Kumina in Rural South-Eastern Jamaica: Beyond Resistance to Antithetical-Hegemonic-Subsumption

by

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Abstract

This work explores an indigenised performative Jamaican cultural practice; *Kumina*. This practice persisted beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'[1]. It addresses the key role played by the *Kumina* tradition, a less well-known symbolic house-yard funeral rite, and a re-enactment of intra-African cultural expression. This is still practised today across the island. This work will focus more specifically on the practice of *Kumina* in the rural heartlands of the south-eastern parish of Jamaica. *Kumina* is generally viewed as an anachronism, and dismissed as "Obeah!"[2] Scholars in their previous attempts to define *Kumina* have been unsuccessful in apportioning value to its contemporary application and historical function. Insufficient scholarship has both simultaneously eviscerated its role within the local setting and pathologised its existence in wider Jamaican society. However, the '*Kumina*-tradition' is still very much a vital part of the memory of spiritual and physical liberation performed in this African-Atlantic setting.

Keywords: African-Atlantic, enslaved, Jamaica, Kumina, diaspora, antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption

Introduction

"Well, for me, I don't know if other womens play drums, but I was playing drums since my little brother died, that when I started playing drums." (Informant B).

Plate No. 1. A modern 'Map of Jamaica' (1997)

My informant's quotation permits a glimpse into a facet of lesser known Jamaican history from eighteenth century African-Atlantic; *Kumina*, an African-Jamaican[3] "religious form/complex" (Braithwaite 1978-81).

According to Moore "these people [from south-eastern Jamaica] [4]are descendants of slaves brought over from different nations in West Africa and the Congo and who, therefore represented different African cultures and spoke different languages." (1954: 6).

This work focuses on *Kumina*[5]. It is an 'intra-African' cultural tradition, performed in south-eastern Jamaica. This study of *Kumina* represents a contribution to the growing body of literature on one of many under-represented aspects of African-Atlantic 'diasporic-culture'.

The research reflects a narrative for these African-Atlantic agents of history. Furthermore, it challenges the 'etic notions' and theories surrounding the constantly evolving nature of cultural and social realities experienced by actors. These agents were formerly engaged with a globalised ideology of 'involuntary-migration' and pronounced racial enslavement.

They were encumbered by the brutal industrial machinations of equally incontrovertible barbaric 'plantation-economy' practices of eighteenth century Jamaica. "For Hegel, the only essential connection between African people and Europeans was slavery." (Shohat and Stam 1997: 90). Enslaved African people were unwillingly transformed through a series of violent processes that almost erased their former cultural traditions and identities. This led to the ruthless extraction of their unfree labour to cultivate the alien and unforgiving terrain of enslavement in the Americas.

This work is the culmination of my research interests. Part of the initial motivation for understanding *Kumina*, is my longstanding personal interest in genealogy and tracing my African ancestry via Jamaica through DNA testing. I am seven generations removed from Ancestors born on the African continent. "African-ness has always signified something symbolic, intangible, and even inaccessible to many descendants of enslaved African people in the Caribbean and the Americas" (Stewart 2005: 142).

I have used my insider knowledge of Jamaica, its cultural traditions, people and institutions, as a research aide. I have successfully traced my father's maternal ancestry back to the south-eastern parish slave plantations of eighteenth century Jamaica; namely Lyssons, Stokes Hall and Golden Grove. Merton indicates that "Insiders are the members of specified groups and collectivities or occupants of specified social statuses: Outsiders are non-members" (1972: 21).

I am aware that my involvement as an 'insider-observer' having 'lived experience and familiarity' with the group of people and topic under study may affect my research on *Kumina*. I will nevertheless attempt to use this a priori knowledge as an 'insider' to help clarify and objectively contextualise my position in relation to this research process when describing my 'emic observations'. Okely states, "The specificity, positionality and personal history of the anthropologist are resources to be explored, not repressed." (2012: 125).

One might ask, "What is African about African cultural traditions in the Caribbean?" From my own DNA genealogical research, I acknowledge that on a phylogenetic level, descendants of enslaved African people in the Caribbean carry unambiguous traits of their former 'African-ness'. These markers are phenotypically evident in our multi-heterogeneous collection of hair texture, eye colour and skin tone variations. This forced transformation was a coalescence of historicised cultures and identities. This underpins my rather complex, yet inescapably rich and varied modern cultural identity (Raman 2017). This process has reproduced composites of African, European and Indigenous elements fashioned by centuries of conquest, domination and subjugation as "the Other".

However, I have viewed 'Africa' or my 'African-ness' through my lived experiences in Britain as an 'Afro-Caribbean'; a constructed term. This interpellation has been used to identify me and others; the colonial products of systemic African and American hegemonic economic and industrial expansion.

Ortiz examines an emergent African 'cultural-identity' firmly rooted within the cultural and historical context of 'transculturation' (1923). This is a 'variegated-broad-mesh' to which Hall (2003) referred to as the "site of the repressed". Hall extracts meaning from the above major components of Caribbean "cultural identity". He separates the notions of cultural identity from being robust and stable to fluid and mutable.

This work explores the performance of *Kumina*. It is an indigenised Jamaican 'cultural-diasporic' expression often viewed as a house-yard funerary practice. *Kumina* has resisted beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'. The literature indicates there is a   lack of information on contemporary discourse related to the survival and transformations of indigenised Jamaican house-yard funerary rites. This apparent void has provoked a series of questions that has led to this particular line of investigation.

"Does *Kumina* contain linkages to its African past?" My primary question springs from my personal experiences of attending *Kumina*. Practised within this African-Atlantic diaspora, I question whether present-day *Kumina*, an indigenised burial practice, contains linkages to an 'African' past. My thesis investigates whether *Kumina* is a determined whole continuity of an African cultural expression or a 'creolised' cultural tradition consisting of European influences. I analyse what *Kumina* does.

Chivallon (2008) asks, "What of memory and cultural trauma?" Regarding power relations and the structures of power debate, she argues that registers of memory offer a framework for understanding Caribbean identities. This provides an analysis for an informed discourse on the authentic or 'hybridised' nature of memory and its reconstitution.

Equally important, is the near erasure of 'collective memory'. Psychological rupture was caused by established discriminatory practices and systems throughout the brutal history of successively meshing and violently intermeshing a 'trinity of component parts'. This has resulted in the construction of a 'Caribbean-identity-complex'. Over time, spurious claims have been made by ideologies of the dominant European culture. The marked "absence and constriction of a reflective space" as stated by Adams (1999), has created a tradition exhibiting the profound 'pain of disconnection'. In addition, a legacy of inter-generational oppression and multi-generational trauma has been generated.

Should the predations of 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheism'[6] be held accountable for its role played in generating a state of aporia amongst those African captives? It may prove useful to question the part played by 'antithetical-metaphysical-subsumptive-thought', and how it partially weakened the resolve of multitudes of enslaved African people. We need to ask how the histories of 'multi-generational-collective-memory' were obscured. This weakened the fortitude of many held captive to the plantation of commerce and industry. Obscured 'multi-generational-collective-memory' prevented widespread sedimentation of African spiritual belief; the arrested development of its cultural practices and systems in many constituencies across Jamaica. This work builds on the current available literature and attempts to inform the reader.

This work explores the continuity of *Kumina*, which assists its actors, past and present, within this particular African-Atlantic 'diasporic-setting'. The cultural practice of *Kumina* is a tradition indigenised in Jamaican folklore (Barrett 1976). I examine 'discontentment' with the term 'creolisation' as a paradigm of African-Jamaican cultural identity. Palmié (2006) remarks on the current diffusion of vocabulary used in generalised terms such as 'hybridity' and 'creolisation', which describe post-modern Caribbean cultural identity.

These terminologies offer little in the way of a nuanced description of an ever-present African heritage. *Kumina's* longevity is perhaps derived from a genealogy of various core African cultural components; cosmologies and theologies. This paper investigates how *Kumina*, has auspiciously resisted differences in expropriation, exploitation and oppression despite long-standing political opposition and widespread social condemnation.

This work is formed of six parts, an introduction, a literature review and an analysis of the term 'creolisation' wherein I put forth the arguments of Besson, Price and Palmié to discuss the claims of continuity and discontinuity in *Kumina* culture and 'diasporic-identity'; an examination of the ethnography of *Kumina*, the methodology and main methods used to test my hypothesis and generate the results, a look at the history of the eighteenth century African-Atlantic 'house-yard' *Kumina* burial tradition, through *Kumina's* interaction with Jamaican landscapes, I discuss 'diasporic-cultural-identity'; to unravel the discourse relating to aporia and Chivallon's text on collective amnesia. I discuss the role of aggressive 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheism' in the African-Atlantic, and a conclusion.

Literature Review: African or Creole

"What we are getting at becomes plain: Mastery of language affords remarkable power."
- Frantz Fanon

It is the earlier term 'creolisation', that I turn my attention to throughout this work. To analyse the term 'creolisation', my thesis investigates whether *Kumina* is a determined whole continuity of an African cultural expression or a 'creolised' cultural tradition consisting of European influences. I put forth the arguments of Besson, Price and Palmié, to discuss the claims of continuity or discontinuity of African-Atlantic cultural and diasporic identity. I examine how *Kumina* has restored enslaved African women's agency to counter 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive' practices. I discuss *Kumina*'s ability to synthesise African cultural traditions.

> "Maroon people always dance wid, yu av a pan wid some kerosene oil an a wheat [wick] down inna it, whe dem light it an put it onna dem head. And dem put on dis big broad frock, whe dem tie di tail a it, an dem a dance, a it dem dance wid." (Informant A)[7].

My informant talked about the genealogy of *Kumina* in the Needham Pen community. He continued to describe how African-Maroon[8] influences have helped to transform the *Kumina* 'cultural-tradition' and language. Brown states, "Cultural practices in American slave societies were deeply entangled. People of diverse origins readily borrowed, stole, and mimicked one another's behaviour." (2008: 7). From the above example we find evidence of continuity in a synthesis of African-Atlantic cultural retentions, 'diasporic-identity' and memory.

Herskovits offers an origin for the term 'creolisation'. "Culturally and linguistically as well, the New World Negro mingled his aboriginal heritage with the traditions and speech of his masters" (1931: 68). A student of Boas, the above excerpt highlights an attempt to simplify and contextualise a social scientific approach to a complex African past. Ladened with racialised epithet, the cultural framework crafted by this anthropologist, influences subsequent research into African-Atlantic diasporas. Herskovits challenges the mythic African past, and further theorises the experiences of the New World African are confined not to the "traditional philosophical discourses" (Bamikole 2007: 70). This attention is directed to the lesser nuanced realm of culture or outlined "conceptions of culture which present immutable, ethnic differences as an absolute break in histories." (Gilroy 1993: 2).

'Why is *Kumina* important?' *Kumina* integrates a variety of African cultural traditions. Bilby and Bunseki further assert "If *Kumina* possesses a single most important organizing principle, it is the continuity between the ancestral dead and their living progeny." (Coester and Bender 2015: 475).

Thus, it is in the tradition of African cosmology, where the 'living dead become our ancestors; these are the ones we can remember. "This linkage makes the dead integral to both social organization and political mobilization, and therefore vital to historic transformation." (Brown 2008 :6). It is inherent in the nature of *Kumina* to effect change in order to maintain continuity of cultural traditions.

'Kumina-culture' is fluid and mutable. Indigenised Jamaican *Kumina*, is performed by the living to venerate the dead. Spatio-temporal, *Kumina* has seen changes in its practice. Despite its dynamism and vibrancy, all of its parts cannot be described as original (Awolalu 1976). Consequently, *Kumina* 'cultural-practice' is influenced by its landscape. It is in the nature of *Kumina's* 'cultural-tradition' to incorporate change in order to adapt to its surroundings.

My thesis investigates whether *Kumina* is a determined whole continuity of an African cultural expression or a 'creolised' cultural tradition consisting of European influences. Fanon states "a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language." (1986: 18). The first uses of 'creole' and 'hydbridity' appear in dialects of Latin. It is in the hegemonic power relations inherent in language, that one first sees the terms 'creole' and 'hybridity' appear. "This is what the linguist calls 'creolised' English, that is, an English learned incompletely in slave days, with a strong infusion of African influences, and continued traditionally in much the same form down to the present." (Cassidy 1982: 2). Language, creativity and thought are inextricably linked. Language is used to express notions of culture, and it is from language that we learn how to formulate ideas of our particular world view (Burton 2009).

"A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question" (Fanon 1986: 19). Language was instrumental in the way African-Jamaicans negotiated power. Fanon's quote suggests that this occurred through the adoption of a code-switch linguistic methodology. This imitation of language used among dominant planter society, was achieved through the use of a non-menacing 'creolised' form of the English language.

These de-characterised African linguistic retentions deployed to reconcile the communicative needs of customary work practice in colonial Jamaica. "The conditions of contact between English people and African people in Jamaica inevitably led to the erosion of African languages and to what we shall call the acquisition of English." (Alleyne 1988: 131). Yet, components of 'Kikongo' are still spoken in rural south-eastern Jamaica. *Kumina*'s existence is resistant to 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive' language acquisition.

The term 'creolisation', denotes the production process of the subject. It engenders the thesis of 'hybridity'. This challenges the authenticity of African-Atlantic 'cultural-retentions', memory and traditions. "The potential for socio-political praxis is so strong in the *Kumina* tradition because of its approach to human fulfilment and well-being and its explicit memory of African oppression in Jamaica" (Stewart 2005:167). Both terms become used interchangeably to describe the cultural identity and condition of modern populations in the Americas. I critique not what 'creolisation' is, but what it does.

What does the term 'creolisation' mean when it is used to mask African diasporic cultural identity and memory? Summarily accused of being a 'creation theorist', Price (2001) defends his methodological and theoretical stance in relation to the African-Atlantic 'continuity-creativity' debate. He claims "So, the ultimate miracle of creolization remains, at least for now, impenetrable… A miracle that repeated itself endlessly" (2001: 58). However, Lovejoy states "to characterise [the enslaved African][9] under a common conceptual label is to emphasise the basis of the social division of labour" (1991: 270).

Scholars argue, that African people who experienced enslavement were deprived of their cognitive abilities; left bereft of their virtual and physical senses. Months of confinement and deprivation were spent through the Middle Passage. This debased and deracinated amalgam were highly incapable of soliciting self-identification. Locke views identity in terms of self-knowledge and believed that "identity of persons consists in continuity of consciousness, and seems to be provided by links of memory" (Bamikole 2007: 73).

Notions of '*Kumina*-identity' are rooted in the memory of forced migration during the eighteenth century. *Kumina*, "was-is-the "Africa" that "is alive and well in the [African-Atlantic][10] diaspora", the site of Hall's "repressed" (2003). Klein (2007) argues that by the late eighteenth century, the largest source of enslaved African people exported to the Americas came from present-day Congo-Angola regions. "Diaspora cultural identity is shaped by a complex combination of cultural, social and economic configurations that are constantly evolving" (Swaby 2017). Besides their labour, enslaved African people brought their indigenous traditions, such as dance, language, music, and various forms of spiritual worship.

In the case of identity, 'creolisation' is perhaps not solely as Palmié[11] suggests, a mild form of alterity, but "a question about the subjective experience of a person; it is a realisation of the personal feeling of somebody towards himself or herself." (Bamikole 2007: 73).

The colonial project's commodification and subjugation of enslaved African people stripped individuals of their cultural identities. Through 'branding', individuals were forced to accept their status within a changed power structure and social setting. This was a systematic process of erasing "their personal histories" (Diptee 2010: 95).

This coerced grouping not only reassigned their designation as a bonded unit of production within the 'panoptic plantation system' (Foucault 1977), but each member was compelled into creating a new identity within this institutional framework. It is in the nature of *Kumina* to reconfigure 'diasporic-cultural-identity'.

Enslaved African people on both sides of the African-Atlantic were essential ingredients in Terray's complex theoretical 'mode of production'. This looked at the multi-dimensional reliance on unfree labour. This included "the prevalence of slave labour in vital sectors of the economy, the development of class relationships based on the relegation of slaves to the bottom of the social order, and the consolidation of a political and commercial infrastructure that can maintain these forms of [large scale and rampant][12] exploitation" (Lovejoy 1991: 270). *Kumina* disrupts the machinations of exploitative 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive' commercial enterprise.

Why is there such a desire to homogenise African-Atlantic diasporic cultural identity? Historically, Jamaica's resources were continually developed for the production of market forces and wealth in Britain. Burton claims "there is clear recognition that the classification of its culture would be that of a subjugated culture, this is as a result of the historical development of the region." (2009: 9).

The contributions of enslaved women were effectively erased during slavery in colonial Jamaica. Paquet states, "The female ancestor is effectively silenced if not erased" (2002: 11), yet it is the enslaved women of my family whose silence in this case, determines how successful I am in tracing my 'African-Jamaican' ancestry. They are the ones most frequently documented on birth records. They are central to my reclamation of ancestral identity. These subjugated women created a "strong culture of resistance before and after emancipation" (Allahar 2005: 127). They frequently bore the brunt of all extremely violent forms of psychological, physical and sexual abuse. The reconstitution of the feminine spirit is all too evident in the practice of *Kumina*, "because women are the keepers of the '*Kumina*-culture' and of its esoteric meaning and religious ritual… *Kumina* tradition is a protest against any glorification of female suffering." (Stewart 2005: 163).

Plate No. 2. Register of Enslaved women. 'African' or 'Creole'?

Newly constructed social hierarchies forced upon enslaved African people ensured women were central to family life. Emphasis is placed on the word 'bands' pronounced 'baahnz' in *Kumina* anthropology. African cultural identity is restored. 'Baahnz' is derived from the Kikongo word 'mbanza'[13].

It centrally positions "*Kumina* female leaders to hold the title of 'Queen', connoting official governing power" (Stewart 2005: 154). The invisible man and indefensible woman, "They have revealed, between them, the capacity of the human spirit to triumph over oppression and suffering." (Nettleford 1972: 10). In colonial Jamaica, enslaved women's reluctant bodies often had to endure the pain, torture and trauma of 'creolisation'.

The above 'Slave Register' names women. We can clearly see the distinction made between the terms used. The word 'African', is used as a marker to distinguish between an enslaved female 'imported' to Jamaica. The term 'creole' refers to those born in Jamaica. "The term creole, so often misunderstood, meant, to the many travellers and writers who used it, simply 'island born'." (Cassidy 1982: 22).

Spivak maintains, "Indeed, it is only in death that they enter a narrative for us, they become figurable" (2010: 21). From this invention, a frequently painted picture of social isolation and marginalisation has been spatially and temporally reproduced of the tragic creole woman. *The Wide Sargasso Sea*, depicts the harlot imagery of the fetishised creole female body.

Whereas, *Jane Eyre's* 'Mad Woman in the attic' is historicised as 'Other' and silenced as Rochester's demented creole wife (Raman 2017). Women in colonial Britain were inherently de-centred. This is in juxtaposition to *Kumina*, which positions and centres the role of women in Jamaica. Forms of legal and legitimate bondage were often coded in the Christian notion of betterment through redemption. These are at odds with antithetical teachings that defer essentialist pre-conditions of freedom from unjust law. Somewhere in time, "The plantation system made that way of dominating nature part of the slaves' experience of unfreedom." (Gilroy 2000: 199-200).

Jamaica was recognised as a colonial destination where the enslaved would be 'seasoned' through a process of 'acclimatisation'. Enslaved African people were subject to a system of abhorrently 'torturous-terror-techniques'. This occurred before transportation to other plantations located throughout the Americas. Nettleford states, "British colonists had a special term - "seasoning" - to denote the period of 'experimentation' of the new arrivals." (1978: 2-3). Enslaved African people were "branded" with a hot iron to determine and identify who they 'belonged' to.

The enslaved African ultimately recognised and rejected the illegitimate authority of a corrupt *civilising* process. They resisted the domination and imposition of the violent institutionalisation over their bodies and unfree labour. This effaced the construct of an aggressive hegemonic ideology that restricted and in-authenticated personal freedom.

This is viewed in stark contrast to the creativity-continuity debate, entered into by Besson (1996). She maintains, post-emancipation African cultural practices and retentions in Jamaica have been greatly supported by canon law, meaning "the process of transformation during this period was that of incorporating Christian elements." (Besson and Chevannes 1996: 216). It was the creation of the "Night Noises" law and other tenets of Christianity that impeded the enslaved African's public and social engagements.

Kumina's music, dance and other recreational practices expressed the enslaved individual's desire to "exercise autonomous power in the body" (Gilroy 2000: 200). In small doses, they were able to bypass, subvert and even transgress the prescribed codes of canonised cultural subordination.

The complex patterning of 'Kumina-drumming' fiercely contested the nature of the enslaved African's unfreedom. This stimulated a reconfiguration of culture and memory. Kumina's 'talking-drums' represent a reconstitution of a collective African-Atlantic cultural identity-rhizome. This was articulated by Gilroy (2000) as an "alternative 'natural' hierarchy" (2000: 200).

This positioned 'African-identity' beyond the order, terrors and reach of institutionalised slavery. The 'Kumina-drumming' polyrhythms disrupt the attempt to erase 'African-identity' and memory.
The term 'creolisation' removes the "attention on the Trans-Atlantic dimension of the African-Atlantic diaspora cultural experience." (Okpeh 2011: 17). It dis-articulates the narrative of this oppressed group to dominate, ignore and eventually silence their history. By re-assigning a cultural identity through branding, 'creolisation' became an exploitative term used to remove African 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. This creates[14] an oppressed population that would be heavily industrialised and susceptible to manipulation.

From a modern commercial perspective, orchestrating identity through 'branding' or 'rebranding' can be interpreted as the interpellation of aggressive hegemonic powers. To categorise this group of people, disrupts and erases African-Atlantic 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. This further blurs continuity of African cultural retentions and traditions. Kumina undermines hegemonic commodification of enslaved African people, and disrupts 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption', to restore 'diasporic-cultural-identity'.

The language of 'creolisation' not only ties the subject by geography to the plantation, but alternatively links them to the history of metaphysics of race, nation, and 'bound culture into the enslaved body' (Gilroy 2000). This industrial marker would be used in a variety of ways to erode the sense of belonging to a wider cultural and historical past. This suggested that a sense of privilege and belonging be given to those born enslaved in the Americas.

Fanon articulated that minute privilege was afforded to the 'creolised' enslaved African, to divide 'African-ness'. This ensured the creation of hierarchies amongst them. This eventually made it easier for the ruling planter class to control this 'new' society of rural labour. Gilroy (2000) refers to this as Manichean coded levels of logic, confusion and mistrust. Hall's (2003) great aporia[15] would prove easier to manipulate through the machinations of the church and other state institutions. The nature of inherent unequal distribution within hegemony causes division. Cosmologies and theologies within Kumina bind culture of oppressed groups to generate an inclusive sense of historical belonging to the landscape.

Palmié invokes the meta-physical "miracle of creolisation" incantation. I revoke this assertion. I stress, 'creolisation' obscures 'African-ness' and an 'African-cultural' past. It is an anachronistic social construct used to reclaim the power of hegemonic language to render African-Atlantic 'diasporic-cultural-identity' asunder as inert and invisible. *Kumina's* very existence is antithetical to hegemonic subsumption.

The contemporary constructed cultural and social claim of 'creolisation' is a distorted and romanticised concept. It attempts to *domesticate* and minimalise 'African-ness'. To advocate the use of gendered violence experienced by enslaved African people and "the criminality of slave owners and the legal system that endorses their conduct." (Paquet 2002: 41). The expression 'creolisation' is steeped in the colonial language of violence and misogynistic practice.

Kumina's presence counters yet another essentialised trope by redefining its linguistic landscape. The term 'creolisation' is used as a means to blur, destabilise, and homogenise African-Atlantic expression. *Kumina* has successfully reinforced African-Atlantic 'diasporic-cultural-identity' and memory in resistance beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'.

Methodology and Data Collection - '*Kumina*'

"In Kumina anthropology, African identity is restored and epitomized in the transcendent yet accessible ancestral community. Through ritual possession and other acts of devotion, Kumina Africans constantly strengthen the metaphysical continuity between the living and the dead, the visible and the invisible, the Bongo nation and the Bongo ancestors" (Stewart 2005: 145).

This work is a qualitative study; to analyse what the African-Jamaican cultural practice of *Kumina* does. I assert in my hypothesis that *Kumina* is resistant to 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'. This section will also address some of the limitations of this work.

I attempt to share my experiential knowledge and understanding of '*Kumina*-cultural-tradition'. I discuss the methodologies which enabled this study. I also present an ethnography of *Kumina*; I present the three main methods used to test my hypothesis, to generate and share my findings. These are participant observation, audio-visual recording and interviews.

My research was strongly influenced by a recent visit to Jamaica. There, I attended the burial service of my late paternal grandmother, Beatrice Davy (née Daley), in the rural Needham Pen community of St. Thomas parish in Jamaica. '*Kumina-house-yard*' burial services in this part of Jamaica are of symbolic importance. A spiritually charged atmosphere, the *Kumina* ceremony provides an opportunity to grieve. As Mandelbaum maintains, "grief helps to reorient oneself" (1965: 189-217). I greatly mourned and remembered her passing.

Location

Needham Pen lies some 30 miles east of the island's capital, Kingston. Located in the upper Lyssons district of St. Thomas parish, Needham Pen is an agricultural area of low population density and small settlements. It borders the bustling urban setting of Morant Bay, the administrative, economic and densely populated social hub of St. Thomas. Access to Needham Pen, involves a three mile journey along the east coast road from Morant Bay into Lyssons district. This is followed by an uphill journey by car from Lyssons Bay's alluvial coast via the poorly constructed steep incline of Top Hill road.

My father was born in Needham Pen. This work provides personal and local narratives, which highlight the authoritative role played by *Kumina* within the Needham Pen community. Throughout space and time, the '*Kumina*-house-yard' burial tradition has reconfigured African cultural vestiges and reconstituted memory of an African past. *Kumina* in Needham Pen is one such site which diminishes the psychological rupture caused by systematic discriminatory practices of these African cultural retentions. *Kumina* has given the African-Jamaican rural class agency to act beyond resistance to inherent hegemonic practices. Through *Kumina*, the people of Needham Pen embody the rebellious spirit that supported their local and national hero Paul Bogle, in the War against the British colonialists[16]. Resistance to 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption' through the presence of African cultural retentions applies. '*Kumina*-culture' still exists and contributes to present-day Jamaican cultural norms and values.

Audio-visual recording

Over a two-week period, I became immersed in the '*Kumina*-house-yard' burial proceedings. I chose this method of direct participant observation, as it was an available method to understand *Kumina*. It permits a glimpse into the complexities of this indigenised African tradition. The close connection to my late paternal grandmother played an important part in cultural and linguistic comprehension. As an Afro-Caribbean living in Britain with insider knowledge, this afforded me access to cultural and linguistic intimacy. Whilst an attempt was made to understand *Kumina*, due to time constraints, I acknowledge that I would neither be accepted as an 'insider' nor would full immersion in '*Kumina*-practices' be possible. Okely stresses the need for "long-term participant observation to reveal the systematic working of group cultures." (2012: 35). Through regular contact with '*Kumina*-practitioners', the 'observer-with-insider-knowledge' perspective aided and compelled me to investigate and later collate data. I conducted and documented four informal interviews. The use of audio recordings, photographs and video of the *Kumina* burial ceremony facilitated documenting performances.

Interviews

To test my hypothesis, '*Kumina's* resistance beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption', I spoke to people connected to the practice of *Kumina*. I used an informal interview method. This allowed interviewees to fully express themselves, and was an adequate gauge of tone and feeling. The informal conversation provided better analysis of performative '*Kumina*-cultural-traditions'. I questioned the leading male percussionist of the '*Kumina*-baahnz'. He is a respected leader, a healer and member of one of the most notable *Kumina* foundation families in the local area. I met him first in adolescence. I consider him to be a distant cousin. I was greatly appreciative and surprised to discover his role, derived from skills handed down to him over successive generations. Throughout the remainder of this work, he is referred to as Informant A.

I was fortunate to speak to Informant B, a female adherent of *Kumina*. Since early childhood she has been involved with *Kumina*, and is a former student of Mrs. Imogene Kennedy[17] (Miss Queenie). Informant B's role as a woman in *Kumina* provided me with valuable insights into the political agency of love, enrichment and enjoyment embodied by the central presence of women '*Kumina*-practitioners'.

Informant C, is my late grandmother's first maternal cousin. He is now in his late seventies, and has been a *Kumina* practitioner since childhood. Unfortunately, the digital voice recording that I made of his interview was not audible.

Informant D, is my father. He was born in Needham Pen.

Participant-Observation

Kumina employs the use of a variety of songs, drumming techniques, musical instruments and dances. '*Kumina*-performance' enables practitioners to engage in a spiritual relationship with African ancestors. Identity is always in part a narrative (Carby 2009). *Kumina* has other uses; to clean your house-yard of unwanted spirits, to bring two people together in matrimony, to herald the birth of a child, for protection and to heal the sick.

"*Kumina* can take your life, save your life and help you to enjoy life."

Plate No. 3. A formal 'country' house-yard *Kumina* burial

Informant A illustrates the potential uses of *Kumina's* curative and cultural benefits. Bilby and Bunseki[18] (1983), reiterate this by saying "*Kumina* is indeed an African form of dance, but it is a great deal more than this. It is a religion, a worldview, and a living cultural preserve."

Kumina is an autochthonous 'Jamaican-cultural-practice'. It has no founder, no central reformer, nor series of reformers. Its functional form is based mainly on oral transmission and performance of its instrumentation and song. As a cultural tradition *Kumina* is not scripted. Its teachings are recorded in oral history, rituals and functions of its adherents. Despite having followers and practitioners, *Kumina* has no evangelical missionaries, or even the desire to propagate itself. It does not even make any attempts to proselytise for converts. Life-long '*Kumina*-adherents' are loyal worshippers. Those who have their roots in *Kumina*, find it extremely difficult to sever connections with it (Awolalu 1976).

Ethnography

Informants A and B, emphatically agree that "*Kumina* is pure enjoyment.". In Jamaica, you 'play' *Kumina*. As a performative culture and not a sub-culture[19], it represents one of the last transformations of an eighteenth century African trope. One becomes enculturated within *Kumina*. '*Kumina*-culture' demonstrates concern for the souls of the dead through a series of rituals; Nine-Nights, Grave-Digging and '*Kumina*-set-up'. Each are held on separate days.

The use of rum or 'spirits' is used by the 'group leader to open the ceremony which appeases the ancestral spirits. It is also used by the '*Kumina*-bands' pronounced 'baahnz', who sit in the centre of the gathering to whet the drum skins. Male *Kumina* drummers sit astride both the masculine 'bandu' bass drum and feminine 'kyaas' treble drum; the lead repeater drum. Percussionists play by beating the drum skins with hands and feet.

In addition, another percussionist beats the sides of the feminine 'kyaas' drum with sticks known as 'kaata'.

Informant B explains:

"And when yu playing drums, the more the people sing, the more you get the vibes to play". The central feature of *Kumina* is the drum playing. The skin of the sacrificed male goat obtained from the previous day's grave digging ritual, is ultimately used to form the membrane for the male 'bandu' bass drum. It sits in opposition to the facing female 'kyaas' treble drum. This aspect reflects the intertwined duality of a gendered nature and spirit within African derived cosmology. Colonial Jamaican law attempted to fragment this.

The music is accompanied by hand-held percussion instruments, such as a gourd filled with dried beads called 'pakki', and 'graters' or 'shakas'. Women are known to play '*Kumina*-drums' too; although not during formal ceremonies. In an African tradition of 'call-and-response-songs', both men and women dance and sing together. They move in a counter-clockwise direction to circle the '*Kumina-baahnz*' at the centre of the ring. These components provide the structure of the '*Kumina*-play', performed during the '*Kumina*-set-up'.

Plate No. 4. The 'bandu' and 'kyaas' *Kumina* drums of St. Thomas

Limitations

Kumina is structurally referenced in a language using dialects of eighteenth century Kikongo and nineteenth century British English. It also refers to words and phrases from other parts of Africa (such as Akan), and the local Jamaican patois. A limitation in the analysis of this paper demonstrates a lack in the focus of this indigenised African language element[20].

Another limitation of this work, is the study of 'Myalism'. 'Myal' or the highest form of 'ancestral-spirit-possession', may occur where participants fall into a trance like state. "Dem all climb tree, foot-weh go up, come-down-back"[21], illustrates Informant B. Unaware of their actions, they proceed to exhibit bizarre differences in behaviour.

Moore's (1954) case study on *Kumina* in St Thomas, Jamaica, explains that *Kumina* is a dynamic and mutable cultural practice. I found some areas of Moore's work to neglect the mutability of "terms". This work limits the capacity to examine this further.

Ancestral-liminality

The focus of '*Kumina*-house-yard-burial' rituals is to communicate with and evoke the memory of ancestral spirits. *Kumina* makes repeated reference to the unseen, souls, spirits and the world of the dead. Plate No. 3, depicts a formal '*Kumina*-set-up' celebration. It was held in honour of my late paternal grandmother. She was born in the Needham Pen community, and the community played *Kumina* in celebration of her life. A year before my grandmother passed, she expressed interest in tracing her African heritage. Her saliva sample was tested[22]. A great portion of her DNA test results reflect that thirty-three per cent of her genomes come from populations of the modern Congo region in Central Africa.
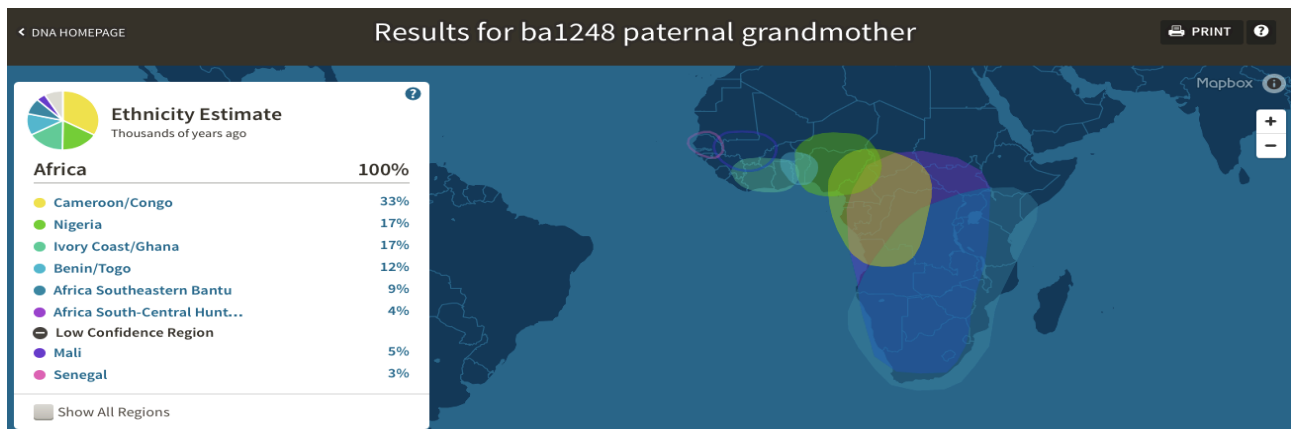

Plate No. 5. DNA Ethnicity Estimate and African heritage regions

Performative *Kumina*, is a fusion of Central and West African music and dance cultural traditions. It is dominated by cultural components from present-day Congo. Songs make use of the "call-and-response" pattern, whereas other elements are likened to the 'talking-drum' styles and dance of Afro-Cuban Rumba and Yuka. Other examples of Congolese 'diasporic-cultural-traditions' exported through the Middle Passage, are now practised in Brazil and Cuba.

Contacts

This study further highlights the use of DNA data by AncestryDNA. Library material such as relevant books, journals, articles, media publications, and online resources informed the use of critical discourse analysis to arrive at my thesis of '*Kumina's* resistance beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'.

Online chat forums and groups, blogs, web pages, recorded seminars and interviews were also used to support this hypothesis. Various bodies and institutions were also consulted for research into genealogy and the Jamaican landscape. These included visits to the Spanish Town 'Registrar General Department' and an organised excursion with Jamaica Hiking and Heritage Tours.

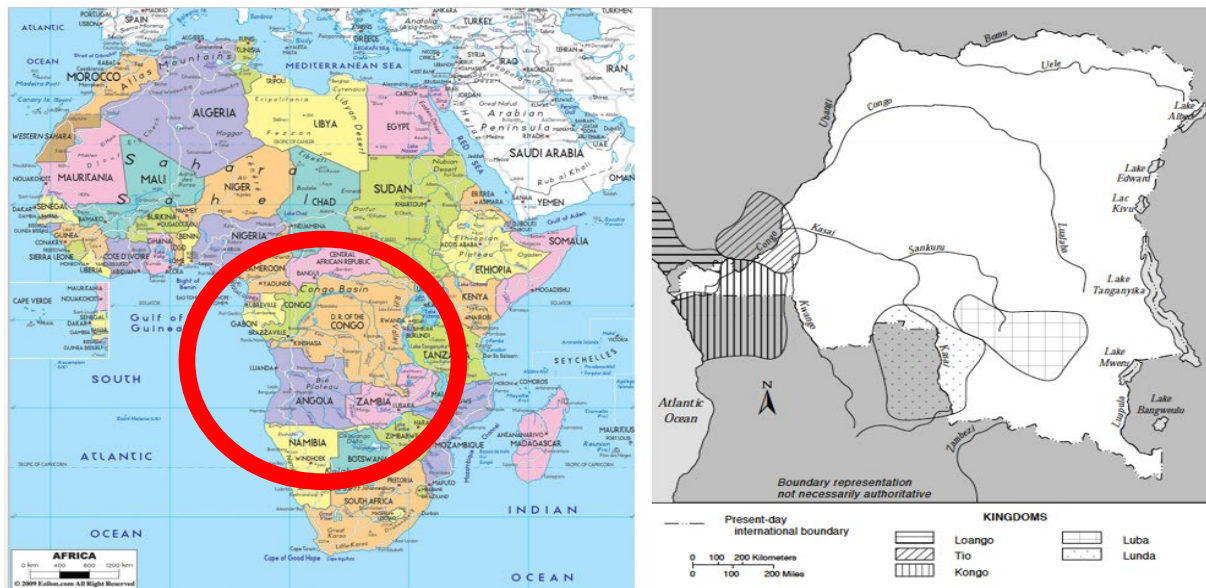## Historical Background - 'The Cultural Landscape'

Plate No. 6. Ancient Kingdoms within the present-day Congo region

"St. Thomas-in-the-East's Central African descendants, for instance, recall their immigrant forebears as belonging to six subgroups: Kongo and Nsundi, from two provinces of the old Kongo kingdom[23]; Ndongo, from the area north and east of the Zaire River estuary, commonly found as strangers in the Kongo kingdom; Bobangi from the Zaire River, upstream from Malebo Pool; Yaka, from a number of kingdoms in the Kwango River Valley; and the Ambaka of Angola." (Schuler 1980: 69-70).

I examine the history of the eighteenth century African-Atlantic 'house-yard' *Kumina* burial tradition. *Kumina* has resisted beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'. Through *Kumina's* interaction with cultural, historical and physical landscapes, I discuss Needham Pen's 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. I analyse how '*Kumina* negotiates power to resist beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'.

In a post-colonial setting, the word 'diaspora' alludes to the general "movement and relocation of different kinds of people throughout the world" (McLeod 2010: 236). Only much later would the term be refined to contain delineated features of "diaspora community" (Safran 1991). The Needham Pen '*Kumina*-community' exhibits a multiplicity of ancestral cultural identities transported from Central and West Africa.

Kumina is a diasporic heritage site of contestation. It lies at the heart of paradox in the suppression of African-Jamaican 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. It has been culturally, geographically and historically effaced from the pernicious post-colonial Jamaican context. Cooper and Donnell illustrate, "[*Kumina*][24]radically destabilizes the insular definitions of cultural identity emanating from the Anglophile ruling elite" (2004: 1).

'*Kumina*-practitioners', refer to themselves as 'Bongo', 'Bongo nation' and 'Kongo people'. They call themselves "*African*" (Informant A: 2017). According to Patterson (1967: pp.142-3), "forty per cent of the slaves entering the island [Jamaica][25] during the last quarter of the 17th century came from Angola" (presumably meaning the entire "Congo" area)." (Alleyne 1988: 55)[26].
There were further forced migrations of south-western populations of enslaved African people, in the last 17 years of the Slave Trade, "... particularly from the region of the Congo" ([Patterson 1967: 143] ibid: 55).

African belief systems transported to the Americas were heavily deformed and distorted. The wisdom of their cultural, scientific and spiritual epistemological value was deliberately devalued. Hall (2003) suggests "hidden histories" have always played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important anti-colonial social movements. The history of colonial Jamaica is punctuated by a series of 'slave' rebellions, revolts and uprisings.

Plate No. 7. Old Courthouse, site of the Morant Bay Rebellion (1865)

Alleyne introduces a new discourse. He challenges the notion that Caribbean people were likely agents of history and not just victims (1988). His examination of the genealogy of language, music, and religion within social organisations of Jamaican culture in the African-Atlantic diaspora, supports the thesis of an African "base" to *Kumina*. This has promoted the origins of new cultural forms and even the creation of political movements[27].

Bilby and Bunseki opine, "Present-day *Kumina* adherents… state with certainty that their 'Bongo' ancestors were directly involved in the Bogle rebellion and suffered the consequences…" (Coester and Bender 2015: 486). Jamaica's rural poor were driven by their aspirations and convictions, as documented in the north-eastern Trelawney rebellion of 1831 and the Morant Bay War of 1865. African-Jamaicans were empowered in voicing their concerns.

A priori knowledge, suggests we should disabuse ourselves of the notion that the enslaved, emancipated and dispossessed were mere bovine supplicants to a system of terror and "legal tyranny" (Buck-Morss 2009: 28).

Morant Bay, the capital of St. Thomas parish, today pays homage to this act of defiance to British rule. The sculpted defiant pose of the statue, once placed prominently in front of the old courthouse building opposite the town square, features the striking figure of Bogle, and serves as a reminder of the achievements of this rebellion leader. Gilroy asserts, "Identity becomes a question of power and authority when a group seeks to realize itself in political form" (2000: 99). This act of resistance represents forms of political and spiritual power, that exist due to *Kumina's* indigenised roots.

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After the seventeenth century, enslaved African people were allowed to participate in European religious practices. Armstrong and Fleischman state:

> "Prior to the 1780s African slaves in the British Caribbean were not encouraged to participate in European religious practices and were thus indirectly allowed to retain elements of West African belief systems, including mortuary and funerary practice that included [*Kumina*][28] house-yard burials" (2003: 40).

Burial ceremonies, "were a basic element of many societies" (Armstrong and Fleischman 2003: 61). These were later encouraged as plantation holders perceived African-based burial and mortuary ritual tied the enslaved labourer firmly to the plantation. This practice is evidenced in Jamaica, where the term 'dead-yard' not only refers to the dwelling of the deceased, but also to the site of interment. In Needham Pen, the '*Kumina*-house-yard-burial' for my paternal grandmother took place on one such site; the plot of land handed down through my father's maternal family. This community is firmly sedimented in the cultural, historical and physical landscape as the plate below illustrates. The compound of houses in the background, also accommodates a series of centred tombs ranging back to the mid-1800s.

Plate No. 8. My late paternal grandmother's house-yard entombment service

Armstrong and Fleischman espouse:

> "While the European-Jamaicans may not have completely understood the details of the slave's burial practices, and may have even belittled the practice, they understood that the practice was important to the people." (2003: 58).

In the above plate, importance is placed on the proximity of 'the dead' to the 'living'. This positioning of the dead amongst the living is found throughout the island. Its significance is predicated on an ancestral connection that serves to link the inhabitants of the Needham Pen community to its ancestral past.

Handler (1997) views archaeological evidence on '*Kumina*-house-yard burials' in Jamaica as "a continuity of African beliefs and practices within this population". The burial service for my late grandmother, points to a part of continuity of this African cultural practice through its use of burial caskets. Antithetical canon law fulfilled its function to provide the domestic privacy that the enslaved African was denied in life.

Only in death it seems, would the enslaved African reify a negotiation of fundamental power over territory to determine their own 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. 'Diasporic-cultural-identity' becomes a concept that reconstructs the cultural and historical mechanics of African-Atlantic diaspora 'involuntary-migration', belonging and dislocation. In death, the individual's identity was reclaimed as an exercise and symbol of power through '*Kumina's*-house-yard-burial' practice.

During the pre-emancipation period of eighteenth century Jamaica, enslaved African people on the island were constantly subjected to intense savagery. The slave plantation system, legalised and supported by the English crown, was upheld by English colonists. Driven by insatiable greed, English capitalists regularly demanded unfree labourers were to endure lives under threat of physical and sexual violence. Those unfree, held captive to plantocracy profit margins, were also further debased by the violence of a constructed iniquitous ideology of untenable conceptualised racial superiority (Olusoga 2016).

Another aspect of the Jamaican landscape, serves as a historical reminder. My father's maternal grandmother was born in Golden Grove, St. Thomas. Renowned for its agricultural produce, I visited a sugar-cane field in the district where she was from.

Plate No. 9. Modern sugar-cane harvesting techniques, in Golden Grove

"*Kumina* is a site of African historical consciousness where the experience of slavery and African oppression are tangibly remembered through cultural institutions and the natural terrain" (Stewart 2005: 234). Plantation slavery in Jamaica was the blueprint of multi-generational financial wealth. It fuelled a system of industrialisation in Victorian Britain, and thereby rapidly transmogrified the fortunes of its city states. Further development of colonial and imperial power at the heart of mainland Britain would prompt steps towards the colonisation of Africa, and later globalisation. *Kumina* generates an inclusive sense of historical belonging in memory of the landscape.

Antithetical Canon Law

"There are accidents all the time… Everybody knows that you take a risk if you work on that plantation. The workers are never alone. They hurry. They are fearful. Why? The white man knows this, he protects the place… He puts up crosses. He organises masses." (Chivallon 2008: 881).

Kumina's resistance to 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheism', highlights the dysfunctional role of religion through canon law. I discuss the social function of the use of religion to support and conserve the collective amnesia of the enslaved African in colonial Jamaica; I refer to Scharf's functional theories of religion. I compare Marx, who examined the functional necessity of religion in most human societies:

> "Religious misery is at one end and the same time the *expression* of real misery and the protestation against real misery. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the mind of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of inspiritual conditions. It is the opiate of the people."[29] (Freedman: 1968: 230).

I explore how forms of 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheism' affected 'silenced histories'.

Heuman adds:

> "But some missionaries began to have doubts about the nature of the revival… According to his parishioner, there were two spirits at work: one was that of Jesus… the other one was a violent spirit which when it seizes hold of people, they become frantic and scarcely know what they do." (1994: 84).

During the 1860s, Jamaica began to experience an island-wide religious revival. This shift led to a significant development in the high politicisation of African-derived religious practice. With the aid of native Baptists it significantly grew in strength towards providing a framework of resistance.

The importance of daily resistance to the machinations of slavery is illustrated in the above example. This frequent occurrence of conflict arose between missionaries and followers of indigenised Jamaican religions.

This denotes aspects of characteristic rebelliousness and subversion. These were not merely happenstance throughout Jamaica's plantocracy. Negotiations of power were sought by the impoverished involuntary labourer wherever the opportunity arose. Revival church is a syncretic form of *Kumina* and Christianity. *Kumina* is referred to by many in the Needham Pen community and beyond as an 'African religion'. *Kumina's* appeal, social benefits and positive functions were derided by the dominant planter class.

Jamaica is predominantly a place of Christian worship. Stewart states:

> "The problem of the Eurocentric Christian bias as an obstacle to the formation of genuinely inclusive Caribbean theologies is so severe that the only way to address it is to expose it wherever it is found in liberation discourse." (2005: 191).

From my findings, within the Needham Pen community, places of religious worship have been established under the influence of the Church of England. There are no 'African-cult-houses' in Needham Pen.

The almost invisible African spiritual belief system of *Kumina* accommodates the highly visible presence of hegemonic religious construct. Counter-hegemony has become *hegemonic* in this African-Atlantic space. It is in this instance, Fanon questioned whether the colonial 'religious' experience has attempted to bury and overlay hidden continuities it continues to oppress. Moore (1954) suggests within African-Atlantic settings, such as Needham Pen, theological lines have been drawn between African spiritual belief retentions and European religious acculturation.

Kumina-practitioners have been traditionally constructed as 'Other'. They live in close contact with hegemonic constructs, theologies and systems. *Kumina* expresses 'African-identity'. This brings into focus *Kumina's* apparent differences of resilience or resistance to 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'.

Kumina straddles both areas of history and religion.[30] Its structured cosmology emanates from Central Africa long before the arrival of Christianity. The practice of 'Malongo', used for divination purposes, embodies a spiritual connection between the living and the dead, in which the help of the ancestral is called upon by the living. Malongo was brought to the parish of St. Thomas, between 1838-1865 by Congolese indentured workers, and is expressed in various forms during '*Kumina*-rituals'.

> "This is a heritage from the past, but treated not as a thing of the past but as that which connects the past with the present and the present with eternity. This is not a "fossil" religion, a thing of the past or a dead religion. It is a religion that is practised by living men and women." (Awolalu 1976: 1).

Kumina cosmologies and theologies sit in contradiction with Hegelian philosophy on the spirit and religion. Hegel posits that artefacts of the past 'haunt' the present. Cognition is disallowed in positive religion. *Kumina* spiritual beliefs conflict with the absolute truth of 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheism'.

Scharf proposes:

> "Marx's theory of religion is part of his general theory of alienation… But so soon as class divisions occur, their first form being that of a slave-owning society, alienation sets in… Religious belief, the acceptance of particular dogmas and particular codes of behaviour as absolutely and ultimately true, is more typical of the exploited class than of their oppressors" (1970: 83).

Authorities persecuted '*Kumina*-practitioners' from an early period. In the nineteenth century, followers of Rastafarianism, born of *Kumina*, are treated in the same way.
Informant A espouses:

> "Church say dem don't like drum … an drum inna it same way… still even if dem a play piana, drum [key] still inna it same way. Mi nuh see why di reason dem a fight gainst an beat down di drum an a di same ting dem a play inna di church"[31].

The plantocracy's economic, political and social order reflected "religious submissiveness". '*Kumina*-practitioner' beliefs were illegitimated. These resisted the elaboration of planter society; its aggressive 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheistic' practices. The church condemned believers to a life of moral subjugation. Aporia discredited the value of subalterns.

This reinforced other rather unutterable dysfunctions within the social structure of colonial Jamaica. Planter society had a vested interest in maintaining their privilege.

Scharf suggests social structures were created through the use of a sustained distortion of divine and unquestionable religious authority (1973: 83).

Informant D states:

> "The English tried to kill out the African languages the enslaved spoke. The drum was a form of communication between the people. The slaveholders tried to cut it out, but due to *Kumina's* spiritual nature and the nature of the spirit of the people enslaved in Jamaica, it could not be entirely subdued. The spirituality of the *Kumina* drum was so embedded in the people, the English could not eradicate *Kumina* practice."

The above quote from Informant D, paints a very similar picture to the one presented at the beginning of this work. "To what degree are New World black people 'African' and what does that mean?", asks Chivallon (2008). We must not forget that the erasure of an African past was intentionally co-ordinated and refined with a well scripted legal, social and religious framework. The existence of the pre-Emancipation 'Night Noises Law' and other such proclamations decreed that drumming was forbidden throughout colonial Jamaica.

The creation of these laws ensured that *Kumina's* benign recreational practices were policed, individuals criminalised, which would in turn, lead to current fragmentation of African cultural practices.

The Obeah Law of 1781 and 1898 incorporates Article 3:

> "In this Law, unless the context otherwise requires, 'Obeah' shall be deemed to be of one and the same meaning as 'Myalism'." This remains in force today.

In both narrations, descriptions of "silenced histories" explore the enslaved African people's new-found agency. They illustrate resistance to the control exercised by the purveyors of aggressive 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheist' thought and action. The practice, not thesis, of 'continuity' identifies with an African cultural past. "While anti-Africanness is alive and well in Jamaica, the truth is that it is Euro-derived. It did not emerge from practitioners of African religions but from the legacy of White Christian culture in Jamaica." (Stewart 2005: 180).

The assertion of an 'African-cultural-identity' often negated the manipulations of power over the enslaved supplicant. The subversion of their ability to affect their present reality was replaced with a definitive and highly identifiable appropriation. "Africa the cultural past", this "loss of identity", or "great aporia", says Hall (2003) was sought through the memory of collective imagination or through the memory of individual agency.

The memory of the enslaved African-Jamaican person did not start with "Slavery the iniquitous present", but with the memory of a former cultural existence. *Kumina* is one of many aspects of this African-cultural past. It has always helped to inculcate an heuristic meta-narration of memories and registers. They were almost eradicated by a dense history of aporia. This was a strategically induced forgetfulness. It was deployed to cover the past of capture, kidnap, slavery… and the rupture of memory.

Chivallon concurs, "These actions bring together those mechanisms of memory that come into being when the symbolic appropriation of a place can be prompted by its (re)discovery." (2008: 871).

Gramsci proposes:

> "The subaltern classes by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a "State": their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of States and groups of States (1971).

Gramsci refers to the invisible hegemonic structures represented by institutions such as the church and their sphere of influence over the subaltern to reinforce such 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheist' practices. In this counter-hegemonic African-Atlantic 'diasporic-space', it is the imperceptible presence of *Kumina* that emanates from the heart of this community and permeates through its very cultural and social fabric.

Informant A, asserts:

> "Fi wi cousin Maas Lenny, im say im go a… church. At di same time… church against drum playing… a wha day when the [*Kumina*] drum playing over there an di drum get to im, im affi dance. Cya it inna a im already an it cyan come out! It born inna im, it cyaan come out!"[32]

Fanon asserts, "Triumphant reports by the missions in fact tell us how deep the seeds of alienation have been sown among the colonized. I am talking of Christianity and this should come as no surprise to anybody." (2004: 7). The barbaric treatment of the enslaved 'Other' made explicit, further entrenched sheltered viewpoints of religious instruction and satisfied the assumption that the lot of the enslaved African was a happy one.

This distinct slant of delivering salvation to the "primitive" was so successful it led to public acknowledgement of an ideology that normalised unwarranted antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive behaviour and thinking. This strategy eagerly disrupted empathic bonds between colonial plantocracy and the enslaved, to acutely dismantle all notions of equity in the interests of English capitalist agency. A viewpoint often shared amongst post-modernists.

The acquisition of English, a discontinuity of African language retention, was fundamental in religious conversion to Christianity in Jamaica. This is evidenced in Moore's case study. He observes "African Cumina cult groups have borrowed the Bible as a powerful charm against duppies, zombies and the Devil" (1954: 181). Perceived English domination of the enslaved African body was deliberately designed to overwhelmingly crush the inherent resolve of the unfree to regain their freedom. *Kumina* inverts this narrative to become a site of physical and spiritual liberation.

I opine, the term 'creolisation' erases the African-Atlantic 'diasporic-cultural-identity-rhizome' and does not even offer an explanation for its existence. It marks the extension of invisible and visible antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive power structures into the social fabric of oppressed African-Jamaicans.

Chivallon states, "The slaves social life and that of their descendants is only seen through the prism of 'dispossession' and the impossibility of mastering the constituents of identity" (2008: 872). '*Kumina*-cultural-traditions' developed to form their own complex set of cosmologies and theologies.

Rodney explains:

> "African dance and art were almost invariably linked with a religious world-outlook in one way or another" (1972: 42).

Enslaved African people in Jamaica were violently de-characterised, objectified, branded, commodified and impoverished. '*Kumina*-praxis' exists to restore memory and reconfigure African-Atlantic 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. Therefore, *Kumina* has resisted beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'.

Conclusion

"The spirit of the people is greater than man's technology" - Huey P. Newton

Kumina's continuity and revival in Jamaica, marks the culmination of a mystical eschatological journey of an 'intra-African' system of beliefs. Its transportation from the continent of Africa and transformation through the Middle Passage, witnessed its disembarkation, dissemination and rebirth as it survives throughout the south-eastern region of Jamaica, its 'home'. *Kumina* is the epistemology of building creative spaces in an alien landscape.

Through the ancestral voices of its actors, '*Kumina*' highlights the complex interrelationship between African-Jamaican identity and the cultural, historical and physical belonging to the landscape. Based on evidence derived from my personal narrative, interviews and observations within this work, *Kumina's* spirit, has constructed African-Jamaican 'diasporic-cultural-identity' and memory throughout time and space.

'Kumina-praxis'*,* re-positions and centres the role of women, to expose the stain of misogyny left by predations of aggressive 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive' practice. *Kumina* persists to reconfigure African-Jamaican 'diasporic-social-structure', to resist a lengthy colonial history of cultural fragmentation and attempts of socio-political impoverishment.

The continuity of *Kumina* as a 'house-yard-burial' tradition goes beyond resistance to 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'. It embraces a cultural history of identity, and points towards the importance of memory. *Kumina's* 'talking-drums' disrupt the attempt to erase 'African-identity' and memory.

Kumina's curative role is evident in the political history-making of the struggle of enslaved African people against 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumptive-cultural-monotheism'; its practices, theologies and institutions. *Kumina* remakes its landscapes and world anew (Brown 2008).

Kumina is an ontological synthesis of African cultural traditions and a way of life. It is embraced by each generation. It constantly draws young people to it, and is an intrinsic part of the fabric of the Needham Pen community. My findings indicate *Kumina* privileges memory of an immutable African cultural past. It culturally critiques colonial attempts at rupture and performs its role as an autochthonous, psychological social adhesive. Firmly rooted in 'African-ness', *Kumina* is vital in negotiating beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption', to bring into existence collective healing, reintegration of cultural identity and memory of an African presence.

Cultural and national identity, have been brought to the fore in our current era of globalisation. As an 'Afro-Caribbean' descendant living in Britain, I have been greatly influenced by generations of my family's "past migration history" (McLeod 2010: 237). This has led me to question the very nature of my 'diasporic-cultural-identity'. I have a strong affective link to that distant African-Atlantic 'diasporic-location'.

As a result of my investigations, I have accepted new 'cultural-citizenship' status. I have elected to become a Jamaican national. *Kumina* resists beyond 'antithetical-hegemonic-subsumption'. I now acknowledge that *Kumina* is transformative, and exists to restore continuity of my own cultural identity and memory.

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Endnotes

[1] The inelegant manner of economic and industrial colonial expansion; in the Americas.

[2] A distorted catch-all term encompassing a wide range of African spiritual beliefs and practices.

[3] The map of Jamaica "reinforces the idea that identity needs to be rooted" (Raman 2017).

[4] Added by author (2017).

[5] Meaning 'interrupt'. Dictionnaire Kikongo. (1973: 212).

[6] Opposing philosophical theory and religious doctrine.

[7] Translation: Maroon people always dance with a lit oil-filled-pan on their heads. Women wear a large dress that is tied so that it fans out when they dance.

[8] Groups of formerly enslaved Africans formed settlements beyond the boundaries of colonial plantocracy.

[9] Added by author (2017).

[10] Added by author (2017).

[11] Creolization and its Discontents. 2006. pp.433-456.

[12] Added by author (2017).

[13] Meaning 'house'.

[14] Marginalisation of a lower class, women, landless, dispossessed and indentured workers.

[15] Internal conflict within the individual and the general population at large.

[16] 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion.

[17] "Miss Queenie", the celebrated *Kumina* Queen of the Kongo nation in the parish of St. Thomas.

[18] Kumina: A Kongo-Based Tradition in the New World (Coester 2015, Bender 2015: 473).

[19] Sub-cultures, then, must first be related to the 'parent cultures' of which they are a sub-set. But, sub-cultures must also be analysed in terms of their relation to the dominant culture (Hall 1976: 13).

[20] In the mid 1950's Edward Seaga submitted 48 words from *Kumina* 'country' songs to Dr Hazel Carter, Reader of Bantu Languages at SOAS. 41 of these words were identified as having Kikongo origins.

[21] Translation: "They climb the tree upside-down and come down the same way".

[22] AncestryDNA.com

[23] Plate No. 6. of ancient Kongo indicates that "there is a dominant narrative which sees place as bounded". There exists a "counter-narrative that can be seen as a challenge to conventional ways of 'reading' and understanding the world" (Raman 2017).

[24] Added by author (2017).

[25] Added by author (2017).

[26] Taken from the book "Roots of Jamaican Culture", by Melvyn C. Alleyne (1988).

[27] Garveyism and Rastafarianism.

[28] Added by author (2017).

[29] Marx and Engels, Towards the Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, pp.378-79.

[30] The Jamaican Gleaner. September 2015.

[31] Translation: The Church claim they do not like drumming, but the drum key is used in the church organ. I do not understand why they are so against the drum when the same thing is used in the Church.

[32] Translation: "Our cousin Lenny goes to church. The church is against drumming. The other day when the *Kumina* drums were playing, he could not resist, he had to dance. Because it is in him already and it is part of him. It is in his blood!"