Epiphany
In a land of shadows
Herring-boned with memory,
The great stone-bird mother
Sweet-balmed with honey
Drops her daughters
From her open beak
—Like pebbles
Pebbles of blood and stone;
The cyclamen girl returns
To her own
—Marlene NourbeSE Philip,
She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks

Peggy Antrobus was born to Bernard and Kathleen Gibbs in Grenada in 1935. Her early education occurred in St. Lucia at St. Joseph’s Convent and later at the St. Vincent Girl’s High School. An island scholarship winner, she went to study for her bachelor’s in economics at Bristol University in England in 1954. This was followed by a professional certificate in social work at Birmingham University. In 1998, she completed her doctorate in education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
In 1958, she returned to Jamaica to marry her high school boyfriend, Vincentian Kenneth Antrobus, who had won the island scholarship three years ahead of her. (In those days the island scholarship for study in England was awarded every three years.) For the next ten years she accompanied him as he took postgraduate degrees in pediatrics and public health at British universities. During this time she did her training in social work, and the couple adopted their first child, Gerrit. Their second child, Alison, was born in Jamaica. The marriage was to last twenty-eight years and continued after a separation of ten years when Peggy rejoined Ken in the final months before he died. In the ten years apart, they had gradually rebuilt the friendship that had not survived the years of Peggy's growth as a feminist.

Peggy has a long and illustrious record of public service to the Caribbean region as well as in the international feminist community. In 1974, when her daughter Alison was two years old, she was appointed advisor on Women's Affairs to the government of Jamaica. This marked the beginning of her feminist consciousness, which was reflected in her subsequent close relationships with a number of Caribbean feminist organizations, for example, the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA). In 1987, she set up the Women and Development Unit (WAND) at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and was its head until she retired in 1995. She was also a founding member of Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN) and functioned as the organization's general coordinator for the period 1990-96. She was on its steering committee from 1990 to 2004. As a global feminist who is committed to living life to the fullest, she presently resides in both Barbados and Peterborough, Canada.

In July 2005, I sat with Peggy Antrobus in her warm and serene retreat in Frère Pilgrim, Barbados, and while cradled in her hospitality we spoke deeply, extensively, and at times humorously on issues that ranged from the formative aspects of her feminist consciousness, the need for generational mentoring in the women's movement, her newly embraced identity as a grandmother, the pivotal role played by Caribbean feminist activists in the international women's movement, and the unequal terms of global trade policy and political economy for small island-states such as those of the Caribbean.

Michelle: Maybe we can start by approaching the question of your early emerging feminist consciousness and how you became a feminist.

Peggy: Completely by accident. I was going along my business in Jamaica and Lucille Mair had asked me to fill the post that she was vacating as
Michelle Kovuley, advisor of Women's Affairs in the government of Jamaica. I had never heard the word “feminist” before. I took [the job] because it was part-time, and I was interested in a part-time job because my daughter was two years old. My feminist consciousness came almost entirely from beginning the work and the effect that had on my own thinking. I always say Jamaican working-class women gave me a whole different way of seeing myself and my world.

Michelle: You said that it was your interaction with working-class Jamaican women that made you identify differently. What do you mean by that?

Peggy: I think that what that did was make me realize how constrained I was as a middle-class, married, somewhat professional woman. Suddenly, I met these women who were certainly in relationships, and they had children, but that didn’t seem to constrain them in the way that it constrained me.

Michelle: Much of your work on development has provided a strong critique of economic policies and structures in the region. What has influenced your thinking on these issues?

Peggy: Well, let's talk about my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law never completed secondary school, and she never worked outside of the home either. Yet in many ways, she is one of the most liberated women I know. The really interesting thing about my mother-in-law was her relationship with the community. Now remember this is Kingstown, the capital of St. Vincent—this is not a rural community. She had this amazing relationship with the neighbors, especially with the children. She always had a lot of time for children, so if they looked sad or they were crying she would talk to them. The people she had the least time for were the so-called powerful people. So if you were the prime minister or a doctor or a minister of religion, she had complete disdain. She never baked without baking enough to share with the neighbors, and they shared what they had with her. She used to guarantee loans for people, a woman with no bank
account. She would call the hardware store, and she would say: “I want you to ‘trust’ Miss So-and-So a few sheets of lumber of galvanize.” Do you know the word “trust”? I don’t know if they use that word in Trinidad.

Michelle: Yes, yes, to sell goods on credit.

Peggy: When she was diagnosed as terminally ill she lived in her own house, and the entire community took care of her. The nurses from the hospital, which was quite close by, would visit her twice a day to give her a bath and change. This story shows that there’s a whole economy and society that has nothing to do with the market, nothing to do with the formal structures of the economy.

Michelle: What do you think [the IMF/World Bank-imposed] structural adjustment policies have done to that economy?

Peggy: [The policies] completely ignore it or [they] exploit it. [They] exploit it because by removing these [social welfare] services, [they] know that women are going to fill those gaps. I like to remind people, particularly men in this region, that it was the women’s networks that first challenged the governments on structural adjustment. This was related to our link with DAWN. It was at the meeting in 1984 that I first understood what structural adjustment was just from listening to the women from Latin America. Up to that point I had heard reference to structural adjustment as the policy framework adopted by CARICOM [the Caribbean Community and Common Market] heads of government at their meeting just a few months earlier. It was just something that Willie Demas and the heads of governments said was the key to the region’s transformation. Not even development you know. Demas used the word “transformation” and the CARICOM Secretariat was pushing it at every ministerial meeting. Nobody questioned structural adjustment—it was a good thing. But after the second DAWN meeting early in 1985 to finalize our platform document for the [U.N. women’s] conference, the analysis showed clearly that these policies were grounded in a gender ideology that was deeply exploitative of women’s time and labor. The Latin American women called it “superexploitation” of women.
Michelle: The connections that you make between the informal economy and structural adjustment highlight the importance of thinking critically about the role of “gift economies” in the Caribbean. Will you tell us a bit more about that?

Peggy: Some of us use the concept of the “gift economy” as a way of underlining the fact that not all economic activity takes place through the market, the “exchange economy.” [The gift economy] includes all of those goods and services we give to each other, as expressions of love and solidarity, caring and sharing. It’s part of our culture—actually the culture of most human beings—the culture of being human. If we don’t pay attention to these practices, we’ll lose them! I’m beginning to document them now—before they’re lost to future generations.

Michelle: Maybe we can use this as an opportunity to talk about the question of class and feminism in the Caribbean. One of the criticisms that is often launched against feminism in the Caribbean is that it is basically a middle-class association. In many ways I see this as undermining the politics of feminism in the Caribbean because in reality the formation of a concretized colored middle class in the Caribbean is at best two centuries old, and often class lines are blurred because of the uneven, fragmented way that class formation occurs. As such, your intimate communities for many can still remain very much a working-class community, if not sensibility. Yet there is still the contentious question of who has the right to speak on behalf of whom? In other words, can middle-class women speak on behalf of other women?

Peggy: It was certainly Jamaican women who challenged me by making me see myself differently; but then interacting with professional researchers, mostly academics and activists from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, gave me the kind of theoretical and intellectual understanding of what I was actually experiencing. So I don’t want to exclude those people because they were my teachers and mentors. It’s a very good question to talk about because the people who got the bureaus started were all middle-class women in Jamaica. Maybe because they were political, they were very identified with working-class women. And you have to remem-
ber that this is in the context of Michael Manley’s democratic socialism. So there was a lot of talk about equity and redistribution. The political context was one that focused on class with a recognition that independence had not brought benefits to the majority of people.

**Michelle**: It’s interesting to me that in your response you highlight democratic socialism that allows us to understand why “class” emerges as a central category of analysis. But if we were to bring the conversation beyond the period of the 1970s, how then can we begin to think about the ways Caribbean feminisms have been able to deal with the question of class fragmentation in the context of the Caribbean?

**Peggy**: Rhoda [Reddock] and Linette [Vassell] are the persons who have really done the most work on that, and I don’t want to venture into that, except to acknowledge the women who were very active, many of them working-class women in Second Wave feminism in the Caribbean. At the same time, I don’t think that women of one class can “speak on behalf of” women of another class—but they can be sensitive to the fact that women of a different class may have concerns that are different from theirs.

**Michelle**: In terms of the experience, tell us a bit about your varied institutional identities. Maybe we can start with DAWN and your experience of being one of the founding members of the organization in Rio de Janeiro in 1986.

**Peggy**: Sure, but what I would also like to say before I talk about DAWN is that I see my own deepening feminist consciousness as shifting me away from a bureaucratic to a more political approach to the women’s movement. I have moved very far away from where I started working in development. I would say that in my Women’s Bureau days in Jamaica I saw myself identifying with the bureaucracy and that kind of concern. By the time I got to WAND, I was still working with governments because in the early days we were trying to get governments to set up “national machinery”—women’s desks and things like that—including the Women’s Desk at the CARICOM Secretariat.
By the time I got involved with DAWN, I was much more movement oriented. I now have much less time for governments, and I'm more aware of the limitations of what the state can do and even what NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] can do. My involvement with DAWN obviously came as a result of the Decade [United Nations Decade for Women, 1976-1985]. There was a small meeting in Bangalore of women, who had been meeting at U.N. conferences over the ten years of the Decade, to prepare our platform document for the end of Decade conference in Nairobi. There was a very open kind of agenda. I think the thing that galvanized all of us (we weren't there to start an organization), the thing that kept that meeting from being just another meeting was the insights that were coming from feminists from different parts of the world. Another new thing for me in that period was the rise in fundamentalisms, raised [in discussion] by the Asian women—these are things that were completely outside of my own experience. Similarly, the experience of Latin American women talking about the debt crisis and the impact of structural adjustment on women's lives was new. I think these ideas and how these crises link together really galvanized us all.

But it was going to the Nairobi conference that finally made that into something really important. First of all, the Nairobi conference was different from any of the other conferences. More African women were involved, certainly more Third World women attended the NGO Forum and Conference. It was really our conference: Nita Barrow headed the forum. A lot of rural women were there, a lot of African women. The distinction between classes was less evident there than at any of the other conferences.

**Michelle:** What would you then identify to be your greatest weaknesses and major successes where WAND is concerned?

**Peggy:** (Sigh) I think that the success of WAND far exceeded . . . well, when I started WAND, I didn't know where it would go. It started as a two-year project but I had defined our objectives very broadly, namely, to raise awareness of women's issues and to provide technical assistance to women and development programs and projects in the region. What I
tried to do was to create a space, even though it was within the bureaucracy, where women, especially grassroots women, could speak for themselves and indicate what they wanted of the bureau. For instance, we had a series of one-day workshops in rural areas in which we simply told communities that the bureau had been established and asked them what they thought we should be doing. Getting involved with DAWN changed my thinking and my analysis so much that I tried to bring some of that back to the Caribbean. The greatest success of WAND I think would be the way in which it evolved, not only to meet the needs that were defined by women in the region and to link the experience of women in the region to that of women in other countries of the South, but the way it evolved to become a much more political, analytical, and activist kind of organization, which was a catalyst for so many new initiatives in the region, such as support for CAFRA, the Women and Development Studies Group, the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development, and the Caribbean Policy Development Center.

Michelle: In light of your many successes, is there anything that you would have done differently with WAND?

Peggy: Well, the one thing I would have done differently was to make sure that the university did not have control over it. [For example, we] spent two years before my retirement thinking about and trying to define what kind of person we wanted to take over the leadership of WAND. However, in the end none of that mattered, UWI just advertised the post without even consulting me. It’s not that I wanted someone to do what I was doing, but the principles and the spirit of WAND were what made it special. That is gone—that openness, that supportiveness, that catalytic work, being supportive of other women and organizations that mattered to them in the larger scheme of things.

Michelle: That’s interesting because you’re taking us in an important direction regarding the institutionalization of a feminist agenda. For example, when you speak of the inadequacies of bureaus, NGOs, and WAND within the university’s structure. I want to suggest that you’re raising an is-
sue that touches on whether it is possible to hold a feminist political agenda when incorporated into an existing institution or national machinery.

**Peggy:** I have to go back to Barbados and Jamaica as contrasts. Jamaica's bureau, at the time I was there, was very successful, and it was successful because of the government's framework of democratic socialism and because the feminist leadership in the party's women's movement in the ruling party was able to generate the political will to deal seriously with women's rights. Barbados was, however, a real contrast with Jamaica—a much more technocratic, less political approach to women's rights. The model we used was the community workshops, and I often think that the reason we did this was clearly because of my background in community development. In other words, if the head of the bureau had been a researcher or a lawyer, the bureau would have been shaped very differently. You can't separate the bureau from the person heading the institution. The institution's culture is linked to leadership; that leadership could subvert the institution or reinforce the institution. Power is fluid: you can hand over that power to bureaucrats and allow the bureaucracy to determine what the bureau can and can't do, or you can be the head of the bureau and give more attention, priority, to working in collaboration with the political [women's] movement or with women's organizations.

**Michelle:** I think we can transition to your new book as we're talking about the importance of the individual voice and leadership. You noted in your preface that one of the things you thought unique about your approach was that it is interspersed with a clear sense of your personal voice and experiences. When you read the text, there are these lovely boxes of personal reflections.

**Peggy:** I thought it was quite a departure to even think of including those vignettes. My editor encouraged that because he wanted my own voice. "This is a think piece," he said, "this is not a piece of research; this is a think piece." So I thought I could do it that way because these vignettes in a sense reflect moments when I realized something, or came to understand something, that illuminated a larger point within the book.
Michelle: As I read I kept responding to a skirting sense that you did not locate Caribbean feminisms as centrally as I would have expected within your issues, reflections, and references. Might you talk to us a bit about your decision-making processes around your choice of themes and concerns in conceptualizing the text?

Peggy: I want to be clear about where I was coming from—the subject of the book was, after all, “women’s movements worldwide”—not “Third World.” So I decided to use the context of the U.N. Decade and conferences. As I started thinking about it, I hit on the distinction between an international and a global movement. I’m sure it will provoke some controversy—which is good! Thinking of your question further, perhaps the sense of a Caribbean feminism is not there because so much of my work was at the international level—even before DAWN and the conferences of the 1990s.

Michelle: You also made an interesting observation in your text regarding the women’s movement. You said that the movement is not only political space that rejects patriarchal privilege but also provides a space where women can recognize and understand their “separatedness” as women. One of the things I would add to this is that the women’s movement should also have a utopian vision, a sense of what kind of society we want to inhabit, in other words, feminist actors must consciously envision a different world and make that possible. By your own parameters, how do you assess the effectiveness of the women’s movement in the Caribbean?

Peggy: I think that most women who identify with the movement have some vision of what they would like—that women don’t get beaten, that women get respect, that they don’t have to scruit,’ that they have a roof over their head. I think that for most people there is a vision for a better kind of life.

Michelle: Is it that you’re making a distinction between the personal vision of change versus a more operationalized radical movement-oriented challenge toward change?
Peggy: In my book I speak of two mutually reinforcing tendencies within women's movements: one focused on identity and one concerned with a larger movement for social transformation—what I refer to as "real change." I think that at the beginning of the Decade for Women, the focus was more on gender identity. However, as the Decade progressed, and certainly at the end in the DAWN platform document, you begin to see the emergence of concern about the larger social project in the analysis of the macroeconomic policy framework of structural adjustment and references to interlinked systemic crises and to colonialism.

Michelle: What I'm not getting clearly is the distinction that you're making between the individual and your reference to "real change." What are you pointing to when you speak of "real change"?

Peggy: Well, in most societies there tends to be one group of people who have little, while the other [group] feels entitled to all the benefits while making very little available to all the others. Many people have a vision of a world where there is security, human rights, respect for people, dignity. You don't want to have to trade these things. That's what I would call a broader vision of social justice, a concern for the larger project for social transformation.

Michelle: Why do you think that broader vision has not occurred in the region? Maybe we can discuss this in the context of what I have been referring to as the Caribbean's "return to development," in which so many of our state managers are now fascinated by the idea of achieving "developed country status by the year 2020," which I see as merely a return to a modernization/basic needs paradigm.

Peggy: I think that brings us back to the question of development, our understanding of development. What we're asking for is education, public services, employment, housing, and we think we're going to get that within these socioeconomic frameworks. That's the vision that I had in the 1950s—when I did my economics degree—that continues. I think that this is still the primary vision in the region. The difference is that the people who think we can get that in the kind of world that exists today
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are wrong. Take the trade agreements for example, could these policies actually deliver that? I don’t think it can happen within these frameworks because people are not confronting the inequality of real structures of power. I mean, do you think that the G8 are really going to open their markets? That they are going to acknowledge that they represent corporate interests? They don’t even represent the interests of all of the people in their own countries! We’re very far away from that. People talk about Africa and they talk about the Sudan and the Congo, and no one talks about the oil interests that are actually fueling those conflicts. They talk about Africans killing each other in civil wars, and nobody asks where they are getting these weapons from, who is financing that war? Our governments are so careful—they don’t want to offend the United States. I mean, look at Haiti!—it’s a scandal, a real scandal!!

Michelle: Yes, if we think, for example, of the Caribbean’s present naive return to development—“in the year 2020, we will be developed.” To follow that naivete, since we’re fifteen years away from being developed, then what should that vision look like? In other words, is housing enough, is education enough?

Peggy: I think that those are necessary, but they’re not enough. I think if we had all the education . . . well, I don’t know. If there were no homelessness, no hunger, would that be enough? There would also have to be respect for people. We would also have to deal with violence. The MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] are not enough because they leave out so much. They leave out rights, they leave out security. That’s why I now do not talk about the MDGs outside of the context of the Secretary General’s report, which highlights freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom from “dignity”—that last one is very interesting. The Catholic Church doesn’t want to talk about rights, they want to talk about dignity. So dignity is being substituted for rights.

Michelle: But how are they using dignity?

Peggy: People are using the language of dignity to avoid talking about rights. However, . . . you can’t have dignity if your rights are denied.
Rights become the basis of dignity. The current U.S. administration and the Vatican do not want us to speak about sexual and reproductive rights, and they have the power to remove references to them and to violence against women from the MDGs. So the MDGs are really very problematic. The reason I've begun to talk about the MDGs in my own work is because it gives me a chance to talk about exactly these issues. It is really nonsense, there's no way you can actually achieve those goals—reducing extreme poverty and hunger, increasing access to education, gender equality and women's empowerment, reducing maternal and infant mortality, stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS, promoting environmental sustainability—within that neoliberal policy framework (reflected in Goal 8). For women, you can't separate the rights and dignity issues from economic issues like poverty and hunger. In the same way, you can't separate women's reproductive rights from women's health. This is why I think the vision for the women's movement is much more holistic because we know that women's lives cannot be compartmentalized. We can't talk about these things without talking about other things.

**Michelle**: I think those are very important categories as they serve to remind us of the many ways in which many women in the Caribbean do live without freedom from fear.

**Peggy**: It is impossible for me to separate these issues. About seven weeks before I took up the post of advisor on Women's Affairs with the government of Jamaica, my two sisters were murdered. But it was only when my son's fiancée was murdered that I made the connection between what had happened to these young women who were part of my life and my life's work. Although Jenny, my sister, was murdered by her boyfriend in New York City, and Heike, my son's fiancée, by a stranger on a beach on one of the "paradise" islands of the Grenadines, what connected these murders was that the women tried to defend their bodies from unwanted possession by men: Jenny was trying to leave her boyfriend. (Her sister just happened to be with her, and, as there were no witnesses, we will never know exactly what happened between the three. The boyfriend later committed suicide by throwing himself before an oncoming train on the
New York City subway.) My son’s fiancée was strangled as she struggled to defend herself from rape. Witnesses saw the murderer with his hands at her throat. (He explained this by saying that he was “checking her pulse.”) At the first trial there, the jury could not agree on a verdict: the five male members argued that “he never meant to kill her”; he was only trying to rape her; if she had not screamed for help he would not have (had to) strangle her! If Jenny had not tried to leave her boyfriend she may be alive today. I believe that the same gender ideology (sexism) that leads to violence against women also explains the exploitation of women’s time, labor, and sexuality in other areas.

Michelle: Yet despite such graphic and painful examples, our governments have remained loudly unresponsive to these issues. What advice do you have for the women’s movement about how we can begin to place these issues more critically on the agenda?

Peggy: I think that the rights-based approach is a good framework for those issues, but I think you have to do it the way it was done in 1993 leading up to the Human Rights Conference. What American feminist and human rights activist Charlotte Bunch and others did was that they created space for women to talk about their own lives, to talk about their fears. They articulated it exactly in those terms—of what is happening to them in the workplace, what is happening to them on the streets, what is happening to them in their homes, in their relationships with their partners—they put it into a framework of rights. In other words, I don’t think we can begin talking about a framework of rights to people who don’t make the connection between rights and their own lives. That’s what I would like to see happen, and I think that would really energize the movement in the Caribbean. We have to go right back to our feminist fundamentals—I don’t want to call it consciousness raising, more conscientization. I also agree that we need urgently to start a conversation about sexuality. It’s fundamental to the way we deal with issues from sexual harassment to HIV/AIDS and sexual orientation. Of course, you will need people who organize beyond the conversations and that’s where leadership comes in. Start talking to women about their lives, the things
that matter to them. I think that the early period of independence in the region, in a sense, was about rights.

Michelle: But, interestingly and maybe unfortunately, I think that period of independence fostered Caribbean peoples' desire to understand their rights primarily in the context of basic needs. However, I think we've been unable to translate that sense of entitlement to more controversial issues regarding identity—these include sexual identity, women's identity as not axiomatically maternal, and so on. I don't only want to hold our governments accountable because I think the women's movement has been equally as hamstrung on these issues. In terms of your own experience, how would speak on our capacity to transfer that language of rights to these issues, specifically in terms of the women's movement?

Peggy: I'm not sure I can answer that. I think if women can talk about their own lives in terms of violence, fear, and security, I think that that's the closest I could get to how that could happen. We could translate that into rights for them; we could translate it into a sense of outrage. I think that's why the consciousness raising is important, because it allows people to relate a sense of injustice in their own lives and then to see how that injustice connects to other injustices. I don't know of any other way that could help to build a movement or to get people to talk about rights and entitlement. I think that the women's movement can do that. Let me say this to you, women should get outraged about HIV/AIDS. If I were young, I think that's where I would put my energy. I think it is insane what's happening to young women, and this is the population that is most vulnerable. Who is the agent for change? Well, it has to be an individual, a group of individuals who decide that they have to do that organizing. There must be individuals who are prepared to take on leadership roles to get the work done. I am an eternal optimist so I keep thinking that somewhere there's a new generation . . . well there is a new generation already. And the question is how can that generation be supported while drawing on the work that has gone before.

Michelle: Yes, both in your text and again at your talk at the University
of Cincinnati, you highlighted the varying levels of women's organizing. You further expanded on the idea and spoke about the importance of women in the movement locating themselves in a community of women who can keep them honest, the "coven" as you defined it then.

**Peggy:** I think different levels of activism can work in every situation, including the Caribbean. You start with a small group, and then think of how to expand into other spaces. At the next level you explore how that group combines with another to form a coalition. I can see it happening at the international level—we’re trying very hard in the region to fight against poverty in ways that do not forget violence and do not forget about gender equality. We cannot get so caught up with poverty that we don’t see the other things that are associated with poverty.

**Michelle:** In your text, you highlight the catalytic nature of U.N. agendas in building support for women’s issues at the local level. However a valid criticism of the U.N.-driven “gender agenda” is that it also has the capacity (and maybe even desire) to universalize what can be named as a legitimate feminist agenda through their varied platforms, documents, and sources of funding. Consequently, this can serve to set the frame for what is an “appropriate” feminist agenda and might often silence the local understanding and operationalization of key feminist issues. Based on your experience of these transnational organizations, how then can we begin to think through this tension between the need for a transnational feminist agenda and the importance of nuancing the local?

**Peggy:** I agree with the criticism about U.N. agendas. However, there is no need to abandon our feminist agendas just because the U.N. (or the state bureaucracy) has taken them on. We need people in different locations doing different things: academics have their role to play, just as those in the bureaucracy, political parties, trade unions, or NGOs.

**Michelle:** I have heard you identify neoliberalism as a form of economic fundamentalism. How do you see the idea of economic fundamentalism impacting Caribbean women in the contemporary sense?
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Peggy: SAPs [Structural Adjustment Programs] are part of neoliberalism and very much an example of economic fundamentalism. Economic fundamentalism impacts Caribbean women just as SAPs do. One of the confusing things is that “Washington” keeps changing the words they use. In fact, their words are meaningless. It’s all different discourse on the same subject: exploitation of the poor and powerless by the rich and “powerful.” This brings me back to the question of nationalism; I really think that each country should have its own model of development, its own approach and development strategies based on its culture, history, and who people are as a society—in this Diaspora, it’s women who keep that going.

Michelle: I’m also curious about this question of the “Diaspora,” of course fashioned by my own location. One of the things I think we have to pay attention to within the women’s movement is the need to strengthen our ties with Caribbean feminists within the Diaspora. I think it is important that we find ways of opening that dialogue, or one of the dangers we can run into is the tendency to begin to craft language of “authenticity,” do you “really” belong?

Peggy: ... if you’re not living here. . . .

Michelle: Yes, and I think that there are ways in which some of those concerns might be valid, but it distracts us from the kind of synergy that we can achieve if we focus more attention on what can be gained from speaking across these boundaries.

Peggy: This is very exciting, you know. This is an issue that DAWN had addressed but it was never fully resolved: DAWN’s argument is about authenticity. The discussion didn’t go very far in DAWN. But with the Caribbean, I feel much more strongly about it because I think that one of the interesting things about the Caribbean Diaspora is that people go away, but they never “leave” the region. The barrels" tell you that, and the technology allows you to read the newspapers “from home” everyday.
Michelle: Particularly for some countries, where there are probably more nationals living abroad than within the national geopolitical boundaries.

Peggy: Yes, I think that the link to our Diaspora could provide alternative development “models” for this region. The Diaspora is a source of capital. It is a niche market—it is the best niche market in the world. It is a source of expertise; academics are a part of that expertise, so are doctors, nurses, engineers, and so on. We have to find ways of letting them come back to the Caribbean.

I can tell you this, I really enjoy being seventy. Being retired, I’m not accountable to anyone but myself. Yes, it’s a very wonderful thing—you young people have many years to go. So what I say to young people now is be sure you think of a “pension.” I never thought about my pension, in part because I was married, but thank God for my pension. It ensures that I don’t have to go out and look for a job. I am really just enjoying life and part of that is that I have wonderful companionship and I’m constantly redefining my role. I never think of myself outside of a movement. I am just constantly redefining what I can contribute based on my own constraints.

Michelle: It’s a wonderful thing, I’m sure.

Epilogue
Within the fissures of any interview, there is always a story about the interviewer, even as the voice of the interviewee is placed to the forefront. I have pursued Peggy Antrobus for over eight years to secure this interview, first in 1997, as a research assistant at the University of the West Indies; this attempt was foiled when Antrobus fell and injured herself. Then again, in 2005, I invited her to the University of Cincinnati to speak about her new book, *Global Women’s Movement: Origins, Issues, and Strategies* (reviewed in this issue). While timely for my teaching of Gender and Development, Antrobus’s packed lecture circuit through the Midwest prevented us from chatting at that time. My persistence was driven by my own scholarly interest in documenting the contributions of Caribbean
feminists to a transnational feminist praxis. If we understand social movements as integral to political change, then Antrobus, as a founding member and former general-coordinator of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and former coordinator of the Women and Development Unit (WAND) at the University of the West Indies, stands as a significant change agent within these local/global shifts and challenges.

In preparing for my meeting with Antrobus, I found myself contemplating the generational distance that stood between us. To younger, transnational, Caribbean feminists like myself, Antrobus represents a generation of Caribbean women for whom the word "feminist" was not a birthright nor an imperative of securing transformational change for women. As the interview suggests, for Caribbean women born in the 1930s and coming of age in the 1950s, using the term feminist as a way of describing their politics required a significant refashioning of the self if they were to challenge existing gender ideology. Yet, any generational thinking, as Lisa Hogeland notes, "is always unspeakably generalizing."

Hogeland places a caveat on generational thinking by asking us to think more critically about the prominence that the "first/second/third wave critique" has been given within women's studies, arguing that the "wave" approach to generational thinking in women's studies often masks the internal nuances that exist within any given generation of feminists and too readily lends itself to contrived discontinuities of beliefs and practices. I would argue further that part of the persistent appeal of generational thinking is due to the fact that the wave critique has become one of the primary ways of telling a disciplinary "story" about feminism, and in particular, women's studies and, as such, it has become one of the discipline's originary narratives. This is an originary narrative, which, due to the differentials of publishing and distribution, is self-reproducing and often dangerously rendered as linear, via ethnocentric (predominantly North American) locales of narration.

Yet, I maintain that it is possible to craft a generational framework that is less ethnocentric if we relinquish our commitment to prescriptive chronologies and attend, rather, to what I am framing here as the politics and conditions of emergence. Consequently, rather than drawing on a
wave analysis, I opt to highlight the politics and conditions of emergence as a praxis that foregrounds differently named theoretical trajectories, attends to the locally specific ways in which feminists have responded and contributed to a wider body of feminist knowledge through the naming of their locally specific realities, and acknowledges the ways in which feminists in the North have structured their own theoretical formulations as a result of these contributions. I foreground the politics and conditions of emergence because, conceptually, it captures the struggles that women of color and the global South have had to struggle with in order to appear. The concept also resonates with the methodological imperative to document the participation of women of color and, more broadly, of women from the global South as a critical aspect of disrupting the existing theoretical hegemonies and transnational flows of knowledge that dominate within feminism.

I also use the politics and conditions of emergence deliberately to resist any inclination that might subtly be emerging within the present body of Caribbean feminist literature to make sense of Caribbean feminist realities by deploying a wave analytic. There are two interesting approaches that exist presently. The first circumnavigates the prescriptive language of first/second/third wave altogether. Rather, it employs similar time periods of the standard wave chronology and uses these frames to address locally specific realities. This is considerably more productive than a second approach present in the literature that deploys the wave metaphor, but uses "Third Wave" as an epithet to chastise younger feminists. Yet, the latter approach provides little or no critique of the ways this model might blind us to geopolitical, cultural specificities that are important to the ways feminists have named and continue to name themselves as such within the Anglophone Caribbean.

Hence, theorizing from and recentering the lives of marginalized subjectivities and spaces continue to be critical aspects of the politics and conditions of emergence. For example, how might we interpret the fact that "feminism" did not hold resonance for Antrobus until the 1970s while operating from within the national machinery in working-class communities in Jamaica? I would argue that it is instructive, insofar as it reveals both an important feature of Caribbean feminisms, as well as one
of Caribbean feminisms' most striking paradoxes. First, as an ideology, feminism in the Anglophone Caribbean has always been in intimate and fraught dialogue with the dominant political ideology of the day. I am not making this observation to merely highlight the now well-documented interactions and contradictions that exist between nationalist discourses and feminist agendas in the global South. However, this dialogue is important because what has not yet been fully explored are the theoretical trajectories that have emerged for feminisms in the Caribbean as distinctive to the region because of these nationalist/socialist-driven intimacies that feminism has courted in the Caribbean. For example, Antrobus's constant foregrounding of a class and race consciousness as the means of describing her feminist consciousness prefigures mainstream feminist thought on the intersections of race, class, and gender which came to the fore in the United States in the 1980s. Reading her observation critically also highlights a degree of resistance to "sex" and "gender" as stand-alone categories within a Caribbean feminist critique.

However, this brings us to the paradox: for while Caribbean feminisms have benefited from a constant engagement with race, class, and gender as analytical categories, this has, in turn, resulted in a theoretical position that has posited a working-class subjectivity as an overdetermined constituency within Caribbean feminisms. This class location has become both homogenized and rendered as the "authentic" Caribbean subjectivity. And yet, despite this analytical weakness, it is ironic that Caribbean feminists are still subject to criticisms that declare them as detached from working-class experiences.

My reading of just a fragment of the interview points to the merits of interviews as data. Reading for the politics and conditions of emergence not only allows for a comparative discussion of the locally specific in a transnational context, but also prompts us within the local space to ask and to rethink the questions that we have drawn on to describe the local context. As the interview reveals, Antrobus's life-work as a transnational feminist change agent resists the "object-markers" that are often applied to women from the global South within multicultural debates. Most importantly for younger Caribbean feminists, Antrobus presents us with a life well-lived in service.
NOTES
4. Michael Manley served as Jamaica's prime minister between 1972 and 1980 and again from 1989 to 1992. The latter period required Manley to embark on a path of economic liberalization in response to the IMF's structural adjustment programs. However, the early stage of Manley's political career is best known for his experimentation with democratic socialism. This ideological and political agenda placed emphasis on social justice, large-scale participatory politics, and increased access to welfare programs designed to alleviate the economic burdens faced by the poor.
5. Rhoda Reddock is the director of the Center for Gender and Development Studies (St. Augustine) at the University of the West Indies. Linette Vassell is a Caribbean feminist historian, activist, and former lecturer in the department of history and Center for Gender and Development Studies (Mona), the University of the West Indies.
6. WAND was established as a result of a recommendation from a regional workshop on the integration of women in Caribbean development. Rex Nettleford, the head of the Extramural Department (now School of Continuing Studies, SCS) agreed to establish the unit within the department. However, from the outset WAND raised its own funds and was autonomous within the university. Its program and direction was set by its staff responding to perceived needs of women's organizations in the region. After several years, the unit became "institutionalized": the tutor-coordinator became a staff member of the SCS, and the university paid her salary, along with that of her secretary, and made a small contribution to the running of the unit's program, although the tutor-coordinator continued to raise funds for the program.
7. In 1964, Dame Nita Barrow was appointed as nursing advisor to the World Health Organization and subsequently to the Pan American Health Organization. During the U.N. Decade for Women, she was appointed as director of the Global Forum for Women.
10. Group of Eight is an international forum for eight industrial countries—Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States.
11. For more on the Millennium Development Goals, see www.un.org/millenniumgoals.
12. The term “conscientization” comes from the work of Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire. The term refers to a learning/teaching process that is invested in empowering dispossessed and marginalized individuals to recognize and challenge the systems that structure their oppression.
13. See Rhoda Reddock, *Women, Labour, and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A History* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Press, 1994); and Linnette Vassell, *Voices of Women in Jamaica 1898-1939* (University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona: History Department, 1993) for a history of women’s political organizing in Trinidad and Tobago and in Jamaica, respectively.
17. I want to be clear, I am not rejecting the analytical importance of chronology or periodization. For example, Rhoda Reddock, “Women’s Organization and Movements in the Commonwealth Caribbean: The Response to Global Economic Crisis in the 1980s,” *Feminist Review*, no. 59 (Summer 1998): 57-73, as well as her *Women, Labour, and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago* are both useful examples of drawing on a wave periodization that attends to the local specificities of each period. However, I am suggesting that there is a limitation to even this approach in that the analytical question or specific area of investigation is sometimes lost by privileging the watershed period, rather than placing the watershed in service of the research question, which allows for new knowledges to emerge.
18. See, for example, Mohammed, "Like Sugar in Coffee." Although her article attempts to critique the idea of the “Third Wave,” it does so by pitting this era against a far more coherent idea of the Second Wave than existing literature and critiques would suggest (13). Consequently, the very dissent and tension that crafted what is now understood as the “Second Wave” is chastised when present in what is understood as the “Third.” More importantly, the article, by virtue of not naming any of the individuals, writers, or scholars who seemingly operate within this “Third Wave,” makes it impossible to determine whether the label holds any meaning to younger Caribbean feminists and the ways they articulate and deploy their own intellectual, scholarly, and activist orientations.
