- An open economy spurs innovation through fresh ideas from abroad.
- Export jobs pay better than other jobs.
- Unfettered capital flow gives the United States and other countries access to foreign investment, thus keeping interest rates low.

The negative side of globalization is that

- Millions of jobs are lost and, on average, the new jobs created pay less.
- Millions more fear losing their jobs, especially at those companies operating under competitive pressure.
- Workers face pay-cut or wage freeze demands from employers who often threaten to export their jobs if they do not comply.
- Service and white-collar jobs are increasingly vulnerable to being moved overseas.
- US employees can lose their comparative advantage when companies build advanced factories in low-wage countries, making those workers as productive as those in the US.

Against this background, there is great anxiety among ordinary American citizens that globalization could result in them losing their jobs. Further, such citizens feel that US policies in support of globalization favour big companies and not their employees. The major unions in the US claim that unfettered trade allows unfair competition from countries that lack labour standards. Environmental groups claim that elitist organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and IMF made undemocratic decisions that

undermine national sovereignty, environmental regulations and bail out foreign leaders at the expense of local economies and ordinary citizens in the less developed countries.

As I read this article, and its explanations as well as its reports of the main arguments of unions, environmentalists and those taking up the cause of the less developed countries, paradoxes emerged as several voices and arguments could be discerned and they were by no means of one accord.

The voice of self-interest of American workers and citizens is loud and clear and appears to be the bedrock of the political opposition to globalization that appears to be emerging in the US. But clearly audible also are sounds of unfairness and therefore immorality that is being associated with globalization. Then there are whispers of opposition to transferring advanced technology to less developed countries and advocacy for the globalization of labour and environmental standards.

What appears to be most outstanding, however, is the growing feeling that globalization is for the benefit of big companies and their managers, in particular, and to the distinct disadvantage of the vast majority of American employees who face either loss of jobs or lower paying jobs. This sentiment is by no means peculiarly American. The protests in Seattle, Washington DC, and Europe appear to signal new twists to globalization. Probably these are early signs of the globalization of protests and resistance against globalization.

There can be little question that the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO have acted in ways that are to the distinct advantage of the countries that direct their policies and programmes. In this regard, they have been servants of the wealthy nations. Yet it is from citizens from of those countries who have been the main beneficiaries of globalization that

militant protest and opposition have arisen. While these protestors may have included concern for the poorer countries in the rhetoric of their opposition to these organizations, this is little more than window dressing compared to their main concerns of self-interest.

Globalization may come to mean that the small potato farmers who are being driven out of business in the United States might almost be in a similar position to the potato growers of Christiana. However, the former are looking to their government to secure greater access to overseas markets, while the latter are looking to the Jamaican government to keep out Idaho potatoes. Two points should not be missed. First, the small potato growers in the United States benefit from huge subsidies designed to mitigate their plight, while the potato growers in Christiana receive no subsidies and are urged to try other crops. Second, it is the large corporate entities in agriculture that are hastening the demise of both sets of farmers, albeit of different nationalities.

In the first full brush with globalization, it would appear that in both rich and poor countries those controlling the pinnacles of the economies have been able to form mutually beneficial alliances. At the same time, those adversely affected have been disorganized and have relied on their governments for their protection.

Were the issues only those of economic productivity and comparative advantage then Jamaica Broilers should be able to export chicken meat to the United States. The barriers to chicken meat breaking into the American market may be lowered only if American corporations buy into Jamaican companies. Similarly, Europe and the United States should have to abandon the growing beet and sugar cane, and come out of the production

of sugar. However, the political clout of the French and German farmers and the influence of the US corporations engaged in sugar production will hardly allow the decision to be made purely on economic grounds. It remains to be seen whether the political actions of small, disaffected farmers in the poor countries will have similar political effects or not and, even if some political consequences are forthcoming, whether this will make any difference in the global political economy or not.

Of particular significance is the fact that the powerful nations, having recognized the negative economic effects of globalization, have exercised some conscience concerning the poorest countries. While it is almost unthinkable to say anything adverse about such compassion, it must be observed that it is middle-income countries that stand most to lose as a result of such compassion. Take, for example, a proposal by Commissioner Lamy of the European Union to allow the forty-eight poorest countries free access to the European Union for everything but arms (EBA), that they produce as it is to be applied to Special Preferential Sugar (SPS), supply by the ACP countries. The only country in the Caribbean among the forty-eight poorest in the world is Haiti. However, several Caribbean countries belong to the ACP countries supplying sugar under the SPS provision. The proposal will commence implementation as of July 1, 2001. It will not cost the European Union anything. However, it will cost the middle-income sugar suppliers among the ACP countries more than US$200,000,000. Jamaica supplies 9.2 per cent of the overall SPS quota. European compassion for the poorest countries, in giving then access to their market for SPS sugar, will come at the expense of middle-income countries such as Jamaica.

Another example is that of the recent blacklisting of certain financial services centres in the Caribbean on the argument that they could be vulnerable to money laundering by drug dealers and others. These services represent an area in which several Caribbean countries have been carving out an economic niche for themselves, with fairly handsome returns. In a market-driven world they are competing with the developed countries for banking and financial services and for tax revenue. The response from those powerful countries has been to seize the moral high ground by casting aspersions of corruption, or possible corruption, on these centres.

In fact, these Caribbean centres are almost minuscule compared to London and New York. Money launderers are much more likely to have their money go through the latter centres undetected by virtue of the volume of transactions that pass through them. Indeed, the Russian mafia passed billions of dollars through a very prominent United States bank recently without that bank being blacklisted. What is manifested here is not morality but power, and particularly the use of that power, by the developed countries against middle-income countries.

What is true among countries is also true within countries. It is the middle classes that are contributing the most in the transfer of wealth to the rich. They are paying for it through job losses, increased taxation and in the acceptance of lower-paying jobs in order to survive

IV

Globalization and Regionalization

Regionalization is a companion of globalization. In this regard, the European Union is a leader in its class. The European Union is not simply about a common market, the free movement of people, a common currency but also about the creation of a multinational state replete with parliament and a common culture. The North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) is conceived as an economic entity that currently includes the United States, Canada and Mexico but eventually will encompass all the countries of the Americas. However, NAFTA anticipates no political integration or free movement of people.

In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been established but again mainly as an economic entity. It could well be that at some time in the twenty-first century the nations of the world would form some four or five major economic blocs: the European Union, NAFTA, Asian countries, African/Mediterranean and Australasia/Oceania. In the world thus configured, going it alone will certainly jeopardize survival.

If such consolidations should be formed, small dependencies, such as the six British Dependencies of the Caribbean, might find themselves in very favourable circumstances. They would be connected with the European bloc but located in a different geographical region, nearer to a different economic bloc. Having

missed the boat of political sovereignty by virtue of size they could, from the perspective of their distant European bloc, find themselves strategically placed.

Changes in Culture

The great changes in culture over the course of the twentieth century have come about as a result of the introduction of new technological advances into the industrialized countries. Any individuals who happened to go into suspended animation 1900 to awake in the year 2000 would, after coming out of shock, need to make fundamental adjustments to their lifestyle with respect to the changes brought about by technology. This would be true in relation to ground transportation, air travel, communications, television and other changes in the home, entertainment, and practically all facets of life Making these adjustments could be a matter of life and death, especially if they lived in Kingston and no one restrained them from wandering out into the street without having been advised of the pervasiveness, speed and reckless movements of that quaint contraption called the automobile.

If one understands and examines culture from the perspective of its wider definition as the way of life and mores of a people, it is not difficult to relate cultural changes to adjustments and adaptations to technological advancement. For example, as taxis, trucks and buses have become the main elements of transportation of people and goods, replacing carriages and other animal-drawn vehicles, several occupations have been dramatically contracted or have virtually disappeared, for example, the saddler. In their place are new occupations such as taxi, bus and truck drivers, operators of heavy-duty equipment,

electricians, and telephone technicians. These became strategically important occupations in the emerging middle class. While not having the educational achievements, social background or speech patterns of members of the traditional middle class comprised of doctors, lawyers, ministers of religion, nurses, teachers and accountants, this class, in many instances, has similar incomes, almost comparable lifestyles and identical values. In a nutshell, technological advancement in the twentieth century has brought with it opportunities for social mobility and the formation of new social and political classes. Indeed, it is technological advancement that has created the of the new clan of social conservative blue-collar worker

In this regard, special mention must be taken of the development of local popular music and its spread as a genre of popular music worldwide. Advancement in sound technology opened up new possibilities for musicians. Exploring the potential of the bass notes they created variations on the rhythms of mento and kumina that evolved into ska and reggae. Combined with the poetry of resistance emanating from a Rastafarian perspective and coupled with the charisma of Marley and Tosh, Jamaican popular music has penetrated the world and, in the process, created an indigenous music industry that has had no government subsidy or international donor assistance. It has not only spawned cultural changes in music and religion but also created opportunities for social mobility that marginalized males have been able to grasp for themselves.

Computers and Culture

Within the past thirty years, computers have been transformed from specialized machines used only by scientists in laboratories

to the ubiquitous component of an increasing array of machines and equipment. Everything is becoming increasingly smart, including cars, lights, engines, ovens, doors, gates, books, toys: the list is endless. The impact and implications of computers for culture rest on at least four pillars:

- As computers become faster, easier to use and more powerful they have also become smaller, more affordable, in need of less specialized care and, therefore, they are more widely used. The spread of computers from laboratories to homes, offices, shops and factories has been spectacular.
- Integrated with digital technology, fibre optics and satellite technology, the computer has revolutionized communications in the volume, speed and cost at which personal, corporate and government information can be transmitted, received and responded to.
- The computer has become an almost essential tool of learning, work and entertainment. Indeed, one can learn to work through computer-mediated instruction and be entertained as the same time. No institution of learning or place of work or source of entertainment can resist the imperative to introduce computers into some aspects of their operations.
- The computer has become the symbol of progress, modernization and advancement.

The combination of the computer's pervasiveness, its instrumental value as a tool of learning, work and entertainment and its symbolic connection with progress and advancement places computers in the midst of cultural transformation. It

makes it virtually impossible to create an agenda of the changes in culture without including technology as a primary consideration. If there is one thing that will be taken as certain for the future and for Jamaica in the twenty-first century is that technological change will continue apace.

Computers and the new information and communications technology have fundamental implications for a society's culture because they come with their own built-in culture. Some of the main elements of this built-in culture are:

- Turning on, sitting down and having a one-to-one relationship with a machine. The computer takes on a persona, developing a private, and even faithful, relationship with the living viewer, replete with idiosyncrasies that betray involvement with third parties.

- Standardization, common platforms, uniformity of operations and conforming to the specifications of the operating systems, application or systems logic.
- Impersonal and even anonymous interactions with the outside world.
- Instant or almost instant response, which creates its own definition of time and timeliness that are much faster and shorter than they were before.

There are several points at which computer culture is at variance with traditional culture. Computer culture requires standardization and does not require personal relationships, while traditional culture lionizes individual style, wide variations in behaviour and personal and intimate relationships. Computer culture assumes almost instant response. Traditional culture is

closer to Jamaican "soon come" in the time allowed for replies. These differences constitute points of resistance, if not resentment, in the adaptation required to use this new technology. Although initially the concept of the personal computer attempted to address issues of individual style, preferences and freedom, the paradigm of the network is strongly tilted toward uniformity and conformity. This is but a recent manifestation of the perennial tension that exists between individuality and community.

V

Jamaica in the Global Matrix of Change

In order to locate Jamaica in the global matrix of change, it is first necessary to note that Jamaica is a Caribbean island nation. This designation is important not only with respect to geography but also with respect to culture. In the cultural panorama of the Americas, the Caribbean presents some unique differences. First, it shares with the rest of the Americas the historical dominance of Western European culture. However, the region harbours a wider mix of variants in terms of the particular variant that dominates whether Anglo, French, Dutch or Spanish. Second, with the exception of a few islands, the culture of the aboriginal Americans is almost non-existent by virtue of their early extinction by the newcomers. Third, the intersection and interactions of the various European cultures have been with the cultures of Africa and Asia, particularly India. Fourth, while Western European culture has been dominant the European elements of Caribbean societies have been minorities within African and Asian majorities. Indeed, the Caribbean is the only region outside Africa where people of African ancestry constitute the majority. These four features of the Caribbean, combined with its peculiar island geography, create a cultural kaleidoscope that is unique not only in the Americas but in the world.

The Jamaican society was not founded on noble and idealistic principles that have been eroded and abandoned over succeeding generations. Rather, it was founded through conquest and then fashioned to serve the prerogatives of the conquerors. That society has fought long and uphill battles for social justice and human dignity. The first injustice and indignity assaulted was slavery. That battle was won with emancipation and a free society. The second injustice and indignity that was assaulted was colonialism. That battle was won when political independence and national sovereignty were achieved.

The explicit assumption of each assault was that once the battle was won, all would be well. The idealism that inspired the assaults and the sacrifices that ensured their success were based on the belief that those who inherited the hoped-for free and sovereign nation would install the just society and elevate human dignity to its rightful place in social intercourse. The implicit assumption was that domination both within the nation and between nations would be eliminated. The domination would cease with the abolition of slavery and the rise to nation status from under the yoke of colonialism.

Emancipation was achieved and a free society was ushered into being but it took the Morant Bay rebellion before some of the issues of social reconstruction were addressed. Upon review, it became apparent that it was Jews, browns and a small group of blacks, mainly in the professions of teaching, the clergy and nursing, who made the most social progress in the free society that emerged. Further, no sooner had the black middle class begun to grow in noticeable numbers at the turn of the century than the brakes were put on the main avenues of their upward mobility. Gender shifts diverted the bulk of the opportunities available from the black man to the black woman.

Political independence was achieved and national sovereignty exists. If we take the post–World War Two period as our unit of analysis, it is fair to say that in the social reconstruction that was engineered between 1950 and 1990 it was large numbers of browns, Chinese, some Indians and a modest number of blacks that were the main beneficiaries of the social progress was made.

As a sovereign nation, we therefore embarked upon the path of development with assistance from the developed nations without a clear understanding that development by borrowing could lead to domination through debt to our benefactors. Indeed, so anxious was the nation for the fruits of development that almost everybody ignored the seeds of the new dependence that was being planted, though every loan borrowed in the name of development.

When the two periods are compared, the Jamaica society has undergone a substantial degree of social restructuring. The privileged groups within the society are cosmopolitan in terms of racial and ethnic composition. However, the underprivileged segments of the society are mainly black with a small Indian minority. These segments still make up the majority of the Jamaican society. They still have not experienced the promise of social and economic justice of the past assaults on injustice. The point is that there is still a great deal of unfinished business and outstanding commitments with respect to social justice within the Jamaica society.

However, it must be immediately recognized that the issue of social injustice in the Jamaican society is far more complex that ever before. While only a minority of the black population could be said to have benefited materially from the social reconstruction that has resulted from emancipation and independence, the numbers that have benefited have been

warships docked in the harbour. Further, the ruling elite made alliances with groups within the disaffected majority to supply information about subversive intentions among their peers, and with other groups to provide support in times of militia or military action. It is this reliance on the military option that more or less encouraged disregard for the consequences of the policy of excluding the majority from benefits owed to them and the absence of accountability on the part of the powerful and privileged. Backed by the military, the elite could act with impunity.

4   Violence and rebellion on the part of the more militant sections of the disaffected majority as economic hardships escalate and injustices become more unbearable. While the powerful privilege had state power on their side, they were a ruling minority. At the same time, although the disaffected majority had state power trained against it, it was not without power of its own. They were a marginal majority they had the power of numbers on their side. The power of numbers generated permanent fears for safety on the part of the ruling elite. The marginal majority was well aware of this fear and played upon it through the threat and use of violence and rebellion both of which could be either random or organized. Whether random or organized, the uprisings resulted killing and injuring a number of the planters or their agents as well as public officials, the burning of great house, estates and sometimes public buildings, These acts of violence and rebellion invariably generated great panic among the ruling elite, their allies and their clients. If the violence were sufficiently large, it could attract attention from the imperial power also, since the peace of the realm was of great importance. Indeed, all of these were intended responses to the

sufficient to blur all racial and colour lines: qualifiers and caveats have been introduced related to social class, residence, gender and generation. To speak of injustice in the Jamaican society, one has to qualify race by reference to the social class, rural or inner city residence, age and gender. Notwithstanding these caveats and qualification, the majority of the disadvantaged segments in the society are black.

To try to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding, allow me a small diversion on this issue of race. Race is a very contentious, emotive and divisive subject but one that cannot be circumvented in any serious discussion of the history of the Jamaican and Caribbean societies. I am using racial terms such as white, black and brown in their Caribbean phenotypic definition of how the person looks and not its American genotypic definition of one sixty-fourth part Negro blood. Race as far as I am concerned is the social meaning given to relatively minor biological variations among humankind. As such, race is far more social than it is biological.

In highlighting injustices committed in the past on the basis of racial differences, one is by no means advocating the continuation of the use of race as a social category. Rather it is to say that if race is to be abandoned as a category, it is necessary to address the injustices of the past and to do so openly and self-consciously. Moreover, it is to say that although we in Jamaica and the Caribbean may affirm the common humanity of all humankind in our internal relationships and, therefore, do not accord any social significance to race, this is not the case in the rest of the world. The challenge in these circumstances is to restructure the society and relate to one another on the assumptions of the common humanity of all of humankind but to deal externally with the codification of humankind according

to such categories as race. Given such dichotomy between the internal and external relations, it is almost obligatory for people of all racial categories, as externally and historically defined, to work together internally to expose the fallacy of those categorical definitions. All references to race in this lecture are informed and premised upon this approach.

For all of its modern history, that is since Columbus happened upon our shores, Jamaica has been integrated into the West. For better or for worse, Jamaica has been a Western society of lesser means and Creole culture. Jamaica's economy became fully integrated into the economy of England as a primary supplier of raw materials. Features of that relationship still remain in agriculture and also mark other sectors such as mining with the export of bauxite and alumna.

The integration of Jamaican society into Western Europe and North America has resulted in long and deep structural relationships with the capitalist economies of those regions. It also includes similarities in cultural orientation, social structure, belief systems and political organization. This integration into the West came about by imperial imposition for over three hundred years, an imposition not without resentment and resistance. Indeed, the integration of Jamaica society into the West is counterpoised by African retentions and Caribbean inventions that manifest the fact that while Britain ruled and imposed, there was an African majority, within which many retained commitment to their ancestral roots, and Creoles who engineered their own forms of resistance.

These historical patterns have created divisions among the population and among different social segments but they have also created baffling and even paradoxical inconsistencies in the psyche of all peoples and segments of the Jamaican society.

This is no mere academic abstraction. Take, for example, the fact that the sugar plantation was the site and instrument of the most savage exploitation and ruthless humiliation of people of African ancestry by planters of European ancestry. The clear message now coming from the European Union is that preferential arrangements in agriculture, including sugar, will be phased out within a few years. This could signal the final demise of the industry as it has operated for over three hundred and fifty years. However, there is no rejoicing that sugar plantations, now estates, will at long last end their connection with that sordid aspect of Jamaican history. Indeed, the loudest voices raising concerns about the end of the sugar industry have come from army of labourers of African ancestry that still continue to be the major labour force of this industry and whose method of working and level of remuneration have given them little or no opportunity to advance well beyond their slave ancestors. These voices are not raised out of love for labouring as cane-cutters and sugar workers but rather from the exigencies of economic survival. Yet the picture of people of African ancestry pleading with Western Europe for the continuation of the sugar industry is depressing to behold. No less depressing are the arguments of learned counsels for Commonwealth Caribbean countries to remain tied to the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords.

Notwithstanding any attempt to avoid facing the facts, a frank and fair analysis of Jamaica's position in the global matrix of change must of necessity reveal the following:

1. Jamaica, like the other countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean, is a small marginal nation unable to alter the terms of trade by any unilateral action that it may take. Further, Jamaica holds no overwhelming strategic position

that constitutes any economic, political or military threat to any of the major powers.

2. Jamaica, like the other countries of the Caribbean, possesses a small open mixed economy that is vulnerable to changes in global markets as well as to reversals caused by natural disasters.

3. While Jamaica may be a small marginal nation and while it possesses a small vulnerable economy that is largely driven by decisions taken externally, Jamaican people have long been integrated into the international labour force. They have used educational credentials to seize opportunities and market themselves in buoyant and prospering economies anywhere these are to be found. Migration has been the response of many Jamaicans to the limitations of the Jamaican economy. Accordingly, the education system has always developed more talent than can be adsorbed by the local economy and ordinary Jamaica people have always demanded education of high standards that can be internationally negotiable.

4 While the colonial legacy may have left Jamaicans a lot of baggage, it has left behind a positive advantage in terms of the English language, now the language of technology and globalization.

5. Although Jamaica may be small and vulnerable, Jamaicans have never accepted, or never known, their place. Indeed, Jamaicans call even Guyanese small islanders and readily compare all aspects of Jamaica to North America and Europe. The unreality of this attitude probably accounts for the fact that Jamaica has produced one of the few new religions of the twentieth century; created a genre of popular music that is only superseded in terms of global recognition

and acceptance by American music; been the smallest country to have a team qualify for the World Cup in soccer, even though it was the only one that did not have a professional league; been the only country without snow that has been able to compete successfully against the snow-bound northern countries in the bobsled event; been surpassed only by the United States in medals won in the sprints at the Olympics. Jamaica was the second country in the world to boycott South Africa because of apartheid. None of these accomplishments fit the social, economic and political facts of marginality. They testify loudly to an indomitable spirit that is audacious in its denial of facts that would normally paralyse such unprecedented action.

6. Lurking not far below that tendency to unreality and indomitable spirit is a deep suspicion of the holders of power and a subversive hostility against constituted authority. These form part of an almost unconscious sympathy for and defence of offenders together with the assumption that it is right and righteous to undermine, circumvent and disregard whatever systems authority puts in place. Accordingly, it is the exception that constitutes the rule.

VI

Contending Choices

Now that the background and context have been provided, it is possible to speculate about the future of Jamaica in the twenty-first century. While there can be little doubt that Jamaica's future will be intimately intertwined with its Caribbean connections and with the Caribbean region, for this lecture the focus will be on choices related to internal issues that the Jamaican society must come to terms with.

I will attempt to sketch three scenarios related to the set of choices that we, as Jamaicans, could make now or at some time during the twenty-first century.

Forward to the Past

In speculating that we as Jamaicans could make choices that move us forward to our past, I am by no means suggesting that, as a people, we could become so overwhelmed with nostalgia that we would decide to return to the good old days. To begin with, there were never any good old days. The mind is usually very selective in what it remembers. It is also true that as people grow older they develop sentimental attachments to their early years. Even more, there are those who operate on the axiomatic assumption

that things are deteriorating rapidly, therefore better days were in the past.

In speculating that we could make choices that bring us back to our past, I am suggesting that, in generations now alive in Jamaica, we could make choices that would cause us to repeat the paradigmatic Jamaican experience. It is therefore important to examine first, the sequence of experiences that have repeated themselves several times in the history of our society and second, the choices that would bring about the repetition of those experiences in the future.

The paradigmatic Jamaican experience that has repeated itself several times in our history can be set out briefly in the following sketch of its elements and sequence.

1. The exclusion of the vast majority of the population from the economic benefits accruing to the society. In other words, the appropriation of most of the benefits belonging to the society by a small elite due to their favourable position with respect to power and resources, and the distribution of those benefits being limited to family, clients and strategic allies through patronage. Patronage has deep roots in Jamaica going back to the patent of lands granted by the Crown to English settlers in the latter half of the seventeenth century. It ensures the concentration of benefits in relatively few hands, whether those benefits are landholdings or earnings from various national resources. Closely related to this concentration of benefits in few hands is the aggressive pursuit of economic advantage by this small, economically and politically powerful elite with very little, if any, regard for the common good of the society. Related to this is the

practice of exporting profits for safekeeping abroad rather than in reinvestment in the country for further development.

2. Making the vast majority pay the debts resulting from the schemes, mistakes or misfortunes of the small, economically powerful elite. Probably the words of Governor Musgrave about the sugar planters in the 1870s best illustrate this element:

> As a matter of fact, there is no interest so little taxed . . . yet none are so loud as the sugar planters and their organs in the public press in their denunciations of an imaginary burdensome taxation . . . While at the same, time the large surplus of existing revenue over necessary expenditure which might have been applied with advantage to many purposes – to build bridges and improve parochial roads and others – for the benefit of the general tax-paying population, has been totally absorbed in the payments of debts and fulfilling the obligations of the proprietors of sugar estates on account of Indian immigration, in which certainly 500,000 of the 540,000 of the population have no interest whatever (HCPP 1880 Vol. XLVIII p. 84).

3. Reliance on the military option to keep the disaffected majority subdued and compliant. Jamaica, being the largest of the British colonies in the Caribbean, always had a strong detachment of the British army in Jamaica. Military muscle was the ultimate guarantee of preserving the interest of the privileged elite. In addition, the planters organized a militia that was the first line of defence. If the militia failed to deal with the threat then it was bolstered by the resident British regiment. If this proved inadequate, then there was the call for external assistance that generally came in the form of

violence and rebellion in the first place. These random and organized incidents of violence and rebellion were most likely to occur in times of economic downturn, usually related to external conditions.

5. Massive and brutal repression to crush rebellion with widespread abuse of the civil and human rights of those assumed to be part of, or sympathetic to, the uprising. This was always the immediate response to violence and rebellion against the authorities. The size and intensity of the repression was always far in excess of the violence. However, it was always directly proportional to the panic generated by the violence and was designed to crush the rebellion before it could spread. Invariably the period of repression allowed the authorities a free hand to deal with those regarded as troublemakers and enemies, even if they had nothing to do with the rebellion. George William Gordon is the most celebrated example of the authorities using the aftermath of a rebellion to deal with persons who opposed their policies and practices. However, there is the even more blatant case of Samuel Clarke who was also executed with Gordon (Wilmot 1998). Clarke had absolutely no involvement with the events of the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865 but he had been associated with an election riot in 1851.

6. Amelioration and change implemented in the medium term. While massive and brutal repression is the short-term response, the medium-term response, usually after commissions of enquiry, is amelioration of the conditions of the marginal majority. The components of amelioration include greater access to educational and other opportunities, reform of the system of policing and the justice system and

changes in the constitution related to governance. Indeed, amelioration measures resulting from the Morant Bay rebellion involved not only Jamaica but also the entire British Caribbean. The periods leading up to rebellion are invariably marked by hopelessness and despair while periods of amelioration are characterized by feelings of progress, hope and the expectation of better times to come. These are sometimes the halcyon years of nostalgia, isolated from the periods of strife that preceded them.

7. Repetition of the cycle as a result of the actions of the reconstituted and reassured ruling elite. Periods of amelioration invariably provide significant opportunities for some groups and individuals to experience upward social mobility, thereby expanding the middle classes and even providing new recruits to the ruling elites. Periods of amelioration are invariably curtailed by the actions of those benefiting from upward mobility making and joining alliances with those entrenched in privilege to effect measures that slow the pace, or reduce to a minimum, the pathways to upward mobility. Thus the reconstituted or reassured elites can consolidate their position as they aggressively pursue their interests at the expense of the common good. Hence, the cycle begins all over again.

In outlining the elements of the paradigmatic Jamaican societal experience, I have no intention to raise any alarm. I am in no way predicting any cataclysm that will cause Jamaica not to be here at the end of the twenty-first century. Rather, I am speculating that one option for Jamaica in the twenty-first century is to repeat, in substance and quality, the basic elements of what has constituted the Jamaican experience in the

seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with all the misery and magnificence, pain and progress that has brought us as a nation to this point.

To put it bluntly: as a country and nation we could continue, in the twenty-first century, to introduce stylistic and quantitative changes relative to the past but without any qualitative or substantial differences in the structural relations of the political economy and sociocultural relations for well over the last three hundred years. Independence colonial style could continue with every thing being bigger and more exaggerated than before, but done in contemporary style. At this point, I am leaving alone the question of whether the twenty-first century will be kind to people and nations living as they had done in the past three centuries.

The question to take up at this point is: What choices will lead us to repeat the traditional Jamaican past? I do not believe for one moment that Jamaicans will sit down and consciously and deliberately decide to repeat their past. The rephrased question thus becomes: What choices will lead to the unintended consequence of repeating the past?

The answer, in brief, is by choosing to follow past practices and established patterns uncritically and by acting out the stereotypical roles, continuing to enter into the accepted relationships that have been handed done over generations. The Jamaica of the past is deeply embedded in our institutional structures. Business as usual is the choice that would ensure the repetition of the historical Jamaican experience into the twenty-first century.

Nine brief examples may be sufficient to make this observation explicit.

1. The members of whichever party forms the government have only to continue the practice of channelling information to relatives, close friends and party members so that they will be in a good position with respect to economic opportunities are come or to shunt contracts to the same sources, despite all the procedures that are established to ensure transparency and fairness.

2. Opposition parties have only to continue to concentrate their efforts on winning the government while paying mere lip service to how they will actually govern.

3. The management of companies and corporations have only to continue to give themselves healthy salary increases and very generous benefits while the workers, who enjoy very few benefits, receive bare minimum increases.

4. Unions in the public and private sectors have only to demand and use mass action to ensure that workers get increases that cannot be sustained by the earnings of the enterprise and to use union muscle to justify the continued employment of poorly performing employees.

5. The legal and the justice systems have only to continue to operate in such a way that a man grabbing a gold chain is tried within six months and given several years in prison, while a manager embezzling millions of dollars from his firm is fired without any legal action being taken or, if it is taken, it takes years to come to trial. The sentence can be little more than twelve months, and even that could be suspended.

6. Members of the political parties intent on defrauding any system that is put is place need only to continue to do so. Their parties need only to continue the practice of pointing fingers at the actions of the other party so that the end result

is that whichever party is elected will find itself short of the moral integrity to govern as a result of the malpractices carried out on or before election day.

7. As a people we need only to continue to disrespect one another and have no regard for natural justice. As a result, it becomes "who you know and not your competence" that determines who obtain jobs, while children and old people are swept aside as those who have social and physical advantages force their way to the front of the line in the normal exchanges of the everyday things of life.

8. Most people have only to continue their obsession with conspicuous consumption and their reluctance to save or sacrifice for their future prosperity. Hence, businessmen have only to continue to spend projected profits before they are earned, finance their businesses through bank loans and then bitterly complain about the high interest rates. Individuals of modest means have only to continue spending large sums on designer clothes, jewellery and fancy hairstyles while pleading their inability to find the money to send their children to school. The don or the political henchmen have only to continue to garner vast sums from illicit activities or suspiciously obtained contracts then manage to become broke in less time than they received their ill-gotten gains.

9. We have only to continue to practise the anti-success mentality, which, as soon as individuals or groups or institutions begin to succeed, threatens to neutralize and contain them, if not cut them down. This attitude will ensure that the practice of secrecy will continue among those who are doing well. The successful will protect themselves by complaining, like everybody else, in order not to attract

attention to their success. This situation, unfortunately, robs the society of many role models as successful individuals, groups and institutions try to avoid becoming targets of the anti-success mentality.

A Date with Destiny: Fashioning a Just Society

In the nineteenth century, the Jamaican society's struggle with slavery ended with emancipation. In the twentieth century, the Jamaican society's struggle against colonialism culminated in political independence. In the twenty-first century the Jamaican society will come face to face with its marginality in the global constellation of nations and feel the full weight of the nations that exercise controlling power in that constellation. This is not something new for the Jamaican society. Indeed, it is a feature of its modern history. However, the pace and the pervasiveness of globalization will make it a challenge that must be addressed. The late Prime Minister Michael Manley alerted the Jamaican society to this challenge with his advocacy of a new economic order (Manley 1987). However, neither that advocacy of a new economic order nor any anti-imperialist rhetoric will alter Jamaica's marginality or the ability of the powerful countries to control the small nations in this geopolitical order.

We have already seen that while significant strides have been made in expanding opportunity in Jamaica in over the last one hundred and sixty years, much remains to be done as most citizens can still rightly claim that they have been excluded from the social and economic transformation that has so far taken place. There can be no question that the promises and expectations of emancipation and independence are still outstanding. The point is that any fresh assault on social injustice

and any new date with destiny must contend not only with the internal relationships of the Jamaican society but also its external relationships as a marginal nation within the global community of nations.

The vast majority of Jamaican could consciously and deliberately choose not to repeat the paradigmatic Jamaican past. Instead, they could, consciously and deliberately, choose to address the unfinished business of reconstruction of the society and to tackle the outstanding commitments of social justice within the context of a self-appointed noble destiny for Jamaica in the rapidly globalizing world.

The path to that choice could come in a variety of ways. It could evolve over time as the consequences of repeating the past create the climate for a different response. Or it could arrive more immediately as a result of some cataclysmic event. Or it could come by scanning the global scene and coming to the realization that this small nation has a unique opportunity to make an indelible and lasting contribution to the evolution of human civilization. Or it could come out of growing frustration with the vision of the future being an imitation of the so-called developed societies and disillusionment with what those societies embrace as advancement. Or it could come through the realization that while globalization is the only game in town, and we must play the game, we cannot play in the same manner as the powerful nations who control the referee and the linesmen. We must play with a resistant formation and with offences that seize the moral high ground, not hypocritically claimed by the powerful nations who control the game. By whatever path, or combinations of paths, this choice would require a nucleus of

persons committed to it and with a clear vision of what was required.

Allow me to sketch this option of the future with respect to possible realizations coming from two paths. First, by scanning the globe and realizing that this small nation has already made unique contributions in several areas of human endeavour. For example, reggae music has captured the imagination of people all over the world not just because of its pulsating rhythms but even more so because of its rhetoric of resistance, its refusal to be crushed and of its response of love, optimism and hope from the depths of marginality and deprivation. As more and more Jamaicans come to realize this, it could well be that the prospect of living out the rhetoric in reality in a world of nations stacked against the small and the economically weak, may dawn on us as a practical possibility.

Further, Jamaica is the second largest country to have a black majority population outside Africa. Haiti is the largest. When one looks at the plight and problems of Africa, the birthplace of Homo sapiens and the cradle of civilization, it will take some time for that continent to re-emerge as a leader in human affairs. Haiti, the second new nation of the New World and that beacon of hope of the nineteenth century, has paid a heavy price for being the starting point of the abolition of slavery. Isolated by the might of imperial power for its audacity, and turned in upon itself, Haiti is only just beginning to take the first halting steps to a different tomorrow. Given these circumstances we, as Jamaicans, could take unto ourselves a special mission with respect to the black people of the world by deciding to equal or surpass the so-called developed nations in some important and significant respects.

Secondly, small marginal nations cannot play the globalization game in the same manner as the powerful nations. The economically powerful have shown no qualms about oppressing the economically weak. It is necessary for some small middle-income nations to decide to resist, to refuse to be crushed and to take on the powerful nations on the grounds that they can be equalled or surpassed. The powerful cannot be successfully challenged on the basis of wealth and might. The small and the weak must therefore challenge the powerful on turf on which they have a real chance of success and which, at the same time, is central to the justification of the claimed superiority of the powerful.

At the heart of this option for a marginal society to take on the powerful ones in some area in which it has a good chance of success is the strategy of mobilizing the citizens of the smaller territory to bring about an internal social transformation that would address the most contentious and aggrieved areas of social injustice. Such a transformation is essential to developing social cohesion, solidarity and the spirit needed to inspire and sustain the challenge. Further, mobilization of this kind is absolutely necessary to unlock the talent, abilities and energies that will be needed. This is by no means a new and novel approach. It is the well-known practice of using external threat to create internal solidarity and cohesiveness as well as the capacity to successfully resist the negative forces at work.

One turf on which the small and weak might have a real chance of success is that of the level and quality of civilization within the society. The big nations claim that the root of their justification for their power and leadership in the world is their superior civilization. The powerful nations directing

globalization to their benefit invariably claim that the so-called weak and disadvantaged nations are in their position because they are backward, corrupt, incompetent and unable to manage their affairs. They are uncivilized and without civilizing culture. The stage, therefore, is set for weak nations to challenge the powerful by equalling or surpassing their level of civilization with fewer means. Singapore has done this successfully.

Jamaica could, therefore, accept as its mission and destiny the unique opportunity to become, in the modern era, the first small nation with a black majority population to equal or surpass the so-called developed world in our level of civilization. While recognizing that these could be seen as very idealistic arguments, to make them even more idealistic, let me list the dimensions that would encompass some of the more importance aspects of what I have called the level and quality of civilization. In the today's world, people with a high level and quality of civilization should act in the following ways:

- Respect and bear themselves with easy grace and that degree of self-confidence and decorum that is commonly called dignity.
- Respect and regard others in ways that manifest kindness and humaneness in dealings over the wide spectrum of human intercourse.
- Celebrate and enjoy life through musical expression and song, drama and dance, the fine arts, the beauty of nature and the simple things of life.
- Care for others, especially children and the aged.
- Be honest in their dealings and manifest a high degree of integrity in their relationships.

- Care for and keep their environment clean.
- Practise a healthy lifestyle.
- Seek and achieve excellence in all areas of scholastic and athletic endeavours.
- Seek and achieve mastery of information and communication technology and apply them appropriately.
- Be comfortable and satisfied with a middle-class standard of material well-being.
- Cultivate a generous and tolerant spirit in the face of diversity and difference out of deference to a higher authority than self and belief in the sanctity of the personhood of every other human being.
- Persuade others but do not impose on their views of the more excellent way as they conceive it.

For the majority of Jamaicans to embrace most or all of these values and practise them routinely, there are at lease five major challenges that must be faced and successfully overcome. These challenges will be presented first in terms of aspects that identify relationships in the Jamaican society today and then in the patterns that need to be established for the new paradigm. They made demands on all segments of the society. Each of these is easy to state but would be extremely difficult to accomplish in reality

1. Trading structural and physical violence for social justice at both the individual and institutional levels. This trade-in would involve an entire range of actions from narrowing the differentials between the salaries and benefits of top managers

and the wages and benefits of those at the lowest levels of employment in companies, corporations and civil services to removing physical terror, or the threat of it, from life in many corporations and communities. It would involve restructuring the provision and delivery services for such institutions as primary schools and public hospitals and reducing or eliminating physical abuse in many homes. It would require restructuring the legal and justice system and adopting and practising the principles of first come first serve in everyday occurrences on the roads and in purchasing goods and services in ordinary, everyday dealings. The structural violence of those who hold an advantage in Jamaican society and the physical violence often used by the disadvantage segments must be jointly traded in as justice is substituted for violence in their relationships.

2. Trading patronage as the means for obtaining contracts and establishing businesses and the sufferers' rights mentality for merit and earning one's way, as the bases for economic livelihood and material advancement. This trade-in would involve a whole range of actions that affect groups at the pinnacle of today's economic power within the society who depend on patronage to secure their businesses, to the vendor on the streets imploring prospective buyers to purchase on the basis of his need to survive and not the purchaser's need for the product. It means doing work that, at least, merits the compensation received by all employed, from managers to messengers.

3. Trading exclusion and alienation from governance for constructive engagement in the decision-making processes by all the stakeholders and actors critical to the operation of every enterprise and institution in the private and public

sectors as well as in local and national government. This trade-in is of the utmost importance for ensuring that the electoral processes, at all levels of the society, have integrity. These include referendums by unions to determine acceptance of wage packages, election of officers at annual generation meetings, and elections at the local and national levels.

4. Trading consumption patterns that increase indebtedness and external control for consumption patterns that support local autonomy and reduce external indebtedness. This trade-in would mean buying products from countries that buy our products, and in similar qualities, and supporting local producers. While WTO rules can ensure the free movements of goods and exclude the banning of products by governments, the rules cannot dictate consumer choice at the point of purchase. The consciousness and awareness of local consumers about the consequences and implications of their consumption patterns will prove to be one of the ultimate battlegrounds of globalization. The education of consumers, including the understanding of the implications of their choices, becomes of critical importance, as does the labelling of products relative to the sources of origin.

5. Trading rank and rampant individualism for holding in constructive tension the claims of community and individuality. This trade-in was the essence of a point so eloquently made by Rev. Dr Burchell Taylor in the 1992 Grace, Kennedy Lecture as he expanded on the issues of morality that had earlier been gently and delicately raised in the first Lecture in 1989 by the Hon. G Arthur Brown. While it is well recognized that although the individual is the

fundamental unit of initiative, inventiveness, energy, enterprise and effort, individuality must serve the noblest ideals of community. A free-for-all where everything is laid on the altar of individualism is a recipe for moral chaos and the breakdown of community. At the same time, total conformity to the group is automatic and stifling in the mechanical and robot-like carrying out of collective actions. Hence, while both individuality and community cannot be dissolved into each other, they must be held in constructive tension as the vitality and vigour of individuality is channelled to serve the common and public good of the community to which the individuals belong.

The mechanisms needed to bring about such a social transformation as that outlined here, and for bringing about the level and quality of civilization envisaged, must include education as the principal tool and instrument of mobilization. By education, I am not referring only to children's schooling. In the twenty-first century and by evaluating the demographic patterns that now exist, it will be impractical to continue an educational policy that focuses on the education of children alone. The education, training, continuous education and retraining of adults will be inescapable.

Further, for the twenty-first century and for the creation of the new template of social justice and self-appointed destiny, it will be necessary to focus educational efforts not only on Jamaicans in Jamaica, but on Jamaicans anywhere they are to be found in the world. The concept of "Jamaican" cannot be a matter of the mere geography of birth: it must be inclusive of everybody who shares our goals and accepts the destiny we seek and is prepared to work with us to accomplish them. To be

Jamaican must go beyond place and ancestry and embrace spirit and commitment.

Therefore, when I speak of education I am referring to Jamaican children, adolescents, and adults in formal and non-formal settings at home and abroad. Our educational thrust is focused on knowledge and skills. In the twenty-first century education will, of necessity, have to focus on mentality, interpersonal activities and quality of civilization. My proposal is that the education needed to create the blueprint of a society based on justice and with a sense of destiny, as I have outlined, must be premised on the ideology of the power of the weak.

From my perspective, education inspired by the ideology of the power of the weak has six main pillars that are needed to construct the formation of the individuals and the society that it serves. Given that "I and I" has become one of the hallmarks of an original Jamaican version of resistance, allow me to set out these six pillars of education based on the ideology of the weak and in relation to the "I" letter. These are:

1. *Identity*. Deliberately and consciously cultivating a deep sense of knowing who we are as a people and the distinctive marks that bind us together. Building confidence and pride in being Jamaican, based on the sense of having a right to be wherever we find ourselves in the world, and the concomitant responsibility to contribute constructively to the well-being of that place, while never forgetting or reneging on the obligations to Jamaica. Inculcating common bonds of solidarity, loyalty and commitment to one another. Inspiring belief and commitment to the agreed destiny as a people.

2. *Indomitable spirit.* Engendering and enhancing the will to persist and persevere despite the odds against success and the failure of some efforts or some people who have tried. Promoting the audacity to face adversity and not flinch nor be deterred. Inspiring the resistance against the powerful in circumstances where power does not defend the right nor the good. Inculcating a spirit of resilience that never gives up or gives in the pursuit of achieving the agreed destiny.

3. *Intellect.* Developing to the fullest the abilities that students have in all the areas in which a human being can be intelligent. Gardner (1873) identifies seven categories of human intelligence. They are scientific and mathematical reasoning, verbal and literary expression, music, artistic expression, controlling one's body, intra-personal understanding and interpersonal relationships. Education that seeks to develop human potential to its maximum must provide opportunity for its students to develop their talents to the full in whichever of the areas of intelligence they possess some special ability.

4. *Imagination and inventiveness.* Encouraging, fostering, rewarding and promoting the application of the intellectual talents to creative and inventive endeavours designed to enhance the quality of life of society and to solve problems that beset various aspects of human and societal development.

5. *Integrity.* Fostering moral development and morality, the glue of social cohesion. Trust is necessary for healthy human relationships. The educational process must therefore encourage the development of trust in social relationships and integrity in personal and societal endeavours.

6. *Information and communications technology.* In today's world, mastery of information and communications technology is critical in any society and particularly in marginal nations. Mastery of the information and communications technology has to be an integral part of any comprehensive system of education. In addition to being a tool of learning and teaching, information and communications technology must become an important means of linking Jamaicans situated all over the world and a major modality of delivering the learning envisaged with respect to this and the other pillars of this approach.

Education organized around the formation of the Jamaican identity, fostering an indomitable spirit, promoting the full range of intellectual abilities, encouraging the creative imagination and inventiveness, inculcating integrity and morality and ensuring mastery of information and communication technology would have to inform and direct the content and methodology of early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and special education and other all forms of adult and continuing education and training. Put bluntly, it is education that would have to provide the principal means of mobilizing Jamaicans to construct the just society, with a date with destiny.

In this regard, those who teach would of necessity need to be exemplars of the values being articulated and inculcated. The work of teachers would be enhanced if the same were true in the political arena and among leaders in the various sectors of society. Word and deed need to be congruent in order to ensure the greatest impact through the educational and political processes.

Freezing the Present State of Flux

Jamaicans could choose to freeze the present state of flux for part or almost all of the twenty-first century. What I am describing as the present flux is the coexistence, in almost equal proportions, of signs of simultaneously moving forward to a new paradigm and of moving forward to repeat the paradigmatic Jamaican past. Dr Lucien Jones, in the 1995 Grace, Kennedy Lecture, referred to this condition as being in a state of transition, a phrase that has become increasingly popular. Transition implies a change of state. This option is premised on the notion that the transition itself can become a state of being. A few examples should be sufficient to establish the point being made.

There are inspiring stories of particular communities in Kingston that have begun the process of renouncing the use of physical violence and of former gunmen enrolling in education programmes. In several of these communities, lists of core values have been agreed on and have served as the basis of guiding conduct in domestic and community relations. In such communities, there has been a dramatic reduction in crime, especially against women and children, including a noticeable decrease in murders. In one such community there an alliance has been formed with a company that has assisted several community members to find regular jobs. In seeking to get to work on time, members of the community chartered a bus to pick them up at a certain time and deliver them to destinations that allow each member to arrive on time.

Matching these examples in almost the opposite direction is the stoning of the Denham Town police station by primary school students who mistakenly thought that their principal had been detained. There was the incident of the assault on the police

station in Claremont by angry citizens claiming that the police in that station had brutally beaten a man of unsound mind. He was said to have sustained grievous injuries to different parts of his body. Yet the television camera showed a picture of the man after the so-called brutal beating but none of the alleged injuries were evident nor did it appear that he was at all impaired in his movements, as would have been the case had he actually sustained the reported injuries. While these may have been two instances in which the angry and violent, almost spontaneous, eruptions of citizens against police action, the number of such outbursts is so widespread and common that it would be unreasonable to expect that, in every instance, the charges and claims of the citizens were unfounded.

On the positive side, there are instances of companies taking a hard look at their capacity to compete in local, regional and international markets. They then have decided to take long-term action to restructure and re-engineer their operations. Such efforts included in-house training and formal training of staff and re-tooling of plants with the aim of having the best available equipment. Modernization of management and production workers was introduced through the judicious application of information and communications technology. The results of these efforts have been extremely promising. Their companies now meet international standards in several areas of their operations and the company has returned to profitability as a result of expansion in their various markets and increases in productivity that, in some cases, has resulted in lower prices for their customers.

Almost as a counterfoil to such examples are companies in which nothing seems to have changed. Recently I attended and

gave the keynote address at a retreat of the staff of a financial institution that is within the fold of FINSAC. It was my pleasure to listen to a number of presentations from top management and top performing staff of the institution. The speakers trotted out the same old criteria of success in terms of increase in market share, premium income, membership in round tables and President clubs, and number of policies sold. When it was my turn to speak, I asked the question as to whether these criteria of success were meaningful. How could employees consider themselves to be successful if the company is bankrupt, seventy per cent of the staff of previous years have been laid off, no dividends have been paid to shareholders who are at risk of losing their investment and where policyholders with equity-linked policies have had very inadequate returns? For whose benefit was this success being celebrated? Certainly it was not the shareholders, policyholders or the employees who had lost their jobs. Clearly the company could not simply be for the benefit of those who had survived the lay-offs so far. Why should shareholders invest and clients buy policies for the personal benefit of the people who were then working for the company?

In the very week that the Scheme of Arrangement for the restructuring of the National Commercial Bank (NCB), whereby FINSAC would become the majority shareholder, was being put to the shareholders at the National Arena, the employees of the bank took industrial action in support of salary increases that would put them ahead of the rate of inflation. The grounds given for the industrial action was that NCB could pay more based on the fact that the bank had made a profit in its past year of operation. The bank, therefore, could give its employees a higher increase than that given in the previous year when the bank had incurred a loss. Somewhere along the line, reality seems to have

escaped the staff. If NCB was really making a profit, why was it necessary for the Scheme of Arrangement and for Government capital injection to make it solvent?

The cold facts are that the so-called profit of NCB for its last financial year was really a contrivance and figment of the FINSAC bailout. If there had been no NCB bailout FINSAC would not have continued to exist. The benevolence of FINSAC is taking over one hundred per cent of the NCB debt gave the illusion of profit. That illusion was hardly a basis on which to make any real case but this was business as usual.

The present state of flux has created the conditions in which there is no adherence to the adage "make love and not war". We are making love and war at the same time. The numbers of killings and injuries per year over the last three years are figures generally reported for causalities in time of war. Close to three thousand men, women and children have been killed. Nevertheless, this has in no way interfered with hedonistic pleasures nakedly embraced in some all-inclusive properties dedicated to such pursuits or in several night spots that have sprung up in urban centres across the country.

The question is: What choices would result from freezing the present state of flux so that it could continue for part or most of the twenty-first century? From my perspective, there are three related sets of choices that would perpetuate the present state of flux within our society.

The first choice is to seek to bring about change in a fragmentary and piecemeal manner by focusing on single issues. The move toward a new future requires an integrated and comprehensive approach. For example, there are several sides to the issue of justice in the society. To focus on any one side without

dealing with the others is fraught with the danger of being simplistic and naïve, on the one hand, and, on the other, fracturing the consensus that is needed to address the problems in a meaningful manner. The multi-dimensional nature of the challenges faced demands comprehensive approaches involving all the stakeholders and actors with an interest in the matters being addressed.

The second choice is to rescue and prop up failing institutions, enterprises and operations without requiring or effecting the fundamental changes needed for viability. Such a choice can only postpone the inevitable day of reckoning. It will keep in place technologies and procedures that are inappropriate and obsolete, people who are incompetent and incapable of effecting the changes needed while demoralizing those who could, and shielding institutions, enterprises and operations from coming to terms with the reality of their situations.

The third choice is to accept the need for change while failing to agree on any broad vision, mission or objective that should guide decision-making, mobilize support, focus energies and inspire action. There is an African proverb that says that if you do not know where you are going, any road can take you there.

VII

Evaluating the Three Scenarios

Choice comes with consequences. That is its very nature. If there are conflicting choices then what are the probable consequences of the three sets of choices outlined? Put another way, how is the twenty-first century likely to treat these antagonistic options?

The Consequences of Repeating Jamaica's Past

The paradigmatic Jamaican past has been fashioned over three centuries. It is therefore backed by long experience in the crucible of reality. Indeed, it has brought the nation to where it is today and, from any objective standpoint, there are many positive aspects to our present circumstances. In fact, many of the negative features about which there is now great concern could be attributed to the state of flux in the country for only about the last fifteen years.

One way of attempting to evaluate this option is to ask: How did repeating the paradigmatic past fare in the twentieth century? This is a very difficult question to answer and I certainly do not possess the competence to address it in any comprehensive manner. In the area of education, in which I may have some expertise, considerable progress was made if one compares where

the country was in 1900 and where it was in the year 2000. However, relative to the Caribbean and the rest of the world, Jamaica has lost ground.

In the 1890s, Jamaica and Barbados were the acknowledged leaders in the provision of education and their standards in the region. With respect to the rest of the world, using primary school enrolment as the benchmark, only nine countries of Western Europe, together with the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, surpassed the levels achieved by the two islands (Benavot and Benavot 1988). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Barbados is still an acknowledged leader in educational standards in the Caribbean while Jamaica has slipped significantly in regional comparisons. With respect to the rest of the world, Barbados still ranks very favourably with the Western industrial countries, while Jamaica has fallen back.

The comparison with Barbados is instructive because what seems be true of education appears also to be the case with economic and material progress. Barbados differs from Jamaica because the contending groups within Barbados have always operated in a more consensus mode than the conflict mode that appears to be endemic in Jamaica. Operating in a more consensual mode, Barbados appears to have been able to come to resolution more quickly and more satisfactorily about the similar adversities and challenges that have faced both countries. For example, when structural adjustment challenges arose, in the closing decades of the twentieth century, Barbados, in the early 1990s, was able to devise a social compact agreed to by the unions, employers and the government. Although similar efforts have been made in Jamaica throughout the 1990s, no firm agreement has yet been reached.

The speculative answer to the question of how Jamaica would fare in the twenty-first century by repeating its paradigmatic past is – No better, perhaps, than we have done in the twentieth century. In other words, we would continue to make progress but will continue to lose ground compared to our Caribbean sisters and to similar countries in the rest of the world.

Of the three options, repeating the paradigmatic Jamaican past appears to be the safest of the three conflicting choices, based on the fact that is has a proven track record and well-established ways of relating. A cyclical modality occurs that includes periods of forward movement through opening up the avenues of upward social mobility.

Freezing the Present State of Flux

There can be little doubt that this option would be the most disastrous for Jamaica. There are three reasons for making this statement. First, it has no track record and no experiential backing. This is unlike the first option of repeating the paradigmatic past and, therefore, lacks the hindsight of past experiences. Second, it has no vision, mission or purpose. It does not have the benefit of foresight. It is neither fish nor fowl. The option has no capacity to mobilize new actions or to repeat them out of habit. Third, by its very nature, this choice represents confusion. With so many different directions being pursued simultaneously and so many reversals of positions taken there is little, if any, possibility of developing consensus on anything, or to mobilize the critical mass needed to implement any coherent strategy. The best that could happen to this option is that, hopefully, it will not last too long.

Creating the Just Society with a Sense of Destiny

This option clearly has the greatest risk and but also the greatest potential. The risks involved relate to three basic features of this scenario. First, since it is premised on creating something new, it is without the benefit of experience or track record. Second, it could be successfully accused of being idealistic, unreal and impractical. Third, it suggests taking on the powerful in some fashion. Such a stance always has negative consequences.

The great potential of this set of choices can be set out briefly. To begin with, it seeks to shift the society and the people to a more consensual mode of operating, therefore having the ability to respond to challenges quicker and in a more comprehensive manner, capable of mobilizing broad-based support. This is critical to any small, marginal society operating in a fast-changing global environment in which many of the items placed on the agenda of change in the society originate externally.

Next, it has a clear and noble vision of Jamaica and the Jamaicans. Clarity of purpose is one of the main ingredients for mobilizing people in any age. A clear and noble purpose giving meaning and importance to mundane and routine actions gives everybody reason and importance for their existence. When ordinary people within any society understand that their actions in the regular routines of life are addressing the extraordinary issues of their times, what is unleashed in that society is enormous energy for transformation.

Third, a society focused on a noble vision could lift itself out of the barbarity of the survival of the fittest in which everyone and every institution holding advantage and power seeks to use that strength to advance their cause without regard for the

welfare of others, particularly the weak. The result would be a more humane society.

And finally, the timing of this set of choices could be of critical importance in that the earlier it is made the greater will be the opportunity to seize the full range of opportunities offered by the information age revolution and the emergence of the knowledge economy. Of all the technological revolutions that have taken place in the course of human history, the information and knowledge revolution offers the greatest scope and possibilities to small nations and marginal peoples. It is not might and muscle that count but intellect and the creative imagination. In these matters, small marginal nations and their peoples are on the same footing as those with military might. Without attempting to be exhaustive, the advantages afforded to Jamaica and other small marginal nations that comprise the Commonwealth Caribbean can be listed as follows:

- In fully exploiting the opportunities offered by the knowledge economic and information society, Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean nations are hardly likely to be seen to present a major or serious threat to any of the entrenched powers. By being ignored, these small marginal nations could be given the chance to fully exploit the opportunities afforded.
- The global knowledge economy and information society need talent. Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean have been net exporters of talent for well over a hundred years, beginning with the construction of the railroads in Central America in the late nineteenth century and the construction of the Panama Canal at the turn of the century. Our people have developed the knowledge base for living constructively

in other places. The new revolution offers the region the prospect of developing its abilities to the full, almost confident of the fact that people with developed talent and ability to operate as global citizens will find opportunity somewhere.

- The nature of information and communications is such that the flows are both in and out of the region. Accordingly, local talent and services can have global reach while being physically located at home.
- Early adaptation and mastery of the elements of the technological revolution should allow Jamaicans and the people of the Commonwealth Caribbean not only to provide leaders within the so-called Third World but also to provide and deliver development services of a superior quality to Third World countries which are still making later adaptations.

In assessing this option for the future, it is necessary to make some general comments on the concept of marginality to which so many references have been made. From my perspective, marginality is neither a disease nor a terminal condition. It is nothing to be lamented. Rather, it is a social fact of both the internal organization of society and the interrelationships between societies. Further, neither marginality nor its polar opposite, centrality, are permanent conditions in the long haul of history.

One of the facts about the New World, of which we are a part, is that practically all of the peoples who now populate this hemisphere had their origins among marginal groups or lineages within the societies of the four continents from which they came by choice or force. It was not the kings and senior nobles who

came to the New World but the lesser notables and commoners seeking their fortune or religious people fleeing persecution. It was not the chiefs of the powerful tribes of Africa who were captured and transported but the captives of the wars fought as the powerful tribes on the sub-Saharan trade routes pushed to the Atlantic coast and fought the weaker tribes for territory. It was not the Dynastic heads of China who made their way to the New World but members of marginal lineages seeking a better life. It was not the high caste Brahmins that came from India to labour in the cane fields of the Caribbean but mainly members of the lower castes.

That in two centuries the United States could rise to be the sole superpower of the world and to take on the leadership of the Western World, not only in military might but in scholarship, technology and standards of living, speaks to the enormous potential of marginal energy and the rise of the marginalized in human history. The case of the United States is by no means unique. History is full of such examples in every region of the world. Up to the middle of the sixth century, Arabs were still mostly discordant nomadic tribes roaming the Arabian Peninsula. In less than one hundred and fifty years, they had established an Islamic Empire with borders that encompassed territory greater than the Roman Empire at its height (Stanton 1990). The new Islamic Empire stretched across three continents. Its borders ran from the Indus River in South Asia, to the Pyrenees of the Iberian Peninsula, across to the Aral Sea in Southern Europe, and from there to the first cataract of the Nile in North Africa. In this vast area, there was one state, one law, one official religion and one official language. At one point of Arab conquest, the Turks were slaves. Within four centuries, they had risen to be the military and political force in the Empire. By the eleventh

century, Turks were the Sultans and leaders of the Islamic Empire (Nakosteen 1964).

One thing about the twenty-first century that can be absolutely certain is that, during its course, nations and peoples that are now marginalized will rise while nations and peoples now central and powerful will fall from grace. This has been the course of history through the centuries and millennia up to this time. There is no reason to believe or expect that the twenty-first century will be any different. The changes will come not because of any predestined force operating in history but because of the nature of society itself. While it is not possible to predict which of the marginalized will rise and which centralized will fall, it is possible to identify the characteristics that will mark them.

The central nations and societies that will lose ground will be marked by the following characteristics:

- They will become conservative by holding on to obsolete ways of operating, outmoded forms of relationships, thought and practices that are no longer relevant or appropriate.

- They will become increasingly incompetent as they seek to keep the entrenched elites in place, thus excluding competent people from rising to the top and, as they seek to look after their own, by keeping out the talent they need to recruit from elsewhere.

- They will become increasing corrupt by the actions taken to keep the entrenched elites in place and to keep talent out.

- They will become comfortably based upon the standards of living and the lifestyles they now enjoy and complacent in believing that these will continue almost as of right.

Conservatism joined with incompetence, corruption and comfort will induce the decadence that ensures their fall from grace.

Marginal nations and peoples that will rise will share the following characteristics:

- Development of some noble purpose capable of capturing the imagination and inspiring the commitment of the majority of people in their polities by virtue of the moral force of that purpose.
- Desire to make a mark on the world with respect to resolving some intractable issue that so far has eluded the best efforts of people elsewhere and in other eras.
- Engage constructively and overcome the moral constraints of their existing social structure in ways that transform relationships, thus allowing competent, talented and capable people to rise to the top from wherever in that society they may have originated.
- Mobilize the entire society or nation, and the energies released by social transformation, to exert themselves to achieve the noble purpose about which consensus has been reached.
- Seize the opportunities offered by new and emerging technologies to serve the practical objectives set in achieving the overall goals, which the nation is attempting to achieve. This includes recruiting talent and competence that are not found among its own people and giving room to innovative applications and inventive solutions developed in the powerful nations but which entrenched interests in those nations crowd out because of their potential to disturb the status quo.

The point of these observations is that the option chosen to create the just society with a sense of destiny has the potential to make it possible for the Jamaican society, and any other Commonwealth Caribbean society that might follow this path, to accomplish the greatest advance in its history.

Conclusion

Let me conclude where I started. Speculation about the future is risky business. Its greatest value probably resides in provoking thought and stimulating others to improve the ideas expressed. So much of our regular dialogue in Jamaica is about the short-term that hopefully this lecture may cause some to raise their heads and look at the long term. If that were the case, then my exertions and the exposure of my "tripe" would be worth it. The essence of this presentation and my speculation about Jamaica in the twenty-first century is that, basically, there seem to be three main categories of choices and futures.

The first option is based on the notion that there is a paradigmatic Jamaican experience that has kept repeating itself over the course of the last three and a half centuries. Jamaica was the prize British colony in the Caribbean in the early eighteenth century. The country declined from that pinnacle during the nineteenth century. Over the course of the twentieth century, we made progress but have lost ground regionally and globally. Repeating the paradigmatic Jamaica experience in the twenty-first century will allow us to continue to progress but also to continue to lose ground. The prime reason for this would be the high levels of conflict and confrontation and the consequent dissipation of energy embedded in that experience.

The second option conceptualizes the present circumstances as a state of flux and warns that if we were to continue in this state of so-called transition for any length of time the consequences could be disastrous. This warning is premised on the notion that in this state of flux, characterized by business as usual and fragmentary single issues tackling the status quo, there is neither an inspiring noble vision nor tested experience-guiding action.

The third option is a dream or a vision of a future that could be. As far as I am concerned, it is not outside the reach and the grasp of Jamaican audacity. If globalization is going to be a downward spiralling sinkhole bringing doom to small and middle-income nations, then let us heed the words of our countryman, Claude McKay, in his famous poem that highlights the options before those confronting seemingly hopeless odds.

> If we must die, let it not be like hogs
> Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
> While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
> Making their mock at our accursed lot.
> If we must die, O let us nobly die,
> So that our precious blood may not be shed
> In vain, then even the monsters we defy
> Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!
> O kinsmen! We must meet the common foe!
> Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,
> And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!
> What though before us lies the open grave?
> Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
> Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

References

Benavot, A. and Phyllis Benavot. 1988. "The Expansion of Primary Education, 1870–1940: Trends and Issues." *Sociology of Education* 61 (July): 191–210.

Gardner, W.J. 1873. *History of Jamaica.* London: T. Fisher, Unwin

Manley, M. 1987. *Up the Down Escalator: Development and the International Economy.* London: André Deutsch.

Miller, E. 1991. *Men At Risk.* Kingston: Jamaica Publishing House.

Nakosteen, M. K. 1964. *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education.* Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado Press.

Smith, A. 1987. *The Ethnic Origin of Nations.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Stanton, C. M. 1990. *Higher Learning in Islam: The Classical Period AD 700–1300.* Baltimore: Rowman and Littlefield.

Wilmot, S. 1998. "The Politics of Samuel Clarke: Black Creole Politician in Free Jamaica, 1851–1865." *Caribbean Quarterly* 44, nos. 1 & 2: 129–144.