



CARIBBEAN CULTURE

- SS for CSEC Study Guide:
Unit 2.1, pages 24-25
- Modules: page 180-192

Image source: Pinterest
(Caribbean Art #Culture
#Diversity Via
Artist: Ivey Hayes #SemCaribe)

OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss different cultural patterns, customs, ceremonies, religions and festivals in the Caribbean region
2. Identify ancestral customs, art, craft, language, music, dance and folklore promoted by national organisations and groups

Cultural Diversity in the Caribbean

- Cultural diversity occurs when people from different cultural or ethnic groups live together in one place.
- Within the Caribbean, people of African, European, American, Afro-Indian, Asian and Middle Eastern ethnic groups live together.
- Mixing cultures brings a variety of festivals, food, art and traditions to the Caribbean. It can also cause tensions.

Cultures and their influence in the Caribbean

- The earliest ethnic group to settle in the Caribbean were the Amerindians who came from Central and South America around 4000 BC. The Taino people from the Orinoco river area arrived around 500 BC. Amerindians still live in the Caribbean today, particularly in St Vincent.
- Africans were transported to the Caribbean in the 17th century as slaves. Most countries in the Caribbean have a majority Afro-Caribbean population.
- The influence of European culture is present in the Caribbean through Christianity and festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Europeans arrived in the Caribbean in 1492.
- Asian influence came with the arrival of indentured workers from China and India in the 19th century. With these ethnic groups came Hinduism and Islam, along with their many festivals.
- Write a timeline using the information above.

Today, these cultures fuse to create diversity in the Caribbean. Traditions are kept alive through festivals, crafts, food, literature and religion. Many cultures form their own groups to promote and protect their ancestral customs.

| Ethnic group | Contribution to Caribbean culture |
|---|---|
| Amerindians (Central and South America) | Cassava, pepperpot, traditional crafts (basket weaving and pottery making) |
| Afro-Caribbeans (Africa) | African traditional religion (Orisha), drumming and dance, storytelling, plantain, breadfruit |
| Europeans | Architecture, Christianity, cricket, government, legal system and education systems, language, way we dress |
| Asians (China, India) | Hinduism, Islam, festivals, roti, curry, rice |

Commercialisation of Culture

The Caribbean's rich cultural mix is attractive to tourists, who like to try the different foods available and visit cultural and historical places. People also come to the Caribbean to experience carnival. Tourists can buy traditional art and crafts and pay to watch traditional dancing and music.

Test Yourself:

1. Name TWO European influences in modern Caribbean life.
2. Which ethnic group brought Islam and Hinduism to the Caribbean?
3. Identify ONE benefit and ONE drawback of cultural diversity.

COMMERCIALISATION OF CULTURE

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TRADITIONAL MAS' COSTUMES





PRESENT DAY CARNIVAL COSTUMES

Commercialization of culture is when cultural elements are used to make money.

e.g. traditional dances may be performed mainly for tourists, musicians sell commercial CDs across the world, and companies make Jamaican jerk sauce.
NB: Carnival costumes

Is commercialization good or bad?



What do you notice?

Present day

- Skimpy/revealing
- All relatively similar
- Focus on person's physique rather than costume
- Raucous behaviour to match costume

Past

- Not revealing, lots of fabric (more modest)
- All different
- Focus on costume rather than person's physique
- Chipping rather than wining

What caused this change?

Commercialization of our culture!

COMMERCIALIZATION OF CARNIVAL

GOOD OR BAD?

GOOD

- Helps to keep cultures alive
- Earns foreign exchange
- helps to boost economies (tourism \$)
- Provides jobs for calypsonians, soca artistes, wire benders/costume makers etc.
- Encourages talent development

BAD

- Dilution of culture and cultural erosion may occur due to the commodification of cultural goods (staged authenticity)
- Cultural erasure
- Standardization / loss of unique and distinct quality
- Loss of creativity



LOSS OF AUTHENTICITY AND STAGED AUTHENTICITY

- Adapting cultural expressions and manifestations to the tastes of tourists or even performing shows as if they were "real life" constitutes "staged authenticity".
- As long as tourists just want a glimpse of the local atmosphere, a quick glance at local life, without any knowledge or even interest, staging will be inevitable.



CARIFESTA

Although some people worry that global mass media is diluting Caribbean culture, the reverse of this is also true:

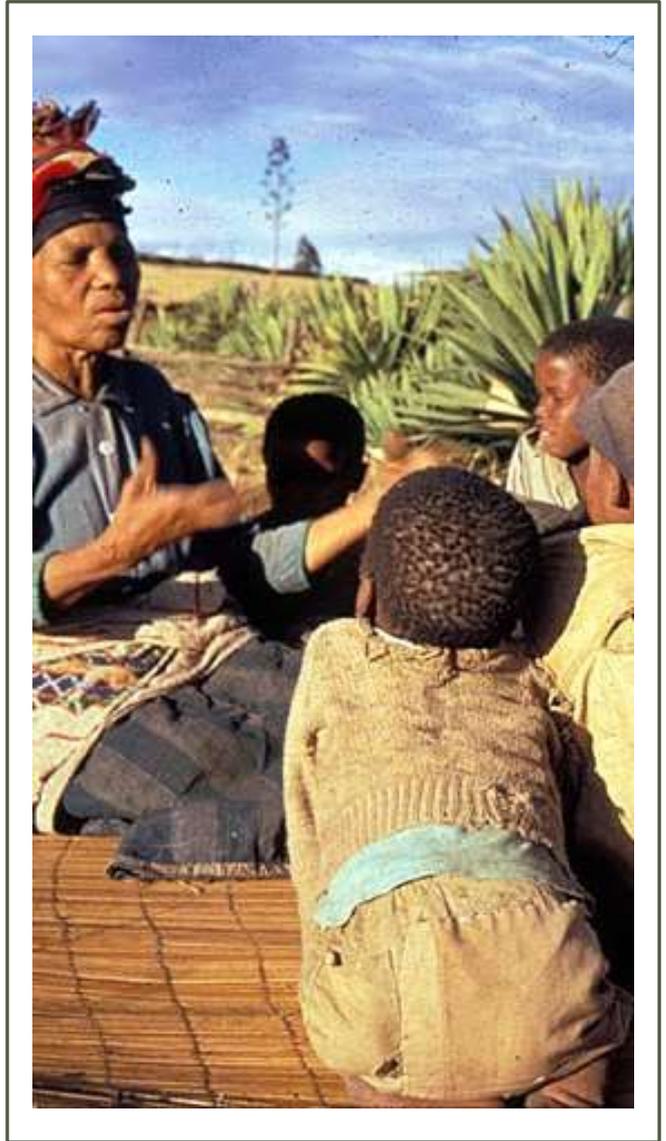
Caribbean culture can be preserved, transmitted and transformed through communication.

1. Cultural Groups
2. Artists and artistes
3. Mass Media
4. Institutions
 - **government ministry** responsible for arts and culture
 - festivals such as CARIFESTA
 - art galleries
 - universities

Cultural Groups

The Caribbean is made up of many different cultural groups and their traditions are kept alive through:

1. Oral tradition (story-telling) (Griot)
2. Customs
3. Traditional food
4. Traditional music
5. Arts, craft and festivals



Cultural Ambassadors

- Shiv Shakti Dance Group
- Malik Folk Performing Company

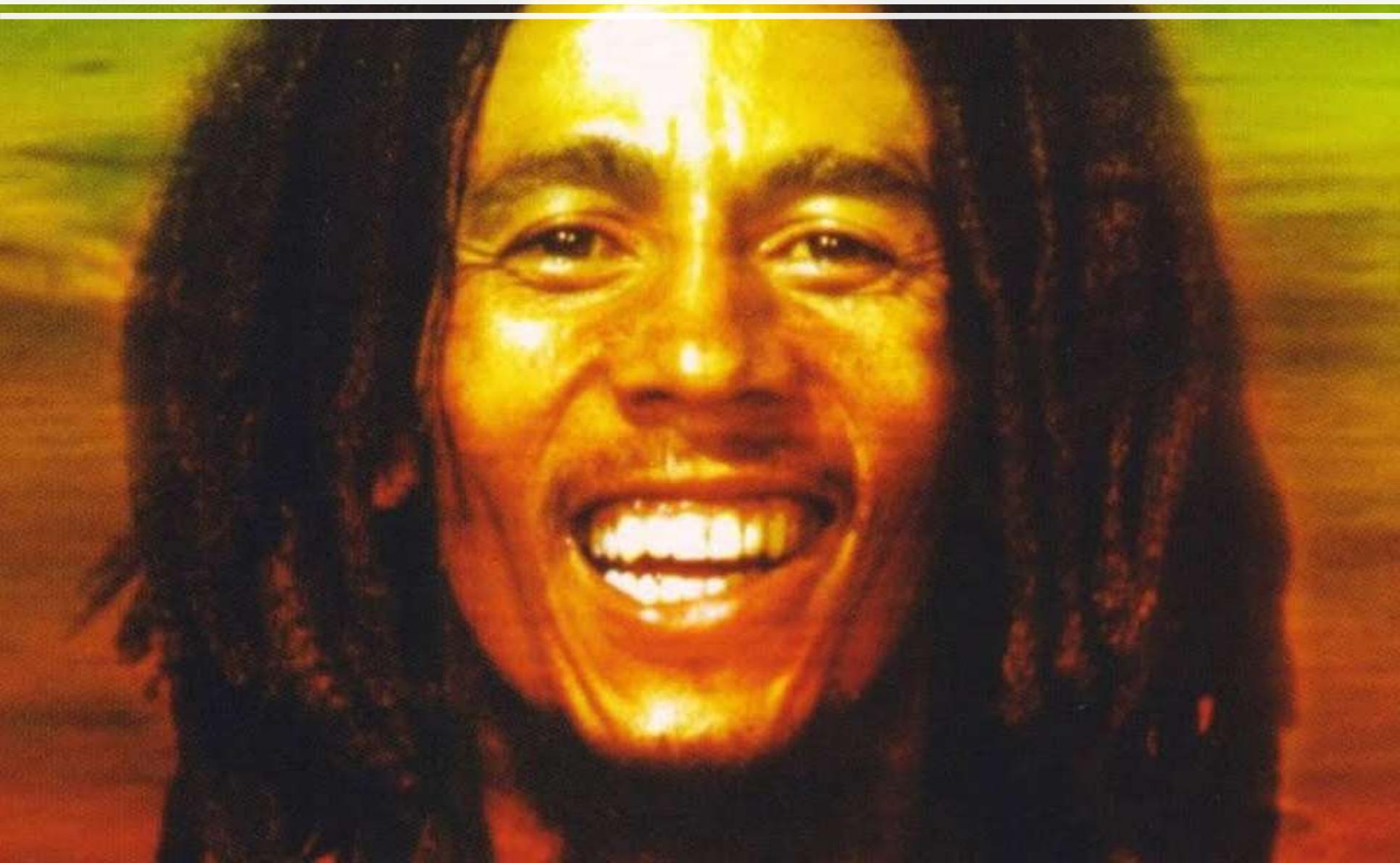


Cultural Icons

- Calypso Rose
- Machel Montano



Bob Marley



Cultural Groups

Many cultural practices, such as Carnival, are now celebrated across the Caribbean and even draw in outside visitors.

Traditional Caribbean culture is preserved through:

- performances
- workshops
- museums
- awareness-raising through the media

Cultural groups also exist outside the Caribbean to promote and preserve Caribbean tradition for the **Caribbean diaspora** (Caribbean people living in other countries).





Artists/Artistes

Artists pass on cultural heritage through the paintings, sculptures, craft, writing and music they produce.

Some artwork, music or writing may be very traditional, other pieces may be modern translations of traditional culture and others may reflect the modern, diverse Caribbean culture that exists today.

Mass Media

- Through **making programming involving local people, artists and traditions**, Caribbean culture can be preserved and shared across the world.
- The mass media is responsible for transmitting reggae, dance hall and patois worldwide along with artists such as Rihanna, Bob Marley, VS Naipaul and Marlon James.
- Examples of Caribbean culture such as Bob Marley lyrics are internationally recognised as a result of transmission by mass media.
- **Celebrations of Caribbean culture** such as carnival have also been **publicised through mass media**, resulting in thousands of visitors to the islands each year.

Institutions



Every Caribbean country has a **government ministry** responsible for arts and culture. These ministries develop and support cultural and artistic growth in their country and across the Caribbean. They may:

- fund arts programmes in schools and communities
- promote and produce cultural festivals
- support libraries and museums
- run competitions
- propose and develop policies to protect and promote Caribbean culture.
- Give awards/recognition to cultural icons

In addition, institutions such as **CARIFESTA**, **art galleries** and **universities** promote Caribbean art and culture regionally and worldwide.

Test Yourself

1. List FOUR means by which cultural heritage in the Caribbean can be transmitted and transformed.
2. Identify some strengths and weaknesses of these different forms of transmission.
3. Do you think that Caribbean culture can be commercialised (promoted and sold to a mass market) at the same time as being conserved? Why or why not?

Language

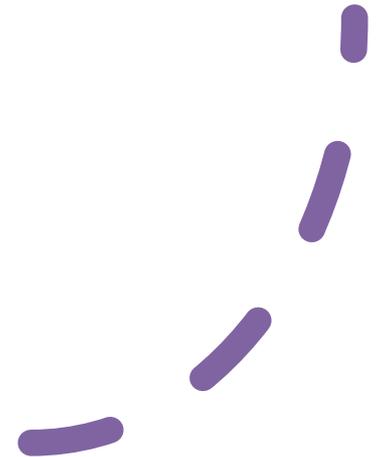
- The **official language** of most Caribbean countries is **English**.
- **French Creole is a dialect that is a blend of African and European languages.** E.g. French creole in Haiti, St. Lucia and Dominica. Patois/patwa in T&T and Jamaica. Papiamentu (mix of Dutch, Portuguese, English, African languages) spoken in Surinam and the Dutch Caribbean. Examples of indigenous words: hammock, canoe, barbeque
- Literature and writing: Helps to preserve our cultural heritage by immortalising the traditions of life in the Caribbean. (Caribbean authors: VS Naipaul, Derek Walcott, Sam Selvon).

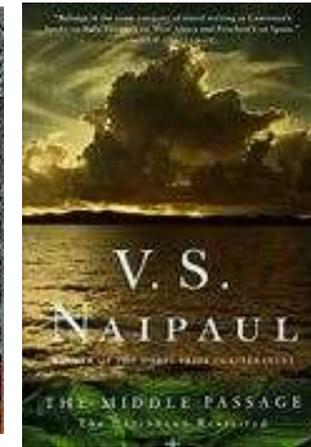
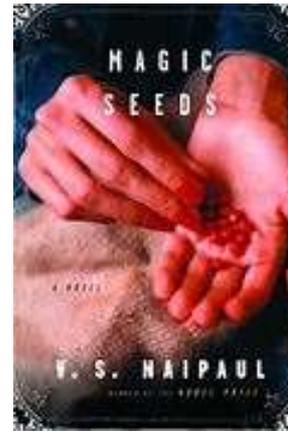
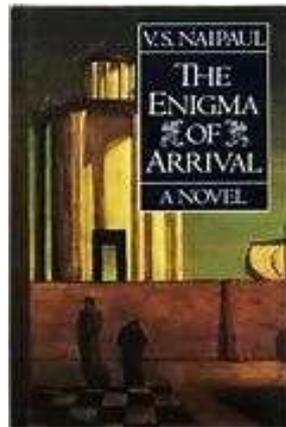
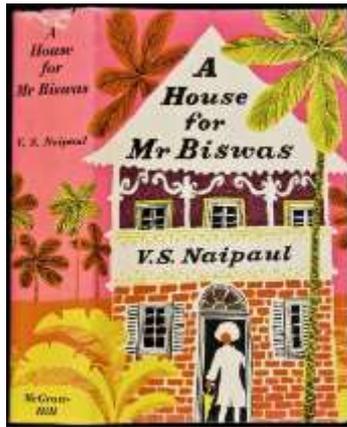
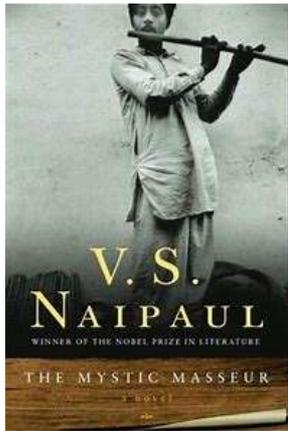
Literature and writing

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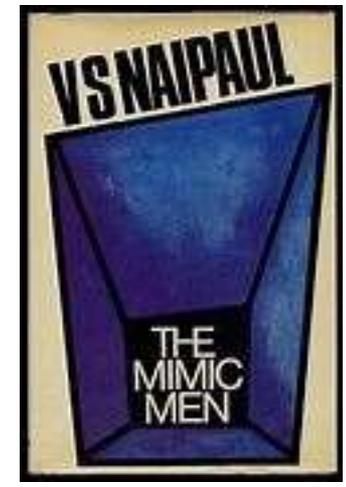
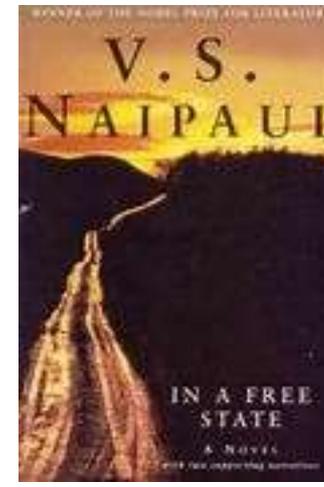
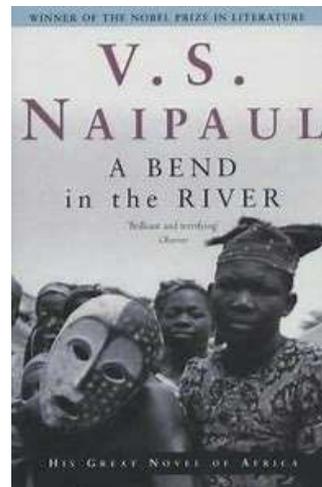
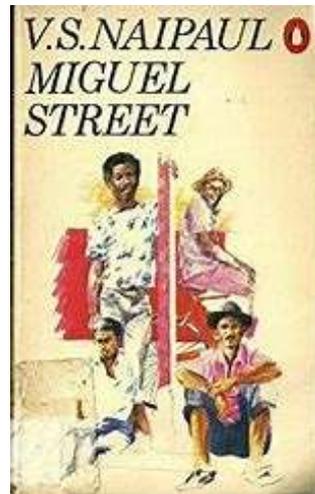
Caribbean authors:

- VS Naipaul
- Derek Walcott
- Sam Selvon

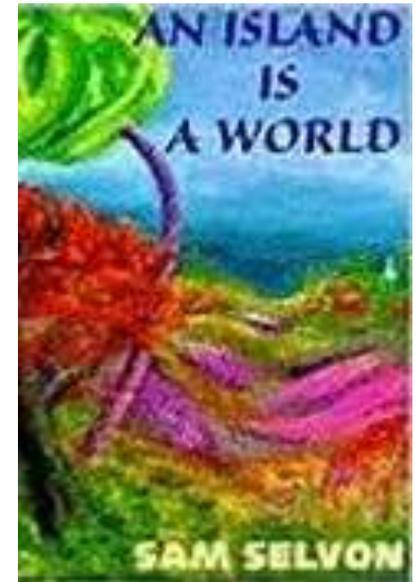
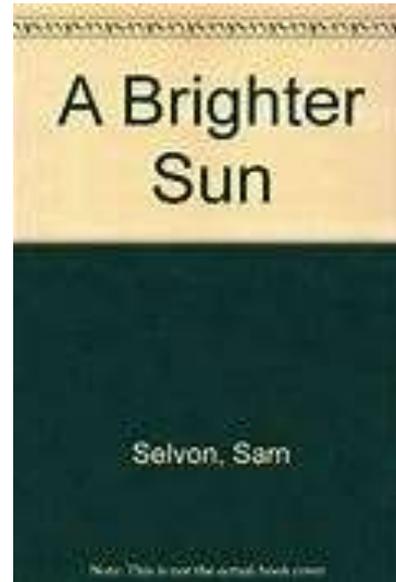
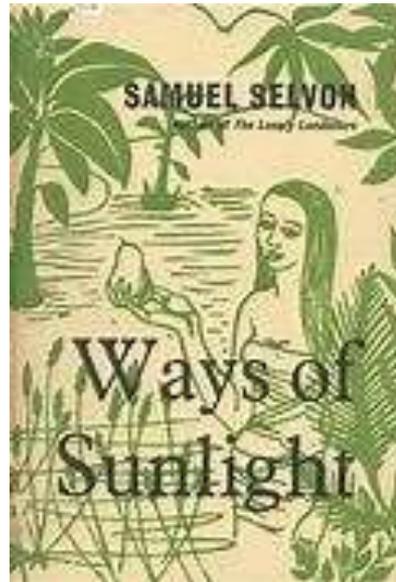
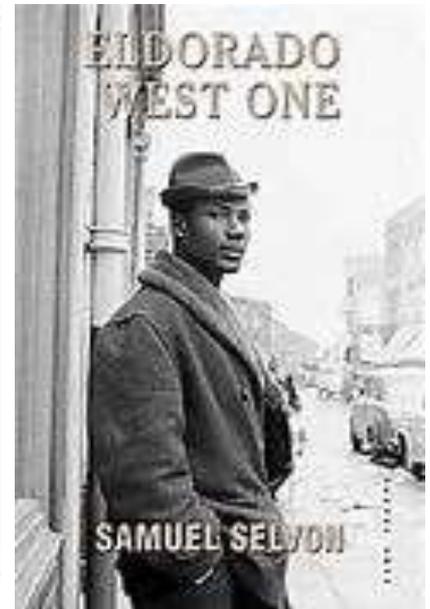
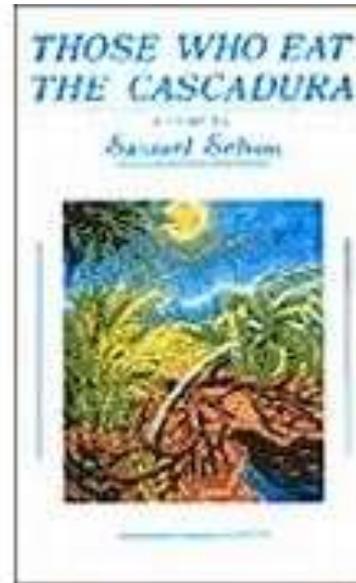
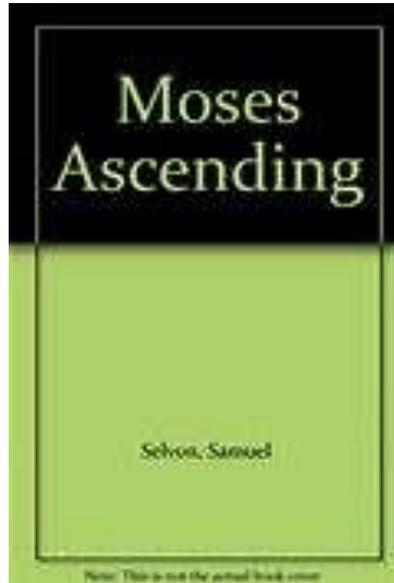




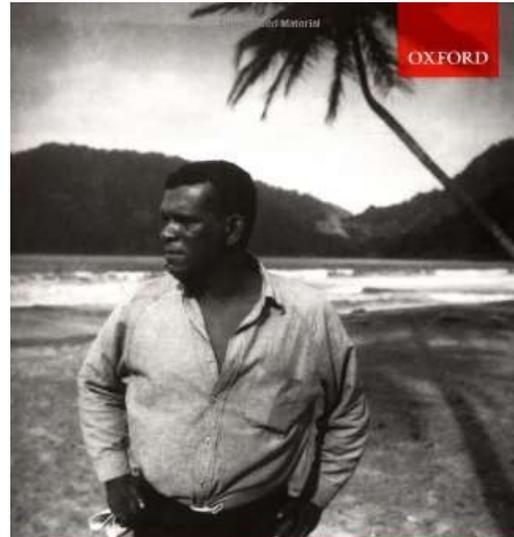
SIR V.S. NAIPAUL



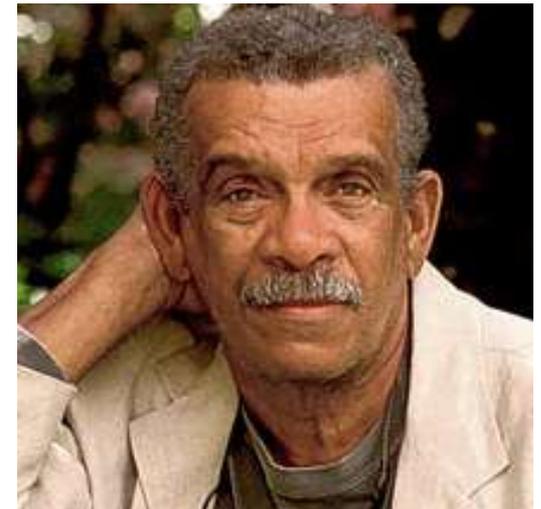
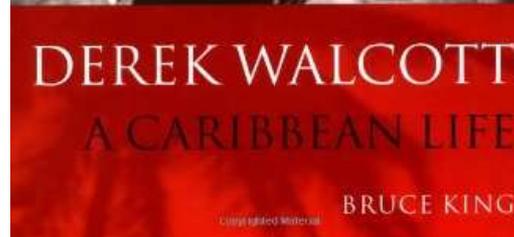
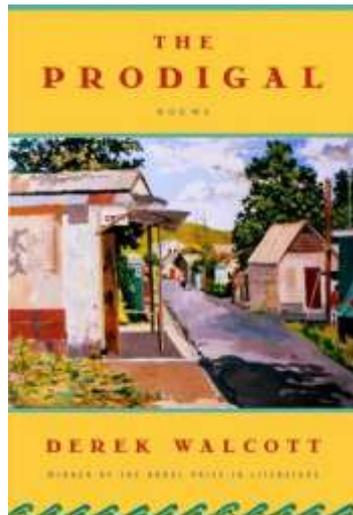
SAMUEL SELVON



Another Life
Derek Walcott



WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE
DEREK WALCOTT
COLLECTED POEMS
1948-1984



THEATRE AND DRAMA



Plays etc:

- help to preserve past and present day social and political issues. They depict the changes in life and culture within the region.
- preserve culture, promote culture, and are a valuable source of entertainment and relaxation

Organisations:

- the National Drama Association of T&T
- Theatre Guild of Guyana

MUSIC



- Music is an important part of Caribbean life. It was a means of mental survival especially during slavery. A common characteristic of each island's music is the presence of African and /or East Indian drums. The African drum was used to send messages during slavery. The East Indian drums (tassa, tabla and dholak) play an integral role in religious ceremonies and festivals.
- One of the main musical instruments in the Caribbean is the **steelpan**. It is the only musical instrument developed in the 20th century.
- Caribbean music is world renowned: calypso, dancehall, reggae, soca, zouk.
- Artistes: Bob Marley, Machel Montano, Rhianna, Eddie Grant
- Other popular forms of music: parang, chutney, chowtal, pichakaree, ska and tuk.
- **Syncretism: Cultural integration has resulted in the fusion of different forms of music such as parang-soca, chutney-soca, rapso, and ragga-soca.**
- Music Festivals: Reggae Sunfest, Jazz Festivals in St. Lucia, Tobago and Barbados.

CALYPTSONIANS



INSTRUMENTS

Europe: guitar, clarinet, saxophone, piano, cuatro, violin

Africa: drums, xylophone, clappers, scrapers, gourds

India: sitar, tabla, harmonium

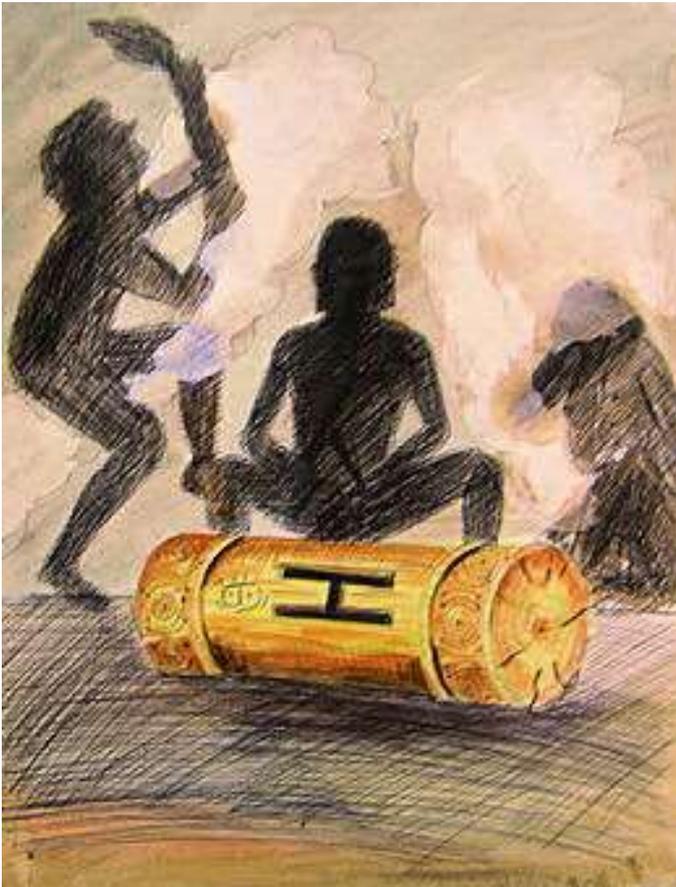
China: cymbal

Amerindians: maraca, scrapers, rattles, gourds, flutes, reeds



TAINO INSTRUMENTS

Taino drum (*mayohuacán* OR *maguey*, a wooden drum)



Maraca



guamó (conch shell)



DANCE

- Used to portray stories, celebrate, relax, exercise
- Traditional dance forms in the Caribbean: Belé (Belle Air), Bongo, Kalinda, Merengue, Waltz.

Also:

- Landship (Barbados)
- Beguine (Guadeloupe and Martinique)
- Goombay (Barbados)
- Rumba (Cuba)
- Bele (Eastern Caribbean)
- Kathak (Guyana and Trinidad)
- Bongo, Tobago Jig, Limbo (Trinidad and Tobago)

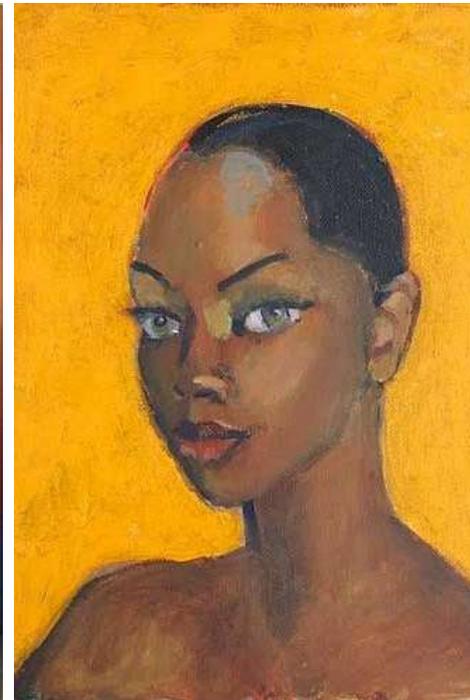
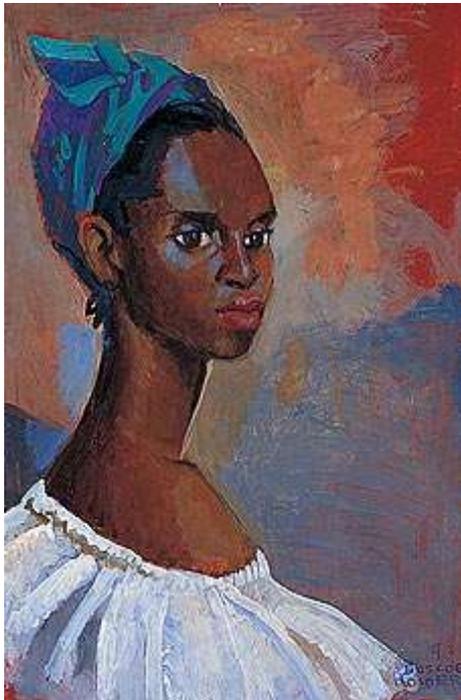


Beryl Mcburnie





Boscoe Holder



CUISINE



Caribbean cuisine is a unique blend of Amerindian, European, African, Indian, Chinese, and Creole flavours. Popular foods:

- Pepperpot (Guyana)
- Oil down (Grenada)
- Coo coo and flying fish (Barbados)
- Ackee and saltfish (Jamaica)
- Curry crab and dumplings (Tobago)

Caribbean cuisine is showcased at various food festivals:

- Food and rum festival (St. Lucia)
- Breadfruit festival (Jamaica)

EAST INDIAN CULTURE





AFRICAN CULTURE

- Coo coo and callaloo
- Pelau
- Crab and dumplin





CHINESE CULTURE



FESTIVALS

CARIFESTA is the main cultural festival held in the region.

Highlights regional culture, artistes, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, song, dance, drama, photography, literature etc. Other festivals include”

- Junkanoo (Bahamas)
- Cropover (Barbados)
- Carib indigenous peoples’ week (Dominica)
- Divali, Phagwa, Eid-ul-fitr, Hosay (Trinidad and Guyana)
- La Divina Pastora Festival (Trinidad)
- Tobago Heritage Festival (Tobago)



ARCHITECTURE

Our architecture shows the legacy of our history, the grandeur and wealth of the plantation system and the struggles of our people for justice and freedom.

- Rose Hall (Great House in Jamaica)
- The Red House
- Whitehall
- Stollmeyer's Castle
- Queen's Royal College



Next class

Lesson 3: Preserving our culture

Image sources

Cover art: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/b0/10/02/b01002b37d0d93d6aa647676c88aead4.jpg>

Carnival costumes:

<http://www.tntisland.com/images/tccfancyindian.jpg>

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