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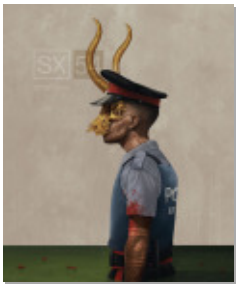

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Too often "the intensity of where we are, passes by anonymously and unremarked," as Clifford Geertz once observed. "It goes without saying."[1] Yet it bears reminding that "places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities"; and "as people fashion places, so, too, do they fashion themselves."[2] Now two generations on since New Kingston was conceived of, the question of how it came to be is worth asking as a way of calling attention to the settled place it has come to occupy in the Jamaican social imagination. The story, I suggest, forms an important part of the mid-to-late-twentieth-century self-fashioning of Jamaican elites and their (re)configurations of the border between themselves and their "othered" compatriots. It allows us—as one component to the critical reassessment of the Jamaican 1960s being initiated in this issue of *Small Axe*—to begin to reflect on the social-spatial realignments that center roughly on this period. To understand the Jamaican present, then, demands close attention not only to the sugar plantations, mountainside peasant holdings, livestock pens, coffee estates, and colonial port towns whose historical and continuing impact on social formations has long been recognized, but also to the changing urban emplacements of the more recent past.

These explorations are in conversation with David Scott's incisive reassessment, in an essay published some years ago in honor of Stuart Hall, of the part played by the conceptual register of difference in theorizing the Jamaican past and present. Instead of regarding difference and

1 Clifford Geertz, afterword to Steven Feld and Keith Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), 259.
2 Steven Feld and Keith Basso, introduction to ibid., 11.

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contestation as inimical to community—elements to be tamed, managed, and overcome, as the nationalist project sought to do—Scott proposes that we view difference as "constitutive rather than dispensable to a common life." This requires, he argues further, a new "conception of politics and of the domain of the political that comports with these revised conceptions of difference, community, and consensus."[3] While in substantial agreement with Scott's argument, I am nonetheless concerned about how readily social differences in Jamaica continue to be viewed in both academic and popular discourse as composite, inert, and unchangeable: veritable facts of nature. I aim to remind, then, that difference is constantly being demarcated and produced—to urge that difference is not only *constitutive* but *constituted*, and I aim to show that also attending closely to just *how* it gets constituted can afford greater purchase on our present. By calling attention to historical contingencies of place and place making that have largely been taken for granted, I seek to foreground the boundary-maintaining practices that have persisted in postcolonial Jamaica. Paradoxically, even as many of the symbolic sociocultural markers of difference have been demonstrably transformed over the postcolonial decades, difference itself has at the same time been reimagined and renaturalized.

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A minor scandal erupted not long ago on social media when Jinx—Jodi Stewart Henriques, the wife of Sean Paul—complained publicly about a more famous resident of her upscale Kingston neighborhood: Olympic legend Usain Bolt. For our purposes, the incident helps illustrate just how deeply the subtle but cutting everyday condescensions of Jamaican life *are embedded in a discourse of place*. In a moment of indiscretion, Jinx blurted on Facebook: "Between the bikes, . . . loud, horrid music, parties and screams, I honestly wish he would go back to where he came from. He's a horrible neighbor. I cannot wait to move. . . . He takes his nasty behavior with him everywhere. . . . He's the ultimate party clown."[4] Jinx quickly apologized, though not soon enough to deflect a storm of protest. In commenting on the episode on his blog shortly afterward, award-winning poet Kei Miller wickedly teased out some of the nuanced and hidden anxieties, unacknowledged entitlements, status gradations, and gatekeeping maneuvers still routinely entailed in Jamaican emplacements.

Using a sampling of recognizable place markers, Miller summoned his intended audience, beat out the rhythm of their familiar world, to deliver a letter—"Dear Uptown Jamaica"—addressed just to them: "Aah—Uptown Jamaica. A we say Campion, Immaculate, Ardenne, Andrews, Wolmers. A we say Sunday Brunch at Terra Nova or Strawberry Hill. A we say Liguanea Club; a we say lunch at Pegasus, dinner at Normas on the Terrace. A we say, 'Mummy, Daddy? Can come pick we up?'" Miller explains that he writes as one of them (us) having grown up deep inside uptown Kingston. He nicely recapitulates much of the criticism Jinx received and underscores the classist and racist implications of her remarks, concluding, "For her as an uptown Jamaican to tell this black country

3 David Scott, "The Permanence of Pluralism," in Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg, and Angela McRobbie, eds., *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall* (London: Verso, 2000), 298.

4 "Sean Paul Wife Says Usain Bolt Is Neighbor From Hell," *Dancehall Hiphop*, 30 May 2015, dancehallhiphop.com/2015/05/30/sean-paul-wife-says-usain-bolt-is-neighbor-from-hell. See also "'Jinx,' Bolt, and the Power and Danger of Social Media," *Jamaica Observer*, 9 June 2015.

boy to, 'go back to where he came from' was nothing short of shocking." But turning more directly to Jinx's critics, his fellow UPT Gen Xers, Miller tellingly asks, "Are we really offended by Jinx's classism, or are we merely defending Bolt? . . . If this was just another interloper from Downtown who had come into some money and moved into our streets, would we be as willing to defend their right to be themselves, to throw occasional parties, and to play any kind of music that they wanted to play?" Miller not only underscores the evasive maneuvers through which Uptown tries to shield from scrutiny its own pretensions and snobbery, he also highlights the alacrity with which it creates and celebrates *exceptions*: in the person of "Honorary Browns," for example. His essay calls attention, it seems to me, to the way the boundary can be firmly maintained—narrated now not explicitly in racial terms but more indirectly and less self-consciously in terms of Uptown/Downtown and cognate spatial signifiers. By recoding difference and allowing more frequent transgressions, more "passing," the self-deceptions around naturalized difference go unacknowledged.[5]

In the aftermath of worldwide cultural and political upheaval, the local cultural-political battles of the nationalist era through the 1970s, the decline in Jamaica's white population, and the emergence of a visibly black bourgeoisie, there is now widespread acknowledgment among Jamaicans, at least in public, that civility and civilization know no color. Moreover, Jamaicans' "somatic norm image" (to borrow Harry Hoetink's memorable phrase), is now richly brown: notions of "racial" mixture akin to the Latin American idea of *mestizaje* have become normative.[6] At the same time, there is much reticence among Uptown folks to name, acknowledge, and assert brown difference and brown privilege openly in terms of color. When "brown" does get explicitly named, as in the adulation of "the Browning" in dancehall, it tends to provoke uncomfortable chuckles on the other, Uptown, side of town. Differences of civility and worth, once coded in explicitly racialized color terms, have come more fully to be understood in terms of "class": recoded and metonymically expressed through the less controversial, more acceptable registers of place and of language. As Jinx's faux pas and Miller's deft commentary reveal, however, differences continue to be stubbornly shadowed by "race," that seemingly natural, biologically incontestable mark of otherness on which a profoundly unequal social order was so successfully erected across "plantation America." This essay highlights aspects of the spatialized recoding of difference in postcolonial Kingston. I use the term *elites*, then, not to deny the continuing presence of race or minimize ethnic, class, and color differences still very much in play but to call attention to ways the new black and brown bourgeoisie participate in the steadfast reenactment of a boundary that demarcates acceptable belonging—a boundary that was once invented and enforced in terms of fictions of "race."

5 Kei Miller, "Dear Uptown Jamaica," *Under the Saltire Flag* (blog), 2 June 2015, underthesaltireflag.com/2015/06/02/dear-uptown-jamaica.

6 See Harry Hoetink, *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations: A Contribution to the Study of Segmented Societies*, trans. Eva M. Hooykaas (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

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For those unfamiliar with the city, "New Kingston," as identified on the accompanying map, describes a zone of the larger metropolitan area that extends just a few square blocks—bounded more or less by Trafalgar Road on the north, Oxford Road on the south, Ruthven Road on the west, and Old Hope and Lady Musgrave Roads on the east—and which serves as the axis of power for Jamaica and its capital city. It is contiguous with the so-called Golden Triangle neighborhood: a residential center for many of the city's wealthiest citizens in its mid-twentieth-century heyday and still an area of high property values and exclusivity. Knutsford Boulevard forms the central spine of the New Kingston business district that shades on its fringes into a land-use pattern of mixed residential and commercial properties. In the 1950s and '60s, the emergent middle class of the nationalist generation, following closely on the heels of the city's business and administrative elites, comfortably ensconced themselves on the surrounding foothills of the Liguanea Plain: they created themselves a suburban elsewhere. Gradually over time, this "New Kingston" became a symbolic and operational business center to the new suburbs. The district's sprinkling of plate glass–clad high-rise buildings of reinforced concrete, its upstanding white-collardness and veneer of order, have come—notwithstanding its modest scale—to embody and inscribe the modernist aspirations and accomplishments of postindependence Jamaican elites.

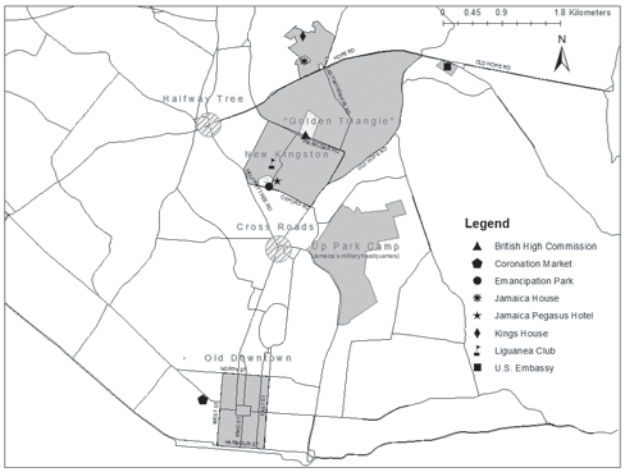

Figure 1. Map of Kingston, showing the location of New Kingston and other centers of power in the city. The map was prepared by Shauna'h Fuegen.

The story of New Kingston's birth seems straightforward enough. Its central business district occupies the site of the former Knutsford Park, acquired in 1905 and developed into a horse-racing track to supersede the older Race Course, a mile or so to its south, which had hosted turf-racing meets in the city for much of the nineteenth century. For the first half of the twentieth century, Knutsford Park's racing meets, polo ground, and golf course were a center of fashionable recreational life, attended by the colony's governor and men and women of local high society. By the mid-1950s, however, even as Jamaica's postwar economic boom and the city's expansion were

in full bloom, the market calculus shifted. As the story goes, the racetrack's revenues had fallen because of declining attendance and competition from English football pools, and Knutsford Park's owners, seeing an opportunity to convert this prime piece of real estate to commercial use, sold the property to a newly formed development company, New Kingston Suburban Developments.[7] Plans for the subdivision were drawn up and approved in 1958, and a few significant construction projects were completed in the decade that followed. However, land sales and new construction lagged until the late 1960s to mid-1980s, when many of the buildings now present were erected.

But how might we read the emergence of New Kingston in relation to the period of its rise? What does New Kingston signify? How did it come to be so central to the habitus and loom so large in the imagination of the city's most powerful and influential citizens?

Jamaicans seldom question, then or now, the irony implied in the act of designating a commercial subdivision drawn up by a private developer on a tract of land just over thirty-two hectares, or under a hundred acres in size, New Kingston.[8] How do we account for the unnoticed hubris implied by this act of naming? Reflecting thoughtfully on the historical tendency for European settlers to confer on so many sites and cities, in the New World and elsewhere, place names drawn from the homelands from which they came—New London, New Bedford, Nouvelle-Orléans—Benedict Anderson attributes these unimaginative christenings to the dawning of a new recognition of synchronous or simultaneous coexistence.[9] It was not that the newly arrived colonial usurpers saw the cities and regions they settled in the Americas as *succeeding* or *replacing* their Old World namesakes. Rather, a radical shift in consciousness brought on through the adoption of new technologies of navigation, cartography, time measurement, and the printing press led to an entirely new sense of lives lived simultaneously, in parallel worlds, an ocean away from each other. Moreover, this newly normalized sense of doubling and simultaneity, Anderson argues, allowed for and served to make possible the birth of nationalism in the Americas.

In the present case, I suggest, a real estate developer's precocious act of naming perhaps mirrored, and most certainly has fortified over time, a frame of mind on the part of the new suburbanites that blends Anderson's two alternative explanations. These elites have come to see the old downtown largely as a place of terminal decay, one that for most day-to-day purposes can be ignored since, in effect, it has been superseded, geographically and functionally, by the new business center and satellite Uptown shopping districts around which their own lives revolve. However, compelled to acknowledge the formidable economic, political, and sociocultural presence of the poor, they also see both groups as coexisting simultaneously in parallel worlds. With respect, then, to these postcolonial sociospatial rearrangements of the urban landscape, I argue that Jamaican elites have been actively engaged in *pluralizing* their social world, cutting against the grain of nationalism's equalizing, homogenizing discourse.

7 See Wendy Light, "New Kingston Development," *Masterbuilder* 6, no. 1 (1972): 9–17.
8 See Pauline McHardy, *Urban and Regional Planning in Jamaica* (Leicestershire, UK: Upfront, 2002), 119. Note that the shaded area representing New Kingston in figure 1 above extends beyond the boundaries of the approved 1958 subdivision to include adjoining streets now generally referred to as New Kingston.
9 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 187–92.

Residential dispersal began long before the 1950s. By the last decades of the nineteenth century Kingston's merchant and professional elites, white and light-skinned for the most part but closely followed by the emerging brown and black middle classes, began inching away from the city center.[10] This "movement away," as Don Robotham notes, coincided with a steady rise in the urban population as a result of a growing rural exodus: the effect of extended decline in the rural economy ultimately resulting from the earlier loss of imperial trade preferences, modernization of and reduced labor demand in the sugar industry, and the barriers to land acquisition that prevented expansion of the small farming peasantry.[11] In this initial phase of their outward residential dispersal, the elites continued to avoid the once poorly drained floodplains to the west where the city's most impoverished and the newly arrived migrants from rural areas largely settled. Instead, they favored areas directly to the north and east, yet still within easy walking and cycling distance of the old city center.

A pattern of gradual dispersal continued through the 1940s, and, as Colin Clarke and David Howard demonstrate, based on an analysis of census tract data from 1943, areas of residence across the city broadly correlated with race and color. These criteria remained strong determinants of status—despite the social and economic changes that had occurred in the century since emancipation—and demographic groups differentiated accordingly by race and color were spatially concentrated in particular parts of Kingston and its suburbs.[12] Importantly, however, in this late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century phase of Kingston's gradual fracturing, the city was still characterized by "its relative compactness." As Robotham underscores, "There was certainly spatial segregation by social class and ethnicity but not of the dimensions of today. The fatal border—Uptown/Downtown had not yet been erected."[13]

That now habituated divide, Robotham argues, "is really a product of the rise of the middle and upper middle classes and the postcolonial bourgeoisie, and ultimately of the development model pursued by the anti-colonial movement within the global political economy prevailing at the time."[14] The late 1940s ushered in a period of sustained economic growth that relied on and disproportionately benefited those classes best positioned by virtue of education and social location to take advantage of the emerging opportunities. Extension of renewed preferential treatment within the British Empire beginning in 1932 subsidized Jamaica's floundering sugar industry and offered the prospect of more widespread protection for the island's exports in the global economy. In addition, substantial US and Canadian investment to develop Jamaica's bauxite industry in the early days of the Cold War; implementation of new import-substitution policies that sheltered and promoted a nascent manufacturing industry geared toward the local market; and the expansion of

10 See Colin Clarke, *Kingston, Jamaica: Urban Development and Social Change, 1692–2002* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2006); Colin Clarke and David Howard, "Colour, Race, and Space: Residential Segregation in Kingston, Jamaica, in the Late Colonial Period," *Caribbean Geography* 10, no. 1 (1999): 4–18; and Don Robotham, "How Kingston Was Wounded," in Jane Schneider and Ida Susser, eds., *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 111–28.

11 See Robotham, "How Kingston Was Wounded," 114–15.

12 See Clarke and Howard, "Colour, Race, and Space."

13 Robotham, "How Kingston Was Wounded," 117.

14 Ibid.

the state sector, all contributed to the high growth rates and increasing opportunities for upward social mobility that middle-class beneficiaries experienced during this period.

As in other parts of the world, economic growth and the movement to ever more distant suburbs from the 1950s onward went hand in hand with the growing acquisition of private automobiles and the pleasurable status display of automotivity. The move to suburban tract housing was also facilitated by the state, which made prime lands available to private developers, devised new financial arrangements to avert capital risk, and helped create the physical infrastructure to support these newly opened-up residential areas.

In retrospect, New Kingston's rise served to make more visible and helped consolidate the emergence of what in effect now constitutes a parallel set of social arrangements and institutions to serve elite and nonelite segments, respectively, of the city's population. The move away from Downtown of much of white- and pink-collar work and its concentration in New Kingston, as well as the dispersed development of new shopping and banking facilities in closer proximity to the residential suburbs, decisively shifted elite lifeways into an almost exclusively Uptown orbit. Along with their suburban churches, private schools, medical facilities, nightclubs, cinemas and other recreational venues, supermarkets and retail outlets, private security services, satellite funeral homes, and more, Uptown folks these days largely occupy a world of their own, one far more class segregated than in the past. In their lifetime, most will never have visited the bustling Coronation Market: the central marketplace for agricultural produce located on the western edge of the old city center (see fig. 1).[15]

Creation of this parallel, duplicative set of institutions to serve the city's minority elite population, moreover, diverted capital that might otherwise have been invested in transforming the productive base of the economy and has served to deepen and normalize social separation between classes. As Robotham ruefully observes, the "considerable mixing in daily life across class and ethnic borders" that was once commonplace downtown has now become rare, even, and perhaps "especially in the crucial relationships between the urban black middle class and the urban black poor."[16]

The hardening of these status divisions, as well as residential segmentation of the poor, was further promoted through state policies whereby almost exclusively low-income housing developments were built, primarily in the western and central zones of the city, by successive governments in the 1960s and '70s and allocated to political party loyalists. The creation of these developments on the immediate periphery of the old city center, and the violent political rivalries fomented around these housing projects, only served to deepen and affirm Downtown's undesirable social connotations.[17]

15 Charles V. Carnegie, "The Loss of the Verandah: Kingston's Constricted Postcolonial Geographies," *Social and Economic Studies* 63, no. 2 (2014): 49–75; Robotham, "How Kingston Was Wounded," 119.

16 Robotham, "How Kingston Was Wounded," 119.

17 Ibid., 120–22. Besides those already cited, other important studies of Kingston published in the last few decades include Diane J. Austin, *Urban Life in Kingston, Jamaica: The Culture and Class Ideology of Two Neighborhoods* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1984); David Howard, *Kingston: A Cultural and Literary History* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2005); Gina Ulysse, *Downtown Ladies: Informal Commercial Importers, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Huon Wardle, *An Ethnography of Cosmopolitanism in Kingston, Jamaica* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2000); and the fine comparative work of Rivke Jaffe, including "Exclusive Cities: Space, Social Capital, and

These combined developments facilitated important shifts in the modalities of social differentiation. Differences that had, until the mid-twentieth century, been more openly coded through a habitus of race and color—and through language—were now increasingly articulated through more socially acceptable spatial practices of differentiation. Even as race and color were becoming increasingly socially objectionable—assailed through Rastafari discourse, roots rock reggae, local reverberations of the Black Power movement, and more—they were being quietly reworked. The criteria of differentiation shifted somewhat, but other mechanisms for marking and reinforcing social distance were assiduously maintained.

Over the past four decades the orbit of elite business and social life in the capital, then, decisively shifted to New Kingston. Presciently, as the map indicates, the departing colonial power secured for itself prime real estate on the edge of New Kingston to house the residence and offices of the British High Commission. Most of Jamaica's banks, insurance companies, and other financial institutions are now headquartered in the area, as are the city's leading hotels and many government departments. A constant round of activity centers on the Jamaica Pegasus and other area hotels, hosting the annual general meetings of some of the island's leading companies, business expos, awards ceremonies, prayer breakfasts, business luncheons, meetings of service clubs and of the diplomatic corps, and more. In addition, several of the city's small theater houses and fashionable nightclubs are clustered in and around New Kingston, and the area serves as a favored anchor for crowd events that attract middle- and upper-class support, such as road races and the annual carnival. Creation of this parallel Uptown economic and social galaxy produced disinvestment in the city center and neighboring communities, slowing their economic vitality. The decline of downtown Kingston, then, is directly related to New Kingston's rise. As one prominent older business executive I interviewed remarked: "If you had not had a New Kingston, Kingston would have been redeveloped."

Yet, paradoxically, given the expressiveness and vibrancy of Jamaican life, New Kingston stands out for its uncommon restraint. It is in many respects a zone of exception. Strikingly, and in contrast to other hubs in the city, the area is largely devoid of sidewalk vending. Regulated by real estate costs, and by closely policed administrative restrictions, the more conspicuous forms of informal economic activity—itinerant vending, repair and personal services, carpentry shops and other forms of artisanal manufacture, clandestine hookups to the electric grid, and the like—are mostly absent from the well-swept streets of New Kingston. Needless to say, however, less visible forms of unreported or illegal earning—rip-off financial schemes, tax evasion, and bank fraud, among others—flourish.

Unlike other densely trafficked zones of the city, such as Half Way Tree, Parade, and the adjoining downtown Market District, the appropriation of and tight competition for public space in New Kingston is closely controlled. And, as with physical space, so too with New Kingston's soundscape: the air is relatively uncluttered by the calls of vendors, imaginatively peddling their

Urban Fragmentation in Jamaica and Curaçao," in José C. M. van Santen, ed., *Development in Place: Perspectives and Challenges* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 310–28.

wares and services, and the music of stationary and itinerant daytime sound systems, all of which compete for attention in the sound space of the city's other commercial districts. We can detect in their regulated absence—as in Jinx's exasperated complaint about Usain Bolt's alleged "loud, horrid music, parties and screams"—the anxieties of Jamaican elites about place and sound, place, behavior and decorum, their worry about the sonic invasion of place.

By day at least, New Kingston wears a patina of respectability; by night, less so. Much of the streetwalker prostitution business made its way uptown in the wake of suburbanization, and streets in and around New Kingston became a favorite and relatively safe zone for streetwalkers to ply their trade. In recent years, dispossessed gay and transgendered youth have taken up residence in some of the paved, below-ground storm drains or gullies in and around New Kingston, surfacing in the evening hours to flamboyantly challenge Jamaican heterosexual normativity.[18]

However, despite its centrality, daytime New Kingston is not marked by the bustle of its street life. While crowds turn out for the occasional holiday or weekend street event, pedestrian traffic on business days is relatively light and mostly purposeful. Even at lunchtime, a significant number of the thousands of office workers in the area order catered meals delivered to their workplaces or eat at the company cafeteria. New Kingston streets offer few inducements to linger or browse. Banking and financial institutions predominate over retailers. There are few restaurants or cafes, even fewer of these at ground level or open to the street, and almost no eye-popping window displays.

The important business of New Kingston happens indoors and out of view. Buildings are almost all air-conditioned, not designed to make use of the air-circulation patterns of the local environment. Street entrances are of limited extent, and many business places carefully screen public admission through electronic buzzers and security guards. The covered piazzas to shelter pedestrians from sun and rain that constitute a historically significant architectural feature of downtown Kingston's main retail thoroughfares are not generally found in New Kingston. Walkways appear to be not intended for aimless sauntering or social encounter: pedestrians are kept resolutely moving to and from tasks and appointments, mostly eating on the run at one or another of the area's fast-food outlets.

In keeping with mall design elsewhere in the world and with the area's signature downplaying of enticing street-level window displays and the curtailment of pedestrian access, the New Kingston Mall, which opened in the mid-1980s, faces inward. Its two floors of attractive retail space and food courts open onto an interior amphitheater-courtyard rather than to the nearby streets. The exterior façade is clad in forbidding grey-brown metal, and pedestrians are channeled into the building through single entrances on two adjoining streets and from gated, ground-level and underground parking lots. Despite its trendy design and a strong potential clientele to be drawn from office workers and nearby apartment and townhouse residents, the mall has not proven to be a boon for retailers. Moreover, the one area supermarket that has done steady business for four decades relies

18 The self-styled "Gully Queens" are subject to public abuse and periodic police raids. They have attracted much local and international media attention, including a well-known 2014 VICE News documentary; see www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILXVpFQVEbw. Ironically, they also recently featured as models in a photo shoot for Hood by Air (HBA), manufacturer of a high-priced street-wear fashion line; see www.konbini.com/us/inspiration/hood-by-air-pieter-hurgo-jamaica-lgbt-community-gully-queens.

heavily on customers who come and go by car; thus, tellingly, three of the first buildings erected as early as 1965 in the subdivision were gas stations.

An early press announcement in January 1959 heralding the development of the new business district envisioned it as "a modern commercial township to meet the changing conditions taking place in Kingston."[19] This was to be a "planned development," deliberately contrasted with the *unplanned* shopping areas that had grown up in Cross Roads, in Half Way Tree, and along the city's main arteries. The announcement's emphasis on pleasantness, safety, and convenience for patrons and their cars suggests that these conditions were no longer being met in downtown Kingston. The report notes that "people" (meaning of course the new suburbanites) were already "spending less time in Kingston's main shopping districts" and showing "greater desire to shop by car": "They seem to be quite willing to forego traditional shopping habits in return for new and convenient parking." From its inception, then, New Kingston was conceived to cater to the new automotive era.[20] As built out, however, the new "suburban shopping and service centre" came to offer fewer services and attractions than this grand early announcement advertised. For example, the diversity of department stores, specialty shops, and other services; a post office; and paved plazas, planted and landscaped and "linked by covered arcades to enable people to shop freely and comfortably in any weather," have mostly failed to materialize in the ensuing six decades. Thus, while guarantees of safety and good order were fulfilled, many of the pedestrian comforts, shopping attractions, and other services have not come about.

Occupying several acres of choice land at the very heart of the city's center of power stands the Liguanea Club, one of Jamaica's most prestigious private members clubs. There, many of Kingston's wealthy citizens and high-income executives and their families recreate themselves at the club's squash and tennis courts; use the swimming pool, indoor game facilities, and members' lounge; dine informally at the open-air restaurant; or hold business meetings. The club, founded in 1910, was located in and closely interconnected with Knutsford Park, which was run by the Jockey Club and opened five years earlier. In 1960, as geographer Colin Clarke showed in his now-classic study of Kingston, most members of the Liguanea Club were drawn from the upper stratum of the society and lived in the most exclusive parts of the city; their residential distribution coincided causally and not coincidentally with the distribution of Europeans. Some 67 percent of the club's members in Clarke's sample were listed among the island's prominent citizens in that year's edition of *Who's Who*. The club was known as "the Jew's Club," and half the members of its management committee had Jewish names.[21] Nowadays, the club's management and membership are noticeably more dark-skinned. However, the imagined boundary between those who rightfully belong and those who do not, though no longer as clearly configured along ethnoracial lines, remains firmly in place. Set back from Knutsford Boulevard, partially concealed by trees and fences, the club's seemingly restrained presence quietly demarcates and claims New Kingston as the ongoing center and preserve of power in the city. Place, though more to the point, a symbolic

19 "Shopping Centre Replacing Knutsford Park," *Gleaner*, 11 January 1959.
20 On the era of the automobile more generally, see, for example, Jane Holtz Kay, *Asphalt Nation* (New York: Crown, 1997).
21 Clarke, *Kingston, Jamaica*, 227–31.

order of emplacement—dynamic in its expression and refinements—continues to serve as an important enforcer of difference even as cultural-institutional distinctions manifest themselves more ambiguously and so-called racial ones have faded.

The moment of independence, I suggest, produces as much anxiety and apprehension as it does euphoria (if that).[22] The idea of territorial sovereignty, collectively held by the new state on behalf of a nation that has not yet come to see itself as such, is at best an abstraction. What all this talk of sovereignty does for most soon-to-be or newly born citizens, however—and importantly for foreign investors—is provoke a sense of urgency and immediacy around questions of place, property, and ownership, and on terms that reflect the social divisions and contestations they have long known. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, as Trevor Munroe described in his important study of Jamaican decolonization, Jamaica's Law Society and its principal spokesman Leslie Ashenheim fought determinedly and ultimately successfully on behalf of the island's propertied class and of foreign investors for the right to private property to be entrenched in the Jamaican Constitution, notably against the better judgment of the country's political leaders.[23] Yet even as the propertied elite was anxiously securing its holdings in law, the up-and-coming urban middle class was busily cordoning itself off from its working-class neighbors, abandoning sections of the city it had once happily occupied, deepening its investment in a spatialized representation of difference.

III

The deep divisions in Jamaican and Caribbean society, or, viewed differently, the question of social integration, have preoccupied anthropologists and other social scientists perhaps more than any other issue since the 1950s. One explanatory framework developed to address these divisions, M. G. Smith's theory of pluralism, though much criticized over the decades, has never quite gone away. Scott, for example, in his essay "The Permanence of Pluralism," notes wryly that "the ghost of M. G. Smith is haunting the landscape of the Jamaican political-modern."[24] Barry Chevannes, in a short but important paper published in that same millennial year, concluded that, despite Jamaicans' deft ability to code-switch between different cultural institutional forms, "the country remains not one but two Jamaicas, divided not so much by social class as by thinking."[25] Even Robotham, in the closing paragraphs of an otherwise bitterly critical reading of Smith's work—the opening salvo in a heated debate between these two eminent Jamaican anthropologists in the 1980s—credited Smith's pluralism analysis as "the theory of [Jamaican/Caribbean] society which gives the most realistic account of the social and ethnic cleavages which characterize this society."[26]

22 Robert Hill described the mood of the times in Jamaica in an interview with David Scott: "Putting it very bluntly, there was no excitement in the country for going it alone. In fact, I remember people thought like we were going to Independence in a state of mourning." David Scott, "The Archaeology of Black Memory: An Interview with Robert A. Hill," *Small Axe*, no. 5 (March 1999): 126.

23 Trevor Munroe, *The Politics of Constitutional Decolonization: Jamaica, 1944–62* (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1972), 159–62.

24 Scott, "The Permanence of Pluralism," 286.

25 Barry Chevannes, "Those Two Jamaicas: The Problem of Social Integration," in Kenneth Hall and Dennis Benn, eds., *Contending with Destiny: The Caribbean in the Twenty-First Century* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000), 184.

26 Don Robotham, "Pluralism as Ideology," *Social and Economic Studies* 29, no. 1 (1980): 88.

Central to Smith's ideas, especially in their earliest formulation as both Robotham and Scott have convincingly shown, was a tension between acculturation and pluralism. In the first of several papers in which he begins to develop and apply the theory of pluralism to the Caribbean, Smith argued that these societies, legally divided into "white," "free coloured and free black," and "slave" sections, were also culturally differentiated in their religious, legal, economic, kinship, recreational, and other beliefs and practices. Smith emphasized that at the same time there was a strong tendency for all members of the society to acculturate towards the values and practices of the dominant white social section. This tendency toward acculturation was inhibited, held in check, however—and especially so for the largest group at the base of the society—by the severe limitations imposed by the social and legal system. Summarizing his position, Smith argued that "the population of a British West Indian colony at this period [i.e., around 1820] was culturally *pluralistic*—that is to say, it contained sections which practiced different forms of the same institutions. Thus the population constituted a plural society *divided into sections*, each of which practiced different cultures. Moreover, in the West Indies *these social sections were organized in a rigid hierarchy and defined in terms of social and legal status differences*, including the most extreme form, slavery."[27]

My emphases here are intended to suggest that in this earliest formulation, Smith did not view these social sections as entirely sui generis, but as having been organized and defined as such by the dominant order. His description inclines, moreover, toward seeing pluralism as a somewhat more dynamic condition, as in process or being *produced* rather than simply constituting a diagnostic condition of the society in perpetuity, than his later formulations of the concept might suggest. In his observation Scott aptly captures the dependent, contingent status pluralism occupied in Smith's initial formulation: "It is not the problem of pluralism that gives rise to the problem of acculturation; it is the *failure* of acculturation that produces the structural *effect* of pluralism."[28] Yet it is precisely this—the *contingency* of pluralistic differences—that has been hardest for scholars (including Smith himself) to keep in focus.

Scott's intervention revisits the question of pluralism, he says, not for purposes of weighing in on the correctness or aptness of Smith's model. Instead, Scott aims (in a way that overlaps to some extent with Robotham's critique in the 1980s) to historicize Smith's ideas: "I want to *locate* his theoretical project in relation to the cultural-political conjuncture in which it was produced in Jamaica in the 1950s . . . what interests me primarily is the way in which *difference* has gotten written into—or out of—the Bandung project of the national-modern." Rather than regarding difference as something to be managed or assimilated or overcome, as was the preoccupation of the nationalist era, Scott argues that the present conjuncture demands a new conception of politics, one in which "politics is envisaged more as the strategic practice of arriving at *settlements.*" We need now to find "more adequate ways to accommodate contestation and the constitutive differences that make us up . . . to embody them politically."[29]

27 M. G. Smith, *The Plural Society in the British West Indies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 112 (emphasis mine).
28 Scott, "The Permanence of Pluralism," 291 (italics in original).
29 Ibid., 287, 298, 299 (italics in original).

For many of us who—like Scott—are seeking to make sense of the present conjuncture and to meaningfully situate our work in relation to Jamaican and other postcolonial societies in the throes of seemingly intractable and interminable crisis, this historicizing move to make clear the "contexts of argument" or the "conceptual problem-space" out of which Smith's ideas about pluralism emerged, as well as the urgency with which Scott stakes out the need for a new kind of politics, offer profound insight.[30]

Scott's analysis rests, importantly, on a now widely accepted proposition: "Historically constituted difference is ineradicable and indeed central to human flourishing."[31] All too often, however, we forget the "historically constituted" part of this proposition: naturalizing difference and employing it in nefarious ways to limit the capacity for achievement of society's denigrated "others." Once difference is admitted as foundational, it tends to be essentialized in binary terms.[32] Too easily we neglect to examine *the ways difference has been constituted* historically and in the present, pass too lightly over the symbolic practices and social circumstances of its contingent emergence. Moreover, the tendency to focus heavily on the culturally substantive ways in which difference is expressed correspondingly obscures the border and boundary-maintaining maneuvers that allow relational difference to be given fresh significance and sustained over time. However, the boundary still matters; it perhaps matters far more than the substantive differences it purports to mark off.[33] Certainly, these cultural differences are not insignificant.[34] However, as Chevannes persuasively shows, people hold more than one set of cultural understandings and can matter-of-factly code-switch between them. Differences, though significant, are not inert.

In coming to terms with Jamaican postcolonial social formations, we need, then, I suggest, to pay far more attention to the ongoing production and maintenance of social distinctions, and to ask, How is the boundary being refashioned and maintained? Just as historicizing the conceptual apparatus of Smith's pluralism can help us, as Scott demonstrates, to better grasp the central question it sought to address, so too, I argue, historicizing the symbolic registers of difference themselves, of their maintenance and transformation, can usefully serve to illuminate the problem-space of our present conjuncture.

In hindsight it is striking to me that neither in the thinking of the nationalist era nor since have there been attempts to interrogate on a wide scale the symbolic-ideological fictions of "race" in Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean, and their invention as part of the discourse of rule.[35] Unquestionably, the disparaging meanings associated with "blackness" and the significance of "Africa"

30 Ibid., 288.
31 Ibid., 298.
32 See, for example, Nina Glick Schiller, "Situating Identities: Towards an Identities Studies without Binaries of Difference," *Identities* 19, no. 4 (2012): 520–32.
33 Pace Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969).
34 See, for example, Deborah A. Thomas, *Modern Blackness: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Politics of Culture in Jamaica* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Chevannes, "Those Two Jamaicas."
35 Efforts to begin to interrogate "race" in Jamaican and Caribbean contexts as what Stuart Hall has called "a signifying practice" include Brackette Williams, *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991); and Daniel A. Segal, "'Race' and 'Colour' in Pre-independence Trinidad and Tobago," in K. A. Yelvington, ed., *Trinidad Ethnicity* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); and Charles V. Carnegie, *Postnationalism Prefigured: Caribbean Borderlands* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

have been subjected to systematic and necessary critique and been altered in the postindependence decades; and the role of the "black" subject has been given pride of place in the historiography of the nationalist era.[36] Correspondingly, "whiteness" and "brownness" lost their hierarchical priority and could no longer be openly spoken. However, even as racial/color categories have been symbolically revalorized and the injustices perpetrated in their name exposed, "race" itself—the presumed facticity and the myth-making enterprise of race; the psychosocial displacements and unrecognized reimagining of racial meaning in the local context—has not been sufficiently subject to critical scrutiny. Indeed, the mythological sureties of race were appropriated to validate the national project itself and lend credibility to narratives of national belonging. Yet with these nation-state endorsements they continue to be regarded as biologically grounded rather than culturally produced; they remain steadfastly part of the background of everyday common sense. I suggest that were we to better understand the origins and disentangle the symbolic workings of "racial" difference—invented as part of an apparatus of domination yet disguised and narrated as part of the natural order—we might be better prepared to trace, catch hold of, and forcibly confront their displacements cleverly parading in the guise of reconstituted avatars.

As I have argued, the marking of spatial difference is one of these avatars. New Kingston's development, starting in the late 1950s—a contribution to what I have called elsewhere the pluralizing of Jamaican public space—has been made to express and to harden in a matter-of-fact kind of way ideas about unbridgeable social difference that once relied on but could in postcolonial Jamaica no longer be comfortably (or accurately) spoken through a narrative of race and color.[37] Not only had "whiteness" and "brownness" become tainted with oppressive associations, many among the new elites were themselves "brown" and "black" in appearance and presumed ancestry. Place, which in colonial Kingston up until the early twentieth century had been much more heterogeneously settled and traversed, became a favored medium through which differences of civility and worth—infused still with the permanence with which they once were endowed through race—could be openly expressed, proudly so these days through a neoliberal idiom of personal accomplishment.

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36 See Thomas, *Modern Blackness*, for an insightful discussion of the changing significance of "blackness" from postindependence to late-twentieth-century Jamaica.

37 See Charles V. Carnegie, "Pluralizing Jamaican Public Space" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Caribbean Studies Association, Mérida, Mexico, June 2014).