Speaker 1: Today we are talking with Dr Erna Brodber, a distinguished scholar, writer, word artist from Jamaica. She is the author of many books and studies including Yards in the City of Kingston, Jane and Louisa will Soon Come Home, Perceptions of Caribbean Woman, Continent of black Consciousness, Reggae and Cultural Identity in Jamaica, Miyal and Louisiana. Most recently she is the author of The Wall is a High Hill, story of Jamaican woman.

Thank you for being here with us.

Speaker 2: Thank you for asking me.

Speaker 1: So, we want to get a sense of what made you who you are, what are the building blocks that led to the Dr Erna Brodber that we see? What are the building blocks that led to this wonderful collection of books and the articles that are just so numerous. So first of all, tell me about your place of birth and what it was like? So, the flora, the fauna, the people when you were a child?

Speaker 2: Well, a lot of what I do, I trace back to the place in which I was born. I don't just mean the physical space, I also mean, Ernest Brodber, my father and Lucy Brodber, his wife, and the general area district, the people that are around.

My father was very, very involved in community work, very early left us and taking his politics seriously and taking his community seriously. Not just the community of Woodside, but the community in general very seriously. I remember for instance, you know Jamaica got blacks, poor people started voting in Jamaica in 1944, when we had a new constitution.

I remember I was 4 that time, but I remember the excitement of my parents when they were going out to vote and when they were going out on the campaign trail, and when they were doing synthesis. I remember also my father talking about the poverty that he had seen, when he went out to do the syntheses. So, all of that stayed with me and then there were organizations within my village, which were set up by something called, the social welfare.

It wasn't the government organization then, it was the brainchild of Norman Mandy was the head of the PNP Party, and in the area in which we lived and the guys in that area there was fertile for work in community development. They really took... we were going to build a generation, we were going to build a new Jamaica. They rally took that seriously, so I was forever with my parents, going to these meetings, singing these songs and the business of building a new Jamaica was just part of what I saw that people did.

So, a lot of it as I said, goes to my parents and the place in which I lived.

Speaker 1: What songs? Do you remember any of those songs?

Speaker 2: Well for instance, we are all to build a new Jamaica, we are all to build a new Jamaica, and that is one of them, I can't, my voice is not doing what its supposed to do. There are things like, things about how to handle your land, how to cut your trenches. Okay.

Muddy water, muddy water, flowing, flowing, flowing into the sea, muddy water taking all my precious soil from me. And then it goes into telling we must cut out trenches in a particular way and stuff like that. So, there was all of this teaching that was coming through songs and stuff like that, which made it exciting for somebody like me, a child sitting down on this hard benches and sitting through all of these meetings that they were having.

Speaker 1: So as a child you were interested, the songs are what got you?

Speaker 2: The songs got me as well as the concept of building a new Jamaica, and the concept of sharing and the concept of seeing this person as your brother, your aunt and all the rest of it. The concept of community.

Speaker 1: Definitely.

Speaker 2: Then my father was into drama as well. He was an odd person, a very small farmer, but he was a man who knew his Shakespeare inside out and who would recite things like, Porches speech from the Merchant of Venice was something he would do for us in the most dramatic form. The quality of [inaudible 00:05:04] is not strained, he drop it away, all the rest of that and he would do it with all its drama.

My mother would act, they would act these things out at a community level. We would have concerts and the same, we had one relative, it was my aunt up the road from us and her son, we just buried him last week, but he was really, really, really dramatic. I mean, he did a lot of writing, playwriting and producing and so and so. It was there, I mean I wrote my first short story at something like 9, which was published.

So, we just did this kind of thing, you know?

Speaker 1: You just wrote literature?

Speaker 2: You read, my parents would read to each other at the night. You read and you wrote. It was just something you did, and you acted, and you learned recitations and you got a feel for poetry and so on.

Speaker 1: You say that's something you did, where do you think that, that came from?

Speaker 2: Well my parents did it, you know, it was all part of the family. We did that within the family.

Speaker 1: Where did the inspiration come to them?

Speaker 2: To them? Well, I don't know how far back this went, but I know in that social welfare program that my father was involved with, that part of St Mary's and St Catherine that I'm talking about, guys in Woodpark and stuff like that, was very much taken up with the community development movement and among the things that they would do, was drama.

So, my father was of course from before, as a young man coming up, he would be in this dramatic things. He had been debating societies, he would be in all of this. So, and then of course there is the church. There were always church concerts, there is always cantata. So people always preforming and so part of growing up, I suppose it happened in the urban areas, but I know, we in the rural areas depended more on it because there were no movies, there was no television anywhere, but there were no movies that we could go to, so we had to make our own.

Speaker 1: Did you try to write plays when you were a child?

Speaker 2: I don't recall ever trying to write a play, no.

Speaker 1: You say your cousin wrote?

Speaker 2: My cousin wrote, my cousin wrote.

Speaker 1: Do you remember seeing, talking with him about his plays?

Speaker 2: His plays? No, we just acted it them. We just acted in them, he was a very dramatic person, just acted in them.

Speaker 1: Do you remember anyone of them?

Speaker 2: Well, I remember one. There is, the first reader station in Jamaica was called ZQI, and of course that was not deemed out into the country, so my cousin decided that we going to have our own ZQI. So, he got a biscuit tin, biggish biscuit tin, cut a whole in the middle of it, put some yellow transparent paper in it and said that was our radio. We didn't even know radio, that was our radio, and then he was both, all of us were workers at the reader station, as well as presenters.

So, he had us do, we would read news and we sang ads, you know? A strange sort of theater that was, but that's the kind of thing.

Speaker 1: I'm curious, ads for what?

Speaker 2: Well, one of the ads was for, I will sing it for you, rubber dub dub, with therojean rub. There is a stream suffering acutely from lonbaga, but they quickly use

medicated rub, and the fever will soon quite over, so rubber dub dub, so thermajean. Of course there was ads were already on radio, so we were just copying what was, we weren't making the ads, we were just representing radio.

Speaker 1: He figured he were going to have a radio station, your radio station had to have...

Speaker 2: The radio station, yes we had to have everything that radio station had, so we just, we were exposing ourselves, or he was exposing us, to what people had in Kingston, to radio.

Speaker 1: What particular memories do you have in terms of stories that you heard as a child? Were they Doppy stories, were they Nancy stories that you?

Speaker 2: They were Nancy stories, they were the stories with the singing and unfortunately I can't remember the songs, but they were so sad, all of the Nancy stories. My favorite Nancy story has to do with, do we have time for this? Has to do with Nancy and sister dry head, now I don't know who is dry head, but dry head is also the king of the sea, so I don't know, I really don't know who dry, I can't place dry head as an animal or a creature, but there was this family in the land, there is always a family in the land, its something I wanted to look at, to the Nancy stories. I want to analyze the Nancy stories because I think it tells us quite a bit about where we are coming from.

So there was a family in the land, and Nancy decided that, everybody was starving, people would eat, if you saw somebody doing something and you laughed at them, you would die and that person had the right to pick you up, put you in a bag and carry you home and eat you. So, Nancy tried going, doing all sorts of ridiculous things, going up on a hill to fuck up the place, which was already because they farming and people come Nancy, what you doing here man?[inaudible 00:11:29], and they laughed, and of course they would drop down and dead, so Nancy would be able to pick them up and carry them home and eat them.

Now sister dry head comes up and as the word says, sister dry head, you know the dry head girl, she had no hair on her head, and Nancy tries to talk to her so she could laugh and so she could drop down and he could eat her, but sister dry head resist all of this, that he said to her, sister dry head, where are you going? And she said time hard and everything so sad, may I go to hairdresser and go see if I can't fix up myself, where Nancy laughs and he drops down and dies and sister dry head puts him in her bag and walks off. That is my favorite Nancy story.

Speaker 1: Wow, I have never heard Nancy story where Nancy loses?

Speaker 2: Yes, that is the one of the few, and I'm glad his sister dry head who knocks him out, gives him that punch.

Speaker 1: Why?

Speaker 2: Well, because she is a woman and she is not the vamp, she is a dry head woman. I sympathize with her and I'm glad for her success.

Speaker 1: That's funny. That is very good, I'm struck by the Nancy story because that changes around so many aspects of the traditional dynamic of the Nancy stories, like Nancy always has his family with him and he is doing something with his family, if it's a one on one its Nancy and some animal, but its Nancy and this actual woman, so it makes me think about your work with rural black people and specifically rural black woman and I'm wondering about whether that story has some real events?

Speaker 2: I don't even know where I got that story from, I don't think it came from my father, he was always in the village, but yes, I know a village woman who wouldn't stand up and take anything or was striking back, so sister dry head is not usual in a rural setting. She is not even usual in a Jamaican setting either.

Speaker 1: But she is usual in the Nancy troupe?

Speaker 2: She is unusual in the Nancy troupe, as you call it, but not in, and you know this story have to become look localized and they have to move with the times.

Speaker 1: So what other stories did you hear, or did you learn or messages that you think you got as a little girl, about what it meant to be a girl or a woman?

Speaker 2: Well, I don't know, there were things about what it meant to be a girl or woman because I don't think I went to bush, I went to the river to collect shrimps for the boys, but I would, the thing I wouldn't do is swim in the water, because that would involve taking off all your clothes, and we know, one of the things we knew as girls, is we didn't take off our clothes. So, I don't know what else we learned.

I mean, you had to kind of look nice, occasionally put on a little perfume, which boys didn't, but I don't know that my, I mean, well I don't think we really did anything beside look nice. There is nothing else that would distinguish us from boys, except that we are supposed to look nice, and you supposed to sit that your clothes stayed on you and you wouldn't put stones in your pocket because that would tear up the clothes, but anyhow from very early we knew how to sew, and we knew all of these things, so we could fix things.

Speaker 1: But other than that, you didn't get any kind of messages, you talk about kind of perceptions of Caribbean...

Speaker 2: I don't think I got any, except that I knew that woman had to arrange themselves in such a way that eventually they can take care of themselves, and I got the impression when I was growing up that the accent would be, well my brothers came much later, the accent would be seen to that the girls are capable of taking care of

themselves, they are the ones that get pregnant and they are the ones who have to take care of themselves and a child and eventually children, so you know.

So definitely, that you knew.

Speaker 1: Do you think, you mentioned your father reciting Shake sphere, what did you know or think about being a British subject or any relationship to Britain at all?

Speaker 2: Yes, yes, yes. Well, my father was anti-Britain, so I remember, a very sharp memory I have of him coming and sitting down on the back veranda, pulling off his water boots and just quarreling, just quarreling about colonialism and quarreling about how his chocolate, his chocolate has to be send to England to be processed and it comes back and he can't even buy it, can't even afford to buy a chocolate, a bar of chocolate.

So he took all of that, as I tell you he took colonialism serious and he would be... I remember, with I was in fourth class, we had a school text, which talked about Drake and Hawkings and how Drake and Hawkings did this good deed of stealing the Spanish Bullion on the Spanish main and my headmaster called the whole school together, the whole school, from A class, right up to sixth class, to talk about children, Drake and Hawkings were thieves, don't you ever let anybody believe that they were honest men, they were thieves, they stole and when I went home and told what the headmaster had told us, my father was elated.

I knew from very early that there was, this British connection wasn't something that we had to be jump upon, overjoyed about.

Speaker 1: Do you think there was a difference between country and town around that issue? Do you think you had that perception, you were able to have that perception because you were in sixth grade?

Speaker 2: It's not because I was [inaudible 00:18:19], It was because of who my father was, who my parents were and of course who the headmaster was.

Speaker 1: The particular individuals?

Speaker 2: Particular individuals and what had been happening in western St Mary. The consciousness has been risen with St Mary, that's western St Mary. I don't think what was happening in ST Mary, I don't think it was happening in western Hanneville, it was just an unusual place.

Speaker 1: Very interesting. So when you were a child, we talked Nancy stories, what made you laugh?

Speaker 2: Well, laugh? Laugh? I don't know there is very much. There is happiness but I'm not sure it was laughing. There is a lot of happiness, happiness going to the river and

stuff like that and catching Junga and coming back, you know, there were children next door, even more children next door than children at our home, and it was this one yard, so we would be over in their house, playing cards and telling stories, and on Saturdays we would be going to catch Janga and if it was mango season, we wake up very early and we go take up all the mango's that had fallen all about the place.

Those were happy but I don't know that it was laughter, I don't know If it was laughter, just happy.

Speaker 1: What are things that made you cry or made you sad?

Speaker 2: I suppose I was kind of born with a particular kind of sadness, but that didn't affect my early childhood. I remember being sad, I remember being very, very sad because when we just, my parents lived over in St Ann, and then they moved to Woodside where my mother was pregnant with me, I'm the first one born in Woodside and my mother went back to work as a teacher, and she was living more than ten miles away from the family and the transportation was not... when the bread van or the mill van was coming by she could come up to see me, so I remember being very, very sad about that and it was just my father and myself there and it was very, very, very lonely.

I just remember the loneliness of us in that house, me and my father.

Speaker 1: Your mother was a teacher.

Speaker 2: My mother was a teacher.

Speaker 1: What do you think you learned from her? Or what messages did she give you about education and knowledge and books?

Speaker 2: What I learned from my mother was not so much education and the knowledge and the books, but that the community, every child is yours, every child was hers. They still treat her in the village as if she is some sort of common ancestor. She taught law division, so very many people are still alive who's hands she guided to make that [inaudible 00:21:42].

So that is what I learnt from her, more than, and well, the respect for the process of learning, because in summer, in the long holidays, we would be sitting with her while she was doing this or that and she would have us doing exercises in maths and exercises in english. I suppose that was just to keep us quiet, but anyhow, it also meant that we knew many things that came from books, such as [inaudible 00:22:19] in New Castle, which is really foolishness, because there is a New Castle in Jamaica, if we are thinking of our New Castle, [inaudible 00:22:25] in New Castle makes absolutely no sense, but anyhow, we knew about this kin of thing.

So, when you came to school, I met them, or you are reading, I have met these phrases, you knew that they existed.

Speaker 1: What other kind of books do you remember from your childhood?

Speaker 2: There were, I forget who do these condensations, but a lot of Shakespeare was condensed, I remember reading the timing of the shoe, which was a little flat book. So we ere familiar with a lot of Shakespeare, a lot of Dickens, and these are the flat books, I don't know where she got them from, but we had these flat books.

So, we were aware of most of the major and then she had this book, she was a reciter herself, so she had this book written out in beautiful handwriting of several poems, you know when time came to go to recite, or to have a concert, you could go into her book and study one of the poems she had copied from somewhere into that.

She also kept newspaper clippings, even though I have some of her clippings going back to 1937 and further. So, we could see her doing this kind of thing or even helping her to paste in this book, and then there was craft, we would be making Christmas Cards, full of snow, put we would be making our Christmas cards too.

Speaker 1: Christmas cards full of snow, the snow falling in the cane fields?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Where you taught, was that, we were taught to send thank you notes than kind of lots of stationary, just all over the place and always writing cards...

Speaker 2: Yes, well people sent you presents, she had these brothers in the far flong in Jamaica, who would send us presents, where we would have to write to say thanks. So you knew you had to communicate by writing.

Speaker 1: But also part of it was that part of being proper?

Speaker 2: Well, we never considered it proper, we just considered something that you had to do. Thanks was something you said.

Speaker 1: Just manners?

Speaker 2: Manners.

Speaker 1: So what did you, you said your mother kind of showed you books and you learned from being in her presence and just watching her do things, what impact did that have on you when you were teaching? When you kind of moved into the other role as a teacher yourself? Did that have any connection?

Speaker 2: No, I don't think it had any connection, the bigger connection is when I went back, when I left the university and went back into my village, then I could draw on how she had handled people and she had a knack of handling people.

Speaker 1: Say more.

Speaker 2: Okay, well I will give you an example, you know teacher beat students in those days, I don't think they can do that now. Well, I remember her beating a child and the child's mother came to complain to her, came to complain that she had done a [inaudible 00:26:19], my mother said, oh boy the chest you know, something the talking, I can't manage all the talking, I have to use a rod, because your chest is so tired, you don't have any eggs to send me to build up the body? She got the eggs. The lady went home and sent her eggs.

Speaker 1: So people skills?

Speaker 2: Yes, she had people skills.

Speaker 1: And there was no cussing, no more...

Speaker 2: The woman is finished, she understood. She understood that the teacher, sometimes is tired and has no other resource.

Interviewee: Beside this trap to get through to the child.

Interviewer: I will go into the forms of education that surrounded you. You've talked about different kinds of education. The education from your father from watching him, the education from just seeing your mother around. What other kinds of educations were you getting?

Interviewee: Well the kind of education you would get is that, remember my father is a farmer. It's only thought of now that I know so any other people who don't even know what a cocoa look like, that I understand that we were being trained. I remember, you know the chocolate tree, on the limb, the young chocolates come up under the limb. They don't wait until the thing has gone to point direct on the limb.

If you're sitting on the limb, you're going to be bruising the young chocolate. I remember my father saying, "[inaudible 00:01:10] you don't realize that that is your school fee?" The connection, I never lost that connection, that if you sit on this tree and rub off, they'll be no chocolate to sell, and we would not be able to pay your school fee.

That link, you understand very clearly. I also understand then, that this is how the chocolate tree grows, so you don't do certain things. You got knowledge about farming and knowledge about the plants and how they grow.

Interviewer: How do you think that knowledge in all these different forms of knowledge that we've been talking about factor into your work?

Interviewee: Well, I think it's me. I think all of that made me, and I don't think I would, if I have to do landscape, right landscape, I think I understand and I have enough sympathy with the landscape to be able to write about it competently and so on. For me it's a matter of sympathy, that's what being a farmer's daughter gave me, the sympathy with the landscape.

For instance when rain is going to fall, you know to run and pick up the clothes from the line, because the rain is going to fall. You haven't seen the rain, but you know the rain is going to fall. You know when Christmas is coming because you see the sugarcane starting to get its flag, its arrows, okay. You just, there are things that you know important knowledge. I can say that to be important knowledge.

You know, which plants you shouldn't touch because they will make your body itch. Yeah. I consider that important knowledge, I'm glad for it.

Interviewer: Absolutely vital.

Interviewee: Yes. I could dig a potato without scratching it. You know I know how to dig a potato.

Interviewer: Okay. Interesting. It makes me think about that kind of knowledge, that kind of layer of transnational relations that has not yet been studied, because in multiple sides, I'm thinking about African-American communities here in the US south that are rural communities. That, that knowledge that you have connects with that knowledge that they have because friends that I have from further, from rural Tennessee, I've learned that that kind of knowledge is for them when they grew up with farm is embedded.

Interviewee: Yes, okay, and what I try to do in my interaction with my village people, is to get them to understand, you have knowledge, which people need. You have knowledge. Just respect yourself because you have knowledge. You might know how to do algebra, but you have knowledge and people need this knowledge.

I don't know if you've read 'The Rainmaker's Mistake', but one of my nicest reviewers just couldn't deal with the yam business at all. I know she couldn't deal with the yam business because she is a, she's coming out of the Middle East. She's never even watched somebody dig a yam. Digging a yam, I had to do it once, and that is really an art.

A, not to scratch the yam, and B, to understand that it is really deeply embedded and you have to, how you have to dig in order to get it out whole. It's an art in itself. Also, that yam takes many yams, rather unlike human beings, take nine months to the gestation process is like nine months. Some are seven months, but anyhow.

The comparison with lifting a child. Taking a child out of, helping with childbirth and producing, and taking a yam out of a hill, is for me just the same. Yeah, very close.

Interviewer: Then the question I would have in relationship to that is the whole, does the production of a literary text mirror that or is that different?

Interviewee: Oh, no, no, same thing I consider the two of them as childbirth. You get, with the literary thing you get even more tired. You get tired, just like how mothers get tired after pushing out the baby, you get tired too. You get tired and sometimes you don't even want to see the product, so tired you've been with it for so many months, for years sometimes. Yeah.

Interviewer: The writing process like childbirth?

Interviewee: Like getting the yam, taking the yam out of the, yes. Ideas mostly, ideas not all of them writing mile was beautiful, I mean I just enjoy doing that. Writing the one that is unpublished, nothing matters beautiful. I enjoy doing those two.

[inaudible 00:06:23] as we talk about it sometimes it was hard work, very, very hard work, very, very hard work. 'The Rainmaker's Mistake' was hard work as well.

Interviewer: What is your, do you have a particular kind of writing process? They say some writers who believe you get up every morning and you write every day, some people say you write when it comes.

Interviewee: Well, I don't get up at five o'clock and write during the day, that just has not been part of my life. I haven't been able to do that. I write when it comes and sometimes what comes you don't even know what it has anything to do with. One of the things I do, I would write something and put it in a drawer, it will be a drawer of things.

One of these days you open the drawer and you say, "Oh my God, look here, look at this thing. It fits so nicely into," so it is as it comes and when it comes. Usually, I have a thesis that I'm developing, so when I look in that drawer, they'll be something that fits into that thesis.

Interviewer: Okay. Where does the thesis come from?

Interviewee: Well the thesis usually comes out of my arm, my struggles with the sociology of the Caribbean, or the sociology of Jamaica. That is where the thesis is coming from. My struggles with, understanding my community, understanding my environment and so on.

Interviewer: You'll be reflecting on something or have a particular question or something?

Interviewee: Yes, I have a particular question, which I need to answer and sort out.

Interviewer: Then you'll keep going back to the drawer?

Interviewee: I don't keep going back to the drawer, it will just a happen stance. One of these days, I just say, "Let me look at this drawer, let me look at what is there," and then there is something right there. Or something that I've spent some time worrying about and you had some little answers, which fit in with something else.

Interviewer: Okay, so sometimes, wait if I'm hearing you correctly, is that sometimes you're thinking about something, but you don't realize that you have thought about it before in some other context at some other time?

Interviewee: Exactly, and you pick up that thing and say, "My God, look at the answer here," and I've gone through two years of rethinking this thing. Then I say to myself, "If that happens," that's what I tell myself, "If that happens, it means that this thing really makes sense."

Interviewer: Okay, so tell me about your schools. What schools did you go to?

Interviewee: Well, I went to the elementary school in our village, which was just up the road, and my mother taught there. Then I left on scholarship to Excel [inaudible 00:09:16] here in Kingston, that's it and then the university. I taught school as well as a teenager.

Interviewer: What subjects do you remember? Which were your favorites? Which were your least favorites?

Interviewee: You know I did like maths, I did like maths and if I could live again I would really try with maths. I really like maths okay. Geometry fascinates me, all those beautiful lines you draw and keep on drawing and then new things emerge out of the lines. You can do all sort of, it's very creative, you can do all sorts of things with geometry. Draw line, draw another line, probably that's why I'm so fascinated by fractals. Fractals that's when you craze fractals.

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

Interviewee: Fractals, I don't know where I met the term fractals. Oh I went to a conference in my adult, big old woman, went to this conference and there was this fellow who was talking about Rastafari. He said that Rastafari can't die, because it is built upon the notion of fractals.

I went to fractal, look to the internet to find fractals. There were all these pictures, you must look at it. It's the most, you must look at fractals. Go on the internet and look at fractals. To demonstrate what fractals are, you have the most beautiful shapes and it's magnetic, they pull you in. It's frightening, they pull you in, they really pull you in.

I continued, I've been searching, I want to understand this fractals, fractals, fractals, and I know I couldn't write again until I had to find fractals. 'Nothings Met' is my fractals novel, and then I also met up with some Yoruba people who told me, "Don't listen to what you see on the internet about fractals." Fractals, the way we know fractals to be very African because it is a notion.

I remember my uncle telling me, my grandfather went to Africa in the wars, Ashanti wars. When I asked my uncle what he remembers, he said he remembers his father telling him about all the women's hair was combed to look just like the shape of the horses. It's the dependency of it's how also lifeforms are related. That is the business of fractals.

My friends tell me, "Don't pay any attention to that." Fractals it's a spiritual concept. I haven't understood the spiritual aspect of it, but I can see where it is going, because wise men do these fractals and can tell you all sorts of things about whatever it is.

They tell me, but I can understand how that could be, because it's really magical I must say. Just go on the computer and look at fractals, and it blows your mind. We're back to the geometry with all these lines, because fractals of these lines, one, two, three, meaning something plus put five onto it, it means something else. Put eight onto that eight, it means something else, which is not numerology, but shapes, really shapes. Okay. Yeah.

From then, I was fascinated by shapes, so geography I liked very much, really enjoyed. I've really enjoyed my geometry classes, not that I was particularly good, but I enjoyed [inaudible 00:12:53]. I also enjoyed geography, I was not good at geography either, but I enjoyed geography. I loved to draw serving, it's a serving they call it? Where you have this map and on the map you'll have 22 and you must put on your graph 22 at the bottom.

Then you have this, you manage to do a shape of the landscape. I loved that. I didn't get a chance to do much of that though, because I wasn't good enough to do it in sixth form.

Interviewer: What subjects did you do in sixth form?

Interviewee: History and english, of course, history and english. I did four, so there must be something else. History and english and there're other subjects too. Spanish and Latin.

Interviewer: More in the humanities?

Interviewee: It was total humanities okay. I liked Latin. What I liked about Latin was, translating, and when you've got a sentence, it's like oh my God, isn't this beautiful. The process of learning, of cracking those notes in Latin, it was beautiful. It just wasn't the same in Spanish, wasn't the same in Spanish, but in Latin it was.

Interviewer: What was the fascination?

Interviewee: With the Latin?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: I think it was just harder work, it was hard work. Then I liked the sound of the, I won a prize for reading Latin. I liked the sound of Latin, Mensa and sunt and all these, they had nicer sounds. I loved the sound of Latin words.

Interviewer: When did you start learning it?

Interviewee: Latin?

Interviewer: Do you remember the first class you were sitting in and how that felt?

Interviewee: Yes, we had to, is conjugate is the word? No, decline Mensa, where it says table is the first lesson in our Latin book, decline Mensa. I don't know that I know it properly now, but declining, we were always doing these things.

The sounds of these things were always having to decline at load, which we didn't do that in Spanish. There was a lot of sound to the Latin.

Interviewer: Okay. There was primary school?

Interviewee: There was primary school, but we didn't do Latin and all that in primary school.

Interviewer: When did you start? At what level?

Interviewee: At high school, that's high school we did Latin and Spanish, and geography, algebra and geometry. In primary school we just did arithmetic.

Interviewer: In the Latin class, did you read any literature?

Interviewee: We read literature, because all of those little things that you were learning had their stories behind them. That is another part of being able to crack it, because when you crack it, you get the story.

Like the story of Perseus and the Gorgon and there's this lady with her stick for here and all of that. This mythology, which, and even Caesar and his wars, I quite liked okay, and I really loved Caesar's role.

I'm still, I mean there are people I will call Caesar [inaudible 00:16:43] getting up as a young man and he shouldn't be saying anything, because he's so young. Gets up and he just delivers the most cogent argument. We also did Juvenile, which was supposedly difficult, but Juvenile was just amusing, Juvenile was amusing okay. The satirical attacks on the upper class and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Talk more about your experience of it.

Interviewee: I believe a lot had to do with the teachers. The Latin teacher was a young man. When I reached sixth form, was a young man who just left university, and who must have been excited enough about Latin to be able to transfer all of these things to us.

You got, and he had little jokes, which he would bring in from wherever I don't know, with like Juvenile. We hadn't read this, but he would be able to tell us something as a Juvenile had said, and you'd like to get into it for yourself.

Then since I also liked history, Caesar's wars and just to learn that Caesar had been in Germany, and Caesar had been in Britain, and so that was exciting for me, so I enjoyed Caesar. That was the history and Levy.

Interviewer: It sounds like through that you were traveling, traveling in time.

Interviewee: Traveling and traveling in time, traveling in time, and where we begin to understand that there is no new thing. All these matching over the Alps and matching from wherever, and setting up these war strategies is not something of today. No.

Crossing the Alps and learning that, there were, I think it was he who told us that, in some of the areas that levy talks about black people were there. That kind of thing fed into the particular interest, because Caesar had camping's in north Africa.

Interviewer: In addition to it allowing you to travel somewhere you were also able to link it.

Interviewee: Link it to me.

Interviewer: Both things were now?

Interviewee: Yes, both things were together. Much more than you could do with Spanish, because Spanish was just, I just considered Spanish to be the Cubans and it didn't have much to do with me.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Interviewee: Well, I mean with that Latin, I could sort of claim Latin. In any case also, a number of english words, I had the origins in Latin. I couldn't say the same thing for Spanish. I didn't feel a connection to Spanish, I still don't. I didn't feel a connection to Spanish, not in the way I feel a connection to Latin.

Thought the Spanish teacher was also quite nice and I loved the Spanish poetry. I just was very annoyed that we had to translate it into English, because it was the sounds like any other poetry, very nice. You could pick up the meaning from the sound, I didn't see why we had to.

That was my same attitude to Shakespeare as well. Why we forever analyzing this thing, why didn't we just read it and enjoy it and enjoy the images that Shakespeare gave us, the poetry itself characters, which he's so good at? Instead of having to dig and mess up with the man's work, but anyhow there we are, that's called school, that is school.

Interviewer: That's how school is.

Interviewee: That's what everything is done at school.

Interviewer: What? They go and mess it up?

Interviewee: Dig up and mess up things. Okay.

Interviewer: As you said, that's one of the things you do in school is dig and mess up things and be critical or not the analysis messes with the sound?

Interviewee: Yes, the analysis mess with the sound and the particular involvement that you have with the writer, whether it be Levy the historian or whether it be Shakespeare the writer. There's something going on between you and that person, which is just the book side, just the medium through which they are coming. If you could leave me and Shakespeare to deal with our things.

For instance, I don't see how [inaudible 00:21:55] and the character [inaudible 00:21:59] really fascinated me so much. We started dealing with how Shakespeare dealt with [inaudible 00:22:07] we're dealing with, we're trying to bother his language and all that when I felt it was much more in the [inaudible 00:22:15] with his ... You know [inaudible 00:22:23] is hero, I can see this hero come back from the war with all these wounds and all these stuff.

He has to be stand up there for them to come and touch off his wounds and all the rest of it and he's just vexed, and I understood it so very well.

Interviewer: Then as a writer, do you want to have that direct connection with your readers? Are you concerned that critical analysis?

Interviewee: Well, I can't read the critical analysis because I don't have the language. I mean I read the critics, but I very often don't understand anything that they say, and I'm really very amazed the connections they make between me and some writer, because I can't see these things, but thank God it's not my business to see it. They can't do anything they feel like.

Interviewer: When you're writing, you're writing for that one reader and that communication between you and ...?

Interviewee: I'm writing for the communication between myself and whoever's outside who will read. I couldn't think of the critics at all, because thank God I don't understand them, so I couldn't write for them.

I'm glad when they notice my work, and some of the things they say are nice. When somebody writes something and compares me to Chekhov, I mean there's nothing for me to do. I know Chekhov, I don't know Chekhov in any detail, but I know he's a huge person, so I'm happy about that, but it's not that I can understand what they are saying, what is the nature of the comparison, no, no. I'd have to go to school to learn that.

Interviewer: Okay. You said history, english, Spanish and Latin in terms of the subjects that you did? Or did you do was both at O and A level or?

Interviewee: Well, we did much more at O level, but this what I did at A level. There was four subjects at A level.

Speaker 3: Go ahead.

Interviewer: Okay, so you went to Excel Sear. Excel has another of course distinguished graduate, and I'm curious about your relationship with her and her works, Miss Lou.

Interviewee: Oh Miss Lou, yes, yes, Miss Lou is a graduate of Excel [inaudible 00:24:56]. Well, I don't know people have said that I've been influenced by Miss Lou and probably I have, but I'm not very aware of it. It's not something I'm very aware of every day. I recited a lot of Miss Lou in my day, but I'd like to believe for one reason or another, whether she intended to or not, Miss Lou's work elicits a lot of humor, a lot of comedy. I don't want to believe that my work elicits comedy, scenes that's comedian, elicits laughter.

There's a thing about when you start talking to our people about themselves, it like turns into a joke. It's something I want to move away from, so we look at old self, because they really love seriousness. I hope I get that.

Interviewer: That's very interesting. I was today in my class we were actually discussing [inaudible 00:26:05] and that's a similar issue comes up around her work. Where is the line, between humor and mocking, celebration and yeah objectification? What is your thought on humor and where it's useful for you?

Interviewee: Well, it breaks tension, and so on, but if it can be seen and operate within the mind of the reader as a tension break that you intend, and it is not something that takes a place of looking at the seriousness, which you then, okay, then that upsets me. If it takes away from the seriousness.

Interviewer: Okay, that was ...

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:00:00] ... Because we were both Excelsior graduates, so I thought that, that's very, very interesting. So continuing your schooling, so when you did O and A-levels, and then after that what happened?

Speaker 2: After that, I went to teach. I had a little stint at the government treasury where [inaudible 00:00:22] a very bad job, and I disliked that very much. I was in filing. Actually before I was in filing, I was helping to work on some other things, which were really sort of boring. So one day, I just took a book to work, I didn't even know who is the big man. And the big man passed and saw me reading a book. And so I was thrown into the registry, which was really the worst kind of work you can do because it involves having to search for files and taking the files from here to there. And the files always seemed to have a knack of being lost. So, that wasn't nice. And then somebody got a job for me in Montego Bay, I went to teach at Montego Bay High School. And then I did a semester at Cornwall, Cornwall College and then university.

Speaker 1: What do you remember about your time at Cornwall?

Speaker 2: Oh boy, there's a lot to remember with Cornwall and Montego Bay. At Excelsior, we had a lot of English teachers and they taught us a lot. They taught us a lot not just in the school room, but like going hiking. They did a lot of hiking. I mean, they want to know Jamaica and that goes along with them. So that was it. But in Montego Bay, you were just thrown into this non-black sea of people. Montego Bay High school, the headmistress was Irish, and the second head was Irish as well, as if they had all of these people, young English graduates waiting to put them into the school. I was living among and working along with all of these non-Jamaican people.

The same thing happened at Cornwall. But at Cornwall, there were one or two men who'd come back from university, and that's where I learnt to appreciate jazz, just listening to them talk, because they were coming out of Canada and the US. They were talking about race, and they were talking about music and stuff. So that began my involvement with music and my understanding, that you have to cogitate on what is happening in this North American continent.

Speaker 1: So that was one way in which the-?

Speaker 2: It was one way in which it came to me.

Speaker 1: Did you have any perception or relationship with the US when you were younger, when you were a child, when you were in Saint Mary?

Speaker 2: No, only that people ... Farm workers went to the US and came back with a number of items, and occasionally with an accent, but that was most of the US. And you knew of the US as having pretty clothes, unusual looking clothes anyway. Clothes, which ... or just makers were not making. So you knew when somebody got a box

from the US as well. And then we got an aunt who went into America and so we ourselves now start getting box of clothes, was mostly the clothes though. And it was in the US, and there some Pentecostal churches, which were coming in the area, and they themselves were bringing old clothes. So I associated America with clothes, old clothes. Some of it old clothes, most of it was, well, fashionable then. So that was my America, fashionable. And then the songs which the farm men brought back.

Speaker 1: Like what?

Speaker 2: Like, "Open the door, Richard, open the door, Richard. Richard, Richard, why won't you open that door?" You know that, that is a ... Anybody can tell you who sings that. Who sings it? I just can't remember right now, but it's one of those very famous late 1940s jazz men.

Speaker 1: So you had heard some of those songs from the farm worker, and then-

Speaker 2: From farm workers.

Speaker 1: And then when you went to Cornwall and will hear-

Speaker 2: They were a different kind because they were listening to instrumental jazz, they were talking about instrumental jazz. So you heard about a different kind of jazz.

Speaker 1: All right. In terms of ... till graduate school, it seems when you went to University of the West Indies, which was then affiliated with the University of London, it's like you were confronted with disciplines, with rules for how research was supposed to be done.

Speaker 2: Well, this is later on when I was in graduate school of how research should be done. But that was not how I wanted it done because I didn't come there to do something that somebody was telling me to do. I was spending my life, it was my life, because there's something I wanted to do and something I needed to do. It was just the housing, which I was doing what I wanted to do. I wasn't going to turn back or let anybody turn me back. I was with somebody who was quite willing to be outside of the box himself, Lloyd Braithwaite who was an early sociologist, I was with him. But you learn so much because when I thought I was finished with the masters in sociology, when I thought I was finished with it, they wouldn't send a thing over to where it is to be graded. He just said to me, "You think if you're to going to be tested, I am being tested too, as you're my first graduate student."

And I was the department's first graduate student. So a lot was on my back, so they couldn't ... But anyhow, it went right eventually and I got the Masters in Sociology. And then to do the PhD in history was a bigger struggle, a bigger fight, a bigger fight. I have a paper, which I've written and which should be published. I'll tell you how the struggles went with that. The struggles went with that in terms of, say for

instance, I wanted to write about The Second Generation of Freemen in Jamaica, they wanted me to confine myself to things like the period between the wars. I didn't fight no war, my grandfather did fight the war, which was Ashanti. So I had no interest in them and their war, these were not periods for me. What was the period, which is what I got from the field was that these people who were living between 1900 and say 1944 were thinking of themselves as the Second Generation of Freemen. Well, I fought through and went through with that.

I remember coming from one of the external examiners. I met him in England, and as we were going through some of my problem he would say, "I can't see what is your problem. What is wrong with writing about your race?" But that was a big deal back in my university, "Did you write about your race? I suppose you write about somebody else, not your race." That was a big problem for me and them. And then, of course, I was using oral history, which was new, so it was a big fight all around. But I didn't see it as a fight until later, afterwards, especially when other people told me that it was a fight. It was just something I had to do, and I was going through the backdoor.

It's not the fight, it's your life, it's just life. So I saw it and ... But it took a lot of time, if somewhere else, I would have been finished long ago, but it just took time, and time. By the time I was finished, the university and I parted company. That is how that turned out, me and them separating and by moving in the area. Another thing that made us separate too was that the English department started to embrace me after Jane and Louisa was published. And I suppose the social scientists must have been wondering, "What are you doing here, what are you doing here, what are you doing here?" So there was no support coming from them.

Speaker 1: So that they were the gatekeepers in a way?

Speaker 2: Well, they're all gatekeepers and can close the door any time they feel like. So I went back to my village eventually and decided to do all sorts of things. I decided to take my relationship or lack of relationship with the university community as a positive. No, you can't do what you want to do, which I think I have done.

Speaker 1: In relation to that, you talk about this perception, getting a little catch in white space-?

Speaker 2: Oh, yes, yes. It's a little catch, I don't know if there is any other way of [inaudible 00:10:35]. A little catch until you have defined your black space, what is all about, then you're just catching another people's places, another people's spaces, places and spaces.

Speaker 1: What do you define or do you see as the white space?

Speaker 2: Well, to go back to [inaudible 00:10:59] and my fight with the people and my thesis, it's deciding that between the wars is a space to write about when it's not

important to people. What's important to people is the hurricane that we had in 1933, the earthquake we had in 1907, and the hurricane in 1944. This is what troubled people's lives. Okay, them and the world, okay, they had it and they were cut off, imports were not coming and kerosene, that was hard to get. But that is not what framed people's consciousness, what framed a consciousness was dealing with hurricanes. This is where you put in two acres of cabbage or whatever it is and the hurricane comes, and everything rots. Or you're putting banana and one morning you wake up after hurricane and everything is flat on the ground. That is what is important to us.

That's what I mean when I'm talking about white space that's different from black space. Understanding that the hurricanes and the earthquakes and stuff like that have a great deal to do with our lives. It's part of, I call it the black space, looking at things from your perspective. Having the confidence to look at it from your perspective. And that is what they didn't have, the confidence to look at it from our perspective. I was supposed to just ... And then a lot of the ... I count that a lot of the, even the sociology derived. The whole business of the way people approach family studies. Okay, they approach family studies because they wanted to help to make the general statement about family. Whereas, there were people sitting down there whose mother gone, parents gone off to Panama and leave them alone just with somebody.

I thought that, if we're looking at family studies, that's the kind of things we should be looking at. How to handle this [inaudible 00:12:55] about the word fractured are this over-extended family, how to handle that. Not to be concerned about making some theory. That is black space versus white space. Black space is understanding the significance of emancipation to people. And you just go and decide that emancipation will stop where out of many people, we're mostly like the Americans [inaudible 00:13:26] what it is, what do you have?

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:13:27].

Speaker 2: Okay, and so we are out of many one people as well. So you can't have emancipation celebrations because that favors one side of people. That is white space. You understand what I'm ... And a lot of Africans just not having the confidence to stand up and say, "I am black, and this is my space, this is where I'm coming from." I'm pretending that to say that means that you are against anybody else. No, no, no, other people can stand up and say I'm this. The Chinese Athletic Society is there, these other people are in their racial groups and they have this and they have that. They might invite you, they might not invite you. But you stand up ... There is a time in Jamaica you stand up and say I'm an African or I'm black. And everybody believe that you'll go and burn down everywhere right away.

It is a kind of fear [inaudible 00:14:39] marvelous work on slavery, talks about the slave as the enemy within. And this is part of what happens in the society like Jamaica, where black people are still the enemy within. You're not part of the

society, just the enemy within. And in black space, you have to evolve those methods, the techniques for getting in. And nobody can do it for us. As nice as everybody is, they can't do it ... They might be thinking of us, but they can't do it for us. We have to do it for ourselves. We have to create these things.

Speaker 1: That raises many questions, two of them, and you can say which one you want to answer at this point. One that comes to mind is, thinking about when I was a child, and then when I was growing up there, it was between '72 and '86, I didn't learn about slavery until I moved to the United States in 1980. Well, we heard about Paul Bogle and Sam Sharpe, these are the national heroes and then you go on, but we never actually learned about slavery or anything. I learned more about it coming to the United States. So my question to you is, how has that silence from your perspective been present in Jamaican society?

Speaker 2: I think that silence is detrimental and is outcomes of the same thing I'm talking about. Not wanting to look at it, not wanting to be it, but you cannot not be what you are. It doesn't make any sense wearing somebody else's clothes. That's it. But that thing, when I did some work, which I'll talk about in my major talk, do some work on slavery in Woodside, there's a family there ... I could trace from their ancestors who came from Africa and who produce a number of years. So I could do a long tracing of this, and they were [inaudible 00:16:56] whatever it is that I could do it, but when one of them saw me, the young lady who had been to both St. Andrew High School and St. Hughes, both of these schools, and she says to me, "I didn't know that there was slavery in Woodside, I didn't know. I think it was something that Rasta make up."

And her aunt who studied in Canada, tertiary education says, "I knew there was slavery but I didn't know we had it here." And I was talking about this recently, and a colleague of mine in this department said, "They even stopped teaching history in the schools now." It is a silence, which once again when I go back to Paris, and that if you can't make a connection ... And it is said by Marcus Garvey and a lot of other people, "If you can't look at your past, you're going to have no future." It is just this brick you are nobody. And you prefer to be nobody than to be what you are perhaps.

Speaker 1: You talked earlier about methods and methodology. To what degree is oral history as a methodology, has it functioned for you as a way to counter those silences, or to kind of create black space?

Speaker 2: Very definitely, very definitely, and very definitely. I have spent a lot of time in it, and I feel justified the need for doing the kind of work I do, which is stopping the silence, bringing the material to the fore. Came to me very clearly when I was in the field how much people knew and how much they want it known, and the kind of information that they have. It was like it was a barred, rather like what we did with Malcolm X, we couldn't read Malcolm X. The kind of information they had was in the same sense barred from knowledge. The oral history helps you to find these

pieces of knowledge, to give it back to another generation so that one generation can know about the other and learn from the other. Though, of course, there are people who don't want just to learn from the others, learn from the past.

Speaker 1: In that first, that first set that you did that currently holds the recordings that holds that [inaudible 00:19:42], are there particular individuals who you interviewed in that first set that have stuck with you?

Speaker 2: Oh, Lord, yes man. There's a lady named Bambi who totally and completely changed my life. Bambi was 82 when I interviewed her. She talked about what her grandfather had told her. What her grandfather had told her, among the things her grandfather told her was, when I looked back, was talking about the Sam Sharpe rebellion, 1831, and how they had burned down the master's house with the billiard table. And she could say things like, "But they were so foolish, the billiard table and the horses and the hill. When you burn that first, you just attract everybody, so the government could come in and quickly mess with them." She stood out with me because she kept saying, all through the [inaudible 00:20:41], she was telling me, she would say, "Why would few generation meet it?" She was connecting, she's a grandchild, but she was living her grandfather's experiences and all that happened in slavery. It was something that was new to me, my father didn't tell me about slavery. All that was very new to me.

It was new to me but it wasn't new to everybody my age because Rastafari and the Black Conscious, mostly singers, were continually talking about that, but their old cast, nobody want to hear anything that they were saying. And they were making their reconnection with this old lady [inaudible 00:21:20]. I remember coming down, I was so thinking about ... This was first time I was hearing somebody talk about the experience of slavery. I mean, we read it, mostly what we see is coming from North America, but this was a Jamaican person talking about this.

And I was coming down through Hanover or the Sugarcane area, and I stopped my car. I knew that if I had a match, I would have started burning. Then a voice said to me, "But Bambi at 82 was able to laugh about it and able to say how foolish her people had been. Are you going to the same foolishness, then have you learned anything?" And then I realized that my way has to be a different way. I'm a different generation and I have been given different skills. I cannot do something else such as the kind of that I do.

Speaker 1: Any other people, individuals you remember?

Speaker 2: No, she was particular to me because she changed my life, she changed my trajectory and set me on a different, different path.

Speaker 1: How do you think your interview methodology differs from traditional sociology interview methodology?

Speaker 2: Well, I think it differs in that I'm not going in to ask people set questions. I don't ask set questions perhaps because I have had a year in psychiatry. So what I usually start off with, and I want people to give me their version and their thing. So I usually say to them, "Tell me the first thing you remember. Go back and tell me the first thing you remember." And they do. If you go back to various different things, one man said it very nicely, "I remember holding my mother's baby, I was seven holding my mother's baby. I come from school early because the school had much of hurricane of earthquake, and I did not save her earthquake." His first day at school, the earthquake came and break up the school so he came back home. His little task was helping his mother with the baby until the school could be rebuild.

So people came from different ways, the same Bambi here, I haven't written about this, but somebody else will. What her first memory was, tipping on her toes and looking into her father's plate. I just find that so beautiful especially given the going statement about men not being part of the family. I mean, he was so much a part of her family. She was looking in his plate, tipping on to look in his plate and occasionally he will give her a piece of what she saw in his plate. That was the nature of revelations between them. So people came to me with different things, which led me off into ... Absolutely, absolutely important was this exposure to these old people. Of course, I'm as old as them now, but then that time I was a middle-aged person.

Speaker 1: So how did those stories factor into your work that came after that? You've talked about that in many ways before, I'm interested in what specific connections did you see yourself making between that experience for you? The experience of interviewing them and the experience of writing the text. So one is oral and one is written, how did you connect the two?

Speaker 2: Connecting them? I think it goes more to the fiction than to making ... Not that I took anybody's story and wrote about it, but the consciousness that he gave me has transcended everything else. But I use this consciousness to write their story in this, sort of, sociological fashion, which is The Second Generation of Freemen, which I don't think I'm doing very well, I want to rewrite it. I wrote their story mostly using their voices and their knowledge, but I help this out by going into the archives to check on this or to check on that. So it did have what the academics will call a scientific base to it.

Speaker 1: Why do you think you didn't do a good job?

Speaker 2: Well, I was preparing to come here for [inaudible 00:26:36] this is much more than I have put into the published work. There's so much more here, there so much more here that could have gone that I didn't find a way of putting it in, mainly I suppose because of all this what I consider to be a fact that I was having, you know, you're staying in history, or you're staying in the

Speaker 1: I wasn't thinking enough of, or I didn't think I could think enough of the generation to come. I was writing this time for the past, to get a PHD.

Speaker 2: If you were thinking differently, what would you have done different?

Speaker 1: I would have done, and I would ... That's why I say I don't think I did justice to the material. I would, it would be much more, it would be fuller. It would be more, it would be, it would have more of their ... I wouldn't, well okay, you had to do, you had to set it into some environment. So, I organized the data in terms of going to school, looking at living, finding a mate, settling down, that being finding land and building house and all of that. So I looked at them and that.

But there was more going on. There was more going on. Don't even know how to tell what is more going on. I just picked that up as I was reading some of these things, more going on.

Speaker 2: I understand. I do, I do. My assistant here knows, she's been listening to some of the interviews that we've been doing, and she knows. There's more there...

Speaker 1: Yes, yes, yes.

Speaker 2: So that's why I wanted to ask you about methodology...

Speaker 1: Hope, yes.

Speaker 2: About how you transfer that, all of that into because you have experimented and tried different genres.

Speaker 1: Right, right. No, I don't know. I have to look again at how I can take more of that. But, as I said, I used the material to describe life of a set of people. So, that I have the kind of, I could deal with growing up in Jamaica. Okay. I could deal with that. I could deal with the business of being trained to go into the labor market. I could deal with the business of the labor market, but for instance, the business of settling down, I don't think I dealt with way.

If and when I go back to that, I would like to be looking at the work that, that do social psychologist like, modeling like a social psychologist. But, like Edith Clyde did, because I have data which can fill out, or contradict so much of her findings there. So I would spend some more time at this level here.

And I would look, now that I know words like epistemic, I would spend more time looking at the world view that was coming out you know, ut you also write little papers apart from that, you write little, little papers. And some of the little papers, for instance, a piece of work which I have done, two pieces of work that I have done, from that material which is not in the big thing.

One of them has to do with 18 ... 1938. You know, everybody talks about 1938 as the beginning of Caribbean history, Jamaican history. Would you believe those 90 people, all of them were young, not young like 38 years old and, only about four of them talk about this great big event. Only about four of them talk about this great big event.

So, you know I wrote a paper on that, which was, these days, in these days after all these years, fairly well received by the history department. That we got to look again and see if it was really such an earth shattering thing, or, isn't it. It was a middle class revolution. These guys, Blackheart and Swan, who were pushing things, and in conflict with the British government, these are the people for whom 1938 meant all of that much. What was significant for people was 1838? The early emancipation.

So there's that kind of thing, and then there's a thing I wrote about the women and their race consciousness. For although they were strong black women, and talked about race and ... none of them wanted to go back to Africa. Like I had a woman and I asked her, "So you know, you go back to Africa?". "You think someone will eat me?" So all of these notions are still there, although you recognize yourself to be of African heritage. So, I wanted to, and I still want to look more closely at this ambivalence, okay.

Speaker 2: That gets missed in the kind of traditional visions?

Speaker 1: Traditional visions, okay, okay.

Speaker 2: So, the interviews that you've done, have kind of uncovered layers and perspectives that ... so it ... but it sounds as well as interesting, one of the parts that was particularly intriguing to me, what you said, it sounds like it has prompted, reignited a conversation with history and sociology, and particularly the methodologies of sociology.

Speaker 1: More people are doing that kind of work now.

Speaker 2: So there's, now it's because sociology has changed?

Speaker 1: That sociology has changed and history has even changed. History even teaches a program in world history now, okay.

Speaker 2: So they have caught up with you?

Speaker 1: They have caught up with me. They've caught up with me, okay.

Speaker 2: Alright, so I have with books that you know they are yours.

Speaker 1: I know that one.

Speaker 2: So I'm interested in your ending with your, talking about the journey from this book. A study of yours to, The World Is A High Hill, in terms of all the issues we've been talking about.

Speaker 1: All of those things I came between and go further back to the abandonment of children in Jamaica. All of those issues I came in between, but this set of short stories here, is not my usual, not my usual form. I don't write, I mean I'm not into short stories for one thing, and I don't usually write like that. I'm not quite sure what that is about, but I certainly know that nobody can now see that I'm inaccessible. These are very accessible, okay. Very accessible.

There is someone that come and say, "she has been able to get further than Beverly, the first one".

Speaker 2: No [inaudible 00:07:00]is here?

Speaker 1: No, I don't know why her [inaudible 00:07:04] reading Beverly, no not in there.

Speaker 2: So, what are the similarities and differences you think between this particular piece? Because the study of ours just seems, the conceptualization of it, from me as someone who grew up in Jamaica in the late 70"s and early 80's, where tenement yards in particular were the sight of the PNP of so much, that a sociological study on yards coming from that era is a radical undertaking.

Speaker 1: And the way we did it too. I was coming back from the University of Washington where I was a fellow in Psychiatry and I was coming back fresh with all of that insight into communities psychiatry and getting the community to talk about themselves and so on. So the methodology there, getting for instance, the defining of the area was done for instance by a postman, didn't I say it there? By postman, and what they told us where the yards were, and we were able to draw a map using the map of Kingston and draw this thing.

So, we were very much, we weren't disturbing the data very much, it was coming fresh. So, this is how we went into yards for instance, and then after that use the usual anthropological thing. I had students living in the yard and visiting ... one or two, I think it was two who lived in yards and two who visited the yards.

It was very exciting for me too, because I was learning so much. It's always, the point about the research is that you learn so much. You grow with it and that's another thing I don't understand about the academy, of how you can sit down on one subject and you become an authority on one subject and you just keep on one subject, it seems to me that, you grow, you have to move from that to something else and something leads you to something else. I know that is bad, because I have heard them talk about it.

I heard them talk about other people, in terms of moving all over the place and or even when, I remember when Artie Smith, virtually, you know that physiologist, Artie Smith virtually said something that he had said, it was a big thing, I mean how could he say that? Didn't he say something in 1955 and this is 1955, we now talking about 1985, the man has grown, give him a chance.

So, we grew and hopefully we lucky enough to be able to go back to work with Trev sometime and rewrite it, with a new sense of, but that doesn't tell you about the space between ... Those images of women that I saw in my research, I sort of got a chance to feel them out in the world, perceptions of Caribbean woman, what about it?

Speaker 2: No I thought that's what you were saying, the images of woman, you drew from this...

Speaker 1: No, those women are too old. In perceptions, those women are women who are coming from newspapers and stuff like that, but the woman like in yards.

Speaker 2: Oh, that's what you mean, okay.

Speaker 1: For instance, one of those stories are set in yards, okay. Its Kishwana, you will notice that the names Kishwana is a woman, it reminds me of Bill Cosby and the name business, nobody [inaudible 00:11:18], Kishwana. I met a lay who says "all the violence, and the carrying on that's going on in Jamaica, that is the reason. These people have these doppy names, these names that they make up and sound devil names. You know everybody names Shh, something like that, nobody have a decent name like what your mother have, or your grandmother did have". So, it's the name that's causing all of this things, which I think requires us to look into it a little bit more.

Speaker 2: I'm still curious about your exploring, between A Study of her eyes and the World is a high hill, between the two, what similarities do you see?

Speaker 1: Well, when I started at yards, the yards led me into all these old woman, the past of these women and led me into the second generation of women and stuff like that, led me into that. The world is a high hill, as I said, it jumps out of nowhere, I don't understand where it is coming from, except to say that I was sitting down in Manchester and the rain was falling, and I didn't have anything else to do, so I just wrote up these. Remember that I also have had experience in, as a childcare officer and experience as a case worker.

So they are stories that are inside you here, that you took them somewhere, and you don't know how far they have gone. So, imagination was now working to see what has happened to enemies that had come to as a particular problem and then

you continue. Did you do that? Look at people and look up stories about them? And so, this is what happens with that world.

Speaker 2: Which then would make it very different from the study?

Speaker 1: Its different from the studies, this is different from the... When I took my mission from these people that I interviewed, all over Jamaica, that I had to come and tell their story to their people, what I was doing, what I did was to, work with the community that I had been given in Woodside, not to bring their stories necessarily, but to use the training I got from them to develop certain things in the community, and we did a lot of work.

We found historical sites and taught the people about the history of the place. Developed community tourism product, people would come in, develop, what we call a educo-tourism product. It was mostly students that come in and they coming in on what I call a share learning basis. They came in and they informed. The first set came in help me with the family studies, and they had to do their family history before they came, and some of them were so happy as a young man from Atlanta, who said he really did not know Andile started on this work, how closely, how much American Indian he had in him. He didn't know until he started int hat work.

So, they came in and it continued, other schools came in and stayed in peoples homes and people were supposed to know their village history enough to teach them and they teach us and they teach us how to cook what they like and we teach them to cook, it was that kind of sharing that was supposed to be happening.

It didn't all go like that, people got involved with this American one that was coming in, of course I did use it well, because there was a time when we first started where people had to come to use my bathroom, and when we ended, there was nobody using my bathroom, everybody had shower in their house. So that is one thing, but what I had hoped for, I had hoped for instance that the farmers in the area would benefit, or farming would benefit in that, since the students coming in would be eating like us.

If you didn't have banana, you would get from somebody in the area. What I found what was happening, as soon they learned they were having guests, they ran out to Haggie to go and buy, what are those things that have, that come in this box? Spaghetti and people are even giving their guest ham. So, it had its disappointments.

Then I moved from that into having the black space sessions, where now people... one of the reasons why I moved from that, was that I wasn't quite sure village people, some of them did not want to be black, they didn't want to be called black.

I remember, somebody from [inaudible 00:16:34], he came in to talk and people are complaining that he was talking too much black things. So, I said, let me find some

black people who want to talk about black things, and that was our black space. The black space lectures, so I would have black space every... the village had set up the village, the village celebrations, which we will see on Wednesday, with all the things we discovered together in the village and then left that more or less for the 31st and the 1st and on the 29th and the 30th, I would have this black space talks and they were very welcome.

In fact, some very highly placed people, I think, I had hoped that they would take it over, they came and had a session in my space, where they talked about the declaration of Woodside and how we would be joined together to press on, to make people more aware of and to ... they are very important people. All the media houses, people from all the media houses were there.

It seems to have crashed. So, I haven't seen or heard from them, but It won't die, somebody will take it up. When and if I am financially capable, I will continue with it, it's mainly that I'm old now, I built a place particularly for these meetings, but between that meeting place and my house is a hill. A hilly place, steps, and I'm breathing very hard when I'm coming up those steps, so I can see that somebody should be taking over these things.

What I will do though is, from all the work I have done in the black space conversations or in the writing that I have done, Is begin to see if I can make some statements, because I can still write and I can still type very well, but I will make the statements that we can use as hypothesizes for looking at all the things.

Speaker 2: Like what?

Speaker 1: Well, like I have a notion which some of the people are using now about the vacuum in the culture, culture lacone, one of them is quoting the old people talked about quoting you know? That engagement paper, writing a letter, some of them still had a letter in their writing case, that a man had written to get permission to come to visit and stuff like that, but generally speaking, there was one lady tell me, the fellow asked for don't we [inaudible 00:19:54], you know what that means?

So, the quoting, there is no quoting going on.

Speaker 2: Can you translate that?

Speaker 1: Quoting?

Speaker 2: No, the [inaudible 00:20:05]

Speaker 1: You no longer go to somebodies parents and ask for their hand of their daughter, you take what you want from her and then you leave her. [inaudible 00:20:18]. So, and it wasn't ingrained enough into the society, I don't think. They ask for.

For a number of reasons, I think I did that fairly well in writing up that thing. Yes, so things like that I want to explore some more. That particular lacuna, and because there is a lot of talk about the weakening of society and how the family bonds and that kind of thing.

Speaker 2: You said, making statements, what are the kinds of statements are you thinking about?

Speaker 1: Well, I can make statements for instance about, remake statements in a form that people can understand more easily. Statements like, when will we stop being the enemy within, or not just statement then, showing that we are seeing ourselves as the enemy within, okay. Even when there is no other body, you are still the enemy, I guess that's the genesis of bad man. You are the enemy within, you are the enemy to your own, you are an enemy to your... yes, I want to do that, I started doing that, using a figure of a man, who was introduced to me by this American anthropologist, who wrote black road with Martha Beckwit.

Martha Beckwit interviewed around my area and talked about actually in Woodside, talked about a man in Woodside. So, I have gone back to him, to make him make some statements about what is happening about the bad man business.

Speaker 2: So, what do you want to see the generations behind you do? Generations meaning generations in Woodside, but also generations of younger scholars and younger researchers?

Speaker 1: Well, the generations generally, you have it here, I would like to see them stop bleaching. You are bleaching here? How do you manage not to? I would like to see them stop bleaching, and I would like to not have to turn on my TV and see all these naked woman of themselves and saying that this is, what do you call now? Video going with some song. I would like to have, I guess it refers in the clock, I would like to have the singers more conscious of life around them and more conscious of blackness, rather like we did in Bob Marley's day, rather than just talking about [inaudible 00:23:29] girl, which is a lot of what is going on now.

I would like to see that kind of thing, and I would like for the scholars to be writing from the perspective of the people, which is themselves. I don't know, I'm not really aware of what is happening. I don't know very much of what is happening at University now.

Speaker 2: What would you want to see young scholars in the US working on your work?

Speaker 1: Well, I would like to have young scholars in the US continue with [inaudible 00:24:08], I'm not quite sure I can finish, looking at the connections between us and the Dasper, I would like to see Daspers studies much more, more work done on the Dasper studies, linking the parts of Africa, of the Dasper. I would like to see that kind of work done.

I think there is something more to begin, I mean if we, all over the world, if we are the most people in prison, if we are the people dying from diabetes, if we are the people who are dying from high blood pressure, wherever we are, we must be able to come together, there must be an argument for us to come together to work on that.

So, I believe that once we have started understanding that we are one, we are the same, [inaudible 00:25:01], we should be able to see ourselves, to use that as a, what is the word? There is a word for it in the theory of knowledge, but to use this as a base for examining a number of other things.

Are you still so amazed when I was looking like an American family, I don't understand how people could write about the american family, we comparing it to with the Caribbean family, I could not understand it, it just seemed to make no sense. So, I'm hoping that when I see somebody writing about the African American family, they will understand that African America is also the Caribbean, and what happened, which what I'm reproducing their family system, is like [inaudible 00:25:48] in our family system, all outcomes being the same.

Speaker 2: But then, what you were talking about before, in terms of the enemy within, because the enemy within affects relationships between African American and Caribbean people?

Speaker 1: Oh boy, yes. Well, I suppose somehow in the process of doing the work, somebody will understand that we cannot continue to be the enemy within. We cannot continue to be each others enemy. We can't continue, I learnt that when I was here in the US.

I remember, in those days, I was here for 1968. I was here from Mather Luther Kings assassination, I remember African American young man telling me, sister they don't ask you to talk before they shoot, and that was so graphic for me. It just told me who I was. The conversation has to start again.

One of the black space...

Speaker 1: Year before last, the Black Space theme was on this ... You must know that they call us, the African Americans supposedly call us monkey chasers. So, we were looking at stereotypes that we have of each other and how to get rid of them. That was what that was.

We don't call African Americans anything. I have African American friends who are really, and I can see their point. I can see their point because that's what they fought for. Goes to the West Indians, and a friend of mine I say 'When does a West Indian become an Africa America?' They're here for five generations, they're still talking about how they're West Indian. And if it could stop here, if it could be worked out here, then it would be.

Speaker 2: But that is precisely the challenge. [crosstalk 00:01:07]

Speaker 1: Here has been such a mighty place, this is where black is beautiful started up, this is where black pole was. Here is a place for it. This is for people here to be aware of it. And there too, because Jamaicans, Africans, Jamaicans come here seem to have some odd ideas. I remember listening to a woman who was in the Embassy here, Jamaican saying with a great deal of pride 'I have never been into an African American home' as if these people know me and they know they couldn't invite me.

So, it is not just African Americans, it is the West Indians too. So I try, I was talking to a class in East Carolina University about what I would like to see the same thing ideas in African American, the other day just looked at me and asked me if I am stupid. If I think I make any sense. I mean I guess he couldn't see what was the point of it. And because African Americans sometimes consider themselves to be Americans, the most powerful people. The most powerful people, why would they want to link up. I've heard African Americans say this about African Americans in England, say this 'why would we want to link with these stupid people here?' these black British.

Of course Africans say that too, so we really hate each other, don't we?

Well there will be a transformer, that's the work we have to do. That is the work for the new generation of blacks.

Speaker 2: Thank you

Speaker 1: Alright sister, hope the work gets done.

Speaker 1: Good Morning Dr. Brodber.

Dr. Brodber: How are you doing this morning?

Speaker 1: Well aside from the cold, I'm feeling great. How are you?

Dr. Brodber: That's good. Well, I'm cold. I've not reached great yet. But, perhaps great will come while we're talking.

Speaker 1: Well thank you so much again for coming here. We're very grateful to have you here.

Dr. Brodber: It's my pleasure.

Speaker 1: I've organized my questions into two general sections. The first set of questions will just cover the state of Caribbean studies in general, from your perspective. Then I will shift to talking about Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home.

The first question I have involves the institutional status of studying the Caribbean and you've described how when you were a student studying history, how disappointed you were with how little Caribbean history was taught. Has that changed?

Dr. Brodber: Well, it has changed in the University because there are Caribbean writers have emerged and are being studied and people have done some research and published more than when I was at University as an undergraduate. So, there is material. People always said, "We need more Caribbean studies." People would say, "Quite right, what will you study?" Because the work has not been done. But enough work has been done now for people to be real student in Caribbean studies. I think.

Speaker 1: And that extends beyond just studying Caribbean writers, but also work-

Dr. Brodber: Caribbean sociology.

Speaker 1: And historians.

Dr. Brodber: And Caribbean history and ... so we just kind of moved a little bit from what existed in my day, which was really the foreign policy of France and England into moving into really studying the Caribbean now.

Speaker 1: This question is sort of playful but, what text would you assign for your ideal Caribbean studies course?

Dr. Brodber: I'm not quite sure it has been written. So, if I had to do a Caribbean studies course I would be taking little bits from here and little bits from there. Because I don't think it has been written.

Speaker 1: What little bits would you-

Dr. Brodber: The little bits that I would be taking? My ideal Caribbean studies course would have two languages: English perhaps, but certainly another European language, and Creole.

I don't see how we can do Caribbean without being able to deal with the languages that have been made by Caribbean people so I would definitely have to have the Creole. Then I would be looking at the Caribbean as a plural area, plural culture. So I would be looking at the Indians in the Caribbean, I'd be looking at the Chinese, the Middle Eastern people in the Caribbean the Africans in the Caribbean. I would disassociate in that fashion.

I'm not even quite sure where the material would come from. There has been a bit of work now being done on the Chinese in the Caribbean. The Middle Eastern, I don't know that the work has been done in the Caribbean. I think the work on the Indians should be done. There are so many Indians in the Caribbean it would be a big disgrace if they hadn't done the work. And a pile of them are in St. Augustine, the Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies. They should have done quite a bit of work by now and I know that they have an institute which deals with Indian studies. I would be taking from these study areas. I'm pulling them together into a Caribbean studies program.

Speaker 1: I'm inclined to think that you would pull from Caribbean fiction as well.

Dr. Brodber: Yes. I would pull from Caribbean fiction as well. But that would be a sub-area because there's quite a bit of that. The fiction writers have been doing their work. There's quite a bit of that.

A great deal of poetry and a great deal of music. I mean lyrics set to music. That would have to be a sub-area. And would probably come under the performing arts or something like that. Who knows because there's quite a bit of that.

Speaker 1: I spent some time at the Cave Hill Campus of UB last summer and I learned that the Linguistics and Literatures Department was going to be offering a Master's in Caribbean Studies for this upcoming academic year. And that really surprised me because Caribbean studies is a fairly accepted discipline here in the United States, especially here at Vanderbilt, and the way that this new M.A. program at Cave Hill had advertised itself. It said, "Study the Caribbean in the Caribbean." And I was wondering how you feel about the American academic interest in the Caribbean.

Dr. Brodber: Well, it has always been. If the American studies opens up the area, especially with respect to funding and makes it possible for Caribbean students to come over and to learn what you guys have studied. Then that's a good thing I think.

Because a great part of us not doing as much research as we should is that we do not have the funding. What is going on here I think should open up areas of funding for everybody.

Speaker 1: Over the past couple of days there have just been moments. For example on Monday evening when the graduate students read parts of your work and what it meant to them in terms of their personal development and their intellectual development. You made a comment after that saying something to the effect of, how Jamaican students wouldn't do that for you.

Dr. Brodber: Haven't.

Speaker 1: Haven't. Yesterday when you were talking with graduate students you mentioned about how there will always be an outsider perspective on the Caribbean and that isn't necessarily a good or a bad thing, there's just always going to be outsiders.

Dr. Brodber: Until insiders start to do work.

Speaker 1: But you don't necessarily take the American interest as you describe Ella in Myal, and one line of Tripped Out and Foreign.

Dr. Brodber: Yes, in Tripped Out and Foreign. I'm not anti-that at all. If one understands that it is the outsider. If one understands that and doesn't take it as Gospel. Recognizing that this is the outsiders view.

Speaker 1: And this was also something that I also ran into at Cave Hill over the summer. Because there were two groups of American students spending some time on campus to study commerce and communication, but when I went to the office on campus that helps out the visiting American students, the woman that works there says it doesn't necessarily go back in the same direction. That is, the Caribbean students aren't really given the opportunity to study in the United States in the same way that the American students can come to the Caribbean.

Dr. Brodber: It's a matter of money. The American students come down funded by their universities. Our universities really don't have the money to send students to do the same thing. They have to depend on Fellowships that students could get and stuff like that.

I am not however attached to the University, so when I am talking to you and these questions you ask about university I am just talking from what I hear. I haven't been working at the University since for the past three years or so. I haven't even been working part-time there. I have no links with them. Except that Literatures and English comes to visit me in my home in the country once a year usually and there are some other classes that come down. Just as I am talking to you here, but I have no in on the inside.

Speaker 1: In the recent piece that you wrote for Small Acts, you mention the influence of Lloyd Best's essay.

Dr. Brodber: Oh Lord yes.

Speaker 1: Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom. Could you talk a little bit more about the impact that, that essay had on you.

Dr. Brodber: Since first we talk inside out. As a student in Caribbean history as you know, I was upset that there was so little Caribbean history. As a graduate student I was even more upset, because I was doing what I thought was inside work and not getting much support for it. When I met Lloyd best ... not just Lloyd Best, but Lloyd best and George Beckford ... a name you might know he wrote Persistent Poverty. I was so happy because these were two scholars who were intent on putting our gaze on ourselves. It was like finding mentors.

When Lloyd made the statement about mainly "We are the people too," that's not something that's usually said The Academy had felt that we had moved ourselves out of the people and we were a distinct group of people who could look on and give directions. "We are the people too," meant to me that we have defined ourselves as part of our people and we must find our role not as people who have emerged out of some kind of cocoon and gone to form a new tribe, but as part of the existing tribe.

And when he says "We are intellectuals, our job is to do good intellectual work, which tells us about ourselves and helps us to form [inaudible 00:12:23] policies for ourselves. That rang also some bells with me and my life has been made much easier by the fact that somebody came out and said that.

Speaker 1: Did you read, for example, New World Quarterly?

Dr. Brodber: I not only read New World Quarterly but in those days I would go to the New World meetings. Some of them, they were impossible because New World was around about when I was there. And I knew Lloyd and G-beck very well.

Speaker 1: There hasn't been that much work done on the New World Group. I guess because it's still so recent in memory.

Dr. Brodber: I think somebody I know, they had a conference.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Dr. Brodber: That had a conference on the New World.

Speaker 1: Yes and that's now published in a ...

Dr. Brodber: I don't know the papers were published.

Speaker 1: I believe it is. I think it's, The Thought of New World.

Dr. Brodber: I don't know.

Speaker 1: It seems at least from my end, my perspective as literary scholar, that whenever New World Group is mentioned it's always in terms of their thoughts on economics or politics. But you seem to be emphasizing the word intellectual, so it was more than just restricted to politics and economics.

Dr. Brodber: Yes, we really did spend a lot of time with economics and politics but ... I didn't always understand what they were saying, but when Lloyd talked about the function, the rule of the intellectual that would come straight at me. That's the kind of thing that I would remember. That would have been my concern. Not the economics because I couldn't understand that.

There are people who are saying, "It's a New World Group that has messed up the Caribbean." Because a lot of the people who are like ... I can't call their names because I don't know. People who are now going off the bank in Barbados the smaller Islands and stuff like that, were people who were part of the New World Group. If we're crashing, people are saying we're crashing because they came out influenced by New World thought.

I can't comment on whether this is just or not.

Speaker 1: I've also heard about the New World Group talked about in that regard and having a disconnect from the people.

Dr. Brodber: Oh they couldn't disconnect from the people, it would have to be a disconnect from orthodox economic theory. Disconnect from the international systems because that was the tendency of our thought, that we can do it ourselves.

Speaker 1: I'm going to shift to talking about your fiction a little bit. This question definitely comes from my training as a literary scholar and how we're encouraged to categorize everything that we read or trace lines of influence. The subject of gender is usually one of those organizing principles for literary critics. With your work you're often mentioned in tandem with George

Lemming and Wilson Harris. I'm wondering, when you were writing your fiction, what is your sense of other Caribbean writers as-

Dr. Brodber: I don't consider them at all. Nor do I consider critics. Because these things could influence what you want to say. I would like to say what I want to say without having influence of ... I would not ... I'm quite aware that there are males as well as females and my political position has been and continues to be that men as well as women were humiliated during slavery. We have hardly come out of that. We have to come out of it together. We are together. I can't celebrate women and not celebrate men. I can't look at women and not look at men, which is not a popular position I know.

A position that I have kind of suffered from because when everyone was jumping up and doing women's studies I was doing men's studies. Nobody talks about this, but I have a book, I do have it here, of twenty-four portraits of Jamaican males. Because I think that a lot of lies have been told about the men. They have not been worthless, not by any means.

Some of the interviews that I have done with people who have been born at turn of the century, you have men that have been supporting their mother and her children and therefore couldn't go off to do anything else. There are men who are doing that and even the older ones, the very much older ones. There are women who talk so fondly about their father and what their father did, portraits of their father, how their father helped them and moved them and was very gentle with them and all like that. So I have felt that the portrait of the Jamaican male has been wrong and I have also felt that I should have to correct that.

Speaker 1: The influence of the father was something that I registered a lot on Monday with your interview with Professor [inaudible 00:18:17]. What about women writers from the Caribbean who are now based in the U.S. such as Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff do you see yourself affiliated with them in any way at all.

Dr. Brodber: No. No way at all. I can't buy their works. I can't read them. I've met Michelle Cliff and Jamaica Kincaid. I've met them at conferences where you say. "Hello, how are you," and move on. It's not that we have talked even as you and I are talking here or I was talk to people here. No, no that doesn't happen. And I don't mind it's not happening at all because I just have things I have to do.

I would talk if we were talking. I don't think that they are reaching out to talk either.

Speaker 1: Is their literature read in the Caribbean? You said something about how you can't get their books there.

Dr. Brodber: I can't get their books because I can't buy them. That's what I mean. It's not that they're not read, but I can't buy them. And I suppose there are courses on literature in English which does do their work. It's a financial thing with me that I don't know these people's work.

Speaker 1: In your recent interview with Katherine John, you talk about the influence the modernists had on you. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Dr. Brodber: I hope I have the right term. One of my problems with literature and criticism is that they have these words, which I don't understand at all. Which don't say anything to me. I hope that when you say Modernists that what you and I are thinking is the same thing.

When I was in what we call sixth form ... You would have it here as grade 11, 12 or 12, 13 ... I don't know, at the end of school ... You're 17 to 19 about that time. I was exposed to people like Houseman, Virginia Woolf, Sanford Weiss and somebody who had a lot of influence on me, he was a playwright-

Speaker 1: Was it J.B. Priestly?

Dr. Brodber: J.B. Priestly. Yes. So I gather those are more than-

Speaker 1: I think that those would safely fall into the critics' idea of Modernism. [crosstalk 00:21:05]

Dr. Brodber: They were introduced to me as Modernists. Those are the people that I read. Those are people I liked. I read them and enjoyed my literature courses. I enjoyed reading these people. I enjoyed trying to find out what they were saying and how they were saying it.

I think they have influenced how I look at data.

Speaker 1: "At data," you said?

Dr. Brodber: At data, generally. How I pull from the whole environment. How I pull from around me. They have influenced my pursuit of knowledge.

Speaker 1: So it was everything about these writers? Style and content?

Dr. Brodber: Style and content, and what they were about. I've been very sympathetic to Houseman. His work absolutely weeps. He manages to make to weep in the simplest of words and simplest of form as well.

I did like Virginia Woolf because I liked her style. Somebody compared Jane and Louise to Virginia Woolf. I wasn't thinking of Virginia Woolf as I was writing Jane and Louisa. But. I understand that we were doing the same thing just

letting it flow and consider yourself as part of the process. Not standing outside or writing about something but writing yourself into it. Which, is how I see Virginia Woolf; writing herself into things.

Speaker 1: Do you have particular Woolf novels?

Dr. Brodber: I was thinking of Mrs.-

Speaker 1: Dalloway?

Dr. Brodber: That. Because I actually did teach Mrs. Dalloway and I did enjoy teaching it.

Speaker 1: You also mentioned in the interview with Katherine John, I believe, Joseph Conrad.

Dr. Brodber: Yes. I had to do Conrad. I did Conrad as well. But is Conrad modern? I read him as modern was he modern?

Speaker 1: I think so.

Dr. Brodber: Yes, I read Conrad. And I remember especially, The Nigger of Narcissus.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Dr. Brodber: We [inaudible 00:23:35] marvelous, a marvelous sin there. Of this big Negro, this big black man, I hate the word Nigger, this big black man having to be rescued by people who don't want to rescue him. But they're caught up in the ethics of life. "We have to rescue him. We prefer if he would not put us in the position of having to rescue him." Also not even understanding his physical self, trying to hold on to his hair to pull him back. You would understand, our hair is not one that you're gonna hold on and pull back. Usually it is not long enough for that. I really found that so full of the tensions of people distinctions.

Speaker 1: I'm not that familiar with the criticisms on Conrad but I know that his racial politics is something that interests critics.

Dr. Brodber: Yes.

Speaker 1: So I'm going to shift to asking you about your first published novel, Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home. Could you just tell me about the writing process that went into Jane and Louisa?

Dr. Brodber: There are some critics who tell me that I'm telling a lie when I tell the truth about how that came around. But the truth of it is that I was teaching social workers and there were no case studies pertaining to them and I said after a

while, "Let me write something." And I was writing that for my social work students.

I happened to have people around me who are writers, not writing for, but writers. And some of them looked at the manuscript and said, "This is not for social workers, this is literature." This is fiction." And so, it gets taken somewhere else. I didn't have a job, I lost my job. By the time I finished reading [00:25:41] that I'd lost my job teaching with social workers.

So I couldn't know if it was of any use or whether they use it at all. I doubt very much that they use it since everyone complains that it is inaccessible. That it is not accessible I doubt very much that whosoever was teaching then would have taken it in. It is a case of ... what do we call it in psychiatry now ... a case of ... If I tell you what it is you probably can find me the word. It is a case of being frozen. You have all your traumatic things and you haven't been able to deal with them and they have frozen you in time. Just frozen you. Frozen physically. The word won't come to me. It's a very, very ordinary ... very ordinary syndrome.

Speaker 1: It wouldn't be depression?

Dr. Brodber: It's not depression. It's a catatonic state.

Speaker 3: Paralysis.

Dr. Brodber: Paralysis, but I think the word is catatonic. Catatonic state where you just ... That is about moving from the catatonic state, which is why you see ... it begins with voices you're in a catatonic state, you don't have all-

Speaker 1: Of your faculty's are [inaudible 00:00:01]. The only thing that can happen is that you can hear, that's the only sense that you have is the sense of hearing. The next sense is being able to tail of the snail. Being able to remember. Then we're going to still life. It is the term here, it's not just still, you know still as in photographs where you have been walking a little bit but you are a still life. Not one of those moving things.

It's a still life. But as the language already said, still life, it is still life, we give thanks. This is where we are at with the still life. It's not a total thing, but it is still life.

Minature you're able to see what you can't see. You can't see the right dimension of things. Things are getting small. It will take you some time before you are able to see fully. That is all of those sections come into that section called [inaudible 00:01:17]. Okay. To help you, allow me to [inaudible 00:01:23], allow me to help you kind of thing. Okay. So I'm just describing to you what the catatonic thing is about and how this is about getting out of a catatonic state.

Okay. A social worker, if I were teaching them, I would have been able to make those points.

Speaker 2: So did you write it in that order?

Speaker 1: I wrote it in that order with the intention of their understanding what a catatonic state is. In our culture what could be a catatonic state, which is not necessarily as [inaudible 00:01:59]. It is trusting as you would see in a mental hospital. But a number of us are in a catatonic state, in that we don't want to connect with our past. We don't want to know ourselves. So we are frozen. We have chosen to freeze ourselves. Okay. So I would have gone through all of that kind of thing with them, okay.

Speaker 2: About your, the day to day process of writing, were you going to envision of the scientific procedure you write about finding the short story on the back of one of your questionnaires, but with Jane and Louise was this something that you wrote out in long hand and scraps or did you sit down-

Speaker 1: Oh the word scraps, I not sit done and type. No. A lot of it was written out in long hand. A lot of it took time because I was teaching at the time too. I didn't really have time to, even if I had wanted to. I didn't see myself as a writer. So for somebody, for me to be sitting before a typewriter and typing up this fiction really was not on. I was not a writer. I did not write that as a fiction writer. I wrote it more as a sociology teacher.

A teacher of people who are involved, whom I was helping to train to go out to therapitize others. So the business of sitting down as a writer those and writing out was not part of it. I wrote when I had time or when the ideas came to me. That was how it was. But there is a particular section there, the fair, that served a different

purpose. I think it was back in 83. Yes. Back in page 97 the first of August, which is really emancipation day where we always had these dances. I had these 78, you wouldn't know about 78 would you? Yes? Do you know about 78s?

Speaker 2: I've heard of them. I can't say that I have experience with them.

Speaker 1: Well I had these 78s of Jamaican music. I wanted to ... You're laughing. You know what 78s? Are you there? All right, yes. So I wanted to preserve them. They were also very fragile. So I played them and I typed. This was my way of preserving the rhythm. It is difficult even for me to read because it is so influenced by what was on the disc. That was how I was playing along also with the business of archiving.

Speaker 2: So just having this music in the air?

Speaker 1: Having this music in the air so that writing ... But that was after I had ... I didn't have any teaching to do. That was when I could play around with a method of getting my points across. So playing around with, rather than sitting down at a computer or a typewriter and typing. Playing around with how do you preserve this? Was more my conservation. Rather than sitting down to compose.

Speaker 2: So you would position Jane and Louisa, as you've already said, as a case study and not so much-

Speaker 1: That is how I designed it to be. But I've said, my critics have shot down and said it's a lie. I mean, as openly as that. It's a lie, you didn't do it.

Speaker 2: Believe coming of age fiction is the label that's often put on it.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). There's another word, a german word, but as I tell you-

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:06:10]-

Speaker 1: Yes, that's it. But as I tell you, I did not study english, so all of these terms that they use, half of the critics of my work I'm not able to understand.

So that takes me out of having to read them because I know I can't understand them because I'm not quite sure where literature has decided to make a language which cannot be read by people who read.

I suppose you have to seem important. You have to have your A + B and you're over 16 and not like that to make you feel that you're a sense. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: What about the process of getting it published?

Speaker 1: Oh that was difficult. That was difficult. It was not my intention to get it published. I had made 12 copies and I thought that would have been good enough for my class.

But somebody saw it and said, no, this is better and bigger than your class. So I started to try and send it around to publishers who are really not interested. I met one at a party, he was a British publisher who was in Jamaica and he said, oh I love this story but let me tell you something, it is 10 years before it's time. So it will just have to sit on our desk for 10 years before we ... Nobody was willing to take it out until [inaudible 00:07:45] who is a professor of English on the same campus, took it on and sent it to John Rose. Who was then the publisher of New Beacons.

And John took it on.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: So that is how it found it's way into print. Into that kind of print.

Speaker 2: So New Beacon is a London based publisher?

Speaker 1: Beacon is London based and Beacon is one of the first black persons dedicating itself to the work of African descendant people.

Speaker 2: So do you take the presence of New Beacon in London as a sad fact of the colonial set up?

Speaker 1: No as glad fact because they emerged and continue to this day, they knew that works like what [inaudible 00:08:44] should be published and would not be published by the growing presses. So to counter this they set up their own press. So because the other presses had had a chance at it and wouldn't publish for one reason or another. They write back and say thank you, these are beautiful stories but we can't publish them.

I didn't write beautiful stories, but they wouldn't understand that. So, the unfortunate thing now is that New Beacon, John died and his wife is carrying on but she has to downsize and she no longer publishes. So I've lost the publisher. They've done all the novels. They've done everything that I have nearly, everything. Most things have been done by them. So I'm in the process of setting out to build another relationship with another publisher.

Speaker 2: Your collection of short stories was published by-

Speaker 1: Ian Randall. That's a new other person. But he had a chance at Jade and Louisa and turned it down. In fact, Gordon, same Gordon earlier, I told him go back and read it again. It came to him once, he turned it down. Gordon told him go back and read it again, and he turned it down the second time.

So, they have something that they've been holding for me for the longest time because I have, they contract with me for this new book. Says that they're to get the first refusal on anything else that I do. Well, they've had it for a year, I assume that

is refusal. But I know they can't publish that because it's more like this. It's not going to be ... They're publishers of the normal. New Beacon was not a normal publisher. New Beacon was political intended to have works of a certain kind. Ian Randall wants to make money and publish for the people who want to read certain things. The general. I am not knocking them for that. It's just that I know that they will not be publishing very much more of my things.

Speaker 2: When you were with graduate students yesterday, talk to me about Louisiana. You talked about how-

Speaker 1: During that session?

Speaker 2: Yes. I was saving my questions for our session today.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: One thing you talked about yesterday was type face.

Speaker 1: It's type face, yes-

Speaker 2: Making writings speak. You said that was more present in Jade and Louisa.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: Could you talk about how you used that?

Speaker 1: Well let me show you. Well look at this spaces, which are not really, they're not supposed to be ... It's not about paragraphs. It's about something being finished and, as I said, wanting people to stop and think at this point here.

Speaker 2: So it's almost like a poet using-

Speaker 1: Yes. A poet using space. Even the uppercase is suppose to make a particular point and things like that. Then something like this, which is almost poetic form. We're jumping from here. It's like a cliff. We're jumping into this. I wanted people to feel like they were jumping.

Speaker 2: So all of these elements were intentional-

Speaker 1: Intentional. Yes. Intentional.

Speaker 2: So you already mentioned that you don't think about other writers-

Speaker 1: No, I really don't think about other writers when writing. I don't think ... I don't know that other people think of other writers when they're writing either. I don't know how you do that.

Speaker 2: It just reminded me a little bit of Timole Bradways. Some [inaudible 00:13:31] video style.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: How he really-

Speaker 1: I don't know that one.

Speaker 2: Using typography and spacing to-

Speaker 1: Oh yes, he does a lot of that. Does a lot of that.

Speaker 2: So do you see typeface as one of the ways to make book learning more relevant, able to communicate in different ways?

Speaker 1: Yes I think it might attract people to just wonder why is this face different here? Then in their wondering they might think about what they have read and say does it have anything to do with what I'm reading? Or what I'm about to read? I think it might attract, like an advertisement. You fix it so that it attracts people so they buy.

Speaker 2: It's like grabbing attention-

Speaker 1: Grabbing attention-

Speaker 2: Pausing-

Speaker 1: Pausing to think.

Speaker 2: Was New Beacon nice about-

Speaker 1: Oh yes, they did what I wanted them to do. They have really done what I wanted them to do. They have been very kind. They haven't asked me to re-write anything ever.

Speaker 2: Okay. Another thing you mentioned yesterday, talking with graduate students, was how much you liked to watch the process of art. You brought this up when talking about theater. I'd like to tie this back to instances of visual technology in Jade and Louisa.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: Towards the end there's a movie camera-

Speaker 1: Yeah the movie camera and there's a magic lantern.

Speaker 2: I'm also thinking of something that Cam Albra, the way it wrote in his essay, the love axle. He praise you a lot.

Speaker 1: In the love axle?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Well I must go look.

Speaker 2: Yes it's in the final part of it. He says that your work of the arts brought, I'm going to quote this phrase because I think it's a powerful phrase, of new seeing tools to study society.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: I know that later on today you'll be showing a film with your-

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative), a video. It's good [inaudible 00:16:19].

Speaker 2: We'll call it a video actually.

Speaker 1: Okay, I just don't know. I just want to know if it's the same thing.

Speaker 2: Well, I think some people would restrict the word film to the 35 millimeter. I guess we could say video. Visual technology in general.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: Do you see potential in visual technology and your project of connecting the di astra?

Speaker 1: Oh yes because it can move. I remember hearing a political person for whom I had a lot of regard. He is, have you ever heard of the trials of Israel Rastafarian group? Well the head of that was called Brother Gat. He talked about that little box, the little ... Those things we put in our tape recorders. Tape deck? Tapes. How much potential that is going to have for sending newer word across the place because you can move from Jamaica to Silan with one of these tapes and carry the messages.

Then people like he would be talking to wouldn't have had any computers, there wasn't internet at the time. Generally for people. So if you moved, or well, you know about this because Marcus [inaudible 00:17:55] for instance, the guy that painted that great deal up on the boats, which are going here and there to send the materials. But now we wouldn't have to do that. A person can just put a tape in the pocket and then go through immigration and play it and teach people what is happening on the other side of the world.

In the same way, there is potential in that, though of course as I'm saying that where the videos, the films, have all of this stuff here it's difficult to carry. It's also restricts you to places where there's electricity. Many of the people you want to talk to are in areas where there's no electricity, but there is something like the tape, which is operated by battery. So the technology should have to spread the word.

Speaker 2: So I'm thinking of lines in Jane and Louisa, such as, your dermis is beginning to show. It's beautiful in how powerful that would be if conveyed through a visual medium rather than a written medium.

Speaker 1: How would we do your dermis is showing?

Speaker 2: What was that?

Speaker 1: How would you do that? How would you film that?

Speaker 2: Well filming a person.

Speaker 1: Okay, who's dermis is showing?

Speaker 2: Well I guess it depends on how you stage it.

Speaker 1: I'm just thinking about how you stage it. Okay. Well, of course I still say the problem would be do they have pockets? Pocket VCRs where you don't need electricity for?

Speaker 2: I believe many things can be powered with a battery.

Speaker 1: Okay. Yes if you can power with a battery. Yes. This video, which I'm showing this evening, is one of the things, answers some of the question you're talking about because we just did it. We happen to have, whenever we had the celebrations we would have somebody tape them. The tape that I have made from this is cut from several years celebrations. I have played it in England, I have played it in Florida and I played here. So people get to see the Emancipation celebrations worldwide, which is not something that we had planned. But the sharing can be done by that just little, that thumb drive, which comes in the side of my bag moving all over the place.

Sharing. So without doubt, in answer to your question is yes. The technology can help to push the messages.

Speaker 2: But it's still excludes the rural community in a way.

Speaker 1: In a way, yes. If there's no electricity. But this had been shown back to the people because when we do have electricity in most villages. Most people have, a lot of people have a television. Well I mean, they coming to the centers ... Because I've

played it in community centers. Have a television and this thing can play on television. Well, I also had a disc but it is quite bad. It cannot be played on, what do you call that one, the VCR?

Speaker 2: DVD?

Speaker 1: DVD. The disc went bad. So we haven't been able to play it again.

Speaker 2: That is the disappointing thing about technology.

Speaker 1: Yes. Which is why I was telling you that I'm so tense about this thing in my bag. I just want to hand it over to who service to work it. So that he can ... Because anything can happen to them it seems to me. You never know when or what it is that causes something to go bad.

Speaker 2: In your essay, beyond the boundary, you were asked about the term magical realism-

Speaker 1: Oh yes magical, I was wondering which essay that was, good. I remember that one.

Speaker 2: You are very hesitant to embrace that phrase, magical realism, and you propose that it should be called social realism instead. Your writing that is. If one had to choose between magical and social, or if there was a realism at all to it, it was a social realism-

Speaker 1: I don't remember that essay at all. I don't remember. I just remember that I was asked to talk on magical realism and didn't know what it meant. I wasn't brought up in english. So I didn't know what it meant and when I asked a friend of mine who's teaching in Virginia, Darid Dance, what it meant. Darid said, your work. So, then I had to think about it. I guess it's magical, I suppose its intentions are social. I'm not quite sure that magical realism's intentions are social. I don't know. I just don't know.

But I hadn't thought of magical. In the same way people are beginning to think of me in terms of, what is it now? This kind of writing where you deal with this supernatural and you deal with ... You see I don't have the names for these things.

Speaker 2: Speculative?

Speaker 1: Speculative fiction. I've been trying to tell them there's nothing speculative about my fiction. If I tell it as a dog walking on its hind legs and there's reason why it's walking on its hind legs and I have seen it walk on its hind legs. So I don't hold onto the term speculative fiction for my work. I just use this to get to another more basic point. A point that is more useful. This is just a tool to get to another useful place. I'm not talking about the dog. I'm talking about the dog only because talking about

the dog can help somebody to see something else. So my story's not a story. It's more of a para bell.

Speaker 2: This brings up a related question, but what is the word aesthetics mean to you?

Speaker 1: Never had to think about it before. But I think of in terms of relativity of beauty. When I think of beauty coming from different kinds of beauty coming from different places. That's for me aesthetics.

Speaker 2: Because when people talk about Jane and Louisa will soon come home, it's not uncommon that they would mention the language being beautiful or just the feel of the-

Speaker 1: This I hear is-

Speaker 2: So I was wondering if that was something that you were ... Because you've mentioned that you liked to play with words.

Speaker 1: I love playing with words. A word for me is like a diamond in the sun. It glints, glitters and it gives off all sorts of different shapes and stuff like that because of the sun. Different shapes and different shades. Words are just beautiful I love them. I love them. They can say so many different things. One word can say so many different things. Put it beside a preposition and it means ... Not even in terms of its actual meaning, but the subtle shades that it brings. You don't even have to be looking at the meaning of words, you're looking at the song that has come across to you.

You could look, when you see it on the page, what arises, what it brings into your head and stuff like that. So I love them.

Speaker 2: Does this affinity for playing with words, does that come from reading literature?

Speaker 1: We do that in our culture.

Speaker 1: Playing with words is something that Jamaican's do all the time.

So for instance, there's a popular phrase going on, floss and endorse, floss and endorse, "We just floss and endorse." No, I do know people who are talking about floss and endorse have picked the word "floss" out of some advertisement from dental floss, okay. And "endorse" is not a word that is normally on the street. You're endorsing anything. But it's so nice, floss and endorse. So people- Floss and endorse. And you know what, that is cool how you floss and endorse.

You see what mean? The word don't have to have a meaning. You use it in such a way, that it's a cause that means things different people, different times. Or the speaker, what the speaker is saying comes across a different people and is doesn't have to be- I don't even know what they bothering themselves about this language is business and try to make things into, you know, something you teach at school. Because it's not what we do. We make words. We're not into standardizing anything. We continue to make words and people understand what you're saying.

Speaker 2: So, language is living.

Speaker 1: Language is living and continues to be living and you're part of the creative process.

Each speaker's a part of the creative process.

Speaker 2: Could you share any other examples of-

Speaker 1: Of the language making. Oh, we Rastafarians make so much language, like, "deadas". Can you imagine what "deadas" is?

If somebody is going to the dining room and he says, "No deadas." What would that mean to you?

"Bring back some food for me but no deadas."

No dead meat. No dead meat. And it's like, "No dead meat, I only want live food. See if you can find some potatoes or something like that. But not anything that somebody killed."

That's a kind of thing that goes on all the time. What's another popular Rastafarian thing?

Irie-heights. "Irie" is a word, I don't know where it came from, but irie is good, something is good, irie man is good. Is good good good. What is very very very very good "Irie heights" [inaudible 00:02:59] irie heights. Heights of irie, irie heights.

So, continually doing this.

Speaker 2: So, you're hesitant towards the move to standardize [crosstalk 00:03:18]

Speaker 1: I'm hesitant towards [inaudible 00:03:19] standardize. I don't think it's going to happen. I don't think it can happen.

Speaker 2: But on the other hand, do you think it's important to preserve language-making?

Speaker 1: I think it gets preserved like in the DJ things. I guess, preserved in the particular kind of poetry that is going on, no?

The spoken word. The spoken- A lot of spoken words.

I think it's preserved in that way. I don't know that you have to take it into schools and teach children ho to talk. I think if you're going to teach children anything, is you have to teach them how to be nimble at making words.

Speaker 2: So you have a- You're proposing that there are other ways to build archives, I guess.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2: Besides a standardized dictionary.

Speaker 1: Yes, and the archives get built if we watch them, everyday they get built. I mean, look how many new words, they're telling me I haven't seen them, but that's true reggae and people like Bob Marley, a lot of Jamaican words I know in the new Oxford Dictionary. They're there. I haven't seen them but I'm told they're there. Words have been added.

Speaker 2: So things find a way of sticking around?

Speaker 1: Things find a way. [inaudible 00:04:51]

Speaker 2: Do you consider your novels, your fiction, an archive?

Speaker 1: I've tried to use it as that. I tried to use it as that. They most recent, the word is "a high heel" is, yes a kind of archive. Poetry's of young women which, I think needed to be drawn and posted and that's what the word "a high heel" is. The posting of poetry to young women.

Speaker 2: And you described Jane and Louisa as an instrument for sociology, and also for thinking through history and tradition. But you also mention in Fiction and the Scientific Procedure how Jane and Louisa has failed to inform sociology students.

Speaker 1: Because nobody has picked it up and-

Speaker 2: Do you still hope that they will pick it up or-

Speaker 1: Well, when they come to see me and when they bring the students to see me, I can do that. I do that. 'Cause I'm telling that there's one course that comes down to me regularly. I have to talk about Jane and Louisa. I have to talk about usually it's Jane and Louisa.

Speaker 2: But for the most part it seems that [inaudible 00:06:24] those interested in fiction have, I guess co-opted it-

Speaker 1: You right, co-opted it and- Well the sociology people, the social science people, the make such a distinction between social science and fiction that it's crazy. It shouldn't be but, anyhow, there it is. So they are not likely to be reading my work, nor are they likely to be telling their students about it. Except that, Maya is on the list for the Political Science Reading.

Speaker 2: How do you feel about that category's-

Speaker 1: I feel quite happy about that. Something is happening.

Speaker 2: Well this reminds me of- I taught your essay to my students, Fiction and Scientific Procedure, I taught it to students last semester and one student, after reading that essay said that he was going to major in sociology. I haven't caught up with him since then so I don't know if he actually pursued that.

Speaker 1: [crosstalk 00:07:35] Yes. And he probably humanized sociology.

Speaker 2: But in that same class, I shared a comment from Aime Cesaire that he makes in Discourse on Colonialism, whee he calls novelists and historians the same thing. And this bothered my students very much. And I think it bothered them because they assign history with some particular authority that they don't necessarily extend to literature. And I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about why feel fiction seems to be so low on the hierarchy of epistems. We can think about it that way.

Speaker 1: I suppose because fiction is story, story, story, story. And there is, in Jamaican language, a child is not supposed to say "lie" because is to big a word, to strong a word. So, say your parents with adverse, "No you don't say lie. You say it's a story." You understand the connection there? So that a story is- fiction is a story which could very well be a lie. And history doesn't lie. Stories lie. Stories make up things and lie. So I suppose it would be, and as far as knowledge is concerned. The fiction isn't there for knowledge, the fiction is there to make you- To send you to bed, somebody's reading it to you, send you to bed. Or make you laugh, they make you laugh.

So it is not considered serious knowledge, serious source of knowledge.

Speaker 2: If you were introducing a student, just a general student who isn't necessarily studying literature, or studying sociology, or studying history. How would you introduce Jane and Louisa to them?

Speaker 1: I would tell them what they were designed to do. As I have been telling you, what it was designed to do. It was designed as a therapeutic tool to help people to understand the people that they have to deal with in the social work practice and to help them to analyze themselves because you should be doing that before you face- You should be analyzing yourself before other kinds. So it's a therapeutic tool.

Speaker 2: A tool to [crosstalk 00:10:43]

Speaker 1: What it is built from, of clear understanding of the sociology of the Caribbean or Jamaica.

Speaker 2: A tool to turn the, as you mentioned earlier, gaze back.

Speaker 1: So, the gaze onto yourself and the gaze onto your clients. So that you're understanding yourself, and your understanding yourself in the light that the client has seen you, and you're understanding the client so that you can better help the client to move forward from problem into solution.

Speaker 2: On Monday, when you were talking to Professor [inaudible 00:11:32] you talked about how you see digging as an art.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative) it really is an art.

Speaker 2: And that, for me, opened up the subject of land. And the depiction of land and Jane and Louisa will soon come home. Could you talk about how you write about land and landscape?

Speaker 1: Well to begin with, I'm a country girl so I know I have been- I've used a stick to dig potatoes or to dig things too. So I have a relationship with the land and I think I understand that the land is something, a delicate thing, and a beautiful thing and an all like that. So it is all here, there is no there way I can explain it so that When I talk about the land, I talk about it I think with understanding and with sympathy. It is something that can be hurt. I watched them burning, these days burning- well it burn with chemicals and it burn with[inaudible 00:12:41]. I feel for the land. I think of all that burning I feel it for the land.

Speaker 2: So I just want to turn to an example passage from your novel, or from Jane and Louisa.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2: This is on page nine.

"We lived in a mossy covered, dim and cool and very dark. And we can make it darker still, when we played dolly house in our sinkhole searching for treasures which the sea washed up. Or when we stared into the iridescent black-ink that made our dark night, or moonlight seem with love. Nothing can beat moonlight upon oceans of banana leaves. Banana leaves shifting our shoulders like rag effigies of our politicians."

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm. [inaudible 00:13:40] with banana leaves?

Speaker 2: A little bit.

Speaker 1: They're beautiful in the moonlight. 'Cause they usually have some dew on them. And the dew is glistening and the moonlight comes and is further glistening. It's really, really, really really beautiful. Green and white, and green and glistening.

Speaker 2: So when you're writing sentences, like the ones I just read aloud, would you be-Are you pulling these images out of your mind as you're, writing or are you looking at it as you are, that is are you writing out in the landscape?

Speaker 1: Well I write in the landscape 'cause that's where I live. So I can look outside and see something, which pulls me or forces me to write about it. Calls me and says, "Write about me. Here I am." Or it could be something that is there in my head. Which I said to my self one time, "What a beautiful thing that is." And then at the point, which I'm writing, it comes back to me, "We need to deal with this beautiful thing. We need to put this beautiful thing right here."

Speaker 2: Archiving, perhaps again.

Speaker 1: Yes, I like that term you have been using, archiving. Because I know I do that. I mean, people have said to when I've gone to places, "How much money are they paying you now?" I've said to them, "It's not always about the money. They're paying me because everywhere I go, there is something I see, which I've never seen before, which I put inside here." I guess I'm in the process of archiving all the time.

Speaker 2: So you're archiving Nashville right now?

Speaker 1: Oh, yes. When I need it, I pull it out. Yes, I'm archiving Nashville. Which is why I tell them I don't- Somebody offered to take me to a Jamaican restaurant and I said, "What is the point? I don't want to eat at a Jamaican restaurant. I'd rather go somewhere and eat as the people in Nashville eat."

Speaker 2: Add items to the archive.

Speaker 1: Yes, add items to my archive.

Speaker 2: Is there anything else you'd like to say about Jane and Louisa?

Speaker 1: No. The only thing I'd like to say on Jane is Louisa is that, when I read it I get very sad because I was writing it at a time of great sadness. Not just for me but a great sadness- We were in Jamaica. We were going through a very difficult period. We've come through it and as people come through things, what it does- I'm remembering how sad it was. It reminds me so much of where I was when I was writing. I rarely read from it because it's to sad for me.

Speaker 2: Was the experience of writing it also sad or-[crosstalk 00:16:53]

Speaker 1: The experience of writing it was also therapeutic for me. [inaudible 00:16:56]

Speaker 2: So this isn't just a personal sadness but a, sort of,-

Speaker 1: It was a social sadness.

Speaker 2: Social sadness.

Speaker 1: Social sadness. Social sadness. Social sadness and-

Speaker 2: Can you talk more specifically about some of the things that were[crosstalk 00:17:26] Jamaican society?

Speaker 1: Were happening at the time? We were changing. But change is always such a difficult and painful thing. We were changing we were just beginning to be talking about things like inequality, social inequality, and how to change that. So, this was a time- I don't know if the Michael Manley means anything to you. This was Michael Manley's time when he was coming and we were talking about the word "love" and how we should try to love each other. All sorts of fine things, and go outside to try to love somebody and then, you know, it just backfired on you and- but we tried, we tried. It was hard but we tried, we tried, we tried, we tried.

It was like the 60's here in the US. Where the flower people and all like that. People trying to change our way of looking at and well-behaving. And that was what we were trying to do. We tried to break down colonization and create help- Begin to create a new people. Make out of ourselves a new people. Which was hard work, you know.

As I was trying to do that. Make my students into more aware people who would go out into their field and face their clients with a different sense of self. This is the kind of thing that we were all doing at the time. Trying to make ourselves a new people.

Speaker 2: Well, this actually makes me curious about the sociology that did use Jane and Louisa.

Speaker 1: I don't know if they did use Jane and Louisa.

Speaker 2: What about the-

Speaker 1: English students.

Speaker 2: The particular sociology class that [crosstalk 00:19:19]

Speaker 1: I don't know. It was a social worker that I wrote it for.

But as I told you I lost my job. By the time I'd finished that, I was out of a job. So, I couldn't face them. So, for who it was written didn't get a chance to reject it or to embrace it. But it was made into a play and performed, and I think there was some people who saw it as a transforming tool and were responsive to that.

Speaker 2: Were you involved with the play production?

Speaker 1: Production?

No, no, no, no, no.

Speaker 2: The script or-

Speaker 1: Nothing at all. None of it.

I know that somebody else turned- Somebody else made the script but it wasn't me.

Speaker 2: Was it in a institutional context of some sort?

Speaker 1: No it was done by a group of players. I forget what they call themselves, but they no longer exist. But I know somebody else wants to do it because she's been asking me, "where's the script?" , if there's a script? So, I imagine if they do find a script that it will be on again.

Speaker 2: You find that idea exciting? The staging of Jane and Louisa.

Speaker 1: Well, yes, otherwise I jump up and do an exciting- Just exciting in the sense of, well somebody might be able to see what I- to benefit from what I tried to do. So, I would want to be very close to the people who are staging it. So, that my points get a chance of being made.

Speaker 2: That brings back to my mind the [inaudible 00:21:14] phrase of new seeing tool.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2: And how staging this case study, which some people like to I guess, court it off as a fiction- So putting it on stage allows another angle of [crosstalk 00:21:32]

Speaker 1: Another angle, yes. Another angle.

Speaker 2: Do you feel that re-packaging the book would [crosstalk 00:21:44]

Speaker 1: No, I wouldn't want I repackage it all.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: It's too late, that. I think, as it is there, It is more likely to stay on the library shelves and be there 20 years time. If I re-package it, it would just become like a store where somebody come and say, "Mmm it's nice.", pass it over and go ahead. As it is now I think it challenges people. And because it challenges people they don't throw it away so easy [inaudible 00:22:16].

Speaker 2: So is Jane and Louisa [inaudible 00:22:27] is she based off an actual case study? Or was this more something you constructed?

Speaker 1: No, no, no, not a real case study. Not a real case study, but the fact that I'd worked as a social worker I had clients coming to me- You are likely to see bits of cases inside there. You know, like the woman who's sending off her child, her one child, she can't have any other children but she's sending off her child to America to its father and its father's wife. That is something that you'd admit- I mean and people who came to me for help. A woman looking towards- Looking for the best for her child, rather than looking to- that the child is a comfort to her. But at the same time sending the child into a situation which might not be the very best for the child. Problems which a woman like that, has to contemplate.

I think I would have met in my normal course of my involvement as acting as a social worker. But it's not the case, you know, I wouldn't have taken a case but I know cases like this, you understand what I'm saying?

Speaker 2: So, I'm curious about how social work is perceived in Jamaican society.

Speaker 1: Well, there's a time when I knew- sort of text books. Somebody comes, okay, she can't manage her children. So the next thing would be to send her to poor relief where she would get someone to help, which is really not what she came for. She might come and say she can't manage but it didn't necessarily mean she can't manage financially. That is a manager she can't manage, but it's not just that that she needs. She probably needs instead, she needs extended counseling, and being parenting, and the children being taught that it is necessary to have somebody who

is a leader in any group, that kind of thing. And we weren't doing that kind of thing, really. We were just directing people to other agencies to have financial needs met and all of that. There wasn't very much counseling happening in those days. I'm not quite sure what is happening now. But I had hoped that the kind of thing I'm talking about, counseling, would happen to a woman like that inside there.

What we would have done with a woman like that was simply, to help her to connect with the agency, the social welfare, the child agencies here in the States and ask them to keep an eye on- Which would leaver her out. She would have a sort of emptiness syndrome and there'd be nobody helping her get over that.

Speaker 2: So it's not- Social services aren't necessarily something that's actively offered or[crosstalk 00:25:43]

Speaker 1: They're offered but not in the way I'm telling about. Not in the way I thought they shoulda been offered. I thought more- We shoulda have been having more counseling in these agencies rather than sending people from one agency to another. With the notion of financial help on our minds. Financial help or putting the children into government care. Not enough counseling happened at the home level to keep the home intact.

Speaker 2: There was deeper source that you thought had to be addressed.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Had to be addressed. Yes.

Speaker 2: And is this mythology something you picked up when you were doing your fellowship in-

Speaker 1: In psychiatry. Yes, that would have influenced me because as[inaudible 00:26:42] more understanding of groups and human behavior. Yes, but I mean, I could see that from just dealing with the people, as somebody who was not really trained in social work. 'Cause if I were trained in social work, I'd probably be doing the same thing that people are doing. Send them to this agency to get some money or send the children to be taken in by the state.

Speaker 1: Looking back on your entire body of published work so far, how would you situate Jane and Louisa, besides the sadness that you have already mentioned?

Speaker 2: Jane and Louisa is a beginning and there are even threads there, which have not been developed. Understand? This is sort of basic old line and things from it developed and there are things that haven't been developed yet. I mean, if I have the time and I talked about rewriting, what I would look at the whole that of what I have done and try to compress and make theoretical statements ... make sociological statements out of all of this meditation that I have done.

Speaker 1: Yesterday, when we were talking about Louisiana I brought up how I asked you if Ella Townsend was a continuation of LL Grady in Myal. So I suppose what you are saying here is that maybe Nelly could show up in another form?

Speaker 2: Could show up in another form, or I'm not even thinking necessarily fictional, I'm thinking more of philosophy, social philosophy, that I could pull from all these works and make some statements which would be guides to social planning, guides to thinking about ourselves.

Speaker 1: So this shift to sociology or social philosophy from fiction ... Do you feel tired with fiction in any way?

Speaker 2: No. I'm not tired with fiction, but, like I'm here, I realize that I have said somethings. I don't believe that there is any ... at home where I should ... where this work should be read. I don't believe anyone is pulling, "Well, somebody said she wanted to do that." I don't believe anyone is pulling out of the ideas. You know, like I was talking yesterday about ... last night about the harm which is done by the fact that you would have to leave the rural areas, or had to leave the rural areas, to go into town, the separation of rural and urban. I try to do that separation of rural and urban. I'm not sure that we were dealing, looking at ... The people who should be planning are looking at how we destroy ourselves when we make this distinction between rural and urban. Okay?

That kind of thing that I should spend some more time writing about ... writing in a way that they can understand. Writing the sociological ... well, social philosophy then, way so that people can understand what I had to say in this round about way in Jane and Louisa and in fiction.

Speaker 1: So it's a matter of reaching a different audience?

Speaker 2: Reaching a different audience. Reaching a different audience. Yes. Reaching a different audience. Okay.

Speaker 1: And doing that through the format of the ideas?

Speaker 2: From whatever ideas. From whatever ideas. From whatever ideas. Okay? For instance, ideas in Myal, which virtually ask ... Myal and Jane and Louisa too, virtually asked people to consider the spiritual life, the significance of the spiritual life more than we do now. And also, it would also mean to give more credence to non-Christian religions, the traditional religions, and stuff like that, which are very spirit based. To give some more credence to that.

Speaker 1: This is off the topic of Jane and Louisa, but is this why in Myal you have the character, the English woman, Madine Brazington, the way that she accepts the ...

Speaker 2: She accepts ... okay.

Speaker 1: ... the spirit based religion?

Speaker 2: I mean, the spirit based religion is universally accepted, just like Jamaican people do in real life. They just think it's real that we have this thing, and, therefore, it is a bad thing. It wasn't even talked about it.

Speaker 1: Any final words on Jane and Louisa?

Speaker 2: No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. I think we will leave Jane and Louisa there. I just want to tell you this, when Jane ... I was in England when Jane and Louisa came off the press. And there is a little country that is near to South Africa and has a king. What's it called?

Speaker 3: Swaziland?

Speaker 2: Swaziland. Swaziland?

Speaker 3: [inaudible 00:05:16]

Speaker 2: No. Swaziland. Swaziland. Somebody from Swaziland came into my room and saw that book. She came with her three year old daughter. And she just started singing Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home, and the three of us there started playing the game. You know? [inaudible 00:05:30]. And I couldn't figure out where, how would she know about Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home in Swaziland? And that same English class that comes up to me like once a year, they were some St. Lucian's, you know Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home?

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Kind of.

Speaker 2: You didn't know it? Okay. Well, it's from St. Lucia, somewhat from St. Lucia who started singing it and telling us about LaRosa. You have something called LaRosa.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 2: LaRosa ...

Speaker 3: [inaudible 00:05:59].

Speaker 2: Yes. Yes. Yes. You told us about that. And within this thing, Jane and Louisa was played because she played it in a different way than we played. So Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home was not just a Jamaican thing, which I thought it was. I have not been able to track down how these things move from one culture to the other. I thought it had to do with the wives of Christian ministers who might be spending some time teaching people the games that they knew. But I haven't been able to examine that, and I haven't heard anybody say that they have heard these games played in England. They probably are played here because the American missionaries did quite a lot of work all around the place, but I don't know yet and I haven't seen anybody doing this work, which I believe should be done. I don't want to be the person to jump up and do it.

Speaker 1: Tracking down the travel ...

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 1: ... of Jane and Louisa?

Speaker 2: Not just Jane and Louisa, there are a number of things like that, things which are in our culture, games in our culture, which are not in the [inaudible 00:07:05] and are not in our language and are played in straight English. Where did they come from? Have we had to transform them? Where did they come from? I still don't know. So that's Jane and Louisa remains at that level, a question sang from me. What's it doing in Swaziland? And how did it get to St. Lucia?

Speaker 1: Hopefully someone will pursue that project.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I hope so. Mm-hmm (affirmative)- I hope so.

Speaker 1: And this is when, around the time that it was first published?

Speaker 2: First published that I had this experience with this girl from Swaziland.

Speaker 1: In England?

Speaker 2: In England where we are both ... were both at ... we were both at ... I forget the place where we were at. What is in England? We were both at some university in England where I was, but I forget the name of it.

Speaker 1: Was it in London or somewhere else?

Speaker 2: Outside of London. That place where they claim they have a beach, ...

Speaker 1: Oh.

Speaker 2: ... which is just a joke because of the rocks.

Speaker 1: Sussex?

Speaker 2: Sussex.

Speaker 1: And Brighton?

Speaker 2: Yes. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Speaker 1: That's not a beach?

Speaker 2: That's just a set of stones. As a matter of fact, a Nigerian fellow took photographs of us. We were sitting in lawn chairs with our umbrellas on the beach in Brighton.

Speaker 1: Different landscape.

Speaker 2: Yes. In our raincoats and our umbrellas on the beach in Brighton. Yes.

Speaker 1: Well, thank you so much for talking to me and answering the questions.

Speaker 2: It's been a pleasure. It's been a pleasure.

Nicole Spigner: Well first off of course I'm sure everybody's been saying this, but really thank you, and I mean that. Not only for doing this, and this type of thing this interview and spending time with us one on one, but just all the time you've been spending. Last night was really, like I said, it was really fantastic. And your work is generating a lot of conversation, as the conversation we have in the room and the how it trickles out and so, I just wanted to take knowledge how much you're making a ripple in our environment in such a really wonderful way so.

Dr. E. Brodber: Yes, and I have to thank you too, 'cause I've never had so much positive feedback. It's been a lot and I appreciate it.

Nicole Spigner: Well I'm happy to give it. So I wanted to just start off kind of an extension of last night. And thinking about the Kishwana story, and talking about it as a love story, right? And one of the students asked if you would ever write a novel. I guess she was presuming that was a love story, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought you said no 'cause you're too invested in the politics.

Dr. E. Brodber: Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Nicole Spigner: But I think what I noticed about Kishwana was that it was both. Right? But it's absolutely a love story. So I guess my question for you is what makes your work not love story and makes it political?

Dr. E. Brodber: I suppose it's the intention. My intention in Kishwana was to show sort of this silliness of our political system, where these 2 political parties who are fighting all the time. And it just happens that one of the ways to show how silly it is by having 2 young people, 2 very intelligent young people, break this bond.

Nicole Spigner: I appreciate that. One of the things that Professor Daen said, and I know that I've had conversations with Professor Montco also, in terms of ideas of politics. One of the things I've heard them both say, and what was said last night, is kind of the idea that all things are political right? All writing is political. Even when it, especially maybe, when it tries to pretend like it's not political. Maybe. And I was just wondering if you had any thoughts about that because I know that was thrown into the room.

Dr. E. Brodber: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Well I suppose most people have a political position whether they articulate it or not, or whether they even know that they have it or not. So from that point of view if you open your mouth, if you're right, if you communicate at all, you tend to make at political statement.

Nicole Spigner: Do you think that your work is writing, in terms of politics is your work, are you thinking about kind of larger ... this kind of thing? Whether the idea of being overt about your politics, is that a deliberate kind of move? Or is it just kind of

the way that you write? And the reason why I ask that is because you talked about how their stories just kind of came. So then thinking about how deliberate you bring politics into your writing, I'm asking.

Dr. E. Brodber: Well I mightn't have brought it as deliberately as I normally do in these short stories here. But I do think about the politics when I'm writing and I do set out to make the point. I say myself sometimes I write because I don't have the confidence to get up and stand up and preach.

Nicole Spigner: That's interesting 'cause we're going to talk about Myal, right? And that there's so much about preaching, and what that means in that book. Going to ask a couple questions first.

In terms of politics one of the things I keep seeing in your work are ideas of blackness.

Dr. E. Brodber: Definitely

Nicole Spigner: And recovering blackness, and I'm wondering, and also African-ness. I wanted to ask how you defined African-ness. What is African-ness to you?

Dr. E. Brodber: Well I suppose African-ness is a culture, it's a cultural thing. Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Nicole Spigner: Can you say a little bit more?

Dr. E. Brodber: I'm sort of hesitant because I haven't examined that question in a long long time. But when I did long ago from the days of black power I had come to the conclusion that it's as you saw it's not color, and it's hardly even race. It is culture. Okay? You know Rastafarians? Alright, well there was a time when Rastafarians were black. Rastafarians have become white also. And people have been bothered about that. What I've always said, anybody who can say Haile Selassie is divine, by whatever color, is making a black cultural statement. And therefore, they're black.

Nicole Spigner: Interesting. That's very similar to something, well, the question that you let hang in the air last night about what makes a Caribbean writer?

Dr. E. Brodber: Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative). I still don't know.

Nicole Spigner: Right. So then, what is the difference, is there a difference between African-ness for you and blackness?

Dr. E. Brodber: I don't think so. Do I use the two terms? I don't think so, I don't know, I don't really know. I haven't thought [inaudible 00:06:07]. Blackness, and

African-ness. Well I think blackness comes with African-ness. I don't think it came from black, without being African.

Nicole Spigner: But you can't be white and be black at the same time.

Dr. E. Brodber: But I think you can be white and be black. I don't say it's easy, no. I don't say it's easy because it takes a revolution.

Nicole Spigner: When you're writing ... Well first of all, first question. When I'm reading your writing I'm think of your writing of storytelling, right? Specifically storytelling. I think in part because of the way you marry, spoken language and written language so beautifully. And almost seamlessly.

I was wondering how storytelling factors into, or your writing specifically, but how storytelling factors into your ideas of recovering blackness.

Dr. E. Brodber: Well, one of the things about storytelling is that they can operate as parables. Like in the Bible. [inaudible 00:07:23] sewing, and what Jesus really wanted to say was, was you've got to be ready to take the word. Okay? So the story, very often, is like a quoted pill. People take it, because it is a story. And then, having put it in their mouth or in their body, it becomes what it really is. So I think the story is an easy form to injecting something into somebody's system.

Nicole Spigner: Would it be fair to say you're deliberately injecting?

Dr. E. Brodber: Deliberately injecting, yes.

Nicole Spigner: One other question that's tangently related, but. How do you, or do you, use the language of African diaspora? And if so, what does African diaspora mean to you?

Dr. E. Brodber: I use the language that I use in my head. And if that is African diaspora then I suppose I am African diaspora, or whatever it is. African diaspora to me, means the rest of us were not in Africa. Africa descended people, Africa derived people. Were especially those who claim it.

Nicole Spigner: Okay, so if you don't claim it you're not of the diaspora.

Dr. E. Brodber: If you don't claim it you can't be. If you don't claim something you can't be it. I suppose you can be, but you are very rarely it. Seriously, it. If you claim it, it becomes part of you.

Nicole Spigner: So is that also a-

Dr. E. Brodber: Tell me why you have a question about African diaspora.

Nicole Spigner: Because. My experience with the language is that it changes depending on who you're talking to. I think that about language in general but particularly some of these terms that are filled with so much meaning.

The question came to me specifically from an experience I had where I was in a room with a bunch of black scholars, and the question of diaspora came up. And we were trying to think of an image, to represent, African diaspora. And I was like, well, Africa. And somebody corrected me and said, "Well to everyone Africa is not the center of diaspora."

And so, my next question was going to be about where is the center?

Dr. E. Brodber: And that was answered? Or not?

Nicole Spigner: Well I don't know.

Dr. E. Brodber: You didn't get to ask it?

Nicole Spigner: No. I mean, no. It was one of those things that was left.

Dr. E. Brodber: Well I suppose diaspora doesn't have any center. Diaspora is a spread so it doesn't really have any center. The diaspora will have to create a center, mark a scavenge right [inaudible 00:10:13] but it remained New York. But I also don't think Africa is the center, because Africa and it's diaspora. So the diaspora is really something different from Africa. And the diaspora has to make up its mind now if it going to create a center.

Nicole Spigner: So the claiming blackness, inside of this conversation, I'm not saying that this is how you usually talking about it. But the claiming, is that about, I mean is that about community? What would it mean for people to claim the diaspora?

Dr. E. Brodber: To claim the diaspora of Africa. Because in the Caribbean, for instance, everybody is diaspora. Everybody came from somewhere else. You're a splinter from somewhere else. So, could you repeat your question?

Nicole Spigner: So my question is, I'm trying to find a way to reframe it. My question is, the idea, you said that diaspora is made up of people who claim, being a part of the African diaspora. So then my question is, what does claiming do? What does-

Dr. E. Brodber: I suppose for me what claiming does is puts you as a worker. You ask the question about where is the center. Well, if it's a political thing, most political things really require ascent. And whether they have headless tribes in east Africa and all like that. But if you're going to be really working toward something you really need a center. And it requires a lot of work, a lot of thinking through. And if you are not claiming to be part of the diaspora, the

African diaspora, then we might as well push you out. You're just sitting, you're just taking up seat.

Nicole Spigner: So then thinking about diaspora also, or just thinking about blackness, or African-ness however you want to talk about it. How do you see, cause I've heard you talking about how African Americans, and Jamaicans, should have more communication with one another. So my question is how do you see, African Americans and Jamaicans, what are the similarities that they share that could maybe help orchestrate that conversation?

Dr. E. Brodber: Well there's many similarities. Wherever we go we are the people in prison, for one thing. Diabetes. And this one here, uterine growths, which we share with all of Africa and the diaspora, not just the diaspora. So there is that.

Then there are the links which we have actually made, we have worked together for. Certainly the Gavi movement, it was not just Caribbean people it was African American people as well. And pulling out a lot of other things like this, where meetings have been happening, building in a religious organization first and it's called the African Hebrew, Israelites... I think it's the African Hebrews, I'm not quite sure Israelite is on to it. But that is something which both groups made, came together to make.

I'm not saying they said "Let us sit down now and have[inaudible 00:13:44]." Yeah but, the idea was here, the idea was there and the people came together. Some established over here, the others established over here, and I know that African Americans came over into Jamaica, and set up.

Nicole Spigner: So then how do West Indians in the United States, who are already in the United States, factor into that conversation?

Dr. E. Brodber: Well they factor big time because many of them are denying that they have any links at all with the African Americans. So they will have to meet their declarations. Find their place in it all, and stop pulling away from African Americans.

Nicole Spigner: What kind of conversations would you like to see us having?

Dr. E. Brodber: Us? Who is us now?

Nicole Spigner: Oh sorry. What conversations would you like to see African Americans and Caribbean people having?

Dr. E. Brodber: Well, one of the conversations would be, as a conversation I would like to start with African American. Why did you call us monkey chasers? Can't figure it out myself.

Nicole Spigner: What's the history with-

Dr. E. Brodber: You didn't know we were called monkey chasers. I don't know. But it's something long, long, long in our past from Westerners coming here. And African Americans resenting, course we're called monkey chasers. Of course we kept on talking how African Americans were crude. And you called us skin chargers, Negros, and stuff like that. So there's a lot of throwing words at each other.

So I'd like us to sit down and figure out what it is Africans Americans claim that we came here, and we would breaks tracks, they were standing up for something. West Indians could be depended on to come in and take the jobs. There has not, they felt, been the kind of cooperation that has made them face white space and conquer. Because they've come in and they've split the ranks.

So we need to stop splitting the ranks. If we are to be charged, we should say we're sorry, and move on from that. I think a lot of we're sorry should be said.

Nicole Spigner: So would it be fair to say that first step is a healing conversation?

Dr. E. Brodber: Oh definitely! There must be healing, healing, healing. And before healing come the admission of guilt.

Nicole Spigner: Do you envision that leading to a sense of community?

Dr. E. Brodber: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I envision it to leading to a sense of community. And I envision it leading to, in the political with a big P sense, you have things called the north-south dialogue, and the south-south dialogue. I think the south-south dialogue needs to be put fully on the front burner. We're working out, of course as people say, "African Americans are Americans first before they are anything else." So they would have to do a bit of reorganizing of their head to see what is the point.

I've even heard African Americans in England taking aim at West Indians in England and separating themselves just as West Indians have come and separate themselves from African Americans. American young people have seen, coming across to do some studies, wanting to separate themselves from the West Indians that they see in England. And "These are not our people, these couldn't be our people." That kind of thing.

So even there, there needs to be this talk. There needs to be this "Hey, we're the same. We're the same, we can start building together."

Nicole Spigner: What is the cause for the separation? Why do you think these claims of separation are happening?

Dr. E. Brodber: Well because, nobody wants to be at the bottom. We're fighting to be not at the bottom. And when you're not at the bottom you need to push somebody else down there. So it gets as bad as that, that you need to push somebody else down there. If you are to be number two, you need to push somebody into number one. So you push on the number one bodies and you just become number two. So it starts trouble for the best, and the best stings as well.

Nicole Spigner: Or the not worst.

So now I wanna ask a question, thinking about the role of my colleagues, the grad students here in the US. And I'm wondering if you think that there are any particular tools that we, in thinking of the critical side of literature. If there are any tools that you think specifically that you think we could use in order to help with these conversations.

Dr. E. Brodber: I think that as grad students, as researchers, you can make your frame of reference, spread out. I think I've given this example somewhere we are already.

When I was a graduate student, doing the studies of the family, I could not understand how come significant people whose names can't remember now, could be studying the family, the black family and not study the West Indian family. The West Indian family was the only [inaudible 00:20:03] and nobody was even comparing the works that had been done in the West Indian family with a black family here. I could not understand that! I could not understand that.

And this would one time it would matter frame of reference. Cause if they were using a frame of reference we say black, rather than African American, they could not miss. And there's so much opportunity for the comparity of study and to make a statement, which links our common African past with the shape of the families here.

I just couldn't understand it. With that kind of thing graduate students can do.

Nicole Spigner: You said, I've seen in interviews, that you see, that you've called yourself an intellectual [crosstalk 00:20:57]. Can you tell me what that means?

Dr. E. Brodber: Well, it means that, it's a response to the notion of the academic are separated from the people. From the academic who's in this ivory tower. And I don't think that in our situation, in the Caribbean, in black Caribbean or black US, we can afford to have a set of people who are in any ivory tower. We're separated from the people. And we all have the same history. We all have the same things to surmount as individuals and as a group. And so we have to think of ourself as a group, we have to think of ourself as part.

When I was here in the 1960's in the black power days, they had something to say like this. "What do you call a black man with a PhD? Boy. What do you call a black man without going sir?" So we had to understand that the PhD doesn't mean anything in view of the world of politics. So we have to wheel and come again, and look and get ourselves in with the people. And know that every one of us is working, has to work to change our situation. And it just happens that the skills that you have are intellectual skills. So you have to put them into the working. Just as a plumber has the skills of plumbing, your skills are intellectual. Go to work.

Speaker 1: Have to help things to get better.

Speaker 2: So doing just the academic work is not enough?

Speaker 1: Doing the academic work, it is enough, but it is not enough for you to be sitting over the side and looking on. You have to get inside there and one of the things you have to do is, since you're working with ideas, you have to help people to be thinking. Help people to think, and help them to shape ideas, and work with them to shape ideas towards this and that. You are ... your skills are intellectual, but they have to be located, you have to locate yourself within the system, OK, and work within the system.

Speaker 2: Okay. Can we move in to talking about the novel now? Well, we'll talk about novel writing first. I think you've answered this but just in case you have some more to say, do you see your writing, your creative writing, as community work? How is it community work?

Speaker 1: Well, because I write about the community, and I take as it were, people's private, private things, and write about them. These are their things that I am taking and writing about, and I must give it back to them somehow. It is community property that has allowed me, because I'm a daughter, or a sister, or a mother. They've allowed me to look and to see and to talk. What is real, I am speaking for them, out of their consciousness. So, it's a community ... it's community data that I'm using.

Speaker 2: How might Myal, specifically, the novel, work inside of conversations about recovering blackness?

Speaker 1: That to us, there are four people there. All African, for instance, has something to offer. The Baptist man has something to offer. The Mother Hen has something to offer. And even the white lady, White Hen, has something to offer. White Hen has married a black man, so she really has some responsibilities, and in any case, there are things that she knows by virtue of the fact that her father had books, and she can bring something to the table. So, these people, four or five or however many of them, must work together to find definitions, and so they are the intellectual workers.

Speaker 2: How did you end up coming to write Myal?

Speaker 1: Well, because I think I feel ... I felt that ... I had to talk about we are the people to, and in the position of the intellectual. And that, that was the idea that I had to flesh out through that. And then on another level, I had met, I knew about the connections between Africa-Caribbean and Africa-US through some work I had been doing on a set of books called [inaudible 00:03:53] which are used by spirit workers, and they're used here as well as over in, that's why they come from Chicago, yes, over into the Caribbean, or certainly went to Jamaica. So it's one of

the links. So, I wanted to look at these spirit workers at work, the Baptist Man, the old African, and I wanted as well to use, or explore for myself, Myal, the concept of Myal, and experience it for myself.

Speaker 2: I was going to ask you-

Speaker 1: What is Myal?

Speaker 2: ...exactly.

Speaker 1: Well, Myal is a state, I don't know how much you know or how much if it happens in the US, because I haven't seen the work and I don't know anybody who's doing the work on spirits, when people fall in prayer meetings or something like that, when people are invaded by the spirit. Do you have that happening here? People invaded by the spirit, yes. The state of invasion is a Myal. They always say, "People have gone into Myal."

Speaker 2: So in Pentecostal churches, there's-

Speaker 1: Catch the spirit.

Speaker 2: ...like in Santeria, it's possession, in Voudu it's being written...

Speaker 1: But it is still being possessed. You know of them here?

Speaker 2: Do I know specifically who's doing what?

Speaker 1: Do you know that this happens on your continent?

Speaker 2: Yes, absolutely it does, in all three places. In Christianity, and Voudu, and Santeria, all of that is present here. In Yoruba, some people have stripped Santeria and Voudu names off of it and are practicing it.

Speaker 1: Just Yoruba? I had heard of it. I have friends in Oklahoma, but I have never, I haven't seen anything written on that here, it's, I guess. So I wanted to investigate that, OK, and before I, before I started to write, I did an interview with a number of ... at least, did some detailed interviews with about four healers [inaudible 00:06:26] whatever it is, spiritualists. But you know something? I was watching the Pope, that business of the Pope, and somebody was talking about one, I think he was an American cardinal, talking about the process and how we wait for the Holy Spirit, and we sat down there, and we waited until the Holy Spirit guided us, and this and that. And he said, "Well, what is the difference? What is the difference?"

Speaker 2: We also have Quaker history, and the Quakers also sit and wait.

Speaker 1: They wait for the spirit.

Speaker 2: And they will sit in a meeting room until things start to happen.

Speaker 1: Does it come with a loud noise? How does the spirit come?

Speaker 2: I don't have an answer to that question.

Speaker 1: OK, because the spirit with the cardinals came very quietly, but our spirit, the African spirit, has a way of coming with a great deal of noise, as I suppose it seemed that the Day of Pentecost had a lot of noise going on there ... and sometimes, you plain and simple want to record thing. Myal helped me to record Reverend Simpson, the Baptist minister. I heard about this man, my aunt used to talk about him as one of the ... Anglican minister in the village before I was born, and how he had served in Africa, and he came back and told him about Africa, and told him about things like the spirit and all that. So I wanted, as well, to record Reverend Simpson's contribution to thought.

Speaker 2: So then, what's the connection between catching the spirit and spirit stealing?

Speaker 1: Oh, well, catching the spirit is the spirit that is outside there, OK, which God has sent, and you're blessed when it falls on you. I don't really like the word catching, when a spirit descends on you, OK, and it sends you to do particular tasks. No, stealing the spirit is stealing it, taking it from somebody who has it, and then finding a way of undermining them by taking away the spirit, because we are all, we are all spirit. We are all spirit. All of us have spirit, and spirit is what send us forth and make us do X, Y, and Zed. What is spirit can be ... you can get more spirit from the outside, you know what I'm saying?

Even those people who have not caught the spirit, or God has not sent the spirit to descend on them, that what has God sent is an extra thing, OK, because everybody is spirit what sends an extra thing. Some people mightn't get anything extra and they have just their basic spirit, and somebody comes in and steals that, as in, I mean, we heard about, we hear about a case like in Haiti where you can be zombified.

Speaker 2: Which is what happens to Ella. So, I, I'm thinking about a lot of other questions that (laughing) are coming from this conversation. And I guess the, the next question for me is ... you, I also read an interview, you talking about ... spirit stealing as connected particularly to colonialism. So then, how does Myal work, right?

Speaker 1: It has to work contrary to, it has to fill the spaces which, which, the spirit stealers have taken. The spirit stealers come and take your spirit away, and leave you to walk as zombies, OK, at their direction or no direction at all, OK. What the Myal people know will bring you a spirit, help to guide you back into your spiritual self, give you back your spirit.

Speaker 2: So is being an intellectual worker, because this is how you talked about the community in the book, is that if people working as a group of intellectuals workers, or a community of intellectual workers, are they performing Myal?

Speaker 1: Yes. You're supposed to be, you are, one of the things you're supposed to be is to be helping people to get their back their spirit. That is one of the functions an intellectual should have, to help people back to their spirit.

Speaker 2: Can you tell that directly to what you mean about blackness?

Speaker 1: Yes, so that ... I think in one of those lectures, I talked about the old people that I had met with a lot of black spirit, African spirits, and the young people coming up, all those DJs, were now finding that black spirit. What the intellectual can do is pull these things together so that the young have a better understanding of what the old are saying, and so on, and out of the old, the young can be ... you can be less theory. Ethereal blackness, whatever it is, that can guide people and people's action.

Speaker 2: I have read, and this is not in your work, but I have read that Myal is an antidote to Obeah. Do you believe that?

Speaker 1: Well, I am not in a position to believe with either one of them, because I don't ... I don't ... I don't really practice, practice one or the other in the real terms, except in the sense of the intellectual that we've been talking about. But I don't think I've ever crossed the spirit, at which I try not to be wary if I can catch the spirits, OK? And well, of course, they say that Obeah is bad. I don't know that it is. I've talked to people, one or two people who, who have been said to be Obeah men, but I haven't seen, I think that if you have the strength to do something bad, you must also have the strength to do something good, so something has to come along now to make you use that strength which you have in a positive way. So I'm not going to be, I'm not going to be, to be charging any of them Obeah men guilty of anything. I will be charging people around him guilty of not helping him to transform the power that he has into something positive.

Speaker 2: In Myal, [inaudible 00:14:05] criticizes the Baptist minister's exercise-and-replace kind of way of doing his ministry, and she actually even accuses him of-

Speaker 1: That's a Methodist, her husband.

Speaker 2: ...her husband, sorry, sorry. She accuses him of, and this is my language, infantilizing. Is that fair?

Speaker 1: Of what?

Speaker 2: Infantilizing, making children of-

Speaker 1: Making children of these people who know their way, declaring that something is wrong with their way so they have to come back as children and learn his way, or learn the way that he was taught in England.

Speaker 2: In the story, then, does Christianity represent colonialism?

Speaker 1: They're close. They're close. The kind of Christianity he was going with.

Speaker 2: I've also heard you, I've read you saying that though you don't see a conflict between people who practice things like Myal and even maybe, I don't know that you said this specifically, but maybe Obeah and Christianity, so how does Christianity get transformed by these other spiritual practices?

Speaker 1: I don't know if it is Christianity being transformed or coming in laterally. You have your things going, and then you say, "Well, the Day of Pentecost did take place," so you can say, "Well, what was happening there was Myal, it's just that the Bible has chosen not to use that term," you understand? So it not necessarily that it is transforming, you are transforming it, but you see, you see the connections as I am telling you in the connections that I saw when I was watching the discussion about the Pope? They were sitting there waiting for the Holy Spirit just like a Myal man might wait for a Holy Spirit, or whatever spirit. A person would dance and dance and dance until the spirit lights on you.

Speaker 2: So I want to interrogate the Christianity-as-colonialism just a little bit more. Then does, is there a way, how would the Reverend ... how would William, right .... how could he practice and not be replicating colonialism?

Speaker 1: Well, I think he would have to join some more with the Baptist priests and talk some more about, with the Baptist priests, exhort-ish and about ... you have Myal, do you have the book there? All right, the exhortation about ... Egypt. There's a long, longish speech where he's preaching, and his voice is going up and he's looking like a, like the dog with the collar, and he's talking about, "we need a Moses," OK, OK. So one of the things that the Methodist man could do was to sit down and shape what their Moses, think about what their Moses would be like, instead of trying to make people look like, "Take off, stop wearing a head tie and put a hat on your head," so you could look like the Christians, or the head tie for him, which might represent Africa, taking it away from people and giving them this other thing. For us, he could start, stop making people put on their head tie and put on a hat.

Speaker 2: That just makes me think, one of the ways, as an Africa-American, because I do primarily African-Americanist work, not exclusively but primarily, and I just finished working on a 19th century book by Pauline Hopkins, and in it, the main character-

Speaker 1: What's it called?

Speaker 2: ...oh, Of One Blood.

Speaker 1: Yes, yes. I've read it.

Speaker 2: So one of the characters in there, the way she connects to her African-ness is through this song, "Go Down Moses," right? And I thought about this, right, how Moses is both Christian but is also very African, right? Because, well, it's at least a story in Africa and it's about freedom. So anyway, I just, I was thinking about that and thinking about how are ... how literature is, I think, one of those ways that we can use some of these (laughing) bridge some of these conversations because we use a lot of the same language.

Speaker 1: But you also probably know, see, for instance in Rastafari, they claim that the Bible is about black people, and Blyden, Edward Blyden, you know the name Edward Blyden? When Blyden does his exegesis on Philip, Philip the eunuch, all goes into Ethiopia's contribution to the world, and goes through the Bible and shows that so much of what happened, happened in Ethiopia, and happened to Ethiopians, and showing that the Bible really is about, is about black people. So that is one of the things that [inaudible 00:19:45] husband could be helping to tell people: "This is about you." Because Christianity has a way of treating black people as if they are foster children instead of born to the master.

Speaker 2: It was used against black people a lot, historically, in both places. If there are only two, there's not just two, but in all of these places, yeah. I'm going to switch a little bit. A lot of what I read in your work has to do with memory. Is that fair to say?

Speaker 1: Some, yes. Some.

Speaker 2: I wondered how memory works with identity for you. In your work, or if you think about those two things.

Speaker 1: Well, I'm thinking about it now that you raise it. You choose to remember, there's a part of you that chooses to remember, and what you remember, therefore, defines you and gives your identity what you choose to remember.

Speaker 2: So Ella, right, who gives her memories away, so to speak...

Speaker 1: Yes, she gives them away to that spirit thief.

Speaker 2: So how do you share your memories and keep your identity is the question.

Speaker 1: Wel, you have to be very careful about them, very careful about them. I share them with people who have your best interests at heart, and who can help you to forward them.

Speaker 2: That feels ... your work is so public, right? I mean, you can't control who ends up having your work. So it's funny, because I wonder what the tension is about that. How, because I'm thinking of memory ... I'm thinking of memory and identity and intellectual work all kind of being in a pool together. Then how, once it's out there it's out there. How do you keep it safe for yourself?

Speaker 1: There's something called hope and there's something called faith, and you just have to hold on to them, and hope that the right people read this stuff and the right people forward it. I don't think you can do very much more than that. You can write, you can write in a code which only some people, like, I have a friend and she's Hungarian ...

Erna Brodber: In England, what very much into black movements and all of that, and we went to a conference, both of us, and she was arguing that Caribbean and black people have to write in a particular way because they have to make their work available, accessible to white people because white people will have to help them to carry this and that forward.

Afterwards we talk and then she finally said, she was talking, reading something, which she didn't understand in my work and she said, "Well, don't worry, I know you're not writing for white people so it's okay." So what I mean is that, you can write in a kind of code, which you know because you know the vocabulary of black speech and of black ideas and a black thing. Because, let me just ... when I was here in the late 1960s, they had a ... What you call it, an IQ test for black people, made in the black community, it was a joke, and it would say ... One of the things it said, "What is a gray mare?" A gray mare, G-R-A-Y M-A-R-E, is a white woman but unless you know, you can't know.

So if you hear a song and somebody is talking about a gray mare, only those who have the language would know what you're talking about, and then that is what I'm saying is that there are ... if your ears are to the ground you know the language and the references and you can use them in such a way. I think a number of writers do that, that only some people will be able to ... And I always think if you write on various levels, some people can access the immediate floor level and others can go up further if they have the references and they have the vocabulary.

So that is one of the ways that you can control or you can keep the message.

Speaker 2: That sounds like ... The woman who was worried about how her voice is getting usurped by her program.

Erna Brodber: Yes, okay.

Speaker 2: I want her to hear that answer. You know? I want her to hear that you can embed yourself all the time.

Erna Brodber: Yes, you can write a thing in straight English, and some people can't access it.

Speaker 2: Right.

Erna Brodber: The gray mare, those are two English words.

Speaker 2: One of the things I keep hearing you joke about with the stories is that no one can complain that-

Erna Brodber: They can't access it.

Speaker 2: Right. And this is actually something that did come up with the group of students who were reading your work together before you came. There were several, but this is just one group. Came up the question about accessibility in your work. And I hadn't planned on actually asking you this, but can you talk about that a little bit? Because I have heard that your work is really hard.

Erna Brodber: Yes, but you've read it, so you tell me.

Speaker 2: My answer to that is that it's no harder than Faulkner or Shakespeare, or, you know? My answer has been that it's about language, right? And I think that if you come from outside of, particularly Jamaica, that some of the language is harder for you, so I think that your work asks us to work.

Erna Brodber: Yes, you have to work. But I had to work with Shakespeare, I had to work with Walter Scott. We had to work with all of those people, and we worked, and we got through. So really we're getting...

Speaker 2: I don't know, I don't know what I wanted to hear you say about that, I just think, well first of all, I...

Erna Brodber: And some of the accessibility I suppose might be designed. I don't expect everybody to understand what Myal is, especially since it's not explained in the book. But if you really want to know, you go to the computer, the internet, and find out what Myal is. And those people who know what Myal is will pick up right away, you know. So inaccessible means, I suppose, not being able to enter right away.

Speaker 2: I feel like though, often, my personal experience with those conversations are usually conversations of people who are used to having things accessible to them all the time.

Erna Brodber: Is, let me see now, is Toni Morrison accessible?

Speaker 2: A lot of people claim, "No."

Erna Brodber: Yes, because she's writing out of her culture. She's writing out of her culture. So I remember talking about... just sitting in an ordinary conversation with African Americans, and saying, "Belov-ed," and some would say, "You did not say beloved, you said belov-ed." I said, "Yes." They said, "Well, that is odd." Because that is what Morrison wants us to say, "Belov-ed." And that is what, if you are at a religious church, they'll say, "The belov-ed." The church talks about the belov-ed. And so, she wants us to say belov-ed. That's coming out of her religious environment, belov-ed. So I suppose, if you get belov-ed, you can get some other parts of what she's saying. But if you can't get belov-ed, you're probably stuck.

Speaker 2: You have to do the work. So what we've been just talking about has to do with voice, yeah? And can we talk a little bit... can I just ask you to talk a little bit about the way your text... you talked about code switching last night, how your text code switched, and how that happens in your book? How books... how you make those decisions about when... the change happens? [crosstalk 00:06:40]

Erna Brodber: This is a question somebody has asked, how do I make... when I change... of course, the characters, the words you put in the character's mouth will be very... will represent how the characters... the character's status, and all like that. So you will have to switch as characters speak. But you talk about the author's voice, I don't know that my voice actually moves, I don't know, which it probably does, because I was given an honor by the government of the Netherlands, and when I read the stuff about why I was so being honored, it had to do with my use of language.

And I was really quite surprised, because I didn't know that I was using language any different from anybody else, because it just seems to me you can't be writing about a farmer and use the language the Prime Minister uses, you have to use the language of the farmer, so that seemed quite ordinary to me. And in my own writing, I write as I speak, and I don't think I speak necessarily English, and I certainly don't speak Jamaican, I speak what comes to my head, okay.

Speaker 2: What does voice, in Myal, what does voice mean? How does voice work in the novel?

Erna Brodber: Can you break that down for me some more?

Speaker 2: Yeah. We'll start with Ella, because her voice seizes, right? It stops. That's the first thing that happens, is she goes quiet when she sees...

Erna Brodber: What has happened to her, what she's given her husband.

Speaker 2: So why is voice the first thing that she loses?

Erna Brodber: Well, isn't voice the thing that indicates that you have spirit?

Speaker 2: Is it?

Erna Brodber: It's one of the things, okay, at least it seems to me. When you really get mentally disturbed, one of the things that very often... of course you can make a lot of noise, but one of the ways that people know is that you withdraw, you withdraw your voice. So voice is very significant to live, it's evidence that you're alive, that you're in the group, you're voicing. If you're not voicing, then you're

kinda dead, or you're dead to that section of the group. So I suppose that's how I see voice, if you're not talking, you're not...

Speaker 2: There's also a lot of sound happening. I think all the time I've heard you call your novels lyrical novels.

Erna Brodber: I didn't call them that, those reviewers called it.

Speaker 2: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought I heard you say that... when you were talking about the short stories versus... okay. So reviewers have called your stories lyrical. And in Myal there's music, right?

Erna Brodber: Yes, there is music. You tell me how you come by that.

Speaker 2: How did I come by that... well there's literally music, yeah? There's music, there's musicians, there's drumming, yeah? Am I making that up?

Erna Brodber: I don't remember. I know that there's music, there's singing in Louisiana. But I don't know that there's actors performing in Myal.

Speaker 2: Okay, well then that's gonna be hard. Because I was going to ask the difference between voice and sound.

Erna Brodber: But that's a... I'm glad you asked me that question because when I'm writing, I sometimes go into other art forms. And for me, Myal was... I was telling people I'm going to do music on wood, you know, which is like the violin. So Myal for me is music on wood. And I'm not quite sure I know how to tell you music on wood, except that there's a... wood is a hard, there's a hard base there, and people are playing their little things, the characters are playing their things on top of the wood. So I was taking it back when you said "The music in Myal," because Myal is a particular kind of music for me. I was hearing a particular kind of music.

Speaker 2: You were hearing wood?

Erna Brodber: I was seeing wood, I was seeing the strings on top of the wood, which would be guitar or violin or one of those stringed instruments.

Speaker 2: So did you see... you saw the characters on the strings?

Erna Brodber: I saw the characters as the strings, you know the characters making the music, making the stringed sounds on top of the wood.

Speaker 2: Then, when Ella falls silent, we lose a key, right? Or a whole line of keys. A whole tone.

Erna Brodber: Or there's no vocals along with that music at that time. And then you have rest in music, you know, where it goes silent.

Speaker 2: Can we talk about Ella's strangeness?

Erna Brodber: Okay.

Speaker 2: What makes her strange?

Erna Brodber: Ella is strange because she lives in a... she be poor child, she is strange because she's a mulatto in a black... I mean, it might be odd to you, but there are places, I grew up in a place where everybody was black like me. And one or two children who were... well, we called them red-skinned, I think suffered. And ethic is very hard, a lot of Jamaicans just... I mean I hear people reviewing and talk about people jealous of Ella. Well we weren't really jealous of Ella. They're only jealous of Ella because they know that with Ella's odd colors she could get places, but they knew that Ella was uncomfortable. And so they weren't jealous of Ella's discomfort, okay. And I know, I can think for instance of my aunt talking about... she came into this, we went into this very black village. Most of the people were only like two generations away from slavery. And she came, as sort of, well... if not a mulatto, at least sambo, and the village was lined up against her, especially as she came in and married one of the most distinguished of their sons, okay.

I remember her talking about that, and I know, even going to elementary school, all those brown-skinned children must have suffered because they were called all sorts of names, okay. So color is not just... certainly in the Jamaican situation, color is not just black people suffering. Red people suffer as well, suffer from black people. And in some of the... certainly one of the reports I've read from women talking about slavery, one of them told me about how when Massa want his work to carry true, he would get a mulatto and tie up dead parts on the mulatto and put it... and everybody wants to work faster, get away from this person, okay.

So it's a long time, since... it is there, and when I write Beverly, Beverly in that set of stories there, Beverly is for the brow-skinned people I know who have suffered. But we've pretended, I don't know where there's pretense, that they have not suffered as all the black, black, black-skinned people have suffered. Everybody carries their little burden of suffering and we have to recognize each of those suffering, okay. So you ask me about why she's strange, she's strange because she's... and her hair, everybody has these little... hair like mine. And then you have this girl with hair, part like there's two pieces hanging down. You can't... I just say you can't fight, you can't fight with that. Everybody must be able to thump you now, hold on to your head, here, right, and pull your scalp. You can't pull her scalp, you can't [inaudible 00:14:42]

Speaker 2: So is she more fragile?

Erna Brodber: She would have been more fragile because she knew she wasn't a part of things. And in the case, poor Ella's father didn't have a name. He was a white man who couldn't come into the village, couldn't or wouldn't come into the village. And her mother wouldn't leave, so she didn't have a paternal side, so she really wasn't too much by her village.

Speaker 2: This does actually make me think about blackness in the United States, and maybe one of the things that is different, and I've heard this talked about in terms of the way slavery was done in the United States versus the way it was done in the Caribbean, and one of the things that they did in the U.S. was break folks up so we lost a lot of culture, right, because we lost language, we lost other people to share our cultures with. I'm "our-ing" us again, I'm sorry. But what also happens here, and I think happens all over the West Indies as well, but black people here are always mixed, right, with something. So the idea of just blackness is really complicated in the U.S. because there is almost no such thing as just blackness for someone who is black American, and generationally black American. Because you are probably... okay, everybody claims having some kind of Native American in them, everybody. But...

Erna Brodber: And then every black person is now Native American.

Speaker 2: Exactly, every black person has some Indian princess, it's a mess. But so many of us also... I mean like, the color in the U.S. is all over the map. Not that it isn't in the Caribbean as well, because it is, but we have so much conversation about color, that is even by degrees, right?

Erna Brodber: Oh yes, we have that too. Color is very central. We used to hear that here you have racism, but over there we have colorism. But you have them both. Okay, well that's another battle I have to fight with my African American friends who are claiming they don't have colorism here, and no matter how many books I hold out and say, "This one does and that one," they don't know what I'm saying. "We don't have colorism here."

Speaker 2: We have tons of colorism here.

Erna Brodber: Of course we have tons of colorism, okay.

Speaker 2: One of the things that I am interested in you talking about Ella, and then talking also about the history of how mixed people are treated in Jamaica, but I have not heard of any cases in the U.S. where someone would be... like someone who was an enslaved mulatta would be used to ward off other people. Like, I just...

Erna Brodber: Yeah, you haven't... alright, well what happened in our situation there is that the mulattos, the coloreds, were freed before blacks, okay. And they felt as if they were in a caste by themselves, and of course it didn't suit them to speak to their mother, so they had that cutoff there. So there's been antagonism between the coloreds and the blacks in Jamaica. And I believe a lot of the rest of the Caribbean, okay. Which they probably didn't have here, because the coloreds were suffering as much as the blacks here, so you could make common cause. But it took a long time for them to make common cause, okay. I'm telling you this now, it sounds very bad, but I'm telling you all the same. An old lady once told me that her people told her that if you see a brown man, colored man, with a sore on his foot, step in it. Because if you ever help him to get that sore better, when it is better he's gonna take that foot and kick you down.

That is the kind of antagonism between brown people and black people. I'm not saying it happens now, nor that it happens everywhere, but I know that there is this underlying thing, okay.

Speaker 2: So...

Erna Brodber: So Ella vexed them. I mean, she was uncomfortable, they would say she have lice and all the rest of it, but at the same time, they were vexed not at her necessarily, they're vexed at the system, because they knew that Ella, with her little color, would build more... would get that job as a typist faster than they would.

Speaker 2: In this conversation now, I am thinking differently about the half that's never been told. What does that mean, though, well African is... I mean this is almost... I guess the thing he calls over and over again, right? So can you talk...

Erna Brodber: You talk about, how do you protect what you know? The half that's never been told. You don't tell it. You don't tell it. But there are cues that those people who need to know that other half can get in and... because the half is not going to be told, the half has to be discovered, the other half has to be discovered.

Speaker 2: I personally am tempted to call Myal a syncretic novel.

Erna Brodber: Well tell me, what is... I forget, that's anthropology's long time gone. What is syncretic novel?

Speaker 2: Well, I'm thinking particularly about religion, right? And I'm thinking... so we talked earlier a bit about... so like... Santeria, Voodoo...

Erna Brodber: I see where you're going, yes.

Speaker 2: Yeah, are syncretic religions. And I wanted to ask you first of all, if that makes sense, talking about Myal, to you.

Erna Brodber: Yes, it was also my hope that eventually they would come together, that African spiritualism would once more awake and arise. It's coming back, awake and arise. And the Afro-Christian would recognize that it is Afro-Christian and find itself over into the African spirituality, and we would be building something that is a spiritual path that is particularly ours, built out of our understandings and all like that. Thus, I suppose it's there for syncretism to be concretized.

Speaker 2: This is a... well, do you categorize your novels? Do you... yeah, do you categorize your novels in any way?

Erna Brodber: No, I don't think that I have probably done enough, because they're all coming out of... so far, they're all coming out of the same search. So they're just extensions of one search. But I suspect that if I start writing again, I will be writing a different kind of thing.

Speaker 2: Even though you said the one that's at the publisher now is part of...

Erna Brodber: It hasn't got a publisher.

Speaker 2: Oh, the one that's waiting to be published is part of the previous work, before the...

Erna Brodber: It's like, it's like. But it is different in that I'm not preaching anything to anybody here. Not preaching, it's just not preachy. I mean it might be preachy because I am a natural preacher. A preacher by word. But it is not intended to convert anybody. It's just me, you know.

Speaker 2: So I wanted to ask you this based on your interview with doctor Kathryn John, and in your interview with her, she asked you the importance of the Blake poem, right?

Erna Brodber: Importance of the Blake poem?

Speaker 2: "And did those feet in ancient times," yeah?

Erna Brodber: Okay.

Speaker 1: I wanted to ask. I'm inspired by that, because I had read that before I read my ... When I read [Ella reading 00:00:06] Big Steamers, the Kipling, it really stood out. What's the significance of [Ella reading it 00:00:16]?

Speaker 2: The significance of ... Not the significance of Ella, the significance of that Blake, that's what you're asking, what Blake in my life? That particular Blake thing. I read that thing when I was in 6th form. That was the last of the high school things. There was this character in JB Priestly. JB Priestly's Time and the Conways. Have you ever heard of that? You have heard of Priestly.

JB Priestly [inaudible 00:00:44] Time and the Conways. In that, there's a character called Mavis. Mavis was just this political lady, and she was going to change England. She was forever courting [inaudible 00:00:57] Blake. I identified with Mavis, even though Mavis ... You know, Priestly writes in this, he writes the end first before he writes the beginning and stuff like that.

In the end, poor Mavis was so consumed by her politicality that she virtually went off the rocker. Then about my friend telling me, when I was telling her about how much Mavis meant to me, and that I was shaping my life on Mavis, pointing out to me that maybe she's a sun dried up old spinster. Are you sure you want to be that? This is the path that it leads to [inaudible 00:01:35]. Mavis and that ... To build Jerusalem in Englands, playing that whatever it is, that carried me. This is one of the things that carried me through my mission. You can build. We can rebuild. That is what that Blake [inaudible 00:01:54] for me.

Ella's reciting of the Steamers was just by pointing out how Euro her education was, and that Ella had identified with these things. She had added [inaudible 00:02:13], because there was no way of this black people allowing her in. I was very impressed with this book was set by the door. I remember there's a red creature in there, brown skinned creature, that they spend some effort in ... I think [inaudible 00:02:32] imagined it. In pulling him in, and defend, helping him to defend himself as black. Nobody was helping that Ella to defend herself as black when she was a schoolchild. She took on all of those myths, she took on the myth of Peter Pan and all of these things that look like her, and got carried away.

Speaker 3: Is this bad for the [inaudible 00:02:58]?

Speaker 1: You've talked about this in particular, and how does European writing then ... Myal is in part a recovery of blackness.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: How does European literature-

Speaker 2: Writing ... affect me? Yes, yes it does affect me, okay. It does affect me. I was exposed to the moderns, to as they say, JB Priestly, [Tom 00:03:25] Sackville-West, to Virginia Wolfe, and somebody who wrote about India. What's his name again? Goldsworthy and these kind of people. I was very involved with their kind of writing. They were terse and to the point, and I could never ever deal with kids, whereas [inaudible 00:03:52] these people with all their wordiness and what the moderns were just terse to the point. This one I liked very much, Hoseman. Very very simple language, very very simple language. His words were like Bob Marley's words, like arrows coming straight at you. Charismatic.

Speaker 1: I have read somebody categorize your work as modernist, actually.

Speaker 2: As a modernist?

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you agree with that?

Speaker 2: Well, I can't agree or not agree, because these terms ... If these terms [phased me 00:04:32], I don't really understand it, I don't use them. In any case you know, I've always said, these reviewers, it's their business to review. It is not my business to read them. I don't have to understand it. I don't read enough to understand what they say.

I'll tell you a story, which I tell all the time, but I haven't told it here yet. At 17, and you've passed 17, so you know when you were there, you knew everything that there was. You were just the most intelligent person on Earth. I go down to this exhibition, and I'm looking at this thing and I'm saying, "This is a piece of work," and Mark [inaudible 00:05:12] say, "Oh my god, this painting is so great. Look at early dawn!" It was done in a [inaudible 00:05:19] fashion.

I saw early dawn, early dawn. There's a man beside me saying, "What do you see?" I said, "Look, look look! Foolishness!," I'm saying, I look at him, and he look likes he just came in from off the street. Clearly he was not being trained to be an intellectual like me, he was just a man coming off the street. He continue to talk to me as I was seeing all of this early dawn in it, and then he finally says, "You know, I think the man finished at early dawn, and he just called it early dawn."

I said, "But that is so ordinary. I don't think so at all." Look at early dawn peeping through, coming through the work. He said, "Suppose I [inaudible 00:05:59] decided it," and I said, "No, but I was [phased 00:06:06], but he was the artist!" I keep on saying, I had a right to see early dawn in that, as much as he had a right to say it was done at early dawn and he just called it that. That's me, and the reviewers. They have a right to say. Once you have done a piece of work, I have let it go public, everybody has a right to call it anything they feel like calling it. I know writers who complain about how this one said this one, and the other one said that one about their work, and they weren't giving me careful ...

No I don't say that at all. It belongs to you. All of you, after I have done it, so you can call it modern, you can call it post modernist, you can call it with any other words. You can call it any of these words, they're yours.

Speaker 1: I think I got this also from the John interview, but I think she suggested that you resist talking about gender in your work?

Speaker 2: Yes. I don't want to be labeled as a gender anything. I don't want to be. The interview at the back of [inaudible 00:07:20], that comes back again, because they've been trying to tell me that I'm a ... What's it? Woman's ... A feminist.

Speaker 1: A feminist?

Speaker 2: They've been trying to tell me that I'm a feminist, and I have resisted being ... Whenever they say it, they know I'm not ... I haven't accepted that label.

Speaker 1: Why?

Speaker 2: Perhaps I don't understand what feminism is, but the way I look at it, is this. In this era, called feminists era, a lot of attention has been placed on women. Work on women, work about women, and all the rest of it. I don't see that as a thing that is needed in my society. Men, black men, were equally sat upon, beaten, boxed about, treated badly, as black women. I think that what we need, which more willing to accept the term gender, what we need is understanding between the genders, rather than raising one up. Is understanding work, getting the genders to work together, so we can be in a better position than the people who left us, who were probably a patriarchal ... They tell me that society is patriarchal. That is my position. I have to work together with the men.

Speaker 1: I'm going to make a claim about Myal, alright?

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: I'm going to claim that your women characters are more three dimensional than your male characters.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm, and I will tell you that I write out of myself, and I understand women better than I understand men. That is just it. I can write three dimensional women. I don't understand men. Probably when I start writing again, I will have a better understanding of men. I would like to have a better understanding of men, now that I know to get it now, I think it's probably a bit late for that, but anyhow. I would like to understand men and I would like to write from their point of view, okay.

Speaker 1: Well, the number-

Speaker 2: What I think the men in the rainmakers' mistake, are quite three dimensional. You have read the rainmakers' mistake? The rainmakers' mistake, the men there are ...

Speaker 1: That'll be next.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Can I read a quote to you-

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: ... about the spirit theory? This is about the colonialism. You said that you have this notion that colonialism as it operated in Jamaica was a theft of culture, a theft in a strange way. The English have brought in all these African people, they have a particular worldview, and they insist on taking this worldview away from them, which is in fact their spirit. Without it you cannot live. Without it you are just plain flesh. Only dry bones, rotten flesh. I wanted to ask about the fleshiness of your women characters in Myal, and spirit theory.

Speaker 2: Your fleshy?

Speaker 1: I think so.

Speaker 2: [Gheta 00:10:54]?

Speaker 1: It's part of the three dimension for me.

Speaker 2: Was [Gheta 00:10:57] was fleshy?

Speaker 1: White henna's definitely fleshy.

Speaker 2: Yeah, well white henna is coming in.

Speaker 1: You don't agree that they're fleshy?

Speaker 2: No, I don't think they're fleshy. Anita was not fleshy. She could run, and she was like a horse actually. [inaudible 00:11:15] definitely not fleshy. Was a skinny little woman.

Speaker 1: Then I guess finally, I don't know if you've answered this because you said that you know women better. That Ella is a girl character, right? That you have her losing voice, I was wondering if you see voice and there's some connection, something special, or unique about removing voice from a woman character in Myal?

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:11:55] refusing voice from anybody. You remove voice, you can't communicate. Voice is very central to interaction.

Speaker 1: She just happened to be a girl?

Speaker 2: She would be a girl, because I can better handle that character.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: I don't know how a male would operate in that setting. I don't know how. I didn't even think about male as [mulatta 00:12:31], and therefore I can't even imagine what it'd be like for understanding a [mulatto 00:12:37] girl, you are here, defend from these people, and the rest of people and stuff from like that. I can't imagine. Probably I didn't write in [mulatta 00:12:45] boys. I probably did, but they were stuck, nuh-uh. I never saw them.

Speaker 1: I'm going to go back to conjuring. Well, what I call conjuring.

Speaker 2: Conjuring, conjuring, yes. Conjurer, yes.

Speaker 1: When I first came to graduate school, I thought I was going to be writing a dissertation on conjurer women.

Speaker 2: Great.

Speaker 1: My topic has changed, but I figure it will stay with me all the time. When I got your book, one of the things that I noticed in the work that I do, or that I have done I should say ... I did work ... I started with Charles [Chestnut 00:13:34], whose conjurer is actually mostly the male speaker throughout, but he does have some women in there. [inaudible 00:13:44], right. Octavia Butler, do you know her?

Speaker 2: Yes I do.

Speaker 1: Then I also did Mella Hopkinson, and Maurice Conday. These were just some. There were a lot of people. These are the ones that come to mind. Most of their figures are women figures that are conjurers. I wondered if there was something different. I've even heard you say, "Oh, be a man." If there is something different happening with the African spiritual practitioners in your work, or maybe in Jamaica, or ...

Speaker 2: I'll tell you about my experience of interviewing them, which started off with, I told you about the [DeLorens 00:14:28] books, which are used to produce in Chicago, and spread all over Africa and all over the Caribbean, and all over everywhere. When I was tracking them, and I wanted to know how many of these, you call them conjurer people, did use the DeLawrence books [inaudible 00:14:47]. When I approached the mention of DeLawrence books to the women, they were very angry, okay. Not the men. The men had the DeLawrence books, [inaudible 00:15:01], pull from there and read stuff to me and all like that.

The woman's position is this. They are getting their spirit and their knowledge straight from God, which makes them better, or more holy, than the men who have to go through book. Their spirit come from book, their spirit is book. That will probably tell you why we deal with women, and women would consider themselves as probably better conjurer woman, because they are dealing with God, not with some book. They didn't have to learn this, they were selected.

One of my women for instance, at 18, the spirit lit up on her, and she went to her Bible. She read this, and she read that, and she learned. She found that she could heal, and she found that she knew the red plant, a spiritual leader to the red plants. Then the spirit one day told her to get up and walk, and she walked to a place in the pasture of St. Anne. She was coming from the neighboring parish, and went to what was, and is still, something like a university of the spirit.

There were a set of women there who help you to develop spiritually, in ways that are really quite odd. She tells me, she went up ... God sent her to this place, she went up, and the first thing that happened to her as she opened the door, is that one sister, big woman like her mother, just box her. Box her, box her, give her a hard box. She was to understand humility. That was her lesson in humility. She stayed with them for a long, long time, developing her own skill set. Developing like I suppose in the Curia ... I don't think they call it Curia now. That [inaudible 00:16:56] Catholic place.

Developing your spirit, understanding when the spirit is coming, and what the spirit is saying, in order to translate the spirit. She learned all of that. When she felt she had graduated, she left and went back, came back to St. Mary, and set up her own [floor 00:17:14], they would call it in Haiti, I suppose. Would set up her [assistant 00:17:19] with her hospital and all like that. I think the thing is that the women believe that they get the spirit direct from God.

Speaker 1: For you, are these spirit workers ... There are both men and women, are they equally showing up for you? In your work. In Myal, they're men.

Speaker 2: They're women. They're men and women. Men and women. Miss [Gata 00:17:57] is a spirit worker, she's like a commoner queen.

Speaker 1: The conjurer women that I've read about ... Literary, I mean, read about, not the historical figures, are kind of always in the woods. Isolated. They're also very threatening, like scary, and dangerous. They're dangerous women a lot of the time.

Speaker 2: Dangerous to whom?

Speaker 1: That's the question, right? That's not always clear, because they don't actually end up ... They have reputations of being dangerous, but they don't necessarily do anything that would merit it. We have a lot of lore, but they tend to be very isolated characters, although the community all knows them, right? The whole community

all goes to them, like their immediate community. She's usually off by herself somewhere. I just wondered if that sounds familiar to you, because this is a totally different thing for you.

Speaker 2: No. It's the same kind of thing. I know of one who was taken by the spirit and taken into the woods, and spent some ... Some trees have a hollow in them, and spent some time in the hollow of a tree, where she was actually taught an African language, so she could come out saying the Lord's Prayer in Congolese. There have been researchers who have come and said, "She's right, what she's saying is Congolese." I believe that you require to get the spirit transfer, you really have to be totally and completely focused. If you're in the woods, you're likely to be more focused. Apart from everything out there.

There's [toons 00:20:00], there's branches, everything out there is all part of God, okay. They would help you also to concentrate and to focus, and even give you protection, but if you are sitting in your house, with somebody asking you where to find the milk, or whether you're ready for your meal now, it is a very difficult for you to go in and be ready to have the spirit descend upon you. You would be alone out in the woods very often. In any case, out in the woods is where you find the medicines. Out there now, it is easy for the spirit to say, "Pick three," or to pick this one, or to guide you, because what is around you is what is you going to be used for your [pharmacopia 00:20:53]. It suits you to be out there, and it suits you not to have people bothering you while you write your lessons. You can concentrate better, you can focus, and the word can come into you.

Speaker 1: How do the people who gather their knowledge through books then do differently?

Speaker 2: Well, in the books like in the DeLawrence books, there are spells. I've seen one where there's a spell to show you how to be invisible. Yes, [inaudible 00:21:35] invisible. I don't know if anybody really bothers with that. There are also things like what Psalms to read, and also what spirits to call on. These are all in those books, what spirits to call on, okay? If you study those books very well, it would feel that you know ... [inaudible 00:22:00] Not even supposed to call their names. You call their names, they will come. Go back [inaudible 00:22:05], I didn't mean to call you, you know.

If you know all of this, if you study your lessons well, then you should be able to, when somebody comes to you, you should be able to call a spirit. You would know what is the spell that will call this one to you.

Speaker 1: Would you go to one versus the other? Meaning, why would you seek out someone who communes directly, versus someone who ...

Speaker 2: I wouldn't go to ... No. I have been to the fortune tellers, but not to these people. I think I would prefer to go to the one who feels she's getting it straight from God, rather than the one who read it from some book. Why? Because I think the book

can be wrong. Much more wrong than the thing that's coming down directly. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Well, I'm ...

Speaker 1: ... Change pace now because we're finishing up.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: And I just wanted to ask kind of a completely different question.

If you had one piece of advice to give your young self, what would you tell yourself?

Speaker 2: You know, I'd tell myself to carry on just as I'm carrying on now. I've wandered since we're females, except for [crosstalk 00:00:27] who came into this conversation if he feels like. I wonder whether ... I'm not married. I do have a son who's an adoption. I wonder whether I would have been able to do the work I do if I were married. I wonder about that a great deal, because where I am now, I do also think that it might have been nice to have been married and have some company. But then I think, could have I have done the work I do if I weer married?

I don't know so it's ... I don't know what I would tell my young self then. When I was coming up. Deal with this, or not deal with this. I had made up the decision not to go running after this thing, but to sit down and do the work that I was sent to do. But as I said, I think I would tell my young self just behave like how you are behaving.

You think I would have got a male to walk beside me? Or would he want me to clean his shoes and I have no time to go and meditate?

Speaker 3: No, I think that if the male had the right mindset, he would have added to and supported what you did, as opposed to detailing you and causing you to lose sight of that.

I think for myself, for example, my wife, she had medical school dreams before we met. Those haven't changed at all. I've had to get on board with ... And I've had to change some ... I'm from a very traditional family. And there's some things that my wife and I do that my dad will look at and say [inaudible 00:02:05] but that's not his marriage.

Speaker 2: Alright then, well.

Speaker 3: It depends on the nature of the person.

Speaker 2: Yes, yes, yes. I would have had to have had a marriage, some arranger going and looking for this, because I don't think the men I know around me, I really think they needed supper. And they need the women to cook it, and stuff like that. So I'm not quite sure. I'm not quite sure I would have found somebody to cooperate with me.

And I better think that, eh? So that I don't look back and look back in anger.

Speaker 3: Yes.

Speaker 2: Better for me to think I would never have found one. Alright. So there we are.

Speaker 1: Thank you very much.

Thank you, thank you.

Speaker 2: Alright then. Good day, OK.

This is the last of them? Well I have another one of these?

Speaker 4: Monday and Tuesday.

Speaker 2: Interviews? Alright then. I wonder if I have anything new to say.

After all of this, I think I have anything new to say better.

Speaker 1: Thank you.

Speaker 4: I think so too.

Speaker 2: Because I've really quite surprised. I've never had to go into myself and answer all of these kind of questions before. I'm quite surprised at what I'm doing, as a matter of fact, I've given myself eight out of ten.

Speaker 4: Why not ten?

Speaker 2: Okay because if I gave ten out of ten, forget eight out of ten for me ... But ten out of ten was ... Aah ha, yes. OK.