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CP Fri 23 Sept 2011

Dear Tom,

Yr lighthouse website, 'Save CowPastor' [tomraworth.com.wordpress/] comes on in Ap 2005 at the beginning of the still optimistic & feisty days of what turns out to be the *Second* (and i fear fatal) *TIME OF SALT* [[for the >>>> TIME OF SALT see, inter alia Brathwaite, *BarabajanPoems* (1994), *Golokwati* (2002) or simply dial GOOGLE]

and i want to thank & celebrate yr lett of 14 sept w/its newes of how the site had recently gone down after, as it turns out, some technological ad->justments at the Server but how you was able – typically and w/all yr livication – to 'get it back up' and enclosed the note from **Megan** at Trinity College, Dublin, witnessing to how much the site has meant to her as a researcher & person of conscience. And over the years i've heard similar from several

So we bless & thank you again & again for yr help & presence in these time(s) of need

Cultural Lynching or how to dis. man. tle the artist

You will, i'm sure, be surprised that i'm so suddenly no longer at NYU. indeed even as you was opening yr site to all the response we've had ref CP, the teefin (CL) of my archives had started in my NYU apartment building on Washing-

ton sQuare Park – tho is only now, as i write this, that i am aware of the alignment of these two negative happenings Some people, now i recall, had always >> linked CP w/my NYC Cultural Lynching, but i've nvr myself seen/felt/recog->nized the possibility until now -

i can only provoke this record -

(1)

Late in 2004 we begin to notice strange activity in our NYU apartment - >> more & more books, manuscripts, work in progress, teaching material - my spiritual possessions¹ - disappearing from the shelves & boxes*, w/the Authorities - the 'authors' of my being there - unwilling &/or reluctant - for the first 3 years of the goings-on - to become involved. In the end, they changed our front-door locks and put in a door to help 'protect' the room where most of my archives were kept - but this made NO DIFFERENCE to the teefin And since NYU 'declined' to put in 'security' (tho this had once, at some level, been discussed), we installed at our xpence, our own cameras etc/tho this made no difference to the highly skilfull & relentless teefin from our rooms - accompanied by the almost universal mantra from

¹Amazing how many people, some Quite close, who insisted that these losses were/are merely material goods/things/chattel - making it clear how wide the GAP between artists & non-artists is and making it all the easier for the lynchers to destroy me w/out fear or interference and how clever they were/are to recognize this about our society - and i include most of the 'western worlders' (not only the 'usual suspects in the Caribbean) in this frustration & hurt which has so contributed to my so easy destruction. The loss (theft) of my **Mother Poem** ts burns me out forever - but i'm told it's just a *thing* - something to 'get oVer' - to 'get lost' in that other sense

* The first sign(s) of the CL was DreamChad's computer open & 'burning' the evening we come back unexpectedly to the apartment from leave in Sept 2004; my live recording of a Harlem performance of **God's Trombones** gone; and all our Rex Nettlefords/NDTC dance brochures. . .

evvabody – friends, colleagues, the authorities, even from those members of the Press who, in < my view, shd have at least brought the situation to public attention – **that nothing was in fact goin on – figment of my imagination** – esp as the university Security officers and the help they had from the NYPD and other sources – kept making the point that there was (again) nothing they cd do since there was no evidence of break-in (tho, let me add, there was nvr any forensic investigation from any of these bodies tho i make no claim that they nor anybody i kno, were in anyway involved w/this cultural lynching)

Some 4000 items (there's a list when i stopped counting two years ago) **have been stolen out of our apartment ranging from my 1967 braille edition of RIGHTS OF PASSAGE, my Institute of Jamaica Musgrave/Muscradle Gold Medal** (it will cost me £500 to replace) **which for some reason people assumed i'd left on a shelf accessible to passers-by on the street!! – part of the pretence that i was making all this up!! – in fact we lived in a 4th floor apartment. . . all my pile of work for the year 2007 lifted. . . all the material prepared for my MR segment on RADIANCE - even our xtra-long xtension wires**

(2)

So it was that i ended up in Hospital in August 2008 (one doc said 'trauma' - how does one scope w/the vagabond spiritual loss of one's heritage & achievement and have that loss scoffed & laughed at & ignored?) and have gone downhill evva sence – the medical people, like the Security, unable, they say, to locate (despite the one-off 'trauma') what was wrong w/me – tho by now am i losin weight (from 180-150 lbs of induced suffering - *yu wd nvr now recognize me!*) :sleepless & going blind - increasingly weak & withering and unable, therefore, to accept any of the many invitations from all parts of th (e) world to celebrate my 81 b/day in May 2011. Indeed i can't go/get out any-

wheres . a proper **pyjama nero** . a man whose life love & livelihood have been too taken >> from him. . .

(3)

At the same time - again perhaps only a 'coincidence' - there is pressure from the university for me to 'retire' - on grounds of age(?) (by this time i too weak to teach anyway) and because - believe it or not - it might be the 'best solution'(!) to the Cultural Lynching - i mean, since we clearly not 'comfortable' on Wash sq etc etc etc, it might/wd be better to return to the Caribbean ('sun & sea') where i cd 'sit & think & write'

Alongside - again! - more coincidence?! - my relation w/my Department deteriorates - as if i was nvr there as if i'd made NO contribution - no successful graduate & undergraduate classes, no planning of the (aborted!) SLAVE ABOLITION CONFERENCE 2009) (after the earlier literature one w/Orlando Patterson, Antonio Benítez Rojo (*The repeating island*), Erna Brodber, Rhonda Cobham, Sylva Wynter who cdn't make it); no annual MARASSAS when the classes shared & celebrated their work w/each other and the university & wider community - when 'stars' dropped in to take part²; concluding in 2010 w/a first Festival of Caribbean Film at NYC - not even a PS of Thanks or Farewell

² Among them Paule Marshall, Kofi Anyidoho, Princess Adwoa/Merle Collins, Robt Antoni (**Divina Trace**)

(4)

By Emancipation Day 2011, i find myself 'deported' (back) to the Plantation and so weak that they have to wheel me thru JFK in a wheelchair

*And still **no**body paying attention . can you imagine?!!*

(5)

The above is like the data of this second **TIME OF THE SALT . It does not explain anything – the pain the teefin the undiagnosed illness and the sudden-death/displacement of ‘retirement’ in the full flight of mediating & meditating upon my postgraduate course in Magical Realism, for instance –**

sycoraX, the Slave/African as Plantation Hero/the alterNative, the concept of IT and Xtreme Lyric, tramp-carnival-radiance – these among other new pathfinding ideas in ‘postcoloniality’ have had to be summarily abandoned – contradicted by the Basilisk of Washington sQuare; extending of course into my writing (MR/MR, Slow Horses, Elegguas, G/2, The love axe/1 – these last two i’ve not even been able to proof-read & return to the publishers)

- not to mention – not to think about – the unfinished(ed) trilogy – *Missa, Rwanda, Dead Man Witness*

(6)

This Cultural Lynching (CL) has resulted in my sudden (i have to repeat the word) total destruction: loss of heritage, job/career, health (as if i've been poisoned - some radioactive pill - Alexander Litvinenko? (2006) - engraved to swallow^x

and who/why wd have done all this to us?*

· eventually, i suppose, i'll develop something 'obvious' like kidney, TB, a lump, an ulcer, diabetes or prostate cancer and evvabody will clap and say *I told you so!* Whatever, i can't win!! (for Kawamuinyo 23 sept 2011)

· A well-wisher actually told me (in mid-Sept [2011]) that NYU prob '*got rid of me*' in order to protect me [sic!] ➤ th (e) Cultural Lynching

(7)

So i'm returned to the Plantation poorer, more bereft, than when i left and still there's no word, no xplanation, no Q or outcry about it/against > any of this. not only as if, as i say, none of it happen(ed) ~ as if i've done > nothing – taught not/thot not/writ not for my 20 years @ NYU <sat 17 sept 2011 . 2:34pm. w/wave after wave of murmurous hurricane coming in from the mouth of the Kongo and when the Bajan >> WeatherMan declared 'There's no wind blowing across the island of Barbados at the time'>

(8)

i return to CP to find our Thyme - my past present fewcha - gaan; our Serengetti - all the cows black-belly sheeps goats fowls the white rhode-islann fowlcock egrets donkeys guinea birds etc - gone gone gone

Xcept for the brave green spaces kept by the few remaining residents, the whole place is into depressing overgrowing wildernesse. the Govt still in negative limbo if we will have to move or whether i will be granted the xtension for my planned Bussa-Namsetoura Cultural Centre and the dream of a beautiful pristine Pasture. . .

(9)

Since i share both vectors - the CP and the CL - i can begin to repeat the point that maroons always made in their rebellion ▶ the Plantation and is this - that w/out protection (thorns of resistance - *palenQue* - of yr boundaries and for yr possessions & soul - all yr gains & discoveries & reclamations & dreams of << freedom/independence will come to naught; and w/out allies, < whatever you may have evolved as yr *culture* will be filtered fall tered infiltrated stolen from poison spat upon & destroyed w/-out even the vestige of record or *qual* or eQual or quail to << mark that you tried that you xisted that you made a contribution. As if is some strange penitential retribution - certainly somebody's vengeance - ▶ you

||

(10)

My Q is - can we now talk about this?

How important to literature is the plight/flight of the artist in crisis? i'll nvr feget Walter Rodney, only a few weeks, as it turns out, before his assassination, telling a History Conference on Slavery in Ontario, that it was so saddening to see the enthusiasm of scholars for the txts & archives of

Slavery while they didn't even recognize, far less have any concern for, the children of slavery in the streets

Historical/Contxt

(11)

The four *mkíssi* (gift blessings) a writer needs (in add to luck & talent & imagination of course) is (1) **health:** (2) **protection/encouragement/allies/creative criticism:** (3) **continuity:** (4) **a hoom (which involves a home. cosmic energy) and oumfô³ (Akan *kusum*) – sacred space of possession**

(12)

Now in the pre-capitalist 'traditional' ecumene, these *mkíssi* were part of the cosmos – the griot a trained gifted person of/in this spirit/healing/divinatory/revelatory world

(13)

The western capitalist 'enlightenment' displacement of 'Tradition', replaced this communal artist w/Individual Talent ('Genius'/remember Eliot's great 1921 essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'?), dependent on his/her own success/achievement and patronage from the State (Castle-Palace)/Institutions (like the ++

³ We have to connX PEACE also, w/the oumfô, tho POSSESSION takes it 'beyond' that. It's the place where you creatively work w/in its liminal space whether stable or unstable . a well/being of routine &/or sacred insanity

(Christian) Church, the universities, later the Banks) and the Wealthy (the Banks here again of course) and soon the artist was not only being employed for Entertainment but for Propaganda on behalf of the Patron (Portraits, Depictions, < Songs of Praise And eventually the Novel (the 'highest' form of Western art, in a <<< way) which gained considerable independence after the period of preCapitalist Patronage - replacing the Prince w/the Publisher & sometimes walking a thin line w/the Pauper esp if the format was the Poem; and attempting a new daring enterprise: to speak for the *Culture* and in this development to be caught up in the vocabulary of the new competitive Nationalism - w/national recognition & acclaim and a few very lucrative Prizes for those deemed to be most expressive of this enterprise

At the same time - at the height of Western Wealth after c1865 - certainly after the Treaty of Berlin and the second invasion/partition of Africa - there emerges the CounterCulture - essentially antiCapitalist, proto-communal but really artistically Individualistic w/a flirt of the anarchistic and this works OK as far as the System is concern, since is Western Culture, in whatever guise, being celebrated

is only when w/the Soviet/Chinese/Third World/Black World/Bandung Revolutions/Negritude Revolutions that a real alternative sometimes alter/Native to the West emerges, that the role of the 'postcolonial' writer/artist/griot becomes problematic, esp since in the case of the Black World Revolution, there had always been a Black World (Af & Asian) alternative/alterNative and to make things 'worse'/more dangerous, this Black World/Third World revolution was taking place not in its Native Lands, but in the very heart & ghetto of Western cities - result & harvest of imperialism and

the action/activity of the Western Capitalist MISSILE which in its thirst for power/fuel had not only devastated the hinterlands of Afrasia and the 'Middle East' but had had to draw their poor but virile populations into the EuroAmerican patrix for yet more labour (and entertainment) fuel. So that the (e) emergence of the Third World writer/artist/ intellectual was a real threat – Gandhi Garvey Fanon Robeson Césaire Malcolm Stokely MLK Lumumba Mandela Nkrumah Che Fidel the Vietcong – and even tho many significants of these remained outside or were grounded outside Western cities, their influ on Western politics and Western art was challenging & crucial and had to be co-opted or destroyed

And was. tho the story of this still has to be properly written. . . inc case-studies like 37 Washington sQuare West. . .

oumfo and palenQue

(13)

The challenge/paradox/contradiction of the 'postcolonial' alterNative writer/artist and the salient factor (alongside HEALTH/STRENGTH/THE GLOW) & POWER OF THE VIBE) is the presence/creation of the **oumfô** – the secret sacred live-/work-/ing space – what the Trini panmen call the (Xangô) *engine-room* – since almost before we begin, wherever we are, at home or abroad/xile, the *oumfô*, in its traditional form, is destroyed by the West tho miraculously surviving and continuing in HAITI vodoun; and is this, in its complex manifestations thru the Fon/Dahomey/Middlepassage that i

was beginning to try to interstand as aspect of MR/MR when i am so cruelly struck down. . .

(14)

The (re)creation of the **oumfô** in xile is really NO PROBLEM esp since the days of easier/Quicker communication (airtravel the telephone the internet) and the presence of Native (i.e x-colonial) now established communities in th (e) metropolises, bringing our food music religious forms lifestyles etc w/us and) the writer/artist will emerge his/her own oumfô as soon as he/she 'settles'

What's missing here is the **palenQue** – the necessary natural most often constructed protective circle – difficult in both native & metro environments because of the 'special reQuirements' of the artistic; but usually regarded as 'easier' to estab in the metropole than in the 'native land' because of the 'Las Casas'/Plantation deVastations of 'home', whereas in the metropole there is more evident – and funded – support for the arts as part of the 'national project' and more people interested & supportive w/opportunities/

ideas/+?easily available publishers editors reviewers critics prizes – cf HOME where there's practically nil and the few encouragements there are are often, shall we say, particular & partisan & with overall a very limited provenance – some xceptions being in Revolutionary Cuba and in the work /achievement of Rex Nettleford and the NDTC in Jamaica – one of the first

set of items – note – taken from our apartment at the beginning of the CL being the Nettleford books and the NDTC dance brochures

But this ‘new’ palenQue is always/?often subject to the tides of metropolitan anXiety/xenophobia/abiding RACISM esp during its periods of CRISIS – economic and ideological or fear of INVASION, when the cultural assumptions/definitions &/or ideals of some at least of the elements of the palenQue (the friends & alliances) come into Question – issues of subtle diVision & difference, for instance, like the shape of the future and the sycoraXian aesthetics of this –

for instance, Is yr dream of the FUTURE based on the restoration of a lost invisible CITY or does it rest upon the restoration of a lost Palmares or Golokwati – on the centrality of NATION LANGUAGE and its ‘modern-ity’ – or on my complete creolization into the Roman Empire? in other >>>> words, how long and to what xtent/depth can you remain X-SELF in London Paris NYC? – the difference, for instance, for us/for them between th (e) appearance of the Jackson Five/and Bob Marley & The Wailers at the National Stadium in Kingston; the style & status of the independence of yr own HOMELAND – that indeed that you shd at all continue to have &

hold yr own HOMELAND in view of yr 'new residence' & apparent 'eQuilibrium' – that you shd now acknowledge ultimate & continuing LOYALTY to the Other now assumed as YOURS – the history of course of MONOPOLY

There's also the 'moment' when a/some *palinQuero(s)* feel(s) that *they* shd now own the oumfô – dictate the 'discourse' of > it both at Home & Abroad – more problems then – *cultural lynching?* - for the wd-be independent nativist -

what happens to 'Claude McKay'/'Fanon' at >>> times of metropolitan Crisis – esp during its IN>>> QUISSIONARY and **auto-da-fé** periods – Pendle Salem Gulag Chinese wénzìyu McCarthy Guantanamo Abugrave the Holocaust – and where/how does my own xperience of CULTURAL LYNCHING fit in/to dis dis. course?

