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The continuity-creativity debate: the case of Revival
Argues that the attempts to polarize the debate around Caribbean culture into an African continuity versus a creole creativity position is misplaced. The authors use Revivalism as an example of both continuity in African-derived Myalim and an on-going process of re-creation.
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THE CONTINUITY-CREATIVITY DEBATE:
THE CASE OF REVIVAL

INTRODUCTION

The republication of Sidney Mintz and Richard Price's classic work, *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past* (1976), under the new title *The Birth of African-American Culture* (1992), clearly indicates that the debate on the African cultural heritage is still alive. In the Preface to their republished essay, Mintz and Price (1992:viii-ix) outline this debate in terms of reactions to their first edition, which advanced a linguistic model of underlying African "grammatical" principles and a dynamic process of Caribbean culture-building to replace the more static approach of African cultural survivals advanced by M.J. Herskovits (e.g. 1937, 1941; Herskovits & Herskovits 1947):

> The argument aimed to build on the insights of Herskovits and his peers. But it was greeted in some quarters by a – for us – surprising hostility, accompanied by the charge that it denied the existence of an African heritage in the Americas. It seemed that many such reactions originated in a desire to polarize Afro-Americanist scholarship into a flatly "for" or "against" position in regard to African cultural retentions. For instance, Mervyn Alleyne dubbed us "creation theorists," charging us with exaggerated attention to the cultural creativity of enslaved Africans in the New World; yet his own book reaches conclusions close to our own. (Mintz & Price 1992:viii)

Likewise, in relation to Besson's (1979, 1984) reinterpretation of the customary freehold tenure of "family land" as a Caribbean institution, Carnegie (1987) claimed that she had dismissed the African heritage. How-
ever, Besson had been concerned to show that family land is not a passive survival from either ancestral or colonial cultures. This approach explicitly left room for the possibility that family land may reflect the underlying grammar of West and Central African kin-based landholding (Besson 1987:108), but such unilineal systems have been transformed within Caribbean societies to create adaptive creole tenures.

Consistent with this approach, Besson (1995b:46) has argued that the Jamaican Revival worldview “highlights the dynamic process of Caribbean culture-building as the context for African continuities in Caribbean culture.” This perspective advances Chevannes’s (1990, 1995a) approach to Rastafari, which goes beyond Alleyne in the search for the African heritage in African-Jamaican religion.

Based on his 1968-69 fieldwork, Chevannes had approached Rastafari as an entirely new and innovative movement that had superseded Revival. Not only was prevailing scholarship focused on the millenarian and political impact of this new religious movement (Smith et al 1961; Thrupp 1962; Patterson 1964), but the social and religious characteristics of the Rastas themselves (the dreadlocks, foodways, monotheism, hostility to spirit possession, etc.) served to isolate them from the mainstream. Rastafari thus appeared as an entirely new creation of Jamaicans, one which was clearly on the ascendency, attracting the urban youth and posing a serious challenge for the colonial and post-colonial state, in a manner reminiscent of the challenge posed by the Revival leader Bedward in the period from 1895 to 1921.

Meanwhile, Revival had undergone a decline. While the 1943 census showed a total of 332 Bedwardites, down from 1,309 in 1921, by 1960 it was too insignificant to include as a separate category. “Pocomania,” which as a census category encompassed both Zion and Pukumina, also registered a decline, from 4,230 in 1943 to 811 in 1960. The pealing drums, announcing a Revival meeting, had disappeared from the St. Catherine and St. Andrew hills, and so too had the street meetings of Revival bands prevalent in the 1950s (Simpson 1956). Pentecostal-type churches, on the other hand, were showing increasing strength, from 3.9 percent in 1943 to 12.8 percent in 1960. And, as Mother Burn’s search for legitimacy revealed, this growth was at the expense of Revival. Chevannes (1978) therefore concluded that Revival was “A Disappearing Religion,” superseded by Rastafari and Pentecostalism, the old giving way to the new.

It was not until his 1973-75 fieldwork among the Rastafari and later in his urban fieldwork among Revivalists that Chevannes came to appreciate the dynamism of African-derived religion. Thus, while Alleyne (1988:103), in his search for the African heritage in African-Jamaican religion, found
such continuities in Myal, Native Baptism, and Revival, but denied their presence among Rastafari, Chevannes (1990, 1994, 1995a) uncovered direct deeper level continuities between Rastafari and Revival, arguing that Rastafari might also be considered an African-derived religion with direct continuity with Revival and through Revival with the earlier antecedent Myal and Native Baptist movements. And in his current urban fieldwork, ongoing since 1992, Chevannes (1995b) has found overwhelming evidence of a deep-rooted continuity and transformation of Revival itself that can be seen to be central, not marginal, to the wider issue of Jamaican worldview and identity. The "disappearing religion" has not disappeared at all; it has been undergoing transformation and regeneration. Meanwhile, based on long-term recurrent fieldwork in rural Trelawny over the period 1968-95, Besson (1987, 1993, 1995b) also found that Revival was still thriving at the heart of a Jamaican peasant culture rooted in the slavery past, but on the basis of continued transformation.

This recent research by the authors leads to the conclusion that Revival not only represents continuity with African-derived Myalism, but also an on-going process of re-creation. It reinforces the contention by Mintz and Price that the attempts to polarize Afro-Americanist scholarship into a creation versus retention position are totally misplaced. Such attempts we believe are based on a reified rather than dynamic understanding of culture. No-one disputes the African roots of Revival such as the spirit pantheon, spirit possession and its role in healing and personal empowerment, the cosmology of an integrated world incorporating the spirits, the living and the dead, the symbolism of water and other objects of nature as mediators between the unseen and the living dimensions of this undivided world, or the use of music and dance in ceremonial worship. However, this article is concerned to show how these African cultural "grammatical" themes have been re-created and transformed in varying social contexts from slavery to the present day, and therefore that Revival, both as religion and worldview, represents both continuity and re-creation. Thus what was taken by Chevannes to be the disappearance of Revival can now be seen to be a further stage in the dynamic process of transformation.

In advancing this argument we focus first on the pre-Christian era during slavery, until the late eighteenth century. We then turn to the Christian era encompassing both the later slavery period and the aftermath of emancipation in 1838 up to the Great Revival in the early 1860s. The impact of Bedward after 1860, and especially following the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, is then considered, up until the apparent disappearance of Revival noted by Chevannes. The continuity of Revival in Trelawny peasant culture is then outlined, followed by an examination of the current
situation in urban Kingston. However, we are not advancing a rural-urban dichotomy, for the networking of Revival, the dynamics of rural-urban migration, and improved media communication open up further avenues for articulation and transformation between the urban-rural scenes.

THE PRE-CHRISTIAN ERA

On the Jamaican plantations the slaves were untouched by Christianity until the arrival of the Nonconformist missionaries in the late eighteenth century. In this pre-Christian era, the slaves forged a cosmology from the elements of their African religions. This process of re-creation remolded the African baseline beliefs in witchcraft, medicine, ancestral cults, and a pantheon of gods and spirits within the social context of the slave plantation system. This re-creation crystallized in Myalism and Obeah.

Myalism was centered around community rituals including spirit possession and the Myal dance, which honored the African-derived minor spirit deities of the Myal pantheon (rather than the distant Supreme Deity) and the departed ancestors who, it was believed, could possess the living. Integral also to Myalism was the belief in a dual spirit or soul. One spirit was called the shadow of the living person, the other being the duppy.

Obeah both contrasted with and complemented Myalism. Obeah was “essentially a type of sorcery” using “charms, poisons, and shadow catching” (Patterson 1973:188). Involving clients and an Obeahman, it was practised at an individual level for protection, punishment, or revenge. Obeah was, however, also instrumental in slave rebellions, and in this defensive function and in other respects, such as the manipulation of spirits, overlapped with Myalism.

Through Obeah one’s shadow could be caught and separated from one, thus causing disorientation and mania; through Myal it could be restored, making the person whole again. The other spirit, the duppy, was believed to leave the body at death and, after remaining for a few days at the place of death or burial, to journey to join the ancestors. The elaborate mortuary ritual was practised to mark and effect the transition and placing of this dual soul. Myalism was thus both a belief system and a religious organization modelled on West African secret cult societies. Myalism united the slaves in resistant response to slavery and European values, and was thought to protect their communities from internal and external harm. The unification of disparate ethnic groups was accomplished and sustained by an integrating network of communication and exchange that we believe
has come to characterize the religious and secular life of Jamaicans right through to the present.

The diary of Thomas Thistlewood (Hall 1989) provides insight into Myal mortuary ritual in the life of Jamaican slaves. On Saturday January 5, 1771, "Abba's Johnie died" (p. 184). Abba was a female slave, purchased by Thistlewood in 1758, who became his "chief domestic slave" and "his most prolific child-bearing female" (p. 186). Johnie, Abba's son, was about six years old when he died. Thistlewood "[G]ave Abba rum to entertain her company at the burial," and "[M]ade Lincoln dig a grave for Abba's Johnie, near her house. At night they buried him." Thistlewood also "gave some boards, nails, &c. to make him a coffin, which Mrs Bennett's Sam and Cumberland performed. Venus, Johnie, Shalle, Mr Say's Vine, several of Egypt and Kirkpatrick Negroes, &c. at the burial. Sang, &c.&c." (p. 185). Abba and her "new sweetheart, Cudjoe" reciprocated by giving Thistlewood presents of a roasting pig and oranges (pp. 184-85).

Several months later, on Sunday July 7, Thistlewood gave Abba leave:

to Throw Water (as they called it) for her boy Johnie who died some months ago; and although I [Thistlewood] gave them strict charge to make no noise, yet they transgressed, by beating the Coombie loud, singing high, &c. Many Negroes there from all over the country. (Hall 1989:185-86)

This ritual, with its libation of Jamaican rum to Johnie's spirit, African-derived "Coombie" or "Gumbe" drumming, and the participation of slaves from throughout the island was, as Hall (1989:214, n.5) notes, "[A] later continuation of the death rituals in which, until a final 'play' about a year after death there were recognised periodic returns to celebration." Thistlewood's help was reciprocated by gifts from the slaves. Slaves came to the burial from Egypt and Kirkpatrick, a sugar plantation and livestock pen respectively, elsewhere in the Parish of Westmoreland (Hall 1989:xvi, 160).

This description of Johnie's death has all the essential features of mortuary ritual in Jamaica even at the present time, namely, the protracted nature of the funeral rites; the mobilizing of a network of friends and kin, far and wide, including overseas; the burial in the family plot or garden near the house; the entertainment character in the drumming, singing, and drinking; and, not least, relations of reciprocity.
Near the end of the eighteenth century, the war of independence in the American colonies, the abolition movement, and the religious revival in England led to Nonconformist missionaries being sent to Jamaica. The Moravians, who had arrived in 1754, were joined by American Negro Baptist preachers in 1784, the Methodists in 1789 and the English Baptists in 1813. This missionary activity had a great impact on the African population. The Established Anglican Church was violently opposed to the preaching of these missionaries, which they regarded as a threat to the slave system (Patterson 1973:40-41, 207-9; Besson 1995b:47).

The Baptists were the most successful in converting the slaves. The main reason for this was the reliance on Negro preachers in the late eighteenth century – the most important being George Lisle and Moses Baker – combined with the use of the Wesleyan ticket-and-class-leader system, which facilitated Myal continuity through the Baptist religion.1 In the last decades of the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century this continuity was reflected in the term Native Baptist Movement. It was in response to this subversion of the Baptist faith that George Lisle called on the Baptist Missionary Society in England for reinforcement; and it was in this context that the Reverend William Knibb, an outspoken opponent of slavery and the Established Church, came to Falmouth in Trelawny in 1830.

Following the so-called “Baptist War” slave rebellion in Jamaica’s western parishes in 1831, Knibb, regarded by the plantocracy as one of the ringleaders of the rebellion, was arrested and briefly imprisoned. In 1832, as a deputy for the Baptist Church in Jamaica, Knibb contributed to the anti-slavery campaign in Britain, and in the Falmouth Baptist Church on August 1, 1838 celebrated the full emancipation of the slaves. Following emancipation, he negotiated the first wage settlement in Jamaica with the Trelawny plantocracy on behalf of the former slaves. With another Baptist minister, the Reverend James Phillippo, Knibb also initiated the island’s church-founded Free Village System within a context of acute plantation-peasant land and labor conflict. By 1840 Knibb estimated that there were nearly 8,000 cottages in 200 such villages throughout the island; by 1845 his estimate was that 19,000 ex-slaves had purchased land and were erecting their own cottages (Paget 1964; Knibb Sibley 1965; Wright 1973; Mintz 1989:131-79). By 1860, “the number of holdings under 50 acres in extent had reached 50,000” (Marshall 1985:6), and Jamaica’s “reconstituted” post-slavery peasantry was established.

Within this context of the Christian era of the late eighteenth century,
especially after 1791 (Schuler 1979:133), until the 1860s, Myal was further consolidating through transformation. The slaves embraced the Baptist faith at a formal level while remaining committed to their Myalist traditions. As a result, two variants of Baptist Christianity emerged among the slaves: the “Orthodox” form, taught by the missionaries and practised by the slave congregations in the churches; and the “Native” or “Black” Baptist variant, controlled by Myalism. Thus Myal identified itself as Christian and in so doing took up a clear-cut position of opposition to Obeah, which was seen as a source of divisiveness within communities. Such Black Baptist Christianity played a central role in the 1831 slave rebellion, led by the Native Baptist class leader, “Daddy” Sam Sharpe, a domestic slave in Montego Bay in the Parish of St. James.

After emancipation, the parallel commitment to two variants of Baptist Christianity continued among the former slaves. Orthodox Baptist faith provided the formal framework of free village life (Mintz 1989:157-79); while the Native Baptist variant, rooted in Myalism, formed “the core of a strong, self-confident counter-culture” against the persisting plantation system (Schuler 1980:44) and the basis of a black ethnicity (Robotham 1988:35-36). Emancipation itself was a significant catalyst in the transformation of Myalism; for emancipation enabled Myal to come out into the open (for example, drumming was no longer forbidden except in relation to the Night Noises Law), to be opposed to missionary Christianity, and even to subvert it while appearing to uphold it.

In the 1860s, Native Baptist beliefs, reinforced by the Myalist Revival of the 1840s and 1850s, and by the religion of post-emancipation African indentured immigrants, contributed to and controlled the Great Evangelical Revival. This produced a new African-Christian variant, “Revival,” which is the basis of Jamaica’s Revival cults, Revival Zion and Pukumina (or Pocomania) today. Alleyne (1988:96, 101) describes these contemporary religious forms as “important meeting points in the continuum of religious differentiation created by the meeting of Myalism and Christianity,” with Pukumina being the closer of the two to Myalism, and Revival Zion being nearer to Baptist Christianity.

In the aftermath of emancipation Myal, and then Revival, took root in the Baptist church-founded free villages, where such creole religion was regarded by the missionaries as “backsliding” to an African way of life (Mintz 1989:177-78). In such villages family land was also evolving in a process of both continuity and transformation from the proto-peasant past. Moreover, through burial on family land within the context of the Myal-based worldview, Revival was literally embedding itself in post-emancipation villages (Besson 1995b).
The process of transformation during this period was that of incorporating Christian elements. These included the incorporation of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and other Christian prophets as Revival spirits. The Bible also became central to Revival, although it was imbued with Revival interpretations. In addition, preaching became a significant element of Revival ritual, as in Christianity. The practice of digging up Obeah also placed witchcraft and medicine in a new, Christian, context of cutting out pagan destruction. Spirit possession, which was central to the Myal dance, remained, but possession could now be by Christian spirits. Revival was therefore re-creating the Jamaican worldview in the context of free village communities.

The Impact of Bedward

After the re-establishment of Crown Colony Government following the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, the role of Bedward was central to the continued re-creation of Revival. First, from the Christian period the Bible was a central basis of moral authority among Revivalists and this was appropriated by Bedward in his role of preacher. Bedward also skilfully used the Bible against the ruling class, especially the plantocracy who either consolidated their monopoly of sugar plantations in the western parishes, such as Trelawny, and south-central Clarendon, or re-established their position through the expansion of banana plantations or livestock pens in the east and south of the island (Satchell 1990). This opposition to the ruling class included denouncing the whites as Pharisees and Saducees. In the aftermath of the Morant Bay Rebellion, Bedward therefore both reinforced the tradition of Revival as resistance and involved Revival in a struggle for legitimacy at a time of growth among the Established and Nonconformist churches, reflected for example in educational developments and the consolidation of church-founded villages. By establishing a church of his own, the “Jamaica Baptist Free Church,” Bedward made a bid for legitimacy.

Second, healing became a major dimension of Revival with the beginning of the “balm-yard,” which elaborated the significance of the yard from the proto-peasant past (cf. Mintz 1989:225-50); a development associated especially with Bedward and Mammy Forbes, who passed the tradition on to her daughter Mother Rita (Beckwith 1929; Barrett 1979) and others. Healing rituals involved the use of water, anti-Obeah charms, the Bible, as well as prayer. Third, Bedward was a charismatic leader who almost believed himself to be God, telling Beckwith that he could set the
date for the end of the world. This merging of identity between humanity and God (which would subsequently evolve within Rastafari with the conceptualization of “I and I”) was a variation on the Revival possession theme.

The impact of Bedward, then, in the aftermath of Morant Bay, was a further re-creation of Revival under the new conditions and ambivalent developments of freedom; and in the context of the continuity or re-establishment of the plantation system within a class situation that was much clearer, and even worse, than during slavery. For poverty was now exacerbated and the peasantry was becoming saturated within the constraints of the consolidated plantation system and its transformation to corporate capitalism (Beckford 1972; Satchell 1990). Bedward’s role within this context of oppression was that of a God, a Savior, a “Lord and Master,” a great healer. Bedwardism also reflected the culmination of the antagonistic class dynamic, which would later give rise to Rastafari. Bedwardism therefore posed a challenge to the state structure and was soon crushed, with Bedward himself being incarcerated by the state. However, while Bedwardism fell into decline, Revivalism did not, at least not immediately, or uniformly. As the census figures quoted above show, Revivalism (under the general category “Pocomania”) did not decline in numbers until the period after 1943.

**Revival among the Trelawny Peasantry**

In his article on Revivalism as a disappearing religion, Chevannes (1978: 15) concluded that “as far as the peasantry is concerned, it [Revival] is no longer a force.” However, Besson’s fieldwork provides strong evidence that Revival not only remains embedded in the island’s peasant culture and – a point of view shared by Chevannes (1994, 1995b) – continues to shape the Jamaican worldview (Besson 1993, 1995b), but is also undergoing transformation in keeping with the new, more modern context.

Research in Trelawny focused on five free villages at the persisting plantation-peasant interface: The Alps, Refuge, Kettering, Granville, and Martha Brae. The villagers are still Baptist in formal faith, and Baptist churches and class houses provide symbols of the free villages, moral guidelines for daily life, and a significant focus for community activities. However, Baptist Christianity co-exists with the Revival worldview, which orders the villagers’ entire world including perceived relations between the living and the dead. This worldview was studied in depth in Martha Brae, where there were three Revival yards. The oldest of these
“bands” (now also known as “churches”) was established around 1948 and still endured in 1995, marked by a tall seal or pole with a flag representing the Revival spirit pantheon (cf. Simpson 1956, Chevannes 1978: 6) and led by a “Pastor” and a “Mother.” In addition, by 1995 Revivalism had spread to Martha Brae’s satellite squatter settlement of Zion (where Revivalism co-exists with Rastafari as in Martha Brae), which has several Revival yards including a “balm-yard” with a female healer.4

Revival cosmology in Martha Brae closely resembles that outlined by Chevannes (1978, 1990, 1995a) for the traditional Revival worldview. Revival is essentially a spirit possession cult based on a perception of an integrated world of living beings, God, the spirits, and the dead. While the unseen portion of this world includes the Christian Trinity, the total spirit pantheon is Africa-derived (cf. Patterson 1973:182-207; Schuler 1979:133). Likewise, spirit possession and baptism through immersion stem, as Schuler (1979:133) noted of Myal, “from an African and not a Christian or European tradition.” The spirits, including those of the deceased, are thought to cause good fortune and misfortune, and to be open to influences for good and evil. The latter is believed to be effected through an Obeahman, while the former is regarded as the true role of Revival.

Spirit possession, which is manifested at meetings, is believed to be induced through drumming, dancing, singing “sankeys,” and “trumping” around the basin of holy water which stands on the subsidiary altar (cf. Chevannes 1978:8-9).5 Possession, which culminates in trance and sometimes in glossolalia, is regarded as enabling communication with the spirits for protection, prophesy, and healing. It is believed that the spirit world may also be revealed to individuals through visions in dreams. Contact with the Revival spirit pantheon is perceived as being a source both of power and of danger, and this is especially reflected in the symbolic colors of red and white: white symbolizing the sacred spirit world, red standing for the power and the danger involved in spirit contact. Revival turbans are therefore usually white or red, and women often dress in red or white for meetings.6

As in the slavery past, the Revival worldview is reflected in elaborate mortuary ritual, where Revival plays a complementary role to the Baptist Church. While the Baptist minister from the William Knibb Memorial Baptist Church in Falmouth generally conducts the funeral and oversees the burial, Revival cosmology is reflected in a number of significant features of ritual and belief. These include, first, a series of “set-ups” in the “dead-yard” whereby members of the community visit and keep company with the household of the deceased. Sankey-singing and merrymaking involving jesting and playing dominoes are aspects of these community
gatherings. Feasting on coffee, bread, and rum at these set-ups reflects further creole innovations, as at Abba’s Johnie’s death in slavery.

These community rituals in Martha Brae are undergoing transformation. The traditional set-up, whereby the corpse was laid out in the house – with a saucer of salt placed on the body to keep the dual spirit (see below) at bay – and the household and community sat watch over the deceased, was beginning to die out in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The corpse was sometimes kept in the hospital morgue in Falmouth, especially if the death occurred in hospital. However, villagers explained that there were only five drawers in the morgue, one of which was kept for “dem what squash out a road”; that is, for road accident victims. When the morgue was full, the body was “iced” in the house-yard by the village’s male mortician, nicknamed “Sam Isaacs” after one of Jamaica’s leading undertakers in Kingston and Montego Bay.

At that time too the Nine Night wake, traditionally held nine nights after death to mark the transition of the duppy to the spirit world, was beginning to change: it being re-scheduled to the nearest Saturday to accommodate the demands of wage labor which is an increasing dimension of the peasant economy. In addition, a Forty Night was sometimes held approximately forty nights after death to further assist the duppy’s journey, which was regarded as completed by the tombing one year after death.

By 1995, these rituals had been transformed. Nine Night and Forty Night are dying out, while there is increasing emphasis on the set-up (now known as “Singing Night”) the night before the funeral as the culmination of the set-ups at the house-yard of the deceased. Moreover, despite this increasing significance of Singing Night, the corpse is now routinely removed to a funeral parlor beyond the village such as to a recently established “dead-house” at the nearby land settlement of Hague. The rising cost of mortuary ritual, referred to by villagers as a reason for the decline of Nine Night, seems an insufficient explanation for this change. The removal of the corpse, the increasing practice of vaulting (completed at the funeral), and the logistics of return migration from the urban areas (and sometimes from overseas) for the funeral appear to be contributing to this transformation within the continuity of the set-up complex.

A second continuity with the slavery past concerns the elaborate funeral itself. If the deceased was a paid-up member of “The Martha Brae Come-Togather [sic] Society,” a friendly society whose main function is the provision of mutual aid for sickness and burial, the Society contributes to the costs of the mortuary ritual. At the funeral a procession of the Society – with banners and regalia, and members dressed in black and white – escorts the coffin from Martha Brae to the Falmouth Baptist
Church and back to the village cemetery. Prior to this, the body may have "lain in state" in the Society Hall. When the Baptist minister has completed the burial service and left the cemetery, Revivalists dance (waving their Society regalia) on the grave. In addition to perpetuating the elaborate funerary ritual of Myalism during slavery, the institution of the friendly society itself appears to be rooted in mutual aid among the slaves as well as in European and African influences (cf. Karasch 1979; Johnson 1991). Free community grave-digging, in return for breakfast and rum provided by the bereaved, reflects further continuity in relations of reciprocity.

A third significant continuity lies in the distinction between the duppy and the shadow inherent in the concept of the dual soul. The elaborate mortuary ritual in Martha Brae continues to be practised to place the duppy in the spirit world and settle the shadow in the grave. However, as in slavery, it is believed that the shadow may continue to be active among the living causing harm. This belief was highlighted on several occasions which reflected three variations on the tombing theme. First, an untombed shadow may cause illness and death by wandering from the grave. Second, even with proper tombing, a shadow may be invoked by Obeah to cause misfortune. Third, even with proper tombing (including vaulting) and without invocation, a shadow may cause misfortune and death of its own volition.

A fourth continuity is that Revival mortuary ritual provides a basis for inter-community networking in Martha Brae, as with the Myal rituals surrounding Abba's Johnie's death and burial during slavery. Individuals from other communities attend funerals and wakes, while Martha Brae villagers attend such rituals elsewhere. In addition, friendly societies from other communities, especially from the neighboring village of Granville, attend burials in Martha Brae; while the Martha Brae Come Togather Society processes at funerals in other villages and in Falmouth. Membership of such societies also cross-cuts communities; for example, some Martha Brae villagers belong to friendly societies in Granville or Wakefield, while Martha Brae's Come Togather Society includes members from Daniel Town, Rock, Granville, Zion, Hague, and the rural town of Falmouth. More extensive inter-community networking, linking villages and other urban centers, such as Montego Bay in western Jamaica, and Port Antonio and Kingston in the east of the island, typifies the annual fundraising "Anniversaries" held by these friendly societies, including the Come Togather Society in Martha Brae.

Revival meetings likewise provide a basis for inter-community networking. This was especially apparent in 1983 and 1995. In the summer of
1983, there was a spate of Revival meetings involving visitors to Martha Brae. These included Revival Mothers from Sav-la-Mar in Westmoreland and Watt Town in St. Ann, a Messenger from Lime Hall in St. Ann, a Pastor from Freeman's Hall in Trelawny, and visitors from Lethe in St. James (Besson 1993). In June 1995, a Revival convention (see below) lasting one week likewise drew visitors from rural communities in western, central and eastern Jamaica to Martha Brae. These visitors came from neighboring Granville and Zion, Duanvale in Trelawny, Lime Hall in St. Ann, Tower Isle in St. Mary, and Negril on the border of Hanover and Westmoreland. Such visits are reciprocated by Revivalists from Martha Brae. Reciprocal visits for river-baptism, such as at Lethe on the Great River in St. James and at the Martha Brae River (at the edge of Martha Brae village), reflect further continuity in inter-community networking.

The Current Urban Scene

Chevannes has found that the transformations of Revival at the present time, especially in urban Kingston, focus on legitimizing African-Caribbean culture. By way of background it is important to note that Chevannes's fieldwork since 1992 was focused on a Revival church in West Kingston. But because of the highly articulated nature of networking, his research has embraced Revival groups in several other sections of the city such as Kintyre, Maverly, Rockfort, and Waterhouse, and in communities, especially in eastern and central Jamaica, such as Spanish Town, Bog Walk and Riversdale in St. Catherine, Yallas and Bull Bay in St. Thomas, and Watt Town in St. Ann.

First, the organization of Revival has been transformed from a loose individualized system of groupings to the establishment of churches and dioceses, which also means that many of the former Pastors are now Bishops. These changes mirror the structure and organization of some of the more mainstream religions, such as the Moravians and Pentecostalists, and therefore legitimate Revival. However, despite these changes, the individuality of members in Revival has been retained. Second, these organizational changes in turn have implications for the naming of churches, which are no longer known as “bands” but by Pentecostal-type names such as “Apostolic Church.” Third, there is increasing legitimacy of Revival through the performance by Pastors and Bishops of state rituals such as funerals, from the “churching” or lying in state to interment in the Dovecot and May Pen cemeteries. Fourth, preaching has become a more noticeable part of the ceremony highlighting the liturgy of the word. Fifth,
annual conventions – like synods – with similarities to those of the Pentecostalists have been instituted. By 1995 Revival in Trelawny was appropriating some of these developments, namely, the increasing use of “church” instead of “bands,” the emphasis on preaching and the significance of conventions. A sixth transformation has been the merging, in Kingston, of the two variants of Revival, Zion and Pukumina, through members of the same church being possessed by both Zion and Pukumina spirits. Indeed, Chevannes has not been able to identify any purely Pukumina group in Kingston. Likewise Besson, in Trelawny, found only Zionist groups (who defined themselves in contrast to Pukumina). In all of these transformations within organized Revival, Revivalism remains unmistakeably linked to the Myal past.

Finally, there has been both continuity and change in the Revival worldview as reflected in mortuary ritual. When a death occurs, there is still a “set-up” with the family of the deceased. There is also still a Nine Night. However, rather than being held nine nights after death or on the nearest Saturday, Nine Night in urban Kingston is held the night before the funeral – like Singing Night in Martha Brae; this change being due in part to the gathering of returned migrants from overseas to participate in mortuary ritual.

Evidence of the current vitality of Revival in Kingston is that it is now attracting younger members, in contrast to the situation that Chevannes found in 1968 when adherents were mainly older persons. In addition, Revival is attracting middle-class adherents, whereas previously members were working class or unemployed. Membership continues to be predominantly female, as in the rural areas. However, in Kingston, leadership is mainly male (Pastors and Bishops), in contrast to the rural areas where women play significant leadership roles as Mothers and healers. Postmodern, post-Rasta urban Revival therefore reflects a male bias in its status system paralleling that of Rastafari. In addition to these transformations based on age, class, and gender, urban Revival is incorporating the Rastafarian colors of red, green and gold in its quest for legitimizing African-Jamaican identity.

Therefore in contrasting and complementary ways, linked with both continuity and change, Revival is central in the processes of African-Caribbean culture-building and identity-creation in both rural and urban Jamaica. The networking of Revival, the dynamics of rural-urban and overseas migration, and improved media communication and transportation open up further potential avenues of transformation between the urban and rural areas, and between island-based Revival and transnational migration networks.
CONCLUSION

The central argument of this article has been that any attempt to polarize the debate around Caribbean culture into an African continuity versus a creole creativity position is misplaced. A correct understanding of the processes of cultural development in the Caribbean region must take account of the wider social framework of everyday life in which the African cultural heritage has been drawn on and expressed. In addition, such cultural traditions and social contexts should be viewed from a dynamic historical perspective (Mintz & Price 1992:64).

We have used the case of Revival to explore the themes of continuity and re-creation in the process of culture-building in the Caribbean, at the core of African-America, because what first seemed to be the destiny of Revival to disappear turned out to be only a transformation in which aspects of the African heritage were being remolded in the context of modern urban life, while Revival stood fast in many rural villages. In Kingston the structure and organization of Revival have undergone changes, in which ritual and belief nevertheless remain identifiable links of continuity with the past. In rural Trelawny such links have never been threatened with disappearance and the strength of continuity can still be clearly seen in structure, organization, ritual, and belief.

However, the continuance of the Revival complex itself in rural Trelawny is part of a constantly transforming peasant culture, which is expanding from a culture of resistance to the still-persisting plantation system towards an even greater role in forging modern Jamaican identity (cf. Besson 1995a; Chevannes 1995b). For not only is Revival itself, in all its pristine forms, seen to have been and to have continued at the core of proto-peasant, post-emancipation, and contemporary peasant culture and identity, but also the wider complex of peasant culture itself, of which Revival is a central part, is undergoing transformation. For example, family land and the kinship system have become transnational institutions through international migration. In addition, family land is transforming the national legal system, for example through the 1976 Status of Children Act, towards a greater appreciation of equality independent of birth order, gender status, or Eurocentrically-defined legitimacy (Besson 1984:76, n. 9, 1987:111; Carnegie 1987:97, n. 3). The marketing system, in which women play a central role – as in family land and Revival – interrelates both with the proto-peasant past (Mintz 1989:180-224) and the global situation, as informal commercial importers commute throughout the Caribbean region and to Miami and New York. Revival, too, has become internationally dispersed through migrant networks and is part of an evolving matrix of
religious variants in the diaspora, where it is seeking to establish a recognized place within this religious complex. Chevannes has uncovered evidence of Revival networking in Toronto and Brooklyn.

Thus in conclusion, turning again to the continuity-creativity debate, it can be seen that Revival is both an African continuity and a Caribbean creation. Put another way, Revival is a living manifestation of Africa in the new context of emerging Caribbean nationhood. Therefore our aim is to show that the methodology used in this paper in relation to Revival, inspired by Mintz and Price's understanding of the dialectic of cultural change and continuity, does point the way forward for future study of the African heritage within the wider context of Caribbean culture-building.

NOTES

1. George Lisle (or Liele) was an ex-slave from Virginia and Georgia, who came to Jamaica in 1784. Moses Baker, also an American ex-slave, was baptized by Lisle in 1787. In 1788 Baker began preaching in the parish of St. James bordering the new Parish of Trelawny that had been created from eastern St. James in 1771 (Patterson 1973:210-12; Alleyne 1988:89; Besson 1995b:47).

An invention of John Wesley, the ticket-and-class-leader system involved establishing small groups of converts and giving a lay leader responsibility for their spiritual and moral well-being. In the hands of the Baptists, "the leaders, commonly called 'daddies,' were responsible for weeknight prayer meetings in class-houses on estates or in the villages, for the day-to-day spiritual oversight of class members [...] It was a common occurrence for the people to form their own classes, select their own leaders, and have them accepted by the missionary, a procedure never followed by the Wesleyans" (Stewart 1992:8).

2. Chevannes 1971; Patterson 1973:187-88, 214-15; Schuler 1980:40-41, 104-5; Alleyne 1988:99-100; Besson 1995b:58.

3. The Alps (New Birmingham) was Trelawny's first free village and, with Sligoville, St. Catherine, Jamaica's first Baptist free village, served as a model for the island's Free Village System. In the case of Martha Brae, the free village was established on the site of a former planter town, which was founded in 1762 (Besson 1987). Fieldwork in Trelawny was partly funded by the Ministry of Education, Jamaica; the Social Science Research Council (U.K.); the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland; the University of Aberdeen; and the Nuffield Foundation.

4. The squatter settlement of Zion was established and consolidated during the period 1968-95, primarily by migrants from Martha Brae, on government-owned land on Holland plantation bordering Martha Brae. The settlement's name reflects both Revival and Rastafarian themes.

5. The "sankeys" sung at such meetings derive "from the collection of Sacred Songs and Solos by Ira Sankey" (Chevannes 1978:9). For a detailed description of "trumping" see Chevannes 1978:8.
6. Chevannes (1978:7) in his early fieldwork found that “Meaning is attached to each colour; yellow brings on the Spirit, green is for healing, white for purity, blue for prosperity and red for the blood of Jesus and for cutting and clearing evil spirits.” In Trelawny the predominant Revival colors are red and white (with blue as a subsidiary theme), but in 1995 yellow was a major theme for decorating the church during the Revival convention in Martha Brae.

7. While Johnson’s study of friendly societies in the post-slavery Bahamas provides no information on slave cosmology and ritual, focusing on the “practical” reasons for such societies, he observes that: “The prompt formation of friendly societies after the abolition of slavery suggests that an organisation of that type, on a more informal basis, might have existed during the slavery era, especially in the final three decades when slaves exercised extensive control over their own lives” (1991:184-85). He further notes that “Such an organisation existed in British Guiana during slavery” (1991:196, n. 12). Karasch (1979:139) shows that slaves in urban Brazil manipulated the institution of the Catholic lay brotherhood to serve their own needs, the most significant being “as burial and mutual aid societies.”

8. In rural Jamaica, the Holy Spirit and its manifestations in the Revival spirit pantheon are referred to as “Messengers” (cf. Chevannes 1978:5). However, Evangelists carrying spiritual messages may also be called “Messengers.”

9. Cf. Henry (1983) on Orisha in Trinidad, Wright (1984) on Pentecostalism in Britain, and Van Dijk (1988) on Rastafari in Jamaica for similar developments.

10. For example, in Trelawny in 1995 Pastors and Bishops were increasing in significance. Several Pastors (mostly male, but one of whom is female) from beyond the community attended the convention in Martha Brae. Likewise, the village Pastor and one of the Revival Mothers (his wife) from Martha Brae are strengthening their allegiance to a recently-established male Bishop in urban Falmouth.

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