Lloyd Best:
REFLECTIONS

Edited by
Kenneth Hall and Myrtle Chuck-A-Sang
Note

These articles, which appeared in regional newspapers over the period of 1964 to 2007, have been pulled together in this manuscript.

They are preceded by an introduction to facilitate an understanding of the ideas presented in the various articles.

They are intended to facilitate research on the ideas of Lloyd Best and are not for sale or publication.

Kenneth Hall and Myrtle Chuck-A-Sang
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On 19th March 2007, Lloyd Algernon Best died. His death occasioned an outpouring of expressions of sorrow, condolence, and concern. A sample of these expressions is recorded in ‘THE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO REVIEW SPECIAL LLOYD BEST TRIBUTE ISSUE Vol 29 No 4 April 2, 2007’. And prior to that compilation of tributes, there were statements issued immediately after his death with the spontaneity of truth bubbling forth. Thus in the Guyana Chronicle of March 21, 2007, an Article by Rickey Singh entitled ‘George Lamming on Lloyd Best’ quotes Lamming as saying of Best: “For more than 40 years he put his formidable intellect in the service of one singular cause - independent thought and Caribbean freedom.” Mary King in the T&T Express of Monday, March 28th 2007, affirmed that Lloyd Best persisted in an environment that she describes thus:

‘Yet our disdain for knowledge, for its use, for indigenous innovation and new ideas in the reconstruction and reinvention of our society and economies retards our progress. Tapia, as Lloyd Best, was respected for its intellectual endeavours and both were summarily disregarded since knowledge plays no part in our day-to-day life, in our politics, in our economics.’

In 1976, Richard Dawkins first published the book entitled ‘The Selfish Gene’ in which he introduced the term ‘meme’. Therein he gave examples of memes as tunes, ideas,
catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches; and he posited that in the same manner as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain. He explains that if an idea catches on it can be said to propagate itself, spreading from brain to brain; and that when a fertile meme is planted in one’s mind it literally parasitizes the mind into which it has been planted, turning it into a vehicle for that meme’s propagation. Dawkins had the pleasure in 1988 of seeing the word ‘meme’ join the official list of words for possible inclusion in future editions of Oxford English Dictionaries.

Lloyd Best was a purveyor of memes. The only question that remains is whether the memes he spawned will prove to be good replicators, to use the parlance of genetics. Time will tell. On this aspect, Keith Smith in his piece ‘Knowing from knowing Lloyd’ in the T&T Express of March 23rd, 2007 claims that Best had himself asserted ‘that he didn’t expect his formulations to really take root until after he was dead because while he was alive they would be constrained by the conflicts of personality, the very fact of his being standing in the way of both acceptance and implementation of his political, social and economic truths.’

The issue raised in the previous paragraph is not trivial. Indeed, it has an analogue in the hallowed history of mathematics. The story is worth telling in a simple and possibly simplistic form. It has to do with the emergence of non-Euclidian geometry.
The set of 13 books known as Euclid’s *Elements* treat with various aspects of plane and solid geometrical figures. They study points, lines, angles, surfaces, and solids based on acceptance of 10 axioms and postulates as selected by the Greek mathematician Euclid (c. 300 BC). Euclid deduced 465 theorems and propositions from these 10 axioms and postulates; and it became generally accepted that the theorems were accurate descriptions of the world, and provided valid tools for studying that real world.

Included in the 10 axioms and postulates is one referred to as ‘the parallel postulate’. Put simply, it may be stated as follows:

> ‘Through any given point \( P \) not on a line \( l \), there is only one line in the plane of \( P \) and \( l \) that does not meet \( l \).’

This was treated for a very long time as a self-evident truth; but there arose those who were unsure about the claim to its being self-evident. Such doubters considered the two alternatives: *that there is no such line*; or *that there are more than one*. Investigations of systems based on these alternatives showed unexpectedly that no contradictions resulted! Instead, two new, non-Euclidean geometries arose and were found to be just as valid and as consistent as Euclidean geometry. This all took place during the 18th and the 19th centuries and has resulted in the current (21st century) situation that the cherished concept of a single correct geometry has been replaced by the concept of equally consistent and valid alternative geometries based on change of the parallel postulate. Indeed, the conceptual change has possibly passed unnoticed by very many formally well educated
persons, even though they currently benefit from the technologies and gadgets based on
the non-Euclidean geometries - applications to the real world in which they exist.

As a proselytizer of memes, Lloyd Best could be viewed as having persistently proposed
not dissimilar far-reaching departures from the tenets of conventional economic
development theory as it should be applied to the Caribbean. Nevertheless, Best’s stance
has equally persistently been as he described it in the Article ‘Differences with a bosom
friend’ in the T&T Express of 26th October, 2003 in which he states: ‘It has never once
occurred to me to stir students up or to urge any group of people to complain, protest,
march or agitate. For as long as I can remember, I’ve believed in the power of ideas.’

In the same Article Best avers: ‘Never has any of my proposals not been anchored in
reality and modest so as not to lose the general public.’ Despite this asseveration, there
is no royal road to understanding what Best understood and proposed about the issues
that affected the lives of the people of the Caribbean.

Best was a rambunctious proselytizer of memes he deemed relevant to his beloved
Caribbean, for which he sought independent thought and freedom; and an iconoclastic
debunker of memes he deemed irrelevant and an obfuscation.

This collection is being offered as a valuable tool in helping its readers understand the
Honourable Lloyd Best and the ideas he espoused on a range of issues which impacted
the territories he defined as the Caribbean.
INTRODUCTION

On 19th March 2007, Lloyd Algernon Best died. His death occasioned an outpouring of expressions of sorrow, condolence, and concern. A sample of these expressions is recorded in ‘THE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO REVIEW SPECIAL LLOYD BEST TRIBUTE ISSUE Vol 29 No 4 April 2, 2007’.

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persons, even though they currently benefit from the technologies and gadgets based on the non-Euclidean geometries - applications to the real world in which they exist.

As a proselytizer of memes, Lloyd Best could be viewed as having persistently proposed not dissimilar far-reaching departures from the tenets of conventional economic development theory as it should be applied to the Caribbean. Nevertheless, Best’s stance has equally persistently been as he described it in the Article ‘Differences with a bosom friend’ in the T&T Express of 26th October, 2003 in which he states: ‘It has never once occurred to me to stir students up or to urge any group of people to complain, protest, march or agitate. For as long as I can remember, I’ve believed in the power of ideas.’

In the same Article Best avers: ‘Never has any of my proposals not been anchored in reality and modest so as not to lose the general public.’ Despite this asseveration, there is no royal road to understanding what Best understood and proposed about the issues of development of Caribbean territories. Such understanding is perhaps best achieved, but is certainly facilitated, by having insights into the answer to the question: ‘Who was Lloyd Best?’ This book sets out to help answer that question. It does so by providing four sets of information:

(1) a selection of tributes to the Hon. Lloyd Best on the Occasion of the Celebration of the 40-year relationship between him, the Tapia/Trinidad and Tobago Review, and its Readers;

(2) a selection of the comments made immediately after the announcement that Best had died – what is described above as
statements with the spontaneity of truth bubbling forth;

(3) a selection of the tributes delivered at his funeral – statements that persons would have had the opportunity to seriously mull over before presenting them; and

(4) Best’s Curriculum Vitae and the Citation presented on the occasion of the award to him in 2002 of the Order of the Caribbean Community.

Best was not a ‘polycrat’, a term he used with respect and admiration to describe William Demas - the low-key but multi-talented, all-purpose, policy-leader, the pragmatic academic in public life who wears the technocrat’s face. Best was a rambunctious proselytizer of memes he deemed relevant to his beloved Caribbean, for which he sought independent thought and freedom; and an iconoclastic debunker of memes he deemed irrelevant and obfuscation.

Hopefully, this book will do justice to Lloyd Best and the ideas he espoused by giving readers insights into the matter of what manner of man was this Lloyd Algernon Best.
SECTION ONE

Tributes to the Hon. Lloyd Best on the Occasion of the Celebration of the 40-year Relationship Between the Hon. Lloyd Best, The Tapia/Trinidad and Tobago Review and its Readers.

November 14, 2005.
IDENTIFYING THE EPISTEMIC CRISIS
BY
WINSTON RILEY

“...we’d be hard put to explain our current predicament without reference to what might be described as the Moses conundrum. How does a nation revise the perspectives of the desert so as to form fertile empirical judgments of what is required by the Promised Land? Over and over, I’ve been minded to ask the question in terms of the need for the heritage of culture to find ways of escaping and breaking away from itself.”

Lloyd Best

Paying tribute to Lloyd is both easy and extremely difficult at the same time. Easy because there is an instantaneous outpouring based on an intense desire to say thanks in celebration of one who has enriched our space with his tireless endeavouring to disclose the possibility of a new world to us. A world which he insists must be created out of our own sweat out of our own blood and out of own tears, a world ‘crucibled’ in our own history and geography.

And yet, within this ease there is a nagging difficulty. A difficulty created by the sheer volume, originality, range and intensity of Lloyd’s works. A difficulty which dwarfs one’s own outpourings of thanks dwarfed even more so, that Lloyd is present to muse over the form and content of our tributes.
To say thanks in Lloyd’s presence thus demands a shift away from that which though important, can become mere entertainment, mere relating of one’s joys and sorrows as we delineate that which is instructive and exemplary in our cycling with Lloyd. One is thus forced to be either poetic or to strive also to effort at disclosure.

To me, Lloyd’s central theme resonates in the following quote from his writings.

“For between 40 and 50 years now I’ve been claiming with increasing assertiveness that what lies at the heart of the current Caribbean challenge is an epistemic crisis of immense proportions. .... I’m arguing that we, Caribbean persons, are, for whatever reason, caught in an historic knowledge trap, an epistemic conundrum that prohibits us from de-limiting our own condition within definite coordinates of culture and institutions, meaning our own place. We refuse the Heideggerian imperative of “being there.” ... we’re therefore largely blind to reality. We repudiate the scientific necessity...to speak from the spot in which we’ve been positioned by history.” (Lloyd Best 2003).

Lloyd in coming to terms with this epistemic crisis, this Moses conundrum, saw quite clearly that a different way of being in the world was required. In his words he said - “My counter strategy has been to locate myself in our landscape and to play for change …” (Lloyd Best).

Central to Lloyd’s counter strategy is his contribution to the modelling of the economic structures in the Caribbean utilizing histoire raisonnée to delineate and interrogate a
moving target - a society and economy in the making. The identifying of ‘the plantation’ as the original and fundamental institution of Caribbean economy disclosed how economic arrangements conditioned the responses of our people and institutions and revealed the basis of our epistemic conundrum.

“The models of the plantation economy were put forward as an aid to discerning the Caribbean predicament as a legacy of history, as a simple tool for grasping complexity and as a partial formulation meant to focus on the whole” (Lloyd Best 1998).

I see the epistemic problem identified by Lloyd as rooted in our Cartesian view of the world, a legacy of our colonial history, with its tendency to look at human experience from the point of view of individual agents generating action and privileging detachment, abstraction and theory as epistemological necessity for disclosing world. What is required is a shift away from the Cartesian view, a shift away from agency, to allow a focus on human practices, shared practices and skills into which we are socialized as ground for producing people, selves and worlds. Without shared practices and skills we encounter things as meaningless -as artefacts. Any visit to a museum could verify such a claim. Shared practices disclose meaningful things; they are the a priori conditions for agency.

“...shared human practices tend to gather together into organizations which we recognize as worlds, people and selves. Once those organisations gain consistency and effectiveness we as people and selves bring them into sharper focus and organisation” (Spinosa, Flores, Dreyfus 1997).
The question then becomes, how can the shared practices of a nation be altered so that people, selves and worlds are disclosed anew, so that the ‘Promised Land’ can be seen more clearly? Since there is no algorithm or set of algorithms by which worlds are disclosed, then the first task becomes one of developing sensitivities - not knowledge in the Cartesian sense.

I developed a habit, when attempting to understand a specific domain, of selecting an individual who has critiqued the prevailing knowledge about that domain. In my attempt to understand the West Indian Question I moved from Williams, to James and settled on the ‘Best’. Lloyd’s life has been for me one of pointing the way by nurturing my sensitivities to the gravity of our predicament in the Caribbean. A predicament encapsulated in the words of Wilson Harris in ‘The Infinite Rehearsal’ thus -

“Is there anybody there? Said the Traveller”, Knocking on the moonlit door;
“You may knock Tiger and even though I hear I must be silent in order to stress that there are no easy answers to the predicament of a dying age within its most obvious, most telling biases and assumptions.”

And he smote upon the door again a second time; Is there anybody there? He said

*This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 27 No. 12, November 14th 2005.*
It is 4:00 pm on an autumn day in Hartford, Connecticut, in the fall of 2003. A lecture hall that ordinarily seems cavernous has become stiflingly uncomfortable, as Trinity College [University] students and faculty vie with West Indians from Hartford’s north end for the few remaining seats before the doors are opened, chairs dragged out, and the crowd clusters first in the foyer and then down the hall. We think of setting up remote speakers to be sure everyone can hear. The occasion? Lloyd Best is giving a talk. Without notes, he explains in factual and specific detail the necessity for us in Hartford to understand his culture in the Caribbean: its messages, its lessons, its caveats and accomplishments. What it means in a shrinking world for a set of disparate peoples that have always had to “make space where there is no space,” make do, and come to terms with the realities of racial difference and multi-ethnic rivalries, to search for ways to reach across the CARICOM boundaries and, in the process, through their failures as much as their successes, to offer lessons to the broader world. He never pauses; attention does not flag. Despite the elegant formality of both his language and his person, he speaks as if to every individual, warmly and, despite a strong self-critique, affirmatively.

The obvious point is not to lament, whine or moan but to use the lessons of the past as a guide to the present and the future. A few hours earlier, the Manager of the Trinity Guest House has asked me about the “gentleman” in room 31. “Who is he?” she asks. And
when I explain, she says, “He has such presence. He walks across the room and you know that he is someone who is…, well, someone.”

If Lloyd himself had heard this story (which until now he has not), he would of course have quickly pointed out that everyone is “someone.” And yet, there is no doubt that he wears his own sense of authority with the assurance, the calm dignity, and inner reserve of one who has paid dearly to sustain the personal freedom and independence that have allowed him over the decades to remain a moral barometer of West Indian culture wherever it travels. Lloyd’s writings are concentrated in the media that reach the most people the quickest; his teaching spread not only among his own students but all those within the reach of the Review, The Trinidad Express and his other outlets. From interpreting the crisis of the Black Power Movement in Woodford Square in the early 1970s to sitting as if enthroned next to his mother on his own front porch awaiting tributes on his seventieth birthday from a host of Trinidad cultural icons, patiently lining the steps in expectation of the privilege, he has understood and accepted his role in the life of these islands and beyond.

And, in truth, the privilege is collectively ours. It has been generously spread to those whose path directly crosses through the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies, and those who do not. Where else could one find on the Board of an independent institute such an aggregation of professors and administrators and scholars as those from the University of the West Indies who so serve the Institute, at the behest of a man who left the University for the sake of independent education? To have established such a Board,
which reaches broadly throughout the culture, is but one of the many ways in which Lloyd has kept the faith and enacted through turbulent times the promises he made to himself and others at the advent of Tapia House. As he now passes the direction of this work to his wife Sunity and others, you can be sure he will continue to monitor, advise, and guide. For the past five years, it has been our privilege at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, to engage both Lloyd and the Institute to work with the students who study under Tony Hall’s direction at the Trinity-in-Trinidad Global Learning Site. Slowly, over these years we have evolved with Lloyd a plan for the possibilities of expanding this program, engaging students from other universities, and opening up this privilege to students within, as well as outside of Trinidad. These plans are just beginning to be developed. Watching them grow, nurturing and supporting them, will be the task of those to whom Lloyd is on this occasion passing the torch of the Institute. But make no mistake about it: he won’t be far away. Hurdles that to others would have proven formidable if not fatal are to Lloyd but detours in his path. He knows how to treasure the small steps: When I asked him just last week how he was feeling, he replied, “Well, I’m not working yet, but I am walking.” Despite his consistent critiques, this is a man for whom the glass of life has always been at least half full. When I asked him about his own health on that front Porch on Tunapuna Road after one of his several miraculous restorations to vigour two years ago, he quietly replied “I know that everyone in the world has died, but I do not see why it should apply to me.’ When asked later to expand on this idea, this economist said, “What I meant was that, until it happens to you, death is only statistical. I’ll grant you that the statistics are high. But they are, after all, only numbers.”
Congratulations, Lloyd, on achieving this milestone in your journey. Those who must pick up the burden and carry it onward under your watchful eyes – both here at home and abroad – are ever mindful of the privilege and the responsibility you have accorded us all. Be well. Enjoy, and keep reminding us of our ethical and moral obligations, as well as our constitutional and legal rights. With luck, pan will enter the schools and the schools will enter pan, and your pandemic understanding of education will produce results for others as dramatic as they have for your own daughters. I am sorry not to be able to deliver this tribute to you personally, but within the larger reach of the spirit of the island, we are all with you today.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 27 No. 12, November 14th 2005.
Lloyd Best and I entered Queen’s Royal College in the same class, 1A, in the same year, 1946. This immediate post-World War II period displayed the expected twin features of metropolitan authority and instinctive colonial allegiance. Minions in constitutional fetters, we would sing lustily of Britain as the Land of Hope and Glory, the Banner of the Free. The irony quite escaped most of us.

Like today, students did not on the whole come from a background of privilege. Your elders made it clear early o’clock, and kept reminding you, that because of their circumstances the only licit path to socio-economic upliftment was through free education.

In general, access to such education meant a three-stage pole vault exercise, the bar being raised in almost geometric progression at each stage: the government exhibition from primary to secondary school; the house scholarship based on the results of what we now call “O levels”; and finally one of the four - four! - annual “island” (now national) scholarships, the apogee of academic effort, which opened before you the road to university and, it was confidently hoped, financial independence. A British university, of course, or at least one in the Empire: the Crown would not have had it any other way.
Alleyne, Amoroso, Best, Boxhill, Carr, Corbie, Dumas, Finigan, Hajal, Ince, the 1A names scrolled every morning alphabetically down to Solomon. Twenty-five of us. Competition was unrelenting. We drove one another, drove many out: only thirteen survived to the sixth form. Eight of those, Lloyd among them, won island scholarships.

Surprisingly, Lloyd had not for many years been perceived as among the academically best. Two things about him were already apparent, however (and the contemporary Caribbean will at once recognise that nothing has changed). One was self-confidence. The other, closely related, was unwillingness to accept without question practices taken as established or theories posited by the cognoscenti. An example comes to mind.

Sometime in 1953 I secured an appointment with Eric Williams, then with the Caribbean Commission and already a legend in Trinidad and Tobago. I asked Lloyd to come with me. We spent two hours with Williams. I forget now the details of the conversation, but I do remember an awkward moment when Lloyd sharply disagreed with one of Williams’ historical interpretations. After we left, Lloyd was grumbling loudly. I have always suspected that the incident marked the beginning of his doubts, publicly and frequently expressed in the decades to come, about the then Prime Minister-in-waiting.

Cricket, ping-pong, football and all-fours in Tunapuna would give way that very year to new challenges at Cambridge, where the intellectual mediocrity of British students shocked us, until then fairly casual subjects of Buckingham Palace, into West Indian nationalism. Much later, the politics would come between some of us, as with Lloyd and
Karl Hudson-Phillips. But we are all old men now, and ancient angularities have been scrubbed smooth by the pumice stone of time.

Lloyd is not well these days. But the weakness is physical. The self-confidence and optimism, thank God, have not dimmed. Nor has the eagerness to challenge received ideas and propose new ones. That above all is what for forty years he has consistently urged on this country and this region, and elsewhere, too: the indispensability of dispassionate analysis and thought and plan in the interest of societal progress.

It is only a pity that while we hasten to quote his observations and his maxims - “As Lloyd Best says” is one of our favourite phrases - so few of us, especially those who pass for politicians, actually heed his constant monitions, let alone reflect upon his proffered correctives.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 27 No. 12 on November 14th 2005.
FILLING THE POLITICAL VACUUM

BY

LLOYD TAYLOR

Lloyd Best, as political activist and public opinion catalyst, has had an extraordinarily long run, since he launched the *Tapia House Group (THG)* as an intermediate political organization in Trinidad and Tobago 37 years ago, in 1968. Eight years later he would take another momentous step by resigning from teaching at the *University of the West Indies* to contest the General Elections of 1976 under the rubric of the *Tapia House Movement (THM)*, the party, together with 33 young political fresh-men and women on a slate that was short of the full 36 candidates.

The task at hand was to take action appropriate to filling the political vacuum marked by collapse of the West Indies federal experiment in 1958 and the successive failures of the regional independence movements to vest decision-making in our island societies in a way that harnessed fully the energies of West Indian people, to induce professional political participation and to encourage indigenous economic capital expansion.

In Lloyd Best’s attempt to advance an independence West Indian enterprise, the notion of filling the political vacuum went beyond the routine exercise of contest for political office. His ultimate purpose was in fact, to expand West Indian capacity to perform effectively on all fronts with our national integrity intact and uncorrupted. The concept encompassed every aspect of social life – economics, politics, education, constitution
reform, sports – beginning where we were in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere, and it involved applying the resources we converted from God’s earth, into inputs for the reconstruction project.

Over the years, his efforts involved several initiatives of recruiting cohorts for different tasks to inspire the growth of a nation out of its colonial past. In the nature of case- and given the resources and the limited state of collective West Indian consciousness the organization of colleagues to collaborate on these ends could only advance on the basis of politics, which is to say persuasion, and not in any programmatic manner. That such participation could not be bought even if he wanted to, simply because there was no money for that purpose, underscores the significance of pursuing one specific mission for all of a life time.

So it was ten years prior to *Tapia House Group*, Lloyd Best would be instrumental in launching the West Indian Society for the study of Social Issues, The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, following what would be a rancorous breakup of the West Indian Federal arrangements. Then the generation of men and women that ushered in island- state independence, had betrayed our cherished hopes by ducking the responsibility of forging a West Indian state. West Indian society, a unique cultural sphere remained, as C.L.R. James pointed out, stateless across the Antillean archipelago. The Society for the Study of Social Issues was but one small step toward filling the vacuum. In time, it would foreshadow by five years the emergence of the New World Group and its flagship the New World Quarterly, beginning in 1963 with an Economic
Development Plan for Guyana. New World Group represented a new mobilization of a West Indian party, albeit among men and women of letters, drawn from every island and instituted in most every community in North America where a cadre of West Indians had been schooling themselves abroad.

Beginning in Georgetown, Guyana, cohorts that included David De Caires, Miles Fitz-Patrick, Clive Thomas, Eusi Kwayana (Sidney King) would produce the *New World Fort-nightly* (*NWF*), before it was transmuted into the *New World Quarterly* (*NWQ*). For this enterprise copy had to be assigned, the habit of writing prompted by numerous arts of nurturing and publication undertaken to give the New World movement visibility and a distinctive West Indian preoccupation in character and reach. In time, a whole generation of people writing in the arts, poetry, history, politics and economy would be spawned across the region and a generation of West Indians would discover the means to self-validation. Publication of NWQ was defined by the rhythm of sugar plantation production such as *Dead Season, Crop Time, Crop Over and High Season*. Chapters founded by initiates in Kingston, Toronto, Washington, London, Basseterre, Georgetown, Bridgetown and Port of Spain would spring up. These chapters attracted popular attention by the process of open discussion, but would draw the eyes of political incumbents mindful of any activity, even remotely subversive of their political tenure. Several years later, I would discover, while thumbing through the pages of the Guyana Independence Issue, NWQ, in the library of the UWI, St. Augustine, located then in what is now the Administrative building, a one phrase biographical blurb, penned by the Barbadian novelist: “Lloyd Best – generally recognized as the driving force behind New World
enterprise.” In the context of the time to blurb was an impetus to find out who Lloyd Best was.

In the middle of the *New World Group* phase of the mission to fill the regional political vacuum, Lloyd Best was laying down another foundation block, crucial for deepening self-awareness by pushing back the boundaries of ignorance about those frustrations that bedevilled society and what we can do about it. The NWQ and NWF were in place but more work needed to be done simultaneously. This was the process of intellectual capital goods creation. Following a discussion Lloyd Best had with a group that included Alistair McIntyre, from which the idea of Plantation Economy emerged, he would assemble a cadre of young professionals at McGill University, Montreal. The mission was to flesh out his idea of plantation economy model. Led jointly with Kari Levitt, his collaborators would include George Beckford, Norman Girvan, Ainsworth Harewood, Edwin Carrington. His perception was that economic theory was often bound by place, time and circumstance and an independent people had a responsibility to examine their historical antecedents and founding conditions of society in order to discover for West Indians, ourselves what precisely explained our economic underdevelopment and to let the emerging comprehension inform solutions. Skeptical to the end that he could be wrong, Best allowed the passage of time to test the relevance of his plantation economic models and refused to publish them for almost 40 years.

The next phase, Best would move toward direct politics through a series of intermediate stages. In the process of advancing the development of capacity to fill the political
vacuum Best’s mission would be to found a permanent professional participatory political party and to build into it all the attributes for self-sustenance and enduring existence. After 37 years of unrelieved endeavour, Tapia people as much as the West Indian community, as a whole, are a long way from that goal. Considerable advance has been made in understanding the root causes of our failings. Like Lloyd Best we all face the question he posed for himself: How do we convert the initiative of an individual into a movement for change? The story of Lloyd Best and Tapia House Group provide many clues, but no sure answers. If we knew the answer we would exist in the realm of the gods. Therefore in the absence of one, in order to fill the political vacuum, West Indians are fated, in the words of a famous Tapia idiom, to continue to play for change.

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I’ve learned a great deal about how to engage young people from Prof. Lloyd Best simply by observing the man in action. We first met in New York during the tumultuous 1970s when he gave a number of public lectures about Caribbean politics at various universities. As graduate students of different nationalities coming from diverse fields, we flocked to hear Lloyd Best. He didn’t shy away from the debate of ideas no matter what the difficulty, yet was far less strident and formulaic on the podium than most of his contemporaries. He always seemed to maintain a spirit of openness and curiosity towards other points of view (however erroneous, from his perspective).

We became better acquainted under the auspices of The Ford Foundation, which had the honour of partially supporting the publication of the introductory volume to the multi-volume series cataloguing his life’s work on plantation economy. Lloyd was among the keynote speakers at Dr. Damien Pwono's groundbreaking convening held in Port of Spain in June 2000, where the term ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ was coined. Eloquent as ever on that occasion, he proclaimed the importance of using culture, not as a static paeon to tradition, but as a living tool to help Caribbean youth authentically shape an evolving identity. Later, as we collaborated on his chapter in the forthcoming book titled “Calypso and Social Justice,” I was struck by his animated recollection (complete with energetic
gestures of re-enactment) of the escapades of his salad days which played out against a backdrop of university politics punctuated by cricket and calypso.

I’ve observed Lloyd with young scholars at UWI and with the students who come annually from Trinity College in Connecticut to learn from him. I’ve noticed that he doesn’t overpower them with the force of his singular intellect. I see the respectful attention with which he listens to them, even as he corrects some misperception or the other. I’m aware that he fully endorsed his daughter’s decision at a very young age to turn to the alternative of home-schooling, seeing it as a normal and natural part of her self-determination; and I enjoy seeing his fascination with the things that today’s kids are pioneering -- whether hip hop or blogs or skateboards. He is interested in their efforts and regards them with far less condemnation than many of us.

Now that I am involved in building a new philanthropic venture that aims to help inspire, nurture and protect Africa’s children and youth, I too aspire to pay close attention to young people and to take their dreams and expressions seriously. Knowing Lloyd’s long and illustrious experience as a United Nations diplomat in Africa, and knowing his commitment to assisting young people to use their own imagination and intellectual power to solve the staggering problems their generation is confronting, he was among those I consulted as we began. I asked for ideas about what the foundations should prioritize as we develop a strategy to strengthen self-sufficiency of children and youth in Africa and their families and communities.
Lloyd’s words of advice? “If young people are involved, you can’t avoid starting with music. That is their common currency and there is great potential in drawing upon the artists who are already there. Experiment with that and see. It mightn’t work, but one has to try.” It’s all there: the spirit of curiosity and perseverance, a relish for social inquiry and experimentation, and a trust and recognition of the value of meeting young people ‘where they are’ instead of where one wishes they might be.

The African proverb says: Where you will sit when you are old shows where you stood in youth (Yoruba). How rare the elder who while occupying an exalted seat, still leans in, bending an ear to those much younger.

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A SOBER HEROISM

BY

LEROY CLARKE

Among the intrigues of constantly shifting hemispheres of our space, there is arisen, a citizen of our highest, yet, elusive aspirations that wont to fashion our sphere in the likeness of monument and reflection as expressed by a well distinguished labour only, that can register it in its full, maturing height. He is arriving, just when the lure of the lost is being immanently secured and its gleeful proponents draw their blood-tipped pens to final rites and obituaries.

Those innocent indignations do not touch him though. How can they, when he fails to be, among them, a witness to his own funeral; rather, he participates in his dying no less than he is doing in his living transcendence! He will have no part in the fictitious existence in which his mission-like zeal to offer critical alternatives to out-dated paradigms has been an unrelenting resistance to being swallowed-up in the rhetorical flourish of political ruse. Lloyd Best is a gift deferred, a symbol of our own genius that is impossible to be absent; one that we love to punish, to ignore and eventually bury beyond our memory.

Nevertheless, with the disquieting force of his well constituted sense of independence, with subtle wit and variations of a bold, confiding heart, he is the embodiment of a sobering heroism that rides the carnival shuffle of a land charged by considerable paradoxes of no mean measure of violence and restraint. Abhorred by popular
imagination and intellect, he seeks a monumental form that countenances the ideal reputation of good intelligence – a universal voice whose governance commands principle and definition.

We often miss his splendid, suffered width of gratitude because of his seemingly merciless criticism and affront to our paranoia and hurried formula to bribe and satisfy immediacy through rampant import of ideas foreign to us. Quite relentlessly, he encourages our intuitive potential to labour in order to evoke mediums, imaginative symbols, and a cogency that is rooted in an earth identical to us. How else does he manage to walk away as if entering upon newer horizons, leaving us consumed by his presence in utterances that continue to outpace and baffle our debates.

With the thoroughness of natural scholarship, he lets no caprice in. His fastidious manner is studied, sacrosanct and, even as he is of community, a solitary niche he has most likely fashioned for himself, looms, exalted in a mysterious open for fresh ideas whose foundations he questions at every turn, weighing their solidness, eyeing the future with the entirety of his smouldering passion and thought.

No angle of his chiselled, masculine countenance is tortured in the brine of Caribbean cynicism or despair, no parasitical farce underscores his bite. His is no surrender to any brand of our mamaguy or its mania for distortion and distraction – the gossip of no-name-no-feet! This Caribbean man, armed in the certainty of him, assails where duty holds to its integrity among reified judgements of those who are sanctified by their deeds to
vocation -mainly that distinguished duty of being here. Not satisfied at being a tenant, Lloyd lives in the authentic manner of his own voice, dwelling in his word, using his skills in Economics with the enormous grasp of the essential tools that language life.

This Caribbean man, this El Tucucheian spirit is profoundly assigned; greatness, nouminously inherent, is with him. He is our islands’ dream keeper of continent’s birth. Our legacy to civilisation –where the true possibility to bring to fruition the best of us– resides in an un-tampered, unexploded seed, its unrealised portents webbed in a bed of sleep, awaiting the risks that courageous hands of creative minds take to rending.

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When I marvel about how this place never managed to kill Lloyd Best and how he never get weary yet, and how he never lose his conviction about the green light the sustaining future that we can build with our own hands and minds, I remember one of my favourite inspirational passages from Joseph Conrad.

In the novel, Lord Jim, a man who has lived a full life is speaking to the narrating character Marlow about moral courage:

“A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do, he drowns... I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hand and feet in the water make the deep sea keep you up. So you ask me, how to be? ... I will tell you... In the destructive element immerse. That is the way. To follow the dream, and again to follow the dream - and so-even to the very end.”

I would not say that Lloyd Best is an optimist. And no one can accuse him of being an escapist or dreamer dosing his eyes to the realities around/ behind and in front him. In fact, from day one, Best has held that our greatest drawback has been a refusal or inability to see and understand what is before us and around us, and that the base and
foundation of our development is finding out about ourselves and the place from day one. Best has immersed himself in “the destructive element” and made it keep him up. Look at some surprising evidence.

Naipaul's The Mimic Men, appeared in the same year/1967, as Best’s – Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom. Amazing coincidence: the novel and the essay, in their different modes, cover almost exactly the same ground. You could almost think that Best and Naipaul sit down and had long talk and then they went their separate ways to write their own thing.

In his opening paragraph, Best declares that he is trying to encompass “the cultural, social, political and economic foundations of the sugar plantation variant of the colonial mind”. These are the foundations and this is the same disinherited mind that Naipaul's great novel brings to dramatic and theatrical life.

Naipaul projects politics as empty theatre/ and works upon our senses, overwhelms us with the imagery and dramatisations of drift, disorder, and institutional and personal mimicry. So people get vexed with Naipaul. They say he is anti-West Indian. But is Naipaul more severe than Best?

Almost everywhere, Best begins, - “there is disorder: fragmentation, segmentation and disarray. What is more, it is mounting disorder …”. In Best's analysis, “the economy
which underlines this disorder is literacy a pappyshow” prompted as ever by metropolitan demand. and metropolitan investment.

A critique of imitation and mimicry is strong in Best's comprehensive analysis of our social, political and cultural institutions, including the institutions of learning and the intellectuals who are as implicated in the values and procedures of institutions abroad as are the firms of the economy which are really branches of metropolitan corporations.

Best is most devastating in his analysis of a pattern of economic development which is reliant upon metropolitan initiatives and which is rationalised by Governments as an interim goal “separate and distinct from political independence and social equalisation”. You cannot miss the omens of further disorder and seemingly inevitable chaos. How a man can see all this and carry on as if the Frank Worrell trophy is still ours to play for 7.

Best has applied himself with unblinking rigour to understanding the brink from which we have come, the stasis or chaos in which we stand, the direction in which we are pointed, and where we can end up if we don't take our bearings and set our own course. Nobody complains that he is depressing; and he is not himself in a state of depression. When you read him or talk to him you don’t feel to ask him, if all of this is true why you don't kill yourself or go and lecture in America?

Best is more severe than Naipaul. Ryan says in the Introduction to Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom (2003) that “controversy followed him continuously”; and in the
Foreword to the same book. Rex Nettleford speaks of “his trenchant prose which sometimes rankles even while it enlightens”. But nobody quarrels with him for his severity. He is not destructive.

The individuals and institutions he has castigated turn round and honour him. Not because they want to take what he says to heart but can't, and not because they are thick-skinned. I suppose they know he knows they mean well, that they want better possibilities or fulfilment for everybody, and that his quarrel with them is a quarrel about means not ends. So the region's politicians and the organisation he has found wanting, confer on him the Order of the Caribbean Community. It is the only way they can respond to what is really a call for dialogue.

Dialogue, it is a key word for understanding Best. I have never known a man who knows so much and who listens so intently to what you have to say. I have never known anyone who is so definite in his analysis of what is wrong yet so tentative, provisional and open-minded when he begins to trace what needs to be done.

The young man of twenty-three who saw the need to create a journal for young West Indian scholars and thinkers to create their own discourse did not know exactly where New World Quarterly was going. All he knew was the need for dialogue. The proposal for a Constituent Assembly in 1970 is also a call for dialogue “a political process of finding out and sifting”, a political process of give and lake welding different points of view and community interests for “a new politics, and new parties and new leaders”. Let
us talk and talk and talk and we will find out. Community interests cannot for long replicate ethnic polarisations.

The advocacy of dialogue comes from an appreciation of the capacity of people to transform their environment. This appreciation is based upon solid evidence, knowledge of the achievements of people who were brought here five hundred years ago as labour to do work on the land and of their descend ants who became farmers, writers, painters, craftsmen, builders, teachers, musicians, entrepreneurs, pundits, babas, panmen, calypsonians, the whole lot.

It is an appreciation of facts that does not need a romantic concept of the people or the folk. I thought he did not know this and that I was the only one who saw it until heard I him say at the Conference held in his honour at St Augustine in 2003: “What is this concept of the people? I don’t have this concept of the people? Which people? When I talk about people I mean everybody in the country.”

Everybody in the country. Everybody can contribute to the process of change. If we look we will see that they did it in the past. It is not a leap in the dark to imagine they can do it again.

Lloyd Best is not an optimist. That is a sentimentality his mind will not permit. He is not a pessimist. That is a self-indulgence his knowledge would decisively arrest. He is not a high priest or doctor of any ideology or orthodoxy. His sense of dialectic and of the
variety of human opinion and points of view rejects any intellectual monopoly or imposition. He is not a doctor (it so happened he didn't bother to do any doctorate for any University) and has chosen to remain an independent and enquiring spirit. He is a treader of water, a believer, a man who will keep doing all he can while waiting.

If I had to settle on one term, I would say he is a man of faith. Faith in man's unconquerable mind. Faith in the power of knowledge to make things hang together. Faith in preparation for the future. Faith in himself. Faith in work.

Absolutely not that vaunted faith in things not seen, but a faith in people, based on the evidence of what he has seen, understood, and learnt:

*I have a lot of patience; I can wait one hundred, years, but I want to install the mechanism to make it possible for a constituent assembly to bloom some time in the future, on the assumption that people are going to learn, and that people are intelligent and reasonable, and sensible, some of them, not all of them can be. And if you get sufficient people like that – we don't know what the magic number is, 55, 105, 20 - then the civilisation could save itself by its own exertions, and save its neighbours by example.*

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A GREAT CONCEPTUALISER

BY

PROFESSOR NORMAN GIRVAN

I first met Lloyd Best in 1960 when he was a young economics researcher on the Mona Campus of the UWI and I, an economics undergraduate. Lloyd had a huge impact on a group of students that included Walter Rodney and Orlando Patterson and many others who went on to make a name for themselves in the social sciences, history, literature and politics. He was the intellectual leader of a discussion group called the West Indian Society for the Study of Social Issues that met every week at his house on College Common; the precursor of the New World Group that was formed by Lloyd and David DeCaires in Guyana in 1962. This group activity developed a series of critical analyses of the economics, politics and sociology of the colonial and emerging post-colonial order in the West Indies. ‘Industrialisation by Invitation’, the ‘theory of plantation economy’, ‘plantation society’ and ‘Doctor Politics’ were concepts which Lloyd originated that shaped the development of Caribbean social sciences in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. My own work on multinational corporations, dependency and regional integration, owes a great deal to Lloyd’s influence and encouragement. Dozens of books, journal articles and pamphlets and radical publications including New World Quarterly and newspapers like Moko and Tapia in Trinidad and Abeng in Jamaica were among the offshoots of a powerful intellectual movement whose objective was the intellectual decolonisation and social and economic transformation of the Caribbean; a movement that had a significant impact on politics and government policies in the region.
Throughout his life Lloyd has been a ‘Great Conceptualiser’-a source of inspiration and of a constant flow of new ideas and of ways of seeing the world and the Caribbean reality that profoundly influenced the thinking of several generations of scholars and political activists. His robust and eloquent advocacy of a Pan-Caribbean cosmology that knows no linguistic boundaries and that is rooted in our own experience and aesthetic, has evoked a sympathetic response from a people seeking to affirm its own unique identity and to forge a sense of regional nationhood out of what had been the forgotten outposts of an empire in decline. Above all, Lloyd has been an exemplar of the practice of critical, independent thought. In this sense his contribution is timeless; and the entire Caribbean nation will forever be in his debt.

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LLOYD BEST AS SPORTSMAN

BY

DENNIS PANTIN

Lloyd Best’s life functions can be interpreted to be all derivative of his core pre-occupations: dreamer and visionary. From this perspective Lloyd can be seen to have exploited his roles as economist, academic, lecturer, publicist and politician to give effect to this long cast of eye.

Both his core pre-occupations and functional roles deserve critical, dispassionate appraisal: a story for another day and time. There also is, of course, a private, personal Lloyd. Today, I wish to reflect on Lloyd as sportsman: a role for which he is deservedly less known for reasons I will explore below.

To state that Lloyd is a cricket fanatic would be to engage in under-statement. He proudly displays a picture from the British newspapers of the 1950s of himself first in line awaiting the opening of the gates at Lords or some other such hallowed cricket grounds for an England-West Indies test match.

It is in this context that one has to locate a cricket match organized between national Tapia and an affiliated group from Corosal in South Trinidad in the 1970s: cricket politics you may term it.
On paper, Tapia has a formidable team. In addition to Lloyd, other players included Baldwin Mootoo (later a member of the Trinidad and Tobago and West Indies cricket boards) and Winthrop Wiltshire who at this time –and perhaps even today- routinely donned white flannels for cricket games across the country.

After nine players were pulled together, the Tapia team remained two short. Two confirmed voopers, who will remain nameless, were reluctantly press-ganged to make up numbers.

Corosal won the toss, elected to bat and quickly knocked up a century. Enter Tapia. As you can imagine these Tapia cricket connoisseurs could not simply go to the wicket and bat. There was a repeated show and dance of taking guard while the pitch was gently prodded with a studied care that would have put the 3 Ws to shame. Corosal’s field settings were examined with apparently seasoned eyes.

Unfortunately, this ritual was being repeated at a very quick pace as wicket after wicket fell with embarrassing speed: Lloyd as cricket fanatic/commentator did not quite translate into runs!

Soon, it was down to the pick-up final two. Without so much as a glance at the field setting - and certainly without taking any guard- they vooped and blocked Tapia out of total annihilation, though not to victory.
And then there was the time that as under-graduates, students in the class of 1970 we discovered an unused table tennis board locked away in the backrooms of the Faculty of Engineering. Access required some agility since it involved climbing and glidding through several barriers.

Somehow Lloyd found out about our daily trips to take ‘a sweat’ and joined a group which included Albert Vincent, Anthony Bartholomew, Terry Farrell and, I think, Keith Smith, myself and others.

One board: many players and limited time: culturally this meant spending time waiting on the existing game to end and also trying to stay on as the winning player. Lloyd had plenty of talk and was not a bad player but the former greatly exceeded the latter!

At the end of the day the conclusion was clear: Keep your day job Lloyd: as dreamer and visionary.

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EXCESS OF LOVE

BY

DAVID DE CAIRES

It has been convincingly argued that the Easter uprising in Ireland in 1916 was doomed to failure. There were not enough men and arms. It has also been suggested that some at least of the leaders were aware of this. The uprising, in this interpretation, becomes a symbol of protest against British rule ending with the execution of some of the leaders. It was immortalised by William Butler Yeats in the magnificent poem ‘Easter 1916’ which ends as follows:-

Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse -
MacDonagh and Mac Bride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
Though he has never taken up arms physically one might feel that Lloyd Best has for the last forty years been involved in making a symbolic statement of some kind, perhaps quixotic, often deeply flawed, marked by rhetorical excesses, marred by human weaknesses, sometimes almost incoherent, to the effect that we have not done enough, we have not achieved our potential, we have not aimed sufficiently high, we have not completely shaken off the shackles of the plantation, we are mediocrities, just not good enough.

I have often said that I sometimes felt uncomfortable in the presence of my late friend Martin Carter. Martin was a large man in every way, you felt that he expected a lot of you and others, and that you were not delivering and indeed perhaps could not deliver. It was, of course, an impossible quest but he wanted us all to be better than we were. He never lost his impossible dream though it ended in great bitterness.

I got to know Lloyd in the sixties when he worked in Guyana advising government on the setting up of a planning unit. It was a good time. Inevitably, we discussed the problems of Guyana. The destabilisation of the Jagan government was in train. In 1964, he would lose power under the imposed electoral system of proportional representation to a coalition government led by Burnham. Neither of us was particularly enamoured of Jagan's ideology or his praxis, though living through the subversion of a duly elected government with all the hypocrisy, dishonesty and shamelessness involved is not a
pleasant experience. In 1963 the well known first issue of the New World Quarterly proposing a coalition government between Jagan and Burnham was published. That was not to be.

We also played football and had a pleasant social life. I remember to this day with some affection some of his more extravagant phrases such as “when we take the full power.” Lloyd subsequently entered politics in Trinidad. I have never been convinced that that was the right decision as I felt he might have had more to contribute in the academic field, in particular if he had pursued the work he had been doing on the plantation model. Be that as it may, in 1976 when it was known that Tapia would be contesting the elections in Trinidad and Tobago the excitement in Guyana among his former colleagues was considerable. It was reported to us that the party was having a good campaign and on election night myself, my legal partner Miles Fitzpatrick and other friends got together to eat black pudding, drink rum and wait for the results on the radio. They were, of course, bitterly disappointing. I have always felt that that night was a watershed in the evolution of the West Indian intellectual, an enlightenment that politics was about more than bright people and impressive manifestos. In particular, it was about appealing to specific interest groups and constituencies and the need for organisational capacity.

One senses that Lloyd has never really been a team player. There has always been in him something of the maverick. He has also not been free of that particular characteristic indulgence of intellectuals in Caribbean and other ex-colonial societies to pour withering scorn on the capacities and achievements or lack thereof of their own people. This
phenomenon is particularly rampant in Guyana where the excoriation of people in public life goes to extreme lengths and sometimes betrays a peculiar parochialism.

Yet if one looks at the body of Lloyd's work one cannot fail to see that it is always motivated by a redeeming hope that things could be better if only, as he would put it, the educational system were not so bankrupt or the validating elites took more responsibility for their conduct. It is this unquenchable optimism that has always made him a little larger than life, this conviction that a brave and better new world lies in the future, if only we had the wisdom and the fortitude to get there. I have said before that he has played the role of the Socratic gadfly, raising questions, trying to provoke dialogue.

Kirk Meighoo has argued that Lloyd displays some conservative values. What we all badly need to understand, I suggest, is that it is essential to preserve some things from our past, harsh as that was, some pride in the achievements of our ancestors, even if we believe those were mainly the ability to survive and adapt. The debilitating cynicism that is prevalent among our intellectual elites makes nation building even more arduous. We have to stop feeling so badly about ourselves as a country. We have our heroes, for MacDonagh substitute Butler, for Mac Bride, Cipriani, for Connolly, Williams and for Pearse whoever you think appropriate.

(A)nd at the brink of this dawn
this is my virile prayer may I heed neither laughs nor cries,
eyes riveted on this city which I prophesy,
beautiful, give me the savage faith of the sorcerer

give my hands the power to mould

give my soul the temper of the sword

I do not dodge. Make of my head a prow-head

and of myself, my heart, do not make a father nor a brother

nor a son, but the father, but the brother, but the son

nor a husband, but the lover of this unique people.

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DISCUSSION, THE KEY

BY

MICKEY MATTHEWS

Tributes to close friends are indeed difficult to write. For me, who has been described as Lloyd Best’s “fan and protegée”, it has proven to be quite a task.

Only once in my life have I shared as close a friendship as the one I enjoy with Lloyd Best. That friendship was of my boyhood, and what they both had in common is this tendency to make me jealous. Only on the passing of Arthur Atwell did I learn that he enjoyed a friendship with Lloyd that rivalled the one I have. The truth is that in both instances I faced an army of rivals, for the same qualities which made them my bosom buddies made for them scores of other intimate friends.

What is it about a man that permits him to make so many friends? In the case of Best, it is because he would engage you at your own level while never relenting on his passion for teaching. Discussion is his key. Forever on the lookout for the craftily-put expression that captures the point of the case, he would engage you by underscoring the fact that you had coined one, and using it himself. Expressions like “UWI is a polytechnie” which he got from his son Stuart, the “cussedness of the opposition” from the late Martin Sampath, “clash of the protagonists” which I had coined, are just a few in his repertoire that I know to have been discovered in this way. This way of proceeding made teaching a partnership between teacher and student that in my own case, blossomed into enduring friendship.
TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY

BY

MARTIN G. DALY

The thing about Lloyd Best is that one always knew that he was important, not important in the cocktail party sense, but important to the country. Lloyd is a man whose beliefs could never be compromised for the sake of a high sounding office or a tax-free car. Even people who do not know him personally are fully aware that he is important and good for the country.

I first encountered Lloyd in the Guillaumes’ house around 1973 or 1974. In the course of the evening we had a serious difference concerning the likely approach of Dr. Williams to a re-examination of the Constitution.

I remember vividly when his Tapia House contested the 1976 general elections. They did not win a seat but they had the goodwill of many people. The morning after the election a building contractor, who was working on my home and whom I discerned to be a strong PNM, said the following to me: “Mr. Daly, what do you think about the election?” Before I could reply he continued, “I real sorry that Mr. Best and Tapia did not get to form the opposition.”
My contractor never answered my question whether he voted for Tapia. He probably did not but in his heart he knew that Mr. Best and his followers were good for the country, but he had “chinksed” (a favourite Lloyd word).

More recently, at the time of 18-18, I commented that Mr. Robinson should have sent Mr. Manning and Mr. Panday back to the Crowne Plaza to negotiate a full agreement how to operate the country. I also wrote to Mr. Manning querying the political legitimacy of a Government selected by the President. Lloyd, with whom I had not been in recent contact, wrote approvingly of my position. Sometime later I was at Panorama and a hearty pan official, whom I knew by seeing him around, applauded me in a loud voice. “Daly, you must be good because Lloyd Best does not praise anybody.”

As is obvious, the accolade described above, is another example of the importance of Lloyd. To many persons he is a touchstone of what may have substance or is sincere. He has earned universal respect.

On the occasion of Lloyd’s retirement from the task of publisher of the Review, with total love in our hearts, we must plead with those in control of mortal destiny to keep him strong. We are never without need of his wisdom.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 27 No. 12 on November 14th 2005.
LIBERATING THE MIND

BY

JASON MOHAMMED

For me to pay tribute to Lloyd means that I must first give a short account of my past and what led me to his work and its profound influence on me.

I did not know of Lloyd Best when I went up to read Natural Sciences at Pembroke College, Cambridge, at the age of nineteen, in 1988. I left Trinidad a very naïve, and narrow middle-class teenager. My life had been all school, science, sport, sea scouts. How little I knew of both my country and myself was dramatically highlighted as a foreigner in England, as I became more and more aware of their political, social and economic issues in the waning years of Thatcherism.

The resistance of my fellow students at University to the unfair Poll Tax, which I paid mostly out of fear for my foreign student status, when they absolutely refused to comply, left a significant impression on me that widespread, vocal and vehement public resistance was an acceptable and productive approach to letting an unpopular Government know that it needed to reconsider its actions. At the time, it made me realize how apathetic I was compared to my English peers.

And then, 1990. I was more shocked than my English friends at the events in the news that July that I spent working in my Department’s lab on my second-year summer
project. As I explained to them, it was unbelievable to me that a group of my fellow Trinidadians felt motivated so strongly to execute an attack against the Government. For me, as an observer thousands of miles away from the terror and curfews, this event was significant in making me realize how little I understood and knew of the society and culture that I had been raised in.

So when I returned home in late 1991, I was determined to learn as much as I could about my country and what and how it had made me.

Coincidentally, Lloyd had also recently returned home from Africa, and started writing articles for the Express. I clipped his articles out of the newspapers, along with those of Elton Richardson, Denis Solomon, Wayne Brown, Diana Mahabir-Wyatt and any others that would help me better understand the condition of our eccentric culture and society. However, for me, it was Lloyd’s that were the most rich, and the most dense. I would take to his weekly article last of all, with a highlighter pen, a dictionary and at least an hour. It turned out to be an effort that was well rewarded.

Lloyd would ask questions without necessarily giving the answers. I know for most, including me, this was truly maddening. But once you had the patience to go beyond being mad, the questions made you look at the world, your reality, differently. They forced you to go beyond your assumptions and delusions. They forced you to reflect on why you thought what you thought, and how you knew what you thought you knew. This is the real essence of Lloyd’s influence on me.
My scientific training at university had given me a lot of useful tools – an analytical mind, the discipline of working rigorously and logically from first principles, a problem-solving orientation, and the always-required habit of doing a reality-check. That kind of training in the scientific method gave me great respect for its contributors; in this case thinkers from Aristotle to Galileo to Descartes to Darwin. In addition, the application of science to the development of technology and engineering had impressed me into believing that the civilizations and societies that generated most of these achievements were frankly, also to be modelled when it came to how they conducted their social and economic affairs. If they did it, whatever “it” happened to be, then it was probably good for us to do “it” too.

It was my reading of Lloyd that helped me to question that invisible underlying assumption and the effect it had on my sovereignty over my thinking. The tools I had gained at Cambridge were of great value, but I needed to lose my assumptions about the power of their makers, and apply those tools to finding and making my own powerful ideas and understanding about my society, my culture, and myself.

From this realization, prompted by Lloyd, I started framing questions of my own, re-engineering my cultural schema, changing my assumptions about “first world” and “third world”, “developing” versus “developed”, learning to truly think historically in the context of how we came to be what we are, and what might be possible for us to change for the better. Lloyd invited me to become more reflective and more self-aware, and
paradoxically, even as I realized how much I didn’t know, I became more self-assured because I was sure about what I knew I didn’t need to know any more.

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THE WILL TO ENDURE

BY

PROFESSOR GORDON ROHLEHR

The educated West Indian elite of the first half of the Twentieth Century used to be told, as their countries crept towards the Franchise, self-government and the dangling carrot of Independence, that they would be the ones to shoulder the responsibility of leading their old societies into new nationhood.

Lloyd Best was a product of this promise, and shared with the emerging post-war intellectual elite of which he was a part, the cultural duality of the Afro-Saxon and Indo-Saxon caste; the ambivalence of having both sprung and grown away from the grass roots of their survivalist society; and the pioneering spirit of a group chosen by both history and fate, to name their new world and define the terms and values by which they hoped this world would operate.

Best emerged a generation after Williams, at a time when an earlier version of the island-scholarship winners had just assumed the burden of self-definition and national self-validation.

He was, in other words, born into an Oedipal situation in which a “son” is destined to question, revise, challenge and confront the definitions and ground rules of a “father” whose authoritarian face the son also wears. So Best, himself the product of an
educational system that had created egocentric authoritarianism throughout the colonial world, questioned the “doctor politics” by which the new nation of Trinidad and Tobago was being governed. If Williams celebrated the historic walk around the Savannah in the misnamed “March on Chaguaramas” in 1960, with the famous speech, “From Slavery to Chaguaramas”, Best would undermine and invert Williams’ rhetoric with his first great essay: “From Chaguaramas to Slavery”. In the process of creating a counter-discourse to what had rapidly become a Williams’ monologue, Best became a generator of names – “Doctor Politics”, “T/the validating elite”, “the parasitic oligarchy”, “Afro – Saxons”; “a big macco Senate”, “localization”, “screwdriver industries”, “industrialization by invitation” – as he relentlessly questioned the foundering structures of the floundering fathers. But in probing their flaws, he was also painfully aware that he had himself been a product of the same system of intellectual elitism and authoritarianism, and that all of his fundamental recommendations needed to serve the primary objective of placing checks and balances on authoritarian leadership. Thus a certain implicit self-questioning lay at the roots of his formulations for constitutional reform; for the empowerment of local agencies and the transformation of the entire education system. By 1970, Best had devised a counter - curriculum which he wanted UWI lectures to teach as a public service, and the University to legitimate by offering certification and thus forcing the state to do likewise.

Best was bold, visionary compelling and quixotic. He was also courageous, headstrong, tenacious and passionate, in his desire to pool the energies of the intellectual caste towards public service, and set no limit on the variety of forms such service might
assume. The poets, the playwrights, the novelists, the economists, the doctors, lawyers, taxi-drivers, pannists, workers and farmers, all had parts to play in the making of the new worlds he envisaged, and in contributing to the dialogue upon which democracy and a civil society were to be established. Conscious of the fact that some persons, regardless of the scope and depth of their engagement with society, are due to leave only their words to posterity, he strove to have as many of his words and those of his contemporaries chronicled. Hence the extraordinary energy that for forty years has produced journals: such as “New World”, “Tapia” and the “Trinidad and Tobago Review”. The latter two indeed, have survived the devastation caused by two fires: the fire in 1969 that destroyed the building in which New World used to meet in Port of Spain, and the even more terrible one in the mid-seventies in Cipriani Boulevard, where an entire archives was reduced to ash.

Best emerged from those catastrophes, as he did from the lost deposits of 1976 General Elections, scarred, but not losing hope, exhausted, but stubbornly refusing to give up. For him, the New World was still new, the task of naming and illumination still incomplete. The Constitution awaited revision, the society transformation. I suspect that it is this quality of endurance, this refusal to be overcome by the machinations of man or fate, that I have most admired in Lloyd Best.

_This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 27 No. 12 on November 14th 2005._
SECTION TWO

Comments Immediately After
The Hon. Lloyd Best’s Death
It is with a sense of profound loss and deep personal sadness that I have received the news of the passing of one of the Caribbean’s greatest sons, Lloyd Algernon Best, OCC.

When Mr. Best was awarded the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC) in 2003, at the Fourteenth Inter-Sessional Meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in his native Trinidad and Tobago, his citation included the following description: “Best is without doubt one of the most fertile minds in the Caribbean and has bestrode the regional intellectual world like a colossus.” Truer words have never been spoken and that investiture was one of my proudest moments as Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community.

I have known Lloyd Best since my student days and, like many others, could not fail to be influenced by his sharp intellect, incisive debating skills, and his relentless search for truth and honest discourse. He was at the centre of a group of innovative thinkers whose views remain not only relevant, but have inspired succeeding generations of independent Caribbean thought.

The views expounded by the New World Group, a think-tank which flourished in the 1960s, reinforced the concept that the independence movement of the time must be
driven by Caribbean reality and not be “mimic men” to European or any other models of government. This was an era that laid the foundations of the kind of debate and discourse still necessary as we continue the struggle towards true Caribbean integration. The thoughts and writings of Best, William Demas, Kari Levitt, Lloyd Braithwaite, M G Smith among others, have set a benchmark for Caribbean intellectualism.

Lloyd Best’s wide range of interest is reflected in the many publications which bore his stamp, none more so than the Trinidad and Tobago Review which has lived through many incarnations but remains a beacon for Caribbean expression in so many areas. His foray into formal politics centred around his beloved Tapia with its headquarters in his equally beloved Tunapuna.

The force of Lloyd Best’s ideas are best gauged by the passion with which he advocated “Independent thought and Caribbean freedom”. That passion has inspired many and has influenced political and economic discourse for over four decades. Never one to be daunted, he remained to the end, dynamic, stimulating and provocative. Lloyd Algernon Best has left a legacy to this Region; his spirit will ever live.

To his wife Sunity, his children and grand-children, I offer sincerest condolences on behalf of the Caribbean Community, its Secretariat and on my own behalf. His was truly an outstanding and sustained contribution to the development of this Region. Farewell my friend!
A DEBT REPAID MANY TIMES OVER

BY

EDITOR, TRINIDAD EXPRESS

One never quite knew what to call Lloyd Best. "Economist" was, perhaps, the easiest because that after all was his primary discipline. But one could call him - and many people did too - "politician", "social activist," "intellectual," "pamphleteer," "journalist," "erudite editor", "critic". All would be correct in the singular and the collective because Mr Best was each and every one of these.

Being all of these things, he had tremendous impact and influence not only on his native Trinidad and Tobago but throughout the region, with his thoughts and ideas having international currency as he sought to and succeeded in making sense of the various, ultimately intertwining currents, lapping on shores both far and near.

As perhaps the foremost original West Indian thinker, and not only of his time either, Mr Best had perforce to invent entirely new concepts which have withstood examination over decades even as he, himself, moved on to wrestle with ever new ideas as he sought to make sense and bring sanity to local and regional conditions.

Difficult to comprehend at times - and how could he not be - he nevertheless lived to see governments, both here and elsewhere, attempt to assimilate his thinking in their programmes and policies and, perhaps even more startlingly, his turns of phrase become part of the vocabulary of, at least, the thinking men and women of the streets.

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1 This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express, March 21, 2007.
Today, even as the ruling People’s National Movement seems unassailable with the opposition forces in disarray, there are new moves to resurrect the "party of parties" which he was to invent to such good effect even before the political earthquake that was to shake Trinidad and Tobago in the elections of 1986.

That neither he nor the Tapia party he created for the purpose ever achieved political power is a historical fact. But there can be few who would question their high and lasting profile as they endeavoured to engage the society in terms other than the "gut responses" of ethnicity, a word, incidentally, now made universally commonplace but for which he was pilloried because of its then strangeness.

Mr Best believed to his death that, having been educated at taxpayers’ expense, he had a lifelong debt to the society. There is no fair-minded man or woman in Trinidad and Tobago who, as we mourn his passing, will not shout from the mountain tops how, in multiple fashion, that debt has been more than amply repaid.
GEORGE LAMMING ON LLOYD BEST

‘IRREPLACEABLE LIGHT’ GONE

BY

RICKEY SINGH

On Monday [March 19, 2007], when Trinidad and Tobago buried George Radcliffe John, an illustrious journalist son of his homeland, there came the passing also of another native son, Lloyd Algernon Best - the renowned independent thinker and a titan of the kingdom of Caribbean intellectuals.

Both John (86) and Best (73) died after long battles with cancer, George eventually in a hospital, Lloyd at home in the care of his journalist wife Sunity Maharaj.

Many would be the very deserving glowing tributes to flow in the days ahead, but yesterday I turned to the celebrated novelist George Lamming, himself a formidable icon of Caribbean thought, longstanding friend and co-worker of Best, for a response on the passing of a Caribbean man with whom some have been at variance for his so-called “doctor politics”.

“With the passing of Lloyd Best”, said Lamming, “an irreplaceable light has been put out. Lloyd and I shared a friendship which survived the sharpest of disagreements, but each disagreement deepened my respect for his integrity.”
“For more than 40 years he put his formidable intellect in the service of one singular cause -- independent thought and Caribbean freedom.” According to Lamming, “there was no corner of this archipelago which escaped his political concern, and his politics was the name of an intellectual culture.” Lamming recalled that Best “fought to the very end to help us dismantle the imperial boundaries we inherited. We failed because we do not recognise the difference between politics and government; and dare not see our” mimicking of a Westminster model as the greatest obstacle to genuine representation. Himself viewed by Rex Nettleford as “one of the Caribbean's finest intellects and foremost literary artists whose creative imagination has primed our consciousness to arousals...to faithfully reflect the region's diverse historical experience”, Lamming extended his tribute on the passing of Best by noting: “To find a language of our own creation that would define the Caribbean collective experience was the gospel he preached.”

Notable publications like “New World”, “Tapia” and “Trinidad and Tobago Review”, said Lamming, “are some of the significant markers of Lloyd Best's abundant legacy. He will be remembered as one of the richest gifts Trinidad and Tobago made to its Caribbean family.”

A subjective view may leave some asking how formidable Caribbean thinkers like C.L.R. James and Lloyd Best could have drifted into the confines of narrow party politics to effect - unsuccessfully as happened - the changing of governments in their native land.
Surviving any such questioning would, of course, be the wealth of ideas located in their respective body of published works. While he writhed in pain from the cancer that tortured him in his final years, both the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Community hastened to appropriately honour him. The UWI did so with an Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt) degree and CARICOM conferred on him its highest award, Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC).

Lloyd Best would long remain a reference source for any serious discussion on the history, politics, economics and culture of the Caribbean region. The discourses he inspired as an economist and columnist would certainly be missed in the media.

In my salad years as a journalist working in Guyana, I had the great privilege of being introduced to Lloyd Best when he turned up at the invitation of the then Premier Cheddi Jagan to help in creating what was to have been the first-ever Economic Planning Unit in our region. It has been a learning experience ever since with a great West Indian

This article first appeared in the Guyana Chronicle, March 21, 2007.
Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every PNM, UNC, NAR, every card-carrying party person and every man and woman who couldn't care about any party. Best, better than most here, understood the value of party politics but he understood, too, not only how party politics had failed the Caribbean but why and understanding why, what he brought, above all, to the turbulent table of West Indian being was a compassion that sought to corral all of us into seeking a new kind of politics, one that would see us taking up our bed and walking rather than lying on it and waiting.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every CEPEP worker struggling along the East-West Corridor, every lost cane-cutter in Central, because while he was blacker than most, none more than he was able to break out of the castle of his skin to reach out to all his peoples, all his learning leading him to the communality of their condition even as, more than most, he comprehended clinically the vagaries of culture that made them just that bit different.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every millionaire businessman and middle-class professional, because just as he was never one for race he was never one for class, not that he didn't know what they were and the divisiveness they could create but, I have
come to think, this Tunapuna boy, born and brought up where country merged into town, intuitively knew that they were not unalterably decisive to the human condition.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every decreed intellectual and every seeming illiterate, because while none lived more intensely than he the life of the mind he knew, that life was more than book learning, that sense make before book and that, in the search for light, the true teacher listened to the voice of the most timorous of his students.

Lloyd Best is dead and we are all alone now. Every rational mathematician and mind-meandering poet, because, more deeply than most, he understood the connectivity of things and that the opening up of the humanities was what it would take for us to prise open the doors of science, Man/ Woman having a number of halves, the challenge being to leave enough space for either and both to play in the quest that we be made whole.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every socialist trade unionist or Afro/Indo nationalist, because while never a prisoner of ideology, particularly borrowed ideology, he understood why folks found solace in their imagined truths even as he sought to engage them into divining truths of their own that drive, knowing, more than most, the lure of the conventional option.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every one of us who knew him personally and who was lucky enough to take a ride on that magnificent mind as he took us through the amazing length and breadth of his vast world, telling us how Communism would
collapse decades before it did, even as he sympathised with the way Marx had been led into error.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every one of us who not only thrilled to each and every one of his insights, but his way of eagerly, graciously, passing on those insights, Otis Redding bringing soul from the slums into the Top Ten, Williams and Capildeo playing the game of “Doctor Politics”, the “marginals” outside of the Indo/Afro garrison constituencies, “schools in pan” far more than “pan in schools”, since out of the barrack yards had come this “blasted miracle” that should long have encouraged us “to design forms of organisation inspired by our own experience and traditions as well as our current circumstances”.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. All of us who were close enough to him to share his addiction to all the wrong things, tomatoed smoke herring, onioned buljol and over-peppered roti and the right things, too, Frank Worrell/Viv Richards moving early to cut suicidally late, Muhammad Ali, taunting, teasing and terminating, Tiger Woods giving golf breathtaking grace.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. The old 19-year-olds among us, their minds already stuck in the past and the young 90-year-olds mindful still of the future, all of us who have ever drawn a line straight between points A and B or wished upon a star, all of us who have hummed “Red, Red Wine” in some dingy recreation club, all of us finding elixir in a Lydians operatic line or laughter in a Spoiler “fall”.

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Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. Every fulminating pastor and aggrieved atheist, because he was aware of the protracted search for some spiritual dispensation even as he veered towards doubt and, perhaps, even denial, nobody but he and wife, Sunity, perhaps, knowing on which side of that transcendental line he ended up.

Lloyd Best is gone and we are all alone now. So lonely and alone now. Left, bereft, to scramble in the Caribbean centre that should be our world. Unless, in time, those thoughts become flesh. So lonely and alone till then. Alone and so very lonely, wondering when.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express on Wednesday, March 21st 2007.
DOOKERAN HAILS SCHOLAR

BY

KIMBERLY MACKHAN

Former Central Bank governor Winston Dookeran has hailed economist and political thinker Lloyd Best as one of the best academic scholars he worked with.

Dookeran, who is also the Political Leader of the Congress of the People, stressed that one of the greatest contributions that Best made to Trinidad and Tobago was that he knew that in order to build a building, one must have the foundation correct.

“When I myself joined the University of the West Indies, he was my friend and colleague and I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a man whose voice remained a voice of sanity in the midst of political turbulence in our land,” said Dookeran.

“We lost a very distinguished scholar and academic yesterday in Lloyd Best. He was someone I knew very well for the last 30 years.”

Dookeran said yesterday that the reason Best never rose to high political office was because people would not worry about the foundations but rather the fruits of the labour.

“He never allowed himself to be tempted with the fruits, he was committed to the labour.
If you remember, he spoke so often about how we could change the political structure of our country to make sure that everyone becomes part of the nation," said Dookeran.

"Tonight I pay tribute to him, to a man who understood that true and genuine development comes out of good foundations."

Dookeran was speaking at a Congress cottage meeting at Balmain, Couva on Tuesday night.

*This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express Thursday, March 22nd 2007.*
KNOWING FROM KNOWING LLOYD

BY

KEITH SMITH

Studying it even now I still chuckle, Lloyd Best expostulating years ago: “They want me to give people right!” The “they” were those of his political colleagues, collaborators even, who felt that since he was in politics, Best should set out to win people in, at least, some of the conventional ways. Not he. It was not that he could not be as amiable as anybody else but he was not about to give strangers passing in the streets "a right" just so that they could see what a down-to-earth feller he was. To Best, that smacked of deceit, if not subversion. And then there was the time when a spinmaster merely suggested that Best should make himself over-jacket and tie, cravat even. "They want to dress me up," he complained, which is not so say that he was above dressing up when the mood suited him, only for him “dressing up” was wearing whatever clothes he felt like choosing from this country's cultural cupboard.

Dashiki, dhoti, jacket and tie-he would wear them all as it suited his mood, a fuss caused by his not matching mood to occasion so that there were some Indo-Trinidadians who objected to what they saw as his caricaturing of their clothes and, of course, when he went into the Senate he and the rest of the Tapia crew refused to wear jacket and tie just to make the anti-colonial political point. As I read over the last few days the fulsome praises that have been sung in both his and the group's name I couldn't help but remember some of the low points, like when during the campaign of '76, we held a “mass meeting”
on Independence Square to which nobody came, a chastened Best retreating at my urgings to a recreation club in Laventille where, as we sat, he lamented: “We are nowhere in the game.”

Later, last year in fact, I was to hear him describe that entry into electoral politics as a major mistake although, newspaperman that I am, I remember (and, in fact, keep) the group's manifesto, rich in content and magnificently presented by Lennox Grant who had brought me to Tapia as I had brought him to the newspaper profession. And, then, there was the sweeping NAR victory in the elections of '86 of which he was, arguably, the main architect, Best, perversely in the minds of many, refusing afterwards to involve himself in the "messy business of construction". In his mind, of course, was the certainty that the aggregation under Robinson would not be resilient enough to withstand the competing strains, he telling me once that the NAR's political leader "didn't even know what kind of party he had". And so it proved, neither "Robbie" nor his closest collaborators understanding that the NAR was not as cemented as the PNM, the construct coming crashing down because nobody had bothered to fit in Best's called for "Court of Policy" which was his description for whatever the mechanism set up to solve the grievances and disputes that were bound to rear up in what, after all, was a “party of parties.”

Some of his collaborators moved away from Best when he opted out of the NAR in government and even as they must have pondered how his prediction of collapse did
come to pass, I have often wondered what would have happened had Best actually entered the arena.

Would he, on the basis of force of personality and superiority of intellect, political and otherwise, have been able to salvage the NAR, sew its salient parts together? And, if so, what would have been Trinbago's political future and indeed its political present? We talked a lot about matters arising, both before he went off to Africa and after, and I gathered from him that he didn't think he would have been able to arrest the political passing, the waves of many-sided hostility that emerged having their own momentum, he, sure to be circumscribed by the "terms under which" he "went in" by which he meant, I continue to suppose, that he would not have enough of the clout or sufficient of the backing to make his counsel matter. Or, perhaps, it was that he had concluded for some time that his erstwhile collaborators could not see beyond getting rid of the PNM which, while he felt necessary, was but the first step in the essential mission of "churching and burying" the ethnic politics that was then hamstringing the country's future-and who, among us, will not stand up and sorrowfully shout: STILL!

I heard from Best, himself, that a certain judge had once dismissed him as a "failed politician". And I suppose you could say that in the narrow sense of his never having marched triumphantly into White Hall. In the broader sense, however, I don't see how he could have been more successful than he was. Last week I was to read in the B.C. Pires interview, Malcolm Speed, ICC chairman, describing the West Indies team as the greatest sporting phenomenon of the twentieth century.
Speed's point of departure was the context in which the West Indies came to cricket glory, all the odds stacked against them, and when I think of the context in which Best and Tapia made their continuous impact, coming with none of the agitated, if coded, appeals to race and class, foregoing "instant mobilisation", as it were, I have to think that to think they did all that!

I want to end with two more of the things that Best told me. One was that “the duty of leadership was to make itself obsolete.” The other was that he didn't expect his formulations to really take root until after he was dead because while he was alive they would be constrained by the conflicts of personality, the very fact of his being standing in the way of both acceptance and implementation of his political, social and economic truths. I do not know whether he did enough to have achieved the first and I certainly do not know whether his death will open the relevant doors. But I confess to being stunned by the national impact occasioned by his passing, not only by the distinguished and learned but by the ordinary people whom he never considered ordinary and among whom were those who, while not absorbing his various works, somehow realised that he was completely on their side. For myself all I can say is that most of what I know, I know from knowing Lloyd. And, no, I cannot envisage him ever resting in whatever the peace.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express on Friday, March 23rd 2007.
REMEMBERING THE MASTER:
INTERVIEW WITH DR. ERIC ST CYR

BY
B.C. PIRES

Before a death that would have been untimely if he'd lived until 3007, Lloyd Best worked most closely with fellow economist and longstanding friend and colleague, Eric St Cyr, who this morning recalls, for the benefit of us all, some aspects of the great man.

Q: You?
A: In March 2003, I was ushered into [Lloyd's] office, sat on that tall stool and we chatted. Lloyd said, "Eric, you know my health condition. Do you have some time to help me get these four pieces of work I need to finish out?" We were last together working on 14th March, by which time we finished three. The fourth - the glossary of terms, because if you're doing a paradigm shift, there will be a change in the language-is almost completed.

You were his last extensive collaborator?
I would say so. Lloyd was an extremely hard worker. Sometimes we would start at ten in the morning and at eight at night we would still be there, with two short breaks, a little food right where we sat, just to complete the work. The last time I went in, he was between sleep and wake. I stayed with him for an hour then he opened his eyes, said hello, and we did about three hours of work. That was the second half of the final chapter

Why do you think Lloyd touched so many of us so deeply?
Because, as a person, Lloyd was a man of deep, genuine, profound love. This is why he was able to give himself so completely to his family, friends, the nation and the cause of mankind. But he was a lot more than that. He was a man of compassion. He identified with the struggles of the people, especially the disadvantaged. He is also a very generous man. Now, if things were wrong, he would say so but I have never heard Lloyd say anything negative or evil about anyone. He always looked on the upside of people. He was also a man of tremendous courage. No challenge ever seemed to have daunted him. I would say he was also a man of great faith. The things he believed in, he got up and did them.

Though he was agnostic, he viewed every man in what we might call a genuinely Christian way?
Yes. We so loved each other, he knows who I am and where I stand [as a Christian] but I would never say, you have to be like me because the obverse to that is [chuckling] I would have to be like him. Lloyd was not religious but he was deeply spiritual. I believe he died trusting as King David of Israel would say, “The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.”
He certainly seemed connected to something bigger than himself?

Yes. He liked to refer to that as, “the cosmic realm”. There is a beautiful little quote in the Tapia, going back to about 1976: Lloyd said, "When at the age of 14, I gave up religion for the secular life". [Laughs] But he couldn't give up being a spiritual person.

Would you call that wellspring of love his greatest quality?

I would say so. It's not to be confused with a strict, formal, upright person. If you did wrong, Lloyd would let you know because he loved you. If perchance he did wrong, he would admit it. And people loved him for that.

He didn't often admit he was wrong professionally, though?

Yes but I think he always conceded that was his position and then he would say, "What is yours?" He might tell you, "I don't share your view" but would never take the position that you're damned for that. He respected people's opinions even when he didn't share them.

He was able to connect with almost everyone?

And this is the core of what we call compassion: your ability to put yourself in the other man's shoes and empathise with how he's seeing it.

What was his Achilles' heel?

That's a tricky one. I don't know I'd say this is an Achilles' heel but Lloyd would not compromise on the truth. I don't think he would suffer fools gladly. Persons who didn't
want to relate on the basis of striving for accuracy and truth would usually be offended and pull away from him.

\textit{He lived life on his own terms?}

Very much so. Very strong- willed. I think it was because he felt he was here for a purpose he had to fulfil.

\textit{Was his greatest gift to us the example of dismissing the frills and examining the fabric?}

Yes. The core of the problem. Lloyd would get to that. I know him best in his work in economics, the discipline we shared. I believe Lloyd's work would have made a profound impact on the discipline internationally. One of his core distinctions was between what he calls "the algebra" and "the arithmetic". The algebra would be universalistic and, if you're not careful, could lead you into the metaphysical. The arithmetic is very particularistic and lead you into science, the empirical reality. Investment, e.g., would generally drive an economic system. This was one of the things Arthur Lewis lacked. But we have had tremendous amounts of foreign investment in the region. So investment by itself would be categorised in the algebra of the thing; but where the investment went and for what purpose, within what institutional structure and how the society related to it, would be different from one economy to another [and would constitute the arithmetic]. And this is where Lloyd's departure in the realm of the methodology of economics is and will remain profound. Arthur Lewis knew you couldn't just apply the British model which is why he developed the unlimited supplies model. Rawle Prebisch in the Economic Commission for Latin America was also sure you couldn't just adopt the North Atlantic economic
paradigm. Dudley Sears captured that in the phrase, "the limitations of the special case". But what Lloyd has done is to say that is a universal problem: that each economic system is located in a particular historical, cultural, sociological setting. The concreteness of Lloyd's perspective is profound. The theoretical piece, Plantation Economy, which he has been working on jointly with Kari Levitt, would have world impact. We are believing the application of that work to the Trinidad and Tobago case—which is the work he and I have been doing together—will one day open the eyes of policy makers. I'm sure people will come after and refine it, make it more accurate; but I think Lloyd has made a breakthrough in that. A seminal work.

*Was he frustrated in being unable to influence policymakers?*

At our last seminar in January, the economist Ronald Ramkissoon asked, "If the thing is so clear, why aren't we receiving it and doing it?" [Chuckles] Lloyd is very much aware there are several levels of problems.

*Conceptual. Epistemic.*

People are loath to let go what they're holding on to, either because they benefit, are comfortable, or fear the implications of letting go. I think there is a great element of the latter. The thrust of the work is to open the society, economy and polity to the broad mass of people for whom this region is home. There could be interests in place at the present whose purposes would not be served by such a move. I think it is this sense, and this sense only, that we should think of Lloyd as radical. Not in the negative sense of wanting
to break up things. Lloyd is the most responsible thinker and person. He believes in good order, discipline and so on.

*If that were really taken on board, it would cause upheaval, at least in consciousness?*

Not necessarily physical upheaval; in fact, it may be, that if we don't take it on board, the consequence could be that undesirable upheaval. One could affect a revolution incrementally. I don't think we're aware of how massive our current [energy] bonanza is. Last fiscal year, 2005/6, the government revenue amounted to $38 billion. In the ten years, 1974-83, the total revenue was $39 billion! There are enough resources-the gas is projected to last many years-to change the whole economic system.

*Did Lloyd accept the government's claim of having achieved full employment?*

Yes and no. Yes in the sense that any statistic means only what the definitions, concepts and methodologies used to collect the data says. There is no quarrel that the way the CSO has collected the data over the last 30 years, the numbers are not being cooked. But no in the sense that you have to ask what the data mean?

*Has our unemployment problem been solved?*

I would say no, because the level of employment we have is only sustainable so long as the oil and gas resources put those abundant revenues into the treasury and abundant foreign exchange into the central bank; that we could make work for everybody.

In strict economics, employment and production should have a one-to-one relationship. If employment is rising, so would output be rising; but we know a great bulk in our increase
in employment has not resulted in a commensurate increase in the goods and services we need. It's really not meaningful. The high level of employment we have now rests on the offshore economy bringing in the revenue by which the jobs could be generated. I want to give an almost crude illustration: the story is told of a guy who needs a job.

A well-off person says, "Would you take that log down the hill for me for $10?"

He did it and said, "This is not enough to sustain my family. Do you have anything else for me to do?" The well-off man says, "Go and bring the log back up and I'll give you another $10." So the guy says, "Is there anything else?" And the well-off man says, "Well, if you still want something to do after, you could take the log back down." At which point the man says, "You take me for a fool!"

He is working, he is getting pay, but there is no production. In a man's psyche, you work to a purpose. So I would say both on conceptual and empirical grounds- don't forget in 1980 and 1982, we'd gotten unemployment down to 9.9 per cent but by 1987 to 1989, it was back up to 22.9 per cent-the question is, is it sustainable? And it can only be sustainable if the work we do earns us the income we need to support ourselves.

Can our tax-and-spend governments of clerks get us out of this?

I think by the end of Lloyd's life his position was, "Let us write this down very carefully and leave it there. One day it will serve its purpose: bring light and clarity and give direction to what people are doing."
You think he felt this lot could read it?

Well, one of his own phrases in the introduction is, "I trust that this work will be carefully read".

This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express on Sunday, March 25th 2007.
You want to wear jacket and tie!

Central Bank Governor, Ewart Williams
Remembers Lloyd Best

By

Roxanne Stapleton

Far more than the consummate intellect, Lloyd Best was described by family members, friends and colleagues as an incredible soul with a penchant for pulling the best out of those he knew and worked with.

His sister, Carol Best told the Sunday Express that the last thing she said to her brother last Monday, was that she could not have asked for a better brother, adding that he was there for his 10 siblings. “He gave the best advice. I remember when I was studying at George Washington University he came to visit and while we were sitting at the train station, huddled together because it was so cold, he said it cold eh, like they trying to kill black people. We had such a hearty laugh, it was a moment I will remember forever,” she said.

Reflecting that he was a man who could not stand by and see needs not being met, she recapped that with his first job as a civil servant, Best would bring his salary to make sure there was food on the table. “He bought my mother a stove so she would not have to use a coal pot. When he came back from study, he bought a washing machine. He took care of his family and he never forgot his roots, he set the example as a big brother.”
Governor of the Central Bank, Ewart Williams credited Best with setting him on his career path. “He got very mad at me when I told him I was going to the Central Bank in 1970, because he thought I should stay on to help develop the Masters Programme at UWI.” Lloyd was mentor to a lot of people and sometimes he found it difficult to let go. About three months later he called and said okay, you're at the Central Bank, make it better. "If you thought he was mad then, boy, he was even more mad at me when I told him I was going to Washington to the IMF. “He told me he always knew I wanted to wear a jacket and tie,” Williams said, as he laughed. “Lloyd had such humanity, three months later he called and said, okay so you're at the IMF change them from their current thinking, make them understand the Caribbean better,” Williams said. He took it very personally, he really thought that the people he helped develop should stay to develop the country, the region as a whole. “He always fought against the tendency for policy makers to adapt overseas prescriptions to local problems,” Williams said.

*This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express on Sunday, March 25th 2007.*
CARIBBEAN MAN:
HUNDREDS CELEBRATE LIFE AND TIMES OF LLOYD BEST
BY
KIM BOODRAM

Journalists, scholars and politicians mingled yesterday to weave a vibrant tapestry with a common thread - memories of the late Dr Algernon Lloyd Best. The renowned economist, intellectual and political activist was sent off after a lengthy battle with cancer, to which he succumbed last Monday, at the age of 73.

The service was held at the Sport and Physical Education Centre of the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, where scores gathered to share stories about one way or another that Best had touched their lives. The ceremony began at 2 p.m. and ended shortly after 4 p.m., preceding a private cremation at Belgrove's Funeral Home.

It was the pinnacle of a week of celebration of his life and one thing became clear by the end - Best had somehow managed to learn continuously and still be a teacher, to talk but find time to listen and to assert himself yet allow others to be. It is said that one's funeral is a mark of one's mettle and a worthy measure of one's success - the evidence being in the number of people that would take the time to say farewell, while a cross section of the crowd shows how much one reached out to one's fellow men. If that be the case, Best was a truly successful man of rare mettle. It was evident in the crowd of around three to four hundred that he and his work had crushed many boundaries, including those of race, age
and religion. The tributes were sincere and, amazingly, there were many smiles after the service as talk went on of "my good friend Lloyd" and often, "Uncle Lloyd".

Prominent faces yesterday included former president Arthur NR Robinson, Opposition United National Congress (UNC), Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Opposition Leader, Winston Dookeran, Congress of the People (COP) leader, Gregory Aboud, head of the Downtown Owners and Merchants Association (DOMA), former Ministers Lincoln Myers and Jennifer Johnson (National Alliance for Reconstruction), Trevor Sudama (UNC), David Abdulah, and Tunapuna MP Eddie Hart, Federation of Independent Trade Unions (FITUN) leader.

Earl Best, in his tribute, described his brother's fight with cancer as "heroic". Even his entrance into the world was dramatic - Best arrived without help, before a midwife could reach his mother. He gave his family another scare at the age of six by cutting himself fairly badly, the younger Best told the gathering. "We almost lost him twice," Best recalled. He went on to speak of a man whose life was lived in huge proportions and one so patriotic, the distinction between family and country was blurred. The late Best saw the relationship as one made of concentric circles, where his families extended outward to become his country. He also described a man without pretensions. "What you saw was what you got," the younger Best said. He added that within the family - whether a close relative or a 'pumpkin vine' - "Uncle Lloyd was the one you took your problems to." Best was described several times as "multidimensional" and a true Caribbean man. This was also the start of the tribute made by Dennis Pantin.
Dr. Eric St Cyr, the last colleague to work extensively with Best, said one of the most important parts of his legacy was his meticulous attitude towards work. Dr. St Cyr said they would often work from 10 a.m. to past eight at night, with only two short breaks in between. During the working hours, Best protected accuracy with an iron fist. "He would often say, 'That statement is not correct,'" Dr. St Cyr said, adding that Best would rewrite the said statement as often as needed until it satisfied him.

Former colleague, Kari Levitt, in an ad lib trip down memory lane, related a tale of an avid historian. Often, Best would set aside other pursuits or university duties in favour of dusty history books; Levitt: “I had many great times with Lloyd” Levitt said. So excited was Levitt, she asked that two minutes be added to the allotted five, in order to fill her need to talk about Best. The request won a round of applause. Levitt was slightly emotional when she ended by saying she could only hope that one day, the Caribbean would realise the loss it has suffered.

Mickey Mathews, Activity Coordinator of the Tapia House movement that was founded by Best, spoke of someone who believed in God. Mathews sought to clear the air, “in case the agnostics and atheists claim Best for their own”, by saying that Best could never understand those who dismissed the notion of God while millions believe. Best felt, he said, that even if there were no God, one would have been invented for the sake of the human condition. Though the tributes were made with restraint, Mathews' voice fell heavily when he ended with a “Goodbye Lloyd”. Mathews' 20-year-old daughter also
spoke, expressing sorrow that her generation would have lost the opportunity to interact with one such as Best.

Economist Dr. Kirk Meighoo saw a story that had not yet ended. Asked to sum up Best's impact on local politics, Dr. Meighoo said it was too early for that impact to be felt. He hailed Best for adding a “different perspective” to political and cultural arguments by refusing to use race as weapon. Best, he said, had never bought into victimhood. Independent Senator Angela Cropper, a close friend of the family, chaired the service and was the last to pay respects. Cropper disclosed being told by Best's wife, journalist Sunity Maharaj, that he had lived in his mind and heart. As such, even when Best surrendered his sick body to the ministrations of others, his mind continued its work. Stimulating conversation, she said, was key to Best's happiness during this time.

It was befitting, also, that Best's coffin was led out of the service by the national flag. Ironic too that at the same moment - out of a nearby radio, covering the bicentennial commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade at Woodford Square in Port of Spain - came the national anthem being played by the National Steel Orchestra.

*This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express on Monday, March 26th 2007.*
A TRIBUTE TO LLOYD BEST

BY

DR. MARY KING

It would be remiss of me if I did not in this column publicly recognise the man who first sparked my interest in the subject of development economics, the man who over the years found the time to read what I wrote in this column and others and the humility to call me to discuss articles that caught his fancy. He was always the teacher. Below is my Senate tribute.

Sadly, Lloyd Best is no longer with us. We have lost another icon, a politician, an economist, a visionary and, of course, an ex-Senator. He sat somewhere there on the bench in front of me as an opposition Senator.

As a politician, he was never in the position of being able to implement his ideas though on two occasions he walked away from such an opportunity on principle. The first was when Dr Eric Williams extended another invitation to Lloyd to continue to work with him and he refused on principle. Dr Eric Williams had not gotten the economics right. On the second occasion he walked away from the NAR and predicted that it would self-destruct, it had not gotten the politics right. Today, we live in the midst of poor politics and poor economics.
It was not that Lloyd Best did not want to participate in the conventional politics. He created Tapia in part to do just that. However, Tapia was a victim of the schism of the society in which we live. Every single Senator in this House and many of our citizens will and are heaping praises on Lloyd, on his command of the intricacies of the socio-political economy of the country and the region. Yet his creation, Tapia, was soundly rejected at the polls when it chose to contest the elections. This schism of which I speak is our respect for and our drive to possess the trappings of knowledge. Yet our disdain for knowledge, for its use, for indigenous innovation and new ideas in the reconstruction and reinvention of our society and economics, retards our progress. Tapia, as Lloyd Best, was respected for its intellectual endeavours and both were summarily disregarded since knowledge plays no part in our day-to-day life, in our politics, in our economics.

Mr Best taught me economics at UWI in the 70s. His fundamental instruction to us was learn all we can, to read as much as we can but above all trust our capacity to think originally and to solve our own problems. He warned us that most economies were created by their existing societies. However, our economies were first created and then societies imported as slaves and indentured labourers. Hence our problems and their solutions were not to be found in the traditional textbooks. The solutions had to come from our heads. We need to take charge of our destiny, of our economies.

Mr Lloyd Best et al developed the original ideas in the glory days of economics at the UWI on the plantation economy, which evolved into the on- and off-shore economy and the curse of the boom-mark-up-bust economic behaviour of our private sector. Today,
nothing has changed. In this Senate, like Mr Best before me, I have talked about the paucity of the Government's model of development now and since independence, though we are at the controls. But no one of the Executive was listening to Mr Best then, and no one is listening to me now; I am from Tapia. Some weeks before he died, Lloyd called to congratulate me because he had read an article I had done on a vision for the University of Trinidad and Tobago, a vision in the context of the reconstruction of the economy.

The conversation got around to a comment made by someone about the irrelevance and death of Tapia. His comment was how could Tapia be dead when its creations like Messrs Tewarie, Cropper, Solomon, Ramchand and King and many, many others are vocal in the society. Tapia is not a conventional political party (and as such it has failed). Tapia, the creation of Lloyd, is about the identification of a political-economic construct and associated visions, problems and solutions with reference to the region. Tapia is knowledge-based and as such has always been at a disconnect with the ensuing day-to-day political economy of the country, which is driven by the economic requirements of the international investors, the off-shore plantation owners. Those of us who remain here will also remember what he did for us, his challenge to us to think, to depend on ourselves. My family joins with me in sending condolences to his family. May he rest in peace.

*This article first appeared in the Trinidad Express on Monday, March 26th 2007.*
Lloyd Best has passed on and we are all poorer for it. Both country and region have lost one of its original thinkers and luminaries particularly on issues of the economic transformation. Even as we mourned Best's passing, we heard the news that Prime Minister Manning's mission to Caracas had been successful. On his return, the Prime Minister seemed elated that the newly acquired reserves would support the further expansion of the energy sector. As tributes to Best continue to pour in, we cannot help but wonder what he would have had to say on the latest developments?

Lloyd Best is perhaps most famous for his development of the model of the Plantation Economy. For this reason, there are those who consider his thinking to be irrelevant to today's circumstances. Over the last five or so years, Best had spent considerable time focusing on the challenges of management of the economy during this period of plenty. This work may well prove to be his most vital contribution to the economic transformation debate in the contemporary Caribbean. In the specific case of Trinidad and Tobago in this current golden age, Best has expressed concerns about both the rate and focal point of the economic development thrust. For him, too many resources of all types are being devoted to expansion of the energy sector "offshore", while there is stagnation onshore.
Always one to challenge the orthodoxy, Best was not too keen on the FDI driven expansion in the energy sector. In a series of articles in the Express in January 2005, he argues that "we've been deluding ourselves believing that Pt. Lisas and related developments would not have happened without decisive local initiative. Most likely, it would have taken place but only 25 years later - conceivably with a few more of our rivals ahead of us in the queue. For him, the country needs to strike a balance between the externally propelled expansion offshore and stimulating expansion onshore. While the country debates the pros and cons of the Heritage and Stabilization Fund, Best reasons that given our state of development, perhaps the most important Fund should in fact be a Provident Fund. - a Fund that provides for a number of critical requirements spread over time so as to avoid overheating of the economy and consequent inflation.

In fact, Best has questioned the extension of the Point Lisas model. “For all that we've gained from expanding our offshore base through the Pt Lisas strategy, the evidence questions whether that had been the way to go,” Best offers several reasons for doubt. First, he argues that we've bred only the barest minimum degree of transformation. Much more could have been accomplished “had we deployed in the inshore economy those funds we wasted in consumption or invested offshore.” Among the plethora of proposed energy projects, a few do promise a longer run viability, even when the industry depletes. However, not many seem explicitly tailored to incorporate national cadre and at sufficiently strategic levels. The macro-economic data supports Best's point. As it was in 1982 so it is in 2006, the energy sector dominates, GDP, export earnings and Government
Revenue. Moreover, much of the growth in the “non energy sectors” is derived from energy investments.

Second, Best felt that “far from teaching us to mend our ways”, further energy expansion “has whetted our taste for more of the same.” Therefore, the Prime Minister's announcement of Train X, would have been viewed by Best as simply more diversification, whereas what is wanted is real transformation. Such transformation will only be achieved when we have changed significantly the ration of energy to non energy GDP. For Best, this required a greater focus on onshore, where the vast majority of people live and work. One reality that Best has always emphasized is that the energy sector by itself is never going to solve unemployment. Instead of sustainable job creation, what we are witnessing is the harvesting of offshore rents to sponsor welfare jobs onshore. When Government revenues fall at the end of the Golden age, all sponsored job schemes also come crashing down.

The third reason is that accelerated energy sector growth is that while the golden age persists, it encourages the inshore practice of pumping funds into construction and other transient sectors and into speculative business. At the end of the boom there is little that could sustain us. The problem for Best is that we have failed to prepare for the future because "we mistake a Golden Age of temporary abundance for progress in perpetuity."
Best is gone now, but his legacy will live on. As we embark on another phase of energy expansion, fuelled perhaps by cross border reserves, the question lingers- Are we placing too much emphasis on energy -offshore- expansion, at the expense of the onshore?

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SECTION THREE

Tributes to the late Hon. Lloyd Best
Delivered at his funeral.
Later published in the
Trinidad and Tobago Review
Special Lloyd Best Tribute
Issue Vol 29 No. 4 April 2, 2007
I buried my father 14 years ago, come this Saturday, and again two Sundays gone, when Lloyd Best, father to so many of us, at last shuffled off this mortal coil. And though he had been gravely unwell for years—he once replied, when asked how he was, “Well, you know all of my illnesses are terminal”—and we all knew it was coming, his subtraction is so fundamental, so absolute, it becomes incomprehensible, beyond its mere statement as fact: Lloyd Best died.

Fewer sentences have broken my heart more completely in their writing. And history has never been contained more concisely than in those three hard syllables. The only other sentence I know that carries as much sad weight is, “Jesus wept”. Speaking for myself – even though I wear, for this issue, the hat of editor of this splendid paper started by Lloyd and these words must pass for its editorial – for me, the passing of the Caribbean Lloyd is of far greater significance than that of the Christian Lord. I believed deeply in Lloyd, you see, and was quite unsure about Jesus.

I have an instinct for blasphemy.
And I think it delighted Lloyd. If, as a contributor to these pages, I sometimes caused more trouble than I was worth, and my editor, who was his wife and is now his widow - another word whose profound sadness remains unplumbable until one is immersed in it
oneself – if my editor, his wife, was ever minded to simply pull a column and save
herself the catch-ass of confronting whatever demons (more usually, priests) might be
provoked, I imagine Lloyd defending me. “Leave it,” he might have said to Sunity, “it
might prompt someone to reconsider the orthodoxy.”

Lloyd had an impulse towards heresy.
I can’t convey how much Lloyd’s opinion of my work mattered to me. From my first
reading of it, this paper struck me as far too good to have come out of Trinidad - and far
too good to want me in it. That Lloyd Best and Sunity Maharaj both stopped, when we
bounced up in a car park in the early 1990s, to ask me to write for the paper, is one of my
greatest trophies. I included two columns in my own collection because Lloyd liked
them. What he thought of what I did was almost as important to me as doing it.

But that is as nothing compared with what he meant to me.
The best thing about editing this special remembrance issue of the Review was not
working with some of the finest writers and thinkers around. Though there was, as they
say, that (and it was particularly satisfying to move a handful of Dr. Denis Solomon’s
words from the end to the start of a sentence, the closest I dared come to “editing”
Denis).

Though most of them were taken by surprise – I began editing this issue only a few days
before its printing and had to issue commissions and deadlines virtually simultaneously –
everyone whose byline appears in these pages was honoured to be asked and all produced
work worthy of the great man. Subbing the copy was the professional equivalent of rubbing fine silk between one’s fingers, sipping wines chosen for competition, watching a beautiful woman undress.

But, though those may all have been Best things, they were not the best thing about editing this issue. No, the best thing about editing everyone else’s work was, for four or five days, I did not have to think about writing about Lloyd’s death.

I could avoid it, of course. Everyone would expect a leading article for a splendid paper commemorating the life and death of its founder to note, in this case, Lloyd Best’s legendary, almost rapacious capacity for work. Flat on his back, racked with pain so intense he had to squint to chase his words, he dictated some of his finest Express columns.

I could chronicle his abundant energy, even in illness, the zest for life that swept everyone around him into his personal whirlwind. Eh? Eh? (And he would smile broadly.) A cover drive, a coda or a coconut-water would bring out the best in Best, if they were fine enough. Truly, many a Romeo has failed to love with the passion Lloyd did his Julie mango trees.

I could hide behind his achievements: Lloyd Best as father/provider. Under his wing, there was enough room for all to find refuge; and even then he built for us a house.
The Tapia House.

Drive through the ghettos of Westmoorings and Lange Park (they even lower gates at dusk, just as in Warsaw, 1939) and ask yourself what there looks like Trinidad to you. Within thick walls copied from Coral Gables, in corridors laid with tiles from Italy, under chandeliers that cost a year’s salary for many, you may find temporary protection but shelter will elude you.

Where would our society be today if, just once in the past, it had accepted the counsel of its most reliable visionary and used our own materials to provide for ourselves the things we saw we needed, and not blindly pursued what someone else, outside, had told us was desirable? If Jesus built a church upon his rock, Lloyd made a Tapia house out of mud and gobar — and the irresponsible elite turned their noses up and their heads away. Had we buried the oil in the ground in the 1970s, the way he suggested, would we now be so depressingly familiar with the words, “kidnap for ransom”?

For me, death is Death: the long, cold sleep, the subtraction from which there is no remainder. I have lost the only man I have ever known in Trinidad to be completely incorruptible, apart from my own father (and, though I doubt it, there may be things others know about my Dad that I do not). In this often barbaric place, he was the most civilized man I have ever met.

And now he is gone forever.
I would be tempted to say I wish we had the man and not the work he did if I had never known Lloyd, who taught me we are ourselves our work, and must do ourselves proud.

Lloyd Best died.
But he left behind the greatest legacy any father could: a large family, united by his ideals and working as hard and as long, even if not as well, as he did, in the house that he built.
In the pages of this paper, over the years, few words have failed to challenge. In this issue, as always, the most challenging are Lloyd’s, extracts from interviews he gave.
Everything else, including Steve Ouditt’s striking graphics from his “Rethinking Colonialism” series, is inspired by and produced for and in honour of Lloyd by people who valued him as priceless and loved him even more.

Every one of us wanted to do Lloyd proud; most will feel we have not done well enough; it may not be the best Review ever, but at least it is the Best review we could do.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 29 No. 4, April 2, 2007.
BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN US

BY EARL

BEST

Brothers and sisters all, we are gathered to celebrate the life of Lloyd Algernon Best, who left us on March 19 after a long and heroic battle with cancer. As is certainly appropriate for a life so multi-faceted, a life of such proportions, different people will deal with different aspects. Mine, “Lloyd as Family Man”, is perhaps easier than most because there was no private Lloyd, separate and distinct from the public Lloyd. “With Best,” said a letter writer in the Express, “what you saw was what you got.” His life was indeed, almost literally, an open book, an open newspaper if you will, a Tapia or a Trinidad and Tobago Review. What he was in the privacy of this family is what you have reason to believe he was, a man so devoted to the cause of country that for him the distinction most make between family and country was, at best, blurred. The former was really merely the smallest of the concentric circles that expanded outwards around him. But there are perhaps still a few elements which I think he would like me to share with the large family assembled here today.

First, there was one of us, Ira. Then, when Lloyd was born in Tunapuna on February 27, 1934, there were two of us… but there might so easily have been but one again. Heavy with him, Mammy started having labour pains and asked Daddy to fetch the midwife. She eventually arrived to find mother and infant son awaiting her. He had decided to come

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2 Lloyd Best’s youngest brother, Earl, delivered the lead eulogy at the memorial service at University of the West Indies on Sunday, March 25, 2007.
into the world without help. Independent to the last as you know, he was also
undependent from the first.

We might have lost him again in 1940 when he was only six. There were five of us then
and the house needed attention. Workmen making the necessary repairs carelessly left a
chisel lying around. Lloyd’s six-year-old curiosity, larger, I imagine, than most, got the
better of him. He sat on the floor and calmly carved open the veins on the inside of his
lower left arm. Fortunately, the hospital was but a half-mile or so away as the crow flies
and in a panic Daddy sped through the cane fields as the crow would have flown over
them.

So we didn’t lose him them either and he lived to repay that debt in spades. He grew up
to become many things, including, eventually, a father himself, six times over. But before
that, for all the years he spent in England and elsewhere, he filled our house – and our
hearts – with his regular, frequent even, postcards that sometimes said simply “Love,
Lloyd.” Those were not just words; that was not just a ritual. When we lost Irvine, he
admitted to having had a special bond with that brother. But he loved us all, mother,
father, sisters and brothers. Generous to a fault, he said in word and in deed that what he
had was ours and went out of his way to ensure that our needs were met.

And those who were at the Tapia House last night would have heard that it was not just
the needs to which we gave verbal expression. Ask Jean-Jacques, the second Best boy.
Even if it was his father’s alma mater about which he knew so much, he was not quite ready to face the demands of secondary school.

Arriving on his first day, he hopped out of the family car and contrived to ensconce himself among the branches of the stately Samaan that graced the nearby lawn. Unperturbed, his father left him there until he was ready to come down.

Or ask Carmel. The second Best girl was not comfortable in the first-choice school for which Common Entrance had selected her. She too was not quite comfortable with the idea, no, with the reality of secondary school. That’s okay with us, her parents agreed, when you’re ready. In the meantime, your teachers will come home. In May/June of this year, Carmel will sit for the A-Level exams in Modern Languages – and the meantime is not yet ended.

That was his style; he allowed you to be you. You had a right to your view, wrong though it might be. As husband, father, son, daughter, brother, uncle, he let you be.

He let you be. But he also, as the Americans say, grew you. He grew us all. He showed us the best – with both a capital and a common letter - that we could be. Whether you were brother or sister, niece or nephew, cousin, first, second or pumpkin vine, you took your problem to Uncle Lloyd. And he would tell you what you could do to improve your situation. Were there time, I would let Gabrielle, Gerard or Giselle, my three children, tell you about the kind of listener he was. They repeatedly sought him out in his house, his
office, wherever he was or could be reached. And got his ear. It is perhaps why for the
family, some time after our father’s passing in 1982, his house eventually replaced #14,
El Dorado Road as home.

Not for me. I was only in the second form at QRC when Worrell and Sobers and Hunte
and Kanhai and Hall and Griffith and the rest were beginning to emerge as more
important than Mr Ramkissoon and Mr Riley and the rest. His response was to persuade
Christiane to let me into their home where they filled my heart with the delights of
Charles Aznavour and Gilbert Bécaud and Georges Brassens and Jacques Brel and
Mireille Matthieu and Edith Piaf, le Petit Moineau. And le Grand Moineau, Sparrow.
And enabled me, I think, I hope, to fill a few hearts myself as a result.

Yes, he filled hearts and he broke hearts. One of the brothers tells the story of how when
he first returned from England, degree and all, he approached Lloyd with a request to
“get a job for me.” But it is no secret that he was the soul of probity, sea green
incorruptible. I don’t really have to tell you what his response was. It broke Clyde’s heart
- and stiffened his resolve to make something of himself by his own efforts.

The results, however, weren’t always that positive. In the wintry months of his illness he
saw that hearts were still broken and Sunity was being left to bear the huge burden on her
albeit capable shoulders. So, on his 70th birthday, the patriarch convoked the clan and
shared with us all the private story of the advent of that second summer of sweetness. It
was a public plea for us all to say, privately, in the quiet of our consciences, thanks to
Sunity. It was his way of giving us all an opportunity to let bygones be bygones, to close
the family circle completely before the circle finally closed. But he bungled it, we
bungled it. What was to is issed not and the fires of resentment smouldered on, smoulder
on in a few breasts.

And now it is too late for private thanks. The circle closed last Monday when he departed
this life. And left us with this strange algebra of how two from eleven left nine but one
from nine leaves perhaps four or five hundred. Or more. And so on behalf of all those in
his family who failed to grasp the opportunity, I want to say publicly, in the glare of the
public lights, thank you, Sunity. Thank you for being there for him, for being there for us
when we were not there ourselves.

And the families, large and small, private and public, have assembled here today, to
celebrate his life once more. That done, we shall say a final farewell and send him on his
way to be reunited with the two who preceded him. And with our father. And then
tomorrow we, Sunity and Carmel and Ayiti, and Christiane and Jean-Jacques and Kamla
and Stuart, who are here, and Robert, the firstborn, who is not, and all the rest of us shall
go on with our lives as if he were still with us. Because, as the original patriarch told me
in the autumn of his life, the true test of successful fatherhood is whether or not your
diminished family can go on as if undiminished after you have gone.

As far as I know, Lloyd Best has never failed a humanity test in his life. That will not
change now.

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TO BEST,
LOVE, MINSH

BY

PETER MINSHALL

This is one of those things I’ve been meaning to do ever since the time I was supposed to do it and didn’t, and it’s been stuck there, hurting, all the while. I figure if I just take the time to get it off my chest, now, this morning, all that other stuff, piles of important unfulfilled tasks and errands of the mind and spirit, that have been backed up and clogged like a great logjam, held back by this vital little twig that first got stuck by accident in the flow of things, and holding back my entire flow ever since, yes, if I could just get down to this one very important thing this morning, and free it from my heart and mind, all that other stuff would just simply come rushing forth and free the whole of me.

I was asked to make the feature address at a dinner to honour Lloyd Best. It was one of the most important things I have ever been asked to do or attempted. It was real. It was not pretend. It was not about making a good speech. It was about telling a truth, a deeply held personal truth. It was my truth. It was a truth held and believed by most thinking, feeling people. It was the truth of Lloyd Best.

Peter Minshall originally wrote this as a personal note to Lloyd Best.
I could not escape the duty thrust upon me, though I was awed by it, and wondered how or why I of all people was charged with this most important mission and responsibility. Jesus. The very fact that it was me would cause a ruffle and a flurry. This was Lloyd’s doing. Lloyd is a wicked man, yes. He must know what he’s doing. Well, so be it. I could only do my “best”. I could only do what I had to do. I would be myself and trust the truth, and simply tell it, without fear.

It was obvious from the start that if I were to speak from the heart, and certainly appear to be so doing, I could not read from a script. It would be more risky to wing it, but more real. But there needed to be a guiding script in my head, firmly marked steps or sequences in my mind which would enable me unthinkingly to roll with the flow and not lose my way or drop the ball. I would have to make or draw a map in my head by which to guide myself, in order to say what it was I essentially wanted to say about the great man.

By the time I arrived at the Hilton that night I had my map perfectly charted and indelibly lodged in my mind. My planned course was daring, deeply personal, a little outrageous in part as expected of the artist, but all in all it struck at the very heart and essence and humanity of the man and it underlined our great debt to him. I felt fairly confident, good about myself in the circumstances, and well prepared.
Lloyd Best was in a chuckling good mood that night. He was in tiptop form. Whatever his drawbacks physically, they were unapparent, or he made them so. I sat next to him and felt quite elated. Yes, like a little boy I felt, and it was lovely.

Dinner started, and the speeches. I had not expected there to be so many other words spoken before it came to my turn. By the time they did call me up, which was at the very end, my heart was really beating hard. I remember being surprised by it and candidly declaring the power and import of this moment thumping away in me, at the start. As I stood there though, even in mid-sentence, saying whatever, I realized that my map was for a much longer journey than now seemed appropriate and that I’d somehow have to take a shortcut or two standing right there on my feet, without going off-course and losing the sense and purpose and direction of each and every step.

I got to the part where I was talking about a dramatic scenario upon which I was working, a mas for the “legitimate” theatre, which entails a conversation that occurs between a manicou and a man. I was saying some pretty strong things, in the character of the manicou, about the difficulty in the world, as the world is, for a black man to realize his full humanity. The manicou eventually says that blackest coal under greatest pressure becomes brightest diamond.

It was around this point that the sense that the audience had had enough of speeches for one night became more than I could bear. The audience had certainly had enough of me. I felt that it would be to everyone’s advantage and satisfaction if I were to wrap up then
and there and fold away the rest of my map. This I did to the best of my ability and no one was the wiser. Lloyd himself was most gracious with his thanks and appreciation.

Deep in my heart, however, I had misgivings. I felt I had not quite done the man justice. Now the point of mentioning a play of mine at all was then to lead into plays about the Caribbean character in general, and in particular to Walcott’s Ti Jean and the character of its hero, and liken him to Lloyd, the great intellectual with an abundance of plain common sense.

And the point of all of that, of Minshall and Walcott, of the long-suffering manicou and Ti Jean’s bright wit, was to come to the most supernatural of all dramas that concern the Caribbean condition, The Tempest by William Shakespeare, which would have taken me in full circle right back to Hope Braithwaite at QRC, which is where I’d begun.

How many times have I heard the pan ring out in Caliban’s “thousand twangling instruments”! And here is Lloyd telling them “not pan in schools but schools in pan”! A thousand twangling instruments indeed!

Shakespeare’s Tempest is our hurricane. It’s all there. The banished philosopher king. The idiot politicians. Greed, power, folly. The malevolence, the vacuity. The absurdity, the suffering. The carefree spirit of the air. The earthbound spirit struggling for release. Care and Carelessness. Gods and Goddesses. Mortal Man. Freedom and Bondage. On a little island, no less. It’s all there.
My map was to have brought me to a destination where I would be able to declare, as my absolute truth, as my deep personal experience, truly, as a living part of my own life, through tempest and hurricane, this conclusion: that I had found for myself at last what the Trinity in the name of the island Trinidad really meant. I had encountered it for real, personified. I had met him. He was utterly unique in the world, this rare Caribbean hybrid, this man of most beautiful mind, this pure spirit, this extraordinary salt of the earth, this three in one, this Prospero and Ariel and Caliban combined...here in our midst...this man, Lloyd Best.

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I’ve never heard a voice like his. So purposeful and yet unhurried; rich in tone, texture and body. Even the frail man – the very frail man – still retained this quality. And to hear this voice when he became animated despite his illnesses. Lloyd never failed to get my attention merely by the very sound of his voice.

I started a kind of insider joke about it with Samantha and Denzil, the other legs of the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies (TTIWI) tripod while I worked there: in mock LB voice I would intone, “Hello Novack? What's happening over there? Are you doing my work or are you playing the arse?” The variations we developed based on this basic version caused us side-splitting laughter behind his back many, many times. And once, while I was in the act of mocking his voice, he put his head round the door into the office and said, “Hmm! What's happening? Eh?!” We didn't know whether to be mortified or just give ourselves over completely to the joke of it.

One day he and I had a rather lusty dispute over some outstanding work. I was pretty sure we could be heard from the main road.

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4 Novack George worked as Lloyd Best's assistant at the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies from December 2001 to June 2005.
He said: “I see absolutely no evidence whatsoever to support your claim Novack! And I'm telling you plainly how I feel! And you have to deal with that! Eh!”

And I said, “Lloyd, on the facts alone, you are blasted wrong!”

For the record, we were disputing the classification by which I'd decided to arrange the books shelved in his inner office. He'd refused fiction and non-fiction as basic distinctions. He said I was talking nonsense and didn't understand his system. Stung, I'd defensively resorted to rules about how information is categorised. He responded that, in so doing, I was refusing the life of the mind. Thus the battle was joined.

Some two hours later, he told me what had disturbed him was, it seemed to him that I'd refused to consider any option but what had been prescribed by my training. I pointed out that what had angered me was, he seemed bent on mistaking necessary preliminaries for dogma. We then sat talking about classification and categorisation for the next two hours. When I reminded him that he'd miss dinner and how this could affect him, we simply took our talk over to the house.

Later, as I was finally leaving to meet a by-now-angry girlfriend, he called me back to help him decide on some administrative matters for the following day. I explained the vex girlfriend concept and he shrugged, “Don't tell her you already ate dinner, too!”, We both laughed and I said, “Lloyd you know is Sando I have to go now?” “Well, Chief,” he said, “rest assured that at least one of us will be staying put tonight. In any case, I live at
91 Tunapuna Road. See you tomorrow, eh.” And with that, I said goodnight and walked down to the main road.

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THE BEST CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE

BY

DR. DENIS SOLOMON

...under him

My genius is rebuked, as ‘tis said

Mark Antony’s was by Caesar.

- William Shakespeare: Macbeth

Do not take the word “genius” in its modern sense. Here, it simply means self-confidence, essential personality, inner motivation. Still less should you infer that I am elevating myself, in relation to Lloyd Best, to the status of Mark Antony under Octavius Caesar.

Inevitably, however, any relationship with an outstanding person (I will not use the word “great” for fear of begging the whole question of Lloyd’s existence) compels self-evaluation.

Of all those who may be numbered among his friends and collaborators over the years, my relationship with Lloyd was certainly the most sporadic and possibly the most uneven. At Queen’s Royal College, we were schoolmates but not bosom friends; at Cambridge, contemporaries but not allies, to the extent of representing different factions in the university West Indian Society. On my definitive return from abroad, after
resignation from the Trinidad and Tobago diplomatic service and graduate studies in the USA, our collaboration in the *Tapia House Movement* began, culminating in our unsuccessful 1976 general election campaign. Thereafter, there were long hiatuses in our relationship, due to one or both of us being away from the country. Latterly, I have participated in the activities of the *Trinidad and Tobago Institute*, and attempted to supplement Lloyd’s contributions to the press, radio and television with my own.

The tension that arose in the 1976 election period between me and Lloyd, the party leader, understandably worried my constituency committee, and they demanded an explanation. But I was at a loss to explain it, and I still am. In fact, this article is a partly an attempt to explain it to myself.

I do not enjoy politics, and my motives for joining Tapia were purely intellectual. Tapia seemed to have the only valid and coherent programme on offer, in fact, the only programme worth the name, then or since. I did not see this lack of emotional involvement as a drawback: to me all valid motives were intellectual. I think Lloyd interpreted this, perhaps rightly, as dilettantism on my part. I, on the other hand, recognised his total commitment to national reconstruction, but questioned what such commitment could mean, in general or in Lloyd’s particular case. Was politics, for people like Lloyd, not simply a full-time hobby, and the nation simply a stage on which to indulge it, hence his impatience with others for whom “there is a world elsewhere”? 
Lloyd, I think, valued my contribution as an intellectual exponent of the Tapia message, and a reasonably high-profile representative of the movement, but questioned my commitment and to some extent feared my influence; though this I could never understand, for politically I was as much a product of Lloyd’s thinking as anyone, and always the first to admit it. But this apprehension reached the point where Lloyd could give the key speech at an election meeting in my constituency and not mention my name once.

I think our origins were also part of the story. Lloyd, the complete universal man and a person whose intellect and culture raised him far above considerations of class, was also, as Keith Smith recently described him, “this Tunapuna boy, born and brought up where country merged into town”. I, on the other hand, was as middle class as a Trinidadian could be: perhaps even more; and he suspected me of wanting Tapia politics to produce the kind of country where people like me could be comfortable. At one stage he told a fellow Tapia member, referring to me, “Look at the kind of people he has on his committee”. I, on the other hand, taxed him with hypocritical impatience with the common man; when faced with ignorant questions about Tapia policies at political meetings, I maintained, he would turn away and leave me to answer them. But on the whole, and from his point of view as the promoter of a national movement, his judgement of me was correct.

On the other hand, Dr. Eric St. Cyr was wrong when he said, in an interview with B.C. Pires, that the cliché about not suffering fools gladly applied to Lloyd. Not so; Lloyd
suffered many fools, if not gladly, at least comfortably. He could not have been a politician otherwise. His association, in the interest of politics, with the NAR, most of whose leaders he privately condemned as fools, is proof of it. And just as I am forced to the conclusion that in the final analysis there can be no distinction between politics as an all-consuming hobby and politics as a patriotic vocation, so I must admit that there can be no final distinction between suffering fools, gladly or otherwise, and simple human compassion.

There were, of course, limits. Lloyd was never one to duck from violent confrontation when he judged it necessary. And that, most of the time, was when he felt the way to enlightenment was blocked by irresponsibility, and the only way the irresponsible could be brought to their senses was with a “good cut-ass”. This lesson was learned in short order by the hooligan whom he floored with a right hook to the jaw during a cricket match at the Oval, when Lloyd was selling the Tapia newspaper and the hooligan in question, with a couple of friends, tried to give him a hard time. It was also learned by the fellow UWI lecturer, a self-promoting exponent of sophomoric Stalinism, who tried, by introducing one irrelevancy after another, to break up a Tapia-organised seminar-cum-teach-in during the 1970 crisis. “Hear nuh man” Lloyd informed him, “This is an academic discussion. If you can’t play by the rules, I will have no choice but to cuff you in you ass”.

One thing in which Lloyd and I saw eye-to-eye, though, was language. A measure of the respect Lloyd had for his fellow-citizens was the way he spoke and wrote. He was
endlessly accused, even by fellow-writers sympathetic to him, of writing above the heads of the public. In fact, just as the best writer of Trinidadian dialect is not Samuel Selvon or Earl Lovelace but the exponent of “mandarin” English V.S. Naipaul, so no one was more capable of down-to-earth Trini than the “high-falutin’” writer Lloyd Best. Referring to the ability of the PNM to adopt but not digest Tapia programmes, he once told a crowd, “Cobo cyan eat sponge cake”. Metaphors from popular life were at his fingertips: “chickie-chong”, ”chinksing” and “galaying” were pejoratives he frequently applied to the products and efforts of conventional politicians. The written style of his newspaper articles, far from being an insult to his readers, was a compliment to them: he simply refused to write down to anyone. Complex arguments, loftily expressed, were not inaccessible to him as a Trinidadian; why should he assume they would be so to his fellow-citizens? Understanding, like all else, was a matter of work. The full and eloquent manipulation of language is an attribute of a fully-developed intellectual (and therefore political) life. For one in possession of this and aspiring to bring it about in others, to lower his linguistic sights would have been treasonable.

As a linguist and writer, therefore, the most immediate memories I have of Lloyd are of Lloyd the phrase-maker. I was continually amazed at his skill in the formulation of ideas, and the way he could keep them fresh, through manipulation of words, despite the endless and inevitable repetition demanded by politics. “Our condition” he once wrote “is not therefore one of unresponsible or incompetent leaders and elites; it is equally one of studiously supine rank and file”. Elsewhere, he referred to the Afro-Saxon’s “vague aspiration encrusted in futility”. Why should anyone who could write like that refrain
from doing so? And consider the rhythm of this phrase, achieved by the clever placement of the adverbial: “…the unrelieved and unrepented clerkdom to which we seem in perpetuity apprenticed”.

In fact, it is to a great extent in the many pithy phrases he invented that Lloyd’s intellectual legacy will be transmitted: “doctor politics”, “national reconstruction”; “east-west corridor”, “pre-collapsed”, “rum-and roti politics”; “plantation economy”; “Afro-Saxon”; “party of parties”; “playing for change”.

Just as personal reflection on one’s acquaintance with someone of Lloyd’s stature must induce individual self-analysis, so the culmination of his life must be the evaluation by all of us of our strengths and weaknesses as a nation: the kind of analysis that the whole of Lloyd’s life and work was designed to stimulate. Rooted, as few others have been, in his own time and place, Lloyd achieved universality not in transcendence of his origins but in fulfilment of them. We must act, he once said, not as if we were on the fringes of the universe but at the centre of it. This is the lesson we owe it to him, and to ourselves, to learn.

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LESSONS FROM THE BEST

BY

GREGORY MC GUIRE

Lloyd Best was a man of many parts. It has been my distinct pleasure and privilege to have experienced him in different spheres as politician, economist, teacher, friend and family man. In each role there were innumerable lessons to be learnt from Lloyd. He has touched perhaps millions across the globe with his brilliant mind and human heart. Despite the reach of his teachings, written and spoken, there are voices of dissonance particularly here in Trinbago. “Best coulda never reach the people” they say. “Best was too high.” There is therefore a gap which, quite frankly was not unknown to Lloyd. In paying tribute to Lloyd Best I feel inspired to share just a handful of the many messages to be gleaned from the work of the great man. No particular order of import is assigned to these messages for it is difficult to develop any set of criteria that would validate such ranking.

The first message is, we must see ourselves as the centre of the world. Concepts like “Third World”, Best always regarded as foreign. He felt the unquestioning adoption of concepts, themes and theories of the north written from an imperialist perspective, was destined to fail. For Lloyd, viewing oneself as the centre of the world is one way of getting rid of the self-contempt that afflicts Caribbean society.
Secondly, a predisposition to seeing ourselves as the centre of the world requires that we seek Caribbean solutions for Caribbean problems. This applies to our economics, politics and sociology. Lloyd entreated us to build models of development that reflected the unique characteristics of the society. Caribbean society, he argues, is very different from those of Europe and earlier civilizations. In the latter, people existed and built up institutions and economy over time to organize and manage a society. Here, institutions and economy were established and people enslaved and imported to create chattel society. It is the deep search for the Caribbean solution that had led Best to develop initially the Plantation model, the Plantation model modified and more recently the offshore/onshore dual economy.

The third message is that of Hard Wuk. The task of building a decent progressive society goes beyond the mere declaration of intent. It requires Hard Wuk, by all patriots. Special reference must be made here to those who have abandoned the Trinbago for the easy life in a readymade society of the north. Acerbic letters to the editor degrading the land of their birth is a favourite pastime for some. In this regard, Best is an exemplar. I am sure there were limitless opportunities to work abroad, to live the good life in the house that Jack built. This he refused choosing instead to do the Hard Wuk of building a society for love of country and region. He made pronouncements on perhaps every major aspect of national life -- economy, education, culture, sport, regional integration, constitution reform. In each case he proposed solutions intuitively viable, but perhaps not appealing to the narrow interests of the political elite. Fully aware of the limitations of the popular media, Lloyd published his own paper – The Trinidad and Tobago Review – the pages of
which would have captured millions of his words and thoughts on the issues of the day for over 25 years.

Long before the information age and knowledge society became fashionable, Lloyd Best would always encourage students and all who came into contact with him to read, read, read. For me, then, a fourth important lesson from Best is distinction between education and schooling. The latter is institutionalized and measured by certification. The former is a broad-based, lifelong process, measured by the substance of one’s works. The paper conferred by some mainly foreign, accreditation institution was of secondary importance. Several aspects of the modern day education system troubled him greatly. These included the limited scope for scholarly enquiry in the University and the unimaginative process of imparting knowledge across the entire education system. The Best concept of “schools in pan” is just one example of his willingness to explore “out of the box” solutions to our education crisis.

Finally, in my last conversation with Lloyd one week before his death, he said, “You know what your responsibilities are; handle them well.” I believe it was a message meant for everyone interested in building this society. Lloyd has argued incessantly that the society is in stasis because of an unresponsible educated and elite class. To grasp the significance of his point, we only have to look at how public opinion is influenced in this land. More often than not it is the weekly tabloids and the radio talk show hosts that have the greatest influence on the thinking of the bulk of the population. Where a vacuum exists, it will be filled with air, even if such air is foul. The bulk of our educated, either
elope to the good life in foreign lands or quickly become entrapped in the corporate career game that stifles independent thought. For Best, independent thought is our most important asset in the fight for our freedom as Caribbean people. In his words, we should put that in our pipes and smoke!

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I take a moment almost every day
to read the memorials in the daily papers,
published by so many thoughtful aunts and nieces,
sons, daughters, and mostly the surviving wives.
The photograph shows the face
of the recent or the long-departed,
their eyes looking at me at 6.00 am
across the chasm between pages 42 and 43,
or some other chasm, if there is another life
to be lived after this.

The words of remembrance are sweet, but shallow:
mostly worn-down, rhyming couplets
copied from some dog-eared book, I imagine,
from the newspaper editor’s desk.
We Miss You, We Remember You,
in a nutshell, is what they say,
except they insert a word like Pray,

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5 Justice James Aboud, the first recipient of Derek Walcott’s Rat Island Foundation Prize, is the author of two poetry collections, The Stone Rose and The Lagahoo Poems.
or a phrase intended to contract time,
like You Are With Us Every Day,
or words to that effect, in a metered line.
I’d much prefer original words of broken prose
to that sing-song formula of metronomic grief.

The memorials come to us in sequence;
the one-year anniversary, the two-year,
sometimes the three, four or five,
and then the routine slackens, the public declaration
yielding to something less talkative, or mute.
The twine of memory is un-spooled year after year,
until it strains and stretches; until it loosens.
A memorial after 10 or 15 years is very rare.
By then, the family’s had enough,
or died, or forgot to call the editor
because they had a very busy week.

At a burial last year at Mucurapo Cemetery
I wandered away from the sorrowful Hail Marys,
down a path, past the new mausoleums
to some gravestones baking in the sun.
I stopped near the saddest of them,
leaning like a forgotten night watchman
over a slab of cracked concrete and parched earth.
It was built like a flower bed with the coffin sunk
right in the middle, but no flowers grew there,
not even healthy weeds. Stalks of dead razor grass
sprouted like a sailor’s beard from every crevice,
and just lay there, uncut, forlorn.
These are the words inscribed on the gravestone:
Andrew Barrow
My loving Husband
R.I.P. 1943
Memory Defeats Death.

That lifeless soil is one place for sure
that memory did not win. The wife grieved,
the children aged, the whole lot passed on,
leaving the greats and the great-greats
who remember nothing of Andrew and his widow.
The soil was tended, the flowers planted,
probably every All Saints Day in the Forties. Then some years were missed,
then some more, until, in the end,
no one came again to visit Andrew Barrow,
loving as he was.
I should turn the page to the sports section to avoid these thoughts
and the eyes looking up at me, but I can’t, just yet.
I always slow down to watch, as when driving past an accident I don’t need to see.
So I dumbly pause and stare, pay my respects, observe which family
or friends have gathered and mark their sorrow, glad it’s not my own.
The survivors have assembled this morning to declare their loss
and send their clairvoyant’s message to the dead,
who might be sneaking a read over my shoulder
unless they have newspapers of their own.
They cannot pray for themselves or each other
or keep themselves in the memory of the world;
that is what the living do, and only for a while at that.

I hope they put their mark on lamp posts and bridges,
on country trees, on city walls where people pass all day;
on faces of children and grandchildren, on ideas
that were bound in chains of dogma, and freed.
I hope they scrawled their names on the mile mark stones
of coastal roads, known and not well known.
They cannot depend on us with our rhymes and blank verse,
our best intentions, our solemn promises, with our distractions
and the urgency of our fading days. We are not dependable.
We have limited skills in keeping the dead alive.
The ambulance of memory is tearing down the bumpy road

with sirens blasting, but it will not, except for a few, arrive.

It’s time to close the morning paper and get on with life.

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BLUE POTARO HILLS

BY

IAN MC DONALD

This was Lloyd Best’s favourite of Ian McDonald’s poems. It comes from the collection, *Mercy Ward.*

Old Oudit Ram seemed, to those who knew,
To have taken up permanent residence
In the coveted corner bed on the Western side
He had even accumulated a few belongings,
A litter of small items to grace his stay,
A sort of shrine to give a sort of meaning
To his sort of life: a holy Hindu picture, a tattered book,
A bag of stones (I don’t know why), a faded Panam bag.
He seemed to have settled in for good, or bad,
And he behaved himself and said his prayers and ate.

Without any warning, at evening time one day,
He surprised the Ward by getting up and walking out.
He showed every sign of knowing what he did,
Collecting up his picture, book and rocks,
And also his small bag, and making for the door.
He got quite far, almost to the stairs outside
Before the shouts brought order back again,
And he was hustled back to stay in bed
Where he belonged, the nurses told him scoldingly,
And not where he was trying hard to go,
Come As he explained: home, home, one time more,
Home, far away and far to go,
Home where he remembered in the evening mist
Blue Potaro hills of young days long ago.

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“Why don’t you write about it for next week’s Tapia?”

Those words, which marked the beginning of my association with the Bestian ethos, come back to me now with particular feeling as news of Lloyd’s passing reaches me in the middle of my writing trip to Brazil.

I remember exactly when they were uttered. At a gathering during the Christmas school holidays of 1976/77, to which I had been taken by Lloyd’s brother, Earl, then one of my teachers at QRC, the conversation had turned to the arrival of two sensational young West Indian fast bowlers, Colin Croft and Joel Garner. The previous summer, Andy Roberts, Michael Holding and Wayne Daniel had destroyed England. What should the selectors do if the five speedsters were fit and firing. Pick all five? Was there room for spin? Raphic Jumadeen, Albert Padmore, and the Alis, Inshan and Imtiaz, were bowling very well.

From the depth of my 15 years and five months, I contended some kind of spin would mean a more balanced attack. Lloyd held that with that quality and abundance of pace,
why worry about spin. At the end of the debate, with all the naturalness in the world, he challenged me to have the courage of my convictions: Why not get my thoughts down on paper and send them to Tapia. The paper would be delighted to have them.

Afterwards, less intimidated in the company of teacher Earl, I asked:

“Was Lloyd serious? Does he really want me to write about cricket for Tapia?”
“Of course,” was Earl’s unequivocal reply.

I eventually came up with four handwritten foolscap sheets discussing the merits and demerits of trying to find a place for one of Jumadeen, Inshan, Intiaz or Padmore in the WI team to face Mushtaq’s Mohammad’s 1977 Pakistanis. In the first Tapia edition of January 1977, I saw those four foolscap sheets converted to newsprint. “QRC schoolboy, Owen Thompson, takes time off during the Christmas holidays to ask ‘Where is our spin for the Pakistan series?’ Hardly a comma had been changed.

I would never forget, a few days later, when Lloyd came to QRC to pick up his boys after school, how sincerely he thanked me for the piece.

Just over thirty years later, in early February 2007, I called on him at Tunapuna Road. He received me lying in bed, where he remained for almost all of the two and a half hours my visit lasted.
We talked, as usual, about everything. He was particularly pleased about the work he was completing with Dr. Eric St. Cyr, whom he so liked and respected. We also managed to get in cricket, the state of the nation and the Caribbean civilisation, our families, his friends from school, since the first form at QRC in 1945, among them Dr. Denis Solomon, and my imminent writing trip to Brazil. We remembered that first article of mine and Lloyd joked that at the ripe young age of 45 I could be considered a veteran, given that I had been writing for Tapia/The Trinidad and Tobago Review for the small matter of 30 years, since January 1977. My 30th anniversary with the publication had to be celebrated in some way.

There is something in all this that underlines part of the essence of Lloyd. It has to do with his unhesitating courage to make the effort to do things: a 15 year-old schoolboy must be made to see that he has to be part of the process, of debate and evaluation, which must always be there, alive and on-going, if WI are to make something of ourselves. He must be made to see that what is worth doing is worth doing badly. The forum is there, WI must seize it, make use of it, take up our beds and walk. The sooner we realise that, and have the courage to do it, the better. If a 15 year-old schoolboy understands that, and is soon part of the process, WI will be getting somewhere. It is perhaps the most important thing I owe to Lloyd.

The other thing that really struck me then was how sincerely grateful he was for that small article. I could never get over how he always went out of his way to tell me thanks for every piece I wrote (in those days only about cricket) during those initial years,
between 1977 and 1979, week after week, as I finished secondary school and established myself as a cricket writer first for Tapia and then The Trinidad and Tobago Review. Pompous as that might sound, it was how Lloyd made me feel.

I still vividly remember how he greeted Dr. Eric Williams’ 1977 budget in an early edition of Tapia. “Budgeting for A Fools’ Paradise” caused quite a stir in the country. It was ironic that the word of someone who had just taken such a beating at the polls should carry such weight. As far back as then he was saying just how much we were getting the parameters wrong.

There was something special about his thanks in February 2007 at the end of my visit, much more than heartfelt congratulations as he commended me on my Brazilian project. There was marrow-deep, Lloyd-Bestian satisfaction that the schoolboy he had urged to have the courage of his convictions thirty years earlier was about to embark upon a writing trip to Brazil, with funding from The Writers’ Foundation of Spain, to deliver a book on the mellifluous contradictions of Brazilian Bossa Nova. It was as though deep down he knew something.

In a way, Lloyd had spoilt us all. “Death simply isn’t an option,” he so often said. My brother Warren would say to me every time I asked, from my corner of the world, about Lloyd’s health during these final years, “If Lloydie see Basil, he go tell him, “Wey you goin’? Go back wey yuh come from!” In a way, we had come to believe that the option
Lloyd had for so long simply refused, would not arise because of the sheer weight of his conviction. That was the second thing about Lloyd.

For twenty-eight of the thirty years in which I have been associated with Lloyd, Tapia and The TTR, I have been geographically away from Trinidad and Tobago. I have met outstanding people in the many fields my professional endeavours have allowed me to embrace from all over - Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, the Americas. I have met few with as much strength of conviction, even fewer with as much generosity, and none with as remarkable a mind.

At the very core of Lloyd’s love lay his humility, his strength of conviction, his belief that it behoves us to take up our beds and walk, in order to make something of this “Afro-Asian shipwreck on American soil, governed by European institutions”. I don’t think he ever stopped believing that WI could make something of it. If only for that, a great many of us should be a trifle closer to understanding something of the essence of Lloyd’s love. And make it count for something.

I had arrived at his house at around 4.30 pm; it was close to 7 pm when I told him I had to be going. One of his daughters came in to give him some medication. When she had finished, he called me in again. He was then sitting up, rather than lying, in bed. He gave me a final embrace before I turned to leave him. “So,” he said, “Shall we expect
something from Brazil then?”

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Earl Best said at Lloyd's send-off that it was often impossible to separate his late brother's love for country from the love he felt for his family. There appeared to be, Earl suggested, a faultless connection between the two objects of his affection and attention and quite similar ways of expressing these great loves.

Eldest daughter Kamlia's moonlight testimony at the Tapia House the night before had been described-in a whisper, by another member of the congregation-as poetic rendition of correspondence between professional peers when they were meant to be the private outpourings of a father to his daughter.

The early Christians were inclined to acknowledge such seamlessness between private and public loves. In fact, the Greek word “agape” has enjoyed latter-day popularity among the “Born-Again” because it helps, in a single word, to reconcile the selflessness of devotion to cause with the deep affection of spiritual and actual kinship.

It is perhaps a human flaw to attempt to locate discrete coordinates for something as limitless as a person's love. But it might also be our strength that begs the important questions about its true nature. Lloyd helped us frame those questions and, in the process, answered some of them.
As he looked out at the Julie mango trees at 91 Tunapuna Road in the final weeks, Lloyd might well have seen, again, the boys from QRC in brand new long khaki pants-as new to the world as our minds and souls.

We were Caura River, all-fours games under 40-watt bulbs at night, Port of Spain runs after football and cricket games and poetry to wipe the tears that often flowed. We were teenage fights in the backseat of the white Holden and, later, young infatuations under the Tapia House. We were bicycle rides along the Eastern Main Road and long walks through Green Street, up El Dorado and a quick cut across to Caura.

We were Lloyd Best's loves.

The least of the Tapia apostles--Garth, Lindsay, Vanda, Celia, Bill, Rhonda, Patrick, “Worms”, Floyd, Max, Joanne and others who flew in and out of New World Prophet skits watered by souse and forbidden rum on a Friday night. Later, as we grew, those who occupied the original larger table such as ‘Sour” and Lincoln joined in and agape grew out of agape. Lloyd-"Mister Best"-to all of us, often stood there in what looked like a dhoti and scratched his beard.

Who did not wear sandals or try to grow a beard then?

Arthur Atwell with his thick, overhanging eyebrows and greying beard and Alan Harris with brown, piercing eyes behind Solo bottle-glasses, chuckled as we passed. Then they passed and we wept, not cried, as Angela Cropper has admonished.
Now comes the time for us to locate Lloyd's love and we find it everywhere.

In almost each line of poetry and on every laden Julie mango tree. It is as small as our first pimples under the Tapia House and as large as the mountain that looked down on us at Morang where the cold water sent us shivering and giggling back to the Holden and a man with a broad, white smile and a heart with love to match the sky that dried our backs and sometimes our tears.

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THE BEST ACCIDENT

BY

JONATHAN ALI

Considering the importance Lloyd Best placed on accidents happening in his life, it gives me a wry pleasure to note that that’s exactly how I came to know him about six years ago: quite by accident.

This was a time of much difficulty and uncertainty in my life. I had, in the preceding few years, made two aborted attempts to obtain a university degree, the first abroad, the second here. Then a number of things happened in quick succession: great personal loss; serious illness; a period of recovery. I got a job, began to earn a living and sought to establish some type of stability to my existence, to carefully feel my way in the world. This was not enough, though. I had become too self-aware, was too curious, and couldn’t help myself from seeing things around me with a critical eye. I couldn’t simply continue along the conventional path, yet I could see no other road.

Then a friend, commissioned by this paper to review a production of The Tempest by an English theatre company, was unable to do it - and asked me if I would. Like everyone else I knew who Lloyd Best was, but beyond some vague knowledge of the exploits of Tapia and the fact that he wrote a column in the newspaper I knew little of the man and had never heard of the Trinidad and Tobago Review.
But this was a chance to write, to be a part of the discourse. The review was written - in retrospect, a somewhat diffident piece - and submitted. I had had no contact with Lloyd or anyone at the Review and had no idea if what I wrote would be considered worthy enough to appear in print.

This is exactly what happened, however, and soon after I had a call from Earl Best, Lloyd’s brother and the Review’s then copy editor, saying that they had a cheque for me, and would I be willing to be a regular critic for the paper? Over the next few months I wrote a number of reviews, at first on theatre, then on books, my confidence perceptibly growing. I was yet to meet Lloyd and didn’t believe I would, thinking that, as just one of many Review contributors, and an unlettered upstart of a youth-man at that, he couldn’t possibly have time for me.

Then one day Earl called to say Lloyd wanted to meet me, and I made the first of my many trips to 91 Tunapuna Road. There, in the verandah, looking out over that yard of mango trees, we talked. Lloyd showed a genuine interest in what I thought, my background and experiences. And the anxiety I had felt over the aberration of my university career was almost wiped away when, having told Lloyd I had never completed my degree at St. Augustine, he remarked, “That isn’t surprising. That place is a morgue.” This, I was to learn, was characteristic of the man. He said what he thought, and expected you to do the same. It almost didn’t matter what your opinion was, but you were required to have one. And he never spoke down to you, or acted as if his vast store of accumulated
knowledge and wisdom was all there was, and that all you were supposed to do was listen and learn. He didn’t lecture, and he listened as much as he talked.

Over time I got to learn that Lloyd’s initial interest in me was not fleeting. Occasionally he would call to find out how I was, what I was working on, what I thought of some issue or the other: the increasingly absurd politics, the situation in Haiti, cricket. It amazes me still that he cared enough to make these calls, and could find the time to do so.

Lloyd was never a man for boasting (except, perhaps, when the proud papa was speaking of his children) but one thing that gave him much satisfaction to note was the longevity of the Review, the longest-running paper of its kind in the region. He had great plans for it, and I feel honoured to say he wanted me to play a key role in making the arts and literature section - the most vital part of the paper, he never hesitated to say - truly vibrant.

Things being what they are, that was not to be. And the time came when I stopped being a regular contributor to the Review. I was still in touch with Lloyd, still saw him now and then. I knew he was ill, and I always felt a stab of guilt when he would ask, “When are you going to start writing for us again?”

(And, of course, things being what they are, when I agreed some months ago to write for the paper again, and went to Tunapuna to pick up the book I was to review, Lloyd was resting and I did not get to see him. I never saw him again.)
Yet the intervention that Lloyd made in my life, brief as it may have been, has had, and will continue to have, an effect that will last as long as this body is mine. I have an almost pathological aversion to ideology of any sort, so while I will probably never call myself a Bestian - and if I knew Lloyd at all, he would have probably said I was damn right - so much of how I think about and see, in particular my immediate Trinidadian reality, and also my larger Caribbean one, is indelibly coloured by him.

So many of Lloyd’s concepts have become essential to my way of being. Finding out. Getting to grips. Taking the long view. It was Lloyd who helped me to see the difference between an academic and an intellectual; that you didn’t have to be the former to be the latter, and that being the former didn’t necessarily make you the latter. It was Lloyd who impressed upon me that talk - real talk, critical, informed discourse - was in its way a form of action. And it was Lloyd who posed the essential question, the question we must continually ask if we are to genuinely make anything of ourselves, and to which I continually seek to address myself: How does a culture escape itself?

Lloyd’s cheerfulness and optimism, even when he was moved to say - as he often did - that this was a frightening place, always intrigued me, and the last time I visited with him, I got, perhaps, a clue as to how he was able to remain, over the years, so sanguine in the face of such bleak odds. I forget the exact topic under discussion, but I must have said something about how hopeless I felt, because Lloyd then said to me (and I am recalling poorly from memory now) that there was no inevitability about us here in the Caribbean
producing a civilisation, that, despite our best efforts, we could simply and randomly be wiped off the map, and disappear into that grey vault, the sea.

A typically contentious Best view, of course: that our existence as a Caribbean people, which began with an accidental encounter with a rapacious Italian mariner five hundred years ago, could just as easily end without us ever realising our full, enormous potential. But Lloyd was a man who placed much store by accidents. Meeting him was the best accident of my life, and I shall miss him dearly.

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Lloyd’s impact on our politics has not yet been fully felt. It is still too early to judge his influence. Nevertheless, Lloyd always approvingly quoted his own mentor, C.V. Gocking, who argued that *Tapia* had saved Trinidad and Tobago from the excesses of the left-wing adventurism which devastated Jamaica, Guyana, and Grenada.

To understand Lloyd and his politics properly, we must appreciate that above all, he was concerned with our ability to discern fertile options: in politics, economics, and society. His own political interventions – *New World, Tapia*, the “party of parties” – were merely examples of that, even if they weren’t always electorally successful. Following Gocking, again, Lloyd always said that anything worth doing was worth doing badly. This was tongue in cheek of course. For his greatest legacy to us was to demonstrate his way of proceeding, to “play for change”.

Lloyd was not dogmatic. Everything was a series of “Working Notes” for him. He knew that we are playthings of history and fate, that the accidents of living are most important. Accidents make us discover our reality unexpectedly, and force us to dig deep within ourselves, to make choices for which there is no road map or readymade answer. In other words, they make us rely on our ourselves, and to grow up.

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7 Dr Kirk Meighoo, one of Lloyd Best’s many protégés, delivered this eulogy at Lloyd Best’s funeral.
Lloyd’s politics were always about choice and responsibility. To be sure, he stressed that each of us always finds oneself in a particular time, place, circumstance, and culture, each with its own specific limitations and its own specific possibilities. Accordingly, he equally emphasised that we always have the responsibility to exercise our free will, at every moment of our lives. He knew that the exercise of responsibility is the only way to enhance and guarantee Freedom.

Lloyd grasped that the little choices we made everyday, the seemingly unimportant ones that nobody noticed or saw, prepared us for the bigger choices which we all are eventually called to make at crucial times in our lives.

Politically, particularly during the Black Power days, Lloyd could have chosen to be a race leader, but instead he chose to be a nationalist, and refused to use race as a weapon. Lloyd was not a protester. He always built independent organisations himself. If the newspapers were ill-informed and bacchanalian, he published his own. If the University of the West Indies was intellectually uncreative, he created an Institute himself. He never marched against the Government. He organised a political party for responsible participation. When he found the political situation too fragmented, he established a platform for unity.

Lloyd never chose the comfortable, profitable, or easy road. He always chose the right road, however difficult, or personally costly.
Lloyd could have been highly salaried and a recipient of much financing, local and international. He refused them all, choosing to stand or fall by the merits of his own, honest, intellectual work. He constantly tested his own viability.

Lloyd was not a follower, and chose not to ask for followers. He was a creator: of words, ideas, and opportunities.

Lloyd was never selfish. He was always generous, always looking out for the next generation. He always looked out for me.

Lloyd did not abuse his intellectual superiority, make himself an “expert” or an insider. Lloyd was determinedly an outsider, a man of the people, who often described himself as “unemployed”.

Lloyd was not an escapist. He chose to stay among ordinary people, where we were, and to accept us for who we are. Indeed, he left us from the same town from which he came to us.

Lloyd could have written books and created an esteemed professorial reputation. Instead he wrote in newspapers. Millions of words, in hundreds of articles, almost all of them “To be continued…” because he knew that Trinidadians didn’t read books, they read newspapers.
Lloyd chose never to dumb down his work or simplify it. He believed that we could all understand what he was trying to say.

Lloyd never appealed to our vanity or tried to flatter or mamaguy us. He challenged us to become better than what we are.

Lloyd was never complacent, or self-congratulatory. Lloyd was a disturber of the self-satisfied, a critic of our unresponsible and contented elites, and consistently challenged even himself. He knew our biggest problem was the educated, not the uneducated.

Lloyd did not trade in glamour, PR, publicity gimmicks, wealth, popularity or fame, all of which he knew were transient. “Trinidad is a treacherous place” he always told me. Lloyd upheld the intrinsic merit and worth of ideas and actions. Only that could stand the test of time.

Lloyd never succumbed to cynical Trini lawlessness, even when driving on Trini roads, amazingly. He lived by the highest standards, which he knew were right and honourable.

Lloyd stood against mindlessness, fear of the Other, vindictiveness, and historical revenge. He was big enough to embrace us all.

Lloyd never saw himself as non-political. He was political down to his toenail, he used to say.
Lloyd was not neutral, or independent. He was *Tapia*!

Lloyd was not a slave. He was a free man.

Lloyd chose never to be a victim. He was sovereign.

Lloyd chose not to be a satellite. He was the centre of his own world, of which we were all privileged to be a part.

Lloyd was not perfect. But he was Great.

We all should choose to be inspired by his life, to discern fertile options, to exercise responsible choice, to play for change, to build our Best selves. That is his political legacy.

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ALL THE BEAUTY THAT’S A LLOYD

BY

B.C. PIRES

Between 2002 and last year, Lloyd Best spoke with guest editor B.C. Pires three different times for three different papers, the Guardian, Trinidad Express and the Trinidad and Tobago Review. Here are some of the choicest cuts, drives, pulls, hooks and tickles.

ON DEATH:

I had to confront it. It was right there at the door. It made me consider a lot of things, though I haven’t been able to change my basic philosophy of the world because I’m going to die. Not at all. I just don’t know what is going to happen. I entertain the possibility it may be the end of you as a thinking person. I don’t really care. I’ll deal with it when I come to it. I wasn’t sure it would happen. I knew it has happened to everybody else but I didn’t see why it had to happen to me. I more or less disappeared for many days. They couldn’t reach me, couldn’t feed me. I made no response. I was just a vegetable lying there. Until one day I refused the option literally and got up and said, “Rejoice in the Lloyd”!

ON GOD:

My only religion is Tapia. I don’t see how you can fail to speculate as to how the world started and I’m not satisfied with the scientific explanations yet but I’m not minded to conceptualise God in the way people talk about it. I suspect there are explanations we
don’t understand and that makes me cautious but I don’t know how to make the leap to believing in God. I still have the question as to who made God. So I’m just travelling without arriving. I’m just completely open-minded, which I think is the scientific requirement.

ON PERSONAL INFLUENCES:

It’s hard to disavow Marx. I have been astounded by the extent he has influenced almost without their knowing. The simple concept of class, which I don’t subscribe to, is everywhere. People who consider themselves not leftwing still [interpret] the world in a simple model of workers and capitalists, middle class and lower class.

I would count [C.L.R.] James high, in politics certainly. He gave me an insight into government and politics I hadn’t had before. I even put up some money for him to publish his famous Party Politics in the West Indies. James has had a tremendous influence on my thought and my concept of how I should intervene in society and politics and so on. Black Jacobins laid down planks for a whole new interpretation of [the revolution]. I began to discover this place as very exciting.

C.V. Gocking taught me history at QRC and left a tremendous impact on my imagination. He taught the Industrial Revolution and the way huge multitudes of people were driven into poverty and subjugation, working in factories at the age of seven or eight and therefore engendering the need for Factory acts, Poor Law acts and so on. Before William Demas, who taught me French at QRC I had no interest in French
whatsoever. Really authoritarian teaching, conjugating meaninglessly. Demas taught French in terms of wine and Picasso and the Left Bank and Paris. I got interested in a culture and society. Lloyd Braithwaite, in Mona in 1958. There was no book you could mention he had not read or heard about. He taught me to find out about the West Indies. The fifth influence was an Indian, a Kashmiri brahmin called P. Dhar, who was my chief of mission when I went to work in Guyana in 1962, [who had been] the private secretary to Mrs Ghandhi. He taught me a kind of moderation, a view of the Other absolutely indispensable to living if you are going to maintain relationships for long periods.

THE CARIBBEAN RESPONSIBLE ELITE

I don’t think in the Caribbean there is any serious claim for class. Stratification is not class. Some people have more things. Here, people have a lot of money, prestige and status, but accept no responsibilities. They have no class, in another meaning of the word. A man will come into your house, go in your fridge and take two beer and drink it. Anybody. In Jamaica, the servants will tell you go round the back and you put your tail between your legs and sit down until somebody addresses you.

Part of the tragedy is people are working very hard, but at the wrong things. The great problem of Caribbean culture and civilisation as a whole, with Trinidad being the extreme case, is that we have a lot of trained, competent, intelligent people but, for cultural reasons, they are unable to lift the level of their contributions. They remain at middle-management executive standing all their lives. They never graduate to the point where they can conceptualise problems and take charge. People are not just irresponsible,
they are irresponsible. They don’t know they have to be responsible. Which is much worse. The people who founded these societies were absentee investors. They never lived here. If they did, it was a tour of duty and they went back.

The thing that distinguishes the Caribbean is, we all came here to work. Even the Europeans. We have not become the owners of our own land. We keep complaining about what somebody did to us. The whole stance, the posture of the people of the Caribbean is one of victimhood. Especially of the educated classes. We have a lot of bright people who are real masters of their profession. But, essentially, they are proletarians and clerks. They are only able to repeat what they have read in Time or Newsweek or the professional journals in the United States. They are not able to make an original statement about their own condition. But there is a sign that we’re beginning to recognise that and change. There’s a kind of restiveness in the Caribbean now, a sense of futility and frustration abroad everywhere in everything we do, with cricket being the extreme case now, where we ought to know more than anybody else and seem not to do. There’s a kind of incipient upheaval that promises everything. And I’m not talking about physical upheaval. The personality is being compelled to come to grips with being in this place and being in charge. I’m optimistic. I sense that, 40 years after Independence, people are beginning to ask seminal questions about why a people of our intelligence, doing the work we do, with our gifts and endowments and so on are in the hole we are.
ON HAITI

My third daughter is named after Haiti. As you get off the plane [in Naples], people offer you ten-year-old girls, cocaine. Anything you want, you can get in Naples in two minutes. Port au Prince is a little like that. [Still.] Haiti is the only [Caribbean] place with a concept of real autonomy and independence. People in Haiti prefer to starve than submit. You can’t imagine the charm of Haiti! People are building houses from garbage materials, very small little huts but everything is beautifully decked out. They don’t have enough to eat but they have beauty and art, a tremendous sense of aesthetics and independence and that is a good substitute for material things. When people are deprived, the question is, do they have the capacity to invent a world that would keep them human? Although Haiti is so squalid and so poor and so devoid of material things, the painting abstracts from that world… We need to learn some of that in the rest of the Caribbean. We are still dominated by European thoughts and concepts. In Haiti, they see the world through Haitian eyes. That’s very important, decisive, in fact. We are not going to be able to take hold of our situation until we get out of that cocoon. Trinidad is the opposite. Everybody got TV, car [laughs] but nobody is satisfied.

ON TRINIDAD

Trinidad is a remarkable place. It is the most creative of the Caribbean countries for obvious reasons: it is the newest, most cosmopolitan and has the Creole clash of all these creativities. It compels people to make creative adjustments to one another. Trinidad can lead the rest of the Caribbean in a new direction. Three years of [tribal] confrontation have compelled [us] to see exactly what we’ve inherited and how it works or doesn’t
work and what is the source of our debility. Everything I can see suggests we are going to come to terms with it without violence.

Trinidad and Tobago has more public holidays than anywhere else in the Caribbean except perhaps St Lucia and Grenada. And of course every holiday is followed by a holiday, to rest. If Monday is a holiday, Tuesday is automatically a holiday, to recover from the holiday! [laughing aloud] So don’t say we’re not a creative people in the Caribbean.

The only place in the society where there is some glimmer of creativity, some element of independent thought and response, is in the humanities, among the artists. For a long time now, many of the things I am saying as a social scientist, have been said by the artist. Certainly there is nothing I’ve said that Naipaul hasn’t said. But people don’t want to hear the truth. There’s a great sense of denial. Even when I say it in a different way now, many years later, people resent it because it disturbs them. They think I’m pulling down the country. You need a lot more people who discern this to say it. But unfortunately, our education system does not favour the arts.

Now this does not come to grips with the central problem of the country, which is the absence of any philosophical conception and the absence of an officer corps that could articulate these conceptions. The country has not reached there yet but at its level, technocratically, beureaucratic and so on, the country has improved enormously. I am not a pessimist at all. I’m not even an optimist, I’m better than that: I have great faith in the
possibilities of the country. There are many things the country could do by itself, without asking the government for anything. It could spill over into larger initiatives if they started small. For example, I had proposed that these NGOs and community groups should organise a week or a period of proper driving on the road: every morning people come out and do what is right on the road. If the whole country does it, it’s a revolution. It shows the country what can be done on its own initiative: it could solve that problem without the government. But we have to find the will. If you did that, you would find there were any number of things the country could do. And you’d frighten the government, which is the beginning of something. The traffic problem is a real problem. And we can solve it. And, once people begin to find solutions, a lot can happen. I’m an old man now; but if I had been 45 or something, I would have proposed that and organised it.

THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

A crisis is only a crisis when you don’t understand that it is. The moment you seize your situation as catastrophic … [laughing] then you’re in business! [But] the fact that I’m optimistic doesn’t mean we’re going to salvage ourselves. It means there is an opportunity to do so but the record of past civilizations is that most of them go under. Even Rome itself was overrun. Do you know how Rome was overrun, incidentally? I think it’s a fascinating story…. In the year 42, I think it was, the [river] Rhine froze over for many months and the Germans walked over and put a cut-ass on them. They had all this elaborate technology. Rome was like the US now. They were the only superpower. They had all the fortifications, all the bridges on the Rhine were properly manned, all the
routes properly guarded and then [chuckling] one morning the Rhine froze over and the Germans walked over in their thousands and literally overwhelmed them. It’s an important story for us. It tells us the importance of accidents in history. We don’t know what accidents will take place to push us under or over. All we can do is be ready. I remain optimistic because we’re beginning to get ready.

The essential problem of the civilisation is that we need to find out. We need a culture of finding out instead of a culture of regurgitating or restating. To do that, from the first day someone comes into school, the first thing they have to do is, write a paper about their own street. Who are the people there? What are the businesses there? How many children are there? Is the street paved? How wide is it? Find out about your environment and yourself. And we start from there. Right through your school life, this must be the teaching.

**ON HIMSELF**

I am not dismissed. My ideas are everywhere. I could have been in government, Williams asked me. I told him no because I didn’t think that being in government is being in power. And that was not a frustration at all. I have no sense of frustration; like any other human being I’ve been impatient on occasions and as a result made mistakes. When I was leaving Africa they had the usual rounds of valedictory parties saying a lot of nice things about what Best had done and so on; a lot of praise from all the high level people. But they are bound to say those things I mean they can’t get up and say “Best is an ass” so I didn’t take it seriously. On one of those occasions after all the Baas had spoken and
buttered me up comprehensively, a secretary, a man about 30 years old, got up. Nobody asked him to speak he wasn’t scheduled to speak. And he said speaking in the French 
“C’est une vrai Chef [He is a true leader] Il est du, il est froid, il est exigent et il est ex pardon [He is tough as nails he is strong he is demanding but he always pardons]”. I’ve never forgotten that that’s the best thing anyone has ever said about me; he had a real insight into what I was about.

I think the most inspired thing we ever did was in 1977 and 1978 when we converted the Tapia paper into the Trinidad and Tobago Review. With a very long view of how long it would take to establish it, what it should do and so on, going uphill all the way; and then in ’78 we founded the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies which is flourishing now.

ON CRICKET

The day my island scholarship was announced, the press and the principal had to come to the Oval to tell us. I had to go home to tell my parents [but] I couldn’t leave until Worrell had batted. He made the most elegant 19 I’ve ever seen. Lara’s quality is not in doubt but I’ve never liked him too much as a person. I don’t know if arrogant is the word but I don’t find him sympathique. I would put him above Tendulkar. Lara is the man to destroy bowling without being a butcher.
ON VARIOUS OTHERS:

• **Patrick Manning**

I haven’t given him any thought at all. He doesn’t command any attention.

• **Keith Rowley**

Manning is superior to him. Especially of late, Manning has grown. In capacity and in confidence. Manning has learnt. All the measures he’s taking now, he intends to stay there. He has a native political intelligence I didn’t think he had. He made so many mistakes in the past, you began to wonder about him, but he has learnt from the experience.

• **Basdeo Panday**

Doesn’t matter what he’s doing, he’s compelling. I don’t think he’s on the way out. It would be hard [for the UNC] not to persuade him to stay unless something happens with his court case and I don’t anticipate any draconian outcome.

• **Ramesh**

I don’t set any great store by him. He has some resources, I wouldn’t say talent. He has a very limited education. If I had to fight a real case in law, I wouldn’t give it to him; but he has energy and, in this particular situation, he commands attention without having appeal. I expect him to make a lot more noise, create a lot more disruption in the Indo constituency, but I don’t expect him to go anywhere. He doesn’t have what Panday has. He can’t persuade people.
**ANR Robinson**

I’m very clear on Robinson. He’s a hypocrite. He doesn’t believe in democracy. He has no concept of it. The moment he comes into a meeting with other people, even of his equals, he assumes he’s the boss and doesn’t listen to anybody else. He talks about loyalty and patriotism. Anybody who is talking about that is suspect as a matter of course. I want to say he’s not bright either. A lot of his work is cliched and formula. Even after he broke from Williams, a lot of it was derived from Williams.

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The Anglophone Caribbean in the 1960s was in transition - psychological, no less than political. The old colonial order was dying, but there was much debate over what would replace it. What kind of societies and economies could, and should, be shaped after independence? Was Westminster democracy an appropriate form of government? Could politicians be trusted with their newly-acquired power? Could economic regionalism substitute for the failed Federation? Was there a “West Indian identity” and what was the role of the artist in reflecting and shaping it? What about Rastafarianism and pan-Africanism?

The Cold War had entered the region forcefully, Cuba’s young revolution allied with the Soviet Union and Dr. Jagan a proclaimed Marxist socialist in Guyana; while other West Indian political leaders had opted for Western-style democracy and mixed economies. What role did socialism have to play in building the new societies, and what foreign policy should independent West Indian states adopt? These were the kinds of questions preoccupying young West Indian scholars and political leaders-in-waiting, now working in increasing numbers at the Mona Campus.

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8 Professor Norman Girvan is the Professorial Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies.
**LLOYD BEST**

Lloyd Best was the central figure in the West Indian Society for the Study of Social Issues (WISSI) that emerged on the Mona Campus in 1960s, the forerunner of the New World Group. He had come to Mona in 1958 after training in economics in Britain. Brilliant, original, insightful, provocative, irreverent and not a little arrogant, Best was an exemplar par excellence of the charismatic intellectual. He was to become intellectual mentor to several generations of West Indian students, scholars, journalists and political leaders. Among his talents was the ability to coin a phrase that provoked an alternative perspective on a familiar problem; examples are “Plantation Economy”, “Doctor Politics” and “Industrialization by Invitation”, which have entered the language of everyday intellectual discourse.

Best’s articles in New World Quarterly are an excellent record of the political, social, economic and epistemic philosophy that he was to articulate consistently throughout his life. Five, all appearing between 1963 and 1968, will be reviewed here. The first, Working Notes Towards the Unification of Guyana, appeared in the first issue. It was published under the name of “some New World Associates”, but was actually co-authored by Best with the Guyanese lawyer Miles Fitzpatrick. Working Notes argued that the root of the political crisis in Guyana lay in the importation of foreign ideologies from the West and the East - ideologies alien to the West Indian experience. In other words, neither Western-style capitalism/democracy nor Soviet-style centrally planned economy could work to produce development in Guyana, and commitment to either by the two main political parties was making the problem worse.
The essay proposed a locally designed development programme as the basis for a coalition government. The programme would be free of ideological bias, and informed by a careful study of the history, sociology and economic structures of the country. The initiative was rejected, and Guyana continued its descent into the ethno-political polarization that persists to this day. Over 40 years later, this document continues to have relevance in the basic principles informing the proposals.

Best’s Chaguaramas to Slavery? was published in the 1965 Dead Season issue of New World Quarterly. The title reversed, for polemical effect, that of one of Dr. William’s most famous lectures, From Slavery to Chaguaramas, delivered at the University of Woodford Square at the height of Williams’s campaign to release the U.S. naval base at Chaguaramas, for use as the site of the capital of the West Indies Federation. Lloyd’s article was a polemic critique of Williams, for the abandonment of the campaign through an agreement with the United States in return for a package of economic assistance; and of William’s withdrawal from the WI Federation after Jamaica voted for secession, on the grounds that “one from ten leave nought”. Lloyd argued that the retreat of Dr. Williams on the two issues amounted to a failure to seize a rare historic opportunity for the “shifting of responsibility from outside and to the West Indian people”. For him, this was the true meaning and purpose of political independence. The theme of self-responsibility is a constant of Bestian thought.

*Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom*, published in the 1967 Crop-over issue, is probably the best-known of Best’s articles. Its pan-Caribbean vision, derived from the
historical influence of the plantation system, its critique of economic dependency and of government industrialisation strategies, its vigorous rejection of the metropolitan imperialism of both the West and the East, its critique of orthodox Marxism as a kind of Catholic “church”, its thesis that social change begins with ideas and that “thought is action for us”, and hence that “independent thought” is the means of attaining Caribbean freedom. All these are now recognised as distinctive features of Best’s contribution to Caribbean thought.

In Thought and Freedom Best charged that the younger members of his generation who were impatient to take political power were ill-equipped and unprepared for the task. He returned to this theme in an article published in the 1967 Dead Season issue entitled Whither New World? Once again, Lloyd rebutted critics pressing for New World to become a political organization. It was necessary, he argued, to “erode the intellectual and philosophical foundations of the old order so as to guard against the mere substitution of one political elite for another”.

However, in The Next Round, published the following year (Crop Time 1968), we can discern a significant change in tone and emphasis. He announced the political arrival of “the generation born since Moyne... the men who constitute the decisive cohort for the next round”. The piece ended with a ringing declaration:

*Dessalines and Duvalier, no! radical reform, si! Yes, social and economic revolution, a fundamental change in regime, in system of society.* (993).
To his contemporaries, this must have sounded very much like a political call to arms. It proved to be Lloyd Best’s last article in New World Quarterly. Shortly afterwards there was the split in the Trinidad New World Group, Lloyd’s leaving to form Tapia, the Rodney Riot in Jamaica and the Black Power revolution in Trinidad.

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TURNING TO TUNAPUNA

BY

IVAN LAUGHLIN\(^9\)

It was Monday in the afternoon and I was on my way to Port of Spain from Piarco and my cell rang. Lloyd had passed away.

So I redirected my taxi driver to the place on Tunapuna Road where, since the late 60s, we had assembled physically, intellectually, communally, always encouraged by Lloyd, as a Caribbean people, to constantly probe the depths of our intellect and experiences. As I walked through that place the memories of Lloyd and of those times of hope, of discourse, of discovery, of learning, of sharing, of camaraderie, of anguish - and self-doubt too - all flooded my consciousness.

For me the place - Lloyd’s home and Tapia House and Tunapuna – was where I found my Caribbean anchor and therefore was where my ongoing human settlements pursuits had its origins and where I was able to re-enter "the castle of my skin" and to probe "the natives of my person" George Lamming placed before the Caribbean consciousness. Lloyd had the unique capacity to give simple-yet-elevated perspectives to normal everyday activities. Always like another way of seeing. Always stimulating the imagination.

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\(^9\) Ivan Laughlin on Lloyd Best’s unbridled mind.
And so I remembered things:

Once, in the early days of Tapia, we were playing a football fete match at Mayo, just south of Trinidad’s Central Range. Lloyd was playing what I have to term “a roving centre-forward” - you cannot bridle Lloyd. By half-time the score was Mayo 4, Tapia 0 and I must confess I was between the Tapia uprights (of course at least two of those goals were offside and the Tapia coach had saddled me with a weak defence). During the interval Lloyd admitted he was "seeing the openings but could not get there" and waxing philosophical that, in his time "there used to be only two concepts in football – clear and cross.” Well the reality is, we were doing neither. I won't venture to give the full time score.

I first met Lloyd in 1967 at James Millette's home at St. Augustine - a New World get-together. I had become aware of New World in the mid-1960s and Lloyd Best was the central name in its intellectual component. Here I was, a Trinidad "white" searching for self-identity, trying to understand where I was located in this place. In my work as a land surveyor, I had encountered the villages and communities of Trinidad and Tobago. I had resigned from the Queen’s Park Cricket Club as my protest against what I saw as racial or maybe colour discrimination. I was living in Tunapuna, Lloyd's birthplace, his place of growing up, his place of abode and, as he would say, "There are cosmic forces at play in this place." Think of it: Learie Constantine; C.L.R. James; George Padmore; Lloyd Best. I was seeking my Caribbean centre. I was searching to find an anchor.
Lloyd's response, when I said I planned to go abroad to university, was emphatic: “You can't do that! You must stay here and pursue your studies at UWI!”

Lloyd provided the anchor. That encounter opened up a period of philosophical and psychological consolidation for me. I went to UWI in 1968, where he was coming to lecture.

Through *New World* and then *Tapia*, hiking with him in the foothills around Tunapuna, I was exposed to a mind unbridled by the ideologies of liberal capitalism, of Marxism, of the different expressions of Black Power. A mind that had a capacity to see humankind in its fullness - to be able to view and interpret the full sweep of civilization and articulate the special significance of the Caribbean. To understand the forces that have shaped us from without but most importantly to hear, to feel, to sense our place first from within. To listen to "the voices from within, the voices of our land", which are always varied. They may come from the poets, the novelists, the musicians, the calypsonians, the reggae singers and from the laments and stories of survival in the communities.

Einstein, when once asked how he hit on the Theory of Relativity, said, “I ignored certain axioms.” CLR, when once trying to describe Kanhai's approach to the art of batting, said, “I settled for a West Indian proving to himself that henceforth he was following no established pattern but would create his own.” So it is with Lloyd.
So Tapia - building from the earth - which followed New World, came into being in 1969 and the February Revolution - Lloyd's designation - in 1970; and in that year we hiked together the foothills surrounding Tunapuna every morning. And we spoke and I listened and that opened a new window in my mind. That was Lloyd's impact on my Caribbean consciousness. It allowed me a different way of seeing and interpreting. It provided me with the self-confidence to engage new intellectual and political horizons. It influenced my future work in human settlements embracing land, language and community because I was able to see those different interpretations in my planning and implementation processes. The meaning of the language I encountered thereafter by reading or hearing or even saying began to have my own imaginative translations. It did not have to be Lloyd's numerous writings or teachings. No, Sir, it could come from different sources; but there was now an anchor to my perceptions and perspectives.

I remember vividly Lloyd addressing the student population at UWI, St. Augustine, at the time of the Rodney Crisis in 1968, and taking our minds back to when “Enriquillo who, as literally a little Caribbean boy, in 1519 organized the first joint Maroon force of Africans and Caribs to confront the oppressive Spaniard.” And as Lloyd said, “I have walked on that land” to feel the vibrations. The land in these “colonies of exploitation” also has its voices.

As my memory roamed on that Monday afternoon, the realization loomed large - the visions of positive Caribbean possibilities the Caribbean leadership has failed to engage, so we have now moved from the enterprise of colonization to the enterprise of
globalisation - both generated from outside. We are losing the rhythms of the Caribbean, we are trumpeting the language of external dictates, we have failed to listen to the voices from within.

What can I say now that his voice is silent?

I believe that the cosmic forces of Tunapuna cannot be stilled and so Lloyd’s legacy, whether you agree or disagree with his perspectives, will prevail and can continue to be articulated and implemented in many different endeavours. We need now more than ever to listen to our voices, to say our piece, and so to engage a troubled world from our own perspective.

Over the years we have made our good shots and our bad shots but through it all Lloyd made me probe the depths of my intellect and experiences and in the process understand and love this special place, this Caribbean civilization. For that he will always have my standing ovation.

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CONTENT AND CONTRAST

BY

REGINALD DUMAS

These brief words will not do justice to a man the quality of whose intellect and integrity has over the years been hymned and damned in almost equal measure.

Hymned because he unquestionably stood head and shoulders above his peers in his profound understanding of the Caribbean condition, and in the acuity of his analyses and prescriptions to treat that condition. Damned because the very depth of that understanding with his refusal to compromise, to "chinks". A favourite word of his- infuriated the short-term operators and advantage-seekers who, in diametric opposition to his convictions, will never fail myopically to see politics as office and powers, and as "getting rid of" rather than as attempting to construct a new and viable society.

These words will not do justice to a man whose self-confidence not infrequently bordered on arrogance- indeed, there are many who feel it slipped across the border for permanent residence on the other side. And yet, a man free of conceit and self-importance who disturbed kings but walked contentedly with commoners, who challenged and criticized, and was criticized severely but who bore no subsequent spite, whose occasional shortfalls in sensitivity to those immediately around went hand-in-hand with unflagging commitment to the larger vision, who saw life and “hardwuk” as a coherent whole and not as a series of disjointed solitudes, who always drew inspiration from apparent adversity, who was at home with Mozart and Merchant and Miles Davis, whose
pioneering proposals for change have been dismissed as airy-fairy university piffle, even as those who deride sink in the quicksand of their own intellectual limitations.

Nor will these words do justice to a man who was my friend for 60 years - 60 years even if the friendship was afflicted by my absences on foreign service duty abroad. A friendship of more than six decades can survive interruptions, however; it endures.

These words will not do justice to the man who was Lloyd Best- I mean who is Lloyd Best. Yes, he has shuffled off this mortal coil, but his influence pervades. One day it will prevail.

These words do not do him justice. Yet forgive me. They are all I have to offer for now.

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A COGENT THEORETICAL IDEA

BY

DR. ERIC ST CYR

Lloyd was a man of many parts. He will be missed as husband, father, son, brother and uncle, and as friend, mentor and leader. I will miss him as professor; as leader in my own quest to understand man in his social, political and economic dimensions; in particular as Caribbean man in the worldwide scheme of things.

Our association spans four decades, encompassing several dimensions – university colleague, political activist, research associate. Our very close recent relationship began four years ago when Lloyd asked whether I would come and work with him to bring his work on the Trinidad and Tobago economy to completion. This has been a great honour to serve Lloyd as he served the people of the Caribbean, labouring in the rich vineyard of independent thought. Of the four pieces of work Lloyd said we would do only the Glossary of Terms remains for final editing to completion.

Lloyd, as we all know, was a very meticulous scholar. In his search for accuracy and clarity he would strive night and day until he got it right. He would say “that statement is not correct” and after grappling with several alternative formulations, sometimes he would end up simply changing an indefinite for a definite article! If something were

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10 Expressions by his close friend and colleague, Dr. Eric St Cyr, at the funeral of Lloyd Best.
worth doing it should be done well, he thought. Indeed, trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle.

Lloyd was an extremely hard worker. Some days we would work from 10.00 in the morning past 8.00 at night with only two brief breaks in between to refresh ourselves. On my way out, he would request that we start early next morning. Evidently he was in a race with time. On Wednesday 14th instant, I took the final draft of our main work to him. He said nothing; neither did he open his eyes to look at it. After fifteen or twenty minutes alone together we parted in silence.

Time permits us today to take but one statement from that study of the Trinidad and Tobago economy for brief comment. Best wrote: “Such a review would be valid only if it were guided by a cogent theoretical idea that captured the experience in its own place and on its own terms”. A cogent theory of Caribbean economy would, ex ante, guide meaningful policy intervention. Take, for example, the offshore-generated prosperity currently being experienced. The ‘theory of plantation economy’ predicts that whenever a new staple is being introduced in the periphery, there will be massive inflows of foreign direct investment, heightened construction activity with employment impact, increased household income, and an upward trend in government revenue. As these incomes and revenues are spent, there will be further increases in employment, income and fiscal revenue. Unemployment will also decline and a semblance of prosperity will obtain. As the volume of output of the new staple peaks – assuming commodity prices hold – there will be an abundance of fiscal revenue and foreign exchange.
Best was well aware that as natural gas, the new staple to replace crude oil and offshore refining, was being brought on stream, the current prosperity – what he terms a Golden Age of plenty – was in the offing.

His model of Caribbean economy so informed him. Thus forewarned, what then should public policy be? He was clear that there had to be put in place a well defined funding policy – to keep the flood of revenue and foreign exchange from causing disruptive price inflation and currency appreciation; equally, a well directed investment policy was needed to pre-empt wasteful consumption and channel the abundant surplus to build productive capacity and to transform the economy from its excessive reliance on a volatile offshore engine that was completely outside of national control.

Best’s work, when it is ultimately received, will positively impact the direction of policy in Trinidad and Tobago and in the wider Caribbean. His method of tailoring models to the specifics of economies (and social situations in general) will also reverberate worldwide. It is for this reason that today we salute Lloyd Best for this ‘cogent theoretical idea’ and for his many other contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen, brothers, sisters, fellow pilgrims: as we honour the life and work of this distinguished son of the soil, this illustrious Caribbean man, this intellectual polymath of world stature; even as we mark his passing; let us take a moment to ponder the state of our own lives, reflect on our own frailty, and contemplate our own mortality.
May his soul rest in peace.’

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Lloyd Best was one of the most important intellectuals produced by the Caribbean in the 20th century. He was trained as an economist at Cambridge University and became an important voice that spanned the worlds of the academy, politics, and policy in the Caribbean region. He was paradoxically an icon and an iconoclast – a source of both incisive wisdom and irreverent pique – delivered equally with absolute aplomb and grace. As a student in one of his classes at the Institute of International Relations at UWI, St. Augustine, in 1977-78, I was captivated by Lloyd’s off-hand remark that his work was dedicated to the proposition that all orthodoxies, including his own, existed to be challenged. That observation was a measure of his self-confidence and his willingness to learn from others throughout his life. He was a remarkable teacher, a demanding critic, and displayed enormous patience in elucidating issues for students who were in awe of his intellectual prowess. He showed remarkable dexterity in balancing the roles of both intellectual provocateur and insightful theorist - the hallmark of the most successful intellectuals.

One of Lloyd’s most important formative influences was his work with the PPP government in British Guiana, during the early sixties, when the British West Indian colonies were grappling with the transition to political independence. He was acutely sensitive to the ways in which the problems that confronted British Guiana in the early
1960s were replicated elsewhere in the region. He was also a witness to the self-destructive behaviour that drove the political leaders in British Guiana between 1961 and 1964, and the collapse of a regional vision that undermined the West Indian Federation within the wider region during the same period. Thereafter, his work within the University of the West Indies was framed by his search for an understanding of the historical and structural constraints that hindered the Caribbean from pursuing strategies that would facilitate regional transformation. His academic work was constantly influenced by his awareness that politics was about more than rhetoric and posture – and that sound policy would have to be devised in spite of the intellectual limitations and rhetorical stances of the regional political leaders. Long before the term was popularized, Lloyd understood that good governance required the institutionalization of “civil society”, as a forum which could provide informed analysis that could help to shape public policy and the quality of political life. His work with the Tapia House Movement and the Trinidad and Tobago Review was dedicated to the proposition that engaged citizens could help to shape political debate and demand accountability from political leaders – a radical proposition even today.

Just as important, Lloyd understood the importance of debate and citizen engagement in politics as a strategy for institutionalizing a democratic sensibility and the search for consensus in Caribbean politics. British Guiana’s descent into inter-communal violence between 1962 and 1964, and his recognition of the authoritarian tendencies that had emerged among Caribbean nationalist leaders, informed Lloyd’s emphasis on the forging of a democratic culture in the region. His unwavering commitment to a politics of
consensus, and his support for a process of ongoing debate that would inform policy and political life, arose out of his understanding of the ways in which the psychology of plantation life had to be expunged as a precondition for the development of “Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom.” It was a measure of Lloyd’s genius that he understood that the study of the plantation in Caribbean life meant more than the study of the region’s political economy – it was also a vehicle for the exploration of Caribbean consciousness, in order to formulate strategies of intellectual decolonization. According to Lloyd:

“I have argued that we need independent thought. One of the most blatant manifestations of the colonial condition in the Caribbean – of the plantation mind – is the refuge which our intellectual classes take in a sterile scientism on the one hand, or in a cheap populism on the other.”

Lloyd’s contribution to the forging of a Caribbean sensibility has been decades in the making. His incisive intelligence helped to light the way for others to follow and, in that accomplishment, he has played the role that Martin Carter so brilliantly described in his essay, Artist as Artist (May 1958):

“And may I say too that the job of the artist and intellectual in the West Indies is no different from the job of the artist and intellectual in every part of the world. We are concerned always with the human condition and the establishment of value. Everything is to be taken in the hand and transformed and given meaning.”
Lloyd has left us a legacy of both meaning and value – Caribbean freedom is our right and our responsibility.

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UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO A SOVEREIGN CARIBBEAN NATION

BY

LLOYD TAYLOR

To all those touched by Lloyd Best’s passing, I offer you my deepest condolences. I wish you every consolable thought that might give you comfort in your time of grief and mourning.

It is an extraordinarily painful experience that I cannot travel this time to share the stress and strains of an event of great moment. For such is the measure of the man we knew as Lloyd Algernon Best that in death he could summon us faithful souls to ignite passionate debates, as much as he did in life. On the other side of the fence where he now looms large, I can imagine him happily announcing his arrival and busily assembling Adrian Espinet, Ruskin Punch, Allan Harris, Sylvester Lowhar, Lynette and Arthur Atwell to update their information on the state of the party and the nation. And of course with pointed answers to the question: What next?

It is hard to keep from tearing-up. Harder yet not to face up to the question: What Lloyd Best meant to us individually and collectively? The void we feel is both emotional and operational. Confronting it is an inescapable psychological need. This is truer for those who were fated to be summoned 40 years ago to union by his urgent appeal that to claim the Caribbean archipelago, we must salvage a better world from a history of slavery and colonization. Animate though we are, we are the sacred relics, the archaeological
survivals. This progressive transformation from the narrative of duendom, to use the native folklore, has been the mission of our finest ancestors.

Syl Lowhar it was who told me about Lloyd Best. Through his promptings I soon attended *New World Group (NWG)* meetings in the little house over-looking Lord Harris Square on Pembroke Street at the back of the prison house. There was hardly time for reflection to inform action. Trust and gut response were all we young students had to lean on. The most important by-products of those years were deepening self-knowledge and the lesson that politics was serious business. The bulk of that education took place at the Thursday night meetings in the *Tapia House* and during every moment we spent in Lloyd’s presence.

Best was impatient with shilly-shallying and temporizing. After a series of three heated Thursday- night debates on the future of *New World Group* he called for a division that led to the famous NWG split. The following week many of us met at his home to start a “serious alternative.” To the disappointment of many, there would be no political party announcement then, and not for several years. Instead we discussed a comprehensively sober plan for an intermediate political organization. The Tapia House Group was the alternative of choice to conventional politics. Politics took precedence over the preoccupations with taking office. It was predicated on organic growth as the sanest path to political maturity, the practice of central decision-making that avoided the ruthlessness of party discipline. That year 1968, Lloyd Best wrote prophetically that the Next Round “… would be a long haul”. There we re-located the famous open Thursday night
meetings which would be institutionalized and imprinted on the political consciousness of those revolutionary years of 1970. Above all his attributes, Lloyd Best was distinguished by an unimpeachable integrity in thought, word and deed. That you never do anything you do not believe in or believed to be wrong was first principle for him. His commitment to that was total. You could not get him to take money gratuitously for political favours or to sup at the public trough. For decades he opposed all governments from Columbus to Castro, putting himself in the line of fire, much like the boy on the ship’s burning-deck when all but he had fled. At every opportunity his vigilance was at work defending us against native and North-Atlantic purveyors of re-colonization. He exhorted us to shock our imagination into contemplating the ways in which Caribbean troops may occupy the imperial capitals. Lennox Grant once described Lloyd Best as highly-motivated. I agree, but his passion was his unwavering commitment to laying the political and intellectual infrastructure for a sovereign Caribbean nation.

Finally, my friends on this record, I am sure, that our dearly departed teacher, friend, and mentor Lloyd Best, would find no hesitation in receiving a pass for the Pearly Gates of Heaven. Since Lloyd was interested in repairing our sins of commission and omission, my mind tells me that he will soon ask the custodian to work in Hell, for there the real work remains to be done. Therefore, let us wipe our tears and in confidence wish our Native Standard Bearer farewell and continuous happiness indeed.

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I had always known we were going to lose Lloyd Best soon. What I did not know was that with each passing day since his death I would feel such a great sense of loss.

On the day Lloyd died, I was consoled by the knowledge that he had escaped the cancer chasing him for so long. I also felt happy that his economics, understanding of mankind and general wisdom were secure with the thousands with whom he had shared his beliefs personally and in his writings.

I feel a great sense of loss because in our discussions I found in him a blueprint for the improvement of the lives of all of our citizens that did not include reproach, condemnation or victimhood.

He always prefaced his recommendations with an analysis of who we were and where we had come from before prescribing where we should go.

He never, ever ascribed blame for any condition and was extremely worried that we were continuing to diminish our chances of development by teaching victimhood to those who did not know better.

11 Gregory Aboud, President, Downtown Owners and Merchants Association, Trinidad and Tobago.
On each occasion I had the privileged honour to be in his company or even to speak with him on the phone, I understood Lloyd Best represented a formula for upliftment of all Caribbean people that saw them all as one people.

On the very first occasion we met, he expressed utmost trust in my motives and I can think of no greater method of making a man honest than by trusting him. His willingness to trust led to the great trust he earned and in my respectful view was part of the great compassion and love that drove him in all he did.

I have wondered why so few members of the business community were present at the memorial for Lloyd Best on Sunday March 25. Surely his teachings should be a crucial component of our understanding of current affairs and of the recommendations made by the business community for the future?

Fitting tribute was paid at his memorial service by important friends and colleagues who loved him and understood him.

Many of us owe him tribute as well, and I can think of no higher tribute to pay to him than to continue to repeat the things he said. I feel confident, now that Lloyd Best has gone to his next life, that we will hear more of him in the years ahead and that the effect of what he said, needed now more than ever, will help us finally in the way he wanted.
May he rest in peace.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 29 No.4, April 2, 2007.
Lloyd Best was a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional Caribbean man of ideas. I wish to remember and celebrate him as economist, teacher and member of the academic community of the University of the West Indies.

AS ECONOMIST

Lloyd produced original and seminal economic ideas. In particular, the Theory of Plantation Economy developed in collaboration with Kari Levitt, George Beckford and others - challenged the uncritical embrace and application to the Caribbean reality of economic analysis developed elsewhere for other types of economies. Its central hypothesis was that the founding economic structures, characteristics and behaviour of Caribbean economies under conditions of slavery represent a legacy or burden from which we have been unable to emancipate ourselves.

Perhaps not as well-recognised was its conclusion on the need for public policy to support the residentiary sector of farmers, craftsmen, artisans, etc. who, in the post-Emancipation period beginning 200 years ago with the abolition of slavery, established economic activities independent of the plantation.

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12 Dennis Pantin delivered this appreciation at the Lloyd Best memorial service.
Relatedly, Lloyd’s antipathy to successive governments in the region—but particularly in his homeland—was centrally rooted in his anguish at their failure, not merely to recognise they were buttressing the plantation economy, but also negating this residiency sector by creating a politically dependent under-class. Rather than liberating, these governments were economically enslaving their own mass support base.

**AS TEACHER**

Lloyd was an exceptional though mercurial lecturer, certainly in the period in which he taught myself, Angela Cropper, Terrence Farrell, Anthony Bartholomew, Albert Vincent and Lennox Grant among others. He did not seem to have interest in the weekly lecture routine but, in one lecture, he would virtually cover the entire course. Well, I remember the lecture he gave after reading our first written assignment in EC 101.

He began by stating: “Now more than ever I understand the results of slavery and indentureship: not one of you has any comprehension about how the Caribbean economy works.”

We all sank in our seats as Lloyd then began his lecture. By the end, two hours later, we were on the edge of our seats: we understood!

**AS ACADEMIC**

Lloyd retained an abiding love for the University of the West Indies. It is this passion which explained his continued attacks on an institution he felt was falling too far short of
its potential and to which he had given much. Although some have not agreed with his caustic comments on UWI, many understood this was also part of Lloyd’s style of taking the extreme position in order to generate a debate, out of which would come some advance on the status quo ante.

On behalf of the Caribbean and international community of economists including those he taught over the generations, those touched by his mind, friends and colleagues in the departments of economics at St Augustine, Cave Hill and Mona and other members of the UWI academic community, I wish to applaud, salute and celebrate his intellectual curiosity, courage and conviction and to offer our condolences to his family.

This article first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 29 No.4, April 2, 2007.
REMEMBERING LLOYD

BY

DR. MILLA RIGGIO AND JAMES J GOODWIN

Lloyd Best's death ends an era: with his passing goes the last of the great West Indian intellectual statesmen. There are other intellectuals; there are others who serve the nation and the state - and who build through children for the future. There are those who, like Lloyd, still subordinate their own well-being, sacrificing self-advancement and the possibility of wealth to their sense of service. But there is only one Lloyd Best. So it is fitting that his passing - the passing of a moment in history - should be marked with what amounts to a STATE funeral. We bow as the bier passes by. And we hope that some small sparks from so great a flame will fall on those of us who stand behind. THIS is the legacy Lloyd - a teacher to the end - strove to achieve.

But as I reflect on Lloyd in the frigid isolation of New England, where the weather shares my mourning pallor, it is his death rather than his life that captures my immediate attention. Others can write much better than I about Lloyd's LIFE: what it encompassed, what it meant, how it contributed not only to the Caribbean, but far beyond. I have been privileged to know Lloyd mainly during the years when he has been sustaining his life against all odds - in a body riddled with cancer, weakened by diabetes. It is that magnificent effort of survival on which I wish to focus in this memorial tribute. Lloyd refused to die. Many do not wish to die, but Lloyd is one of the few who had the power to

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13 Dr. Milla Riggio, James J Goodwin Professor of English, Trinity College, Connecticut and Co-ordinator, Trinity-in-Trinidad, Global Learning Site, respectively.
enforce his will for a time on death itself. On three different occasions, I asked Lloyd about his miraculous recoveries. The first was after the conference had been convened in his honour and the festschrift published in his name; defying the odds, he had regained the 50 pounds he had lost and, sitting on his porch, he said to me something I have quoted many times, “I know that everyone in the world has died, but I do not see why it should apply to me.” After his second miraculous recovery, when he had come back as he said to “attend his own funeral” - the retirement ceremony Sunity and others planned for him in November 2005 - I asked him if he had really said what I remembered; he replied, “Of course. But perhaps I should explain what I meant.” And his explanation - the explanation of an economist - was this: “I meant only that until it happens to you, death is just statistical.” “Now, I grant you,” he added, “the statistics are very high. But without your own experience, they are but statistics.” His third, and last, explanation of his remarkable staying power came this January, when much weakened, he responded to my usual query of “How have you done it?” by replying, “I do not concede anything.” “To death?” I asked. “Not to death, to life, nor to anyone or anything in life. I do not yield.”

Lloyd was simply telling the truth. He did not yield—not his principles, not his integrity, not his sense of honour, and certainly not his life. Perhaps most amazing, he held himself sternly upright, his conscience and his intellect as unbending as his elegant posture. Yet neither rigid nor self-righteous. While exacting from himself more than one human being should produce, he was for others flexible, humane, and compassionate. He could lecture small children; he could talk to heads of state. He had a way of knowing his audience - of allowing for human weakness and error. And, most of all, he was patient - with the
patience of one who had waited all his life for the miracles of education and statesmanship to happen, and who was prepared just to keep waiting, pushing, writing, speaking, urging, but all the while also patiently waiting. To do what he could do, and to wait. Let us hope that we too might learn the lesson of almost infinite patience that Lloyd faced daily with the prospect of death - never ceased to embody and teach.

Last of all, I must say that Lloyd’s was not the only will of iron that kept him alive. In a lockstep beside him was his entire family, but most of all his wife Sunity, shepherding their daughters, caring for Lloyd, and pursuing her own life. Among the many things that Lloyd and Sunity had in common was their extraordinary calmness. To speak of Lloyd himself: what struck me most about these last remarkable years was that Lloyd took each day precisely what life was prepared to allow him. Until the week of his death, he went every week to the office. He managed always to find a way to rise and get there. And he continued to counsel, to write, to advise, and to guide from whatever position he felt well enough to occupy. When he could, he walked to Tapia House; if not, he got there some other way. There were days when he sat on the porch; others in the back room of his home. And when he did not feel up to it, then we came to him, in his bedroom where he continued to collaborate, to plan, and to participate - all the while with his family at the centre of his consciousness. He kept himself alive partly by not reaching restlessly for goals he could not encompass. Whatever was available, he accepted, whether twelve working hours a day or one hour of lucidity. He had made his deal with Life, and he kept his end of the bargain, extracting every drop of juice from the fruit of his life, and then calmly waiting until the next drink materialized. He moved from highs to lows; and he
accepted both with equal calm. He took what was given, and because he did not ask for more than was available, he drained it all.

One memory stands out for me: I was to interview Lloyd on a Friday afternoon a couple of years ago. Tony Hall had engaged a camera crew to film the interview. At lunch came a phone call from Sunity. Lloyd was not well enough for the interview, but he wanted to see us. For two hours, Tony and I and one of our administrative team at the Trinity-in-Trinidad Global Learning Site sat in his living room with Lloyd as he lay on the couch, outlining his plans for the future of our collaboration. What struck me most, however, was that during that time, he leaned his head against Sunity’s shoulder as she patiently stroked the large expanse of shining skull beneath her hands. She stroked; Lloyd talked.

This memory of Sunity defines for me the hallmarks of her character - the qualities of calm and repose that she has exhibited throughout this long, gruelling week. She, Carmel and Ayiti together with others cared for Lloyd, lovingly, carefully, minute by minute - but always with the same degree of acceptance that Lloyd himself brought to his life. Sunity did what was necessary, and more. She gave what was required - and then gave and gave and gave: her love, her care, her attention. But at no moment in the time that I have known her did she appear troubled by the huge demand, nor despite the fact that caring for Lloyd was largely what she did with her life for a considerable period of time, did SHE ever yield her own life to that endless task of watching, waiting, and nurturing. As she began to work this year at WINTV, she continued to cook the breakfasts, the lunches, and the dinners for her family; she did the banking; she took care of the house;
she guided the children. And then she went to work. When she had time at home to attend to editing the Review or working on the core course for our Trinity-in-Trinidad collaborative project or any other of her extra duties, she quietly moved to the hammock on the porch, where with shoes off, she calmly went about her set of impossible tasks in quiet sequential order.

We often hear of women who “sacrifice” their lives for men. Sunity is not one of those women. She cared for the man she loved - and, as Lloyd himself well knew - her care together with his will extended his life. But she never sacrificed herself for that care; she kept her own identity, her own sense of life’s fullness always intact. She will bear the biggest burden of this death, but as she picks up and carries on, she does not have to find herself in the process, for she has kept that self patiently and calmly intact throughout her vigil.

So, to Lloyd, I say farewell. To Sunity, I say thank you for all you gave to Lloyd but most of all for who you are: a model for me as a woman, a guide for your children, and a helpmate for one who loved and depended on you. Together, you were a team. You still are.

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ACADEMIC PIONEER

BY

GEORGIA C. MC LEOD

LLOYD BEST is one of those pioneers who sought to place in the minds of Caribbean people the uniqueness which sets us apart from the rest of the world. His work on the Plantation Economy represents a clear advocacy of his commitment to create an important area of Caribbean thought that sufficiently captures the Caribbean's reality and sets the platform for a renewed way of thinking and analysis of the region. As a young scholar in economics, one of my most rewarding experiences has been exposure to the work of Lloyd Best, which reveals his passion, determination and heartfelt love for the region. His writing spans decades providing a wealth of knowledge for generations to appreciate the challenges we have faced historically and contemporarily. I am honoured to be part of a project aiming to present an annotated bibliography of his work. The Caribbean has lost an icon, but he will always remain with us through the significant contribution he has made to our development.

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14 Georgia C. Mc Leod, Junior Research Fellow, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.
INTELLECTUAL GIANT

Message from the

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, UWI, MONA, JAMAICA

Lloyd Best, one of the intellectual giants of the 20th Century Caribbean, carved out a distinct place for Caribbean culture in human thought with the articulation of Plantation Economy, an analytical framework for understanding Caribbean-like economies, that influenced other areas of social thought and helped analyse economies with a similar history and comparable role.

His early work, conceived in the intellectual ferment institutionalized in New World, helped shake the hegemony of colonial thought in the Faculty of Social Sciences and still accounts for the international reputation of the Department and, by extension, the entire University.

Throughout most of his life he maintained close relations with his colleagues at Mona, and shared mutual admiration with some, like George Beckford. Anyone who heard his lectures was struck by his command of language, history, culture and all forms of the arts. Many felt the sting of his Wit in his characteristic style of criticism. No one could doubt his Caribbean perspective and the commitment to deepening our understanding of the development process.

We owe much to Lloyd and his work. Even as we are saddened by his passing, we salute
his contribution as a Caribbean thinker. We will cherish his legacy. We too feel we have lost a member of our family.

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SMALL AXE SAYS GOODBYE TO THE BIG MAN

BY

DR. DAVID SCOTT

There are people who say that because the [Caribbean] Region is poor it cannot afford good libraries; in my view, though, it is because the region is poor that we should have the best libraries…. So (roughly) Lloyd Best remarked some years ago in his plenary lecture at a conference in Jamaica in honour of Rex Nettleford. It was just the kind of counter-intuitive observation one had learned to expect from a man whose vocation as an intellectual was to think against the grain of mind-numbing orthodoxies. It captures, I think, the poetics and politics of Lloyd’s unceasing refusal to grant credence to the familiar excuse for anti-intellectualism in the Caribbean - that poverty precludes thinking. For Best, the life of the mind was not merely a life of value, but the only life in the context of which to make the present into a plausible ground for a desirable future. This refusal was his gift, and he practiced it with an inimitable combination of insouciance and daring and mischief and elegance and joy that will not likely soon be matched.

Lloyd was, from the beginning, a friend and mentor to the Small Axe Project, especially in its fledgling years. We in Small Axe, have always understood ourselves as connected to the legacy of New World, that inaugural moment of our intellectual sovereignty; connected in particular to the demand for - and the commitment to - an independent platform for the production and circulation of critical ideas, whether scholarly, artistic, or

15 Dr. David Scott is the founder/editor of the Caribbean journal of criticism, Small Axe.
literary (Lloyd never wasted time with the exact division between these - nor do we). Such platforms have been very hard to sustain in our Caribbean; our institutions are not readily welcoming of them. In a 1996 interview with Lloyd, published in the first issue of Small Axe [“The Vocation of the Intellectual,” Small Axe 1(March 1997)], Lloyd talked about the University of the West Indies [admonishing him] for not publishing in the “best” international journals. Lloyd very characteristically responded: If we do not publish in our own journals when will they become the best international journals? The University of the West Indies has yet - more than four decades later - to offer a persuasive answer. Lloyd of course wasn’t waiting around for one. This is the spirit of independence he embodied and lived, and that we will not soon forget.

Comme tu le savais si bien, Lloyd, dans la vie, il n’y a pas de gens équilibrés, il n’y a que des équilibristes. Bon voyage, notre équilibriste caraïbe! Quel lumière fragile tu nous as laissée!

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THE LAST AVATAR

BY

RAYMOND RAMCHARITAR

Notes to the excerpt

The poem reinterprets the Caribbean in terms of Hindu, Graeco-Roman and Judeo-Christian mythologies in five movements. It opens, proposing that a heavenly committee has reviewed Earth’s situation and realized there is no hope but Eschaton. Section II outlines a final plea for redemption made to Brahma, who with Shiva and Vishnu, decide to descend to see if anything could be salvaged. The staging area for this final act is the Caribbean where traces of the entire world have been deposited as a last ditch experiment in salvation. Section V chronicles their actual descent into earthly reality. The identity of the Trinity is derivable from the poem in its entirety, but here, Shiva represents Naipaul, Vishnu represents Walcott, and Brahma is Best. The whole poem is published in the collection The Armour of the Ridiculous (Lexicon, 2006).

V

Shiva was born into a lion’s house -
A Brahmin votive to a past which doused

Its supplicants in ritual cruelty
As a means to prove the chela’s fealty

To the memory of a past of heroes and myths
Which Shiva adjudged an Area of Darkness.

In 18 years he etched each image and accent
Of every corner of his brown internment—

The brassy water urns and the prayer gongs,
And the low voices singing Indian film songs;

And saw, in the last days of the dark age,
The players lose the divine plot, and the stage

Become a yellow Babel of base desire,
A decadent taunt to Kali’s destructive ire,

And wondered how these shudras had got so far
Without their gods to tell them who they were.
And Shiva saw that clarity and truth
Might cure the malaise from the rotting root:

He taught them history, myth, and common-sense
And showed them the lessons of their innocence

From pristine El Dorado, through first arrival,
Through guerilla wars and enigmas of survival

Shiva traced the path from mud to mortar,
But the multitudes refused to cross the border

From hut to house, from the primal velleity
To the pulverizing roar of modernity.

Vishnu, ever the mediator, remained
Undecided; he could not be constrained
To a single line of descent or tradition
And chose to begin in the heart of division:

A fractal of green insignificance
From the old geography of Britain and France
Whose warring ships and roaring cannons had rotted
But whose people and landscape remained besotted

Torn between tongues, and divided to the vein
No thing could be contained in a single name:
The lives divided between force and memory
Into daylight and nighttime words and history;

The days in an Imperial pastoral,
The green nights in dreams of the ancestral

Unfolded in the patois of the slave Shabine
From mouths that begged their God to save the Queen

And Vishnu, the divided child of high browns,
came to master his people’s inner songs

And became as John to Patmos, the legislator
Of the black, mournful hills, the sole relater

Of the tribes’ hidden dreams, and the gray, shapeless
Longing for wholeness that afflicted the hopeless.

He became the amanuensis of an old rage -
The dramatist for the tragedy of the age

Which began and ended in the endless sea,
As all epics begin and end: in monody -
The single song at the edge of history’s knife
That carves the wretched one or another life.

But by the end of their lifetime travail The
duo’s civilizing mission had failed: This
left only Brahma, the last of the triad The
final hope of the heavenly myriad;

The stoic committees had made their notes in silence
And had looked on in stony ambivalence

With the coolness of the white-robed scientist
Measuring the death throes of the fittest,

Or extracting the minute measurements
Of the primal atom excited to violence.

And, descending, Brahma knew that he
Could never hope to defeat futility -

He did not glean his knowledge from above
But came to understand the world through love:
It was in the grainy dirt beneath his feet
As he walked alone through the lowest street,

And stopped before the heavy iron gate
That no light or thought or hope could penetrate,

To bless the writhing pain-contorted faces
And softly commit them to the peaceful places.

He sighed at the first childish generations
Born out of chains and into new nations

Led by those imbued with the sparks that were rent
From the fabric of heaven at the triad’s descent -

Believing their accident to be design
Assumed the authority of the divine;

And after a generation of evil and failure
Had become high priests of necrophilia,

Like farmers who celebrated the absence of rain
The pretenders transformed virtue into pain,
And Brahma taught, for seventy-three years,
That nothing could be gained from grief or tears

But this was the final blessed end of toil
The welcome shedding of the mortal coil

And the bright vistas of each evolving fantasia
Were sharpened by the silky skein of amnesia:

The committees’ final gift to their charges
As they drifted upward on their weary barges,

For salvation was just a game of the immortals
Played to amuse themselves in the starry portals.

This piece first appeared in the Trinidad and Tobago Review Vol. 29 No.4, April 2, 2007.
PREAMBLE

CURRICULUM VITAE

THE HONOURABLE LLOYD BEST

M.A. (Cantab); OCC; DLitt (Univ. West Indies)

DATE OF BIRTH:
27th February 1934, Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

DATE OF DEATH:
March 19, 2007, Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

ADDRESS:
Tunapuna Road, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

EDUCATION:
  f  Tacarigua E.C. School, Trinidad and Tobago 1939-1945
  f  Queen's Royal College, Trinidad and Tobago 1946-1952

LANGUAGES (spoken and written)
  f  English
  f  French
  f  Spanish

CIVIL STATUS:
Married (Twice). Six children - Three females and three males
POSITIONS HELD:

- Director, *Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies* (1978 - 2005)
- Publisher, Managing Editor, *Trinidad and Tobago Review* (1977 - 2005)
- CEO, *Trinidad and Tobago International Business and Economics Consulting*
- Leader of the Opposition and a Member of the Trinidad and Tobago Senate, 1974 - 1975 and 1981 - 1983
- Publisher, *Tapia Newsletter* 1969 - 1981
- Founding Editor, *New World Quarterly* 1963-1968
- Founding Member, *New World Movement* 1960/61 to 1968

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- Visiting Professor, University of Curacao, January 2002.
- Visiting Professor, University of the Antilles and Guyane, Schoelcher, Martinique, 1979.
- Visiting Professor, Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad 1977.
- Lecturer in Economics, Department of Economics, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad 1968-1976
f Visiting Professor, Department of Economics, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras 1967.

f Project Co-Director, Centre for Developing Areas Study, McGill University, Montreal 1966-1968.


f Visiting Professor, Institute of Caribbean Studies, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, 1964.


INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANCIES

f CARICOM Secretariat, Political Adviser to Haiti Negotiating Mission April, 1998.

f International Labour organisation (ILO), International Training Centre, Turin, Italy, UN Staff College Project June, 1996.


f UNDP, Bridgetown. Mid-Term Review: Barbados, St Lucia, Dominica, Grenada, OECS 1996.


f  United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Senior Consultant, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1989.


f  UNCTAD, Senior Consultant and Member UN Secretary-General's Planning Team, Port-au-Prince, Haiti 1986.

f  UNCTAD, Senior Consultant, UDEAC, Douala, Cameroun, 1986.


Economic Advisor to Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1961-1962.

AWARDS ACCEPTED

2002
Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC)

2006
DLitt University of the West Indies, *honoris causa*
PLAQUES RECEIVED (as stated on the plaques)

f 1991

f 1998

f 2003
Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre Extends its Sincere Appreciation to Lloyd Best For Your devoted and valued contributions towards education and Economic Development of Trinidad and Tobago, January 2003.

f Order of St. Clement and Order of Emancipation. Lloyd Best - No date

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Institute of the West Indies
LLOYD ALGERNON BEST

CITATION FOR THE

ORDER OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

Lloyd Algernon Best, economist, politician, publicist, political commentator, philosopher and “doctor of doctor politics” was born on February 27, 1934 in the town of Tunapuna, a town that also cradled other Caribbean greats such as C.L.R. James, Learie Constantine and Sylvester Williams. He attended Tacarigua EC School from 1939 to 1945, then Queen’s Royal College from which he won an Island scholarship in 1952; Downing College, University of Cambridge (1953-1956), and Mansfield College, Oxford University (1956-1957), where he read Economics.

Lloyd Best had an exceptional career at Queen’s Royal College, and like that other distinguished Island Scholar, Dr. Eric Williams, excelled at both academics and sport. Lloyd returned to the Caribbean in 1958 to take up an appointment as a Junior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona, Jamaica, where he held court and exchanged ideas with the likes of William Demas, Lloyd Braithwaite, Roy Augier, Dudley Huggins, M.G. Smith and R.T. Smith in the heady ideological years of the late fifties and sixties. Best returned to Trinidad and Tobago in 1968 to lecture in Economics at the UWI, St Augustine Campus after brief stints at Mc Gill University, the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Paris.
A dynamic, provocative and stimulating lecturer, controversy followed Best continuously and, in the end, his stubborn refusal to be a “conventional” academic led to his decision to leave the University. As he explained later, “the University of the West Indies was paying me, but I did not work for them. In a university you do what you have to do, and put it before your colleagues; and when I had to leave, I left on those grounds.”

Best has been known for his many pithy and irreverent characterisations of Caribbean economic policies, political practices, and leadership - both political and intellectual. He criticises them all with an acerbity that many find irritating, even if well meaning. Among the many controversial assertions for which he became well known was that “industrialisation by invitation” was the wrong economic strategy for our governments to adopt; that “politics” and “government” were two different phenomena, and that elections in the Region have all been meaningless, since they have been about the former and never the latter. The result was “doctor politics” in which the maximum leader was “three in one” and “one in three” – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. While the term “doctor politics” became associated with Best and his characterisation of Caribbean politics, and enjoyed popular usage, no other voice but his could elucidate its real meaning:

“It is a kind of irony that through the part, which western Christianity played after Emancipation, the New Testament should have become so potent an instrument in recreating here in the West Indies, the chiliastic spirit of dependence and expectation. The explanation lies in the fact that the total West Indian experience of slavery, colonialism and other forms of exploitation contain
its parallels with the old Jewish experience of impotence and frustration. Both experiences have led to the call not for leaders but for prophets. The infallibility of the Prophet has the most serious implications. By the principles of the prevailing mythology he can never be wrong. Since in real life men do make mistakes, the view of reality must then be constantly adjusted to meet the needs of the mystique. The manipulation of men implies the manipulation of truth. The practice of Prophecy breeds Orwellian doublethink. It becomes increasingly difficult to apprehend reality, and finally the people are confirmed in an endless nightmare in which they are led blind from despair to despair. In their delusion, they keep up the wail for a messiah; but in fact they are in Babylon for good.”

Best had a brief flirtation with electoral politics in 1976. Perhaps that was a good thing as electoral success might have robbed us of the fruits of his fertile and creative imagination. But this is mere speculation. In fact, Best’s observation of his party’s heavy defeat at the polls was that “the people were not quite ready for the obviously sound and relevant policies of Tapia”. Yet, on a later occasion when one of the rival factions suffered a similar fate at the polls, Best’s summary statement on the matter was: “like all parties, the party is over”.

It is no surprise that Best has urged us to abandon the myth that we have operated the Westminster model in the Caribbean, and accept that what we have in fact had was a variant of the old crown colony system in which the Governor was chief executive, chief administrator, chief legislator, and viceroy. Meaningful constitutional reform, in his
view, must begin with independent thought that takes Caribbean reality as its point of departure. This view resonated in his advocacy within the New World Group of which he was a cofounder and which flourished as a “Think Tank” in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the very first issue of the New World Quarterly Journal, Best contributed one of the most seminal pieces of philosophy, “Toward independent thought and Caribbean freedom.” It is as relevant today as it was in 1963.

Best firmly believes that our constitutional reformers should not plagiarize models from other jurisdictions and seek to impose them from the top like Royal Commissions of yore. Two of his better known proposals are the “party of parties” and the “macco senate” in which community and corporate groups will be represented in an enlarged, autonomously selected and managed “House of Parliament” which will complement the existing “House of Government” which we now mis-name the House of Representatives. Whether or not one endorses Best’s characterisations of Caribbean political systems, or challenges his recommendations for change, there is no doubt that “Bestian” ideas have influenced political discourse throughout the Region, and that social scientists and would-be reformers cannot avoid taking positions for or against them.

Best is without doubt one of the most fertile minds in the Caribbean, and has bestrode the regional intellectual world like a colossus. It is this quality that allows him the arrogant but justifiable boast that he has opposed every Caribbean leader from Columbus to Castro. Best is a genial and genuine Caribbean hero, one who truly deserves a standing ovation from the people of the Region. For his outstanding and sustained contribution to
the intellectual development of the Caribbean Region, for his resolute passion for exploring the “truth”, for his fearless advocacy of independent thought and Caribbean freedom, for all these and more, the Caribbean Community salutes a distinguished son, Lloyd Algernon Best, by conferring on him the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC).