

Introduction of Professor Eudine Barriteau for Induction Ceremony as Principal of the Cave Hill Campus, University of the West Indies

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“Reading creates parallel worlds, says Eudine Barriteau “It stimulates the mind”. “From young I began to experience the interiority of the mind, how it could operate in direct contradistinction to perceived reality, so from about 13 I would observe situations where my mind was beyond it. But an external reading by others would dwell on what they saw, a teenager, growing up working class with a single mother, producing easy classifications that did not fit that interiority. In my mind I had analyzed it and thought how wrong they were”. She spent the first eleven years of her life in Grenada and moved to Barbados in 1965, the year before this society would become independent. On November 30, 2013, she was awarded the Gold Crown of Merit by the Government of Barbados, in celebration of its 47th Anniversary of Independence. Today we acknowledge another boundary crossing in the life of a remarkable Caribbean woman.

Violet Eudine Barriteau is a Professor of Gender and Public Policy, two interrelated and complex areas of thought that define her expertise in the academy. The dualism in this professorial title represents her academic contribution to new knowledge, and the impact of her work in the public sphere. She has contributed significantly in this region to bringing gender out of its domestic confinement, breaking this glass ceiling of gender, not with explosives, but through evidence, with hard edged argued rationality. Her ideas have filtered into classrooms as well as government and corporate boardrooms

In 2011 Professor Barriteau was the Recipient of the Tenth CARICOM Triennial Award for Women, conferred for her “contribution to the objectives of women’s empowerment” and for transcending “the academic realm to have a powerful impact nationally and internationally”. She had developed an original model in the 1990s for theorising and analysing Caribbean gender systems. The model

was adopted by CARICOM Secretariat to inform its gender mainstreaming development programmes. As Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies she initiated The Summer Institute in Gender and Development Studies. To date this Institute has trained 297 women and men throughout the region and abroad. The CARICOM Triennium award had recognized the significant impact of three decades of work on gender and governance, education and training, and contribution to policy making. It had also taken note of the 172 public engagements, keynote speeches and public lectures in and around the region, and her representation of the Caribbean in 45 international fora on every continent of the globe, with the exception of Australia, where I hear, they are keeping the didgeridoos sounding, waiting for her answer to their call.

Caribbean feminist activism, and gender scholarship came of age at the same time that Eudine would grow to adulthood. “My understanding of woman and the power relations of gender came as a teenager” she writes. “It was the cumulative effect of not accepting society’s assumption of women’s experiences, opinions and prescriptions as automatically less valid or less relevant”. “Being acutely conscious at 16 years old of the inequalities affecting women, starting with the wonderful women in my family, I decided my script would be different”. And she would proceed to write this script with a measured and highly articulate voice, gaining stridency and gathering volume as she mentored others into its flow.

“It is not easy to go to sleep
 When the tramp of a soldier marches in your brain
 You do not know whether to sleep or wake
 When a rifle crashes on the metal road”

The Guyanese poet Martin Carter summons up a typical masculinized image of aggression. Yet this can represent any struggle to fashion a new path, presenting the androgyny of passion that drives one steadily and steadfastly to goals. In her essay “Constructing Feminist Knowledge in the Commonwealth Caribbean in the Era of Globalization”, Barriteau maintained that resistance in Caribbean academy

and society to grapple with questions of women's ontology" continued to find "new crutches for old misogynies". She observed in 1998 "As we approach the twenty-first century we have a choice. We can abandon nostalgia and come to terms with the fact that gender systems have changed... Or we can bury our heads in the nineteenth century and persistently ignore the fundamental changes of twentieth century gender systems. But we do so at a cost to our societies and our peoples. The past is never available". Her approach to administrative and scholastic work has been unsentimental and layered, never simplistic or formulaic.". She recalls "I had read in an essay by James Baldwin, 'avoid easy answers because they obscure more than they reveal. It resonated deeply with me, and still does". Eudine Barriteau has always taken the metallic road less travelled.

She learnt she had a second name, Violet, at age eleven, when an intercolonial travel permit was being sought for her to go to Barbados. She was a child of a colonized tropics, a commitment to the Caribbean forged in her undergraduate days at the Cave Hill campus where she did a B.Sc in Public Administration & Accounting. This grounding in political economies was further honed by her first job as a Research Assistant at the Institute for Social and Economic Research, then under the stewardship of Dr. Joycelin Massiah.

For scholars of this generation, the fortunes of the UWI were synonymous with that of the Region. Those of us who have labored in the Caribbean intellectual vineyards and groomed in the battlefield of scarce resources do not have the luxury of ivory towered scholarship. "I truly cared then and still care deeply about our region" she says. "I was caught with the unique vantage point of UWI in making the region stronger". In 1981 she was part of the Women in the Caribbean Project, a landmark in our gender research, assisting Patrick Emmanuel with interviews in St Kitts on Women and Politics. She proceeded to New York University to do a Masters in Public Administration in 1984. By 1994 she had completed her Ph.D in Political Science, specializing in the areas of Political Economy and Political Theory that further grounded her in the field of gender studies. Her dissertation research was published by Palgrave

International in 2001 as *The Political Economy of Gender in the Twentieth Century Caribbean*.

Professor Barriteau's record of publishing is impressive. Apart from her self authored book, she has singly edited and co-edited with colleagues five highly influential and well thumbed publications. *Theoretical Perspectives in Gender and Development* in 2001, *Stronger, Surer, Bolder: Ruth Nita Barrow Social Change and International Development* in 2001, *Enjoying Power: Eugenia Charles and Political Leadership in the Commonwealth Caribbean* in 2006, and *Confronting Power Theorizing Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in the Caribbean* in 2004. Her most recent, *Love and Power: Caribbean Discourses on Gender* was published by the UWI Press in 2012. She has 25 peer reviewed chapters in books, eleven articles in peer reviewed journals, and essays far too numerous to recount. Yet she confesses "I do not write easily, I write when I think I have something to say, to add to the conversation". And many read what she has to say- she has a virtual following. In 2005 she won the University of the West Indies Press inaugural best selling text book prize for her edited book *Confronting Power Theorizing Gender*.

The reach of these publications is matched by honorific awards for scholarship, among these are awards for scholarly publishing in Manila, in 1986, her selection as an American Association of University Woman Scholar in 1991, The Margaret McNamara Memorial Fund Scholar in 1991 and returning to Howard University as a Senior Fulbright Fellow in 2000. She chaired the local planning committee and hosted the prestigious International Association for Feminist Economics, IAFFE on the Cave Hill Campus in 2003, and was elected President of IAFFE in 2009. In 2008, 2010 and 2013 she was invited as an International Fellow at the Centre of Excellence in Research on Gender, at Örebro University, Sweden.

Professor Barriteau in her lifetime thus far has played many roles on the Caribbean and world stage – she is a feminist, activist, scholar, writer, orator, policy maker, administrator, manager, innovator, opponent, colleague, mother, friend and foe. She possesses the islander's capacity to successfully traverse

different realms - as Olive Senior puts this:

“...If I could balance
water on my head I can
juggle worlds
on my shoulders”

When Eudine returned from completing her PhD at Howard University, she had served a long apprenticeship in research, writing, seeing the Caribbean from afar and from within. She definitely had something to say. “Rather than focussing exclusively on the complications and continuities of the colonial legacy” Barriteau wrote “...I see potentially transformative spaces between what is bequeathed and what continues to be practiced. I want to make visible the new political agency of state systems that are overlooked, especially as these relate to transforming relations of gender”. Using a political economy approach to deciphering the gender system, Barriteau created a deceptively simple theory that allowed scholars and practitioners both to work through the labyrinthine inroads of gender: she defined the system as comprising a network of power relations with two principal dimensions: one ideological, the other material. Barriteau had taken on the ontological project of defining Caribbean women as rational economic and political actors of state and society, a Caribbean response to ideas as far back as Aristotle, Adam Smith, Thomas Paine and others that presented man as reason. A careful analysis of her work demonstrates a systematic unraveling and rethreading of the concepts of economic power, gender justice and gender equality.

She initiated and managed an interdisciplinary research project and annual lecture series *Caribbean Women Catalysts for Change* which unapologetically juxtaposes women with power. She confronts the legacy that has placed women as consistently powerless victims of patriarchy. Barriteau is disruptive, not for the sake of disruption, but to deliberately provoke thought and change. In her fearlessness she represents what our colleague Rhoda Reddock would call *Brave dange* in Trinidadian Patois, or our Jamaican sisters would say “she small but she tallawah”.

While consistently “centering women” to use Professor Hilary Beckles’s term, she has never been dismissive of masculinity: “I am deeply concerned about the well being of Caribbean boys and men” she writes. “I think men as leaders have to step forward and provide tangible leadership for boys and young men, rather than continuously blaming women and harking back to a pristine past, that never was”. In “Requiem for the marginality thesis” she proposes that this notion of male marginality “gives us Caribbean man as victim, with a wounded, regressive masculinity... doing ... a disservice to understanding the many manifestations of Caribbean manhood”.

In 2012 she charts new ground in an essay “Coming Home to the Erotic Power of Love and Desire” admitting that Caribbean gender scholarship had not dealt sufficiently with the power of the erotic and with female sexuality. In acknowledging love power Professor Barritteau has, perhaps consciously and wittingly, returned to fleshing out the other half of her original theoretical equation, moving from a dissection of the material relations of gender back to the ideological. In doing this, she has continued her lifelong scholarly preoccupation with deconstructing the binary oppositions that have framed gender identities for too long, limiting the potential of both sexes.

Professor Barritteau has sustained throughout her entire career thus far a full and equally impressive workload in administration and senior management. From 1995, for fifteen years she served as the first Head of the Dame Nita Barrow Institute for Gender and Development Studies, and in 2004, the first woman at the UWI to be appointed Campus Coordinator, School for Graduate Studies and Research. In 2008 she became the second woman to be appointed Deputy Principal at the Cave Hill Campus. On August 1, 2014 she was appointed as Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the Open Campus. On May 1, 2015 she assumed the position as Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the Cave Hill Campus.

Eudine possesses an extraordinary intellect, a decisive personality, and an independent and critical mind – all of which is tempered and matched by an equally infectious humour and dry intelligent wit. She has demonstrated throughout her working career a capacity for fairness and loyalty to her colleagues, she is staunch in her mentorship of students, and confirmed in the importance of friendships and family.

She brings a wealth of knowledge and a confidence sharpened through local, regional and global experience to the service of The University of the West Indies. This institution could locate no finer champion for its republic of thought and learning. The Cave Hill campus could find no better visionary to install as a caretaker of its resources. Professor Eudine Violet Barriteau has qualified with glowing references to be inducted today as one of the leading stateswomen in the region, joining a still small number of women who have become Principals and Pro-Vice Chancellors at the University of the West Indies.

I end with personal congratulations to Eudine, my colleague and friend of many many years.