



# Cultural Meaning, Social Hybridity and Musical Sonority:

## Unpacking Elements of the Trinidad and Tobago Identity in the Lyrics of its Carnival Music

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This article examines the carnival music of Trinidad and Tobago. These are in the main Calypso, Soca, Chutney Soca, Ragga Soca, and Groovy Soca. Issues of identity will be further analysed using the lyrics of some examples of these forms to unpack definitive aspects of the global yet indigenous culture of Trinidad and Tobago. This work puts primary focus on understanding the identity of the many faces of the Trinbagonian through its carnival music. I posit that the lyrics of the songs, especially written and produced for the carnival season, project specific themes which can be used as a lyrical lens through which we can cull the seemingly latent identities of various groups within multi-ethnic space. In Trinidad and Tobago, though multi-cultural by its evident demographics, there is a tendency for the society to appear as though there is one totalising culture. On closer inspection of the sub-cultures, however, it becomes clear that the individual ethnic cultures demonstrate a manifest presence. Demonstrations of ethnic affiliation and group identity are musically visible in the calypso art-form and the sub-genres of soca music where derivations such as groovy soca, chutney soca, ragga soca and parang soca all speak to various aspects of the personality of the Trinbagonian. Groovy soca speaks to the soul and rhythm and blues while chutney defines

the “Bollywood” like excitement. For Ragga Soca which is emblematic of the merger between Jamaican and Trinidadian rhythms, the “conscious/socially responsible” character dominates and in parang soca, the festive “lover of life at Christmas time” surfaces. The group identity and loyalty for each of these sub-genres is at times static, fixed and expected and at other times, the scene-based following is varied, wide-reaching and unpredictable. The existence of the latter then solidifies the theory that there is at once a current of national cultural uniqueness inherent in the varying music which is still able to capture the essence of all. The themes of the lyrics, the colloquial phrasing and ‘double entendre’ fixations coupled with the dialogue with earlier moments in local music, signal that soca music in Trinidad and Tobago possesses the power to speak through its lyrics, beats and sound, to national, group and individual identities. For example, an individual in a multi-racial and multi-cultural space may have pluri-identifiers of self but through music one dominant identifier surfaces. There are often two forces at work. A blurring of the “identity/who do I say I am” lines while nationalistic lyrics of other songs would resonate equally strong for the individual.

Being multi-ethnic, Trinidad and Tobago produces a vast array of musical genres which each ethnic group in its diverse population attempts to reach and hold on to in an effort to identify with a specific part of their Trinbagonian-ness. Yet, with the merging of the

various cultures the multiplicity of sound that is produced reveals a combination of the local and the global. Calypso music, together with derivatives of soca such as chutney soca, ragga soca, parang soca and groovy soca, all utilise sound, beat and tone from music external to the Trinbagonian space. For example, the chutney element is derived from Asian/East Indian elements, while the ragga sound in Ragga Soca is culled from Jamaican dancehall influences. The groovy aspect in Groovy Soca has been borrowed from the rhythm and blues of American pop music while the Parang soca is music which resembles that of Spanish, Brazilian and Puerto Rican-styled music. It is a popular folk music originating from the Island's Hispanic heritage that originated over 400 years ago during Spanish rule via Venezuela.

Given these rich historical antecedents, Trinidad and Tobago is a twin-island economy which displays the characteristics of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, a term proffered in the works of authors such as Szturmanski and Urry (2002, 2006), Beck (2000), Cheah and Robbins (1998), Hannerz (1990, 2004), Vertovec and Cohen (2002), and Tomlinson (1999), in the production of its music. According to these theorists, aesthetic cosmopolitanism reflects at the individual level, a taste for art, culture, and music of other nations and other groups external to one's own and for the wider shores of cultural experience. When completed, the finished version of the music possesses components of a global sound which contains stylistic traces and influences from both the external and local space. Furthermore, the incorporation of these influences thus naturalises elements of the 'otherness' into the current sense of national uniqueness. As argued by Regev (2007), aesthetic cosmopolitanism comes into being not only through the consumption of art works and cultural products from the 'wider shores of cultural experience', but also more intensively, through the creation and consumption of much of the local art, culture and music that can be further described as ethno-national uniqueness. In any multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-racial locale there is the tendency for a merging and eventual hybridisation of cultures to take place. Robertson (1995) postulates that this is a process of glocalisation,

that is, the re-construction of locality in response to and under the influence of globalisation.

### **Cultural Meaning, Social Hybridity and Musical Sonority**

*Cultural Meaning* – Composers and performers of all cultures, aestheticians and musicians, and theorists of all schools and styles, all agree that music has meaning which is communicated amongst participants, listeners and creators. What constitutes the musical meaning and by what processes is it communicated has been the subject of much debate. There are two main schools of thought. First, musical meaning lies within the context of the work itself and in the perception of the relationships set forth within the musical work of art. Second, and in addition to the intellectual meanings, music also communicates meanings in the extra-musical way of concepts, actions, emotional states and character. The first group has been termed the 'absolutists' and the second, the 'referentialists'.

The emergence of musical theory and musical practice of many different cultures in many different epochs suggest and strongly indicate that music can indeed possess referential meaning. The music cosmologies of the Orient, Latin America, across the United States and in the Caribbean in which tempi, pitches, rhythms and modes are linked to, express concepts, emotions and moral qualities. Musical symbolisms and interpretations utilised by composers, arrangers and musicians, and the evidence by testing the listening audience further corroborates the view that music is referential in nature and can communicate meanings based on space and time in relation to global and local references (Meyer 1961). Following Meyer's (1961) arguments, this paper focuses on the perspective of the 'referentialists' as I seek to interrogate the extra-musical way in which the concepts, actions, emotional states, and character navigates its way through musical expression.

*Social Hybridity* – In this article social hybridity will be discussed from the standpoint that there exists a cultural encounter between cultures of European

origin and indigenous populations where we insist that *the societies of the Americas have been established through a fundamental process of transculturation resulting in cultural hybridity*. This cultural hybridity comes not only from the impossibility to exactly reproduce European cultures and their later borrowings (implicit and/or explicit) from native cultures in American soil, but also from the impossibility of keeping these native cultures intact. The signs of this fundamental cultural hybridity, which can be found very easily among other places at the symbolic level within the toponymy and nomenclature of various territories, are also more or less pronounced, depending on the contexts in other phenomenon such as the mixed composition of populations, the dietary practices, the material culture, the later migratory phenomenon, the transformations in gender relations, the recognition of supra-ethnic and supra-national native affiliations and interests extending beyond traditionally recognised borders (GIRA Inter-disciplinary Research Group on the Americas). Trinidad and Tobago's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural realities lend relevance to the existence of social and cultural hybridity in the society's mores and further in its musical development and expression.

*Musical Sonority* speaks to the resonance and reverberation of the vibrancy of music and its sonic qualities. Given the buoyancy of hybridisation and the root indigenous music and cultures of African and Asian ancestry of Trinbagonian music, sonic strength is self-evident to the listener (not necessarily).

### Identity operationalised

The notion of identity will be discussed through a focus on national, ethnic and reference group identity. The operationalisation of terms will be as follows: *National identity* is the person's identity and sense of belonging to one's country or to one's nation. National identity is not an inborn trait but one that is fostered over time by emblems of national consciousness. *Ethnic Identity* is understood as related to ethnic behaviour (behaviour patterns specific to an ethnic group). *Reference Group Identity* involves identifying oneself

by aspects of groups to which one aspires to belong (professional groups, social groups, etc.). Identification with such a group is a legitimate substitution for persons for whom ethnicity is not salient.

### Music as Identity

Over the last decade or so, some important edited collections have appeared which focused on issues of music, place and identities. Stokes (1994), for example, assembled a collection of works that examined the significance of music in the construction of identities and ethnicities and the ways in which these issues related to place. Connell and Gibson (2002) analysed the links between places, popular music and identities where a range of spatial scales – local, national and global – and in a variety of musical genres and styles and the diverse meanings of music in a range of regional contexts were explored. In effect, musical genres are created by, produced by, arranged by and listened by individuals, groups, and nations of people who have been responsive to a beat, a sound, a nuance in the music which speaks to them on a deeper than surface level, something which they have identified.

Given the multi-ethnic nature of Trinidad and Tobago, musical hybridisation, fusion and the mixing of various musical traditions are to be expected. However, scholars such as Connell and Gibson (2002) assert that fusion music leads to an un-authentic sound not indigenous to the locale but as a representative of a sort of 'world music' which renders the tracing of authenticity impossible. Refuting this view however, Hudson (2006) posits that these processes did create new identities that fused local and global, traditional and modern, while at the same time de-territorialised culture, though – paradoxically – only as a result of the construction and contestation of discourses of otherness and place. Soca music, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago, does exemplify the latter by the distinction that emerges out of the separate elements – *groovy soca* (rhythm and blues strain), *chutney soca* (Asian/East Indian strain), and *ragga soca* (Jamaican dancehall strain). Part of the essence of being a Trinbagonian is the understanding of self as having various

parts which make up the whole. Miscegenation and inter-racial relations have allowed for the 'blurring' of race distinctions and further, the 'blurring' of the sound and beat of the music. In addition, this fusion sound would possess its own authenticity and identity by way of the blend of cultures and local, regional, national and global musical traditions.

With regard to the Calypso artform, calypso music embodied a wide variety of fusion sounds over time such as calypso swing, calypso fox trot, Trinidad Carnival paseo, Grenada paseo, Tobago paseo, Creole calypso circa the 1930s and later graduated to the use of rhythmic patterns on the high hat, musical riffs on the keyboard, and the bass lines from the African-American disco by the 1970s (Guilbault 2007). The presence of American sailors and other military personnel at the US base in Trinidad during war-time had set the groundwork for an audience for calypso music and also affected the speed and tenor of the songs sung for tourists. Satirical skill and creativity were used to deliver the socio-political commentary on societal issues of the day, yet the tempo of the songs on offer was always at a pace at which the foreigner could grasp the full meaning. Out of this practice, the calypso 'ballad' was born. The loss of authenticity that Connell and Gibson (2002) allude to in their work is not borne here as the history of the Calypso artform has demonstrated a culling of a myriad of indigenous influences to produce the authentic hybrid sound which instead spoke to the creation of a fusion music that laid claim to the creation of a new genre which embodied local, regional and global elements. The existence of what Robertson calls "glocalisation", a mixing of the local and global influences, does not negate the impact or the importance of either influence. Instead it strengthens the sound and shows the very fusion in the music that is demonstrative of the demographics.

## The Makings of the Calypso Music

### *Calypso Music*

Calypso music has had a long history dating back to the mid-1800s and as such has enjoyed importance within the national cultural space and has continued

to be representative of national, social and political realities within the Trinbagonian music landscape. During the carnival season in Trinidad and Tobago, which is the week directly before the Catholic Lenten season commences, Calypso has been historically performed and heard mostly during that period. Most of the performances take place in Calypso tents. The highlight of that genre's festivities occurs in the final competition on the Sunday before a carnival day known as *Dimanche Gras* (Big Sunday), a night show which would herald the end of another successful Calypso season where the merry monarch is crowned. Traditionally, the musical form of Calypso encompasses three or four verses and a chorus, and its lyrics serves as social, political and economic commentaries of Trinidad and Tobago. In terms of location, the island of Trinidad is the most southerly isle of the tropical Caribbean. Given its proximity to South America, it has had the fortune to have inherited many of the natural oil and gas resources of the adjoining continent. In this regard, Trinidad became a hub of migratory activity as Caribbean citizens came in search of work. One of the main spill-over effects of the oil and gas-rich economy was thriving commercial economic opportunities. As such, migrants from adjoining West Indian territories also came to Trinidad to become involved in Calypso music. In its embryonic stages, the Calypso artform resulted in a melting pot of local folk tunes from the islands. In addition to such a strong history of collaborative styles, the music genre went through yet another sonic change as the presence of American sailors and other military personnel at the US base in Trinidad during war-time lay the groundwork for an audience for calypso music. These live performances were as important to the naval offices as a source of local entertainment as it was an opportunity to make a living for the native musicians. In order then to ensure that there was a connection between the performer and the audience, the nature of the delivery by the Calypsonians had to be sung so as to be understood. It also affected the speed and tenor of the songs sung for the tourists. The use of the technique 'double entendre' where one word is related to the erotic **meaning**, and the other was related to the neutral **meaning** of the **double-entendre** word, which

was one of the main displays of satire and lyrical genius used to express the social and political commentary of national events.

According to traditional music pundits, Calypso music has been said to have started its descent circa 1983 with the ascendance of Soca music. Later on in the 1990s, other musical offshoots of soca music were being born such as Chutney Soca music and Groovy Soca music which started to gain prominence as the preferred 'party music' as compared to the original upbeat versions of some Calypso music.

### Identity in Calypso

Calypso music's rich history of the provision of witty lyrical content and vibrant and controversial social commentary on the local happenings of the economy and society has lent itself to the patterns and specific characteristics of both the performer of the artform and its audience. The role of the Calypsonian was and is still seen as the leader of the societal 'lobby' group which acts to keep the government, opposition and society in check and in so doing, Calypso music continues to lyrically delineate the national, social and political realities in Trinidadian music. In a similar vein, this artform has garnered a mass following of individuals who enjoy the lyrics of the songs as they seek to realise their national pride and love for country. People who identify with this music are often those who are avid supporters of change and publically vocalise their views on radio talk shows, public television programs, and the print media. The culture of T&T is such that persons exercise their freedom of speech. In this regard, Calypso music is the complete expression of the lobby group where the concerned citizen who has a vested interest in the national good is channelled in the persona of the Calypsonian who then can demand the characteristics of good nation-building in song.

In the following example of a Calypso, colloquially known as Kaiso, the writer is alluding to the days gone by when the personality of the Calypsonian spoke to the caricature of the local term 'Badjohn', which means a bully with a sharp-tongue who could hold his own in any fist fight.

### *Lyrics from Kurt Allen's 2005 Calypso "Last Badjohn of Calypso"*

In Kaiso so long ago ...  
 In dem days de kaiso would attract drunkards and  
 ghetto rats  
 Ah dash of Chinese, Some middle class  
 Ah whole heap of jagga-bats,  
 In dem days de Calypsonian he carried a bad-john  
 reputation  
 A gentleman in disguise  
 But his razor sharper than any knife

Chorus  
 We eh have no badjohns again  
 Kaiso have no bad-johns again  
 Since we put down de bottle of rum for champagne  
 Kaiso have no bad-johns again  
 Since we get caught up with political campaigns  
 No badjohns again

In this excerpt, the writer is speaking about the political situation in Trinidad and Tobago in 2011. This is a cry from the voice of the Calypsonian who acts as the voice of the people to tell the current government that the people are fed up with their shenanigans about peripheral issues which mean nothing to the people. Following from this, we see that music can and continues to be used to mobilise political and social contexts. Lyrics in and of themselves have the ability to give voice to the need for societal change. This analysis thereby uses sound and lyrics through music to express the identification of the citizenry.

### *Brian London's 2011 Calypso – We Fed Up*

Chorus  
 We fed up of the SIA, SIA, SIA, SIA (Security Intelligence Agency – used here for rhyme and hyperbole  
 While poor people suffering, suffering, suffering  
 everyday  
 We fed up hearing about the Piano, Piano, Piano,  
 Piano  
 While poor people struggling, struggling, struggling,  
 struggling in de ghetto

Verse  
 Driver people singing de blues  
 Dem ting eh making de front page news  
 Is time yuh listen to the people's views  
 Get up and deal with the real issues

## Revealing the ‘soul of calypso’ – Soca Music

Soca music is different from Calypso music in its tempo, lyrics and beat. Calypso music, mostly associated with gloomy and foreboding lyrics with a slow repetitive beat and continuous steady tempo, seemed to have lost its hegemonic role as the sole Carnival music or music for the masses and was replaced by a high tempo music with lighter lyrics whose main responsibility was to create and foster wild abandon in its patrons while providing music simply for dancing and pleasure.

Soca music is the ‘soul calypso’ offspring of calypso proper and the dominant carnival music of the past two decades or so, and is widely acknowledged to be a melding of calypso and Indian forms. The birth of Soca, which most agree is said to have taken place during the oil boom period, is most often ‘credited’ to Calypsonian Lord Shorty but not ‘invented’ by him. Soca music is mainly known to have been a melding of African and East Indian rhythms. However, upon deeper reflection based on the cross-fertilisation of the variants of indigenous and fusion music extant at the time in Trinidad and Tobago and the region coupled with the myriad of composers, arrangers and musicians who were critical to the development of Soca such as Ed Watson, Kitchener, Leston Paul, Pelham Goddard, Joey Lewis and Byron Lee and the Dragonnaires of Jamaica, Arrow of Montserrat, and Lyle Taitt, a Trinidadian who migrated to Jamaica and experimented with various new and emerging beats, Soca became a movement of the people, a critical mass in which the majority of the population were clamouring for this new genre to take root. Thus, it cannot be said to have been ‘created’ by any one artiste but by a village of musicians and performers whose creative space was rich with organic content. Regis (1999) attests to that fact when one listens to Soca music, the dominant sound that one hears is a combination of Indian rhythms to a sped-up mix of calypso music. Ethnic group affiliation and national identity then become bound up with this new musical form both emerging out of Trinidad and Tobago and later being seen at once as a global sound distinctly

highlighting sounds and beats of Asian (East Indian) heritage and also as a signifier of Trinidadian music, that is not either just African nor Indian. In recent times, the music of artistes like JW and Blaze, together with Destra and Machel, reflect a different kind of national identity. Most of their content is reflective of ‘jam and wine’ lyrics coupled with directives on varying ways of ‘enjoying Carnival’, the national festival.

### Identity in Soca

The main themes of identity in Soca are Wine and jam; Total abandon; Party fuh (no fuh) is a slang for the word for Endless fun; Non-stop action; Frenetic pace; and Bacchanal. The lyrics of the song below illustrate the wild abandon theme that is Soca music.

#### *Consider It Done by Faye-Ann Lyons*

(Chorus repeated several times)

Ay, Ay, Alright, Alright

What they want, They want mi to

Mash up, mash up, mash up anything, anything,

Consider It Done

Verse

This cyah be good, nobody jumping

No hands eh waving, de party stand still

Ah in the mood to create something, achieving something

Yuh done know when yuh see de waist dem moving

When yuh see the hands dem waving, de party jumping,

Everybody misbehaving, Ah reach, Ah reach

Chorus

Destra Garcia and Machel Montano are commonly known as the Queen and King of Soca music in Trinidad and Tobago. In the following lyrics, the essence of and the passion for Carnival is described.

#### *It's Carnival by Destra and Machel*

Yeah, baby you know how we do

You, me

You tell your friends

I'll tell mine

It's dat time again

[Verse 1: Destra]  
 Carnival in T and T  
 Is so special to all ah we  
 Like we need blood in we vein  
 Dats how we feel about Port-of-Spain  
 When de posse dem come in town  
 Beating pan and ah bongo drum  
 Is madness everywhere  
 Carnival is ah true freedom  
 Make ah noise or ah joyful sound  
 And jump up in de air  
 So...

[Chorus]  
 Everybody take ah jump, take ah jump, take ah jump  
 up now  
 Start to wave, start to wave, start to wave up now  
 Start to wine, start to wine, start to wine up now  
 Because, it's Carnival

### Rocking to the beat of Groovy Soca Music

Groovy soca music is arguably, a more musically palatable means of propelling soca music forward internationally. It is much slower, with around 115 beats per minute and as such international audiences who are not accustomed to the frenzied pace of regular soca can with groovy soca, move to a slower pace more suited to the non-seasoned party-goer. This newer kind of Soca allows for a wider range of topics to be addressed as its aim as a sub-genre is to address national issues and as well speak more to the love and romance theme. Groovy Soca aims to invite its listeners to groove while singing the chorus about "love of country" or romance. Its history dates back to approximately six years ago. Unlike the total frenzy that power soca gives rise to, groovy soca is music to sway and dance slowly to. Artists like Benjai, Farmer Nappy and Kes have demonstrated that this type of music is very palatable to mainstream music markets, with hits like 'Trini', 'Flirt' and 'Wotless' respectively.

### Identity in Groovy Soca

In the excerpt below, the writer attempts to capture national pride in a 'groovy' beat. The sense of national identity is high on the agenda in both Calypso and Soca Music.

### Benjai's 'Trini'

Verse 1  
 Ah partying till it rain nah, nah, nah  
 Ah dressing in up in mih Red, White and Black  
 I doh care what nobody say  
 Every carnival ah done dey  
 Dem say ah mad and ah bad, ah telling yuh  
 Whey yuh from, ah from Trinidad and Tobago  
 Ah is a Trini, Ah Trini  
 Talk 'bout Trini

Chorus  
 Cause they love how Trini does look, look, look  
 They love how Trini does cook, cook, cook,  
 They love to hear Trini talk, talk, talk  
 And they love Trini woman wuk, wuk, wuk  
 And we make good company, and we make good  
 company  
 We does represent for we Soca....

### Blending in the Chutney Soca Music

Since the Indian cultural revival of the 1990s, regular soca has been joined by the much more self-consciously Indian form of 'chutney soca' which exploded onto the Carnival scene in 1996. The development of chutney soca followed the heels of pitchakaree (which emerged in 1990) and was attached to the important springtime Phagwa festival. It has been termed a sort of Indian calypso. The advent of chutney soca came not along after the establishment of the first all-Indian national radio station in 1994 named Radio Masala. Prior to this all, Indian music traditionally sung in Hindi only was often relegated to the occasional time slot for 'ethnic music' on regular radio stations. However, as its popularity grew and it became more and more of a participatory type of music, English phrases were added to Hindi and today it is now a hybrid of both language forms in one musical genre. Popular artistes who perform within this genre are Triveni, Rikki Jai, Hunter and Dil E Nadan.

From a music standpoint, chutney refers to music that is as hot as chutney with reference to the sauce. Later on, its characteristics became associated with a set of melodic structures in combination with a fast, 'hot' tempo, inciting dancers to break into a dance. Interestingly, we see a similar theme in soca music through its wild abandon lyrics and this is even before

the actual merging of chutney with soca as a musical genre. This begs the question: was the melding of chutney with soca an eventual hybrid due to music similarity or was there a deeper national or ethnic significance that lay beneath the surface?

According to Mungal Patasar, a prolific sitar player of Indian classical music, the arrival of chutney and the fusion with soca was inevitable as Trinidadians have always sought ways to improve Afro-Indian relations. With regard to East Indians, he says that what has occurred is the authentication of their group, a nation, within a nation. Alternatively, other scholars such as Manuel (2006) have argued that East Indians have sought to use the traditional music of their ethnic group to leverage for more recognition and power in the national sphere in terms of the presence of a music form specific to the needs of their community.

### Identity in Chutney Soca

The main themes of identity in Chutney Soca are: alcohol Abuse; the use of alcohol to boost sexual prowess; male ascertainment of masculinity; change in cultural norms – no dhourie or bride price for daughter's hand in marriage; and domination of Indian females by their males' i.e. husbands or fathers. An excerpt from the 2011 Chutney Soca Monarch Rikki Jai's 'White Oak and Water' tells of the traditional 'wine and woman' song that is one of the central themes in Chutney Soca Music.

#### Rikki Jai's "White Oak and Water"

Barman, ah want something white and smooth

When I see de guyl, I bazodee (to become stupid over a woman – slang)

When I see she waist, I bazodee

When she walk my way, I tootoolbey (to become stupid over a woman slang)

When she smile with me, right away, right away

Ah see she

Ah like she

Ah wanted to get married

She father he tell me Rikki

I doh have money, for the dhourie

White Oak and Water x2

Is all I have to offer

If yuh want mih daughter

The 2010 Chutney Soca monarch, Ravi B, delivers a stirring rendition via lyrics of the song 'Ah Drinka' with themes of alcohol abuse, male assertion of masculinity and domination of Indian females by their male counterparts. The East Indian community has had a tradition since the early indentureship period of using and later abusing alcohol as they sought to deal with the vicissitudes of plantation life as an indentured labourer. This tradition had continued with successive generations. The identity of the East Indian colloquially has almost become synonymous with the overuse of alcohol.

#### Ah Drinka by Ravi B

Chorus

Yuh cyah change mih,

No way

Gyul yuh know I was a Drinka

Yuh always know I was a Drinka 2x

Yuh only telling mih

What I should do or say 2x

Just how yuh mudda have yuh fadda

Girl yuh know I was ah Drinka

Verse

Every time I liming

Cell phone only ringing

Mih pardoners laughing

They know is you who calling

Saying that yuh miss me

And to come home early

Come leh we hug up and watch ah Indian movie

Why yuh trying to change mih

Gyul you too blind to see

Yuh always know I was ah Drinka...

### Conclusion

Lyrically, the songs analysed in this paper reflect a combination of two concurrent forces at work. Globalisation and localisation which result in what Robertson (1995) calls glocalisation. *Locally* music themes reflect the identity of the various multi-faceted populations within Trinidad and Tobago. The East Indians and their chutney soca beat and lyrics reflect

patterns of behaviour specific to their group and their ways of conjugal life. The groovy soca exemplifies both in beat and lyrics the laid back groove of a people committed to national pride in simply being 'Trini'. Soca music highlights the wild abandon lyrics which are truly reminiscent of a 'True Trini' whose carnivalesque-ness reaches its peak during the Carnival season. Calypso is the primary form of music during the Carnival season. *Globally*, sounds and beat take on international significance, as Chutney Soca culls from Asian (East Indian) culture from the continent to be fused with local soca rhythms. Groovy Soca plays on the R&B tradition which has its roots in American pop culture, Soca which itself is a fusion of music from Africa and India and Calypso whose real source is from the African slave rhythms. Therein lies the *raison d'être* of the multiple identities of the Trinbagonian demonstrated through both its lyrics and sounds and beats. In sum, in this musically expressive culture, traditional music has been hybridised with global sounds to develop its ethno-national style of Trinidadian musics. In so doing, musical content emerging from the twin-island economy will at once reflect indigenised sounds especially in lyrics and beat while continuing to absorb influences from traditions of the music of the world.

In this article, identity was operationalised as ethnic identity, socio-cultural identity and reference group identity. In an attempt to understand Caribbean identity, it behooves one to examine the post-colonial formations in multi-ethnic areas like Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. As such, it becomes possible to understand the role of the collective conscious agreement by a group to adhere to nuances and peculiarities which give them a sense of belonging and ownership of a particular aspect of their home, food, language forms and cultural practices; namely music in this case. Hybridisation of the musical culture, namely all of the soca music variants and strains developed within the Trinidad and Tobago musical landscape such as chutney music, groovy soca, parang soca, ragga soca becomes one of the ways in which each ethnic group asserts their musical identity and by extension their ethnic, socio-cultural and reference group identity.

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