



KEVIN ADONIS BROWNE

Author. Photographer. Poet. Teacher.



“Are we more than failing grapplers with the tide?
More than islands in the mainstream, forced to
contend with the stray of abstractions, energies,
dynamics and discourses?”

-KEVIN A. BROWNE



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BIOGRAPHY

A native of San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago, Kevin A. Browne's major field of study is contemporary rhetorical theory, specializing in ethnic rhetoric, vernacular rhetoric, and rhetoric(s) of the Caribbean and the African Diaspora.



PHOTO CREDIT: JOANNA DA SILVA

His theory—the Mas Rhetorica—serves as a representative framework for understanding the range of rhetorical activity that occurs in the Caribbean and wherever people of Caribbean descent reside. His work challenges the adequacy of a normative Western gaze with an exploration of Caribbean tropes—including the mas/masque—and their applicability as a viable methods in the conception, practice, analysis of complex vernacular themes—such as liberation and recognition in the public sphere—that emerge. Browne's framework is not limited to Caribbean texts, but also implicitly rejects the assumption that texts produced by non-Caribbeans are somehow out of analytical reach when a Caribbean method is applied, whether the “subjects” of those texts are Caribbean or not.

As a photographer, he explores the collection and distribution of visual aspects of the Classical notion of “epideixis”—or demonstrative rhetoric—in public displays as a way of bridging traditions that can often seem to be worlds apart. The urgency of his particular strain of visual inquiry is based on a key directive in the study of Caribbean Rhetoric: to determine the extent to which elements of rhetorical display are misrepresented and, by way of critique, to offer some redress.

For Browne, this may lead to mainstream considerations of the “masque” as a methodology—one that would equip scholars in this little-studied area and allow them to adequately examine both contemporary and historical texts of Caribbean import from a distinctly rhetorical perspective.

Professional Memberships

- Caribbean Studies Association (CSA), 2013
- Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), 2006-present
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), 2006-present
- Rhetoric Society of America (RSA), 2008-present

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Learn more at kevinbrownephd.com



FOUND(ATIONS): A VERNACULAR DIGITAL ARCHIVE

For the vernacular rhetor, success hinges on the commitment to a single criterion: practice.

-Kevin

OVERVIEW

The Vernacular Digital Archiving Project–Found(ations)–is a project in multimodal composition–a living documentary project that emerges from the interplay of numerous themes and approaches. It is an example of deep vernacular participation in humanistic inquiry. It asks, and tries to answer those nagging questions of who we are and from whence do we come.

As a project in vernacular humanistic inquiry, the project attempts to enact that understanding–the active inquiry into what it would require to be who we are through the exploration, collection, and reflection on the documents we and those before us have created. The way I see it, this inquiry is collaborative work because it deliberately blurs the lines between author/audience/text. Out of this concern for praxis comes the initial call: “I remember. I am not forgotten.”

As such an archive develops, so will research and teaching opportunities at the graduate and undergraduate level, both local and abroad. More than that, though, is the probability that this project will take root. And isn’t that what it’s all about in the end? Roots? Routes? Ourselves as the namers, shapers, makers, and doers in our own lives. The tellers of our own stories.

Tradition enacted is what a living archive ought to be.

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Learn more at kevinbrownephd.com/foundations/

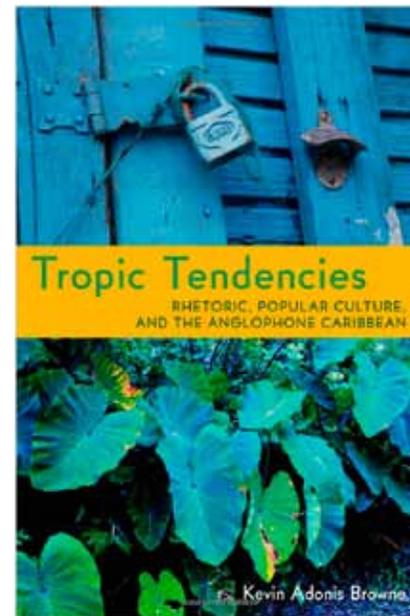
PUBLISHED WORK

TROPIC TENDENCIES: RHETORIC, POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

“Browne’s *Tropic Tendencies* is a groundbreaking study, and a necessary one. He provides a nuanced and distinct analysis of Caribbeans and their rhetoric with his careful exploration of the origins and contemporary meanings of the strategies and forms used to activate and display the complexities of Caribbean consciousness.

Browne’s thought-provoking theory of the Caribbean Carnavalesque—itsself a prime example of the rhetorical creolization present in the many performances he observes—blends classical and contemporary vernacular traditions to articulate an ethos that is distinctly Caribbean.”

—Elaine Richardson,
The Ohio State University



“Browne’s excellent contribution to cultural studies in the Anglophone Caribbean is grounded in a rhetorical praxis that ranges over several expressive forms, including poetry, masquerade, music, folklore, fiction, and digital media. The compelling analysis is impressive both in coverage and insight.

—Glyne A. Griffith,
University at Albany, State University of New York

“Browne’s hermeneutic is meticulous and exhaustive in its attention to detail and reminiscent of Gordon Rohlehr’s essays on Caribbean popular culture. His book is one of the best examples of theory grounded in deep and committed research that the Caribbean has produced.”

—Simon Lee,
Trinidad Guardian

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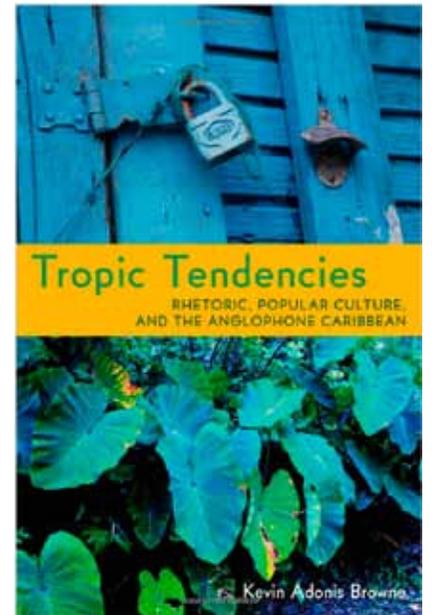
Paperback and Kindle editions are available here.

PUBLISHED WORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TROPIC TENDENCIES: RHETORIC, POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

A legacy of slavery, abolition, colonialism, and class struggle has profoundly impacted the people and culture of the Caribbean. In *Tropic Tendencies*, Kevin Adonis Browne examines the development of an Anglophone Caribbean rhetorical tradition in response to the struggle to make meaning, maintain identity, negotiate across differences, and thrive in light of historical constraints and the need to participate in contemporary global culture. Browne bases his study on the concept of the “Caribbean carnivalesque” as the formative ethos driving cultural and rhetorical production in the region and beyond it. He finds that carnivalesque discourse operates as a “continuum of discursive substantiation” that increases the probability of achieving desired outcomes for both the rhetor and the audience. Browne also views the symbolic and material interplay of the masque and its widespread use to amplify efforts of resistance, assertion, and liberation.



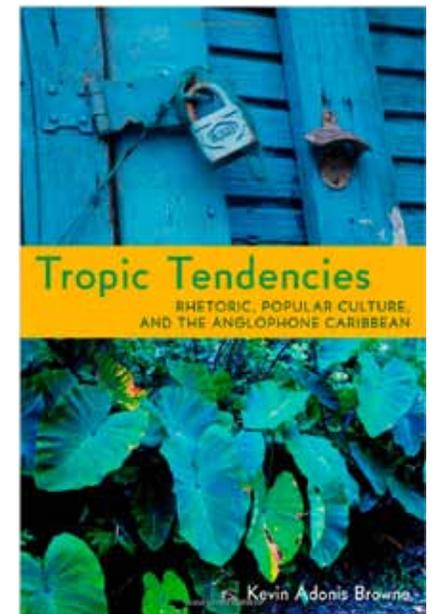
Browne analyzes rhetorical modes and strategies in a variety of forms, including music, dance, folklore, performance, sermons, fiction, poetry, photography, and digital media. He introduces calypsonians, old talkers, chantwells, jamenttes, stickfighters, badjohns, and others as exemplary purveyors of Caribbean rhetoric and deconstructs their rhetorical displays. From novels by Earl Lovelace, he also extracts thematic references to kalinda, limbo, and dragon dances that demonstrate the author’s claim of an active vernacular sensibility. He then investigates the re-creation and reinvention of the carnivalesque in digital culture, demonstrating the ways participants both flaunt and defy normative ideas of “Caribbeanness” in online and macro environments.

KEVIN ADONIS BROWNE
Author, Photographer, Poet, Teacher.

Paperback and Kindle editions are available here.

PUBLISHED WORK

**TROPIC TENDENCIES:
RHETORIC, POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN**



Click the image above to view a video of Dr. Kevin Browne reading an excerpt from Tropic Tendencies... at The Brown Bag Series, Syracuse University. November 2013.

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PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

“Rhetoric and the Stoning of Rachel Jeantel” (2013, Enculturation)

“Harlem’s West Indian Outsiders: Vernacular Rhetoric and the Politics of Integration.”
CCCC Annual Convention in Las Vegas, NV. (3/18/2013)

“Ethos and the Bacchanalian Myth in 19th Century Trinidad.”
Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) Biennial Conference in Philadelphia, PA. (05/28/2012)

“Theorizing While Black: Composition, Rhetoric, and the Myth of Representation.”
CCCC Annual Convention in St. Louis, MO. (3/22/12)

“The Rhetoric of Transnational Flows as Reflective Practice, a Response,” Respondent.
CCCC Annual Convention in Louisville, KY. (03/20/10)

Assistant, Institute Workshop, “Race and Rhetoric.”
Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) Summer Institute in State College, PA. (6/26/09-6/28/09)

“Caribbean Students in the Composition Classroom.”
CCCC Annual Convention in San Francisco, CA. (3/13/09)

“A Language We Can Use.”
Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) Biennial Conference in Seattle, WA. (5/26/08)

“Go Back to Hell: The Paradox of Prophetic Ethos in Caribbean American Rhetoric.”
Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) Biennial Conference in Seattle, WA. (5/24/08)

“What Is Cultural Rhetoric?: A Collaborative Definition of An Emerging Field.”
CCCC Annual Convention in New Orleans, LA. (4/2/08)

“Can’t Play Mas and ‘Fraid Powder.”
CCCC Annual Convention in New York, NY. (3/23/07)

“Mout’ Open.”
CCCC Annual Convention in Chicago, IL. (3/24/06)

PHOTOGRAPHY & EXHIBITIONS

kamerhetorica | ka-meh-ra-torica | noun:

1. the manifestation of visual intent;
2. the instrumentation and mechanisms that enable those manifestations.

As the name suggests, kamerhetorica takes a bit of license, at once fusing and infusing the camera with the rhetorical intent of the photographer, Kevin Adonis Browne. In fact, while deeply inspired by photographers Noel Norton and Jeffrey Chock, Browne often remarks that he approaches his work primarily through a lens of vernacular rhetorical activity—a lens oriented toward collective uplift among the marginalized, the oppressed, and the forgotten.

In his book, *Tropic Tendencies: Rhetoric, Popular Culture, and the Anglophone Caribbean* (Pittsburgh 2013), he writes, “the only distinctions between an aesthetic reading and a rhetorical one are the extent to which the photographer’s imposition of a specific context supports the viewable details of the image and the extent to which the viewer’s consideration of context and details invokes meaning and provokes a conscious response” (70). And by blending aspects of commerce with deep community awareness, Browne has demonstrated his commitment. On June 1, 2014, he donated a complete set of photographs from his “Seeing Blue” exhibition to the people of Paramin and in recognition of the Blue Devil tradition.



On his photography...

I suppose the reason I take photographs is the same as why I do most everything else. That only sounds like a copout, but it's not. I'm trying—struggling, really—to discover some definable idea of my origins and the potential of that idea to make a difference in the broad expanse of Caribbean culture. It's about finding interesting ways of saying what I want to say. The same is true of my poetry, as well as my intellectual work. I don't do it because I need the money (which I do), but because there is a need, an urgency.

I've said in the past that I'm driven by the sublime dynamics of vernacular life—the everyday—which are imagined in the context of my pursuit of rhetorical understanding and the desire for what Socrates would have referred to as an “examined life.” Examined, in this case, means through a camera's lens, as well as a critical lens that's rhetorically informed and oriented toward change in the world. So when I say “it's a privilege that I embrace,” it isn't a romantic notion. I know there's a lot of work to do. I get that. But I just keep pushing.

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To learn more, visit kamerhetorica.com



PHOTOGRAPHY & EXHIBITIONS

Each collection highlights different aspects of Caribbean history and contemporary popular culture—from carnival masqueraders to stickfighters, from portraits of innocence to scenes of defiant hope—inviting the viewer to consider the complexity of Caribbean culture and the fundamental interconnectedness of our existence in these times.

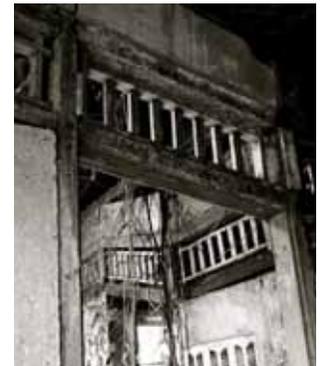
SEEING BLUE - Click images to view online.



THE ROSEAU LOCKS



NATIVE PLACES



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Visit kamerhetorica.com to view the full catalogue.



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Downloads

High resolution image of Kevin A. Browne

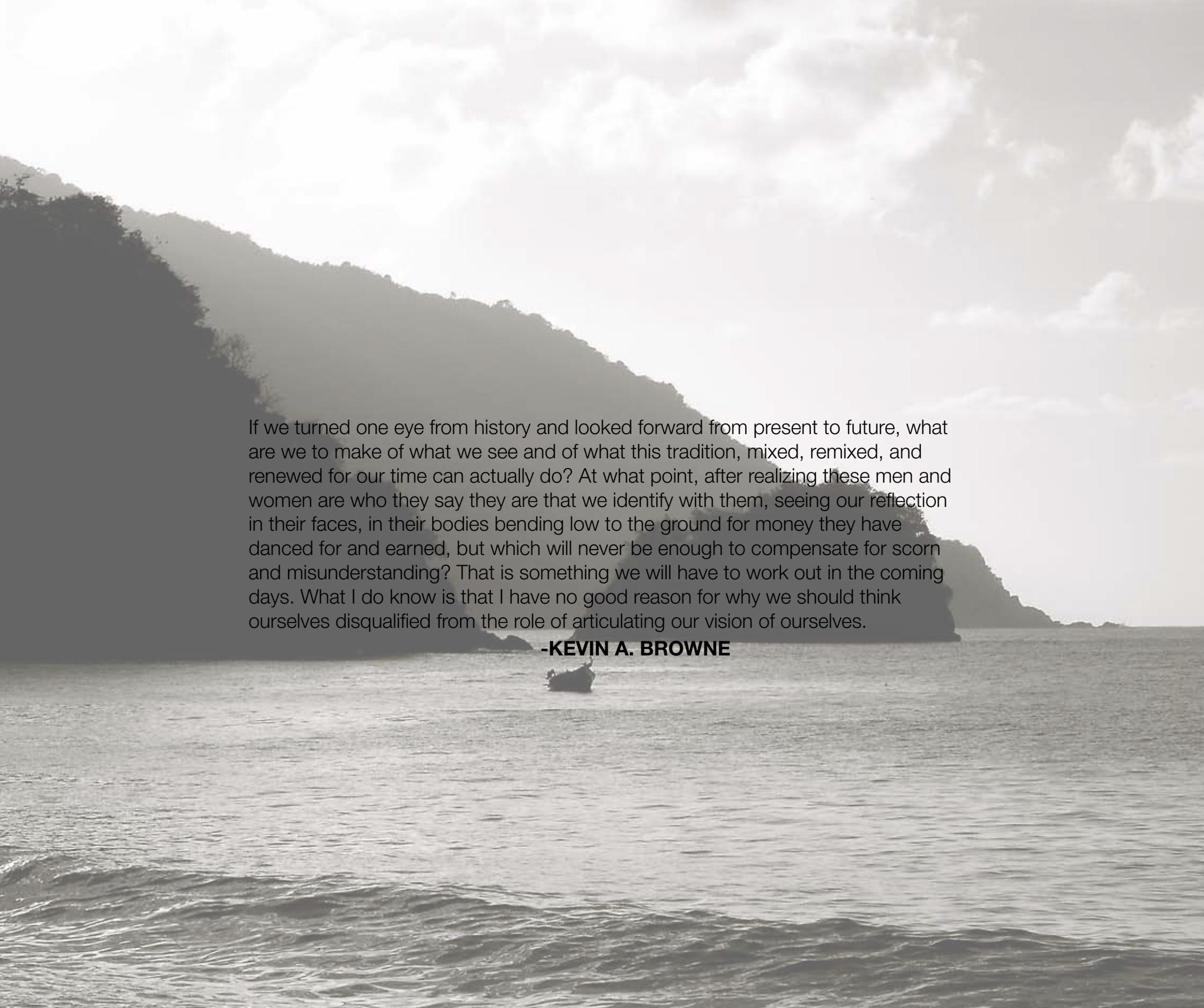
Cover image of Tropic Tendencies...

Trinidad Guardian review of Tropic Tendencies..., Page 1

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If we turned one eye from history and looked forward from present to future, what are we to make of what we see and of what this tradition, mixed, remixed, and renewed for our time can actually do? At what point, after realizing these men and women are who they say they are that we identify with them, seeing our reflection in their faces, in their bodies bending low to the ground for money they have danced for and earned, but which will never be enough to compensate for scorn and misunderstanding? That is something we will have to work out in the coming days. What I do know is that I have no good reason for why we should think ourselves disqualified from the role of articulating our vision of ourselves.

-KEVIN A. BROWNE