

Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal

Volume 8
Issue 1 *Bahamian Literature*

Article 42

April 2011

Colombus's Landing

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Recommended Citation

Thompson, Jeannie (2011) "Colombus's Landing," *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 1 , Article 42.
Available at: <http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/anthurium/vol8/iss1/42>

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COLUMBUS'S LANDING

NARRATOR: The time is toward the end of the 15th century possibly the year 1492. The month is October, the date most likely the 12th. The place is a small island which is one of a chain of 700 islands, rocks and cays situate near the continent of North America, an island it was said, which was never “discovered”. However, on this particular day, in this particular month, in this Century, there are people living on this island. They are a species of Indian known as Lucayans. They are a peaceful people content to satisfy nature and are only moved to fight when attacked by their warring neighbours, the Caribs, who had chased them from as far south as South America to this Island. On this particular day there is no war with the Caribs and we are depicting a typical day in the life of the Lucayans of Guanahani.

In the event that members of the audience might expect a great degree of authenticity we wish to warn you from the beginning that because of the change in civilization we are unable to portray the Lucayans as they were normally dressed, that is, naked with paint and perhaps some ornaments of shells and gold. Further, we are unable to present our play in their language, because we know only a dozen of their words. And we have to use 2007 independent Bahamians because we were unable to find authentic independent Lucayans. In fact, the only historical point which we will present and which has been documented to some extent is the fact that Columbus landed.

(The Scene opens with two Lucayan men relaxing under a coconut tree smoking some grass or tobacco and obtaining a subliminal high, while waiting for their women to bring their morning meal. They are surrounded by opened coconuts. One man puts one of the coconuts to his mouth and throws it down in disgust.)

1st Man: Tell me something, how much coconut them woman cut before they leave outta here this morning?

2nd. Man: Same as usual I believe. Why?

1st. Man: Well how come they finish already?

2nd Man: The way how you was drinking them you expect them to last forever?

1st Man: You talking like you aint had none.

2nd Man: I had my share. I just aint complaining that they finish that's all.

- 1st Man: The way how I so thirsty, I believe they aint cut as much as usual.
- 2nd Man: It would be the smokes, but if you so sure they aint cut as much why you don't count the shells.
- 1st Man. Now that would make a lot of sense seeing as how I never count how much they cut them other days.
- 2nd Man: Man, why you don't stop complaining and have another smoke.
- 1st Man: And is you what say it must be that what got me thirsty. You gotta be joking. Boy, I really thirsty and this sun feeling hot.
- 2nd Man: Well if things so bad why you don't climb the tree and cut one coconut for yourself?
- 1st man: I can't bother. Besides they must be soon come. (*pause*) You don't find they staying long?
- 2nd Man: It seem lil long in truth. You don't think them Caribs sneak up on them without us knowing eh?
- 1st Man: Man, don't make them kinda jokes. You know I wouldn't put nothing past them. You remember the last time they attack?
- 2nd Man: Who coulda forget it. All of we sleeping, big hurricane blowing outside then the eye reach us and they come want fight.
- 1st Man: What a night!
- 2nd Man: You could say that again. What with the hurricane and them dirty Caribs we lose a lot of we best looking women and some of we strongest men.
- 1st Man: The only way I here to tell the tale is because I play dead in my hammock.
- 2nd Man: I run and hide in one cave near the bushes.
- 1st Man: I wouldn't want go through that again in a hurry, but you never could tell.
- 2nd Man: Yeah, seeing as how they aint make a attack for a long time they might be here right now.
- 1st Man: I didn't want say nothing for fear you woulda laugh, but hearing you say them dirty Indians might be here now make me want ask you.

- 2nd Man: What's that you want ask me?
- 1st Man: You hear something strange on the water last night?
- 2nd Man: I hear something sound like boat the size of which I never see before. You think that's why we aint hear from them Caribs in a long lime and they sneak in here last night?
- 1st Man: Boy, I don't know what to say. I hear the same noise you hear and I send Etta out to see if she coulda find out what was going on.
- 2nd Man: What she see?
- 1st Man: Well she stay out there for the longest while then she come in and say she aint see nothing.
- 2nd Man: You believe her?
- 1st Man: Now why you want ask me a thing like that?
- 2nd Man: Nothing. Is just that I don't believe none of these woman when it come to the Caribs these days. Not since Senna been there and come back and tall them how them Caribs does treat them like Queen while we does make them work so hard.
- 1st Man: If that was true how come she come back here?
- 2nd Man: They must be didn't want her. You know how disgusting she could be. Or they mighta send her back to spread this false propaganda.
- 1st Man: Is true. But these woman known they haveta do most of the work so we could rest up to defend them when the Caribs attack.
- 2nd Man: You listening to me or you aint listening to me?
- 1st Man: What you saying?
- 2nd Man: I telling you that these women aint buying that story bout us resting to be in condition to fight them Caribs no more. You don't see how they does line up to get capture while we risking we life?
- 1st Man: I notice that, but I don't think Etta up in that. I think she really aint see nothing last night.
- 2nd Man: Is true. It mightn't a been nothing on the water.

- 1st Man: Either that or she aint see it . Her eyes aint what they used to be you know.
- 2nd Man: Yeah., old age ketching up with her. How old she is now?
- 1st Man: She coming up twenty nine summers.
- 2nd Man: Soon time to put her down.
- 1st Man I know that and it got me feeling real bad. To think I might lose her on account of bad sight and she bear me them handsome sons and her cooking still the best. Beside aint nobody could bind up wounds good as her.
- 2nd Man: Yeah, she's a good woman, but you know they don't last past 30. (*sighs*) They really taking long with that food though.
- 1st Man: Look who complaining now.
- 2nd Man: I aint complaining. I wouldn'ta think bout it if you woulda pick one coconut and we woulda had another smoke. All now we coulda done forget bout hungry. But all this talk got me to thinking bout my stomach and I beginning to feel like it bout to reach my back.
- 1st Man: Maybe they having trouble grinding the maize. You know they was complaining bout the pestle the other day.
- 2nd Man: Maize!. What happen to the fish? They biting good. And besides that the crawfish season open up.
- 1st Man: I tell Etta before she leave outta here this morning that I don't want no fish this morning. I want a nice maize meal.
- 2nd Man: Then is you I haveta blame for this emptiness in my stomach.
- 1st Man: If you want to. But you aint feel for a lil maize meal with some avocado and a pig feet souse?
- 2nd Man: You mean to tell me you send them woman to kill pig and all. We ga be dead from hungry time as they reach back.
- 1st Man: (*Looking up in coconut tree*) I wonder if I remember how to clime one of these.
- 2nd Man: You better start because gully picking in the worse way.

- 1st Man: Is a pity I send them children on picnic.
- 2nd Man: Yeah, but is a holiday you know.
- 1st Man: I know that. And I only hope Etta remember it too. She gotta make the cassava bread for the chief ceremonial dinner tonight.
- 2nd Man: What bright idea it was to make this a holiday anyhow?
- 1st Man: The chief number one son say is time we celebrate his pa birthday.
- 2nd Man: That's right. Anyhow we ga get a good meal outta it. (*pause*) You ga climb the tree or you aint ga climb the tree?
- 1st Man: What you say we give them five more minutes?
- 2nd Man: How you ga time it?
- 1st Man: We could smoke half a joint.
- 2nd Man: No way. I finish smoking for right now, because when I ask you you wasn't interested.
- 1st Man: Be like that then. (*Pause and looking up in the tree again*) You woulda think one woulda drop, since they know how much we want one.
- 2nd Man: What you talking bout?
- 1st Man: The coconut.
- 2nd Man: I feeling lil sleepy, I ga take a nap. You could wake me when the pig and maize meal ready. (*lays down to sleep*)
- 1st Man: I wonder if I shouldn'ta settle for the fish. It kinda dangerous sending Etta and Lenqua to go ketch pig. I wonder if I shouldn't go see how they getting on? (*sighs*) I might as well ketch a lil nap myself. I might need my strength for later especially if is them Caribs what come in them boat last night in truth.

NARRATOR: **Meanwhile, our two Lucayan women have ground the maize, picked the avocados and are presently seeking the pig. Etta, the wife of Coatl, having reached or almost reached the age of 29, which is considered old by Lucayan standards because few pass the age of 30, is concerned for her man and preoccupied by her impending death.**

Lenqua, on the other hand is younger and although considered the wife of Tessel, is a flirt and considers herself somewhat of a beauty.

- Etta: Lenqua, you see how high the sun is?
- Lenqua: I see it and I feel it. So what?
- Etta: You don't realize is twice this week we late for Coatl and Tessel meal.
- Lenqua: Let them wait.
- Etta: I know I aint as strong as I used to be because of my age, but I feel if you help me a lil bit more we could finish quicker.
- Lenqua: I don't know what you get outta slaving over that man all day and all night.
- Etta: Is what I put here for and to please whoever it is what put me here and I ga do it till I go sometime next year.
- Lenqua: I don't know why you so concern bout leaving here, you look just as good to me now as you look 5 summers ago and your work still good.
- Etta: But you know we don't last much over thirty.
- Lenqua: It depend what you do with yourself. Now my grandma last way beyond thirty and that was because she didn't bother go heat up herself behind no man.
- Etta: And you better watch it because you look like you traveling the same road.
- Lenqua: What wrong with living long?
- Etta: Aint nothing wrong with lit so long as you living right.
- Lenqua: And what wrong with the way I living?
- Etta: Combing your hair six times a day, changing your beads , not caring if your man eat on time and on top of all that to go making eyes at the chief number one son.
- Lenqua: How you could see all that and you always complaining bout your bad eyes?
- Etta: I could see what I want see, and I warning you you in for some trouble.

Lenqua: How you meaning?

Etta: It aint only me see you. The chief number one son, number one woman notice it too so you better watch your step.

Lenqua: I aint worrying bout her. She almost thirty.

Etta: I thought just now you was telling me that wasn't nothing to worry bout.

Lenqua: You know what I mean Etta. You and her might be the same age but she just aint wear as good as you.

Etta: I see.

Lenqua: Don't sulk, Etta. You known I aint mean to hurt you. After all you's my best friend.

Etta: In that case come help me ketch this pig for this souse.

Lenqua: You see there again. We now gotta go kill pig. We done broke we back on the maize and now we gotta go hunt. (*sucks teeth*) I tell you Etta, I tired of all of this. You mighta coulda keep this up for all them years but this is one young lady what aint bout to fool with that.

Etta: So what you decide to do? You think you could change these men overnight.

Lenqua: Who talking bout them. I talking bout a different land where the men does take care of the women. Is the men what does hunt while the women stay home and keep theirsself beautiful

Etta: You been listening to Senna again.

Lenqua: What wrong with that?

Etta: She go lead all of you'll astray.

Lenqua: I fancy what she saying make a lot of sense. Is the man what got the muscle so is him what should be doing the hunting.

Etta: But that aint our way.

Lenqua: Well all I could say is that if we can't make our men see it that way, Tessel could forget it because I gone with the first handsome Carib I could see.

- Etta: You might have a hard time looking. They ugly as sin compare to our men. Why you think they like our women so.
- Lenqua: That's just what Senna say. And as pretty as I is they bound to give me the best treatment. I might land up to be the queen.
- Etta: You better stop that day dreaming and let us go kill this pig.
- Lenqua: You aint got nothing else on your mind this morning eh?
- Etta: I gotta go feed Coatl before the sun rise too high and besides I got some cooking to do for the chief big banquet.
- Lenqua: I was forgetting bout that. I gotta go get my best shiny pieces out for that. The chief number one son eye ga pop tonight.
- Etta: Let's make a move then.
- Lenqua: I tell you what let's go get couple conchs, make some conch souse and put some shell in it. They wouldn't know the difference between that and the pig souse all that smoking they was doing.
- Etta: You go ahead fooling yourself. If you think that smoking does do the same thing what that cane liquor does do you better start thinking again.
- Lenqua: Where you think we ga find pig this morning. The only creature I see here for the past three weeks is iguana.
- Etta: We gotta find one because I promise it to Coatl and I promise to fulfill all his wishes till I leave him soon.
- Lenqua: You mind talking all that sentimental nonsense. I know it don't mean nothing but it making me feel bad.
- Etta: So long as you promise to help me more.
- Lenqua: Anything to stop your moaning and groaning.
- Etta: Where you think we should start?
- Lenqua: It don't matter, one place just as good as the next. (*pause*) or we could start where you was on the beach last night waving that light.
- Etta: You see me?

- Lenqua: Yeah, I see you. What you was doing out there that time of night.
- Etta: Coatl say he here one noise like some big boats so he send me to see if I see anything.
- Lenqua: Is funny. Tessel say he hear the same thing, but I aint hear nothing strange, you?
- Etta: I hear the noise Coatl was talking bout I aint see nothing.
- Lenqua: I wouldn't mind if it was the Caribs, then I wouldn't haveta go look for no pig. All my troubles would be over. I'll be queen of the Caribs.
- Etta: You mean slave to the Caribs.
- Lenqua: That aint what Senna say.
- Etta: Well if things was so good with her over there, how come she find herself back here?
- Lenqua: She say she miss her children.
- Etta: Don't make me laugh. Senna aint look at none of them since she drop them.
- Lenqua: Anyhow, let's go where you was waving the light. Either we see one pig or we meet up with some Caribs. Either way is better than staying here talking and getting nowhere.
- Narrator: So off went Etta and Lenqua to the beach in search of a pig, but what they found was certainly not a four footed animal that grunted.**
- Etta: Lenqua, you don't haveta walk so fast.
- Lenqua: I want hurry get this thing over so I could get myself together for tonight.
- Etta: My old bones too weary for this fast walking.
- Lenqua: Etta, Etta, look over there.
- Etta: Over there where?
- Lenqua: See where my finger pointing.
- Etta: It look to me like it pointing all over the place. Keep it still lil while.

Lenqua: You see?

Etta: Well I'll be. What you think it is?

Lenqua: They look like boat.

Etta: Big as that?

Lenqua: Must be the Caribs what Tessel and them hear last night.

Etta: Now where you think the Caribs woulda learn to make boat big as that, if them things we looking at is boat in truth.

Lenqua: They gotta be boat because they floating on the water, and the Caribs had plenty time to make boat that size. They aint been here for a long time you know.

Etta: Is true.

Lenqua: Etta, some smaller boats coming outta the bigger ones.

Etta: What is this today. I think I ready to meet my maker.

Lenqua: This aint no time for foolishness. Let's hide in the bushes and see what ga happen.

Etta: I agree with the hiding part.

Lenqua: Let's go then.

(Etta and Lenqua hide behind some bushes and look out over the audience)

Etta: What happening now, Lenqua?

Lenqua: You can't see?

Etta: I got my eyes close.

Lenqua: Gal open them up and look. You mightn'ta see nothing like this again in life.

Etta: I hope not. My heart palpitating enough already.

Lenqua: Etta, you see them clothes they got on?

Etta: Who?

Lenqua: Them Caribs.

Etta: They don't look like no Caribs to me.

Lenqua: How you could say that?

Etta: Look at the skin colour. You ever see Carib that colour in your life.

Lenqua: It would be paint.

Etta: That aint no paint, that's their natural colour. They aint no Caribs.

Lenqua: I think you right. I don't think them Caribs coulda manage all them fancy clothes and errything.

Etta: What them things is they got on stick?

Lenqua: Look like some kinda cloth.

Etta: They some pretty colours.

Lenqua: Look what they got on they head.

Etta: I see that child.

Lenqua: Etta, they landing the small boats on the beach.

Etta: Let's run.

Lenqua: No, let's stay. They aint see us.

Etta: They mightn'ta see us yet but they ga see us soon as they land.

Lenqua: If you so scared, duck.

Etta: Well I guess since I here I might as well watch and see what happening.

Lenqua: They got the lil boats pull up on the beach now.

Etta: They ga come looking for us now.

Lenqua: Don't be stupid, they don't even know we here.

Etta: Hey, they sticking them pretty cloth on the stick in the ground.

Lenqua: Looka that man what dress up prettier than the rest, he kissing the sand.

Etta: What kinda people these is?

Lenqua: He looking up in the sky now.

Etta: From where I looking he like he crying.

Lenqua: You right, Etta.

Etta: I wonder what he crying bout.

Lenqua: You want go ask him?

Etta: You must be crazy. You think he aint scared he ga dirty up his pretty clothes.

Lenqua: Das only sand. That could brush off. Listen, he saying something now.

Etta: You could hear him?

Lenqua: He saying something bout Dios,.....

Etta: What is Dios?

Lenqua: Aint I tell you I don't know.....Now he saying something bout Padre Nuestro.....

Etta: That aint sound like no language I ever hear.

Lenqua: Now he calling somebody name Ferdinand and another one name Isabella.

Etta: They coming?

Lenqua: I aint see nobody moving, and besides all of them look like man I aint see no woman.

Etta: You hear he say something else?

Lenqua: He say something bout San Salvador. Now he getting up after he do some funniness with his hands on his head and chest.

Etta: They look like they bout to come over here. You think they see us?

Lenqua: I don't think they see us yet.

Etta: Well let's go tell Coatl and Tessel what happen before they find us.

Lenqua: Yeah, because I don't like the looks of them things what dangling from their sides. They look dangerous.

Etta: Lets go then.

Narrator: And with those words the two women left the beach, where they had just seen the strangest sight and went to tell their men folk what had transpired. They found Coatl and Tessel just as we had left them fast asleep under the coconut tree oblivious to everything around them.

Lenqua: What I tell you eh? We slaving over these lazy men all day and all they good for is sleep.

Etta: This aint no time to complain bout that. Hurry up and wake them before them strangers come.

Lenqua: Tessel, Tessel, wake up.

Etta: (*shaking Coatl*) Wake up boy, wake up.

Coatl: (*Yawns*) Oh, is you Etta, I was dreaming.

Tessel: The food ready.

Lenqua: That's all you could think bout?

Coatl: You fix the pig souse, Etta?

Etta: We aint find no pig.

Tessel: You see there. I tell you we shoulda settle for fish.

Coatl: What you cook then. Gimme anything right now. I dead hungry.

Etta: We aint had a chance to cook yet.

Tessel: What you mean you'll aint had a chance to cook yet. You see how high the sun is in the sky.

Lenqua: We see that, but we got something important to tell you.

- Coatl: Aint nothing so important as food right up in now. You grind the maize.
- Etta: Yeah (*feels for it*) Oh goodness, Lenqua in all the excitement I gone drop it.
- Lenqua: All our hard work gone for nothing.
- Etta: We might find it.
- Coatl: All I could say is the two of you'll looking for beating. You leave outta here long enough to have meal fit for the chief and you come beck say you aint cook yet.
- Tessel: I going go look for one tamarind switch, though to tell you the truth I believe I too weak to use it.
- Etta: Why you'll don't stop complaining and let me tell you what happen this morning.
- Coatl: And it better be good.
- Etta: Coatl. Remember the noise you hear on the water last night?
- Coatl: Yeah, and I send you to find out what it was and you say you aint see nothing.
- Lenqua: She aint see nothing last night, be we sure see something this morning.
- Coatl: Is them Caribs hey? I tell Tessel them Caribs creep up on us again.
- Tessel: The fighting finish yet?
- Lenqua: You'll ga listen to the story?
- Coatl: Okay, okay.
- Lenqua: Wasn't no Caribs in that water last night.
- Tessel: Was boat though?
- Etta: Three of the biggest ones you ever see.
- Lenqua: That's right and they even got cloth flying on them.
- Coatl: But who was on the boat?

Etta: Some people like we never see before.

Lenqua: I thought first it was Caribs too, but Etta show me how their skin colour different.

Coatl: Different how?

Lenqua: It very light.

Tessel: Must be paint.

Lenqua: It wasn't no pain, and besides that some of them had eyes the colour of the sky.

Etta: You didn't tell me that Lenqua.

Lenqua: I couldn't tell you everything.

Coatl: What they come here for?

Etta: I wasn't bout to ask them.

Tessel: Where they come from?

Coatl: Must be from the sky.

Lenqua: In boat? They come from cross the water.

Tessel: Well how come we aint see them before?

Etta: Maybe they aint reach this far before.

Coatl: What you think we should do Tessel?

Tessel: I don't know.

Lenqua: I think you should go tell the chief.

Coatl: He don't know yet?

Etta: Was only me and Lenqua on the beach.

Coatl: We better go tell him then. He woulda want to know what going on.

- Lenqua: He might even invite them to his ceremonial dinner, then we could get a close look at them.
- Tessel: You better watch yourself with these strange men.
- Etta: That's what I always telling her.
- Tessel: Let's go to the chief. Them people might be hungry.
- Coatl: Yeah, and if he feed them he might feed us too, seeing as how these women leave us starving.
- Etta: You know how it is Coatl, we gone to the beach to look for the pig and we find the men in the three big boats. Oh, and Lenqua you forget to tell them how the big boats got lil boats inside.
- Lenqua: That's right. They come to shore in the lil boats and leave the big one out in the deep sea.
- Coatl: I don't care if you'll say these people come in boat, I still say them come from the sky.
- Etta: Well, you could ask them when you see them, but let's hurry and go tell the Chief what happen before they ketch up with us.
- Coatl: That's the best idea you had all morning. Come on let's go.

(The four leave)

Narrator: **And this was how Columbus landed on Guanahani, which he renamed San Salvador and he was proclaimed the Discoverer of the New World. He saw that the Indians hand no obvious religion and thought it would be easy to teach them Christianity in exchange for gold and knowledge of gold. This greed for gold subsequently killed Coatl, Tessel, Etta and Lenqua and the others of their race, who extended the hand of friendship and received plunder in return.**

But the white world rejoiced in Columbus' discovery and October 12th was celebrated as Discovery Day – But we know better, don't we.