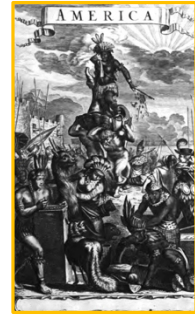


FREEDOM
IS
NOT FREE

Submission - 22nd Islands In Between Conference in St. Croix
in October-November 2019 Conference

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This presentation examines history from a perspective of using it for solutions to our challenges today. Since our region was “discovered” in 1492 by the invaders, we have been fighting for our freedom to BE. In this place, the ground we are on now, called Ay Ay by the indigenous peoples, were set upon by Christopher Colon on 1493.



There is the debate as to why history is important. If we look at it from an objective standpoint, it is a learning tool. While we cannot change the past, in our evolution to becoming whole, knowing from whence we cometh is critical to the healing of our Souls. If we are to find and pursue freedom Soulutions must also be presented that elevate this cause.

In this Matrix called the cycle of life, many have been taken advantage of and continue to be exploited on various levels. This practice has taken on new looks using old tactics. Freedom is not free and it is only through the use of knowledge can this be accomplished. The experiences of our ancestors from 1493 to this present day run through our veins. We are being called to action and in order to proceed in an honorable way. It is up to us to bring truth to light.

When we free our mind from fear, we become the masters of our destiny.

Keywords – *Freedom, Self-Determination, Cognitive Dissonance, Enslavement, Colonization, Religion*

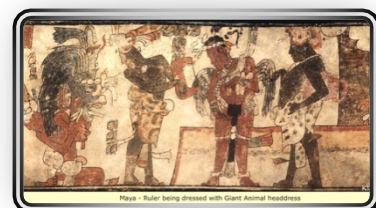


"What you know you can't explain, but you feel it. You've felt it your entire life, that there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is, but it's there, like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad." Morpheus, The Matrix 1999¹

Greetings in Infinite Consciousness and Gratitude.

Congratulations on twenty-two years of collaborative works of the Islands In Between Conference which continues to give a literary voice to our experiences. Freedom is not Free is in honor of our ancestors, known and unknown. For the voices that have been silenced by time and the narrative of the oppressors in various shapes and forms. It is in our nature, our blood to rebel against injustice. Self-hatred is our greatest challenge. Grand Solar Rising Children of the Sun, our time has come.

As I sat on the mountaintop observing a Chicken Hawk using the air currents to carry it higher and higher, I marveled at its freedom. As I imagined myself as the Chicken Hawk freely traveling the trade winds with not a care but its next meal, my





mind strayed to thoughts of being free. Most of the history books concern themselves with the enslavement of our ancestors and hardly anything about what they were doing before the MAAFA².

Turning the thoughts over and over in my mind and doing some research, a few of pieces of this complex puzzle came together. The instruments used are the education system, religion, media and the “CONTROL of HISTORY”. These combined elements shape it’s telling to support the self-serving greed and corruption that keep the oppressed in a robotic state.

Our history did not start with enslavement. We have existed long before the Europeans imposed themselves on our coasts and shorelines³⁴. The first victims of the Atlantic Slave Trade were the indigenous people taken from the island of Haytai⁵. This land today known as Hispaniola⁶.



The inhabitants became prisoners of an unholy war for the lands that were good enough for the colonizers but not good enough for the original people who occupied that space. Our people were taken against their free will and transported to be sold in the slave market in Seville, Spain by Christopher Colon and his criminal crews⁷.

Freedom is not Free. It requires sacrifice. Enslavement is not free. It too requires sacrifice. From the perspective of our history, we have been fighting for our freedom to BE since our region was “discovered” in 1492 by the invaders⁸. This presentation will not focus on the five hundred plus years of genocide, rape, washing of the mind, the dismantlement, extinction of many cultures, spiritual traditions and societies through, slavery, death, destruction, forced relocation or displacement.

Instead we will examine the solutions to our challenges today using our history as a guide. In 1493, this place, the ground we are on now, called AyAy by the indigenous peoples, was set upon by Cristóbal Colón. The art of discernment is the ability to grasp, comprehend, and evaluate clearly the seen as well as the unspoken. It means we can see the true nature of things; it allows us to distinguish between what is real and what is imitation. Because our history is used as a tool of dis/misinformation, it has created an environment of cognizant dissonance.





Still today, the debate is as to why our history is important. If we look at it from an objective standpoint, it is a learning tool. Did you know, for at least fifty years after the first encounter with the trespassers hired by the Spanish Crown, the Carib of this land and the Taino of Puerto Rico harassed the invaders to no end? They burned down plantation fields, many of the enemy and those who supported them were killed. The joined forces took supplies and liberated enslaved persons⁹. If you didn't know this, it is mostly because the present system of indoctrination has hidden elements of our history that do not support knowledge of Self.

This practice went on for fifty years and was the reason AyAy or St. Croix was avoided and not colonized by the Europeans for many years. It was reported that the inhabitants were aggressive and blood thirsty¹⁰. However, AyAy's inhabitants, as did many of the natives of other islands had a system of food forests, fresh water and abundant fishing. Access to many types of birds, fauna, land and marine animals was easy because the land and sea were teeming with life. They were also part of an intricate trade in the Caribbees¹¹.



We forged common bonds through necessity and the desire for freedom even though we were separate tribes¹². While we cannot change the past, in our evolution to becoming whole, knowing from whence we cometh is critical to the healing of our Souls.



The conquest of a people starts with the intent of the oppressor to control and secure resources to benefit themselves by any means necessary. There is a need for the reassessment of the foundation and nature of European overseas expansion. Our society is a web spun with contradictions, deceptions and hypocritical policies. Mental emancipation is dependent on the knowledge of who you are/who I am and constantly seeking Truth.

We are not talking about theories, but actual conspiracies that shackle our ability to empower ourselves. Through the use of germs, guns and steel, cultural assimilation and conversion to Christianity¹³, the rules of our governance has been established. Our present existence is one enforced through constant coercion, duress, intimidation and threat.



As an example, this is a quote from the Cacique Hathuey who was captured in Cuba after fleeing Hispaniola, in the early 1500's. His crime was fighting the murderous invaders on his land. When caught, he was tied to a tree to be burned alive. The monk



told him, if he accepted their faith of Christianity, when he died he would go to heaven, if not he would burn in hell for all eternity. The Cacique asked if there were Spaniards in Heaven? To which the monk replied, yes. Cacique Hathuey told the monk he would rather converse with the devils in hell than among the Spaniards whose cruelty is such that none can be more miserable than where Spaniards are¹⁴. Every living being has a right to self defense. What if that natural sense of self defense was eroded or bred out?

If we are to find and pursue freedom, Solutions must also be presented that elevate this cause. Imagine if you can, the vision that greeted the eyes of the conquerors as they sat anchored offshore of our lands.

Beautiful beaches fringed with coconut trees full of fruit. Children running up and down on the sand free as they were born. Laughter filling the air. People on the rocks. Some fishing while others picking fist sized whelks. The smell of barbeque wafting through the air. Sounds of drumming and merriment against the background of the soothing ocean waves lapping against the seashore¹⁵. I'm sure those invaders near lost their



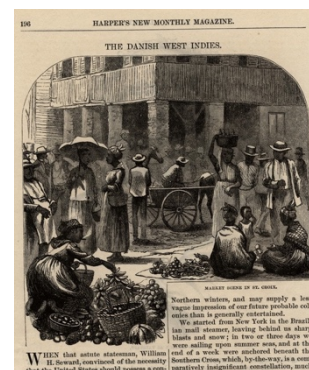
ever-loving minds. Can you hear observers? "Look at them! They are stark naked!" I'll let you fill in the rest of what ran through their heads.

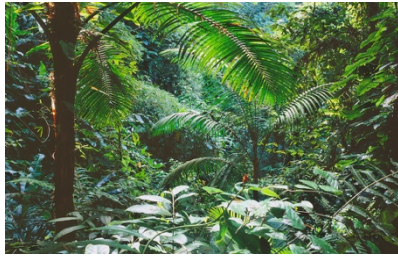
You don't have to imagine because some of us remember when we had these experiences.



Our environment is critical to our survival. Without the living consciousness of Mother Earth, we wouldn't have air to breath, water to drink or food to eat. No birds, no fish, turtles, and no us. Henry Kissinger is famous for his saying, 'If you control the oil you control the country; if you control food, you control the population'¹⁶.

Before the transfer of the Danish West Indies in 1917 to our present overseers, these lands produced 95% of the food products we consumed¹⁷. Today, we import 99% of the food we eat.¹⁸ Instead of clearing land for developments that despoil the earth and only feed the corporate parasitical system, we should be replanting the food forests that provide us with the sustenance and medicines we need to be healthy.





Our oceans need our help. Let us go back to taking care of our beaches and shorelines by reducing the amount of waste and pollution entering our waterways. We may be quite surprised by the returns.

There are those among us who have contracts with the opponents of freedom to keep us in a state of confusion, division and dumbdownness. These folks are used by the machinery to try and usurp the path of Truth and a system that benefits all, not a handful. We will free ourselves from being prisoners of someone else's conscience.



Just recently, parents in the Virgin Islands of the United States had to take the Department/Board of Education to court to insure the teaching of Virgin Islands history in the public schools. This is a statute in the Virgin Islands Code.¹⁹

Through our education system and the media, our assimilation is almost assured by the suppression of our own history. For Instance, details of the St. Jan Slave Revolt of 1733 are still questionable. The Danes tortured/killed anyone they suspected of being a rebel or knowing the whereabouts of said rebels. After bringing the revolt to closure using the Free Corp mulattoes from Martinique in 1734, a story was created to support and allow the Danish to continue their wicked plantation system²⁰. Since we know torture doesn't work to retrieve correct information and our only source is the words of Danes, what is fact and what is fiction?



Secondly, Queen Mary a Freedom fighter on the island of St. Croix, in 1878 was captured and imprisoned in Denmark²¹. A sculpture was created by very talented artists and placed in Denmark on the dock of their commercial warehouses in celebration of the one hundred years of Transfer. Interestingly, the Danes known for their meticulous recordkeeping skills allegedly, didn't have one illustration picture or caricature of Queen Mary, even though she was held captive in their country.



Why would a Freedom fighter against the same country who profited from the unpaid laborers for hundreds of years be celebrated in Denmark and the monument not be placed in the Virgin Islands, but celebrated by the same slave masters?²² It is also well known that many of the cultural and historical artifacts and archival

documents under Danish care have disappeared. This was/is done to continue to control the narrative of our history while the People of the Virgin Islands one hundred years after the Transfer still have our rights to Self Determination usurped and violated by our present administrators.

A good Sister friend of mine used to say, “It is very difficult to educate a hungry or sickly child.” When a child is constantly hungry or always sick, it makes learning even more challenging. Our educational institutional systems should implement school gardens²³. This allows an opportunity for our children have an innerstanding of the trees and foodstuffs they are responsible for along with how to prepare them.



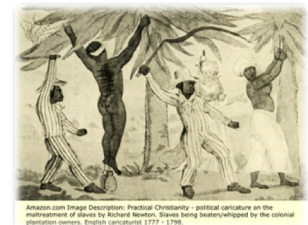
It is in our best interest to invest in a holistic learning structure based on where we see the needs of our community in the next twenty years and beyond. Awareness of the



environment along with instructive learning about the land we occupy through field trips from a hands on perspective, will create our next generation of environmental caretakers. Along with environmental instruction, trades should be included in the curriculum from elementary through high school.

Without slavery, slave trading, and other forms of unfree labor, European colonization would not have been successful in the New World. The invaders of this region were totally dependent on Indian and slave labor in their colonies in the Caribbean. Unfree labor and production was designed to support the slave plantation complex of the West Indies. Without this parasitical system, Europeans would not have generated the wealth that fostered the growth of their colonies and nations.

As Alexander Warbucks says, "If you wish to keep slaves, you must have all kinds of guards. The cheapest way to have guards is to have the slaves to pay taxes to finance their own guards. To fool the slaves, you tell them that they are not slaves and that they have freedom. You tell them that they need law and order to protect them from bad slaves, then you tell them to elect a government. Give them freedom to vote and they will vote for their own guards and pay their salary. They will then believe they are free persons. Then give them money to earn, count and spend and they will be too busy to notice the slavery they are in."²⁴



In this Matrix called the cycle of life, many have been taken advantage of and continue to be exploited on various levels. This practice has taken on new looks using

old tactics. Freedom is not free and it is only through the use of knowledge can this be accomplished. The experiences of our ancestors from 1493 to this present day run through our veins. We are being called to action and in order to proceed in an honorable way. It is up to us to bring truth to light.

"The Matrix is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth." Morpheus²⁵



The Virgin Islands, Denmark and the United States are still in a celebratory mode, while Native Virgin Islanders continue to be denied their rights under the United Nations Decolonization Resolution. We are one century under a less than free society, but one of covert enslavement.

When we free our mind from fear, we become the masters of our destiny. Our spirits minds, bodies and souls will merge into our fullest potential.

I leave you with this adapted quote from Morpheus' Speech to Zion

"People of the Caribbean hear me! It is true what many of you have heard. The invaders have gathered their armies and as I speak their armies are drawing nearer to our home. Believe me when I say we have a difficult time ahead of us but if we are to be prepared for it we must first shed our fear of it. I stand here before you now truly unafraid! Why?! Because I believe something you do not? No! I stand here without fear because I remember. I remember that I am here not because of the path that lay before me.. but because of the path that lies behind me! I remember that for five hundred years we have fought these colonizers! I remember that for five-hundred years they have sent their armies to destroy us and after five centuries of war I remember that which matters most! We are still here! tonight let us send a message to those armies! Let us shake these islands! Tonight let us tremble these walls of earth, steel and stone! Let us be heard from red core to black sky! Tonight let us make them remember this is Zion and we are not afraid!²⁶

¹ Morpheus, "The Matrix", The Wachowskis, 1999

² MAAFA, Maafa is a Kiswahili term for disaster, calamity or terrible occurrence. This term has been used to describe the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade/Middle Passage. people of African Descent are invited in an attempt to honor our ancestors who have suffered through the middle passage AND the lives that continue to be compromised due to racism and oppression.

³ "The First Americans were Africans Revisited", David Imotep, Ph.D, 2012, pg. 29

⁴ "The Aboriginal races of North America; Samuel G. Drake, 1880, pgs. 27 - 30

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- ⁵ Haytin, “*America*”, John Ogilby, 1671, Book I, Chapter III pg. 44
- ⁶ Hispaniola, “*America*”, John Ogilby, 1671, Book I, Chapter III pg. 45.
- ⁷ “*Letter to the Tainos*”, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, 1493
- ⁸ Discovery 1492, “*America*”, John Ogilby, 1671, Book II, Chapter XVIII, pg. 264
- ⁹ “*Caribs*”, John Boyd, 2012-2013, pgs. 117 - 119
- ¹⁰ “*America*”, John Ogilby, 1671, Book 2, Chapter III, pgs. 46 - 47
- ¹¹ “*History of the Caribby Iflands*”, 1666 by Rochefort, Charles de
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- ¹⁴ “*America*”, John Ogilby, 1671, pg. Chapter XV, page 336
- ¹⁵ “*America*”, John Ogilby, 1671, Book 2, Chapter III, pg. 45,
- ¹⁶ Henry Kissinger, 1970’s, <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/653698>
- ¹⁷ Secretary Lansing Report to Congress 1916, Cession of Danish West Indies
- ¹⁸ CIA The World Factbook, Economy
- ¹⁹ 17 V.I.C. § 41, (c) All public schools in the Virgin Islands shall instruct all students in:
- (1) The history of the Virgin Islands and basic Caribbean history and drug prevention and education, such courses to be part of the curriculum in elementary and secondary schools;
- ²⁰ Estate by Estate: Slave Rebellion, Holly Kathryn Norton, Syracuse University May 2013 pgs. 115, pgs. 106 -107
- ²¹ Profiles in Africana Religion - Part 24: Fire Burn! Queen Agnes and Queen Mathilda and the Burning of St. Croix, <http://www.afrometrics.org/africana-religious-studies-series/profiles-in-africana-religion-part-24-fire-burn-queen-agnes-and-queen-mathilda-and-the-burning-of-st-croix>
- ²² I Am Queen Mary, the statue is a collaboration between Danish artist Jeannette Ehlers and Virgin Islands Artist La Vaughn Belle
- ²³ 17 V.I.C. § 41f, Agriculture in the Classroom Program; basic agriculture education
- ²⁴ How I Manage My Slaves, Alexander Warbucks, September 6, 1978
- ²⁵ Morpheus, “The Matrix”, The the Wachowskis, 1999
- ²⁶ Morpheus, “The Matrix”, The the Wachowskis, 1999

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A born ancestral, indigenous and native of the Virgin Islands of the United States, Caroline A. Browne resides on St. Thomas. As a child of the 60's, she was raised in a time of Free Beach Protests and Protests for equal rights of Native Virgin Islanders. Working as a media artist, Caroline has had the opportunity to visit many countries around the world and has found many people in similar oppressive circumstances. She lives by the quote, "The only person I can do anything about is myself, so here is my contribution to the process of Freedom."

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