Disjunctures

Scholarship on black diasporas has notably excluded, disregarded and marginalised women and subordinated attention to the politics of gender. Scholars such as Carole Boyce Davies, Hazel Carby, Constance Sutton, D. Alissa Trotz and Jacqueline Nassy Brown have attempted to redress these oversights by showing “how particular practices (such as travel) and processes (such as diasporic community formation) come to be infused with gender ideologies (or become ‘gendered’) and how such gendering effectively determines the different positionalities men and women can occupy” (Nassy Brown, 1998, p. 301). Male players and supporters mainly occupy the Mavericks Cricket and Social Club (MCSC), but their gender performances and the function of the club depends on women, whose experiences are explored below.

In seminal black diaspora texts, such as C. L. R. James’ *Beyond a Boundary* and Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, women are often left out of the story, portrayed as non-agents, and erased from the history of black politics and Caribbean travel, not to mention sport. A gender analysis of James’ work by Hazel Carby, in her book *Race Men*, explains that for James the connection between sport and politics “was seamless precisely because ideologies of masculinity, whether conscious or unconscious, were already shaping his understanding of the performative politics of cricket *and* his idea of how colonialism should be opposed” (Carby, 1998, p. 120, emphasis in original). James’ fictional writing, including *Minty Alley*, examines working-class people and relations among women, but “[w]hen James abandoned fiction to write about revolutionary politics and revolutionary heroes, he also gave up trying to write about women” (Carby, 1998, p. 125) and rendered invisible the ways in which gender, including women’s experiences and relations as well as performances of multiple masculinities and relations among men, shaped the practices and ideologies of sport and politics.

Where women's experiences are invoked in analyses of the Afro-diaspora, women are often used, according to Michelle Stephens (2005), to represent the past, home, stasis, domesticity and heterosexual captivity, whereas men are described as creating the diasporic future through their transnational, itinerant and homosocial activities. Stephens draws on the work of Carole Boyce Davies to explain the invisibility of women of colour in narratives of nationalism, post-colonialism and diaspora: "it is because she is 'somewhere else, doing something else' in less territorial transnational spaces" (Stephens, 2005, p. 17) that the wife, mother, or girlfriend is ignored. Violet Showers Johnson found of "West Indian" cricket in Boston in the early 1900s, that girls and women were critical to club functions in terms of organising entertainment, food, fundraising for purchase of uniforms and sports equipment, catering and supervising the tea breaks, a *sine qua non* for any cricket match. The same activities "within the periphery and in the traditional domestic arena of food and entertainment" (Johnson, 2006, p. 61) prevail for the female Afro-Caribbean-Canadians in Toronto 100 years later, but the complexities of their roles, and particularly their relationships with each other, deserve far deeper analysis.

When we examine the different positionalities that women occupy compared to men, and the ways in which gender performances (such as flirtatious overtures and macho heterosexualities) are relational in the space of a cricket ground, different diasporic stories emerge and we begin to understand more fully the formation of Afro-Caribbean diasporic communities. Following Carrington (2008, p. 424), in this text:

"I examine the extent to which sport provides a contested arena through which competing definitions of race, gender, sexuality, class, and region are articulated. Or, to put it more succinctly, how are different versions of what it means to be black confirmed or challenged within particular sporting locales?"

Many migrants may feel a sense of community where differences are minimised and communal cultures celebrated. To focus solely on the masculinised world of the cricket ground and men's community building, however, would be to trade in fictions that deny the reality of the ways in which this community is fractured. We see through the lens of women's experiences the fallacy of any notion of a universal diasporic experience, the reinforcement of the patriarchal gender order within Afro-Caribbean diasporas, and women's agency within Afro-diasporic and sporting spaces. None of the female club members play cricket, yet exploring their stories is essential in order to reveal the disjunctures of the Afro-diaspora.¹

A Taste of the Candy Apple

"De first time she come, she flounce outta that car, fly across de grass and she win' up falling into Michael's arms. You know Michael is a real catch. He's got a nice body, always wears tapered clothes. He's clean, you know? Den she come on the scene an' contaminate him. She drove everyone mad. All a dese men, fighting for a taste of the Candy Apple. All de women throwing darts with dey eyes. Look she deh."

I turned in the direction my sister was pointing and saw a round woman in a skin-tight, low-cut, bright red halter top crossing the grassy area by the scorers' table. Her backside and belly battled each stitch of her oh-so-tiny yellow jean shorts. Her personality was even louder than her outfit. "Good afternoon. Good afternoon!" She called to greet everyone within earshot as she waved her three-inch-long, air-brushed, acrylic nails. She walked around the boundary and shook the hands of all her friends, sure not to leave anyone out. "How's your Pops, Kaneisha? You feelin' better Mr. Weste?" She reached a group of four men standing around a table top specifically designed to fit on top of the city's one-metre-tall recycling bins found at the park. They were playing a game of dominoes. One of them must have said something hilarious, but all we could hear was Candice screaming, "Oh lawd, stop!" as she doubled over in laughter, held her belly with her left hand and slapped her right hand on the chest of the man standing next to her. She needed him to stop him the joke he was telling while she caught her breath.

"You see me?" My sister chimed in, showing that despite 30 years in Canada she had not lost a touch of her Bajan speaking ways. "You would neva, eva, eh-hhh-vaaahh catch me wearin' somet'ing like dat in public. People will talk. It's like, someone need tell she, leave a likkle to de imagination, nuh?" Leaning in and in a lowered voice she offered, "You know she won a worker's compensation lawsuit for an injury she claim happen at her job, but she look disabled to you? She just scandalous." My sister had a way of kissing her teeth, shaking her head and rolling her eyes at the same time that made you feel as though whatever she was thinking about was dirtier than a cigarette floating in a sewer. As this was my first time visiting Toronto in 10 years, she felt she needed to fill me in on all of the gossip. "Imagine, Erol tell Layton an' Layton tell me dat she spend all dat lawsuit money on dat car! Look it deh." I was sure that all the pointing around the boundary was going to have that woman in our faces sooner rather than later. I stole a glance at the sparkling new white Lexus luxury SUV parked on the grass beside the cricket grounds. Compared to the practical Honda Civics and Dodge Caravans of some of the other players and supporters her vehicle was conspicuously out of place. "And you see how she park it so, under dat tree. Notice all de other cars all de way down deh so. Wait. Just wait. She t'ink a tree can protec' she? When one a dese ol' men hit that ball over deh, dat windshield is toast. Just wait."

If a ball could decimate her car, none of us were safe just a few metres away, were we? A hard cricket ball could cause serious damage to an unsuspecting spectator, couldn't it? I had no intention of returning to Connecticut with a broken jaw, arm or anything else for that matter. "Should we move over?" I asked her. "We too close?"

“We just need to keep one eye on de ball.” She quipped. “I tell Layton over and over de club needs to apply to de city to make dis a proper ground. Get some bleachers, maybe a washroom in here. Den maybe some more wives would show up for dese games. And definitely, we could have a parking lot across de road away from dis nonsense. I been tellin’ him for years. I know I’m just gonna have to do it myself. Do you know who to call about that? Maybe Candy Apple can help. Here she come” My sister turned a snicker into a smile in a heartbeat as Candice approached us. “Well hello there!”

“A Taste of the Candy Apple” was developed through conversation with a Torontonion and her group of sisters who had travelled to Toronto from Connecticut for the Labour Day weekend, 2008. I shared a version of the story with the sister who lives in Toronto the following week and she highlighted several different dimensions of female MCSC members’ experiences that vary based on their relationships to men and commitment to the club. We rewrote the story to identify four different ‘types’ of women associated with the Mavericks: widows, gossipers, lovers and supporters are described below.

This chapter investigates what the experiences of women can tell us about gender and race in the Black Atlantic and Caribbean diaspora. There are the women who do not “show up” to games either because there is nowhere to sit, they have no interest in the sport, or they remain elsewhere in waged labour or in charge of childcare and domestic duties. These women, whom I call “widows,” may occasionally attend club trips, dances, picnics, or banquets with their husbands, but they “lose” them every weekend through the summer. Their absence from the regular weekend games is essential for the creation of a homosocial space.

Those who attend games regularly are typically connected to male club members through marriage or romance and use the grounds as they would the beauty salon or the kitchen, as a place for women to get together and share stories and experiences. This group of women I call the “gossipers” barely notices that a cricket match is happening. They sit with their sisters and friends at the periphery of the cricket grounds, talk to and about each other, delineate issues of morality and make the values of the community known. They also come to the grounds to observe and police their husbands’ and boyfriends’ on- and off-field performances and other single women’s behaviours.

A woman who is flirtatious can easily transform herself into one of the Mavericks’ “lovers.” This is a small group of women who are not married to the Mavericks, but accompany them to most games, some dances, and on certain trips providing romance, friendship and support. They remain close to the Mavericks, alongside them at their domino games and on the dancefloor, rather than in the respectable, peripheral zone occupied by most wives. They are the

source of much of the gossip at the grounds and play an essential role in creating a heterosexualised, masculine space.

The women I refer to as the “supporters,” like the male supporters, invest their time, energy and money in the on-field performances and the functioning of the club. In addition to providing (grand)childcare, they cheer when the players perform well, heckle those who play poorly, cook food for the post-game celebrations, sell tickets to dances and fundraisers, score keep, *lime* with the male spectators and perform administrative duties such as lobbying the municipality for funds. The club could not operate without them. The widows, gossipers, lovers and supporters are not mutually exclusive groups. Some women perform one or all of these roles in distinct times, spaces and contexts, but all are essential to the club function and the homespaces the Mavericks are able to create.

The MCSC claims to be family oriented. Terrel, a 56-year-old black St. Lucian-Canadian reminded me, “We are not only men, because this is a cricket and *social* club, so we include families.” Between 10 and 30 per cent of the crowds at most games are women: daughters, friends, girlfriends, lovers and wives of the players. Sometimes this amounts to only two or three women.

Widows

Approximately 60 per cent of the Maverick cricketers are currently married to women, so one might expect to see more women out to support the male players, but the social environment of the cricket grounds was a deterrent for many women and fewer than half of the players’ wives ever attend cricket matches. Kundell, a 52-year-old St. Lucian-Canadian, explained that his first wife “wasn’t a cricket fan. She came to one game and that was it. In 1989.” The culture evident at the cricket ground sometimes included men’s loud talking, swearing, spitting, scratching of genital areas, misogynist comments and boasting of their sexual or cricketing prowess. As they use the cricket ground to perform black Caribbean masculinity, they often mark the space as not for women, if not anti-woman. Maintaining homeland cultures in the diaspora can also mean preserving gender hierarchies and exclusions; Davis and Upson explain that women were actively prohibited from watching an India–Pakistan cricket match at the South Asian Friendship Center and Bookstore (pseudonym) in Chicago “because it just wasn’t safe for them” (2004, p. 638). Among the Mavericks some women might also not feel safe, especially at the players’ after-parties. One of the players wore a T-shirt created by the club in 2000 stating that he was a member

of “a drinking team with a cricket problem” extolling his true objective at the grounds. Another’s shirt stated “Me nah eat nuttin’ me cyan’t put hot pepper sauce on!” alluding to his alleged disdain for cunnilingus and appreciation for spicy food. These behavioural and sartorial performances effectively marked the space as hyper-masculine and were a turn-off for many female club members, including myself.²

Belinda Edmonson (2003), drawing on Wilson’s (1973) respectability/reputation thesis, describes the domestic space as the traditional, “respectable,” appropriately feminine space for Caribbean women, in contrast to the masculine public space of “reputation” where men of the oppressed classes are expected to endorse the values of the outdoors including talking, swearing, infidelity, drinking and staying out late. These are ways in which men establish a reputation among their peers. They may move into and out of the respectable home space, but theirs is the outdoor, public domain. The cricket ground and its environs, including the grassy area around the boundary where men sit, talk and socialise at their cars, are experienced as public places primarily for men. Meanwhile women are expected to place their loyalties in their husbands, hope for honest, sober, responsible behaviour and wait for them to come home. This dichotomy is found in the families of many MCSC members and is captured in the above vignette. Women were actively excluded from on-field participation with the Mavericks, and most female club members did not attend games. Edmonson (2003, p. 2) states, “crossing of the boundaries by women from private to public space must be interrogated and assessed as either a proper intervention that preserves the woman’s femininity, or a social violation that masculinizes or otherwise pathologizes her.” Socialising alongside men even at their domino tables is to enter the profane, “reputation” space. Although there were always a few women to spend time with, and respectable ways to behave at the periphery of the cricket grounds, most female club members preferred to simply stay away from games.

Kundell’s first wife, who came to only one game in 1989, saw her husband’s obsession with cricket as giving her the freedom to do as she pleased every weekend in the summer. While she attended dances and annual club functions, her interest in other weekend activities surpassed her interest in cricket and the masculine space created at the grounds. Not every woman who refrains from joining her husband at the grounds is miserable at home without him. Some women’s absences are a form of resistance to sporting cultures, to routine sexual harassment of these men-only spaces, or to engagement with the diaspora.

Tayana, a 46-year-old black Guyanese-Canadian, explained that there are so few women at the grounds because most wives have “too many other things to do than sit ’pon de grass all day Saturday wit’ a bunch a men.” This short statement elucidates two significant points. First, few of the local clubs have been able to mobilise the funds or municipal support to build a proper clubhouse, which forces spectators to stand, bring their own seating, lean on trees, or sit on the grass, something that many older, middle-class, Afro-Caribbean women find uncomfortable. A clubhouse might make the space more inviting for women who are concerned about staying warm and dry while they watch the games and socialise. On the surface the cricket ground appears to be a loud, friendly Afro-Caribbean space that is “not only men ... we include families” (Terrel). However, without amenities such as chairs and washrooms, the cricket grounds on which the Mavericks play are not very appealing places for many women to spend 16–20 hours on a weekend. Unlike black clubs in England, which have benefited from shifts in government spending to leisure facilities as a means of trying to placate inner-city tensions (Carrington, 1998, 1999), the Mavericks have been unable to convince local governments of their need for permanent cricket structures.

Second, having “too many other things to do” highlights the unpaid domestic labour that many women do on the weekends, which indirectly supports their husbands’ sport. In her text, *Mother’s Taxi*, Shona Thompson (1999) demonstrates that doing laundry, cooking, driving and raising children unaided, as well as emotionally supporting their husbands and abandoning their own sporting pursuits, are characteristic of wives of recreational athletes in Australia. The wives of MCSC members also perform these tasks in addition to massage, healthcare provision and attending to their (grand)children’s needs, which allows their husbands the freedom to spend time at the cricket grounds and cricket-related social activities every weekend from May to September. Thomas (2007, p. 114) observes that “Contemporary diasporic resources, while potentially drawing people together – materially or symbolically – in ways that are useful to them at particular historical moments, are never innocent of the broader conditions of power that shape their availability in specific sites at specific times.” Afro-Caribbean-Canadian “widows” are unable to use cricket as a diasporic resource for a number of reasons related to their subordination within patriarchal societies and nuclear families.³

The widows’ husbands are occupied with cricket for the entire summer, but for them it is not enough. Erol, a 55-year-old Barbadian-Canadian complains that they “only have this three months in a year”: “In the summer, we only have cricket twice a week. We practise Tuesdays and Thursdays at [a Toronto] ground and then we play Saturday–Sunday. And if a holiday fall on a Monday

we play that day too, Canada Day, Labour Day weekend we play a game also, but that's it." He minimises his participation, describing it as only "three months in a year" and only "twice a week," when he, in fact, practises twice each week and then plays two or three times each week. Moreover, the cricket season lasts from early May to late September, which is indeed five months. Some of the Mavericks drive over two hours – from London, to Mississauga, Ontario – for two-hour practices. Combined with hours of playing and socialising they could easily spend over 30 hours away from home each week, burdening their wives with domestic and (grand-)childcare responsibilities. Some of the wives who attend games bring their young (grand-)children with them. In my own experience, cricket games were a family event until I reached 8 years of age. Once my younger brother and I began weekend sport and dance programmes of our own, and preparing a picnic and activities for us to do at the cricket grounds for a whole day became more of a hassle for my mother than a joy, she stopped attending. My father, on the other hand, was able to continue playing for another decade without those family obligations.

Many women describe the impossibility of supporting both their partners' and their children's sporting pursuits. Eunice, a 46-year-old white English-Canadian woman, explains:

I haven't been going to the games much since [Sandra] is getting older, since there's always something to do on the weekends. But when she was a baby or before she was born I used to [keep] score ... In fact, when they went on the trip to Jamaica I was pregnant with [Sandra], so I guess we took her to all the games back then ... But now at times they practise twice a week and then they play Saturday and Sunday so I don't see much of him so my friends say "Oh you're a cricket widow for the summer!" ... After they finish playing [cricket] they play dominoes, and that's when it takes even longer ... But over the years I've grown to live with that ... I'm usually the one that ends up taking [Sandra] to basketball. He misses out.

Jean, a 48-year-old black Jamaican-Canadian, explains that her son Jamal is now her first priority.

I'm usually with [Jamal]. There's no choice any more. I'm usually with him, I mean before when he was much younger, yes we were at every game whether it be Saturday and Sunday we were always there ... and when he got into his baseball more competitively less and less we would go to [my husband's cricket] game, because somebody has to be with [Jamal].

Eunice and Jean do not experience attending their children's sports games instead of their husbands' as a choice. They "live with that" because "somebody has to" care for their children. Eunice did not grow up indoctrinated into Caribbean

“respectable” femininity; however, some mores of motherhood (and patriarchy) are cross-cultural. These women’s sense of responsibility to their children and domestic spaces are immutable.

Many of the Mavericks were pleased with the fact that their wives and girlfriends give them the space and time they need to enjoy being a MCSC member. Thomas, a 44-year-old Barbadian-Canadian commented:

I used to think about it every once in a while. Like, “Why doesn’t my baby come and watch me every once in a while?” You know, it’s OK. I have no problem with that ... [My wife] is definitely not a cricket fan. I guess for her it’s like being idle ... She would prefer to do something else with her time ... [but] she’s the type of lady that, you know, it doesn’t bother her that I’m with the guys ... For me, to be able to play cricket every day, let’s say on the weekend, among friends, I love that ... for my wife to give me permission to go ... That’s one thing about that side of her personality I love. To me that is very attractive ... Every cricketer needs a wife like that. (Thomas)

Roland, a 51-year-old black Guyanese-Canadian, also echoed these sentiments. He has a wife who gives him his “freedom”:

Roland: When we start having children she choose to stay home and she understands cricket was in my life before her. And I love her, but cricket is still (pause)

Janelle: The first love?

Roland: Well, if you want to put it that way. It was there before her and she understands that ... You know I get home and I’m very sore and limping and stuff like that and she’ll look at me and say “You’re enjoying the game aren’t you?” and I’ll say, “Shut up, you know I’m suffering.” She will make me beg for a back rub (laughs). But I beg. And I get one.

Their wives “give permission” and “understand” that cricket is important to the Mavericks and facilitate their play, especially because cricket was in their lives first. Roland sees his wife’s decision to stay home as a “choice.” She was away from the games caring for his children, and now that their kids are adults she continues to perform labour in the form of massage (and cooking, cleaning and laundry) to enable his sports participation. I wondered if there was an activity in her life before him. If there was, it probably remains firmly in the past, since she must devote herself to domestic work while her husband revels in the camaraderie, memories, homosociality and conviviality of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora at the cricket grounds.

Approximately 40 per cent of the male club members are single and, of those, all but one were once married, but are now divorced or separated. While I cannot be sure that cricket played a role in the demise of their marriages, husbands and

wives who are still married both expressed the critical importance of a woman's acceptance of the role of cricket in a man's life – even if that means “losing” one's husband for 20 hours or more each weekend in the summer. If *liming* is essential to recreating Afro-diasporic masculinity and men need women to grant them the freedom to do so without jealousy or feelings of possession, widows play an essential role in this community through their absences. As Sylvanie, a 60-year-old black Antiguan-Canadian told me: “I have no desire to interrupt his fun with the boys. He does his thing and I do mine.”

Female club members described several differences between watching cricket in the Caribbean and in Canada. In their homelands, they had the option to bring their children to games. Alternatively, they had nearby family members to call on to help with childcare, or left their children to play in the neighbourhood. In Canada, they are limited in their ability to reproduce feminine Afro-Caribbean homespaces and to access sport, even as spectators, owing to a lack of support resources and discursive tools available for assistance with child-minding and domestic duties. Dominant middle-class Canadian discourses dictate that children must be supervised until 13 years of age, preferably in an arts or physical activity programme dedicated to their enrichment. All of the mothers I spoke to indicated that they do not have as much free time as their husbands to socialise on the weekends:

At home [in the Caribbean], there's always someone to watch the kids. You can just say to the neighbours, “Mrs. Charles, I'm going into town,” and she know that means she mus' keep an eye on the kids. Or else we would just go along with our parents to cricket, but here you can't do that. The kids get bored there all day, and besides you don't even know who your neighbours are half the time ... So I just usually say let [my husband] go an' I stay home to watch them, pick up around the house. You know. That stuff has to get done. (Jean)

Nassy Brown (1998, p. 298) asks: “how do power relations within the diasporic space of particular black communities determine participation in the transnational space of diaspora that Gilroy calls the Black Atlantic?” In the case of the MCSC, patriarchal relations prohibit many women from full participation in community activities. The cricket grounds, and to a lesser extent, cricket trips are constructed as homosocial gathering places. Masculine mobility is important to the “routes” men aim to create, while their womenfolk “seem to represent everything good about ‘black home’ and its attendant values, domesticity and heterosexuality,” as Stephens (2005, p. 146) writes of the black/Caribbean characters of Claude McKay's novel, *Home to Harlem*. While I do not wish to

reinforce a strict home = respectability/street = reputation divide – as there are examples of men and women in the MCSC who defy this binary – it is clear that among MCSC members the distinct value systems described by Wilson (1973) for working-class Afro-Caribbean women and men still apply to the middle-class Afro-Caribbean Canadians. Women are functionally excluded or choose to stay away from the “reputation” value system of the street (or cricket field). This stricture on widows’ participation in the club is further limited by Canadian mores, neoliberal structures and a culture that demands women’s unpaid labour in a nuclear family setting.

Constructions of the black diaspora emphasise the ways in which Afro-Caribbean men’s social institutions free them from nationalisms (see Edwards, 2001; Farred, 2003; Gilroy, 1993), but we must also consider the ways in which they are also freed from domesticity, childcare and women (Joseph, 2011a; Stephens, 2005). Widows surrender their men to the sport. These women’s absences during cricket matches allow men to use the space as an arena for male bonding, the experience of which would be negatively transformed if their wives were there by their sides.

For the reason that participation in MCSC activities was as much about *lim-ing*, talking and playing dominoes around the boundary as it was about actual cricket play, respectable women who chose to attend games were expected to navigate carefully the area around the boundary. Female club members were aware that their place at the cricket grounds was not beside their husbands, but at the periphery, with other women, thereby creating a segregated space for gendered reproduction of the Afro-diaspora. Women who did not conform to respectable ways of dressing, talking and occupying space were punished through gossip and social exclusion.

Gossipers

Of the few women who attended games, most admitted to caring little about the sport. I wondered why a woman would bother coming to the grounds and ignoring the game. Percelle, a black 41-year-old Grenadian-Canadian enlightened me about one reason for abandoning cricket “widow” status: “Wives who stay at home don’t have a clue what’s going on down here. There are a lot of women who would love to distrac’ our husbands.” She acknowledges that there are a number of chores she “should be doing” at home but while she is “working at home, another woman will be *wukking* the game, you know what I’m sayin?” Her use of the word “distract” and play on the term work/*wuk* has been

well rehearsed in the indigenous Caribbean music form, calypso. Lyrics use *wuk* to refer to sensual dancing or sexual intercourse and *work* to refer to domestic or industrial labour. The suggestion is that a woman can easily distract a man (i.e., get his attention) but must *wuk/work* hard to keep it. From Percelle's perspective, it is a wife's duty to regulate her husband's attention. A woman who is present at the grounds, but segregated from the male crowd can use her "absent-presence" to keep an eye on her partner. Percelle's husband, nearly 20 years her senior, is a "catch" that she is not willing to let slip away. Any woman who misses her cricket-dedicated husband has only one choice according to her: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em! ... Let me tell you, for five years I was miserable, complaining. He's out all weekend, comes home late, too sore to do anything. Now I come out, find someone to chitchat with, have my drink an' my fun."

Percelle's expression, "now I come out" is significant in a Wilsonian understanding of Caribbean gender relations. Relegated to the home and inside spaces, she was a "respectable" widow, but lonely and burdened with caring for her young son on her own. Her efforts to constrain her husband's activities were futile. As the Caribbean calypso has long opined, a woman who tries to imprison a man in the home or yard is scathingly denounced for threatening a man's power and reputation. Percelle's only option to overcome her "miserable" condition was to enter the cricket ground space of "reputation," but in a limited way: making friends of her own to *lime* with and bringing her son along. He ran around with other children or when he was the only child (as was often the case) a male spectator chatted with him or threw a ball to him so that he could practise batting with his father's cricket bat. Given the lack of local opportunities for young children to play organised cricket in Toronto, and the popularity of sport for young boys, it is likely that her son will pursue another sport as he ages. Percelle has not yet experienced a conflict between her husband and son's schedules and easily made the transition from widow to what I have termed "gossiper."

Unlike male club members, who seem content to stand while they watch the game, or lean on a tree, rubbish bin, or their cars, female MCSC members always travel with canvas folding chairs or blankets to sit on. They bring coolers (insulated boxes) full of coolers (sweet, carbonated alcoholic beverages), ice, wine, beer, spirits and soda to drink. They also pack potato crisps, meat patties, pastries and fruits on which to snack, and novels, crosswords, Sudoku puzzles, knitting and crocheting to occupy their time. These women are marginally concerned about their husbands' on-field performances. Percelle told me "When we come down here we don't have a clue what's going on in the game, but we cheer when they cheer." For the most part, it is only an "expensive" over (when players

score a lot of runs), that turns their attention to the field. Instead, the majority of the female MCSC members who attend games congregate around the periphery of the boundary to talk about retail sales, politics, fashion, childrearing, menopause, finance, romance, family members dispersed throughout the diaspora and a number of other topics pertinent to their lives. They discuss whose daughter is “in the way” (pregnant), who is sick with “the cancer,” who is sending or refusing to send money home to their families, who is preparing to retire and who recently brought their parents up to live with them. Through these discussions, the values and concerns of the female members of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora become known.

A central topic of conversation revolved around club members’ appearance and behaviour. Gossipers were quick to disparage unkempt women who should “know enough” to wear a hat or headscarf “with nappy hair like that,” or men who are so intoxicated that they can’t walk straight: “You know he smile ‘cause he see four breast ‘pon you!” Another favourite topic of conversation was the “shameless” single women who attend MCSC games and dances looking for love in all the wrong places. I was warned against appearing to be one of those “loose” or immoral women who wears skimpy clothing and befriends male club members in addition to being directed against appearing too “mannish.”⁴ When I cut my long, locked hair into a faux-hawk style and attended one game in a pair of cargo pants and a T-shirt without the make-up or earrings I usually wore, I was admonished by a few cricketers and many of the women at the grounds for “looking like a guy.” I was told “You so tall, min’ dey don’ tek you for a man!” “Now I *know* you look like a boy.” “Lawd! What happened to your hair? She look like Mr. T (laughs)!”

While changing my appearance was not an intentional ethnographic experiment, it offered insights into the gender dynamics of this sporting space. The female MCSC members made it clear that a masculine appearance is not acceptable for a woman, drawing lines around “proper” gender and sexual orientation at the same time. Percelle’s explicit advice to bring a male partner to the ground to appear unavailable, and to be sure to “always wear long earrings wit’ short-short hair” like mine also sent me a message that to gain the respect of these women, I had to perform middle-class, conservative, heterosexual, monogamous respectability. A double standard exists, however, as many male MCSC members, whether married or not, exhibited polyamorous behaviour and used their body and verbal language to mark themselves as “available.” Their access to a reputation system that accrues status with each additional conquest, girlfriend and child made it in their best interest to be flirtatious.

When I asked Teresah, a black 58-year-old Jamaican-Canadian woman, about her friends in the club, she explained that at first it wasn't easy to make friends because "a lot of West Indian women don't talk fact" about the men in the club:

You see dese Bajan women, dey out to destroy you. Dey call you an' say dey saw your man huggin' up so-and-so. Cha! (kisses teeth as an expression of disgust) When is real, people hush, hush, hush. Dat's why I told [Michael] "Do not give out our home number!" Me noh want none a dese petty women callin' me!

Teresah reinforces the idea that within Afro-Caribbean diasporic spaces, an unfaithful man can have a mistress without his wife's knowledge because the community is "hush, hush, hush"; that is, silent about the infidelity around his wife. She also notes that having a philandering husband, or more specifically a community that gossips about it, can "destroy" a woman. Implicit in this is an understanding that a man's reputation would survive such accusations. Her comments also draw attention to another of the disjunctures of the seemingly unified Afro-Caribbean diaspora. While women from her native Jamaica are often targets of abusive stereotypes in the Canadian context, she marks herself as not Bajan (from Barbados) and revolts against the spreading of rumours, half-truths and full lies, a characteristic she attributes to Bajan women. Inter-island rivalries and making boundaries around national identities were as common as coolers among women around the boundary.

Gossipers often distinguished themselves from "those blacks" who are constantly bringing shame to the Afro-Caribbean community. Some Bajan women explicitly reprimanded young black Jamaicans and lower-class (or "classless") black people, whom they described as "bad parents" who "don't control their children." Nearly every club member personally knew someone whose son was, as Jean described, "about to take a trip in the back of a cop car or a hearse." Though some club members engaged in the victim blaming so common in mainstream Canadian anti-black discourse, more common in this community were alternative stories of black youth success and good parenting (individual, neoliberal ways of understanding crime avoidance), as well as explanations of the structural limitations that hamper opportunities for success for many Afro-Caribbean people, young black men in particular.

Some Jamaicans distinguished their adult children from the stereotypes of the gun-toting gang member or welfare-abusing single mother by talking about their children's academic, employment and financial accomplishments. They were sure to share stories of their children choosing a university programme or earning a scholarship, purchasing their first home, or making money in

the stock market. They discussed the after-school sport and martial arts programmes in which they enrolled their young children to teach them discipline and respect, as well as the tough love they doled out so that their teenagers would not grow to be lazy or foolish. There were a few gossipers who admitted knowing of “good people” who had “raised their boys right,” but couldn’t keep them away from “bad influences” such as drugs and criminal peers in their low-income neighbourhoods or secondary schools. Some of the mothers pointed out that Jamaicans commit only a small percentage of the crime. Jean, a 48-year-old black Jamaican-Canadian, defended her heritage, saying: “You see nowadays is not only Jamaicans. The Guyanese, Grenadians, I know they come up here and they can’t find jobs. They move into a certain place and bam (claps hands). Trouble.” That “certain place,” club members were aware, referred to Toronto Community Housing, known to be high-crime and highly racialised locations.

These women noted the intersections of poverty, anti-black and anti-immigrant employment discrimination, and the lure of the criminal life for young black Caribbean-Canadians. Although the structural limitations can target black groups equally, the women’s comments, and particularly efforts to distinguish themselves from “those Jamaicans” and “lower-class blacks” reveal that the stereotypes of Jamaican incorrigibility and lower class criminality that pervade mainstream Canadian society are also embraced and resisted by some people of Afro-Caribbean descent. My time at the cricket ground revealed that these stereotypes have prompted a crisis of identity among some middle-class Afro-Caribbean-Canadians and Jamaican-Canadians in particular who are under an imperative to prove they (and their children) are not dangerous, uncivilised or undisciplined.

In another example of drawing boundaries around particular Caribbean nations, a black Jamaican-American woman, Beatrice, who had accompanied a cricket team visiting for the weekend from the Bronx, New York, commented that they were missing the Caribbean Festival in New York on that Labour Day weekend, but she did not mind because the “Trinidadians an’ dem always win.” A discussion ensued comparing the New York and Toronto Caribbean festivals and the coup led by the “Trini organisers” in both cities. This discussion conjoined non-contiguous spaces as Caribbeans from Canada and the United States expressed their shared experiences. Non-Trinidadians claimed what was once a diasporic celebration of unity, emancipation and inversion, has become divisive, imprisoning and a replication of the status quo of the national politics of the Caribbean. They claimed people from the smaller islands, such as Antigua, Grenada and Nevis are unable to have their voices heard, their music played, or

their achievements honoured. A few women mentioned that they stopped going out for Caribana events a long time ago, because, as Camila, a black 59-year-old Barbadian-Canadian put it:

You go to a dance, and all you hear the whole night is calypso, soca ... Where you see Bajan [dance] is gonna be a little more mixed in the sense of they like the same kind of music [as Guyanese do], soul, slow, good music ... They would like the reggae an' stuff like that, right, and the dance music, but Trinidadians is mainly soca (laughs)! You get soca from the time you walk in until you get tired of it, you get a full diet of it.

There was resistance from one Trinidadian club member who claimed "Not true! All o' we mix up," meaning that Trinidadians are a hybrid group composed of many ethnicities with multiple musical preferences. Trinidadians rely on the metaphor of the callaloo and what Puri (1999, p. 17) refers to as "the language of 'multiculturalism' in attempts to manage difference by projecting an image of nonconflictual diversity ... Haunting all of these assertions is a recognition of the fragility of the 'we' of the race- and class-divided nations." Despite efforts to name Trinidadian and pan-Caribbean unity, "All o' we mix up" is not reflected in all of the gossipers' exchanges. Instead, they provide evidence that "[r]acial and nationalist discourses in the Caribbean ... offer contradictory instances of tearing apart and stitching together the people" (Puri, 1999, p. 17). The women who share their opinions, stories and experiences around the boundary of the cricket field provide innumerable examples of national hierarchies, discrimination and exclusions. The disjunctures of diaspora they reveal are reminders of Clifford's (1994) observation that nationalisms (or, for that matter, local hierarchies and conflicts based on class, village, or family politics) do not merely disappear, although we discuss diasporas as though they were unified entities.

Nassy Brown (1998, p. 298) points out a "serious elision in Gilroy's work"; that is, "the possibility that actors may assign mutually contradictory meanings to the black cultural productions they appropriate." Regarding American hegemony in British conceptions of blackness, she demonstrates the lopsided nature of Afro-Caribbean transatlantic cultural exchanges has resulted in antagonisms within the seemingly unified black community. The antagonisms in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora studied here include discourses of anti-Trinidadian hegemony. Because "almost every major city in North America and Britain has a Caribbean-style carnival that is in large part modeled after the one found in Trinidad" (Nurse, 1999, p. 661), some Trinidadian nationalists have gone to great efforts to claim the carnival's masquerading, calypso, soca and steel pan as "theirs," even in the face of great hybridity, cultural transformations and

challenges from other Caribbean nations. The gossipers reveal more could be done to unpack Trinidadian privilege and honour the concerns of people from more marginalised Caribbean territories.

Trinidadians' version of imagined community conflicts with some Bajans' and Guyanese's more inclusive constructions according to the latter groups. Given that carnival has operated as a mechanism "for inverting, subverting and deconstructing the moral and philosophical bases of societal strictures, conventions and power relations, if only temporarily and symbolically" (Nurse, 1999, p. 665), it is no surprise that some members of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora see Caribana, or rather abstaining from the parade and associated dances, as sites to resist Trinidadian hegemony. These expressions of anti-Caribana sentiment are complicated by at least two other factors. The increasing restrictions in Toronto about how to engage in Caribana, for example the erection of physical barriers between revellers and audience, and changing of the parade route to a more peripheral location in the city, have emptied the parade of much of its meaning as a practice of freedom on the streets, especially for those who remember how it used to be in the early 1970s. Additionally, the ageing members of the MCSC are less and less able or willing to stand in the audience or walk the long parade route each year. Issues of age, local politics and national rivalries coalesce in understanding the reason for the declining participation among the MCSC members in this iconic Caribbean diaspora event.

Reggae is not soca, Jamaica is not Trinidad, and though music forms flow across national boundaries, they remain discursively linked to national identities. People from some Caribbean territories have more power than others, as a result of their population size and longevity in the diaspora, mobilisation as a group, class privileges and historical stereotypes. In some ways, the gossipers reproduce class, race, gender and nationalist systems by which they have been marginalised, as they put down certain groups within the Caribbean community in order to define themselves. They assert themselves as "proper" black women by pointing out the improper ones. "Gossipers" conversations demonstrate the fissures, rivalries and hierarchies of the Afro-Caribbean-Canadian community.

Lovers

Another group of women, the "lovers," regularly visited the cricket ground upon the invitation of certain male club members. Married and single men flirted openly, glanced at their bodies, lingered in their handshakes, and generously

offered to drive them places, show them the city or take them to dinner. Flirting with women is a gender performance that is not necessarily expected to result in a romantic or sexual liaison for men in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. Some single and married men flirt with and proposition women to disavow homosexuality, and demonstrate that they have “still got it” (sexual prowess) or could “still get it” (a woman’s affection). The repudiation of male lovers allows for the categories *black*, *male* and *heterosexual* to become equated in this community.

Relatively young, attractive and/or scantily clad women can expect to be the greatest recipients of the Mavericks sexualised banter. In some cases, the Mavericks’ flirtatious overtures were more than frivolous; rather, they were part of a plan to seduce interested and available women. On several occasions, I was asked for dances, dates and to be a girlfriend and even a wife! Though most of these flirtatious advances were not serious, in some cases my inability to feel comfortable or safe when alone with some participants led to curtailing our interactions (see Joseph, 2013). Some MCSC members carefully walk the line of in/fidelity when they are away from their wives at home games and when they travel for cricket. Angrosino (1986, p. 69), in his analysis of Afro-Caribbean masculinity, notes that even married men are expected to seek their “extra ginger” with “outside women” at one or more points in their lives. Furthermore, he is expected to brag of his sexual conquests, one of the great themes of the indigenous musical art form, the calypso, and a key feature of the Afro-Caribbean reputation system.

Although Wilson (1973) describes “reputation” as a value system engaged in by those lower-class men without access to the resources necessary to access “respectability,” middle-class MCSC members also define themselves through this system at certain times and in certain spaces. Similar to Jack Alexander’s (1984) findings on the Jamaican family, the behaviours of the MCSC members suggests that middle-class black men are embedded in two value systems simultaneously. They access “respectability” (coded as white, upper-class, stable, honest and oriented towards delayed gratification and family), by committing to a marriage, family and work and maintaining a primary home during the traditional work week. They may operate as principals, engineers or police officers, gaining the respect of the mainstream populace. On their weekends and cricket trips, however, they also access “reputation” (coded as black, lower-class, transient and oriented towards display, and for some, infidelity and deceit) whereby they maintain relationships with lovers. Historically, a black Caribbean sense of masculinity was forged in a liminal space between lower-class black slaves and the upper-class white British plantocracy, allowing the Afro-Caribbean (diaspora)

middle-class to straddle both sides of what Wilson (1973) presents as a reputation–respectability dichotomy. Wilson’s schema, while not omni-explanatory, is useful in demonstrating their related yet conflicting cultural practices.

On several trips, a few players left their “widows” at home and travelled with their girlfriends instead, clearly indicating another reason why players appreciate their wives’ absences from cricket-related spaces. At one game, I sat with two women who pointed at male MCSC members around the field and adjacent area where spectators congregate. They indicated which married men had multiple partners and which women have been romantically involved with more than one of the Mavericks:

Everyone knows he married and he sometimes bring his wife to big functions like a Christmas dance, but his girlfriend goes everywhere else with him. Watch, he introduce her by name, “This is [Sheila].” He doesn’t say, “This is my wife,” so most people assume she’s his wife but she don’t come to cricket. I knew his wife from back home. He’s been with her for 20 years and the girlfriend for 15. (Teresah)

I asked the women if they would ever tell a wife about her husband’s infidelities and they were vehement that such an intervention would be inappropriate because, first, it is “not their business” and second, “she must know.” They exclaimed, “How could she not know?” “For 15 years (kissing teeth)?” “You see me? I’m not gonna be the one to rain on that parade!” “All she would have to do is come down here [to the cricket grounds] *one* afternoon. Just one. But in 20 years I never seen her so ...” Trailing off, Percelle suggests that a widow who “chooses” to remain uninvolved in her husband’s affairs (e.g., hobbies and social circles) can expect that he might have an affair (extramarital relationship).

It is possible that a wife might be blissfully ignorant, but what is more likely is that a wife whose husband has “extra ginger” understands herself as in the superior relationship. I was told that some women are satisfied with their husbands’ affairs as long as their husbands continue to provide for them and never embarrass them. While I never spoke with any woman who confirmed this as her personal experience, the gossipers were convinced that as long as a wife is enabled to maintain her respectability, her husband can access the polyvalent meanings associated with his gender. “Some men have very abundant *needs*, you know (winks),” Percelle quipped as she laughed. She suggested that a woman who can satisfy her husband sexually will not have to worry about him becoming a philanderer at the same time as she hinted at the fact that a wife might be thankful that she will no longer have to respond to all of her husbands’ sexual or companionship desires.

Especially as Afro-Caribbean women age and experience menopause, what they want out of their marriage may shift. Indeed, they may be seeking their own “extra nutmeg” in their husbands’ absence. Such an analysis is ripe for development based on future research that examines the intersecting relationships between ageing, heterosexuality, family and gender performances in the reproduction of race and culture in the Black Atlantic. To my knowledge, recreational sport (and its related social events and travel) has not been explored in depth as a significant factor in extramarital relationships. The commitment of some of the men to flirting, dating and consummating relationships with lovers they meet through a sport and social club sheds new light on the concept of the Afro-Caribbean diasporic family and the role of sport as one way in which “outside families” are created and maintained.

As women strive to reproduce their national and regional cultures in the diaspora, the gender performances linked to those identities are also reproduced. Gossipers do not criticise philandering men; rather, they point to lovers and wives as symbols of im/proper femininity. The lovers are easy to notice owing to their interactions with certain men, proximity to the playing field (and men’s *liming* areas), or presence at certain times of day (or night). Gossip about lovers marks the boundaries of morally acceptable female sexuality and behaviour. “That woman knows about his wife. They used to work together. [She has] no class.” They mark themselves as smart (un-dupable), classy women by their presence at the periphery of the grounds and long-term, (supposedly) monogamous relationships. They rest assured that no other MCSC member would be gossiping about them.

As single women passed by the Mavericks sitting around the boundary or at their hotels, some men called out, asked for a name or a phone number, whistled, or described what they liked about what they saw. One of the lovers, Bethany, a white Scottish-Canadian 45-year-old woman has been supporting the Mavericks for decades. She has had relationships with two of the players and openly flirts with many of them. For example, one afternoon Vilroy, a black 68-year-old Barbadian-Canadian was wearing a T-shirt with “Niagara” branded across the chest, purchased at his most recent trip to Niagara Falls with his grandchildren. Another player, Marshall thought it said “Viagra,” and that Vilroy was advertising a pharmaceutical sexual stimulant. He began poking fun at Vilroy, questioning his virility, when Bethany astutely noted that if Vilroy was taking Viagra it would be beneficial to advertise, because a woman who might not give a man in his late sixties a chance might reconsider. Vilroy recommended that Bethany come to the games if she wants to see what his “bat” can do. Vilroy’s metaphorical reference to his sexual

organ continued the sexual innuendo but made it clear that he was not interested in her. This type of implicit/explicit sexual banter that women and men engage in at the grounds makes some wives suspicious of single women's intentions (suggesting that their husbands' intentions are always already known). Unlike Bethany's flirtatious advances, those by other women were well received by club members.

Yalancy, a black 49-year-old Barbadian-English woman attended a game in England and, after only a few hours at the cricket ground she had made a suitor out of one of the Mavericks. Although I had seen Oliver chatting intimately with her at the game while on tour, I was unaware that this relationship had fully blossomed until I arrived at a cricket game back in Toronto a few months later and ran into beautiful Yalancy in the woman's washroom at a plaza close to the cricket grounds. I recognised her face and was shocked to see her because in England she had told me that she did not care much for cricket and was only at the game because a friend had begged her to attend. Her friend knew that few of the players' wives would make it to the grounds for a weekday game and was desperate for some company. Yalancy wore a low-cut, floor-length summer dress and spent the majority of that game sitting in the clubhouse. She described the game as "dead boring" but had a happy consolation: "I met [Oliver], so I guess I got something out of it! (laughs)." She came to Toronto to visit her new lover for four weeks. Oliver received copious accolades for having such a beautiful woman cross the Atlantic to be with him and support him at all his home games. After he was late for one game and then got injured when a ball hit him in the lip, other players teased him that he had not had enough rest that Yalancy was too much of a distraction, and that if he could not handle such a voluptuous woman, he should give her up. Yalancy's quick wit typically tamed Oliver's peers. Nevertheless, this type of banter and joking, which objectifies many of the Mavericks' female lovers, reveals the power asymmetries among club members and among men and women in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. Sexualised joking is an essential part of the relational performance of heterosexual masculinity in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora and in sporting spaces.

Another place the lovers are prominent is not at cricket fields, but at the Mavericks' social events, most of which involve drinking, music and dancing. As a person with a particular passion and talent for Caribbean dance, I often found myself on the dance floor at many of these events either on my own (and therefore being watched by club members) or partnered with one of the club members. If, as Walby (2010) asserts, the interview encounter requires reflexive analysis of moments when a researcher is sexualised by respondents, and the ways verbal and bodily responses to sexualisation influence meaning-making

processes, surely the dance encounter warrants equal analysis. I observed many players and their lovers “getting on bad” on the dance floor. That is, they danced in a style known as *wining*, which involves circular motions of the hips, typically with bodies pressed close together. Elsewhere, I wrote:

I wondered if the movements on the dance floor foreshadowed what would occur in their hotel rooms later. I remarked that they placed their hands on these women’s lower backs, hips, or shoulders gently guiding the pace and the women complied with movements laden with cultural knowledge. (Joseph, 2013, p. 14)

and knew they might be thinking the same thing of me as I performed on the dance floor. I wanted to be seen as a cultural insider and friend to the players and knew that an authentic style of dance, an appropriate performance of blackness and femininity was essential for me to get inside this predominantly male club. However, I needed to walk a fine line with those men who also wanted to get inside me. I adjusted my distance and hip movements with different club members and over my time in the field. I was not interested in being one of the lovers, but through getting sweaty and exhausted on the dance floor, rubbing bodies with this ageing group of men, drinking, laughing and staying up into the wee hours of the morning with many of the players and their lovers, I gained credibility among participants and insights into the attraction of travel and the joy lovers bring to club members.

Acknowledging the fact that male club members rely on women to show themselves to be macho and heterosexual men forces one to think about the relatively undocumented sexualised histories that are part of the project of the Black Atlantic and the role of sport therein. Some of the flirting or relationships with female lovers may serve as a cover for homosexual affinities. Male lovers are conspicuously absent from these sporting and social spaces.

Supporters

“Supporters” are women who used to be “widows,” may be “lovers,” and occasionally join the “gossipers,” but always invest their money and time in the club. Supporters come out to the Mavericks games to cheer for (or heckle) the players or to help the club with fundraising. They spend their time score keeping; cooking, serving and eating food; playing dominoes; drinking alcohol and travelling alongside male supporters. Layton, a black 48-year-old Barbadian-Canadian, explains, when the Mavericks “host touring teams ... [or] go on a trip, that’s when a lot of wives and girlfriends and friends comes out.” At the second game of the tournament in St. Lucia, I was still new to the MCSC. I sat in the stands with one

of the supporters, Teresah, a black 58-year-old Jamaican-Canadian. I asked her if she regularly attends the Mavericks' home games. She told me I would probably not see her in the summer because she does not usually attend home games. In fact, her husband is heavily involved in the organisation of the club but she prefers to remain uninvolved – unless he is going on a tour. Then she is a chief supporter of the club. Many women join the Mavericks' trips because they prefer diasporic tourism (i.e., sightseeing, relaxing, shopping, discovering heritage, or visiting their relatives) over watching cricket (Joseph, 2011b). Teresah has travelled around the world with the Mavericks, and in addition to touring new cities, one of her reasons for making the trips is "hotel security ... I trust him, but I know how these fellas can get. I'm glad I'm here to keep an eye on him." She explains that her husband needs "support" in order not to drink excessively at the hotel and after games. After decades of trial and error, the couple learned that the best way to regulate Michael's behaviour was for Teresah to remain close by. Other than policing their husbands' behaviours, the majority of female MCSC supporters attend fundraising events, picnics, parties and dances because they remain dedicated to socialising and helping the club.

Hussein's wife, Sutara, joins him at most home games and on every trip. The 65-year-old Trinidadian-Canadian got to know the players in the 1980s, learned to score keep and stays involved in all the club events. Sutara acknowledges that the games are long, but says she has to "find some fun in it" and would not rather be anywhere else on the weekends. She travels with the club whenever they go to the Caribbean and sits in the makeshift stands to enjoy the sunshine and the company of friends. Eunice adds: "I used to play badminton, but then I learned to score keep to keep busy at the games. Now I'm just a spectator. I know how the game is played and I know exactly what's happening so once you understand that it makes it more exciting."

Approximately half of the women at the games are knowledgeable scorekeepers and this is an important way to be involved, and in some close games, the most important way of becoming involved in a game you are excluded from playing. There is usually one scorekeeper for each team and they constantly communicate with each other, the umpire and often unruly fans. I was encouraged to score keep early during my time in the field. I had to quickly learn the rules of the game and a technique for tracking the play. I also learned that one missed wide ball can mean the difference between winning and losing, and the difference between being inundated by the appreciation or anger of dozens of MCSC players and fans. It was also extremely difficult for me to observe and record the field of play and the cultural milieu at the same time. After a few games, I opted

to focus my attention on the culture of the club by sitting in the spectators' area and declined the invitation to fulfil this feminised supporting role. However, the experience allowed me to understand how valued the scorekeepers are and how quickly the day can pass in this role.

Other than score keeping, some female MCSC members support the club by preparing traditional Afro-Caribbean food for the after-parties. Typical dishes included rice and peas, fried chicken or fish, provisions (plantain, breadfruit, yams), green salad, goat water or curry vegetables. They also sold tickets to the dances and helped to organise fundraising walkathons and banquets. At one game, Sheila, a black 52-year-old Jamaican woman impatiently watched her husband roam around the boundary, asking club members to buy a raffle ticket to support a fundraising initiative for a school in Trinidad. Sheila interrupted him because she felt his pressure tactics were insufficient. "Look, you goin' buy dis ticket, alright? It for helping children back home. You so selfish you noh want support kids? It don't matter what the raffle for, jus' give 'im de money! \$12 for two tickets, alright?" Sheila took over the ticket selling and was sold out within an hour. When I asked her what the prizes were she admitted to me that she had organised some donations, but had yet to receive them. In fact, she was leaving the game at that moment to meet with a few retailers before heading to pick up her children from a party. Sometimes female club supporters are so busy with this unpaid labour, they are unable to attend games in their entirety, which is disappointing for some. Nevertheless, they continue in their subordinated roles because, as Sheila succinctly put it, "the men need help." For both nations and diasporas, Gilroy (2000, p. 83) attests that "the bodies of women provide the favored testing grounds for the principles of obligation, deference, and duty." At home games, the time of the afternoon was directly proportional to the number of women present, and there could be no doubt when it was six o'clock, as half of the women present for any game arrived at that time. They were there either to watch the last few (arguably the most exciting) overs of the game; set up the tables of traditional Caribbean food for the post-game meal; enjoy dinner; chauffeur their husbands, boyfriends, or fathers home; or all of the above. There could be no club without the sporting labour of the male players, but women's supporting labour is essential to creating the cricket ground as a comfortable homespace for all to enjoy.

Afro-Caribbean-Canadian women do not seem to spend much time reflecting on the "good old days." The majority of female MCSC supporters are not Windies cricket fans. They cannot name the current players and have no knowledge of where the most recent test matches took place. For the most part they

have never played the sport and do not care much for professional cricket, yet this chapter has shown that the Mavericks entire sporting event really depends on their labour and (absent-) presence. Supporters keep the club running smoothly, maintaining a sense of authentic Caribbeanness as they adhere to gendered expectations of the community and preserve relationships across plurilocal homelands.

Although male and female MCSC members may be subsumed within the title Afro-Caribbean diaspora, “solidarities are sutured together, of course, by power inequality” (Hua, 2006, p. 193), and the overriding patriarchal structures in which they live enable and constrain male and female member’s participation differently. Male cricketers depend on women for their performances of masculinity and are supported in their efforts by women. Women’s verbal exchanges at the cricket ground reveal how they use sport spaces to bring their families and communities together at times. When Afro-Caribbean women kiss their teeth, use a gossiping mode of communication, express vernacular language such as patois, or touch each other as they talk, they transgress Canadian borders, dramatise the ideals of the group, and maintain a subconscious connection to their Afro-Caribbean roots and each other. In some cases, they espouse a philosophy of “one people, one nation, one destiny” (Guyana’s motto), and express “a resolutely *postcolonial* moment of resistance to the bourgeois/western and traditionalist gender norms” (Noble, 2008, p. 123) of Canada, representing a cohesive, black community.

However, Hall (2003) and Gilroy (1993) point out how the boundaries of difference within diasporas are continually repositioned in relation to different points of reference. A seemingly carefree, cohesive community can never be entirely hierarchy-free, as our sport spaces are never free of the normalising pressures of the broader society. With closer investigation, the ways Caribbean people tear each other down and build up boundaries around their nation, sexual orientation or class group enable differences within the Afro-Caribbean diaspora to take on greater importance. Edwards’ (2001, p. 64) use of the term *décalage* suggests that any articulation of the black diaspora is “inherently *décalé* or disjointed by a host of factors ... diaspora can be discursively propped up (*calé*) into an artificially ‘even’ or ‘balanced’ state of ‘racial’ belonging. But such props,” and the disarticulations they occlude, he continues, “must be considered a necessary haunting” (2001, p. 65).

To state that cricket is a diasporic resource for the Afro-Caribbean diaspora is to suggest that the sport is useful for both men and women. The cricket, the food and the convivial atmosphere provide a link to the culture and people of

plurilocal homelands, and promote a black sport experience in a predominantly white nation. Yet, in many cases women are haunted by their exclusion from, or subordination within this sport and social club. At the same time, men's cricket games offer room for Afro-Caribbean women to interact with other women, speak freely in their native vernacular and demonstrate a sense of control over their circumstances. To say that women provide the labour and men reap the pleasure is overly simplistic. Many women enjoy sharing their culinary prowess with the group and must be understood as agentic subjects, especially when they create new fusion recipes or healthier versions of traditionally fat- and sodium-laden dishes. Nevertheless, female MCSC members' describe and enact class, sexuality and nationality hierarchies within the Afro-Caribbean-Canadian community, which reminds us to guard against celebrations of unity, hybridity and syncretism in the Afro-diaspora.

Diasporic community-making ventures rely on both unity and disjunctures. In the Caribbean context, any analysis of disjunctures must raise the question of Afro-Indo relations. Though MCSC is predominantly black, racial identifications do not exist in a vacuum. Race is situated, performed and understood as a historical and contemporary relational identity. In particular, at cricket grounds where black and brown bodies abound, the boundary around the Afro-Caribbean-Canadian community is propped up through comparisons to South Asian and Indo-Caribbean experiences. The following chapter explores what encounters with these diasporas also tell us about how the Afro-diaspora is *décalé*.

Notes

- 1 Only one woman, Maria, ever played cricket alongside the Mavericks. She was selected for the team that toured England based on her long-standing friendships with many of the players and her outstanding record in women's cricket in the Caribbean and Canada. For the eight-game event, she only participated in two games (in one she batted and fielded, in the other she was "twelfth man" meaning she dressed in uniform and would have substituted for any injured player). She became ill and sat out all remaining games. Maria was nominally treated with respect and a degree of reverence. She was always singled out during post-game speeches – even after games she did not play in – and her prior accomplishments in women's cricket were applauded. Although her official position as a team member marked her as "one of the boys," the homosocial nature of the team and constant reference to her role in *women's* cricket marked her as an outsider. Owing to her gender and, ultimately, her illness, she was relegated to lime with the female supporters in the pavilion.
- 2 As a female, feminist researcher, I could not help but be "turned off" by some of the men's rowdy and inebriated behaviours and comments, but exiting a research environment when participants' behaviour was detestable limited my capacity to collect the

very data I set out to find: on masculinity, Caribbean cultures and the makings of the Black Atlantic. This type of fieldwork, where sexist jokes are common, pressures to consume alcohol are tacit and overt, and participants are often intoxicated late into the night raises a number of questions regarding ethics and knowledge production. I have detailed struggles over how to document research findings of inebriated participants, when to leave a research setting, and how to protect participant and researcher safety in a heteronormative, sexist environment elsewhere (see Joseph, 2013; 2015; Joseph and Donnelly, 2012). It should suffice to say here that my choices of when and where to stay and go were informed by my desire to continue my research and my understanding of the masculine/feminine reputation/respectability divide in Caribbean homespaces as articulated by Wilson (1973). In order to continue to be welcomed into the community of predominantly male players as a good person to talk to such as a trusted friend, daughter, or granddaughter, I had to maintain a performance of Afro-Caribbean feminine “respectability.” That is, to enter the men’s “reputation” world and stay too late, drink too much, or worse, be paired romantically with one or more of the players, could ascribe the role of groupie, girlfriend, or mistress; a bad reputation; and, in my estimation, severely limit the data I hoped to collect in future. While I was unable to report on certain ways the players made boundaries around their masculinity and blackness at some cricket after-parties, I did this at the risk of protecting my safety and reputations as a respectable person, a researcher, and a woman.

- 3 Other reasons for disinterest in the sport could include the fact that few Caribbean female club members were encouraged to play cricket as youth and never developed an affinity for the sport. Additionally, many of the Mavericks were married to or dating women who were not of Caribbean descent and unfamiliar with cricket or the Afro-Caribbean masculine traditions of “sitting ’pon de grass all day.” Still, they contribute to the making of an Afro-diasporic space with their absence.
- 4 This creates a conundrum for a young researcher, whose fashion choices in comparison to an older woman might be perceived as “skimpy” and who aims to befriend community members in order to have (in)formal interviews as part of the data collection process. In another study (Joseph, 2013), I explore the difficulty of performing Afro-Caribbean feminine respectability while carrying out research with men in marginally respectable spaces.