

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/36383>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**HISTORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY:
BARBADIAN SPACE AND THE LEGACY OF EMPIRE**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

Marcia P. A. Burrowes

University of Warwick
Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies

February 2000

I dedicate this thesis to my Mother,
Hazel Patricia Burrowes,
and
to the memory of Captain Faye Darlington
(1961-1998)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
DECLARATION	xi
ABSTRACT	xii

Introduction.....	1
--------------------------	----------

Chapter One : History, Historicity and its Narratives

I	Introduction.....	13
II	The Island	21
III	The Missing Early Inhabitants.....	27
IV	Colonisation.....	38
	a) The Controversial Names	39
	b) The Landing Party and the Rest	46
	c) ‘a quintessential New World slave society’	51
V	Emancipation and Independence	56
	a) ‘iron tooth’d ratchets’	56
	b) Emancipation Day 1997.....	57
VI	Summary.....	65

Chapter Two: Barbadian Cultural Identity and its Contradictions

I	Identity and Fluidity.....	68
	a) Wrestling with the Statue of Nelson	68
	b) ‘Living in the shadow of Englishness’	75
II	Decolonisation and Culture	85
	a) Culture and Theory	85
	b) Black Barbadian Heritage and Deculturation	91

	i) Benítez-Rojo and the old paradigm	92
	ii) The issue of deculturation.....	96
IV	Summary.....	103

Chapter Three: The Myth of ‘Little England’ and its revival in the Independence Era

I	Introduction.....	105
II	Mythical Hide and Seek.....	110
III	‘Little England’: a History	116
	a) 1789-1899	117
	iii) ‘in’ but not ‘of’ the Caribbean	118
	iv) Little Empire	120
	v) ‘nearest to the mother country’	122
	vi) Loyalty and Home	123
	vii) A Sobriquet.....	126
	b) 1900-1966.....	127
	i) ‘More English than England’: the travel writer’s view	127
	ii) ‘England nebber fear’	131
	c) 1966-1999	135
	i) ‘death with reprieve’	135
	ii) A Tourist Ploy.....	139
IV	In Writing the Nation.....	145
V	Summary.....	147

Chapter Four: The Barbados Landship: The Cloaking of a Heritage

I	Introduction.....	149
II	Sailing with the Landship	153
III	Key Stages in Landship History	156
	a) In Pursuit of Origins	157
	b) The Early Stages	162
	c) 1920s & 1930s	169
	d) Independence and Beyond	178

IV	Landship Rituals	183
	a) A Landship Parade	183
	b) Deck, Dock and ‘Waters’	192
V	Towards a greater understanding of the Landship	194
	a) Creating space through the ‘body voice’	194
	b) A poet’s view	197
	c) Running your hands over the Cloak	200
VI	Summary	202

Chapter Five: The Crop Over Festival: Re-Emergence of Traditions

I	Introduction.....	205
II	The Carnival Paradigm	207
III	Historical Development of the Festival	212
	a) Harvest Home	217
	b) The Slave Period.....	220
	c) Post-Emancipation	222
	ii) The Early Years: 1838-1899	223
	iii) Plantation Ledgers: 1878-1894	227
	iv) Winding Down: 1900-1966.....	234
IV	Crop Over in the Era of Independence	238
	a) ‘an invented tradition’: 1974-77	238
	b) Kadooment and the Consolidation of Crop Over: 1978-99	246
V	Summary.....	255

	Concluding Contradictions: Memorandum to the Ministers of Culture and Tourism	258
--	--	------------

	Bibliography	264
--	---------------------------	------------

LIST OF TABLES

1.1	Barbados Population Estimates: 1655-1715.....	52
4.1	Landship Societies: 1898-1912.....	165
4.2	Landship Societies: 1930-1939.....	173
4.3	Landships Re-Launched in 1972.....	180
5.1	Plantation Ledgers: Carlton, Sion Hill and Rock Dundo, St. James (1889-1894).....	229
5.2	Plantation Ledger: Charnocks, Christ Church (1888-1889).....	230
5.3	Advertisement for the Ice Establishment, Bridgetown: June 1879.....	231
5.4	Plantation Ledgers: Bromefield and Hannays, St. Lucy (1875-1886).....	233
5.5	Calendar of Crop Over Events: 1976.....	243
5.6	Calendar of Crop Over Events: 1989.....	254

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure:

1. Map of Barbados..... xiii
2. The Landship on parade, Independence Day, 30 November 1974.....187
3. The *Rodney* performing their 'hop/drop' exercise at a Landship parade,
October, 1974.....187

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BA: Barbados Archives

CO: Colonial Office Records, Public Records Office, UK

JBMHS: Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society

The Times: refers to the 1875-1888 editions of the Barbadian newspaper published in Bridgetown, Barbados.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank all of my informants, especially the members of *The Barbados Landship*, for sharing their thoughts and experiences with me.

I also thank my supervisors at Warwick, Professor David Dabydeen and Dr. John Gilmore. I especially thank David for his insightful comments on the drafts and for those moments of sound West Indian cheer. I thank John especially for the knack of sending me off in search of the most obscure 17th and 18th century references, which turn out to be exactly what was needed for the argument. I thank the staff and students of the Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies. Special thanks to the Centre for Caribbean Studies, especially to the Director, Dr. Gad Heuman, and Secretary, Majorie Davis.

I am indebted to Professor Fred Inglis who first encouraged me to do this project in 1993. I thank him for giving freely of his time, after he left Warwick, to read drafts and critically analyse the work and thus see it through to completion.

Special thanks to Professor Jerome Handler for his advice, and for making his own work available for me to read. I also thank the staff at the Barbados Archives, the Barbados Public Library, the British Newspaper Library, the British Library and the Public Records Office. Thanks also to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Youth Affairs in Barbados for nominating me for the Commonwealth Scholarship and granting me leave to do this project.

Many persons walked with me on this journey. I thank those in Barbados, especially Peta Alleyne, Dr. Richard Goodridge, Trevor Marshall, Sandra Newton and Dr. Pedro Welch. I thank Dr. Mike Alleyne for all those supportive emails from Tallahassee and Professor Michael Levine for those words of advice from occasionally dreary Toronto.

Of those who walked with me here at Warwick, I especially thank Dr. Özlem Berk, Tony Bethel-Bennett, Edgar Hassan, Elma-Gene Isaacs, Marianna Tortell, Donna Thompson, Lisa Wickham-Branche, Kathy Williams, and all members of the Caribbean community whose very presence kept me sane. Special thanks to Valda Henry for the exemplary healthcare during my chicken pox saga. Special thanks also to Pauline Yates for rescuing me from my printing woes at the end.

Warmest thanks to Juanita Haynes, for sisterhood and friendship, and for making 9A Samos Road the haven to which I could escape and collect my thoughts. Thanks also Asa Haynes. Now four years old, I thank him for keeping me in touch with the curious things of life.

One of the persons who encouraged me to do this thesis was Captain Faye Darlington. I am indebted to Faye for her support, even in the last months of her life.

My Mother, Hazel Patricia Burrowes, provided much needed love and spiritual guidance. She also sacrificed the most through my absence from Barbados over the years. I give her my love and my gratitude.

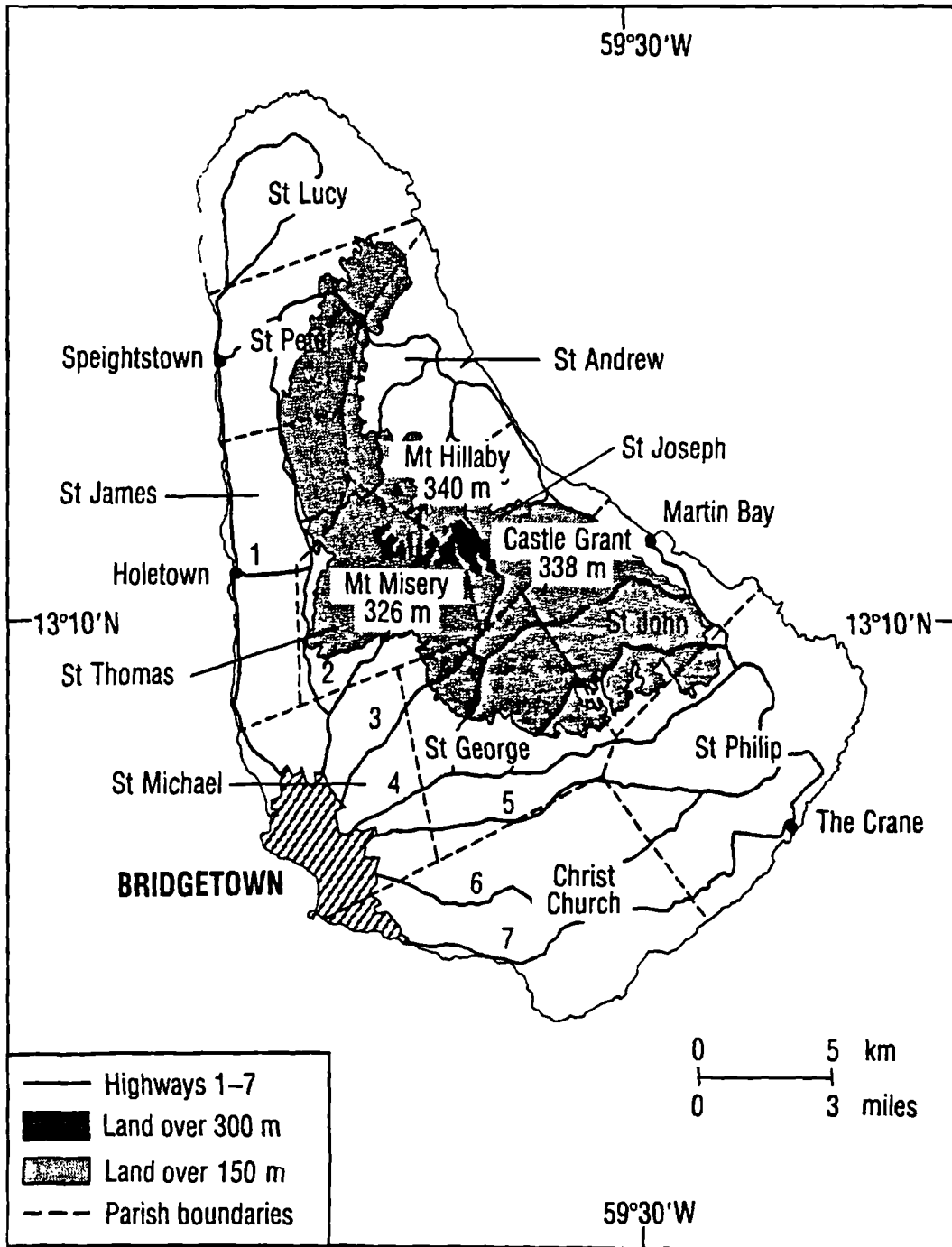
Finally, my thanks to God and to my spirits, who, as Kamau Brathwaite would say, opened the door for me.

DECLARATION

Herewith, I declare that all of the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own, unless otherwise referenced, and has not been submitted for any other award.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores issues surrounding Barbadian cultural identity in the post-colonial period. Emphasis is placed on the role of history in constructing cultural identity. Beginning with the debate involving the Lord Nelson statue which stands in the capital of Barbados, the question of negotiating post-colonial space is closely examined in the three case studies that form the body of the research. These are based on evidence gathered from both archival and secondary sources, as well as personal interviews. The case studies review the following: the history of the usage of the 'Little England' motto and its renewed use in the post-colonial period; the historical development of the community group known as the Landship, whose trademark is to wear naval livery and dance their naval manoeuvres during their parades; the history of the Harvest Home/Crop Over festival of the slavery and post-slavery periods, as well as the history of the modern street festival that it has become. The thesis argues that elements of the colonial discourse gain new life in the post-colonial period because of the struggle between the colonial narrative of History and the emerging new histories. It proposes that in this Barbados example, the performance culture has provided new grounds for advancing the process of decolonisation.



Topography of Barbados

Source: Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. viii.

INTRODUCTION

They sowed in the depths the seeds of an invisible presence.

Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, tr. and
with an introduction by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville:
University Press of Virginia: 1989)

In determining the meaning of the term the 'post-colonial', Stuart Hall provided the following analysis:

It refers to a general process of decolonisation which, like colonisation itself, has marked the colonising societies as powerfully as it has the colonised (of course, in different ways.) Hence the subverting of the old colonising/colonised binary in the new conjuncture. Indeed, one of the principal values of the term 'post-colonial' has been to direct our attention to the many ways in which colonisation was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis. It was always *deeply inscribed* within them – as it became *indelibly inscribed in the cultures of the colonised*.¹ [my emphasis]

It is this question of colonisation being 'indelibly inscribed in the cultures of the colonised' that best captures a central theme of this thesis. Having been granted independence from Britain on 30 November 1966, Barbados officially became a member of the post-colonial world. Yet, as Hall argues, because colonisation was both an external *and* internal process, the process of decolonisation has been an arduous one. This thesis argues that in the independence era, Barbados has found itself especially wrestling with those elements of colonisation that have been 'indelibly inscribed' within its culture. It is the aim of this thesis to provide readings of these deep inscriptions that lay within some elements of Barbadian culture.

¹ Hall, Stuart, 'When was 'the post-colonial'? Thinking at the limit', in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, ed., *The Post-Colonial Question Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (Routledge: London and New York, 1996), pp. 242-260 (p. 246)

Such readings can only be historical. Colonialism was 'always a way of staging or narrating a history, and its descriptive value was always framed within a distinctive definitional and theoretical paradigm.'² On examining various elements of Barbadian culture, it became clear that key to understanding the frustrations being experienced in the decolonisation process lay in understanding the roles played by the various perspectives of history. In this thesis, these frustrations are represented as the struggle between the given 'H'istory of the island, and the evolving histories.

'H'istory is the definitional paradigm to which Hall refers. It is composed of a single narrative determined by what a very eurocentric voice said was the driving force behind the story of a colonised society. It is what Édouard Glissant calls a 'linear' history. 'At this stage, History is written with a capital H. It is a totality that excludes other histories that do not fit into that of the West'.³ Glissant argues that this notion of History is a dangerous one because of its association with colonialism.

One of the most disturbing consequences of colonization could well be this notion of a single History, and therefore of power, which has been imposed on others by the West. The struggles for power and the wild assertion of power in South Africa in the nineteenth century and in Africa today (after decolonization) are the result of this. We begin to realize as much as the stages of the class struggle or the growth of nations, the profound transformation of mentalities in this regard creates the possibility of changing the world order.⁴

On the other hand, the evolving histories represent those other voices, or narratives, which

² Hall, 'When was the 'post-colonial'?', p. 253.

³ Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, tr. and with an introduction by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1989), p. 75.

⁴ Glissant, p. 93.

seek to be heard. They provide insight not only for understanding the complexity of the colonial experience, but also for seeing new areas to be explored in the project of decolonisation. Glissant explains:

our diverse histories in the Caribbean have produced today another revelation: that of their subterranean convergence [...] The implosion of Caribbean history (of the converging histories of our peoples) relieves us of the linear, hierarchical vision of a single History that has run its unique course. It is not this History that has roared around the edge of the Caribbean, but actually a question of *the subterranean convergence of our histories*. The depths are not only the abyss of neurosis but primarily the site of multiple converging paths.⁵ [my emphasis]

It is this understanding of ‘the subterranean convergence of our histories’ that forms another theme of the thesis. In many ways, this thesis is an analysis of the battle for supremacy between what may be deemed the subterranean culture created by the histories and the official culture created by the History. Neither gained the final victory.

In this thesis it is argued that the single version of History that dominates the Barbadian discourse is the narrative of sugar. This narrative celebrates the success and triumph of the sugar enterprise that laid the foundations for the economic prosperity which the island enjoyed for most of its existence under British rule. However, this narrative refutes and ignores other narratives necessary to understanding the success of the sugar venture. Among these are narratives that illustrate the integral role of the enslaved and post-slavery labour force in the sugar enterprise. It is contended here that the narrators of the History have excluded, and continue to exclude such narratives, because they have had a vested interest in perpetuating the singular version.

⁵ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourses*, p. 66.

In the colonial period, the narrators were principally the white planter-merchant élite who owned the sugar plantations and dominated the political arena. As Hilary Beckles argues, ‘the 300-year-old mercantile legacy’ engaged their political and economic vision of Barbados.⁶ With the advent of independence, the narrative of sugar became entwined with the narrative of tourism. As a result, the notion of the linear History was reinforced. This is because the two other groups of narrators who joined those from the colonial era demonstrated little interest in challenging the History. These were the mainly white merchant and commercial élite, and the governing black and coloured élite.

Beckles illustrates how the merchant and commercial élite secured positions of power in the independence era by expanding their operations and exploiting new economic ventures, such as those to be found in the tourist sector. Such a positioning gave them considerable influence in the political affairs of the new nation.⁷ As a result of their vested interests, they favoured the notion of History.

In the case of the black and coloured elite, they chose to perpetuate the singular History because it secured their position of political power. As Glissant argues, such is the general stance adopted by the governing élite of the Caribbean in the post-colonial period. He is wary of such a stance because it intervenes and disrupts the process of decolonisation:

Herein lies the explanation of why the quest for identity becomes for certain peoples uncertain and ambiguous: there is a contradiction between a lived experience through which the community instinctively rejects the intrusive exclusiveness of a single History and an official way of thinking through which it passively consents in the ideology “represented” by its elite.⁸

⁶ Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 201.

⁷ Beckles, ‘Some Post-Independence Trends’, in *A History of Barbados*, pp. 203-210. See especially pp. 205-9.

⁸ Glissant, p. 93.

This stance of the Barbadian coloured and black élite, in which they consent and perpetuate the ideology of the white élite in Barbados, has been duly noted. For example, it has led George Lamming to make the following wry comment:

[t]he last 50 years since 1938 must be regarded, therefore, as a period of transition. We have seen the rapid erosion of an old social order, the political directorates have changed complexion, but they operate within the same basic institution.⁹

Lamming thus concluded that ‘the Government governs, but they do not rule ... Independence has not yet won the right to sovereignty.’¹⁰ It is in this light that this thesis argues that the notion of History continues to hold sway in Barbados.

Yet, this thesis also demonstrates how the subterranean histories waged battles with the History during both the colonial and the post-colonial periods. Indeed, the thesis calls for a re-visiting of the Brathwaite thesis of the ‘submerged mother’ in the effort to fully comprehend the nature and complexity of the battle between the History and histories.

The ‘submerged mother’ is a reference to the now celebrated Brathwaite thesis of the submerged nature of cultures, particularly the African cultures of the Caribbean. Arguing that the ‘culture lies with the folk’, Brathwaite ended his treatise with the following observation: ‘The unity is submarine.’¹¹ Reflecting on the observation, Glissant pronounced the following:

⁹ George Lamming as quoted in Donna Sealy, ‘Mighty Whites — Blacks Still Afraid, Says Lamming’, *The Nation*, 28 April 2000, <http://www.Nationnews.com>

¹⁰ Sealy, ‘Mighty Whites’.

¹¹ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Savacou, 1985 [1974]), p. 64.

To my mind, this expression can only evoke all those Africans weighed down with ball and chain and thrown overboard whenever a slave ship was pursued by enemy vessels and felt too weak to put up a fight. *They sowed in the depths the seeds of an invisible presence.* And so transversality, and not the universal transcendence of the sublime, has come to light. It took us a long time to learn this. We are the roots of a cross-cultural relationship.¹²

It is argued here that this '*invisible presence*' within Barbadian culture quietly and consistently undermined the intentions of the culture of the surface, the culture of the British colonisers. Traditionally, it has been argued that because of the dominance of this culture, Barbados became the most anglicised of all the Anglophone Caribbean islands. To support this premise, reference is made to the continuous rule of the island by the British colonisers for over three centuries. In that statement, what is presumed is that the British culture worked like what R. G. Collingwood calls, 'a kind of cultural steamroller', in which everything non-British was flattened.¹³

Anthropologists would point out that culture is manifested in several forms. Rituals of birth and death, child naming and rituals involved in child rearing, will always preserve elements of a culture deemed unwanted by an official authority. Indeed, the work of Jerome Handler has served to prove that the African culture in Barbados was not 'lost' during the slave period, as was popularly believed. Elements of the African cultures actively shaped the lives of the enslaved in Barbados.¹⁴

R. G. Collingwood also advises that even in the cases where the culture appears to have been steamrollered, what the dominant culture missed was the desire for the cultural

¹² Glissant, *Caribbean Discourses*, pp. 66-7.

¹³ R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959 [1939]), p. 137.

¹⁴ See Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978). For the argument on continuing musical traditions, see Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte Frisbee, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Content.' in *Caribbean Studies*, 11: 4 (1972), 5-46.

form. As he says, such 'desire survives in the form of an unsatisfied desire.'¹⁵ It is this unsatisfied desire that seeks out the submerged culture in the act of transforming the official one. What then appears to have been obliterated will, under favourable conditions, reappear, because the *desire* for the cultural form had not been erased, even if the artifacts had. As Brathwaite would say, it became submerged in an act of 'miraculous, precarious maroonage'.¹⁶

It is my argument that to understand the dynamics of Barbadian cultural space it is necessary to apply the Brathwaite theory of the 'submerged mother', the Glissant analysis of the '*invisible presence*', as well as the Collingwood view of the survival of the unsatisfied desire for the cultural form. It is also necessary to remember Hall's phrase about colonialism being 'indelibly inscribed' within the culture of the colonised. This would explain why after thirty-three years of the Independence era, Barbados is still wrestling with the residues of colonialism, unsure of how to proceed.

These four concepts represent a core methodological approach for reading my chosen elements of Barbadian culture. As Clifford Geertz reminds us, culture is an 'acted document' which can be read as a text to see what it says.¹⁷ What this thesis proposes to do is to present readings of four elements of Barbadian culture which indicate the dynamics of this battle for cultural supremacy between the 'H'istory and histories. It will also review the nature of the 'subterranean convergence' of Barbadian histories and the role they have played in shaping

¹⁵ Collingwood, *Autobiography*, p. 141.

¹⁶ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens*, p. 64.

¹⁷ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993 [1973]), p. 10.

Barbadian cultural identity.¹⁸

For this venture, four distinctive cultural tropes have been chosen. They are as follows: the statue to the Admiral Lord Nelson that stands in the capital of Barbados; the motto 'Little England' that is used as a sobriquet for the island; the community group known as the Landship whose trademark is to dress and perform in uniforms representing the British Royal Navy; and the Crop Over festival, which has become one of the leading street festivals in the Caribbean. These are tropes of self-dramatisation, each explicitly defined by their transformation through colonisation and their survival in the post-colonial period as spectacle. Indeed, it is their ability to adapt themselves in prominent areas within the post-colonial discourse that provides the principal reason for why they were chosen.

These particular elements of Barbadian culture were also selected because such an examination represents a contribution to scholarship. For example, the review of the vicissitudes of the Nelson Statue offers an analysis of the discourse of decolonisation that was, at the time of writing, the arena in Barbados for discussions of Barbadian identity. The case study of the Landship, on the other hand, represents original work, as little research had so far been conducted on this group. The case study on the Crop Over festival, especially the

¹⁸ An element of Barbadian culture that satisfies these requirements, but which is not discussed here, is cricket. This has been a deliberate omission. This is because emphasis was placed on investigating those elements of Barbadian culture which historians and cultural theorists have traditionally ignored. This is not the case for cricket, as is evident by the substantial body of literature on the subject. For further reading on the role of cricket in Barbadian and West Indian cultures, see for example, C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), Hilary MacDonald Beckles, *The Development of West Indian Cricket: The Age of Nationalism: Vol 1* (London and Kingston: Pluto Press and the Press University of the West Indies, 1998); Hilary Beckles, ed., *An Area of Conquest: Popular Democracy and West Indies Cricket Supremacy* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1994); Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart, ed., *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture* (London and Kingston: Manchester University Press and Ian Randle, 1995), Keith Sandiford, and Brian Stoddart, 'The elite schools and cricket in Barbados: a study in colonial continuity', in Beckles, ed., *Liberation Cricket*, pp. 44-60. For a current analysis of the applicability of the C. L. R. James analysis to present West Indian cricket issues, and the post-colonial dilemma, see the chapter entitled 'Cricket, modernism, national culture: the case of C. L. R. James', in Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 144-195.

research on the plantation version of the Harvest Home festival and its transformations is also pioneering original work because of the lack of research. And while it can be argued that the trope 'Little England' has been to some extent examined in the literary texts, it is intriguing to note that historians have failed to fully investigate the evolution and development of its usage. The case study on 'Little England' presents such an analysis.¹⁹

These four cultural texts allow for readings of the formation of Barbadian cultural identity. 'Little England' is very much the representative of the surface culture, constructed by the colonisers and made use of by Barbadians of all classes and races over time. The uniform of the Landship seems to fit and prefigure the surface culture. However, the traditions hidden within the uniform highlight that '*invisible presence*' of which Glissant speaks. They also serve to jar and disconcert, in Homi Bhabha's sense, the image of this cultural entity, and thus reveal the ambivalent nature of colonial discourse.²⁰ The Crop Over festival, in both its plantation and modern forms, also illustrates how the submerged culture will continue to frustrate the colonial intent. Moreover, the modern Crop Over clearly demonstrates what happens when the submerged culture rises to the surface to inform and culturally irrigate the surface culture. As a result, the surface culture is transformed.

Finally, it must be noted that as a historian and performing artist, I chose tropes that

¹⁹ Two literary texts form the backbone of reflection on the 'Little England' paradigm. They are George Lamming, *In The Castle Of My Skin* (London: Longman, 1995 [1953]) and Austin Tom Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (Cuba: Casas de las Americas, 1980). For examples of early research on the Landship see, Trevor Marshall, 'A Ship on Land?' in Rachel Wilder, ed., *Insight Guides: Barbados*, 2nd ed. (Hong Kong: APA Productions Ltd., 1990), p. 65. Also, John Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association: 130 years: 1863-1993* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation and The Audio Visual Aids Department, 1993). Reviews of the Crop Over festival of a particular year can be found in journals. For examples see Marshall, 'An Evaluation of Crop Over', *The Bajan*, August (1979), 14-6; and Marshall, 'Crop-Over- Harvest Season of Bajan Culture', *The Bajan*, June (1979), 39-40. For analysis on the three cultural entities see also H., Fraser, S. Carrington, A. Forde and J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Jamaica: Heinemann Publishers Caribbean Limited, 1990)

²⁰ Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 88.

present a tangible representation of an intangible process: that of wrestling with the legacy of Empire. As someone who was very young when Barbados was granted its independence, my first hand understanding of Empire is through its enduring residues in the post-colonial period. Combing through archival resources was a process of re-constructing how the colonial discourse established itself and changed to suit a changing political and cultural environment. Learning to dance the steps of the Landship opened the access to the process of transformation and submersion of the African-Creole traditions. Analysing the Crop Over festival served to confirm the importance of performance culture in former colonised societies. Performance provides that cultural and literal space in which members of the community can actively work on defining a sense of the collective. In doing so, it creates the factors necessary for the evolution of cultural confidence in the community, which in turn drives forward the process of decolonisation.

Chapter One

History, Historicity and its Narratives

for her history is long and will not always bleed on other people's
edges

Edward Kamau Brathwaite, 'Driftwood', *Mother Poem*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 [1977]), p. 112.

...it is so recent since we assumed responsibility for our own destiny,
that the antagonistic weight of the past is felt as an inhibiting menace.
And it is the most urgent task and the greatest intellectual challenge:
how to control the burden of this history and incorporate it into our
collective sense of the future.

George Lamming, 'Western Education and the Caribbean
Intellectual', *Coming, Coming Home: Conversations II*
(St. Martin, Caribbean: House of Nehesi Publishers,
1995), p. 25.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the historical background for the arguments in this thesis. It is also to argue that key to any discussion on Barbadian identity is the question of the foundational narratives that have been constructed for the island. The chapter illustrates how the historiography of Barbados continues to do a disservice in the independence era despite current re-writings of the history. By informing the popular notions of the island's history, this historiography engenders a false sense of Barbadian identity.

The alliance between the Barbadian sense of identity and the narratives of history was noted early this century. In 1909, George McLellan published a pamphlet reflecting his observations while visiting Barbados. As the editor of a newspaper in British Guiana called *The Argosy*, it might reasonably be thought that his would be a more informed view than the average European or American travel writer because of this West Indian connection. Indeed, he often devotes entire chapters to matters normally deemed irrelevant by the non-West Indian travel writer.¹

Consequently, it is not surprising that the observant McLellan would find it necessary to include a chapter on the importance of history to the Barbadian. In doing so, he goes beyond the usual declaration that the Barbadian is arrogant, or is an anomaly, and seeks to tease out some elements which he sees as key to understanding the Barbadian

¹ George H. H. McLellan, *Some Phases of Barbadian Life: Tropical Scenes and Studies* (Demerara: The 'Argosy', 1909). See for example, Chap. II entitled 'The Sea Egg Season' in which McLellan combines his

character. Seeing that McLellan captures much of the arguments that will be discussed within this chapter, his analysis has been quoted at length.

Barbadians are a patriotic people because their history has made them so. Deprived of that history, deprived of a knowledge of the past, the Barbadian would be bereft also of his faith in Barbados, his faith in himself, and his faith in his own and his country's destiny. Often the Barbadian's conception of his island's past is both confused and exaggerated; often it is nothing more than the consciousness of half-a-dozen or less dateless and disarranged facts interwoven with as many or more grotesque fallacies; but even such indistinct and doubtful knowledge is something to pin his faith to, something sustaining, something to be proud of, to boast of, to cast in the teeth of people who lack enthusiasm and who have no history; something which keeps the Barbadian true and loyal to home and country while he sojourns in foreign lands and gives essence to the sustaining thought, 'Barbados has made a glorious history, and I am a Barbadian'. To fully understand the Barbadian, this cherished consciousness, which runs like a substratum through his entire character, must be reckoned with.²

Though these reflections were written in 1909, McLellan captured some of the issues seen key to any discussion of history and identity today. Identity as construed through history is one of the benchmarks of the post-modern era. Stuart Hall explains:

Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we represent ourselves.³

History, along with, no doubt, geography, economics, chance and necessity, then becomes one of the resources for the creation of identities. In the Barbadian case, McLellan sees history as granting the Barbadian a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of destiny,

observations on how religious a people Barbadians were with their overwhelming love for the sea urchin. Thanks to Clem Seecharan for the data on McLellan.

² McLellan, *Some Phases of Barbadian Life*, p. 73.

³ Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who Needs Identity?', in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, ed., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp 1-17 (p. 4).

which then becomes a matter of 'faith'. Moreover, this understanding of the history not only accounts for the inordinate pride, which is part of the Barbadian character, but also for their attitude towards others. By possessing a history of which they can boast, they opt to do just that, 'to cast [it] in the teeth of people who lack enthusiasm and who have no history.'

But what is this history that grants such confidence to the Barbadian? Says McLellan: 'nothing more than the consciousness of half-a-dozen or less dateless and disarranged facts interwoven with as many or more grotesque fallacies'. Once again he hits upon a most crucial point. History, like identity, is constructed out of what are agreed to be the facts. It is very much a process of selection. Hence in forming the history, the selection of a few items deemed to be facts, whether 'confused' or 'exaggerated', can be taken and shaped in whichever way.

And what is a fact? According to E. H. Carr 'a fact is like a sack – it won't stand up till you've put something in it.' In other words, the notion of historical facts speaking for themselves is misleading. What Carr argues is that the facts only 'speak' when called upon by the historian. Thus what becomes a historical fact is a matter of interpretation, that is, how the particular circumstance or event is viewed.⁴ Hayden White concurs:

The fact is presented where and how it is in the discourse in order to sanction the interpretation to which it is meant to contribute. And the interpretation derives its force of plausibility from the order and manner in which the facts are presented in the discourse. The discourse itself is the actual combination of facts and meaning which gives to it the aspect of a *specific* structure of meaning that permits us to identify it as a product of one kind of historical consciousness rather than another.⁵

⁴ E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1961]), pp. 11-12.

⁵ Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p.107.

This brings us to several points of contention. Questions of power become entangled with questions of interpretation, of what becomes historical fact, of what is made or seen to be history. For example, in the case of the Caribbean, who or what determines how the European explorer Christopher Columbus should be viewed in present times? For the 1992 quincentennial of the arrival of Columbus into the region, the indigenous peoples of Suriname observed a national day of mourning. This was in memory of the millions who had died as a result of European invasion and colonisation of the mainland and the islands.⁶ On the other hand, Europe launched a project for the construction of a bronze statue of Christopher Columbus, to be erected in Puerto Rico in time for the Columbus Day celebrations 12 October 2000. At a cost of US\$20 million, the 351-foot bronze statue will be taller than the Statue of Liberty in New York.⁷

This question of who and what determines the history is especially essential for the review of the McLellan argument. If, as he states, this understanding of the history creates a 'cherished consciousness' within the Barbadian, questions arise as to whose history and what history is it that informs this sense of identity?

For some Caribbean theorists, the bone of contention for this question of history is represented by the battle between History, with a capital 'H' and history. 'H'istory is the version of events that foregrounds Columbus in the 1492 scenario and insists that the

⁶ Also note that for the 1992 Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts (CARIFESTA), the Suriname cast comprised members of the indigenous population. They opted to do a three-hour performance involving drumming, dancing, singing and speech. No European languages were used in the presentation. The entire performance was conducted in their native languages. The director, Henk Tjon, said that the use of their languages paid tribute to their ancestors, while the exclusion of European languages was an act of resistance to the imperial ideal, which they believed still prevailed 500 years on. Conversation with Henk Tjon, 20 August 1992. The Suriname performance was well attended.

⁷ The statue is being constructed in St. Petersburg, Russia. Divided into 2 750 pieces, it has been packed into 100 containers for shipment to San Juan, Puerto Rico. A forty-foot base will be constructed in San Juan

crossing of the Atlantic, and the subsequent imperial enterprise, be read as one of triumph and achievement. This 'H'istory is a linear and singular narrative, 'a highly functional fantasy of the West', which Édouard Glissant has argued is based on the Hegelian paradigm of achievement which sees Europeans as the creators of history:

If Hegel relegated African peoples to the ahistorical, Amerindian peoples to the prehistorical, in order to reserve History for European peoples exclusively, it appears that it is not because these African or American peoples 'have entered History' that we can conclude today that such a hierarchical conception of 'the march of History' is no longer relevant [...] It is this hierarchical process that we deny in our own emergent historical consciousness, in its ruptures, its sudden emergence, its resistance to exploration.⁸

It can be argued that the actions of the native peoples of Surinam and their decision to mourn the loss of millions of lives was one way of confronting this model of history. What they presented was their lived experience. This was their understanding of the history. Their view of history dismisses 'H'istory as palimpsest and demands that other histories be written which acknowledge more voices and other narratives.

Indeed, this has been the project of the twentieth century Caribbean historians, many of whom are descendants of the peoples of the region. Nana Wilson-Tague explains: 'For the first time it was possible to see history from the point of view of the underdog: the slave, the aborigine, groups hitherto depicted as objects of history in the historiography of the region.'⁹ What has resulted is the evolution of several histories and several re-writings of the 'H'istory.

Bay. The statue will portray Columbus at the wheel of a ship. Three gigantic sails also form part of the statue. See 'Columbus Sails Again', *LIAT Islander*, 45 October (1998), p. 52.

⁸ Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, tr. and with an introduction by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1989), p.64.

⁹ Nana Wilson-Tague, *Historical Thought and Literary Interpretation in West Indian Literature* (Florida and Oxford: James Curry, 1998), p. 27.

Yet to fully understand the battle between 'H'istory and history, it is important to emphasise that the task at hand is not just one of revising the singular narrative. Along with the revisions and the making of new histories, what also needs to be tackled is the historical consciousness of the Caribbean peoples. Hence the Glissant challenge:

Because the Caribbean consciousness was broken up by sterile barriers, the writer must be able to give expression to all those occasions when these barriers were partially broken.

Because the Caribbean notion of time was fixed in the void of an imposed nonhistory, the writer must contribute to reconstituting its tormented chronology: that is, to reveal the creative energy of a dialectic reestablished between nature and culture in the Caribbean.¹⁰

This chapter looks at some aspects of the 'H'istory of Barbados as well as the evolving histories. In doing so both the McLellan and the Glissant perspectives will be kept in mind. I agree with the McLellan projection that a strong sense of history has informed the Barbadian character. However, it is my contention that this version of the history is the 'H'istory of which Glissant speaks. This 'H'istory obscures, marginalises and erases other voices in the narrative, for it is only concerned with the white oligarchy of the island and their perspective on the story of sugar.

Furthermore, it is my argument that the Barbadian historical consciousness continues to be affected by this 'H'istory despite the revised histories of the island. What I have found is that in Barbados, there has been a renewed effort to keep the singular narrative alive. What results is an ideological battle over the question of whose history should be followed.

In order to fully explore these issues, this review of the 'H'istory and histories of Barbados has been divided into four sections. These are arranged according to what I

¹⁰ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p. 65.

have determined to be some of the key narratives found within Barbadian historiography. The first looks at the island itself and attempts to place it in the discourse of the history. The second section reviews the pre-European settlements on the island, and argues that although archaeologists and academic historians have taken some notice of it, the Amerindian existence is yet to be fed into the Barbadian psyche. The third section reviews the historiography on the colonisation of the island, and how the black component has also been deliberately erased from the Barbadian psyche. The fourth section examines the period of emancipation to the present day, and looks at current re-writings of the history which reinstate some of the old perspectives despite the availability of revisionists texts.

In writing this chapter, I have followed the recommendation of several theorists on Caribbean culture, such as Édouard Glissant, Nana Wilson-Tagoe and Michael Gilkes. They advise that any rewriting of Caribbean history should include the reflections made in the literary works on the Caribbean. For example, Glissant argues the following:

As far as we are concerned, history as a consciousness at work and history as a lived experience are therefore not the business of historians exclusively. Literature for us will not be divided into genres but will implicate all the perspectives of the human sciences. These inherited categories must not in this matter be an obstacle to a daring new methodology, where it responds to the needs of our situation.¹¹

Wilson-Tagoe argues that the West Indian writer was always a deconstructionist: ‘The tensions over history as a system, which led these writers to interpret “history” as fiction, drama, or poetry, are the same tensions that surface in postmodernist challenges to the separation between history and literature.’¹² Michael Gilkes argues along a similar vein:

¹¹ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p. 65.

¹² See Wilson-Tagoe, *Historical Thought*, p. 38.

For the Caribbean artist and writer any dialogue with the muse of artistic creation is at the same time, at best a problematic encounter with history. Ours is a history whose contradictory nature cannot be resolved through servitude to conventional, linear time or events. Nor can we console ourselves with Heraclitean paradoxes of 'the way up and way down (being) really the same.' The re-sensing of history requires an assimilation and digestion of *contrasting* landscapes of *experience* in an attempt to retrieve and re-member the dis-membered past.¹³

Otherwise, the resulting history is what Wilson Harris has called dead end history, in which the peoples of the region are always victims of the singular imperial narrative.¹⁴

It is with these perspectives in mind that I have chosen to weave within the text quotations from a book of poetry whose central theme is the island of Barbados. Written by the noted Caribbean historian and poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite,¹⁵ *Mother Poem* is a tribute to his place of birth. Geological references are interwoven with the historical as Brathwaite explores the tensions that are within Barbadian society. As he states in the preface:

This poem is about porous limestone: my mother, Barbados: most English of West Indian islands, but at the same time nearest, as the slaves fly, to Africa [...] The poem is also about slavery (which brought us here) and its effect upon the manscape.¹⁶

Yet the poem reaches beyond the boundaries of the island to become a diasporic text. For example, in *Mother Poem*, Maureen Warner-Lewis sees 'mirroring sites of genesis'

¹³ Michael Gilkes, *Creative Schizophrenia: the Caribbean Cultural Challenge*, The Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture (Warwick: University of Warwick Printing Co. Ltd., 1986), p. 6.

¹⁴ There is also the V.S. Naipaul gloomy perspective of the history of the British West Indies in which he argues that 'nothing was created [...] only plantations, prosperity, decline, neglect: the size of the islands called for nothing else.' See V. S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage* (London: Penguin Books, 1969 [1962]), p. 27. For the Harris perspective on History see Wilson Harris, 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: the Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 152-66.

¹⁵ Kamau Brathwaite was been a Professor of West Indian History at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. He is presently at NYU. He is a historian, poet, playwright, and cultural theorist.

¹⁶ Brathwaite, *Mother Poem*, p. ix.

between Barbados and the Sahel, the place from which Brathwaite reviewed the origins of the West African peoples in the collection called *Rights of Passage*. Thus, *Mother Poem* can also be seen as part of the Brathwaite quest to ‘rehumanize’ the history of the Caribbean and Africa.¹⁷ Indeed, Wilson-Tagoe argues that Brathwaite as the historian ‘manages to present several contrasting visions that push history beyond a merely linear analysis of the documents of political and social institutions.’¹⁸ My inclusion of Brathwaite pays tribute to his project of rehumanization and addresses the Glissant mandate of combining History and Literature for a more complete and healing narrative.

II

The Island

This section reviews the geography and geology of the island now known as Barbados. It argues that part of the colonial discourse is to dismiss or distort the role that the island itself played in the making of the historical narratives.

The ancient watercourses of my island
 echo of river, trickle, worn stone,
 the sunken voice of glitter inching its pattern to the sea,
 memory of foam, fossil, erased beaches high above the eaten
 boulders of st philip

my mother is a pool¹⁹

¹⁷ Maureen Warner-Lewis, ‘Africa: Submerged Mother’, in Stewart Brown, ed., *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite* (Wales: Seren Poetry Press, 1995), pp. 52-61 (p. 52). Gordon Rohlehr sees the Brathwaite project as rehumanizing the history. See for example, Rohlehr, ‘The Rehumanization of History: Regeneration of Spirit: Apocalypse and Revolution in Brathwaite’s *The Arrivants* and *X/Self*, in Brown, ed., *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, pp. 163-207.

¹⁸ Wilson-Tagoe, *Historical Thought*, p. 32.

¹⁹ Brathwaite, ‘Alpha’, *Mother Poem*, p.3.

In what becomes known as the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, there is an island that lies at latitude 13° 4 North and longitude 59° 37'. Hence, the Caribbean Sea lies to the west and south of the island, while the Atlantic Ocean lies to the north and east. It is a small island measuring some 21 miles (34 km) in length and 14 miles (23 km) at the widest part; a total of 166 sq. miles (430 km). It is known as the most easterly island in the Caribbean because it is located about 100 miles east of the island chain. This geographic positioning has played a primary role in the shaping of its destiny.

It is said that because it was the most easterly island, Columbus never saw fit to visit it, having been reassured by the native peoples on other islands that there was no mineral wealth to be found there. This makes it one of the few Caribbean islands not to possess the infamous Columbus footprint. Its more easterly position makes it the Caribbean territory closest to the African continent. Indeed, in the traffic of the slave trade, it was the first island to be reached after the Atlantic crossing from Africa, because of the direction of what becomes known as the North East Trade Winds. It would become a main depot for the re-exportation of slaves to the Caribbean and parts of South America.²⁰

These North East Trade winds and currents also make it difficult to near impossible to sail to this easterly island from the island chain. To approach the island it became necessary to sail to the north and then west to safe harbour. Consequently, what nature had created was a natural line of defence from surprise attack. This was utilised by the various civilisations that settled there, but would be especially exploited by its later residents, the English.

²⁰ For the island as a depot for exportation of slaves, see for example, Karl Watson, 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (with special reference to Barbados)', in Alvin Thompson, ed., *Emancipation I: A Series of Lectures to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation and the University of the West Indies, 1984), pp. 16-25 (pp. 21-23).

Other aspects of its physiography dictate a certain distinction from other islands. Caribbean islands are generally mountainous and volcanic. This island is neither: the highest peak reaches just 1 116 ft (340 m). For the early Amerindian inhabitants, this relative flatness meant that the island was unsuitable for hunting, but ideal for activities such as fishing, cultivation of cassava and shell collecting. For the English colonisers, this lack of mountainous terrain meant that they could avidly pursue their enterprise of deforestation as they established plantations and roads. Within thirty-three years of English settlement the extensive rainforest and coastal mangroves had been cleared. The island was completely deforested.²¹

Rather than being volcanic, the other key Caribbean island feature, this is a coral island. This is because it was not volcanic activity, which led to its formation millions of years ago. In geological terms, it was the more recent tectonic movement experienced some 600 000 years ago that caused the seabed to be pushed to the surface. Over time, tiny polyps took hold and multiplied. Though the island did sink again, the Niocene and Pliocene eras of 130 000 years ago witnessed tectonic forces once again pushing the coral out of the sea. With this act of re-emergence, the island remained.²²

Thus, the major feature of this island is its coralline structure. It accounts for 85% (142 sq. miles) of its surface. These coral uplifts have determined the present contours with its limestone terraces and tablelands and its old sea cliffs. This coral base also

²¹ Some sections of the island consisted of grass and scrub land but generally, 'the island was covered with true rainforests of at least three canopies.' See Watson, 'A Brief History of Barbados', in Arif Ali, ed., *Barbados Just Beyond Your Imagination* (Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1996), pp. 33-98 (p. 42).

²² See H. Fraser, S. Carrington, A. Forde & J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Jamaica: Heinemann Publishers (Caribbean) Limited, 1990), p. 77-78. Also Robert Davis, 'Peaceful Origins: The Early Geological History of Barbados', in Sassie Stears ed., *Simply Barbados: An insight into the Elegant Lifestyle of the Island* (Barbados: Peter J. Sassman, 1995), pp. 10-11.

provides a network of underground caves and waterways. Deep gullies intersect the raised coral reef tracts.²³

Coral then becomes a central motif in the discourse. The Kalinago or Carib name for the island, *Ichirouganaim*, foregrounded the coral reefs that are found along the coastline. Coral stone cut from the fossil coral reef (the Pleistocene reef) has been used to build houses, especially the Great Houses of the sugar plantations.²⁴ It has even been suggested that the coral surface may have been partially responsible for the outstanding international test cricketers that the island produced in the twentieth century. C. L. R. James thought that the coral base made the cricket pitches in this island superior to those elsewhere in the Caribbean.²⁵

Even the gullies and caves provided by the coral base become integral to any understanding the dynamics of the island. For example, it has been the tradition of historians to lament that the absence of mountains prevented the enslaved Africans from developing maroonage as an act of resistance. Recent research by anthropologist Jerome Handler reveals that contrary to popular opinion, the enslaved did practice a system of maroonage. They made ample use of the underground caves and gullies to effectively and continuously resist the plantation slave system. These provided a network of hiding places for those who escaped the sugar plantations. New archaeological finds also support this argument.²⁶

²³ Arie Boomert, 'Notes on Barbados Prehistory', *JBMHS*, 38:1 (1987), 8-43 (pp. 8-9).

²⁴ Fraser, A-Z, pp 49-50 and 78.

²⁵ C. L. R. James, 'What Sobers Means to us All', *The Barbados Advocate News*, The Independence Supplement, 30 November 1966, pp. 91 & 94.

²⁶ For the Handler article see Jerome S. Handler, 'Escaping Slavery in a Caribbean Plantation Society: Maroonage in Barbados 1650s-1830s', *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 71 (1997): 183-225; Afro-Caribbean pottery of the plantation era has been found in a cave on the west coast of the island. See Peter Drewett 'The Spring Head Petroglyph Cave: A Sample Excavation', *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 50-58 (pp. 53-55).

The area of the island that is non-coralline is an Andean core that was formed during the Miocene Age. The Andean sedimentaries consist of sandstones, shales and mudstones. What results is a rugged beauty of cliffs and slopes, a complete contrast to the more undulating vistas characteristic of the side of the island shaped by the Caribbean Sea.²⁷ The English colonisers would be inspired to name this northern area the Scotland District. In *Mother Poem*, Brathwaite is also inspired by this landscape:

holding her now, she is the bright beast of bathsheba:
 dark rock unceasingly martyr'd:
 nemwrack of reef's lamentations arising out of the distantest
 pool²⁸

Brathwaite has argued that much of this ragged landscape would have provided 'ceremonial monuments' for the Amerindian inhabitants of this island.²⁹

In summary, an important reality for this island is its duality. It is a Caribbean island that also shares some of its coast with the Atlantic Ocean. It lies in a relatively isolated position and yet it can be reached from its closest neighbours, following the flow of the currents. Its non-mountainous terrain may lead the viewer to assume that all there is to the island is what can be seen. Yet its underground ramblings always prove this untrue, as discovered by this Caribbean poet /travel writer:

There was something on the island which spoke without using a voice. It was written in the landscape. The language was one which dramatized events through the terrain. I had seen the calm and the passionate separated by a mere stretch of land. It said everything I felt. It voiced emotions I was reluctant to admit. There was no Soufrière as in St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent, Guadeloupe. No volcano to erupt at will or simmer, fuming, constantly on the boil or asleep with one eye

²⁷ See David Watts, *The West Indies: Patterns of Development and Culture and Environmental Change Since 1492* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 12; Also Maurice Bateman Hutt, *Exploring Historic Barbados* (Nova Scotia: The Layne Company Printers & Publishers, 1981), p. 4.

²⁸ Brathwaite, 'Driftwood', p. 116. Bathsheba is the name of one of the coasts to the Northeast.

²⁹ See Brathwaite, *Mother Poem*, p. 119, fn. p. 3, 1.14. Brathwaite refers specifically to the areas now named Pico Teneriffe, Cove and Indian Ground.

open, breathing smoke beneath the surface. But there was a violence which lashed, and would surely be diminishing one side of her coastline more quickly than the gentler Caribbean on her west.³⁰

What will be eventually declared (a bit helplessly) about this island is that it is 'unique'. As Johnson states, even its geographical position underlies this: 'It is located at a tangent to the rest as if to assert its uniqueness.'³¹ Unlike Johnson and Brathwaite however, its promoters will pay little attention to its geographical and topographical features when asserting this claim. They will buy into the fallacy constructed by its seventeenth century colonisers that it is the events from that period thereon that make it unique. The mantra will run as follows: becoming the leading English sugar island makes it unique. Being the only Caribbean island to be ruled by the English alone makes it unique.

Yet this was a coral island long before it became a sugar island. It is this coralline feature that gives the island the 'echo' of river and stone that Brathwaite talks about in his poem. The island then becomes a 'pool'; a metaphor which Maureen Warner-Lewis argues is a follow through from an earlier poem in which Brathwaite paid tribute to Lake Chad. It begins: 'This sacred lake/is the soul/of the world'.³² Though both poems resonate with images of water as a life giving force, Warner-Lewis takes her reading much further:

Lake Chad, then, may be understood as a metaphor for mother, island home, and Africa. The lake or pool thus represents both the subconscious and unconscious presence of that mother in the personal and ethnic psychic.³³

³⁰ Amryl Johnson, *Sequins for a Ragged Hem* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 162. Soufrière is the name of the volcano.

³¹ Johnson, p. 162.

³² As quoted by Warner-Lewis in 'Africa: Submerged Mother', p. 57. For the full text of the poem, see Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 105.

³³ Warner-Lewis, 'Africa: Submerged Mother', p. 57.

What then results is a 'pool of submerged consciousness'³⁴ which Brathwaite provides access to through the imagery of water that is seen throughout *Mother Poem*, such as the recurring image of 'ancient watercourses'. I believe that this is Brathwaite's way of reminding us that the island itself is a life giving force. It is this aspect of its identity, this 600 000 year archive of spiritual understanding, that the inhabitants can turn to for sustenance and which they need to feed into the historical narratives of the island.

III

The Missing Early Inhabitants

Jack P. Greene points out that when Europeans occupied a new area in the 'Americas', they always thought their experience to be a strange or foreign one. However, Greene emphasises that whatever the circumstances, no European power could declare any area they occupied as being in a state of *tabula rasa* before they came.

Not only was it a physical entity with its own distinctive ecosystem, topography, animal and vegetable life, and climate but, in most cases, the physical landscape had also already been organized into an articulated social and cultural landscape inhabited by one or more particular groups of people.³⁵

Greene argues that the environment and the landscape as articulated by previous settlements would have shaped the character of the European exercise.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Jack P. Greene, *Imperatives Behaviors & Identities Essays in Early American Culture* (Charlottesville and London: The University of Virginia Press, 1992), p. 213.

By determining to an important degree what could and could not be done there by its new occupants, by both presenting them with certain opportunities and depriving them of others, these preexisting physical and social attributes of place constituted one of the most important ingredients in defining the identities of the new societies that would be constructed in them.³⁶

In the previous section, it was demonstrated how the island itself provided what Greene calls 'pre-existing physical and social attributes' that assisted all of its inhabitants. This section reviews the historical narratives about the peoples who lived on the island before the arrival of the Europeans. It argues that what the colonial discourse has done is to reduce the importance of their existence and the impact they had on the island. Furthermore, the discourse does project that the island was physically and ideologically empty when the English claimed it. Hence, it was in a state of *tabula rasa*. Yet as Greene points out, this could never be the case.

curl, leaf of dreamer
 drift plantations away
 i remember ancient watercourses
 dead streams, carved footsteps³⁷

It is ironic that in the 1990s, whilst digging in preparation for yet another tourism project, the building of a marina, that proof of the use of the island during the pre-ceramic age literally surfaced. With bulldozers barrelling through the sands of the west coast of the island, a known site for Amerindian settlement, the inevitable occurred. Tools, sherds of vessels, whole vessels oft times broken by the very bulldozers, few miraculously preserved, all came up with the sand. Amidst some looting, some of the pieces were

³⁶ Greene, p. 213.

³⁷ Brathwaite, 'Alpha', *Mother Poem*, p. 3.

given to the Museum. Others, many over 1000 years old, are now in the hands of what can only be politely termed as private collectors.³⁸

Before the major excavation was begun in 1995, a salvage operation was undertaken in which the area earmarked for the new marina was sampled. Pottery and shells for the Suazoid period (c 1300 AD) were found. The remains of four burials were also located; one possibly connected with the plantation period and three Amerindian. More importantly, shell tools of the pre-ceramic type conch slip adzes were also found. These indicate that the ancient watercourses in the Brathwaite poem were traversed as early as 1600 BC.³⁹

This find of a pre-ceramic people in the island is important because it revises the traditional view that it was only in the Saladoid/Barrancoid period (350–600 AD) that the first peoples arrived. Other islands in the chain, such as Trinidad, Tobago, Antigua and St. Kitts had shown settlement by Archaic Age peoples who neither practised agriculture nor produced pottery. Until the 1990s, there had been no such evidence to suggest that this island shared such a past with its neighbours.⁴⁰

Consequently, what is now noted is that there were *four* rather than three distinct culture groups, which inhabited the island before the arrival of the English colonisers. They are those of the Archaic Age (c.1600 BC), the Saladoid/Barrancoid (c.350-600 AD),

³⁸ For a picture of a Saladoid vessel recovered at the marina development site dated c. 300 AD, see Watson, 'A Brief History of Barbados', p. 34.

³⁹ The Barbados Museum and Historical Society organised the salvage operation in conjunction with the developer and the Port St. Charles Development Co. Ltd. See Drewett, 'Excavations at the Pre-Historic Sites at Silver Sands, Little Welches and Heywoods, 1995: A Preliminary Report', *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 59-68 (pp. 66-68). Little is so far known about these early inhabitants. The materials rescued from the salvage operation indicate that their activities were hunting, fishing and gathering wild fruits. Like those on the other islands, they did not make ceramic nor practise agriculture. Their tools were made from the large conch shell. It is not yet clear whether they settled permanently on the island.

⁴⁰ See Boomert, 'Notes on Barbados Pre-History', pp. 13-14 and his chart at pp. 16-17. The acknowledged authority on the subject of the Amerindian life in Barbados, he saw no need to discuss in depth the Archaic Age because of lack of evidence for such contact.

the Troumassoid (c.650-1300 AD) and the Suazoid (c. 1300-1500 AD).⁴¹ These time spans are by no means fixed; there is much uncertainty over when one cultural period ends and another begins.⁴²

For the four culture periods, it has been estimated that between 10 000- 20 000 Amerindians lived on the island.⁴³ They generally settled along coastal areas as well as by rivers and streams. With no volcanic rock from which to fashion their tools, they made these from coral and shell, especially from the Queen conch. When tools made of volcanic rock are found in the sites, it is believed that they were brought in from neighbouring islands. They practised subsistence agriculture and engaged in activities such as fishing, both on the coral reefs and in deep water. Their documentary statements are their petroglyphs and pictographs, examples of which were recently found at the Spring Head Cave. These particular petroglyphs consisted of fourteen human face representations and thus fit well within the pan-Caribbean tradition.⁴⁴

One key question for this island is whether it was ever inhabited by those whom Columbus and the Spaniards incorrectly named the Caribs, but who are now known as the Kalinago. We know that it was settled by a group formerly known as the Arawaks, but who have been now identified as the Tainos, during the Suazoid period. However, as it stands now, there is no archaeological or other evidence of Kalinago settlement. The

⁴¹ Dates for the cultural periods are taken from Boomert, 'Notes on Barbados Pre-History', pp. 14-32.

⁴² Our understanding of these culture groups is constantly being updated. For example, knowledge of the Saladoid era got a further boost with the evidence gained at the Hillcrest Bathsheba site excavated in 1993. It had been estimated that settlement during this period was irregular and limited only to the south coast of the island. The Hillcrest excavations on the northern coast produced over 10 000 sherds of Saladoid pottery, the largest quantity ever found. This assemblage of pottery not only demonstrated settlement outside of the south coast, but also settlement in an earlier time of the cultural period than previously presumed. Boomert, 'Notes on Barbados Pre-History', pp. 15-21. Also Drewett, 'A Late Saladoid Site at Hillcrest, Bathsheba, Barbados, 1993: An Interim Report, *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 102-114.

⁴³ Watson, 'The Caribbean Before and After Columbus', in Alan Cobley, ed., *Crossroads of Empire: The Europe-Caribbean Connection 1492-1992* (Barbados: The Department of History and the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1994), pp. 15-22 (p. 20).

⁴⁴ Drewett, 'The Spring Head Petroglyph Cave', pp. 50-53.

Kalinago did, however, visit the island and continued to do so even after English settlement.⁴⁵

Thus, what the Heywoods site revelation has the potential to cause is a significant paradigmatic shift in questions of the identity and importance of the island. It has been argued that because it lay outside of the main passage travelled by migrant peoples it was of 'marginal importance' to them.⁴⁶ These migrants would leave the Guianas via the Orinoco River and settle on the islands in the direct path of the chain. The lack of evidence of any contact with this most easterly island during the Archaic Age and the minimal evidence found for it during the Saladoid/Barranoid period seem to confirm this. Now that the Heywoods evidence demonstrates that contact was made some 2000 years before the recognised Saladoid/Barranoid period, the debate about the importance of the island to these early migrants should be throw open once again.

Indeed, it is my hope that these finds, and the subsequent publications, will revive the interests in the Amerindian peoples. These early inhabitants still find themselves today fixed on the periphery of Barbadian reality. Note the lament in 1990 by the authors of the *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*: 'Although these Barbadians had inhabited the island for 1100 years, three times longer than the present occupants, relatively little is known about them.'⁴⁷ Though it is true to state that more research needs to be carried out on the

⁴⁵ Watson provides the latest update on this question in his 'Brief History of Barbados'. See Watson, 'Brief History', p. 38. Beckles also provides evidence of continued casual as well as treaty related visits by the Kalinagos after English settlement. See Beckles, 'Kalinago (Carib) resistance to European Colonisation', in Copley, ed., *Crossroads of Empire*, pp. 23-37. For further information on the peoples known as the Tainos see Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People who Greeted Columbus* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1992)

⁴⁶ Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 2.

⁴⁷ Fraser, *A-Z*, pp. 5-6.

Amerindian heritage, it is important to emphasise that what data does exist is not being filtered into the popular discourse.⁴⁸

It is my contention that this is so because the historical narrative wrote them out of the history. What the narrative set up was the belief that the island was in a state of *tabula rasa* when the English colonisers arrived. For example, in 1657, a comment from Richard Ligon indicates the nature of the dispute to follow. He reports that one of the early settlers denied the existence of Indians on the island:

This Captain Canon (for so was his name) inform'd me for certain, that this was a gross mistake in the Planters, and that no Indians ever came there: But those Pots were brought by the Negroes, which they fetcht from Angola, and some other parts of Africa.⁴⁹

With such a premise, in which even the evidence of an Amerindian presence is deliberately misconstrued, the narrators could construct the idea of the complete Anglicisation of the island.

The battle over recognition of an Amerindian past was first waged by Griffith Hughes. In *The Natural History of Barbados* published in 1750, Hughes challenged the traditional *tabula rasa* story which emphasised that there were no persons present when the English arrived. He argued that their absence at the time of settlement did not indicate

⁴⁸ Additional sources on the Amerindian heritage in Barbados that have not been already cited are: Peter L. Drewett, *Prehistoric Barbados* (London and Barbados: Institute College London and Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1991); Taylor, Ronald V., ed., *Source Materials for the Study of Archaeology and pre-history of Barbados, with unpublished chapters by C. N. C. Roach* (Barbados: s. n., 1991); G. T. Barton, *The Prehistory of Barbados* (Nova Scotia: The Layne Company, 1979 [1953]); Jerome S. Handler, 'The Amerindian Slave Population of Barbados in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Caribbean Studies*, 8:4 (1968), 38-72; Handler, 'Aspects of Amerindian Ethnography in 17th Century Barbados', *Caribbean Studies*, 9:4 (1969-70), 50-72.

⁴⁹ Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (London: Frank Cass, 1976 [1657]) p. 23.

their non-existence. What he found was a pattern of migration which involved the Amerindians occasionally using the island: 'we have late Instance of their coming hither from St. Vincent's, in their small Canoes, or Perriawgers, even for their pleasure'.⁵⁰ Moreso, however, was proof of their existence prior to English colonisation in places such as 'Indian Pond':

Among several broken Fragments of Idols said to be dug up in this place, I saw the Head of one, which alone weighed sixty Pounds weight. This, before it was broken off, stood upon an oval Pedestal above three feet in Height.

[...]

The last proof of their Residence in this Place; is a great Number of their Stone Hatchets and Chissels, that are dug up. The number of these Hatchets and Chissels was in all likelihood to cut down Timber, to make Huts where they had not the convenients of Caves; as well as with the Help of Fire to fell some of the largest Kind, to make Canoes. These, I imagine, after they were roughly squared, were half-burnt with live Coals-and then with their scooping Chissels, they, by Degrees, made them hollow.⁵¹

Hughes then went on to list some of the Amerindian sites, as well as provide diagrams of the tools and ceramic vessels that had been dug up. He provided substantial proof of the residence of persons in the pre-colonial era. His data has provided the foundations for present day research.

With such tangible evidence of an Amerindian presence, it is intriguing to follow the arguments of those persons who still insisted on excluding them from the discourse. It was narrators like John Poyer who went to great pains to cast doubts upon Hughes' conclusions in the drive to spin the *tabula rasa* narrative.

Although the English found the island uninhabited, the Reverend Mr. Hughes seems very unwilling to relinquish the idea of its not having been formerly occupied by some savage tribes [...] But after all the pains which the learned

⁵⁰ Griffith Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London: 1750), p. 5.

⁵¹ Hughes, *The Natural History*, p. 7.

divine has taken, the proofs that he has collected are insufficient to establish the point in dispute. They only show that the neighbouring Caribs visited this delighted spot for the purposes of hunting and fishing.⁵²

Poyer then went on to assert that the copious amount of Amerindian remains, such as the ceramic vessels, were the results of monthly sojourns to the island rather than evidence of settlement over long periods of time prior to English settlement.⁵³

When Robert Schomburgk published his *History of Barbados* in 1848, one of his aims was to clarify some of the myths spun about the island. One of the issues that he was particularly interested in answering Poyer on was this question of the Amerindian heritage. He argued that the Indians, who inhabited the island before the English came, had been enslaved by the Spanish. Had this not happened, they would have been physically present when the English arrived. He thus gave full support to Griffith Hughes:

Mr. Hughes' opinion, that it must have been formerly inhabited by Indians, grounded upon the number of Indian implements and utensils found in different spots in the island, is therefore borne out by my researches.⁵⁴

However, later writers determinedly overlooked such overwhelming evidence as the master narrative continued to command the *tabula rasa* explanation. The American journalist, William Agnew Patton, who travelled in the West Indies in the 1880s, chose to emphasise the absence of persons at the time of settlement as the important aspect of the

⁵² John Poyer, *The History Of Barbados, from the First Discovery of the Island, in the Year 1605 till the Accession of Lord Seaforth, 1801* (London: Frank Cass, 1971 [1808]), p. 8.

⁵³ Poyer, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁴ Robert H. Schomburgk, *The History of Barbados: Comprising a Geographical and Statistical Description of the Island: a Sketch of the historic events since the settlement and an account of its Geology and Natural Productions* (London: Frank Cass, 1971 [1848]), p. 257-8.

argument. J. A. Froude also dismissed the question of an Amerindian heritage: 'Little is known of the island before we took possession of it'. Froude, like Poyer, perhaps found that acknowledgement of this might deflect from other grand statements such as 'On no one of our foreign possessions is the print of England's foot more strongly impressed than on Barbadoes.'⁵⁵

However, it was the historian Vincent Harlow who found it necessary to do in the twentieth century what Poyer had done in the nineteenth century. He opted to discredit the Schomburgk thesis:

In spite of Schomburgk's assertion to the contrary [...] the island was not regularly inhabited by native tribes. In 1536 Pedro a Campos found it entirely deserted, and left hogs to breed there for future wanderers.⁵⁶

Thus, Poyer was back in the form of Harlow to remain as the dominant voice for the historical narrative. Other writers followed this re-established trend. This time they emphasised the emptiness of the land:

The early colonists found no foreign tradition in their island, as the English settlers found in Trinidad and Jamaica; there no remnants of an alien occupation to assimilate or discard, no body of law or custom to be scrapped or adapted. *Barbados was a slate on which there was nothing to rub out.* No improvisation was necessary; the colonists began as they meant to go on, as they have gone on for three hundred years.⁵⁷ [my emphasis]

It is important to note that in previous arguments, the narrators had ignored the evidence

⁵⁵ J. A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies* (London: 1888), p. 33. See also William Agnew Patton, *Down The Island: A Voyage To The Caribees* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1887]), p. 136.

⁵⁶ Vincent T. Harlow, *History of Barbados 1625- 1685* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1926]), p. 1, fn 2.

⁵⁷ Rutter, *If Crab No Walk: A Traveller in the West Indies* (London: Hutchinson, 1933), p. 32.

of an Amerindian heritage and proclaimed that it was not necessary. Here Owen Rutter declares that there was none in existence. Yet by this time, not only were there Amerindian artifacts from Barbados in the British Museum, but there were also publications in a variety of journals on the importance of the artifacts.⁵⁸

It is my contention that the Rutter argument is a desperate attempt to hang on to the *tabula rasa* theme. Despite all contradictions what the narrative demanded at this time was a clear path to proclaim that the island was thoroughly English or, as Rutter put it, that their ‘whole fabric of life’ had been determined on English traditions. It will be demonstrated in Chapter Three how clear this becomes when the ‘Little England’ construct is analysed. The twentieth century spin on the narrative insisted that the Englishness of the heritage be emphasised.

Since writers following Rutter openly acknowledged his influence on them, and the ideology of the time demanded it, this twist in the trend was upheld. Here is Lucille Iremonger writing in 1955. She consciously paraphrases what Rutter had said, while picking up the Froude perspective:

The first settlers had found no foreign tradition on the island, as they did in Trinidad, and in Jamaica, for instance. That meant that there were no loose ends, no left-over bits of another nation’s customs and laws and language and ways of thought to be discarded, adopted or adapted. There were, in fact, no ready-made problems in Barbados. *The island was a clean slate*, English from the beginning, and English right through.⁵⁹ [My emphasis]

⁵⁸ Donations were made to the British Museum by Greville Chester c. 1870. C.N.C. Roach wrote detailed articles in 1936/1939 about his findings and those of other local collectors of the day. See Arie Boomert, ‘Notes on Barbados Prehistory’, *JBMHS*, 38:1 (1987), 8-43 (p. 10). For early research on the Amerindian heritage in Barbados see for example, Rev. Father C. Cooley, ‘The First Barbadian’, *Timehri*, 2:1 (1912), 142-44; J. Walter Fewes, ‘Archaeology of Barbados’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States*, 1:1 (1915), 47-51.

⁵⁹ Iremonger, *The Young Traveller in the West Indies*, p. 114.

One wonders what Griffith Hughes with his carefully drawn designs of Amerindian tools and his knowledge of their visits to Barbados at the 'Wane of the Moon' would make of the Iremonger position: 'there were no loose ends, no left-over bits of another nation's customs'. It was a clean slate. Yet this was the ideology of the ruling class, and ideologies tend to distort reality, or present a way of viewing reality that serves their interest. This colonial discourse dictated that the concept of the heritage be erased. This became part of the accepted common sense.

It is inevitable to note that the colonial discourse made its way into the Independence era. In the 1978 publication entitled *Barbados: A History from the Amerindians to Independence*, F. A. Hoyos devotes his first chapter to a study of 'Our Amerindian Ancestors'. He writes of the 'Arawaks' and the 'Caribs', their socio-cultural existence and the archaeological finds of R. P. Bullen in 1966.⁶⁰ However in Chapter Two, entitled 'The English settlers', he denies evidence of their existence:

The English settlers thus came to the island about one hundred years after the Caribs disappeared. Barbados had returned to its primitive condition and the English must have found it much in the same state as the Caribs had on their arrival several hundred years previously.

The island was covered with woods and brush and *all traces of the Caribs and their villages seem to have disappeared from the surface of the earth.*⁶¹ [My emphasis]

Here is a historian re-cementing the ideology in the Independence era. Their existence is acknowledged but their influence is denied. Following the Carr recommendation that to understand a history you must know the historian⁶², it is revealing to read the title page of this text. Immediately following the title of the book is the sentence: 'The Honourable F.

⁶⁰ F. A. Hoyos, *A History from the Amerindians to Independence* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan Education Limited, 1978), pp. 1-13.

⁶¹ Hoyos, *Barbados: A History*, p. 16.

A. Hoyos: *Member of the Privy Council for Barbados.*' Here is the re-statement of the dominant ideas of the elite through its court historian. Their version of reality is sustained.

In a 1997 video on Barbados in which great emphasis is placed on the historical narrative, it is interesting to see that the old discourse still remains. No reference is made to the pre-historic heritage or to the geological age of the island. For this version of the narrative, history begins 400 years before the arrival of the English. At that time, 'peaceful' Arawaks who were attacked by 'aggressive' Caribs inhabited Barbados.⁶³ Hence the pre-ceramic peoples, who had inhabited the island some 3000 years before the arrival of the English settlers, have been once again fixed on the periphery of Barbadian reality.

IV

Colonisation

bays of her body have been turned into money
 the grass ploughed up and fed into mortar of houses
 for master for mister for massa for mortal baas
 her sands are now owned by the minister midas
 and have been burned into careful gold brochures⁶⁴

The invasion of Christopher Columbus in the region in 1492 signalled the arrival of the Europeans. These Europeans 'arrived in this Caribbean sea like an epidemic ignorant of

⁶² E. H. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 22.

⁶³ *Beautiful Barbados*, produced by Ronnie Carrington and Jimmy Walker (Barbados: Best of Barbados Ltd., 1997)

⁶⁴ Brathwaite, 'Hex', *Mother Poem*, p. 46.

its specific target: human heroes and victims of an imagination and a quest shot through with gold.’⁶⁵

This section on the colonisation of the island has been divided into three parts. The first looks at the names given to the island by European colonisers and debates how the naming process has affected constructs of identity for the island. The second examines the historical narratives surrounding the initial years of settlement and highlights the groups and events, which the linear narrative of ‘H’istory concealed. The third examines how the story of sugar evolved and became the ultimate success story for the island.

The section argues that the historical narratives about the seventeenth century colonising enterprise are flawed. This is because the narratives omit or distort the role of significant groups. Nevertheless, these narratives laid most of the ideological foundations for the construct of Barbadian identity. The story of sugar became the ideological barometer for the history and identity formation of the island, as her sands were, as Brathwaite puts it, ‘burned into careful gold brochures’ for European determination.

(a) The Controversial Names

As George Lamming points out in his lecture entitled ‘Concepts of the Caribbean’: ‘A curious thing about the West Indies is that we started mis-named, and much later, we decided it was too late to change it.’⁶⁶ Lamming was referring to the misguided Columbus who proclaimed the name of the geographical region he had chanced upon and

⁶⁵ George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p. 17.

subsequently invaded, the 'Indies', after a belief that by sailing west, he had reached India.

In the case of this island, several names have been ascribed to it. One of them is Amerindian. However, it only comes to the fore through the intervention of a Frenchman who set about compiling a 'Carib' dictionary in the seventeenth century. According to Fr. Raymond Breton, the 'Carib' name for this island, as told to him by the 'Caribs' of the Windwards in the 1640's, was *Ichirouganaim*. What must be emphasised here is that little or no attention was given to this name by the English colonisers or, indeed, the post-seventeenth century inhabitants and scholars of the island. Indeed, this Amerindian name is yet to be fed into the Barbadian popular discourse and so is only presently known to a small group of scholars.⁶⁷

It was only in a 1993 publication, some three centuries after the Breton dictionary, that any explanations of the name *Ichirouganaim* were published. Jill Tattersal was invited to offer a translation of the name. Tattersal used her 'Standardised Simplified Spelling System' which identifies the phonemes, or the meanings and sounds within a word. With this system, the word becomes ICHI-ROUG-ANAIM. ICHI meant *Stone* in many 'Early American' languages while IRO(U) meant *Red*. The word is further divided as follows: GA becomes *Bite*, ANA refers to *(Is)land*, and AI-M becomes *teeth outside*, possibly the coral the reefs. Though Tattersal offered no resulting phrase, in 1997 Karl

⁶⁶ George Lamming, 'George Lamming: Concepts of the Caribbean', in Frank Birbalsingh, ed., *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*, Warwick University Caribbean Studies (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean, 1996), pp. 1-14 (p. 1).

⁶⁷ Thanks to Lennox Honychurch for pointing out this name to me. See *La Dictionnaire Caraibe -Francaise* Gilles Bouquet. Auxerre: France: 1655.

Watson gave the meaning of *Ichirouganaim* as ‘red stone island with teeth outside (reefs).’⁶⁸

It can be noted that Tattersal advised that the GA NA phonemes could also be translated as ‘BITE OUR JUICE (people)’. In what could be seen as a typical eurocentric dismissal of self-ascription, Tattersal wrote, ‘I know this sounds weird, but I am assured this is the sort of thing the present day Warao tribesmen are saying to each other when literally translated.’ She then placed her emphasis on the red stone and their connections with the reefs. Her conclusion was as follows: ‘Of course the name could as well refer to the place of red (painted) stone-using *fierce people* who had better be left alone – as Caribs might describe the earlier inhabitants of Barbados.’⁶⁹ [my emphasis]

I have emphasised that the name *Ichirouganaim* could also refer to the inhabitants of the island because this reference to people is also one of the lesser known explanations for its modern name. It is my argument that this is not merely a coincidence, but a pattern of naming which may be key to understanding the early history and identity of the island.

The modern name for the island is *Barbados*. This is a shortened form of the *Los Barbadoes* given to it when the Spanish granted the English possession of it in the seventeenth century. However, the name *Los Barbadoes* was the last of a series of names, which the European powers and their cartographers saw fit to christen it with over the years. Between 1508 and 1623 the island had been named *La Barbata*, *Bernados*, *Barbudoss*, *Isla de Beruados*, *Baruodo*, *S. Barduda*, *S. Barbudos* and *Los Barbudos*.⁷⁰ When the English gained possession of it in 1625, they opted to keep the Spanish name and moreover, to incorporate it into their vocabulary. To be *barbadoesed* in seventeenth

⁶⁸ A full account of the Jill Tattersal argument can be found in Peter Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History* (Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth Limited, 1993), pp. 8-10. For the Watson reference see ‘A Brief History’, p. 38.

⁶⁹ Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History*, p. 10.

century England was to be sentenced not to prison nor to death, but to what was deemed a fate worse than death: to transportation to the island to become an indentured servant.⁷¹

With such dubious beginnings regarding the European name of the island came great uncertainty over its meaning. Translated as ‘the bearded ones’, by the eighteenth century it was deemed to be a Portuguese name which referred to the bearded fig tree vines found growing on the island. By that time the fig tree had been prominently displayed on the seal of the Notary Public of Barbados. However, this proved to be the most controversial of all explanations as a succession of scholars, and sometimes the odd travel writer, challenged the very premise of the argument.

As early as 1741, John Oldmixon confronted the proponents of the bearded fig tree story with the following argument: ‘There are some weak People in this Island, who think the word is formed from the *Beards* of the Fig-Trees, and that it should be called *Beardbados*. But this Etymology is equally groundless and ridiculous.’ Oldmixon proffered his own explanation by stating that the Portuguese name related to the barbarous state of the island and the Barbarians who had previously inhabited it. It can be noted that any shift in discourse was short-lived with the publication of the Hughes position, which reaffirmed the fig tree story.⁷²

In the nineteenth century, J. A. Froude offered an alternate proposal. He argued that the name *Los Barbadoes* was Spanish and that it referred to ‘a race of bearded

⁷⁰ For the name La Barbata see Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History*, p. 6. For the other names see Schomburgk, *The History of Barbados*, pp. 256-7.

⁷¹ The term is very much connected to Cromwell. In a letter of 11 March 1655 which referred to the 1654 Salisbury uprising, it was noted that ‘several were hanged; a great many “sent to Barbadoes” ... A terrible Protector this ... He dislikes shedding blood, but is very apt “to barbadoes” an unruly man — has sent and sends us by hundreds to Barbadoes, so that we have made an active verb of it: “Barbadoes you”.’ As quoted in Jill Sheppard, *The Redlegs of Barbados: Their Origins and History* (New York: KTO Press, 1977), p. 18.

⁷² John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America containing the History of the Discovery, Settlement, Progress and State of the British Colonies on the Continent and Islands of America* (London: 1741 [1708]), p. 3; Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados*, p. 6.

Caribs.’⁷³ This proposition changed the course of the discussion, for though the popular discourse continued to treasure the fig tree story, some elements set about debating the Froude position.

In 1918, E. G. Sinckler posed this question: ‘Is Froude’s idea of a “Bearded Carib” a monstrosity?’ Sinckler did not think so and argued that there was evidence of bearded Indians in British Guiana. He also pointed out that what lined the shores of the island were not fig trees, but coconut palms, manchineel trees and white wood. Fig trees grew in the gullies. Thus his argument: ‘Why should the Portuguese have gone out of their way to name the island from a fig tree in the *interior*? It is purely legendary.’ Sinckler then placed his support behind Froude by stating that he believed that Indians did live on the island before the English came and that they were killed by the Spanish.⁷⁴

The debate continued, but with a greater number of anti-Froude supporters in tow. In 1933, Owen Rutter captured the essential strands of the arguments at that time:

The objection to Froude is that, so far as we know, the Caribs were not a bearded race; and since the Spaniards had little intercourse with the island there seems no reason why, if they ever existed, the first English settlers should have found it uninhabited as they did. Although any explanation of the name must be conjectural, Froude might have been more likely to accept the reference to the fig-tree had he known that the Spanish noun *barbudo* means ‘vine transplanted with the roots,’ so that the word might well be applied to this curious tree, which puts out roots from its branches. The view that Barbados might be a corruption of St. Bernard is unlikely, in view of the early forms.⁷⁵

Once again the bearded fig tree story triumphs and becomes the explanation. With key aspects to the Froude argument remaining unsupported, particularly with regards to the

⁷³ Froude, *The English in the West Indies*, p. 34.

⁷⁴ E. G. Sinckler, ‘The Indians of Barbados’, *Timehri*, (1918), 48-55.

⁷⁵ Owen Rutter, *If Crab No Walk*, pp. 27-28.

question of bearded Indians and Spanish claims on the island, the fig tree story triumphed once again. It remained the popular explanation for the name and is the current one today.⁷⁶

In recent years, there has been a renewed drive for the bearded Caribs argument prompted by the evidence provided by Ivan Van Sertima. In his book *They Came Before Columbus*, Van Sertima had argued that Africans had reached the Americas several centuries before the Europeans and had mixed with the populations living there. It has been suggested that the name *Los Barbadoes* may have referred to the descendants of the Africans who had come to live on the island. With this amended view 'the bearded ones' would become bearded black men or bearded men of mixed African and perhaps Carib ancestry. It can be noted that this argument is highly controversial and has been greatly disputed.⁷⁷

Yet it is my contention that it is one that should not be easily dismissed. There needs to be further research into this question of the name. To date there is only one scholar, Carl Ortwin Sauer, who has conducted research in the Spanish archives on the matter of the name. Though his findings date back to 1966, subsequent scholars appear to have ignored them. Sauer posits the thesis that a bearded people, who may not have necessarily been 'Caribs', did live in Barbados before European invasion:

The permissions to go slave hunting name the Isla de los Barbudos. The Turin map (1523) distinguishes *de los barbados* from the northern *la barbada*. The *Islario de Santa Cruz* (ca.1541) describes La Barbada as flat and deserted and difficult to see from a distance, and Los Barbados as so called because they found on it Indians with beards [...] Still unknown to Juan de la Cosa in 1500, by 1511 Barbados was named in first place in the Lesser Antilles as a Carib island open to

⁷⁶ For a further discussion of the name see Fraser, A-Z, p. 14.

⁷⁷ Ivan Van Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus* (New York: Random House, 1976). Linguist Professor Richard Allsopp holds this view that the name *Los Barbadoes* does refer to descendants of these Africans and is presently doing the research on the matter.

the taking of slaves, an indication that it was well peopled but not proof that its natives were Caribs. It is remarkable that an island situated a hundred miles out into the Atlantic, to the east of the volcanic Antillean island chain and upwind into the sweep of the trade winds, should have been so well peopled.⁷⁸

Several points made in the above quotation have to be highlighted. Sauer's argument that the island *Los Barbados* was of prime importance to Spain in slave raiding is one not usually given. That the island was known to be populated and thus especially targeted for slave raiding is also not usually emphasised. That the Spaniards may have automatically called the native inhabitants of the island bearded Indians, because all native inhabitants were called Indians, and this set had beards, is even more intriguing in the light of the Van Sertima thesis. Indeed, the historical fact that there is a text, the *Islario de Santa Cruz*, which explicitly states that the people living on the island had beards, is never noted. What Sauer had done was to provide the evidence that Sinckler and others had been looking for some fifty years earlier.

This brings me back to the question of the naming pattern arising in both *Ichirouganaim* and *Los Barbadoes*. It is uncanny that both the Amerindian and European linguistic roots determined the recurrence of the concept 'bearded'. Both also indicate a possible reference to people: 'the bearded ones'. Under normal circumstances this would not be deemed too farfetched a connection. Why should the name of the island not reflect its inhabitants?

In 1993, with the fig tree story once again under review, Peter Campbell tentatively offered the suggestion that 'the bearded ones' of the *Los Barbadoes* name referred to the reefs that surround the island. According to this theory 'from a distance the surf breaking on the reef may have given the impression of a beard.' In this way, the reefs

⁷⁸ Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 193-4.

that played such a prominent role in *Ichirouganaim* would be once again highlighted. However, even Campbell was not fully supportive of his own theory as he cheekily admitted that it was ‘far-fetched, but I still think it ranks above the fig-tree theory.’⁷⁹

It is my argument that this theory is farfetched and that it should be quickly buried before it too gains currency along with the fig tree. Seeing that it has been established that ‘the bearded ones’ of *Los Barbadoes* more than likely refers to the people of the island, the hint given by *Ichirouganaim* becomes plausible. There is thus a continuing trend of thought in the various names for the island, which insists on the presence of a people who created the image, and thus the identity of the island, at the time. The element of bearded inhabitants is vital to any discussion on the meaning of the name and it is along these lines that future debates should be pursued.

(b) The Landing Party and the Rest

In 1647, a deposition was given by Captain Henry Powell before the Plantations Committee of the House of Commons in England. It referred to the early months of colonisation of the island Barbados. It began as follows:

Mr. Cleere (and) John Turkerman about 20 yeares since went with Captain Henry Powell to Barbadoes. (There were) noe people there untill they came. They planted it first with Corne and Cutt doune trees and made houses, and left 40 or 50 people there for Sr. William Courteen. And Sr. William paid them wages. Then they went to ye Mayne to Disakeebe a 3 or 4 weeks voiage till settled the people; and hence they brought Indians with Materialls Cassada rootes and Endicoes to worke.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History*, p. 10.

⁸⁰ See Vincent Harlow, ed., *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana: 1623-1667* (London: 1925), p. 40. ‘Disakeebe’ refers to Essequibo, part of the area of the South American mainland known as the Guianas.

There are two elements of the above quoted deposition that will guide this analysis on the early settlement. The first is the reference to the landing party who subsequently did the planting and clearing. The second refers to the Indians from the Essequibo coast, who were brought to the island to assist in the colonising exercise. This section argues that such statements as those in the deposition, set the tone for the historical narratives and in so doing, created praise songs for the English pioneers.

Having opted to keep the name *Los Barbadoes*, it was in 1627, in a vessel called the *William and John*, that the first persons arrived to colonise the island in the name of James I of England. As was stated in the deposition, the landing party reported that they had found no indigenous peoples on the island. But who composed this landing party?

Captain Powell makes no reference to a significant group who was part of the landing party. In fact there were a number of Africans who, in the varying accounts written by historians, had either been captured from a trading vessel en route, or had been picked up at the Cape Verde Islands. Their number varies as well: ten was the accepted total, but recently six has been the given number. What must be stressed here is that until the 1990s, this information was not part of the popular discourse, and the extent to which it is even now can be debated.⁸¹

Little attention has been paid to these Africans in the History. Vincent Harlow, in his 1925 publication, fails to quote the deposition that makes reference to them. Yet, as early as 1892, Darnell Davis had made note of them by quoting the pertinent deposition

⁸¹ Watson states that they were six Africans. See 'A Brief History of Barbados', p. 42; Other sources have said ten. See Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 18; Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History*, p. 26; Also F. A. Hoyos, *Barbados: A History*, p. 14.

given by John Cleere at the time. It stated: 'theye stayed a while at the Barbadoes, and then left some 30 or 40 men there English, and tenn Negroes taken in a prize.' We have no idea if all of the Africans were men, which at this time of slave trading would probably have been the case, or if there were any women in the group. Neither do we know their fate once they arrived on the island. The usual assumption is that these Africans were slaves. Dunn writes: 'The ten Negroes who were brought to Barbados in 1627 were also called slaves like the Indians.'⁸²

It can be argued that this number is far too small and will make their tracing difficult and if anything, unnecessary. Yet, it is my contention that what matters here is not only their presence, but their subsequent elimination from the narratives and from the Barbadian psyche. This group of Africans is integral to the reformation of such concepts as settlement and colonisation within the discourse. Not only was it not a case of *tabula rasa* when the existence of Amerindians on the island for thousands of years is acknowledged, it was also not a case of only English white men being the pioneers in the colonising exercise. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Two, one of the strands pursued over the centuries about what makes Barbadian identity is this question of tracing lineage back to the group who landed at Holetown. Though the question of their effect and their role can be debated, the point here is that these Africans were there, and they were part of the pioneering enterprise.

What has been celebrated is the landing of the *settlers* in 1627. This automatically highlights the English white all male group who usually numbered eighty to eighty-three in the writings, but with recent revisions have been reduced to sixty. There are records remaining today that list the names of this group. Indeed, there are still Barbadians today,

⁸² See Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies 1624-1713* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973 [1972]), p. 227.

usually of the white group, who can proudly trace their ancestry back to these first settlers. And in the spirit of the invention of tradition, there is an annual festival called the Holetown Festival, which celebrates the landing of the settlers on the island. Needless to say, the Africans are yet to be acknowledged.⁸³

Following in quick succession to these groups in 1627 will be thirty two Amerindians brought from the Guianas to assist the English settlers who were clueless as to the techniques of agriculture in the tropics as well as the demands of a tropical environment.⁸⁴ They were unprepared for life in the tropical climate. Basic items like bread could not be produced the English way and so they relied on the Amerindian cassava. Also, they found that the candles imported from England melted quickly in the tropical climate. By 1647, Ligon reported that they were using African wax as a replacement for the candles.⁸⁵

With tobacco established as the cash crop, joining those already in *Los Barbadoes* will be Irish indentured servants. They will be on contract for five years and some may be forced to renew their contracts. This early set were *barbadoesed*, that is, sentenced to go to the dark unknown region and work.⁸⁶ Over time other groups will come including Scots, Dutch Jews and Quakers.

With the changeover from tobacco to sugar, the numbers on the island will rapidly increase due to the further importation of thousands of Africans via the slave trade. These Africans were taken from the regions of the Senegambia, the Gold Coast, the Windward

⁸³ See Hoyos, *Barbados: A History*, p.14; Campbell, *Some Early Barbadian History*, p. 26, Watson, 'A Brief History' p. 42.

⁸⁴ Handler, 'The Amerindian Slave Population', pp. 39-53.

⁸⁵ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*; Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (London: Frank Cass, 1976 [1657]) p.30.

⁸⁶ See fn. 47 of this chapter. Also Sheppard, *The Redlegs of Barbados*, Chapters 1-3, pp. 7-39.

Coast, the Slave Coast, the Bights of Benin and Biafra and possibly from Cameroon to Angola. This results in a wide range of peoples who were possibly brought to *Los Barbadoes* namely, as listed by Jerome Handler and Frederick Lange, the Adangme, Asante, Dahomey, Ewe, Edo, Fante, Ga, Ibibio, Ibo and Yoruba. Richard Goodridge also proposes the inclusion of the peoples from the Memfe region.⁸⁷

Approximately 350 000 of these Africans will be sold in Barbados, with 65.5 % of them landing from the ships between 1651 and 1739.⁸⁸ As the labour force, these enslaved human beings will become the literal and psychological lifeblood of the sugar enterprise. This group will be the most abominably maligned, maltreated and abused of all. Officially declared chattel, a series of laws will be passed to ensure not only governance of them, but also a steady process of degradation and dehumanisation. Official sanction will be given to such cruel practises as the following one which was to be inflicted on a runaway slave 'he shall be severely whipped, his Nose lit, and be burned in some part of his face with a hot iron.' Death will be deemed the most effective punishment of all. In the seventeenth century, the burgeoning slave trade guaranteed another enslaved-human replacement.⁸⁹

From such brutal yet dynamic beginnings can come many histories. However, these initial years of settlement will be narrated through only one strand of history: the strand that emphasises the role of the English as pioneers in an untamed land.

⁸⁷ See Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 25-27; Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, pp. 32-3; Watson, 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade', see map facing p.19; Richard Goodridge, 'The African Background of the Barbadian Population', in Alan Gregor Copley and Alvin Thompson, ed., *The African-Caribbean Connection: Historical and Cultural Perspectives* (Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, and the National Cultural Foundation, 1990), pp. 28-48 (pp. 30-33).

⁸⁸ Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*, p.25.

⁸⁹ Watson, 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade', p. 17. I am grateful to Dr. Anthony Philips for making his copy of the complete texts of the slave laws available for my viewing. See 'An Act Declaring the Negro Slaves of this Island to be Real Estate', 1668. Also 'An Act for the Governing of Negroes, 1668.

(c) *'a quintessential New World slave society'*

In less than 50 years after the arrival of the Africans and Englishmen the island possessed a wealthy sugar economy. One contemporary observer of the seventeenth century transformation commented as follows:

the island in 1643 was not valued one seventeenth so considerable as in 1666; the negroes not being in 1643 above 6,400 were in 1666 above 50,000, the buildings in 1643 were mean, with things only for necessity; but in 1666, plate, jewels and household stuff were estimated at £500,000; their [planters] buildings very fair and beautiful, and their [planters] houses like castles.⁹⁰

In order to demonstrate how extraordinary a feat this was and the lasting impact, which it had on the historical narratives, this section analyses the history of the Sugar Revolution in Barbados.

In becoming this wealthy sugar economy, the island had also become what Jerome Handler has called 'a quintessential New World slave society'.⁹¹ This is because by the 1670s, Barbados had provided the prime example of success in the sugar enterprise in which sugar becomes the main crop for export. With this the sugar plantation becomes the main economic motif, thousands of enslaved Africans form the labour force, and the society is managed by a small white group of colonists and colonial officials.

The following is a table showing the numbers and changing dimensions within the population, between 1655 and 1715. Note especially the reduced numbers in the white population for the period, as against the increase in the numbers of enslaved Africans.

⁹⁰ As quoted by Beckles in *A History of Barbados*, pp. 22-3.

⁹¹ See Handler, *Supplement to a Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627 – 1834* (Rhode Island: The John Carter Brown Library and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1991), p. xv.

Table 1.1**Barbados Population Estimates: 1655-1715⁹²**

YEAR	WHITE POP.	WHITE SERVANTS	MEN ABLE TO BEAR ARMS	MILITIA	NEGRO SLAVES
1655	23 000				20 000
1673	21 309		9 274		33 184
1676	21 725		10 000		32 473
1680		2 317		5 588	38 782
1684	19 568	2 381	6 761	5 911	46 602
1696				2 330	42 000
1712	12 528		3 438		41 970
1715	16 888				

Between the 1640s and the 1670s, there was not only a rapid changeover in the land and capital allocation for sugar; there was also a rapid changeover in the labour force. White indentured servants had formed the labouring group for tobacco and for the initial stages of the changeover to sugar. However, as Eric Williams established in *Capitalism and Slavery*, it was economically expedient for the planters to purchase thousands of African slaves to form the labour force of the plantations. With the Barbadian planters boasting that “three blacks work better and cheaper than one white man”, Williams pioneered the argument that the planters opted for African slaves not because of climatic conditions or racial attributes, as was the traditional argument, but because they were cheaper.⁹³

⁹² Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 87.

⁹³ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1967 [1944]), p. 19. Williams provided the following argument by first quoting the planters: “The more they buie”, said the Barbadians, referring to their slaves, “the more the are able to buye, for in a yeare and a halfe they will earne with God’s blessing as much as they cost.” Williams continued: ‘King Sugar had begun his depredations, changing flourishing commonwealths of small farmers into vast sugar factories owned by a camarilla of absentee capitalist magnates and worked by a mass of alien proletarians’. See *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 24.

Hilary Beckles supports William's thesis. He argues that in the 1640s, the price of an African slave had fallen by 50% to approximately £20, a rate on par with that of an Irish indentured servant. With Dutch capital and expertise, the planters opted to increase imports of African slaves during the crucial period of the revolution. Thus his summation: 'the tendency towards the growing efficiency of the slave trade between 1650 and 1660 allowed the slave to become a satisfactory economic substitute for the servant during this period.'⁹⁴

Consequently, in the short period between 1643 and 1675, the totals of African slave imports rose by 500%. For example, in 1643, 6 000 Africans were imported. In 1655, as seen in the table, the figure had more than tripled to 20 000. In 1676 the number was 32 473.⁹⁵ One of the results of this rapid expansion in the labour force was that in the 1670s, at the zenith of the island's prosperity, the small island of Barbados had *twice* as many Blacks as any other English territory, and *six* times more Blacks than all of the mainland colonies together. In this way, the success of the Barbados economy was seen to be intricately and necessarily linked with plantation slavery.⁹⁶

And successful it was. In the 1650s, Barbados was touted as the most valued territory in the British Empire, richer than its New England counterpart at the time. It was held that the value of the trade and capital from Barbados exceeded the sum total of all of the English colonies. With sugar as the main colonial import into England, it was Barbados who supplied 65% of sugar imports between the 1650s and the 1670s. This absolute dominance of the sugar market changed somewhat by the end of the century, but Barbados still managed to maintain the lead on its competitors. Between 1698-1700, its

⁹⁴ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 28.

⁹⁵ See also Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 59, Table 14.

⁹⁶ See Handler, *Supplement to a Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627 – 1834*, p. xv.

imports to England were valued at £316 000 per annum. However, the value of sugar imports from Jamaica for the same period was £201 400. For the Leewards it was £192 000.⁹⁷

Thus it was during this key period of the seventeenth century, when the English established their empire in the New World, that this island became its most important colony. Barbados became known as ‘one of the richest spots of ground in the world’.⁹⁸

This early success in the sugar enterprise, though later eclipsed by the achievements of other islands such as Jamaica, established an identity that never wore off, or was never allowed to dissipate among the inhabitants. For example, much mileage was made of the events in which the King honoured prominent planters. When between 1658 and 1665, five planters were granted knighthoods and baronetcies, this was seen as ‘a symbol of imperial recognition, [that] also conferred tremendous social respect within the colony and added to the sense of achievement within the class.’ By the end of the seventeenth century twelve more planters were so honoured. However, the narrative had for some time projected the fallacy that these baronetcies were all given in one day.⁹⁹

Consequently, what the early success story of sugar does is to highlight the role of the English planters and the creation of the cash crop economy as the important results of the sugar enterprise. Yet as Kamau Brathwaite argues, the consequences of the Sugar Revolution were both economic and socio-cultural:

This Sugar Revolution was also the island’s first major Cultural Revolution in that the notion of the island as an English/British settlement, with a predominant free/white population, relying on their own economic resources and transplanting

⁹⁷ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 22

⁹⁸ Extracted from the seventeenth century journal of Henry Whistler and quoted by Dunn in *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 77.

⁹⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, p. 27. For the myth of how thirteen Barbadian planters were made baronets by Charles II on the same day see E. M. Shilstone, ‘The Thirteen Baronets’, *JBMHS*, II, (1935), 89-92 .

(and transforming) English cultural forms (family, Church, politics) into the tropics, was now converted into an increasingly 'black' 'full plantation' island, dominated by a handful of planters and their agents, and the militia, and increasingly concerned with the 'profitability of their monocrop' at the same time that this concern made them increasingly dependent on (the) British Metropolitan market and support¹⁰⁰

It is important to note that as the myths were spun about this early success, the essential point of Barbados having a sugar economy based on plantation slavery was simply ignored. The success story is the English imperial enterprise. Yet Father Antoine Biet, who visited Barbados in 1654, saw clearly where to accord success for the sugar enterprise:

Their greatest wealth is their slaves, and there is not one slave who does not make a profit of more than one hundred *écus* per year for his master. Each slave does not cost four *écus* per year for his upkeep.¹⁰¹

Their success was their slaves, the vital group in understanding this cultural and economic phenomenon known as the Sugar Revolution. As Robert Morris puts it, the slaves 'provided the engine that spurred the Barbadian economy to prosperity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.'¹⁰² When, after emancipation, these slaves became the free labour class in the Barbadian economy, they still played that most vital role. The descendants of the slaves continued to be the engine of the sugar economy.

¹⁰⁰ Brathwaite, *Bajan Culture Report & Plan* (Barbados: UNESCO/Ministry of Education and Culture, March 1979), p. 6.

¹⁰¹ An *écu* is an old form of French currency, and presently, the currency of the European Union, Handler estimates that four *écus* would be about one pound. See Handler, 'Father Antoine Biet's Visit To Barbados in 1654', *JBMHS*, 32:2 May (1967), pp. 56-76 (p. 66 and fn. 14).

¹⁰² Robert Morris, 'Slave Society in Barbados', in Thompson ed., *Emancipation I*, pp. 33-44 (p. 39).

V

Emancipation and Independence(a) *'iron tooth'd ratchets'*

look at his hands:
 cactus cracked, pricked,
 worn smooth by the hoe,
 limestone soil's colour:
 he has lost three fingers
 of his left hand falling
 asleep at the mill:
 the black crushing grin
 of the iron tooth'd ratchets
 grinding the farley hill cane
 have eaten him lame
 and no one is to blame¹⁰³

The strongest image is that of the lost three fingers and their fall. Brathwaite makes us see them together. It is as though we join the scene at the moment of their separation. In quick succession we see the maimed hand, we see the sleeping man, we see the fingers 'falling' as we also see (and perhaps hear?) the clanging shut of the 'black crushing grin' of the 'iron tooth'd ratchets' over bone and flesh. In essence, a labourer whose job it was to feed the stalks of sugar cane into the rollers of the windmill so that its juices are extracted, had fallen asleep on the job. For this lapse in concentration, brought on by exhaustion, he has lost three fingers on his left hand.

When viewed from this perspective, sugar and its given History become an ominous reality to be likened to the 'iron tooth'd ratchets' of the verse. All caught within

¹⁰³ Brathwaite, 'Milkweed', *Mother Poem*, p. 52.

its teeth will be and have been maimed. Yet the verse emphasises the plight of the black plantation labourer whose crushed hands are the colour of the black soil of the coral limestone of the island and will become the black sugar of the poem. In the three hundred and fifty years of this history of sugar in Barbados, many a worker lost his and her fingers to the mill during eighteen-hour shifts. 'H'istory does not deem this loss of fingers significant to the story of sugar because it detracts from the main theme of success and triumph. Yet the history of sugar in Barbados will never be complete without an assessment of this loss. It is this history that Brathwaite is keen on recording in *Mother Poem*, this history of the black experience as dictated by sugar.

(b) *Emancipation Day 1997*

This section looks at key elements of the post-emancipation experience in Barbados. It also reviews the struggle for supremacy, especially in the independence era, between 'H'istory and the histories.

On 1 August 1997, Barbados celebrated Emancipation Day. With the day declared as a national holiday, there was an official ceremony to mark the occasion. Held at the site of what is popularly known as the Bussa Statue, thousands of Barbadians took the early morning trek to participate in the celebrations.¹⁰⁴ In the following year, the government invited the President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, to give the feature address. Again, there was an overwhelming response to the day as thousands participated in the morning ceremony.

¹⁰⁴ See 'Celebration: thousands of Bajans mark freedom from slavery', *The Barbados Advocate*, 2 August 1997, p. 12.

What is important to note here is that it took one hundred and fifty-nine years for this event to occur! Between 1838 and 1997 there had been no official public celebration of Emancipation, especially involving the granting of a national holiday. When it is noted that the descendants of the enslaved constitute more than 90% of the present population of Barbados, the one hundred and fifty-nine year wait for a public reflection of what is arguably the most important event in the collective memory is iniquitous. It is my argument that the key to understanding the reasons for this incredible delay lies in the struggle for supremacy between 'H'istory and the histories. The delay demonstrates whose history is being followed, even in the independence era.

'H'istory had viewed Emancipation not as a social revolution but as an 'administrative problem'¹⁰⁵ which the plantocracy solved through the passage of several laws designed to restrict the movements of the freed labour force and guarantee the planters a steady supply of labour.¹⁰⁶ Their view of history was the official 'H'istory of the island that wrote out black involvement and celebrated the success of sugar. As Anthony Trollope noted in the 1850s, the way to spot a Barbadian planter was by noting his fixation with making sugar. A century later, Lucille Iremonger provides a scenario which echoes similar sentiment. The Barbadian makes the following boasts: 'We produce a hundred thousand tons of sugar every year, you know. That's an awful lot of sugar.'¹⁰⁷

Consequently, when the fiftieth anniversary of Emancipation came around in

¹⁰⁵ Hilary Beckles, 'Black People in the Colonial Historiography of Barbados', in *Emancipation II: Aspects of Post-Slavery in Barbados* (Bridgetown: National Cultural Foundation and the Department of History, U.W.I., Cave Hill, 1987), pp. 131-143 (p. 138).

¹⁰⁶ Such Acts include the Masters and Servants Act, the Vagrancy Act, the Act establishing the Police Force. See Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, pp. 103-11.

¹⁰⁷ Trollope records a delightful scene in which the boastful white Barbadians are obsessed with their own dominance in the sugar market. See Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (London: 1859), pp. 198-200; Iremonger, *The Young Traveller*, p. 109.

1888, treating it as an event to be celebrated was not part of the psyche of the white elite. On this occasion, even the coloured elite joined their white counterparts in their hesitancy to officially sanction a celebration. They feared that they did not know how the blacks would react.¹⁰⁸

Nearly a century later, it was amazing to see a similar stance taken once again. When plans were announced for a series of events to commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of abolition, debates arose as to why any commemoration was necessary.¹⁰⁹ Historian Trevor Marshall called 1984 'The Year of the Great Slavery Controversy' in view of the furore that broke out over the decision to observe the anniversary. Promotional messages which showed slaves in coffles with neck chains and hands in manacles were widely rejected by viewers of the state television. This reaction led Marshall to argue that 'slavery cannot be watered down.'¹¹⁰

Nevertheless the decision was made to scale down the celebrations from four years to one year. One good thing that resulted despite the furore was the establishment of a series of annual lectures sponsored by the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. In the first series, the speakers concentrated on examining various aspects of the slave experience. The topics of the lectures have been broadened in scope over the years. These lectures have subsequently been published the series title *Emancipation*.

This brings us back to the Glissant challenge of establishing a historical consciousness for Caribbean peoples. Though Barbados became independent and new histories are being written, the 'H'istory still trundles on. As Glissant points out, what has

¹⁰⁸ See for example the discussion in *The Times*, 19 May 1888, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Adonijah, 'B'dos Black "Gentihommes" wish to forget Africa, Slavery, Emancipation', *Caribbean Contact*, December 1984, p. 15.

¹¹⁰ Trevor Marshall, 'NIFCA- Its Theme and Focus', *The Bajan*, November (1984), pp. 26-7.

made matters more difficult is that the ruling elite adopted the colonial discourse of 'H'istory for their own ends:

They have progressively contaminated the thinking of everyone by this belief in a single history and in the strength (the power) of those who create it or claim to be in charge. Contradiction is created by these two approaches: the lived rejection of a too "cultured" notion of history and the belief in the idea of history as force and power coming from an (external) culture.¹¹¹

Take, for example, a 1995 article written by a prominent white Barbadian who gives his name as follows: Sir Donald Wiles, K. A., C. M .G., OBE. In the article he gives a summary of some of the important events of the history of the island. His is the traditional linear history in which dates guide the narrative. However, what is glaringly absent is at least some form of linear history of the black population that makes up 90% of the island. They are simply not mentioned until his final paragraph in which he also manages to get wrong the one date accorded to the black population.¹¹²

It must also be noted that it is only in his final paragraph that Wiles first mentions the word 'slave'. Yet he has celebrated the success of the history of sugar throughout the article. What Wiles opted for was the traditional stance on the success story of sugar:

From earliest times sugar has been the mainstay of the local economy. It was in 1636 that the sugar cane plant, a member of the grass family, was introduced from Brazil. The plant *found very favourable conditions here*, and by 1646 the settlers were able to export sugar to England [...] Thus many English fortunes had their origins in Barbados [my emphasis]¹¹³

¹¹¹ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p. 92.

¹¹² The date for the abolition of the slave trade is 1807. Wiles gives it as 1832. See Donald Wiles, "'Little England' and the 'Barbarous Barbarians'" in *Simply Barbados: An insight into the Elegant Lifestyle of the Island*, ed. by Sassie Stears (Barbados: Peter J. Sassman) pp. 36-39 (pp. 36-8)

¹¹³ Wiles, p.38.

The only favourable conditions that the cane plant miraculously ‘found’ were the soil and the climate. Everything else was brought in. The capital and expertise from the Dutch merchants and Jews, the equipment for the factory and the manufacturing process and, most important of all, the thousands of Africans who were enslaved for plantation labour. From there on evolved the plantation society in which the descendants of these Africans were born into slavery, thus providing another factor in the success story: a creolised labour force.

This is a misrepresentation of the history. Yet Wiles is not alone in this. Note the work of Kathleen Hawkins A. R. C. A., (as she calls herself). Entitled *Barbados 1900 – 1950: The Olden Days in Pictures and Verse*, it is a book of poetry which purports to be a social history. However, in the very first poem called ‘Crop Time’, Hawkins manages to write out of the history the very mill workers that Kamau Brathwaite was at such pains to write in:

The rollers were inclined to choke,
 So canes were lessened before bolts broke,
 Or mills would grind to a full stop –
 Too much of this would spoil the crop,
 Three rollers could little crush the cane,
 Much of the juice would still remain;
 The fibre, called bagasse, or trash,
 Was taken to the yard on masse
 And spread out on the ground to dry
 Under a cloudless bright blue sky¹¹⁴

Outside of noting the puerile nature of this writing, what can also be noted is that apparently the sugar cane is doing everything by itself. It feeds itself into the rollers of the

¹¹⁴ Kathleen Hawkins, *Barbados West Indies: The Olden Days in Pictures and Verse* (Barbados: Letchworth Press, 1986), pp. 1-2.

mill, it lays itself out on the ground to dry. The labourers have been robbed of their humanity. Moreover, they have been robbed of their pain. With sugar as the focus, the concern lies with how much can be extracted. The linear narrative of History has, in Brathwaite's words, eaten the labourers lame.¹¹⁵

Such misrepresentations of the history at this stage of its evolution, indicates the persistence of that early philosophy which refused to recognise the integral contribution of the enslaved. This is a key factor in understanding the argument with 'H'istory which Barbados, and by extension, the Caribbean is presently battling. Three decades of nationhood have failed to tackle in full the colonial discourse, which quite effortlessly writes the Africans and their descendants out of the history. Any strides made by scholars to revise the histories are always being eroded by those in the Wiles camp.

Take for example this observation:

In Barbados, history has been dusted down, cleaned up and put on display [...] The bit of history that Barbados has chosen to market is its plantation houses, the economic epicentres of the sugar industry and slavery. Yet the reconstruction has been partial. Sunbury Plantation House, for example, is described in the 1994 tourist handout, *The Ins and Outs of Barbados*, as "creating a vivid impression of the life of a sugar plantation in the 18th and 19th century". Yet its blurb mentions the house's magnificent antiques and paintings, while ignoring the slave contribution to the estate.¹¹⁶

In other words, Barbados has mastered the art of celebrating the history of sugar without any reference to the history of slavery. This observation of the marketing strategy for Sunbury Plantation House can be extended to such texts, which also pay keen attention to

¹¹⁵ Note also the 1997 video *Beautiful Barbados*. Under the section of 'History' the narrative leaps from the coming of the English in 1627 to Independence in 1966. There is no account of what happens in between.

¹¹⁶ Polly Pattullo, *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996), p. 190.

the architecture of plantation buildings. Whilst praising the remarkable craftsmanship involved in creating this parapet or that turret, it is intriguing to note that at no stage is reference made to those who built the houses. Though at the start of the sugar enterprise the craftsmen would have been mostly European, for the rest of the period the majority of these would have been drawn from among the enslaved. Here is another one of those missing parts from the 'enormous jig-saw' of History.¹¹⁷

It can be argued that the culture of tourism necessitates a certain glossing over of historical facts as the relic on display is promoted. Herein lies the paradox. With tourism occupying the position once held by sugar as the main foreign exchange earner for the island, the singular narrative of 'H'istory gains new ground. With the emphasis on achievement, sugar as a story of success is revived through the policy of promoting such things as plantation buildings. Thus, Barbados can boast of having two of the three oldest plantation houses in the Western Hemisphere without any analysis of why this is so.

This brings us back to the McLellan observation. He states that this is the boast of the Barbadian: 'Barbados has made a glorious history, and I am Barbadian'. According to McLellan, this sense of having made a history is critical to understanding Barbadian identity. It is a 'cherished consciousness which runs like a substratum through his entire character.'¹¹⁸ As I have argued, the history that is referred to is the singular narrative. It is the 'H'istory as designated by the colonial discourse. By succeeding in the sugar enterprise, Barbados 'made' (in the Hegelian sense of the term) a world history. In that way it rose above the lowly designated status of a colony to become, in its own right, a leader in British West Indian affairs, a symbol of English success in the region. As I will

¹¹⁷ See for example, H. S. Fraser and R. Hughes, *Historic Houses of Barbados* (Bridgetown: Barbados National Trust, 1982); H. S. Fraser, *Treasures of Barbados* (videotapes), Parts I & II, (Bridgetown: Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation & Sissons Paints, 1989). For history as a jig-saw see Carr, *What is History?*, p. 13.

¹¹⁸ McLellan, p. 73.

argue in Chapter Three, Barbados took on the role of imperial leader in the West Indies, justifying its claim to be known as 'Little England'.

However, it is this 'H'istory that paradoxically gives this strong sense of Barbadian identity. If this is so, then the struggle with 'H'istory now takes on such elements as a struggle for power over the creation of what is Barbadian identity. Glissant sees the struggle for power as key to understanding why the battle with 'H'istory is such a difficult one for the region:

The struggle against a single History for the crossfertilization of histories means repossessing both a true sense of one's time and identity: proposing in an unprecedented way a revaluation of power.¹¹⁹

In this way, 'H'istory continues to survive whilst the histories are evolving. The quest for power against the background of colonialism is translated as the battle between History and the histories. The Glissant call for a 'revaluation of power' is an idealistic one as long as the elite continues to see their identity in the History of the region.

Yet there has been a celebration of Emancipation. And there have been other beginnings like the advent of Independence, and the Crop Over festival. In the spaces created by these events, new popular histories are being re-written. These will continue to battle with the old linear version. What must be kept in mind is that the task is to address the historical consciousness of the Barbadian people.

¹¹⁹ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p. 93.

Summary

Derek Walcott argues that when seeking to find alternate readings to the given 'H'istory of the Caribbean, one finds oneself in the company of fragments.

The stripped man is driven back to that self-astonishing, elemental force, his mind. That is the basis of the Antillean experience, this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs, and they are not decayed but strong.¹²⁰

For Barbados these fragments are there in the name *Ichirougainam* and in the small group of Africans who landed in 1627 as well as in the three thousand-year-old shards found on the west coast. As will be demonstrated in other chapters of this thesis, they are also there in the community group known as the Barbados Landship as well as in the makings of the Crop Over festival. In both cases not only have these fragments been noted, but they have been reshaped and renamed. Yet they are there to indicate older rhythms and older echoes that 'H'istory cannot erase.

In the exercise of making new histories it is the fragments that should be sought after for a clearer understanding of the past. We need to reach beyond the constructs of time that the colonial narrative bestows upon us and go back to the geological beginnings of this 600 000 year old island. Like Brathwaite, we will find other fragments in its underground ramblings that serve to undermine the attempts by its surface inhabitants to master its destiny:

¹²⁰ Derek Walcott, *The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory: The Nobel Lecture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p.11.

the ancient watercourses

trickling slowly into the coral
travelling inwards under the limestone

widening outwards into the sunlight
towards the breaking of her flesh with foam¹²¹

¹²¹ Brathwaite, 'Driftwood', *Mother Poem*, p. 117.

Chapter Two

Barbadian Cultural Identity and its Contradictions

...it is not surprising that Caribbean people of all kinds, of all classes and positions, experience the question of positioning themselves in a cultural identity as an enigma, as a problem, as an open question.

Stuart Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities', *New Left Review*, 209, Jan-Feb (1995), 3-14 (p. 8)

I

*Identity and Fluidity**(a) Wrestling with the Statue of Nelson*

In Barbados there is a statue of Admiral Lord Nelson. Like its English counterpart, its place of residence was, until very recently, named 'Trafalgar Square'¹. The statue was commissioned by the Barbadian plantocracy who thought it a fitting tribute to the English hero who they believed saved them from French rule. Erected in 1813, it became the practice to boast that not only was Barbados the first place to pay such a tribute, but also that Barbados had done so *before* the Mother Country. It was not the first place to erect a statue to Nelson; Montreal put theirs up in 1808. Barbados did, however, get a jump-start on England by a good 30 years.²

Life has not been easy for this Caribbean-based Nelson in these one hundred and eighty-six years of his existence. Painted in what was termed a strange pea green colour, he was then re-painted dark green.³ He has been fenced in, raised on a pedestal, and then raised higher still. Donkey carts, bicycles, cabs, trucks and cars have had to negotiate

¹ On 28 April 1999, the area was officially re-named 'National Heroes Square'.

² Other places to pay similar tribute before Barbados are Dublin (1809) and Birmingham, England (1809). The Nelson Column in London dates from 1843 while the statue was added in 1849. See H. Fraser, S. Carrington, A. Forde and J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Jamaica: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), p 121.

³ In 1852, the travel writer Charles Day stated that the effigy looked 'very much as if the marine hero had just tumbled overboard, and been fished up dripping wet.' By the 1880s, J. H. Sutton Moxly reports that the monument was 'now known to the negroes who chatter at its base as "The Green Man in Trafalgar Square"'. See Charles William Day, *Five Years Residence in the West Indies* (London: Colburn, 1852), p. 17; J. H. Sutton Moxly, *An Account of a West Indian Sanitorium and a Guide to Barbados* (London: 1886), p. 3; Fraser, *A-Z*, p. 121.

their way around him over the years. He has been uprooted and turned 180 degrees to face east. Steps and a mini square have recently been built in front of him. Now, as *The Guardian* quipped in April 1999, he's about to undergo another major change. 'This statue was erected in Barbados three decades before Nelson's column. Now they want to knock him down.'⁴ It appears that after many years of campaigners petitioning for his removal, the present Barbados government has agreed to move him from his position of prominence. The question now remaining is where should he go.

I have begun this discussion on Barbadian identity with the tale of Lord Nelson because it indicates some of the controversial issues surrounding identity in general. The statue has become a signifier of some of the vital elements that constitute Barbadian identity. Some members of the society would like to preserve them; others want to be rid of them. All are seeking to create the ideal Barbadian.

There are other tributes to Admiral Lord Nelson in the Caribbean. There is Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua, the island on which his fleet was based and the Nelson Museum in Nevis, the birthplace of his wife. There is also a Nelson monument in Jamaica. What has made the Barbados example controversial is that the statue has frequently been prominent in the tensions surrounding Barbadian identity. For example, it is the point of reference for almost every travel writer and every tourist brochure as proof of a lasting British heritage. Note this 1999 reflection by Gary Yonge:

Nelson's column stands at the mercy of the birds in Trafalgar Square. To his left are the two houses of parliament. Straight ahead, a monument to those who gave their lives in the second world war. In the distance behind him, hangs a sign for Barclays Bank [...]

Were it not for the warm waves of the Caribbean sea lapping at his feet and the baking sun overhead you could be forgiven for forgetting that this particular Nelson stands more than eight hours flight from London, in a country

⁴ Gary Yonge, 'Caribbean at the Crossroads', *The Guardian*, G2, London, 15 April 1999, pp. 1-3 (p. 1).

that declared its independence just 30 years ago.⁵

However, the statue is also a point of reference for nationalists who strive for the evolution of a Barbadian identity that foregrounds the African-Caribbean heritage. For them, Nelson represents a cultural and psychological icon of British colonisation in the nation. Hence the 1977 folk song composed by the Mighty Gabby:

Tek down Nelson
 Tek down Nelson
 Tek down Nelson
 Put up a Bajan man⁶
 Put up a Bajan man.

For Nelson belongs in Trafalgar Square
 In London Town
 Not down here
 Nelson belong in Trafalgar Square
 In London Town
 Not in my Island!

Ironically, with the complexities witnessed in the history, it could be argued that Nelson was just as at home in Bridgetown as he is in London. Herein lies the tension. For the white Barbadian elite at the beginning of the nineteenth century, what mattered was that Nelson was the epitome of Empire, and that Barbados, the island that strove to be the epitome of Empire in the British West Indies, should erect a Nelson statue. Their sense of

⁵ Yonge, 'Caribbean at the Crossroads', p. 1. Other writers have called the Bridgetown Nelson a 'pocket edition' of the London version. Some have argued that at least the face of the Barbados Nelson can be seen, unlike the one in London. Trollope wryly commented that the difference between the two was that the Trafalgar Square in Barbados had a tree while the Charing Cross sitting did not. See John C. Van Dyke, *In the West Indies* (New York: Charles Schubner's Sons, 1932), p. 106; Owen Rutter, *If Crab No Walk: A Traveller in the West Indies* (London: Hutchinson, 1933), p. 40; Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (London: 1859), p. 194.

⁶ A 'Bajan' is a Barbadian. On 28 April 1999 the government announced that the Nelson statue would be replaced by a statue of Errol Walton Barrow, the first Prime Minister of independent Barbados, popularly known as the Father of Independence.

history demanded so grand a gesture.⁷ For the present day nationalists, shifting Nelson from his central position in the capital is their way of undermining this colonial discourse and re-fashioning a more Afro-Barbadian identity.

The statue itself is merely a relic. It is part of the tangible past, which as David Lowenthal advises, cannot stand on its own. Relics require 'interpretation to voice their reliquary role.'⁸ It can be noted that over the one hundred and eighty-six years of its existence, various groups have invested money, time and energy into the statue. Thus it stands in Barbados shrouded by memory and history:

History in isolation is barren and lifeless; relics mean only what history and memory convey. Indeed, many artifacts originated as memorial or historical witnesses. Significant apprehension of the past demands engagement with previous experience, one's own and others', along all three routes.⁹

In this case, the statue of Lord Nelson has been a historic witness, not only to the death of the Admiral in 1805, but also of significant junctures in Barbadian history. It has been used to trigger recollection as various groups assert the version of Barbadian history that suits their ends.

For example, in 1813 when the statue was erected, Barbados was a plantation society with the majority of its inhabitants being the enslaved African and African-Creole labour force. There were also a small percentage of free coloureds, free blacks and poor whites in the society. Both the enslaved and these groups were marginalised in Barbadian society and had no say in the decision making process. They were given this history as

⁷ The statue was commissioned in 1811 and was designed by the English sculptor Richard Westmacott. Trevor Marshall sees a clear connection between the decision to put up the statue to the memory of Nelson and the emergence of the use of the sobriquet 'Little England' by the white élite. Some seven years earlier, during the Napoleonic War, the white élite had sent a message to England which stated - 'Carry on England, Little England is behind You!' What Marshall sees is a link with Empire with the white élite doing their best to be seen as loyal English subjects. See Trevor Marshall, 'Cultural Development and Cultural Problems in Barbados: An Historical and Contemporary Analysis', (unpublished paper presented at The Fourth Conference of Commonwealth Arts Administrators, Barbados, 1988), p. 6.

⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 243.

⁹ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, p. 249.

part of their Barbadian identity and were expected to absorb it within their consciousness as true colonials. It meant that to be Barbadian, whether black, coloured or white, enslaved or free, was to laud the virtues of Admiral Lord Nelson and pay homage to the statue in 'Trafalgar Square'.

The writer who has best captured this paradox of colonialism in relation to Nelson is Austin Clarke. In his novel, *Growing Up Stupid Under The Union Jack*, he describes what life was like for himself as a young boy growing up in Barbados in the 1940s. Having explained how his Mother used English Pears soap and bathed him in an English tub made of Wallaba wood, Clarke makes the following reflection:

Once I saw the soap before it was opened from its wrapping, and I read in amazement and wonder, the short history on its label. *Nelson the hero of Trafalgar and Pears Soap have become the most familiar names in the English language.* I knew Nelson. He was the man who had shouted "England expects every man to do his duty!" [...] This expectation of duty was written in the history book, and at the base of the statue of Nelson, which stands in the middle of our capital Bridgetown looking out to sea "to see what he can see", as we used to say when [we] passed the statue in Town. Nelson was dead hundreds of years before, but every small boy in Barbados giggled and laughed in the suds of Nelson's memory and history; and we would stand in the middle of a fishing boat, or perhaps with luck in life, on the deck of a schooner, and shout, 'Little England expects every man to do his duty!' We were English [...] We were the English of Little England. Little black Englishmen.¹⁰

What the Barbadian white oligarchy had succeeded in doing was making the Nelson statue become the tangible manifestation of the ideology imposed by the colonial narrative. Hence the Clarke assertion that as a young black boy living in colonial Barbados, Nelson had become part of his psyche. As he states, he knew Nelson. With the decolonisation process, that effect on the Barbadian psyche did not disappear. This is because imperialism, as Edward Said argues, 'lingers where it has always been, in a kind

¹⁰ Austin Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under The Union Jack* (Cuba: Casa De Las Américas, 1980), pp. 50-51.

of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices'.¹¹

Consequently, it is not surprising that with the independence movement of the 1960s, Nelson became a signifier for the intangible remnants of imperialism. For example, Peter Simmons began campaigning for the removal of the Nelson statue from 1961. A sociologist, he knew the importance of icons in a community. His argument was that Nelson had never been a national hero for Barbadians, especially Black Barbadians. His removal would be the symbolic act of effecting decolonisation in the nation. The historian Trevor Marshall took a similar position. Seeing Nelson as a 'relic of colonialism', Marshall was always concerned with what he termed the propaganda that went with the statue: 'Generations of Barbadians were taught to salute on passing Nelson.' For him, Nelson was not a national hero and thus not deserving of such homage.¹²

Following independence in 1966, there were periodic discussions about the statue, with camps equally divided over whether it should stay or be removed. Each successive government would vote against its removal. In 1998, when discussions raged over the nomination of national heroes, predictably the question of Nelson came up again. There were calls for his removal by those who argued that he had never been a national hero of Barbados. This time Marshall focused his concern on the prevalence of colonial myths in the independent nation and questioned what purpose they served:

The problem in exploding a myth such as that of Lord Nelson is that in doing so, one assaults the self-esteem of the elite in the society and affronts their sense of

¹¹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994, [1993]), p. 8.

¹² Personal interview with Peter Simmons, now High Commissioner of Barbados to the United Kingdom, 22 November 1998; Trevor Marshall as quoted by Adonijah, 'Who is this Lord Nelson?', *Weekend Nation*, 16 April 1999, p. 25.

tribal supremacy. But facts are facts and our society will continue to be less than a perfect one if it preserves these myths and inflated notions of the past.¹³

Proponents for the keeping of the statue, such as the journalist Keyvn Arthur, argued that Nelson was important to Barbadian and West Indian history and that this could not be easily changed. He compared the Nelson statue to the Emancipation statue, which was erected in 1984, and saw them both as expressing gratitude by a grateful country:

If 50 years from now Bajans have outgrown, are bored by, the need to commemorate our emancipation from slavery, removing the emancipation statue would also be to remove the evidence that we once felt strongly enough about slavery to erect an emancipation statue.

Which would be trying to doctor our history, trying to pretend that certain elements of it never happened. But we can pretend all we want: our history is our history.¹⁴

With the debate going at full blast, the government chose to listen to those who argued for the removal of the statue and agreed to do so. The Minister of Education, Culture and Youth Affairs, Mia Mottley, has no qualms in doing this for it is apparently now official: Nelson is not a national hero:

Clearly we do not feel that Nelson was a national hero of Barbados. But we recognise the contributions he made to British and European colonial history and we have set up a commission to consider a more appropriate place for him.¹⁵

Thus it was that on 28 April 1999, the area on which the statue is sited was re-named for

¹³ See for example 'Statue of one not a national hero', *The Nation*, 14 April 1998, p. 4; 'Remove Nelson! Rev. Charles Morris calls on Gov't to 'do the right thing'', *The Barbados Advocate*, 18 May 1998, p. 3; Trevor Marshall, 'The Lord Nelson Myth', *The Barbados Advocate*, 23 October 1998, p. 9.

¹⁴ Kevyn Arthur, 'Toujours Nelson', *Sunday Advocate*, 25 October 1998, p. 3.

¹⁵ As quoted by Gary Yonge in 'Caribbean at the Crossroads', p. 2.

the third time. Originally called 'The Green' because of a huge tree which had dominated the centre of the capital, in the nineteenth century the white oligarchy re-named it 'Trafalgar Square' as an appropriate title for the site of the Nelson statue.¹⁶ Now it has been re-named 'National Heroes Square', as a tribute to the ten persons who in 1998 were proclaimed national heroes of Barbados. What results is that the icon of colonialism now stands in the place appointed symbolically to be the icon of nationalism. It is claimed to be a temporary arrangement until the decision for its final resting-place is given.

Yet one cannot help but note the irony. Though fallen from his position as national hero, Nelson still presides (literally and figuratively) over a juncture of change in the history. In this sense the statue continues to play that most critical role. It is the tangible manifestation of a struggle to come to terms with what constitutes Barbadian national and cultural identity.

Therefore, these machinations of whether Nelson stays, goes or is re-sited has been the Barbadian way of playing out a much larger discourse. It can be interpreted as follows: to what extent can a former colony ever come to terms with its History and the elements of its colonial past that have shaped its national present?

(b) 'Living in the shadow of Englishness'

It is hard to select a metaphor for the composition of cultural history. A tapestry is something of a cliché and is altogether too fixed and unchanging according to the angle of which it is regarded. Yet what is needed for the analysis is a metaphor relating to a work of art which is woven, but which is made up of strands of different lengths and visibility.

Colonialism is one thick strand in this hard to distinguish panorama of Barbadian

¹⁶ Fraser, A-Z, p. 121.

history. It surfaces at many different points in the picture. It configures and disfigures what we can see. What we can see is also a function of the changing perspectives and percipience of this spectator of the picture. What there is to see, and what he or she can see, is determined by the exchange of social meanings.

Charles Taylor argues that intersubjective meanings are the background to all social action. They are 'constitutive of the social matrix in which individuals find themselves and act.' Political scientists usually place intersubjective meanings under the heading of 'consensus', meaning a convergence of beliefs on certain attitudes or basic matters. Taylor radically disagrees with this practice because for him, the two are not the same: 'Whether there is consensus or not, the condition of there being either one or the other is a certain set of common terms of reference.'¹⁷

Consequently, Taylor places the emphasis on the social practice itself and not on the response to it, whether it is a consensus, or what he terms a 'profound cleavage' between the parties. As he states:

intersubjective meanings are a condition of a certain kind of very profound cleavage, such as was visible in the Reformation, or the American Civil War, or splits in left wing parties, where the dispute is at fever pitch because both sides can fully understand each other.¹⁸

What interests Taylor is that common language of political and social reality that informs the social practice over which the parties will agree or disagree. This language can be found in the institutions and practices of the society.

In other words, convergence of belief or attitude or its absence presupposes a common language in which these beliefs can be formulated, and in which these formulations can be opposed. Much of this common language in any society is

¹⁷ Charles Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1985]), p. 36.

¹⁸ Taylor, *Philosophy*, p. 37.

rooted in its institutions and practices; it is constitutive of these institutions and practices. It is part of the intersubjective meanings.¹⁹

When the Taylor thesis of intersubjective meanings is applied to the Lord Nelson dilemma, some insight into the complexity of the issue is provided. Like the profound cleavage to which Taylor referred, one of the major points in the Nelson dispute is that it reached fever pitch because all sides fully understood and wished to defeat each other. There is that common language of which Taylor speaks, a deep unspoken acknowledgement that what is at stake is much more than a statue. What the disputing groups in Barbados share are the intersubjective meanings of colonial history, brought painfully into sharp focus by the issue of Nelson.

Here Barbados is not alone, for the narratives surrounding Nelson made him an icon of Englishness in the age of Empire. To understand the process, which led to the evolution of this identity for Nelson, it is interesting to apply the Amélie Rorty theory of how personal identities are constructed.

Nelson embodies practically all of the identities that Rorty defines. As a national hero he is a 'character' and thus is seen as not having a crisis of identity. As an 'individual' he is the 'self-reliant pioneer, an isolated being hewing out his place in the world, forming the perspective that is an individual's vision in the world.'²⁰ Over time the Admiral became part of myth which makes him become a 'figure': 'his figurative identity shapes the significances and order of the events in his life. Figures of course become exemplary.' He is also the possessor of his own properties, which allows him to satisfy the category of 'self'. Finally, Nelson is a 'presence', which Rorty sees as 'a mode

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 'A Literary Postscript: Characters, Persons, Selves, Individuals', in Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 301-323 (pp. 303-7 and 316-7).

of identity invented precisely to go beyond achievement and wilfulness.²¹

With such a powerful combination of identities, Nelson of Trafalgar becomes radiant. He is revered as the ideal Englishman, with the emphasis on the patriarchal order that defends the realm. Having saved the English from the threat of the French and the Spanish at the Battle of Trafalgar, he is made to be the epitome of all that the British Empire could achieve. Calling the Battle of Trafalgar ‘the naval counterpart to Waterloo’,²² Oliver Warner summarises its significance as follows:

In fact, Trafalgar was both sunset and dawn. It was the sunset of large-scale battles under sail, and it was the dawn of a supremacy at sea which held for more than a century. Its effects on world history was long-term, widespread and, surely, Beneficent, since British naval power was used, in the main, as a means of maintaining peace.²³

Though the extent to which British naval power was used to maintain peace can be debated, what Warner has captured is the perception of what Trafalgar came to mean in the British psyche. The Admiral came to represent ‘H’istory; the singular narrative of Britannia, the Union Jack and the Island-Kingdom.

All of this comes packed with Nelson, and any of his manifestations, whether they are in London, Dublin, or Bridgetown. It was so interpreted by a splinter group of the I. R. A. who made the Nelson Pillar in Dublin a target for destruction. They blew it up in 1966 because it was one of the supreme icons of Englishness:

After years of frustrated attempts, legal and illicit, to remove Nelson, symbol of British Rule, the end had come in time for the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising. Many were delighted for either political or aesthetic reasons. Others were

²¹ Rorty, ‘A Literary Postscript’, pp. 308 and 319.

²² Oliver Warner, *Trafalgar* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1959), p. 158.

²³ Warner, *Trafalgar*, p. 172.

appalled at violence in O'Connell Street. Yet the destruction of the Pillar was not a revelation of a new militancy but of a corroding frustration. British rule in the North had never seemed less vulnerable.²⁴

It is also the case with British Airways who, in June 1999, made the decision to repaint the tail fins of their planes in the colours of the flag that Nelson flew at the Battle of Trafalgar. Under pressure from critics like Lady Margaret Thatcher who disliked the ethnic motifs that they had painted on the tail fins in 1997, British Airways reached for what in their estimation was the ultimate symbol of Britishness: Admiral Lord Nelson and his version of the Union Jack. Note the report in *The Guardian*:

After spending £60m rebranding itself as a politically correct multicultural airline with images such as Chinese calligraphy and Aboriginal art on its tailfins, the company announced on Monday that it would, once more, fly the flag.²⁵

Ironically, 60% of the BA customers from abroad like the ethnic motifs. It was the UK customers who sent letters of protest, many of which were xenophobic and racist. Hence the decision to call upon the imperial memory when Nelson was supreme and Britain ruled the waves. As Michael Skapinker commented in the *Financial Times*: 'What BA appeared to be saying to its UK customers yesterday was if you want to glory in the past, we have just the design for you.'²⁶

²⁴ The explosion occurred on 7 March 1966 at 1:32 a. m. in O'Connell Street, Dublin. Much of the Nelson Pillar was destroyed. Though the event did get maximum attention, the IRA chose to distance themselves from the act. J. Bowyer Bell quotes their official statement: "As a corollary to this attitude the Republican Movement has not concerned itself in the slightest way with the destruction of monuments of foreign origin, nor has the Movement aided implicitly or explicitly such demolitions." See J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA 1916 – 1979* (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1990 [1970]), pp. 343-4.

²⁵ See Julia Finch, 'BA flies the flag Once More', *The Guardian*, 7 June 1999, p. 22. In 1997 Dame (then Lady) Thatcher expressed her disgust by covering up an ethnic tail fin on a BA model saying: 'We fly the British flag, not these awful things you put on the tail.' See the Editorial, *The Sunday Times*, 6 June 1999, p. 16.

²⁶ See Michael Skapinker, 'Passengers force about-turn on BA's flight of fancy', *Financial Times*, 7 June 1999, p. 8. Of the 340 planes that BA flies, 160 will carry the UK flag. The new design 'was created by the Admiral's own flag loft in the historic naval dockyard at Chatham in Kent. This design features red, white and blue wavy stripes.' See David Parsley, 'BA to fly the flag again and ditch ethnic tail fins', *The Sunday Times*, 6 June 1999, p. 1 and p. 28.

Consequently, Nelson continues to resonate with significance, both in Britain and Barbados, almost two centuries after his great feat.²⁷ It is this significance that feeds the debates about his relevance to present day Barbadian identity.

It is my argument that one of the reasons why the Nelson narrative remains so powerful today is because it has been made into myth. As a national myth, Nelson claims his ultimate power:

For such constructed myths have an extraordinary power to rally, whether at the ballot box or on the battlefield. And in exercising that power, national myths and the sense of history which they help to build also raise fundamental questions of just who belongs and who does not. Time and again, in rallying solidarity they also exclude, and persecute the excluded.²⁸

What both the BA and Barbados examples demonstrate is the way national myths designate spaces of belonging within the nation. Their rallying cry makes them particularly powerful. Only when myths are closely scrutinised, elements that might weaken their configuration are revealed. As Roland Barthes advises, '*myth hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear.*'²⁹ When challenged with intricate historical details, the weaknesses in the myths are revealed.

Perhaps the more obvious of the loopholes in the Nelson myth lies in the deliberate avoidance of any reference to his personal life and his illicit relationship with Lady Hamilton. In the recent decision by British Airways to use the flag, there was a notable silence about the extent to which the notorious liaison with Lady Hamilton

²⁷ With reference to Britain, note the euphoria over the 1991 discovery of a portrait of Nelson 'in the raw', painted circa 1800. See Martin Bailey, 'Nelson 'snapshot' Revealed', *The Observer*, 8 September 1991, p. 64. Note also the debate over the Nelson death masks that were on show at the Royal Naval Museum in 1992. The question of when they would have been made (whether before or after his death) baffled the historians. See Alison Roberts, 'Nelson Controversy stares Historians in the Face', *The Times*, 21 October 1992, p. 10.

²⁸ Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, ed., *The Myths We Live By* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 18-19.

²⁹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, tr. from the French by Annette Lavers (Paladin: 1976 [1957]), p. 121.

impinged upon the image of British perfection that Nelson supposedly embodies. When asked whether BA had considered this, the *Financial Times* reports that a ‘dead pan Mr. Ayling’ said ‘Lord Nelson was the most successful naval commander of all time.’ What worked for Mr. Ayling was the myth.³⁰

This part of the narrative underlying the Nelson myth was also closely hidden in the Barbados narrative. Clarke asserts that such knowledge would have changed the general Barbadian opinion of him. ‘At that time, I did not know he was a fornicator. Had Miss Smith, my Sunday School teacher, who liked Nelson also, known this, she would have closed the book on his sin. She would have prayed for him, too.’³¹

Herein lies the tension. When the Nelson myth is used by the British to sustain their ‘sense of antiquity’³², as demonstrated here by British Airways, the extent to which their intricately flawed history, embedded as forms of pure simplification in national myths, is problematic, is a matter for them to debate. When colonial subjects (and ex-colonial subjects) are expected to invest in the myth as well, the character of the situation changes significantly. Both Benedict Anderson and Simon Gikandi have discussed this in relation to the English national myth of William the Conqueror. Their findings are applicable here.

Benedict Anderson had argued that to the question ‘Conqueror of What’:

the only intelligible modern answer would have to be ‘Conqueror of the English’, which would turn the old Norman predator into a more successful precursor of

³⁰ Skapinker, *Financial Times*, p. 8. It is also enlightening to read the Oliver Warner opinion of why Nelson became so important a figure in history. Warner argues that what Nelson and Trafalgar provided was a diversion from the affairs on the continent and the reality of a seemingly unstoppable Napoleon. The occasion of Nelson’s death gave the artists work to do and the chance to stage a state funeral. Nelson and Trafalgar provided the stuff of which legends were made. The assertion that Nelson had saved Britain from invasion was, as Warner argues, ‘allowed to pass for truth’ for more than a century. For Warner, Nelson’s importance lies in him removing ‘the last possibility of a threat to this country’. See Warner, *Trafalgar*, p.161.

³¹ Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid*, p. 51

³² Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.25.

Napoléon and Hitler. Hence ‘the Conqueror’ operates as the same kind of ellipses as ‘la Saint-Barthélemy’, to remind one of something which it is immediately obligatory to forget.³³

Gikandhi extended this Anderson reading. He argued that not only is the myth of William the Conqueror ‘bizarre’ because a close reading of it shows that the founding father of England was French, but also because in the colonial situation

colonial subjects are invited to invest in it against all logic and common sense. When we first encounter this myth in the colonial textbook, for example, it strikes us with all the powers of a phantasmagoria: here the colonized are asked to consume the foundational narrative of Englishness — in order to identify with it — but not to understand it well enough to question its pseudo-historicism or false cartography.³⁴

Gikandi concludes that when such a narrative is put in the colonial situation, it goes beyond the ellipses that Anderson had suggested. He argues that everything, whether it is cultural, social, historical or ideological, is turned into what Barthes has deigned ‘the natural’.³⁵ Hence, when Barbadians argue that Nelson is part of ‘our history’ and that he is a part of ‘us’, we are obliged to elide the extent to which as colonials, we ingested the coloniser’s national myths and made them, in our turn, become ‘natural’.

This is key to understanding why the struggle with Nelson is so intense. It is this question of complicity with the colonisers, of ingesting his myths, which makes the decolonisation process difficult. The current tussle with Nelson has gained significance because of the power of the myth in the decolonisation period. Though Barbados attained independence in 1966, it is still very much living in what Gikandi calls ‘the shadow of Englishness’:

³³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso: London and New York, 1991 [1983]), p. 201.

³⁴ Gikandhi, *Maps of Englishness*, p. 25

³⁵ Gikandi, p. 25. For the full Barthes text see Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, tr. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), p. 65.

Living in the shadow of Englishness, even in our postcolonial moment, demands that one begin to come to terms with not only the legacy of empire but also the 'presentness' of the culture of colonialism even in the discourses and political practices that negate it. It also demands that we recognize the mutual imbrication of both colonizer and the colonized in the making of modern social and cultural formations.³⁶

It is this 'presentness' of Nelson as a colonial and imperial figure that resonates so powerfully today. It is this 'presentness' which comes through in the recent debates about Nelson. It makes the debate in Barbados go beyond the question of the statue or even Nelson himself. It becomes less of Empire, than of the role of imperialism in the making of the nation. It represents the struggle for ideological space within the nation.

And yet, it is precisely this act of wrestling, this coming to grips with the multiple components of a nation's identity that helps the nation to define itself:

the space of the modern nation-people is never simply horizontal. Their metaphoric movement requires a kind of 'doubleness' in writing; a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a 'centred' causal logic. And such cultural movements disperse the homogeneous, visual time of the horizontal society.³⁷

Let us argue that Nelson is something of a floating signifier, in Laclau's sense of the term.³⁸ This would explain the struggle over the signification, as the meanings change with changing circumstances over the history. This shift in meanings would illustrate Hall's algebra of the elements in the configuration of identity:

A configuration is of necessity a complex of different elements. What is unique about them is not that each configuration is different from the other, it lies in the internal arrangement of the constituent elements, here one element is

³⁶ Gikandhi, *Maps of Englishness*, p 20.

³⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation' in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (Routledge: London and New York, 1994 [1990]), pp. 291-322 (p. 293).

³⁸ E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, *Socialist Strategy and Political Hegemony* (London: Verso, 1985)

foregrounded, there another element.³⁹

When the emphasis was placed on being colonial and English, these elements in the configuration were highlighted. Now that the task is decolonisation and the emphasis is on being African-Caribbean and independent, these elements make Nelson a thorn in the Barbadian side.

Yet his physical removal will not resolve the dispute precisely because of the configuration of Barbadian identity. It is my argument that among the many elements that constitute Barbadian identity, the Barbadian is part African, part British, part mixtures of all that constitute those two major groups, part American, part Anglophile, part Anglophobic, part believers in History and part seekers of histories. As Hall says:

What would it mean to think of the true Barbadian as an African when he or she is so clearly the complex outcome of the threading together in the furnace of colonial society of a series of complex African and other elements?⁴⁰

(Ironically, as we shall see, it is precisely this African element that the Barbadian needs to seek out in order to understand the complex outcome of the colonial furnace of which Hall speaks.)

Consequently, when some proponents advocate that the removal of Nelson will be symbolic of the removal of the anglicised part of Barbadian identity, they fail to comprehend that this anglicised bit is now very entangled with the entity known as 'Barbadian'. Yet it is a viral remnant of the colonial legacy which continues to infect the evolving new components of Barbadian identity. Herein lies the conundrum. To what extent can a former colonised people ever succeed at coming to terms with these viral

³⁹ Stuart Hall, 'Thinking Diasporically: Home Thoughts From Abroad', Distinguished Lecture Series, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, 18 November 1998.

⁴⁰ Hall, 'Thinking Diasporically'.

remnants of colonialism?

II

Decolonisation and Culture

(a) *Culture and Theory*

In searching for a theory on Barbadian cultural identity, it is important to note the complexity of the task at hand. It is not just a matter of selecting a definition of culture that appears to suit the circumstance:

to adumbrate a theory of culture it is necessary to proceed from definitions to evidence and back from the evidence to definitions once again; if the anthropological and historical evidence is not fully consulted, then we may not know what to ask, nor what it is that we must define.⁴¹

It is this process of reviewing the definitions of culture and the evidence that may support or contradict those definitions, which guides the analysis in this section.

E. P. Thompson made that insight on culture and theory in a now celebrated essay in which he critiqued the conceptual framework of *The Long Revolution*, at the time the latest publication of Raymond Williams. Written in 1961, what Thompson was addressing in that essay was the Williams' definition of culture as a 'way of life'.⁴² Thompson challenged Williams on this and posed the question of what was the difference between the definition of society and his definition of culture: 'If way of life equals

⁴¹ E. P. Thompson, 'The Long Revolution', *New Left Review*, 9: May-June (1961) 24-33 and 10: July-August (1961) 34-39 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961)

⁴² Thompson, 'The Long Revolution', p. 32.

culture then what is society apart from way of life: does society equal culture also?' For Thompson, what was missing was the element of handled experience:

Any theory of culture must include the concept of the dialectical interaction between culture and something that is *not* culture. We must suppose the raw material of life-experience to be at one pole, and the infinitely complex human disciplines and systems, articulate and inarticulate, formalised in institutions or dispersed in the least formal ways, which "handle", transmit, or distort this raw material to be at the other. It is the active *process* — which is at the same *time the process through which men make their history* — that I am insisting upon.⁴³

Hence, Thompson argued that any definition of culture must be one that clarifies how society changes. He suggested that the definition 'way of life' should be changed to 'way of conflict', or the Marxist perspective: 'way of struggle'.⁴⁴

When Williams published his *Keywords* in 1976, he provided an in-depth analysis of the term 'culture'.⁴⁵ Beginning with the pronouncement that culture is 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language', Williams went on to warn against using a definition which ignored the complex elements in the term: 'It is clear that, within a discipline, conceptual usage has to be clarified. But it is the range and overlap of meanings that is significant.'⁴⁶ Williams then reinstated his original definition of culture to its place of prominence:

The complex of senses indicates a complex argument about the relations between general human development and a particular way of life, and between both and the works and practices of art and intelligence.⁴⁷

It is my argument that both the Williams and Thompson definition assist in engendering

⁴³ Thompson, p. 33.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), pp. 76-82.

⁴⁶ Williams, *Keywords*, pp. 76 and 80.

⁴⁷ Williams, *Keywords*, pp. 80-1.

an understanding of the complexity of the term 'culture'. Further insight into how culture shapes identity is gained when the views of Clifford Geertz and Stuart Hall are noted. For Geertz, a working definition of culture was 'stories we tell ourselves about ourselves'. These stories, or narratives about ourselves, then assisted in defining our identity. To this, Stuart Hall added the following observation. 'Identity is not only a story, a narrative which we tell ourselves about ourselves, it is stories which change with historical circumstances'. In other words, historical circumstances will change what is viewed as the culture of a society, and what will then be viewed as the identity of that culture.⁴⁸

In the case of the Caribbean, chief among the historical circumstances that would have shaped the culture were the experiences of enslavement, indentureship and plantation labour. The resulting creole experience, in which the various elements of the European, West African and Asian cultures would have merged and intertwined according to the peculiarities of the history, would greatly assist in determining the shape of that culture.

For those persons of the Caribbean who were the descendants of the enslaved Africans, or who, inevitably, were in some way influenced by them, their understanding of culture becomes more complex. Note this Michael Gomez analysis:

The African American represents an amalgam of the ethnic matrix; that is, the African American identity is in fact a composite of identities. In certain areas and periods of time, the composite approached a uniform whole, as the transition from ethnicity to race was more thoroughgoing. But for other times and locations, the composite was fragmented and incomplete. When incomplete, differences having their origin in ethnic distinctions were in instances carried over into differences of status, thus transforming the original ethnic divide without ever having grappled with an effective reconciliation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993 [1973]), Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities', p. 8.

⁴⁹ Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: the Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 13.

For a further understanding specifically of the Caribbean perspective, we can turn to the Edward Kamau Brathwaite theory of what has become popularly known as the theory of the 'submerged mother'. In this Brathwaite thesis, he argues that for some slave societies, the African culture will submerge itself and go underground as an act of resistance. Eventually, with the right stimulus, she will re-emerge and assist in the evolution of the African cultural identity of that community.

but enough has been said to indicate that for the Caribbean, as elsewhere, the basis of the culture lies in the folk, and by that we mean not in-culturated, static groups, giving little; but a people who, from the centre of an oppressive system have been able to survive, adapt, recreate; have devised means of protecting what has been so gained (miraculous, precarious maronage), and who begin to offer to return some of this experience and vision.⁵⁰

Indeed, this is the central argument of *History of the Voice*, Brathwaite's examination of language in the Anglophone Caribbean. He contends that though in terms of its lexical features this language could be seen as English, 'it is an English which is not the standard imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility, which has always been there'. He rejects the term dialect which carries the inference of it being 'inferior English', and proposes instead the concept of nation language. 'Nation language, on the other hand, is the *submerged* area of that dialect which is more closely allied to the African aspect of experience in the Caribbean.'⁵¹

In keeping with the Thompson argument that the theory must be tested against the evidence, it is interesting to note the observation of Hilary Beckles in relation to this question of the submerged culture of Barbados. Beckles has argued that in Barbados, a combination of events forced the enslaved to make critical choices in relation to the

⁵⁰ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens*, pp. 58, 17-21, and 64 respectively.

⁵¹ Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. (London: New Beacon Books Ltd., 1984), p. 13.

African culture. With a much-reduced number of imported Africans, the creole slaves were encouraged by the Planters to reject their African legacy.

Blacks responded in two basic ways to this intense social pressure. First by taking *underground* those elements of the culture which could survive without public display. These included aspects of religion and philosophic world views. Obeah, for example, survived underground in spite of legislation which outlawed its practise as a social ritual or religious construct. Second by assimilating European-derived elements of the creole culture so as to achieve social and material betterment.⁵² [my emphasis]

Hence the creole slave exercised both choices. In doing so, they were able to preserve many aspects of their African heritage within another form. For Beckles this would be the logical outcome.

The creative arts, mortuary practices, language and social philosophy of the post-slavery period illustrate that even where the traditional African forms were not present, the spirit, feel and content of cultural life survived, though diluted and metamorphosed.⁵³

Brathwaite himself has described Barbadian African culture as a hidden one or an underground culture. According to him, Barbadians had to resort to 'psychological marroonage' as a way of preserving their African culture in the face of the constant onslaught of British culture.⁵⁴ He proposes that the nature of this culture be such that on the one hand it can appear to be non-existent and on the other it can produce writers of such international acclaim as George Lamming.⁵⁵

⁵² Beckles, *History of Barbados*, p. 52

⁵³ Beckles, *History of Barbados*, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Brathwaite, *Bajan Report* p. 7.

⁵⁵ Lamming has written several novels and essays, the best known of which are *In the Castle of My Skin* and *In the Pleasures of Exile*. Of course Brathwaite himself is another example of a Barbadian writer with international acclaim. To this list of writers can be added the growing list of musicians for example, who receive international awards for their Barbadian music. This discussion is fully developed in the Crop Over Chapter.

It is this question of an underground, or submerged culture that becomes crucial in understanding the nature of Barbadian society and culture. What will result is that though there may be an onslaught on the actual cultural forms and practices which may cause them to be reduced, or erased, what will continue to linger is the desire for the form or practice. R. G. Collingwood calls this process 'incapsulation'. With this process, the desire for the form survives 'in the form of an unsatisfied desire'.⁵⁶ When the opportunity arises, the desire for the cultural form will assist in realising the cultural form. Here both Brathwaite and Collingwood agree that this is a vital cultural process.

Hence in evolving a theory on Barbadian culture, this question of an underground culture must be taken into account. What then becomes apparent is a cultural battle between the culture that is seen and can be easily controlled, and the one that remains ever present but invisible. Unless this underground culture is noted, this 'invisible presence' of which Glissant speaks⁵⁷, then the culture that is visible is the one that is most prominent in the narratives about the culture of the nation.

Yet, as the following section demonstrates, the traditional theorists on Barbadian culture have ignored the underground culture. These theorists do not seek to understand the culture through the literary works of Edward Kamau Brathwaite, George Lamming or Austin Clarke, for example, or through the evolving new histories by historians such as Hilary Beckles. What they then surmise is that the way of life of the Barbadian has been one in which the colonial ideal alone has held sway. In other words, Barbadians, particularly Black Barbadians, were so traumatised by the colonial experience, that they 'loss' their 'African' culture and forever became mimic men and women. The advent of Independence would only be able to repair this to an extent. In the following section, the

⁵⁶ R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959 [1939]). See his argument on why the Celtic revival, pp. 137-146.

⁵⁷ Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, tr. and with an introduction by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1989), pp. 66-7.

views of such commentators on Barbadian culture will be reviewed and analysed.

(b) Black Barbadian Heritage and Deculturation

In the act of creating models of Caribbean cultural identity, cultural theorists devised a system in which countries were arranged along a spectrum determined by the existence of cultural remnants of the African legacy. What evolved was a somewhat convenient, but functional system of grouping Caribbean countries into the categories of the 'most', or 'least' Africanised. In all of these models, whether they referred to the Anglophone Caribbean alone, or to the entire region, Barbados provided the extreme boundary on the cultural spectrum. It was, and in some cases still is argued, that Black Barbadians are the 'least' Africanised Caribbean peoples for they suffered a 'loss' of their 'African' culture. On the other hand, for the Anglophone Caribbean, Jamaica has been designated as the 'most' Africanised society.

Current scholarship has provided a much more complex analysis of this process of cultural transfer in the Caribbean, especially in relation to the African-Caribbean legacy. Yet, it is surprising to see that the analysis is yet to be applied to Barbados. The nation is still presented as the most English of the Caribbean islands. It is argued that because of the pressures of the plantation, the Africans lost the struggle to keep their culture. It is my contention that though other models of Caribbean identity have been reviewed and updated, the Barbados model is yet to receive similar treatment. Many current cultural theories on Barbados continue to perpetuate the old order.

This section examines the issue of deculturation in relation to Barbados. It has been further divided into two parts. The first looks at a recently published argument

which maintains that Barbados is the ‘least Africanised’ Caribbean country. The second explores the history of the deculturation theory for Barbados and argues that though revisions of the history have emphasised the African-Creole heritage, the cultural theorists have chosen to ignore them.

(i) *Benítez-Rojo and the old paradigm*

In what I see as a surprising move for an eminent Caribbean scholar, Antonio Benítez-Rojo, in his 1996 edition of *The Repeating Island*, renewed the discourse of the black Barbadian being, as he put it, ‘the least Africanised’ of all Caribbean peoples. Whilst debating how the plantation culture affected the enslaved, Rojo declared the following:

[I]t is generally agreed that Haiti, Cuba, and Jamaica are, in this order, the islands whose cultures show a greater degree of Africanization. Moreover, among the Antillean islands with the least African culture, Barbados is usually presented as the first example.⁵⁸

Benítez-Rojo presents what can be seen as a traditional analysis of why this is so. With the emphasis on what he calls ‘the epoch at which the Plantation machinery was set up’, he argues that the Haitians had the Revolution and the sustaining life system of voodoo; Cuba had a belated plantation culture; and Jamaica, though it became a plantation society, began as a Spanish one based on the economic enterprise of buccaneering. Also, Jamaica had a thriving maroonage culture in which runaway slaves provided permanent settlements of resistance to the plantation ideal.⁵⁹

Not so Barbados. With a full plantation society, the African in Barbados suffered

⁵⁸ Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd edn. tr. by James E. Maraniss (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996 [1992]), p.66.

⁵⁹ Benítez-Rojo, pp. 68-70.

the ultimate loss:

In Plantation conditions, in spite of the enormous percentages reached by the number of slaves in relation to the total population, the African was reduced to living under an incarcerating regimen of forced labor, which stood in the way of his being able to exert a cultural influence upon the European and creole population. Still more, he was living under a deculturating regimen that took direct action against his language, his religion, and his customs, as African practices were looked upon with suspicion, and many of them controlled or prohibited.⁶⁰

Benítez-Rojo argued that slave children were separated from their mothers at birth, that different ethnic groups were split up on the plantation, and that in Barbados, working conditions were so bad that half of the population had to be renewed every year. He then summarised his findings:

In my opinion, one has to conclude that the Negro slave who arrived at the Caribbean colony before the Plantation was organized contributed much more toward Africanizing the creole culture than did the one who came within the great shipments typical of the Plantation in its heyday.⁶¹

With these statements, Benítez-Rojo revisited the controversial debate on the question of the African heritage in the Caribbean. In his analysis, he put the plantation squarely at its centre, arguing that it was the central factor in shaping African-Caribbean culture. This is one of his main contentions, as revealed in a recent comment:

Yes, I repeat, the plantation is my old and paradoxical homeland. It is the machine that Las Casas described, but it is also much more: the hollow center of the minuscule galaxy that gives shape to my identity. There are no organized history or family trees in that center; its tremendous and prolonged explosion has projected everything outward. There, as a child of the plantation, I am a mere fragment, or an idea that spins around my own absence, just as a drop of rain spins

⁶⁰ Benítez-Rojo, p. 70.

⁶¹ Ibid.

around the empty eye of the hurricane that set it going.⁶²

Consequently for Benítez-Rojo, the plantation is an essential dimension for any exploration of Caribbean culture.

No doubt, to a great extent, factors surrounding the plantation culture did determine the weight of the contribution by the African slave in the creolisation process. Yet it cannot be assumed that if there was a strong plantation culture, what resulted was a decultured (whatever that would be) African-Caribbean person. What would be needed is a thorough analysis of the history, if it is recoverable, to understand the nature of the plantation culture in that society and the ways in which the enslaved and their descendants responded to it.

Here Benítez-Rojo erred. For a text revised in 1996, there is an obvious lack of updated information on the slave conditions in Barbados. Benítez-Rojo based his analysis on the findings of Eric Williams in his text *From Columbus to Castro*, published in 1970. Though a well-respected work, much of the record has been updated and revised in the ensuing three decades! Hilary Beckles has proven that in the late eighteenth century, the slave labour force in Barbados was stable and predominantly creole, not imported African and dying in large numbers every year. Barbadian planters had reduced the numbers of enslaved that they imported in favour of encouraging the growth of their creole slave labourers. If anything, the question becomes one of the extent to which the creole slave population chose, or subconsciously preserved many elements of their African heritage.⁶³

Then there is the adage repeated here that planters separated the ethnic groups of

⁶² Benítez-Rojo, 'Three Words towards Creolisation' in Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnes Sourieau, ed., *Caribbean Creolisation: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature and Identity* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press and Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1998), pp. 53-61 (p. 54).

⁶³ A large percentage of the data that Benítez-Rojo provides in his end notes, including population statistics comes from the Williams text. See Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, pp. 318-22. See also Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: the History of the Caribbean* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

the slaves and thus they could not communicate. Historians, as well as linguists specialising in Caribbean languages, have continuously challenged this. It presumes that there is no sub-Saharan language system within Caribbean languages that lent to communication between African peoples. It also pre-empts the human persistence that finds ways and means of communicating for common interests.⁶⁴

What the Benítez-Rojo analysis also lacks is a review of the complexities of this question of deculturation, of what exactly is meant by the term. As I shall show in the following section, the extent to which the term can be used with any accuracy is very debatable.

Finally, like many of the cultural theorists who write about Barbados, he failed to take notice of the changes in Barbados in the Independence era. Though identity evolves and changes over time, what these Caribbean models need is for Barbados to have a fixed, stable, unchanging identity, so that the boundaries for the discussion remain fixed as well. Consequently, such celebrations as the Crop Over festival, which has provided a creative space for what I argue is the re-emergence and reaffirmation of a distinctly Barbadian black identity, is ignored. In this festival, the very characteristics that Benítez-Rojo sees in the carnivalesque and that he takes great care to analyse in *The Repeating Island*, indeed repeat themselves in Barbados. So, as he would argue, the question becomes one of how the culture chooses to manifest itself in the space in which it creates for this act of revealing and becoming.⁶⁵

It is my contention that Benítez-Rojo, like most scholars, assumed a knowledge of

For the Beckles data see Beckles, *The History of Barbados*, pp. 51-55. Note especially the table on p. 55.

⁶⁴ For the data on the sub-Saharan languages in the Caribbean see Richard Allsopp, ed., *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. xxxi - xxxiv.

⁶⁵ See Chapter Eleven for a full discussion of the role of carnival in Caribbean societies in the Caribbean and in the diaspora. Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, pp.294-312.

Barbados that pre-empted any in-depth analysis of Barbadian history and culture. The old practise of pitting Barbados against Jamaica has gained the ranks of the 'tried and true'.

In many ways it has become a matter of course for Caribbean cultural theorists.

(ii) *The issue of deculturation*

It was Frantz Fanon who argued that a colonized people were a 'people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local originality.'⁶⁶ It is in this light that the Black Barbadian has been viewed, as an ideal prototype of the Fanon dictum of a colonised people.

Proponents of this loss of culture debates in the 1960s and 1970s would often refer to what was perceived until recently as a reality; the lack of a distinctly African creative expression, in both the public, and to an extent, the private space. For most, this lack of African expression was indicated by the absence of the African drum and the traditions associated with it in the performance culture. Indeed, the big cultural debate of the 1970s was whether Barbadians had a culture, especially an African culture. Informants report that the few congo drums they had at the time had been brought in the 1960s to play for tourists in the hotels.⁶⁷ Otherwise, it was not possible to go into a village in Barbados and see the playing of an African drum, for most of this century. It was said that the African

⁶⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986 [1957]), p. 18.

⁶⁷ See for example 'Cultural Centre, a need for in Barbados', *The Advocate News*, 10 March 1970, p. 4; 'Cultural style must not be cramped', *The Advocate News*, 28 November 1973, p. 4 and 'Barbados needs to rebuild culture', *The Advocate News*, 2 August 1978, p. 8; Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Bajan Cultural Report and Plan*. (Barbados: UNESCO/Ministry of Education and Culture, March 1979), p. 23, No. 5.5.1.10. (ii).

culture, particularly what is termed performance culture, had died out or had been wiped out during slavery.

This particular belief was given academic grounding by anthropologist Sidney Greenfield in his 1966 study of Barbados. In his conclusion, he made the following comment:

The cultural patterns of the island were instituted by the English and derive directly from England. While in bondage, the Africans participated in the total pattern in only a very restricted way. Under the conditions of the slave plantation, they were able neither to re-establish African culture nor to develop new independent patterns. With emancipation, they could have had no choice but to accept the culture that had already existed in the island.⁶⁸

This analysis was directly challenged by anthropologist, Jerome Handler:

Africans did not arrive on the shores of the New World with blank minds onto which were impressed seventeenth century English culture patterns in the 1830's. Although the social system of the slave society was harsh and highly restrictive, slaves developed a complex of behavioral patterns that by any anthropological characterization was cultural.⁶⁹

He went on to support this position with the publication of a long treatise entitled 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Context', in which he and Charlotte Frisbee ably demonstrated the existence of a vibrant African performance culture during slavery. They did note a decline especially in the slave dances by the late 1820s and early 1830s, due possibly to the increased christianization of the slaves.⁷⁰

It must be noted that despite the work done by Handler and other scholars on the

⁶⁸ Greenfield, *English*, p. 171.

⁶⁹ Jerome S. Handler, Review of *English Rustics in Black Skin* in *American Anthropologists*, 71:2 (April 1969), p. 337.

⁷⁰ Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte Frisbee, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Content.' in *Caribbean Studies*, 11: 4 (1972), 5-46 (p.40)

way the African heritage has shaped the culture of Black Barbadians⁷¹, the rhetoric of the loss of the African culture still prevails. In a 1990s publication of the Barbados Tourism Authority there is the traditional misleading boast: 'Our cultural roots are grounded in over 300 years of British heritage'. There is also the 1996 article entitled 'Art, Culture and National Heritage', in which Kathleen Drayton once again gives sanction to the Greenfield stance:

The English were the dominant group for three hundred uninterrupted years, [sic] and thus the loss and concealment of cultural practices and forms of the majority African population were more evident here than in any other territory of the region.⁷²

It is ironic that in an edition entitled *Barbados Thirty Years After Independence*, the old colonial construct still finds room to breathe. In the light of how explosive the entire question of a lost or missing African culture in Barbados has always been, Drayton should have been more precise. She has broadened the argument to include the issue of concealment and thus the hint of possible recovery. However, by foregrounding the traditional anglocentric discourse, what little change to the discourse she attempted was undermined. This is particularly evident when she gives agency to the old myth of the African drum dying out during slavery.⁷³

⁷¹ See, for example, G. Addinton Forde, *de mortar-pestle. A collection of Barbadian Proverbs*. (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation, 1987); Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Jerome S. Handler and Jo-Ann Jacoby, 'Slave Medicine and Plant Use In Barbados', *JBMHS*, 41 (1993), pp. 74-98; Trevor Marshall, Peggy McGeary and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados*. (Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1996); Karl Watson, *The Civilised Island Barbados: A Social History 1750-1816*, (Barbados: Caribbean Graphic Production Limited, 1979), pp. 82-93.

⁷² 'Barbados The Best It Can Be. Things you should know', (Barbados: The Barbados Tourism Authority, n.d. 1990s), p. 1; Kathleen Drayton, 'Art, Culture and National Heritage' in Trevor Carmichael, ed., *Barbados Thirty Years of Independence* (Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1996), p. 198.

⁷³ This conclusion was reached partly through a misreading and/or misquoting of an Edward Brathwaite statement in *Bajan Report and Culture Plan*. He states 'Drums (African) appear to have been, to all intents and purposes, absent from Barbadian slave/colonial society', p. 23, # 5.5.1.10. (I). Drayton reproduces this as 'Drums were absent from Barbadian slave/colonial culture', p. 199.

What Drayton and Greenfield and other advocates of the loss of culture theory continue to pursue is the very Eurocentric contention that claims that political and economic domination of the colonial power will automatically lead to cultural domination. Hence the tradition of emphasising the three hundred years of 'uninterrupted' British rule as the supposedly obvious explanation for why Black Barbadians did not appear until recently to have a vibrant visual African-Caribbean heritage. In the process of acculturation, they were stripped of their African culture and thus became British.

Yet it has long since been established that the culture of the Africans was not eradicated through the colonial and slave experience. There was no stripping of culture, no process of deculturation. While some elements of the culture may have been viewed as a threat the status quo, others, such as ways of working and playing and the practices of medicine, assisted in the running of the plantation. Abrahams and Szwed conclude that the result might have been more a form of desocialization than deculturation; 'and even here there was not and could not have been a total brain washing.' What scholars continue to debate is the extent to which the presence of African influences in New World culture can be seen as 'cultural continuities' as against 'survivals' or 'retentions'.⁷⁴

The loss of culture theory also depends heavily upon the absence of forms or physical manifestations of the heritage within the culture. It does not acknowledge the survival of other intangible aspects such as stories, sayings, superstitions, and legends. Yet, as Stuart Hall demonstrates, 'Présence Africaine', which was supposedly silenced

⁷⁴ John Abrahams and John F. Szwed, ed., *After Africa. Extracts from British Travels Accounts and Journals of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries concerning the Slaves, their Manners, and Customs in the British West Indies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 3; See also, for example, Mervyn Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican Culture* (London: New Beacon, 1988). Sidney W. Mintz, and Richard Price, *The Birth of African American Culture. An Anthropological Perspective*. (Boston: Beacon, 1992 [1976]); Philip Morgan, 'The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African Regional Origins, American Destinations and New World Developments', in David Eltis and David Richardson, ed., *Slavery and Abolition*, 18:1 April (1997), pp. 122-45.

during slavery, was actually present everywhere:

Africa, the signified that could not be represented directly in slavery, remained and remains the unspoken, unspeakable 'presence' in Caribbean culture. It is 'hiding' behind every verbal inflection, every narrative twist of Caribbean cultural life. It is the secret code with which every Western text was 're-read'. It is the groundbass of every rhythm and bodily movement. *This was – is – the 'Africa' that 'is alive and well in the diaspora'*.⁷⁵

In this way forms and physical manifestations are indeed, as Simpson and Hammond argue, very superficial:

Form is the most superficial level of cultural reality. Since it is consciously realized, it is often much quicker to change than profounder philosophic principles and psychological attitudes which are frequently more persistent and tenacious because they exist beneath the level of consciousness.⁷⁶

Hence a culture becomes not lost but *encoded* within the imagination of the subject peoples. It has been argued that Caribbean writers such as the Guyanese Wilson Harris, and the Haitian Jacques Stephen Alexis, are there to prove that these inner chambers of the imagination can be recovered and be viewed as avenues into past experiences.⁷⁷

It must be emphasised that this issue of the nature of Black Barbadian heritage must be further debated. What the colonial discourse of the 'Little England' myth, for example, emphasises, is the presence of the statue of Nelson and the absence of the African drum. Both are used to indicate how colonised and English the Black Barbadian became. In this way, the national culture has always been defined by that which is visible

⁷⁵ Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, ed., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 392-403 (p. 398)

⁷⁶ George E. Simpson and Peter B. Hammond, 'Discussion' as quoted in Abrahams and Szwed, *After Africa*, p. 8.

⁷⁷ See Michael Dash, 'Marvellous Realism: The way out of Négritude', in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, ed., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 199-201 (p. 200).

and of English origin; the three hundred and sixty-year-old House of Assembly⁷⁸, the judiciary, the Anglican Church and the barrage of street and place names. What have always been overlooked are elements of the culture that are intrinsic to the daily existence of the people. This is because 'their common, taken-for-granted quality has put them beyond history and thus beyond examination'.⁷⁹ Subsequently, the sayings, the stories, the foods, the beliefs and practices are there to demonstrate the existence of an African heritage that underpins Barbadian culture.

In the novel *In the Castle of my Skin*, George Lamming dedicates a significant portion of his narrative to the description of his mother preparing and cooking the food known as *coo-coo*. Now known as the national dish of Barbados, *coo-coo* is an African meal that became the staple food for Black Barbadians during slavery and in the post-emancipation period, right into the twentieth century. The *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* defines it as follows: 'A meal of corn flour paste, prepared today in Barbados almost exactly the way it was done in some parts of Africa, where it was originally known as foo foo.' Thus, this food is a prime example of an intrinsic element of Barbadian culture that has been taken for granted.⁸⁰

However, what must be acknowledged is that after emancipation there was a reduction in the visual representations of the African performance culture in Barbados. Indeed, though aspects of the performance and collective culture, such as dances, continued well after emancipation, the public use of other aspects such as the drum, was greatly reduced.⁸¹ Eventually, in the face of ardent opposition from the church and state,

⁷⁸ The Assembly was formed in 1639.

⁷⁹ Abrahams and Szwed, *After Africa*, p. 2.

⁸⁰ Lamming spells it as 'cuckoo'. George Lamming, *In the Castle of my Skin* (London: Longman, 1995 [1953]), pp 265-267; See Fraser, *The A-Z*, p. 50.

⁸¹ For example, in 1875, Crop Over dances were held at Clifton Hall and Haynes Field plantations, St. Thomas despite the wishes of the Moravian missionaries. See Kingsley Lewis, *The Moravian Mission in Barbados 1816-1886: A Study of the Historical Content and Theological Significance of a Minority Church among an Oppressed People* (Frankfurt am Main, Benn, New York: Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 101-103.

both came under great pressure during the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century. There was also a kind of 'Saxonization' of Black Barbadians possibly throughout all classes in the society⁸². Hence the general view held today that older Black Barbadians will say that the African drum is the instrument of the devil and that the playing of it will call up evil spirits.

Several questions again arise which will be revisited in the discussion on the Landship and the Crop Over festival. For example, to what extent does the reduced public use indicate a similar parallel in the private sphere, among the villagers, for example, or on the tenancies on the plantations? And how sound is it to project that the reduction of the playing of the African drum indicates a deathknell for the reproduction of drum patterns on other instruments?

Whatever the process, by the second half of the twentieth century, it was the drums of the tuk band played by the Landship and not the African drum, which was associated with the culture of the folk. In 1960, George Lamming observed that '[in] the Victorian outpost of Barbados the Drum is entirely the property of the Salvation Army whose rhythms have a different intention.'⁸³ With the African drums missing, it was perceived by many, including some Barbadians, that the African-Caribbean component of Barbadian culture was missing as well, or that it had been greatly reduced.

That is until the Crop Over festival which has evolved to highlight the existence of African-Caribbean traditions within the culture. And Barbadians in their thousands actively take part in this masquerade, an action that could not have been perceived in the 1970s. As is argued in Chapter Five, one of the results of the Crop Over festival is that it has created a unique cultural space in which African-Barbadian components of the

⁸² See Chapter Four on the Landship for a full examination of the tuk band. For the view of the saxonization of black Barbadians, see Brathwaite, *Bajan Cultural Report*, p. 7.

⁸³ George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p. 88.

performance culture can come to the fore. Yet the question of what did happen in Barbados remains to be reviewed.

Summary

With the removal of the Nelson statue, it will be interesting to see how future travel writers describe Barbados and the cultural identity of Barbadians. There are still many residues of the imperial legacy which are visible and which will assist in the traditional stance. The tourism discourse will ensure that these are highlighted. Yet the writers will have to concede that there has indeed been a change in the traditional perspective. The eventual absence of the Nelson statue, and the erasure of the title 'Trafalgar Square' from that central space in Bridgetown, should disturb the colonial narrative, and encourage some degree of change to the much favoured projection of the English Barbadian.

Chapter Three

The Myth of 'Little England' and its Revival

in the Independence Era

This land of pastel tints and compromise,
Of huddled tenancies and garden villages,
Of rumshops and churches, slums and postcard views;
This land where sugarcane impersonating wheat
Deceives the traveller's eye; this land
Often referred to as Little England.

Frank Collymore, 'This Land', *New World Quarterly* 3: 1 & 2
(1966-67), pp. 77-8.

For the ex-colony, decolonisation is a dialogue with the colonial past,
and not a simple dismantling of colonial habits and modes of life.

Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of
Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997
[1996]), p. 89.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the history and usage of the construct 'Little England', from the late eighteenth century to the present day. The chapter argues that the construct was an integral part of the foundational narratives for the island and, accordingly, a key theme of the colonial discourse. The chapter posits that its continued use in the Independence era indicates the enduring struggle for supremacy between the colonial narrative of History and the evolving histories.

In May 1997, an US-Caribbean Summit was held in Barbados. The President of the United States, Bill Clinton, travelled to the Caribbean to meet with the Caribbean Heads of Government. An article appeared in the *New York Times*, three days before the Summit, explaining to the American public why Barbados was the 'logical choice' for the meeting. Entitled 'Barbados, All Business Awaits Clinton', the writer, Larry Rohter, proceeded to weave a narrative which would demonstrate that although Barbados was an island *in* the Caribbean, it was not *of* the Caribbean. It was indeed the mythical 'Little England':

'Little England' is the nickname that this small island nation 1600 miles southeast of Miami wears with pride, and not just because most people attend the Anglican Church and play cricket, or because the harbor police wear uniforms that date from Lord Nelson's time. In a region that has made a virtual religion of relaxation, Barbados stands out as an island of primness and propriety.¹

¹ See Larry Rohter, 'Barbados, All business awaits Clinton', *New York Times*, 7 May 1997, p.15. Thanks to Jerome Handler for bringing this article to my attention.

By quoting various Caribbean people, such as a Trinidadian journalist, a Jamaican museum curator and a Guyanese waiter, Rohter tallied up a list of things characteristically Barbadian. Barbadians are 'straitlaced and obedient' without the 'same humour and joie de vivre' as other Caribbean peoples. They are known as the 'black Brits' because they are 'seen as more tied to the mother country, its traditions and mores than other former colonies'. Indeed, Barbados could be compared to Singapore because it is 'a society that values and emphasizes orderliness, conformity and restraint, even if that means the sacrifice of a degree of personal liberty.'

In the only paragraph in which Rohter makes reference to how Barbadians perceive themselves, he gives an account of why there is this difference in character between Barbados and its neighbours:

When asked what makes their country so different from its neighbors, Bajans proudly note that alone among the Caribbean islands Barbados has always remained under the control of the people who originally settled here: the white colonists and the black slaves who began arriving in 1625. That means none of the French, Spanish or Dutch influences visible in places like St. Lucia or Dominica are present, only a homogenous Anglican culture.

He also notes that Barbados did not experience the post-emancipation instances of Asian migration and so is exempt from 'the race-based politics of nearby Trinidad and Guyana.'

Rohter reminded the American public that both George Washington and Ronald Reagan had slept in Barbados. He concluded his article by citing a senior Caribbean government official as stating the following: "Barbados was the safest choice and therefore the logical choice. [...] After all, we are going there to work, not to have fun."

There are several issues to be addressed here. Firstly, it is my contention that in this article, Rohter corralled a number of stereotypes surrounding Barbadian, particularly Black Barbadian identity. As Homi Bhabha points out, stereotypes always function in the

present tense, so Barbadians *are* 'Black Brits' even though they have been members of an independent nation for over thirty years:

As a form of splitting and multiple belief, the stereotype requires, for its successful signification, a continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes. The process by which the metaphoric 'masking' is inscribed on a lack which must then be concealed gives the stereotype both its fixity and its phantasmatic quality – the *same old* stories of the Negro's animality, the Coolie's inscrutability or the stupidity of the Irish *must* be told compulsively again and afresh, and are differently gratifying and terrifying each time.²

In this case it is the *same old* stories of Barbados and Black Barbadians. The very Anglican Church that Rohter credits with ministry over the majority of the Barbadian population, had, in the month of his article, sponsored the visit of an English Anglican revivalist, Dr. Michael Green. His purpose was to suggest ways to inject new life into the Church. The pews were empty, and this was perceived as a crisis to be addressed. In an interview with the Bishop of Barbados, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Rufus Brome, he confirmed that Anglican Church attendance had fallen drastically in the last twenty years whilst it had significantly risen for other churches. Moreover, he questioned the extent to which the island was ever as Anglican as it has always been made out to be. He stressed the difference between attendance and names on church rolls.³

The Rohter article also spoke of the staid Barbadian who did not possess the same *joie de vivre* as her neighbour. Yet Barbadians were indeed letting their hair down at some point of the *seven* national festivals held on the island every year. Two of these, the Congaline and the Crop Over festivals, necessitate bacchanalia on the days when Barbadians take to the streets for the parade of costume bands and the dancing that ensues. And though the advent of the Italian Opera singer, Luciano Pavorotti, performing

² Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995 [1994]), p. 77.

³ See 'Dr. Green is back', *Sunday Advocate*, 13 April 1997, p. 30. Personal Interview with Rt. Rev. Dr. Rufus Brome, 12 June 1997.

to a sell out audience in March 1997 might support the claim of 'primness and propriety', it must also be noted that the Jamaican Reggae and Dance Hall artist, Beenie Man, performed on the very same night in a different venue, also to a capacity crowd. As reports have it, Beenie Man 'ruled things' that night and turned the venue, Festival Village, into his personal playground.⁴

Larry Rohter was writing from Bridgetown, the capital of Barbados. With this façade of authority, of being on the spot, comes the presumption that what is stated is authentic. (This is an intriguing thought if only for the Harbour policemen of the article who have been non-existent for almost *two* decades and who are only now visible in the shape of a bottle of rum. Where did he see them again?) Armed with this stamp of authenticity, it became convenient for Rohter to reach for an old colonial construct on which to base his story. According to this construct, Barbados is 'Little England', an English territory in the Caribbean Sea, an outpost of empire. Such reminders as the Spanish origins of the name, the 90% dominance in the population of those of African ancestry, or even Independence, are treated as mere incidentals to the main narrative. As the most English of Caribbean territories, so the story goes, it is distinguished from other Caribbean territories because it was ruled continuously by England for more than three hundred years. Hence its society is well organised and its people are conservative, making them an enigma in the Caribbean.

Herein lies the root of the problem. What Rohter resorted to was the colonial narrative that forever condemns the Caribbean isle to a state of servitude. While he maintained that when used, the 'Little England' construct was as complimentary as it was

⁴ See 'Big Things from Beenie' and 'All Beenie Man', *The Barbados Advocate*, 4 April 1997, pp. 10-11, and p. 20.

insulting, it is my contention that at no time of its history would it have been complimentary for the majority of its inhabitants. As a master narrative, it is part of a very Eurocentric discourse. Its continued use in the Independence period drags the mishmash of these along with it, making the decolonisation process, which is mostly an ideological one, much more difficult.

In this case, the 'Little England' construct is an old voice that insists on claiming space where new voices are participating in the dialogue. Since it comes with the authority of 'H'istory, it bludgeons its way in forcing others to give way. Yet it has gone unchecked by historians, as there is yet to be a systematic analysis of the historical process in which it was formed.⁵ This is because the construct does not fall within the margins of what has traditionally been deemed to be history for there are no absolute truths upon which evidence can be gathered and measured. Hence, historians have dismissed it as a source to understanding the past. In this way it has been treated as myth, thus not factual, not real.

Yet, as Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson argue, historians can no longer continue this practice: 'if we turn to almost any historical field, this persistent blindness to myth undeniably robs us of much power to understand and interpret the past.' They advocate that historians need to ask different questions:

In identifying mythical elements in our own cultural or professional assumptions, we threaten our ethnocentric self-confidence. We discover a psychic dimension which recognises the power of myth and unconscious desire as forces, not only in history, but in shaping our lives. We open up a history which refuses to be safely

⁵ Jack P. Greene reviews some of the early factors leading to its emergence, but not the construct itself. The review ends at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the label appears. See Jack P. Greene, 'Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados: a Case Study' in *Imperatives, Behaviours and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992), pp. 213-66.

boxed away in card indexes or computer programs: which instead pivots on the *active* relationship between the past and present, subjective and objective, poetic and political.⁶

It is determining that *active* relationship between the present and the past that guides the argument in this chapter. It is my intention to provide a close examination of key events in the history that led to the evolution and usage of the construct.

II

Mythical Hide-and Seek

Roland Barthes maintains that myth is a type of speech selected by history. As a result, the material of mythical speech 'has *already* been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication.' Thus, 'all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness.'⁷

Making myth a type of speech enabled Barthes to apply the rules of semiology to myth for an analysis of how myths function. He argued that when the signifier is used as a reference to language, it is known as *meaning*. When it is used in myth, it becomes *form*. Likewise, when the signified is used as myth it is called the *concept*.⁸ Barthes then sought to define what he calls the 'constant game of hide-and-seek' played between the form and the meaning, that is, between the signifier as a language device and the signifier as a myth:

⁶ Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, ed., *The Myths We Live By* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p 5.

⁷ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, tr. From the French by Annette Lavers (St. Albans,: Paladin, 1976 [1957]), p. 109-110.

⁸ Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 116-7.

But the essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal. One believes that the meaning is going to die, but it is a *death with reprieve*; the meaning loses its value, but keep its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment. *The meaning will be for the form like an instantaneous reserve of history*, a tamed richness, which it is possible to call and dismiss in a sort of rapid alternation: the form must constantly be able to be rooted again in the meaning and to get there what nature it needs for its nutriment; above all, it must be able to hide there. It is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth.⁹ [my emphasis]

For this analysis of the 'Little England' construct I find this argument of 'death with reprieve' most illuminating. One of my main aims in this chapter is to come to an understanding of why and how the construct gains reprieve, that is, why 'Little England' has come back to haunt Barbados in the Independence era. Its return is an indication of the strength of the colonial legacy in Barbados. It is also an indication that a number of interest groups, both within and outside of Barbadian society, feel threatened by the decolonisation process. What the cry of 'Little England' allows them to do is to reach into the meaning, into that 'instantaneous reserve of history', to remind all of what has become a sacred text: the supposed eternal connection of Barbados to Empire, and to England.

In this way, the form of the myth is rooted in its meaning. Whenever it is summoned from near death, 'Little England' looks into itself for resuscitation. Moreover, as a myth, it hides there within its meaning, within the 'H'istory of sugar, thus avoiding full confrontation in this crucial time of decolonisation.

The main task at hand is to identify the meaning within the form of the myth. This is always difficult because myths employ what Lévi-Strauss has seen as 'narrative strategies'. This trick gives them the appearance of being authentic or coherent. Hayden White explains:

⁹ Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 118.

Now, by the coherency of myth, Lévi-Strauss appears to mean the result of the application of narrative strategies by which basic story units (or clusters of events) are arranged so as to give to some purely human structure or process the aspect of cosmic (or natural) necessity, adequacy, or inevitability. Stories of the founding of cities or states, of the origin of class differences and privileges [...] partake of the mythical inasmuch as they 'cosmologize' or 'naturalize' what are in reality *nothing but* human constructions which might well be other than what they happen to be.¹⁰

When myths are seen as 'narrative strategies', the meaning of the myth can be found below the narrative surface. Lévi-Strauss advised that to detect this, what was needed was a close analysis of the items and individual incidents in the narrative, as well as a study of how these change as different versions of the myth are employed. Such an analysis would also reveal the unending struggle within the myth to overcome or encapsulate the contradictions threatening to rupture its frame.

In the novel, *In the Castle of my Skin*, George Lamming gathered the essential strands of the narrative surrounding the myth:

Three hundred years, more than a memory could hold, Big England had met and held Little England and Little England like a sensible child accepted. Three hundred years, and never in all that time did any other nation dare interfere with these two. Barbados or Little England was the oldest and purest of England's children, and may it always be so. The other islands changed hands. Now they were French, now they were Spanish. But Little England remained steadfast and constant to Big England. Even to this day. Indeed, it was God's doing. The hand of the Lord played a great part in that union. And who knows? You could never tell. One day before time changed for eternity, Little England and Big England, God's anointed on earth, might hand-in-hand rule this earth. In the '14 war they went side by side together, and they would go again any time. Big England only had to say the word and Little England followed. Big England had the strongest navy and Little England the best fishermen in this God's world. Together they were mistresses of the sea, and whenever, wherever, the two met on the same side, war or peace, there was bound to be victory.¹¹

¹⁰ Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 104.

¹¹ George Lamming, *In The Castle Of My Skin* (London: Longman, 1995 [1953]), p. 29.

Though Lamming was writing in 1950, the novel is based on his childhood days in the 1930s. Consequently, his reference to ‘three hundred years’ can be read in two ways. Firstly, it refers to the early days of English settlement around 1625. Secondly, it is the traditional echo, the call upon that sacred text that brings in that Barthesian special reserve of ‘H’istory, that claims of *unending English control*.

It is my argument that when this claim of three hundred years of imperial rule is made, it calls upon the colonial discourse. Each time it is asserted, it reinforces a belief of a never-ending relationship with the Ex-Mother Country. Tightly packed within it are a number of narratives that were spun by the colonial discourse.

For example, the three hundred years emphasises the claim that the first settlers made on the land when they arrived in 1625. This emphasis on the arrival serves to repeatedly indicate the virginal state of the island at the time. Matthew Chapman eloquently captures this sentiment:

Fair rose the morning on that bearded isle,
And bright the welcome of her virgin smile;
Sparkled the wave, and listening seemed the wood,
The happy birds were in their merriest mood, —
When first her bay was dipt by English oar,
And English shouts came cordial to the shore;
When England wooed her, and the bridal song
Was heard her thickets and her groves among¹²

The circumstances that led to the island being uninhabited and the arguments provided for this were fully discussed in Chapter One. What can be emphasised here is that a discourse evolved that played upon the missing Amerindian inhabitants and the fortunes made by the English pioneers. This in turn evolved into a belief that, as Lamming asserts, it was been deemed to be ‘God’s doing’. Hence these early settlers turned the island into

¹² Matthew James Chapman, *Barbadoes, and other poems* (London: 1833), p. 48.

what Anthony Smith would call a historic 'ethnoscape', for they invested the terrain with a particular significance:

Often the landscape is given a more active, positive role; no longer merely a natural setting, it is felt to influence events and contribute to the experiences and memories that moulded the community. This is especially true of ethnoscares, where the landscape is invested with ethnic kin significance, and becomes an intrinsic element in the community's myth of origins and shared memories.¹³

Over time, travel writers placed emphasis on the length of British domination of the island. Hence the Froude claim: 'Barbados, after we became masters of the island, enjoyed a period of unbroken prosperity for two hundred years.'¹⁴

With the 1905 celebrations of the landing of the settlers, another century was added to the boast. It became a three hundred allegiance to the English Crown. It can be noted that the celebrations took place in 1905, and not 1925, because of an error in the recorded history of the island. In this, the date of first contact was given as 1605 and not 1625. This misunderstanding was only cleared up in the twentieth century, but not before the full-scale celebrations of the tercentenary of the English landing in 1905. During these a special commemoration stamp was issued, an obelisk was raised and parades and other events were held with great pomp and ceremony. There was even the passage of the Tercentenary Act 1905 by the House of Assembly, which granted Barbadians a public holiday. It was only much later that it was established that the *Olive Blossom* had arrived in 1625. This date, not the 1605 one, is part of the current discourse.¹⁵ And here is where it has remained stuck, at the three hundred-year mantra.

¹³ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 150.

¹⁴ H. N. Coleridge, *Six Months Residence in the West Indies in 1825* (Negro Universities Press, [1825]), p. 45; J. A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies* (London: 1888), p. 34.

¹⁵ See Fraser, A-Z. p.

This appeal to authenticity, to ‘three hundred years’, resonates with an appeal to the forces of destiny. It is this appeal to destiny that signals the use of another narrative strategy within this narrative threshold:

Nor below the surface of our narratives, is it difficult to find residues of a magical world view: notions of destiny and blood embodied in self- characterisation, and the hand of fate in events, signs taken for wonders. Often, for instance, a story will pivot on a moment of revelation or truth, and in talismanic importance attached to ‘extraordinary coincidence’ and ‘pluck’ it is possible to discern, concealed as in the memory of trace, ideas of destiny and fate, a hidden hand guiding the subject forward.¹⁶

Yet there is an earthly explanation which serves to clarify why Barbados remained a British territory during slavery and into the post-emancipation period. The British made good use of the natural defense system surrounding Barbados. They located the headquarters of the West India Army there primarily because it was a good launching point for defense purposes. They also saw fit to heavily fortify the island making it a force to be reckoned with over the centuries. George Frere wrote of this in 1768:

Nature hath been bountiful by fortifying the coast of Barbados, and rendering the greatest part of that island inaccessible to ships of fifty tons upwards. An extensive reef of rocks runs from the south point easterly to the north west. The other part of the coast the inhabitants have at a very great expence fortified, by erecting forts and batteries within gun-shot of each other, the repairs and maintenance of which amount to a great charge: an expence so heavy to the country; that it is hoped the government of Great Britain will some time or other by their assistance alleviate.¹⁷

What resulted was that in the following decades with the increased threat from war with France in Europe, the British Government made provision to further fortify the island with an issue of ammunition, cannon and carriages to the tune of £1425. The value of the

¹⁶ Samuel and Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, p. 10.

¹⁷ George Frere, *A Short History of Barbados from its first discovery and settlement, to the end of the year 1767* (London, 1768) p. 104.

stores was £ 3180. In this way Frere got his wish granted for the colony was not charged for these acquisitions.¹⁸

With such an arsenal occupying the 166 sq. miles together with an unusually large white militia, what Barbados in effect became was a largely heavily defended fort. This reality, coupled with the natural defence system, deterred any attempts by the French to take the island. (Indeed, recent research queries the claim that they ever had an interest.) What must be noted is that it was not by accident that Barbados remained an English colony. It was by design.

It is my argument that it is this type of historical analysis that must be applied to mythical constructs such as 'Little England'. Claims such as the three hundred-year sacred chant refuse to acknowledge changes in the ideology of the nation. This is dangerous for discourses such as this one, only serve to muzzle the evolving new histories which grant ideological space to marginalised groups.

III

'Little England': a History

It is my argument that in the eighteenth, and for most of the nineteenth centuries, 'Little England' was part of the *white* elite discourse. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the coloured elite had also adopted it. Though it cannot be determined exactly when members of the black labouring class affirmed it, it is presumed here to be between the

¹⁸ Robert K. Schomburgk, *The History Of Barbados: Comprising a Geographical and Statistical Description of the Island: a Sketch of the Historic Events since the settlement and an account of its Geology and Natural Productions* (London: Frank Cass, 1971 [1848]), pp 192-3.

late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries.

Consequently, the first point to note is that as a point of identification, the 'Little England' construct is used by some at the expense of others:

Throughout their careers, identities function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected. Every identity has at its 'margin' an excess, something more. The unity, the internal homogeneity, which the term identity treats as foundational is not a natural, but a constructed form of closure, every identity naming as its necessary, even if silenced and unspoken other, that which it 'lacks'.¹⁹

Constructs of identity are constantly destabilised by what they leave out. As a mainly white and then white and coloured elite discourse, 'Little England' did not refer to the majority of the population which included the poor whites, the coloured middle class and the mass black labouring class. It was, indeed, 'a constructed form of closure'.

For this discussion on the history of the 'Little England' construct, the following section is divided into three parts. The first reviews its earliest sighting and then follows its usage through to the end of the nineteenth century. The second looks at its usage during the colonial period of the twentieth century. The third looks at its use and revival in the Independence period.

(a) 1789-1899

My research has highlighted four possible interpretations of the meaning of 'Little England' during this early period.

¹⁹ Stuart Hall, 'Introduction: Who Needs Identity?', in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, ed., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 1-17 (p. 5).

(i) *'in' but not 'of' the Caribbean*

The earliest sighting of the 'Little England' legend is in the late eighteenth century. In 1789, a letter was published in *European Magazine* in which the writer commented on Barbadian society and the use of the phrase 'Little England':

At the other islands it often goes by the name of Little England, and the natives are not a little proud of the distinction: indeed they have never considered themselves here as included under the general name of Creoles, for their oath runs, 'I am neither Crab, Creole, nor Side-walker, but a true Badian born, so help me God! Now I am sure you will laugh with me at this ridiculous vanity; but we must not laugh too loud, for if you and I were true Badians, I dare say we should indulge ourselves in this sort of pride as becoming enough.'²⁰

There are several points to be noted here. The first is that not only was it a non-Barbadian who was reporting on the usage, but also that other Caribbean islanders used it to refer to Barbados in a derogatory manner. Secondly, what is reported is that for the 'natives', being called 'Little England' emphasises some distinction, some difference from the rest of the Caribbean. Thus, they were neither members of the indigenous population 'Crab' or Carib, (the kalinago), nor did they see themselves as 'Creole', as belonging to the Caribbean through birth or culture. Paradoxically, they saw themselves as 'Barbadian', that is 'true Badian born'.

What 'Little England' helped them to do was to proclaim their difference by claiming both an English and Barbadian heritage. They claimed the latter, because they did not see Barbados as being part of the Caribbean. Herein lies the paradox. If we follow this through, they are 'true Badians' by seeing themselves as not belonging to the

²⁰ John Gilmore, ed., 'A 1789 Description of Barbados', *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 125-142 (p. 136).

Caribbean, but belonging to Barbados. That is, they are *in* the Caribbean but not *of* it.

It is my contention that it is this paradox that indicates one of the key meanings of the myth. When the motto 'Little England' was used here, the emphasis was on creating a distinct identity for Barbados, not on making Barbadians appear to be as Englishmen and women. The white Barbadian elite was an arrogant group who thought the world of itself and of Barbados. For example, George Pinckard reports that in 1797, this was the common belief: 'What would poor England do were Barbados was to forsake her?' In *Peter Simple*, a novel published in 1834, Captain Marryat has one of his Barbadian characters make the following declaration in reference to the threat of the French: 'England nebber fear, King George nebber fear, while *Barbados 'tand' tiff!*'²¹ Note also the comment of Bishop Mitchinson in 1876, about the character of the white Barbadian elite. He compared them to

the white snails of Hans Christian Anderson, who, living under burbock leaves upon which the rain-drops pattered, flattered themselves that the world consisted of white snails and that they were the world.²²

Earlier, in the 1850s, Anthony Trollope had found that when 'Little England' was used, it was caught up in the quest for recognition by the very arrogant and overbearing white Barbadian elite: 'And after all, Barbados – little England as it calls itself – is and should be respected among islands.' It seems that the plantocracy were inordinately preoccupied with their success in sugar production and how this success made them and Barbados

²¹ George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies; Written during the expedition under the command of the late General Sir Ralph Abercromby; including observations on the island of Barbadoes and the settlements captured by the British troops upon the coast of Guiana*, 3 vols. (London: 1806), p. 76; Federick Marryat, *Peter Simple*, 2 vols. (London 1834), p. 9.

²² This remark was taken from a summary of Bishop Mitchinson's speech that was quoted by a member of the House of Assembly during a debate in the House of Assembly 8 February 1876. See John Gilmore, *The Toiler of the Seas: A Life of John Mitchinson Bishop of Barbados* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1987), p.60.

important.²³

It is this arrogance that other islanders and some travel writers like Anthony Trollope make fun of. Though it was important that Barbadians be seen as good colonials, it was also important that they be seen as distinct from others in the Caribbean. The 'Little England' construct granted them this paradoxical positioning.

(ii) *Little Empire*

Barbados was set apart from the other islands because of its given history and its role in the British West Indies. It is this idea of being a 'Little Empire' that informs the ideology behind the early usage of the construct. Note the observation of Daniel McKinnen in 1804:

At the Restoration the population has been computed at nearly 50 000 whites; and from the flourishing state of this island, as well perhaps as from the circumstances of its having supplied an emigration to other colonies which were afterwards settled to leeward, it has been denominated "Little England".²⁴

The equation of Barbados with Empire is one that permeates the 'Little England' discourse throughout the colonial period. The Barbadian planters had actively settled the Carolinas, for example, taking their slaves with them.²⁵ Over time Barbados came to be known by a chorus of superlatives as emphasis was placed on its central role in the affairs

²³ Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (London: 1859), p.205.

²⁴ Daniel McKinnen, *A Tour through the British West Indies, in the Years 1802 and 1803 giving a particular account of the Bahama Islands* (London, 1804), p. 23.

²⁵ See Warren Alleyne and Henry Fraser, *The Barbados-Carolina Connection* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1988).

of the Caribbean region. In 1795, it was hailed as ‘the London of the West Indies — the great capital to which we anxiously look for events, and for news.’ By the nineteenth century it had earned the name ‘the Clapham Junction of the West Indies’ in view of its extraordinarily busy harbour which would often be teeming with six hundred sail and steamboats. By 1925, the Clapham Junction alliance had shifted as Bridgetown and its harbour became known as called ‘The Hong Kong of the West Indies’.²⁶

This act of interpellation, or ‘hailing of the subject by discourse’, as Althusser, and in this case Hall says,²⁷ would have been viewed as the ultimate compliment by those colonials seeking recognition within the Empire. Primarily among these would have been the select white group: the planters, merchants and British officials on the island, as well as the coloured elite.

For this meaning of the myth to emerge at this time indicates an interweaving and overlapping of usages which stemmed from the narratives surrounding settlement and the sugar enterprise. Being seen as a Little Empire was the articulation of those ideas within the discourse:

Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discourse practices construct for us. They are the result of a successful articulation or ‘chaining’ of the subject into the flow of the discourse.²⁸

What the colonial discourse had spun for Barbados was a story of success and prosperity,

²⁶ George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, pp. 196-7; Ralph Williams as quoted by Anthony De. V. Phillips, *Modernising Barbados 1880 - 1914* (Barbados: Advocate Creative Services, 1996). p. 13; George Mannington, *The West Indies with British Guiana and Honduras* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925), p. 38.

²⁷ Hall, ‘Who Needs Identity?’, p. 6. ‘Interpellation’ or ‘hailing’ is Althusser’s metaphor.

²⁸ Hall, ‘Who Needs Identity?’, p. 6.

as well as a story of leadership within the West Indies, not unlike that of England in the British Empire.

(iii) *'nearest to the mother country'*

In 1830, Bayley casually writes that 'the island is frequently called by the nomenclature of *Little England*.' William Lloyd, who visited Barbados in 1837 to review the working of the Apprenticeship system, made the following observation:

I have spent several days agreeably on this island, in complimentary appellation called 'Little England', being the nearest to the mother country, and having adopted many of its customs; the oldest colony, and of undoubted loyalty; healthy in character, and the most advanced in cultivation, by a successful rotation of crops.²⁹

It is intriguing to note the change in meanings by the 1830s. The Little Empire meaning within the narrative no longer predominates. The motto is now seen as complimentary, not only because of the similarity in exploits between the colony and the Empire, but more because of its history, its success in the sugar enterprise and the commitment to Empire felt by its inhabitants. It is 'nearest to the mother country'. If anything, what Lloyd says here in 1837 eerily pre-empts what Larry Rohter has to say one hundred and sixty years later. This indicates that the core narratives for the myth had long established themselves. When Rohter wrote his article in 1997, he reached into that 'instantaneous reserve of history' that Barthes has described.

The Lloyd observation also echoes what Lamming had surmised in the 1950s.

²⁹ William Lloyd, *Letters from the West Indies During a Visit in the Autumn of MDCCCXXXVI and the Spring of MDCCCXXXVII* (London: 1839), p. 101.

Seeing that such claims as the island being the ‘oldest colony’ was discussed when the Lamming paragraph was reviewed at length, and that the claim for the island as the ‘most advanced in cultivation’ was also reviewed in the earlier discussions on History, these shall not be further reviewed here. What will be discussed in the following section, is the claim that the myth indicates the ‘undoubted loyalty’ of the inhabitants.

(iv) *Loyalty and Home*

In a collection of poems published in 1833, M. J. Chapman, pens his love for the mother country:

Here has our mother’s altar still remained;
Nor foeman’s foot our soil has ever stained.
Not to her husband fonder clings the bride,
Than we have clung and cling to England’s side.
The harp of memory wakes for her its tones,
She keeps our household gods, our father’s bones;
From her our day-dreams and our visions come—
Our treasure-house of sweets, our only home!³⁰

The master narrative holds that Barbados provides an extreme case of Anglophilism in the Caribbean, as the above verse so beautifully demonstrates. Indeed, Chapman made the following claim: ‘Barbadians love to call their island ‘little England’ while they always speak of the mother country as home.’ Yet when he states that *our* mother’s altar is in Barbados, and that England holds *our* household’s gods and *our* father’s bones, and that England is *our* only home, the ‘our’ here is the white oligarchy of the island. This becomes clearer in a verse, which follows:

³⁰ Matthew James Chapman, *Barbadoes, and other poems* (London: 1833), pp. 49-50.

Our patriot fathers in their sons survive;
 Our Saxon mothers in their daughters live —
 Rich buds of beauty; whose quick rolling eyes
 The guards and outlets of the soul surprise;
 Beneath whose fringed brows the graces sit,
 Over whose cheeks love's rosy blushes flit;³¹

What Chapman has done is to give substance to the idea of 'Little England' and make it tangible. He has penned a sense of belonging for the *white* Barbadian who sees continuity between England and Barbados as a result of blood ties. Thus, to be English and Barbadian is to be white. This automatically excludes the majority of the population who is of African descent. This must be emphasised. For the greater portion of its usage the construct does not include the majority of the population. It is not a black construct in any way.

Yet, even within the remaining minority of Barbadian whites there would have been further exclusion. The poem refers to those whites that came to settle the island in 1627. The 'patriot fathers' were the Englishmen who landed, not the Irish indentured servants, not the Jews, Scots, and other Europeans. Thus in Chapman's eyes, those who can claim the call of 'Little England' have to be the direct descendants of these men. This would make them purely 'English'.

Note again this example from *Desultory Sketches* which was published in 1840. There is once again the projection that 'Little England' connotes ideas of a home away from home:

'Little England', as Barbados has been called by strangers, as well as by its own inhabitants, and not unjustly, — for, save the Negroes and the sun [...] there is

³¹ Chapman, p. 50. See also p. 101, notes to p. 48.

much to remind one of 'home', an epithet not unfrequently in the mouth of the Barbadian himself when alluding to England.³²

There are two issues to be discussed here both in connection to the concept of home. Keeping Hall's argument of 'a constructed form of closure' in mind, what, in the first instance, the above quotation demonstrates, is that Barbados could be just like home if the Black majority were not present, or, *were not seen*. This view emphasises its use as a racist construct. When used in this way, the myth attempted to turn Barbados into an ideal white world.

Secondly, there is this element of England as Home. Observe the 1887 reflections of Charles Packer Bowen and E. G. Sinckler, two members of the white Barbadian elite:

The affection which all here, who think and speak of OLD ENGLAND as 'home' feel for her, is at the present day as keen as it was when our forefathers first set foot on this isolated 'land of figs' and carved on a tree 'James K. of E. and of this Island'.³³

As members of the elite, such as Packer and Bowen held and perpetuated this belief of England as 'home' for most of the colonial period. As Anthony Phillips points out, in Barbados there was 'an existential and psychological dependency on England.' This saw, for example, public officers in the late nineteenth century heading 'home' to England to qualify as barristers. It also led to visits to England by those members of the Barbadian white elite who could afford it, as William Trowbridge demonstrates in 1893: 'In the rare intervals of my childhood, when I was taken Home by my parents'. In this interpretation of 'Little England', a relationship similar to the one of an island to its mainland appears to be at stake here. The mainland may have been thousands of geographical miles away, but

³² [Theodore Easel, *pseud*], *Desultory Sketches and Tales of Barbados* (London: 1840), p. 250

³³ Charles Packer Bowen and E. G. Sinckler, *Royal Visits to Barbados written in Commemoration of the Jubilee of Her Most Excellent Majesty Queen Victoria* (Barbados: 1887), p. ix.

psychologically and perhaps ideologically, it was very near.³⁴

(v) *A Sobriquet*

By the 1870s, 'Little England' had become such a part of the normal discourse that it could be found littered throughout the newspapers of the white elite as well as of the coloured middle class. It appears everywhere without qualification. One article called for the 'citizens of "Little England"' to go to see a performance of a visiting troupe known as Christy's Minstrels. Another spoke of the conditions of the labourers in Little England: 'The fact is Little England can no longer maintain her offspring.'³⁵ Sometimes it is used to reproach the authorities in Barbados for such atrocities as the imprisonment of children, in which case it was argued that 'Little England' carried on the practice while England did not. Sometimes it is used to support the norm. This was demonstrated by the writer who accused the 'natives' of 'Little England' of possessing a 'crab-like apathy' because they allowed themselves to be swayed by the writings of an author who dared to criticise the plantocracy.³⁶

This persistence in the usage suggests that for the upper and middle classes the construct had become a point of identification. Though I believe that it was a combination of all that has been already reviewed, ('Little Empire', 'home away from Home'), the emphasis indicated by these comments in the newspaper seems to be upon the colony as a miniature version of England. There is also a taken-for-granted feel to the

³⁴ F. W. N. Bayley, *Four Months Residence in the West Indies* (London: 1830), p.30; Phillips, *Modernising Barbados*, p. 17; William R. H. Trowbridge, *Gossip of the Caribbees: Sketches of Anglo-West Indian Life* (New York: Taitt, Sons & Company, 1893), p. 75.

³⁵ See *The Times*, 20 April 1872 and 5 May 1875.

³⁶ See *The Times*, 25 September 1872 and 3 July 1872. The author was Chester and his book *Transatlantic Sketches*. For a review of the hostile reception of the book, see the introduction by John Gilmore in *Chester's Barbados: The Barbados Chapters from Transatlantic Sketches (1869)* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation, 1990), pp. ix – xxi.

usage as though it had become part of the daily fabric of existence. Was it supported and used by the black majority at this time? This will never be known. Yet this factor is key to any understanding of the extent to which this colonial mentality permeated Barbadian society. It is, however, plausible to surmise that its usage was firmly entrenched among the white and coloured elite.

(b) 1900-1966

This section examines the use of the myth during the colonial period of the twentieth century. It has been divided into two parts. The first looks at how the travel writers perceived and contributed to its use. The second examines how it functioned within colonial Barbados.

(i) 'More English than England': the travel writer's view

With the advent of twentieth century travel writer, further strands of the discourse are revealed. More importantly, several are arguably constructed. Most of these writers spent their time with the white elite and patronised their clubs. Several of them possessed a clear loathing of the black majority and either wrote of them in very disparaging terms or left them out of their treatise altogether. Hence their writings tend to be a regurgitation of what their white Barbadian counterparts had stated, or an extremely racist projection of what they saw.

When, in 1916, Federick Ober described Barbados as 'a lamp of British tropical civilisation', he captured what was to be the dominant interpretation of the construct for

the twentieth century. In his view Barbados was as 'English' as it could be:

It has been English — and so thoroughly English that it seems like a bit of Old England taken out bodily and dropped down in the Tropics — for nearly three hundred years, never having been taken by a foreign foe.³⁷

In one fell swoop Ober gives us the gamut of meanings and their contradictions. There is the three hundred-year mantra, the 'home away from Home', the connection with Empire with a tropical twist, though this tropical characteristic somehow does not stain its English character. The diverse population of African and African-Caribbean persons as well as the descendants of the Irish and Scottish indentured servants, for example, do not in any way change this for Barbados was not taken by 'a foreign foe.' It is 'Old England'; the 'English' white one that was supposedly dropped there in 1627.

This emphasis on the Englishness in the 'Little England' motto was played upon repeatedly by the travel writers. A scatter of examples indicates this. In 1931, Barbados was 'more English than England itself'; in 1936, it was 'more British than the Empire itself'; in 1941, it was 'wholly English throughout its career'; in 1947, it was 'the most English of islands', and in 1962, it was 'as English as the Pickwick Club'.³⁸ The phrase 'Old England' kept creeping in as well, with a slight qualification by Rutter in 1932 when he called Barbados a 'museum piece' from Stuart England:

Although many of them have never set foot in England, they are more English than the English. The early pioneers modelled their colony on English tradition;

³⁷ Federick Ober, *Our West Indian Neighbours* (New York: James Pott, 1916), pp. 392-3.

³⁸ A. Hyatt Verrill, *West Indies Today* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1931), p. 121; Raymond Savage, *Barbados: British West Indies* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1936), p. 8; Alec Waugh, *Love and the Caribbean: Tales, Characteristics and Scenes of the West Indies* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1958 [1930]), p. 212; Hakon Mielche, *Calypso Islands*, tr. from the Dutch by Maurice Michael (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962), p. 30.

their whole fabric of life was detached from Stuart England. Their constitution was English and their laws.³⁹

The connotation was now fashionable and travel writers made much use of it. From the late 1920s right through to the 1950s, a trend developed in which the 'Little England' label would be used as the title of the chapter on Barbados in a book.⁴⁰ Even Rutter did this in the contents page, though the chapter itself was called 'Museum Piece.'

Another trend that developed was that any travel text on the West Indies had to include a chapter on Barbados. Consequently, George Mannington included one in his 1925 text, though, as *he* acknowledges, he never got off the boat. Nevertheless for Mannington, Barbados was 'known as Little England' and was 'very Englishlike: it could hardly be otherwise seeing that the island has been ours for more than three centuries'. Here is another example of what Bhabha would call 'a continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes.'⁴¹ This act of chaining the stereotypes thickens the façade and grants the appearance of knowledge and authority.

In view of this observation by Bhabha, it is intriguing to see the development of a custom that necessitated the compilation of a list of characteristics. For travel writers, this list summarised what was distinctly English about Barbados. For some, it was a sense of place, with particular emphasis on the designated names:

A single stroll down the fascinating High Street serves as a sufficient reason for calling this 'Little England'. Its irregular course, beginning at Trafalgar Square,

³⁹ Owen Rutter, *If Crab No Walk: A Traveller in the West Indies* (London: Hutchinson, 1933), p. 32. See also Verrill, *West Indies Today*, p. 132.

⁴⁰ See for example Harry A. Franck, *Roaming Through the West Indies* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1920), p. 360; Verrill, *West Indies Today*, p. 121; Dane Chandos, *Isles to Windward* (London: Michael Joseph, 1955), p. 136; Lucille Iremonger, *The Young Traveller in the West Indies* (London: Phoenix House, 1955), p. 107.

⁴¹ Mannington, *The West Indies*, p. 34; Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 77.

its shops and merchants, the Anglican Cathedral and its walled-in churchyard and sepulchers, all bordering on Cheapside, are as British as though made in Old England.⁴²

Consequently, though all English colonies carried English names, it was particularly English of Barbados to do so. Where contradictions arose the writers would still insist that the nature of Barbados was English. Even the more moderate and observant writer, Harry Franck, concurred with the label despite its inherent contradictions. He began his commentary on Bridgetown as follows:

Bridgetown is very English, despite its complexion [sic] and dazzling sunshine. Broken bottles embedded in the tops of plaster walls, which everywhere shut in private property, shows that this too is an overcrowded country where the few who have must take stern precaution against the many that have not.⁴³

However, Franck has called this chapter 'Little England' and these observations tend to shift the focus away from Englishness. He thus rescues himself with a litany of place names in the sentence which immediately followed: 'The streets bear such ultra-English names as "Cheapside", "Philadelphia Lane", "Literary Row", "Lightfoot's Passage", "Whitepark Road".' He then reviews the signboards: "Grog Shop – The Rose of Devon" and "Coals for Sale". He, however, sees no contradiction to his argument of Englishness when he transcribes what was painted on another sign: "O. B. Lawless–American Tailor–Late of Panama". He sees it as very English to give the qualification, but pays no attention to the text itself.⁴⁴

This practice of compiling a list to designate Englishness formed one of the key

⁴² Henry Albert Phillips, *White Elephants in the Caribbean: A Magic Journey through all the West Indies* (New York: Robert McBride, 1936), p. 252.

⁴³ Franck, *Roaming Through the West Indies*, p. 363.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

narrative devices in the myth. As the Rohter article in the *New York Times* illustrated, the practice has continued well into the post-colonial era.

(ii) *'England nebber fear'*

There is an oft-repeated story of Barbadians sending a message to England that stated 'Carry on England, Little England is behind You!' What makes this particular example interesting is the assertion that for every major conflict in which Britain was involved, this message was sent. I have found references to the claim that a message bearing these sentiments was sent on four occasions: the Napoleonic War, the Boer War and both World War I and World War II.

Though Marryat made reference to it in the boast of 'England nebber fear', it was Trollope who specified that a message was sent during the time of the Napoleonic War:

The story runs, that when Europe was convulsed by revolutions and wars—when the continental sovereigns were flying hither and thither, and there was so strong a rumour that Napoleon was going to eat us—the great Napoleon I mean—that then, I say, the Barbadians sent word over to poor King George the Third, bidding him fear nothing. If England could not protect him, Barbados would. Let him come to them, if things looked really blue on his side of the Channel. It was a fine spirited message, but perhaps a little self-glorious. That, I should say, is the character of the island in general.⁴⁵

Popular opinion holds that similar telegrams were sent during the Boer War and the two World Wars. Both Kamau Brathwaite and Austin Clarke have noted the claims for the

⁴⁵ Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, p. 193. See p. 95 of this chapter for the Marryat reference.

World Wars, with Clarke squarely laying the accusation for the World War II telegram on Grantley Adams, the coloured elite lawyer and politician.⁴⁶

Indeed, important to this discussion is the question of who sent the telegrams. For the Napoleonic War, the Boer War and probably World War I, the white elite would have sent it. Each time it was sent, they were investing in this myth of Englishness and the arrogance of the white Barbadian. However, for World War II, the coloured elite who formed the middle class of Barbadian society sent the telegram. This is a clear indication of investment in the 'Little England' myth by the group in Barbadian society who Brathwaite calls the Afro-Saxons.

The Afro-Saxon of the Caribbean were the coloured and black elite who adopted the entire European value system. For Brathwaite this included the 'white collar, (old) school tie, the "right" newspapers and periodicals, an elitist "Oxford" accent, visits to the Mother Country. To be Afro-Saxon became a sign of success.'⁴⁷ Hence, when Adams and his supporters sent this telegram, this would have been the Afro-Saxon or the colonial thing to do.

This love of Empire was an essential component for the black and coloured elite.

Take for example this 1920 poem entitled 'Britannia's Pride':

Gem of the Antilles, all hail to thee!
 Thy sons and daughters too thy flame shall see;
 I'll pin my faith to thee, whate'er betide,
 Thee 'Little England' fair, Britannia's pride.⁴⁸

There are several pictures of the poet in the text to confirm that he is a black Barbadian.

⁴⁶ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Savacou, 1985 [1974]), p.31; Austin Tom Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (Cuba: Casas de las Américas, 1980), p. 51.

⁴⁷ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens*, p. 31.

⁴⁸ John Albert Thorne, '*Britannia's Pride*': *Barbados the gem of the Antilles. Patriotic ode* (Kingston: 1920), p. 19.

A teacher, he had been living in Jamaica for a number of years and thought he should pay tribute to the country in which he was born. His collection of poetry pays tribute to both white and black Barbadians and reflects upon the history as he saw it.

Here is another example of the investment by the black and coloured elite in the 'Little England' myth. Odessa Gittens opted to go to Britain in 1943 as one of the first batch of West Indian women to be recruited to serve in the British Auxiliary Territorial Service. She joined the army not only because she saw the opportunity to do post-graduate studies, but also because of her allegiance to the Mother Country:

I heard they were recruiting people for the army, and beside my love for Britain (because we were British), I wanted to further my studies and I was not able (because my father and mother had died) to pursue courses which you had to pay for. And I thought this was a good opportunity to do my duty to Britain and to myself.⁴⁹

Odessa was eventually signed on and sent to Britain to serve in the war, thus realising a long cherished dream:

We had a saying 'Go ahead Britain, Barbados is behind you' and it was true. White and Black, we were one united family behind Britain. This is why the position of West Indians in Britain, and the stance of the British to the West Indians angers me.⁵⁰

Like most West Indians, the hostile reception in Britain and the lived reality of racism was not what they had expected from their Mother Country. Moreover, note the belief that Barbados and England were 'one united family behind Britain'. The colonised and

⁴⁹ Ben Bousquet and Colin Douglas, *West Indian Women At War: British racism in World War II* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), p.108.. Odessa Gittens went on to become a Senator in the Barbadian government.

⁵⁰ Bousquet and Douglas, *West Indian Women*, p. 109.

the coloniser were here seen as one.

Though it has been established that the coloured and black elite bought into the myth, what about the coloured and black labouring class in the colonial period? Writers like George Lamming and Tom Clarke have written about the adoption of the construct by these groups in the 1930s. In Chapter Two, the connection between the statue of Nelson and 'Little England' was discussed. As Clarke said, the labouring classes were made to be seen as the 'Black English'. Moreover, there was a definite working towards this target culture by some members of the labouring classes as well as among the black and coloured elite. The construct was part of the colonial reality.

In the novel, *In the Castle of My Skin*, the character known as the shoemaker discusses the rise and fall of empires. Having gone through the Greek, Roman, Spanish and Portuguese Empires, he reached the British Empire:

"'Twas the great big British empire' he said, 'That's what we here is of, Barbados or Little England, God bless her soul, is part of that. But times goin' change again an' things too, and that big British Empire goin change too, 'cause time ain't got nothin' to do with these empires. God don't like ugly, an' whenever these big great empires starts to get ugly with the thing they does the Almighty puts His hands down once an for all. He tell them without talkin, 'fellows, you had your day.'

'What'll happen to we in Little England when the big change come?' Mr. Foster asked.

'P'raps we'll start seein' 'bout getting a empire too,' said Bob's father.⁵¹

The passage affirms that shoemaker and his friends saw Barbados as 'Little England'. However, there is the dual recognition of Barbados as a colony as well as an equal to the Mother Country. With the fall of yet another empire, it would be the turn of Barbados to rule.

In view of the current discussion, what is here said in jest assumes deeper

⁵¹ George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin*, (London: Longmans, 1995 [1953]), p. 95.

significance. It indicates the continuity of meanings that were established for the myth from its inception. Barbados is *in* the Caribbean but not *of* it; it is a Little Empire and it is still loyal to the Mother Country. The important difference here is that these working class Barbadians apparently do not fully accept the concept of England as Home. Their reality was their village. Ironically, it is from the position of their village that they would help Barbados to become a Little Empire.

(c) 1966-1999

This section traces the usage of the construct in the Independence era. It pays particular attention to the 1990s, the time in which it gained a revival in use. The section is further divided into two parts. The first generally reviews the three decades following Independence. The second looks at how the Board of Tourism has invested in the term as a marketing strategy.

(i) 'death with reprieve'

As part of the celebrations for Independence, a special issue of the *New World Quarterly* was published. Among those who paid tribute to Barbados on its outstanding achievement was John Hearne, the Jamaican novelist. In his reflections, Hearne stated that he found the Barbadian to be a 'problem' in that 'he is English in a way that the rest of us are not'.⁵² He had observed this Englishness of the Barbadian character especially in the landscape:

⁵² John Hearne, 'What the Barbadian Means to Me', *New World Quarterly* 3: 1 & 2 (1966-67), 6-9 (p. 6)

Sugar cane or no sugar cane, when I as a Jamaican drive through the Barbadian countryside I cannot feel the sense of familiarity and similarity that I feel in, say, Grenada. It is a piece of England, much modified, to be sure, and 'sunburnt' by the tropics, but still and stubbornly a corner of the English countryside.⁵³

Hearne then proceeded to run through a number of tales about the Barbadian, including the 'Carry on England' telegram of World War One, which he admitted was a 'tired old story'. He advocated that the Barbadian should not be ashamed of the Englishness of his character, because it was a 'source of real psychic strength'. It had given the Barbadian 'extraordinary self-confidence and self-discipline', virtues that Hearne claimed that he could not find elsewhere in the West Indies.⁵⁴ Indeed, Hearne explained that unlike other West Indians, he found in this most English Barbadian many qualities to admire.

The wonderful and (for some of the rest of us) truly inspiring sense of **self** is often referred to as self-satisfaction. The habits of thrift, good husbandry and industriousness are often called meanness, unimaginative materialism or ruthless and self-centred ambition. [...] Your careful fashioning of a community in which checks and balances had to be respected if you were to survive decently is often felt to be, somehow, a betrayal of the more haphazard, **ad hoc** approach to social tensions which tends to be the method in other West Indian islands. In a climate of "Southern" attitudes you are the "Yankees".⁵⁵

In his concluding reflections, Hearne warned the newly independent Barbadians that one of the tasks for the new era was the modification of the Englishness of their character. He advised that this was going to be a painful and uncomfortable process, because it involved changing their psyche:

But some modification will be necessary. The Barbadian is now truly a man of the New World. Between the pull of his past and his conscious manipulation of his future, he should become the subject of one of the most creative tensions ever seen in the English speaking Caribbean. If I am right in my assessment of his other qualities, he should make one of the most creative and original gestures as

⁵³ Hearne, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 9.

he attempts to resolve this tension.⁵⁶

The observations by Hearne have been dwelt on at length for several reasons. Firstly, it is revealing to note that Hearne echoes the traditional arguments that place emphasis on why Barbados is so English. For example, it is a tropical piece of England. Note also that the view of the sugar cane fields does not work to disturb the Hearne analysis in any way. Though the cane fields resound with the blood and pain of the enslaved and their descendants, the vision of them still provides him with a very pristine English scene.

However, what is more important to note is the timing of this piece. It has been written as part of the Independence special. Thus at the very moment at which the break with colonialism is being celebrated, the focus is on emphasising the aspects of the Barbadian character which highlight the residues of colonialism. Such an act serves to highlight the dilemma that Barbados would find itself in during the ensuing decades. At the moment of the post-colonial, the imperial legacy held sway. This is the general dilemma of the post-colonial period. Anne McClintock surmises it as follows: 'Colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance'.⁵⁷

Indeed, the very symbols of Barbadian independence paradoxically reflected the colonial heritage. The national flag in its blue, yellow and black colours, has at its centre, the head of a trident. This led Brathwaite to make the following comment:

Barbados is also the island of perhaps the greatest paradox in the Caribbean. It is called proudly 'Little England' — for the Barbadian symbol they took Britannia with her trident and simply broke it, leaving as our symbol the broken part of the trident.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 9.

⁵⁷ McClintock, Anne, *Imperial Leather: Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), p. 11.

⁵⁸ E. Kamau Brathwaite as quoted in Victor Chang, ed., *Three Caribbean Poets on Their work: E. Kamau Brathwaite, Mervyn Morris and Lorna Goodison* (Jamaica: The Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1993), p. 1.

This Brathwaite comment serves to highlight some of the tensions being experienced in the Independence era. The tensions arise from the struggle between History and the histories. For the elite, the trident of Britannia, broken or not, had to be part of the major symbol of nationhood. Its presence in the flag did not upset their understanding of being Barbadian nationals.

In the decades following independence, it was especially the writers and poets who worked on analysing the colonial heritage. Such persons as Edward Kamau Brathwaite, George Lamming and Austin Clarke created literary works of art that examined how the colonial discourse was constructed and resisted in Barbados. The work of Brathwaite, for example, always sought to bring to the surface that submerged culture that would provide different readings of Barbadian cultural identity. Stewart Brown notes that in *Sun Poem*, Brathwaite pays tribute to the memory of the folk who found ways of resisting the colonial culture:

It became a dream, a rebellion of spirit symbolised in *Sun Poem* by Hannibal, the African ancestor whose daring achieved what the white world thought impossible. Hannibal is invoked as the 'BLUE LOA' whose submerged remembrance implicitly permeates the very coral of "little England"⁵⁹

With independence, there was indeed a definite fall in the usage of the construct 'Little England'. Not only did the 1970s and early 1980s see the publications of literary works, these decades also witnessed a resurgence of an African-Caribbean consciousness in Barbados. (This will be discussed in detail in the Crop Over chapter.) What resulted was the creation of a socio-cultural environment that was not conducive to the conditions

⁵⁹ Stewart Brown, 'Sun Poem: the Rainbow Sign?', in Stewart Brown ed., *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite* (Wales: Seren Press, 1995), pp.152-162 (p. 159)

necessary for the construct to be used. Thus it apparently fell out of use among the members of the populace.

However, in the late 1980s, but more especially in the 1990s, the construct became very visible once again. As the next section illustrates, the tourist discourse provided the conditions conducive to its revival.

(ii) A Tourist Ploy

During the 1970s and 1980s, references to 'Little England' apparently died a natural death. Several brochures sponsored by the Board of Tourism highlight the slave past within the history. Any reference to the nation as 'Little England' was couched in the experiences of the pre-independence days when, as Clarke said bluntly, Barbadians grew up stupid under colonial rule.

For example, here is a passage from the 1985/1986 official guide to Barbados sanctioned by the Barbados Tourist Board. It is part of the script for the history section:

The high point in Barbados' history was the attainment of independence within the Commonwealth in November 1966. The way of life established by pioneer Englishmen was developed and strengthened by their descendants in combination with the descendants of people whose ancestors were brought to the island, not to share its government, but to produce its wealth. The privilege of the few has now become the bounty of all.⁶⁰

Note the acknowledgement of the contribution of the colonisers, the enslaved and their respective descendants to the development of the island. Note also the lack of emphasis on the English character of the island. At this time, promotion of an English heritage was not a vital element of the marketing strategy.

⁶⁰ Angela Zepherin, ed., *Barbados* (Barbados: Board of Tourism, 1985), p.8.

It is thus revealing to find that in just over a decade, Board of Tourism brochures for circulation in the United Kingdom would assert that Barbados was once again known as 'Little England'. Indeed, in an advertisement in the *Travel Weekly*, one travel agency deemed it fit to extend the phrase to *Tropical Little England*, perhaps to create some rather thin distinction.⁶¹

This theme of the Englishness of Barbadian culture and the history of empire now dominates the tourism discourse. Note the shift in emphasis in the explanation of the island's history:

Despite Barbados independence in 1966, a very British atmosphere still prevails. [...] It is not surprising that there is so much of Britain in this tiny island, because unlike so many of its neighbor islands, Barbados' history is relatively free of strife. Barbados in fact enjoyed 339 years of uninterrupted *peaceful* British rule.⁶² [my emphasis]

The writers and sponsors of the brochure see fit to continue the traditional colonial line of thinking. Their 'relatively free from strife' makes light work of the series of slave revolts of the seventeenth century. It completely ignores the major 1816 slave revolt that surprised the planters. It took five months to restore order and lift the martial law ban. In this revolt, 25% of the sugar harvest was destroyed, one hundred and forty four slaves were executed during martial law, while seventy were sentenced to death. A remaining one hundred and twenty three slaves were sentenced to transportation, to be exiled in the territory of British Honduras. There was also a spate of riots in the late nineteenth century and labour disturbances of the 1930s.⁶³

⁶¹ Advertisement for Harlequin World Wide Travel in *Travel Weekly*, 5 November 1997, p. 43.

⁶² *Barbados Travel Planner* (Florida: Gold Book, 1996), p. 11.

⁶³ See Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. New evidence now proves that there were also series of riots in the late nineteenth century, which the oligarchy failed to report. However, the Confederation Riots of 1876 have been well documented so there is no excuse for ignoring that example of resistance. Here the Barbados riots were part of an entire upheaval among the labouring poor of the West Indies. The 1937 riots served as

In other words, Barbados does share a similar past with its neighbours. Like them there have been disturbances and revolts, though to a lesser extent in number. The tourism narrative finds it necessary to subvert this knowledge in the act of making the history of the island as uneventful and 'peaceful' as possible. Thus the average advertisement for the nation now reads like this:

While the island has long been viewed as one of the Caribbean's remaining bastions of British refinement, today's traveller experiences a renewed sense of adventure and excitement. You'll find a British flavour to all our customary offerings with afternoon tea served daily at select hotels, an ardent passion for cricket and polo, English as the national language, and an aptly named Scotland district. Known as Little England, Barbados has secured stability and harmony a diverse of cultures.⁶⁴

This shift back to a projection of a certain English character to the island can be explained by the shift in the marketing drive of the Tourist Board. In the 1990s, the British market provided the largest number of tourists for Barbados. For example, between January to July 1996, there were 79, 418 British tourists to Barbados. In 1997, that number had climbed to 87, 486 for the same period. The country that provides the largest number of tourists after Britain is the United States of America. Though their numbers were high in January – July period of 1996 with 72, 466 tourists going to Barbados, these numbers fell by 5.5% in the similar period in 1997.⁶⁵

What these figures reveal is the dependence that Barbados has on the British market. Whatever works to encourage the growth of this market, or to sustain it, will be employed. In a conversation with a member of the recently appointed Board of Tourism, it was confirmed that the Board had taken the decision to use the construct 'Little England' as part of its marketing strategy. In marketing terms, it is a ready-made product

the landmark for the formation of the labour union, the political party system and eventually self rule.

⁶⁴ *Barbados: Just Beyond Your Imagination*, (London: Barbados Board of Tourism, n.d. 1990s [?]) pp. 2-3.

⁶⁵ 'Tourist arrivals- July 1997', Barbados Tourism Authority, (Barbados: Department of Statistics, 1997)

with which consumers can identify. Its main target is the British tourist market.

Thus it is not surprising that British travel writers have once again returned to their traditional stance. They have reached for the old formula of 'more English than the English', as they strive to emphasise how the tangible aspects of British legacy continue to shape the culture. Here is the list given by Gary Yonge in an April 1999 edition of *The Guardian*:

They don't call Barbados 'Little England' for nothing; here they have red post boxes, drive on the left and watch cricket at the Kensington Oval.⁶⁶

Note also the reflections of James Fergusson. He took up the travel writers' traditional mantle and ensured that Barbados would be well enfolded within the myth. In *A Traveller's History of the Caribbean*, Fergusson presents a much-expanded list of all of the characteristics that make the nation of Barbados 'Little England'. In this 1998 publication, he has coughed up every possible stereotype:

Barbados is still popularly known as 'Little England' because of Britain's unbroken colonial possession from 1627 to independence in 1966. The capital, Bridgetown, contains many buildings, monuments and place names which recall its colonial past: the Parliament Building, the statue of Lord Nelson (erected thirty-six years before its equivalent in London) and Trafalgar Square. Villages and resorts have quintessentially British names such as Worthing, Dover and Hastings [...] Further north is Speightstown, once an important trading centre known as 'little Bristol'.⁶⁷

What Fergusson has chosen to emphasise are the colonial buildings, the English place names and the Nelson Statue. Note also the re-assertion that because of all of these, the nation of Barbados can still be popularly called 'Little England'. Fergusson has reached

p. 2.

⁶⁶ Gary Yonge, 'Caribbean at the Crossroads', *The Guardian*, G2, London, 15 April 1999, pp. 1-3, (p. 2).

⁶⁷ James Fergusson, *A Traveller's History of the Caribbean* (Gloucestershire: The Windrush Press, 1998), p. 356.

for the proof of the legacy of Empire. He has ignored the way such events as the Crop Over festival, enriched with all of its African-Caribbean traditions, disturbs this colonial discourse. Such acknowledgement conflicts with the 'Little England' projection. Fergusson prefers to stick with the familiar colonial narrative.

With its return in the 1990s due to the tourist discourse, 'Little England' now turns up in the most interesting of places. Paul Gilroy used the construct when reviewing an exhibition of photographs mounted by David A. Bailey. Bailey, a Black British photographer of Barbadian descent, had gone to Barbados to explore his roots. For Gilroy, the resulting photographs told him the following:

Read through the imagery of the beach, the billboard or the schoolyard, Barbados is neither what England thinks it is nor what Bailey wants it to be. The church, the schoolhouse and the other core components of black cultural autonomy are all witnessed from an outsider's point of view. But the Bibles, the Sunday hats and the eager Brownies clustering around his camera represent the vitality of a Caribbean island still known as Little England, an island that remains perversely and ironically more English than England itself.⁶⁸

It is intriguing to see Paul Gilroy repeat verbatim the favourite phrase of the travel writer: 'more English than England itself'. Note also that the focus of the analysis is on the tangible representations of the culture. Yet Gilroy states that Barbados does not fulfil either Bailey's, or England's expectations of what it should be. It is this 'Little England'.

In his summary, Gilroy said that the photographs were 'neither alternative nor even complimentary representations of Barbados'. He read them as

contrasting frequencies on which inner attributes of the post-colonial condition can be publicly transmitted. Brought together, they deepen and extend each other's range so that the viewer's attention is concentrated on the unique experience in English culture.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Paul Gilroy, 'On the Beach: David A. Bailey', in *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), p. 147.

⁶⁹ Gilroy, p. 151.

And, may I add, Caribbean culture.

Finally, it appears that the myth is still in use among the members of the diaspora. In an August 1999 article in *The Voice*, a Black British newspaper, Tony Sewell bestowed high praise upon Barbados. Entitled 'It's booming in Barbados', the article compared the economic records of Barbados to those of Jamaica. It stated that while Barbados had reduced poverty and held the best record for doing so as a developing country, Jamaica was 'lurching into chaos and civil unrest.' It argued that the key to the Barbados success story lay in discipline and management: 'Barbados has an education system that outperforms even Britain's in terms of the proportion of students it produces who are numerate and literate.' The island also had the technological edge and so is 'ready to become a key technological player in the next century'. The article concluded as follows: 'Maybe we should stop insulting the place by calling it Little England and rename it Big Brother.'⁷⁰

It is revealing to note that the use of the construct in this example. This indicates that it has a life in the diaspora, apparently complete with its gamut of meanings. What Tony Sewell argued was that Barbados was now outperforming Britain and outperforming Jamaica. With what he viewed as remarkable achievements, it deserved to be promoted to the position of respect and envy. Thus for him, 'Little England' no longer meant colonial stooge. It now meant Caribbean elder.

Keeping in mind the meanings that have been discussed in this chapter, this promotion by Sewell would be treated by the Barbadian nineteenth century promoters of the myth as a matter of course. As was noted in 1804, Caribbean elder here would mean Little Empire.

⁷⁰ Tony Sewell, 'Its booming in Barbados', *The Voice*, 9 August 1999, p. 9.

Therefore it can be surmised that in these recent examples of usage, what appears to be happening is that the myth has to reconfirm its existence in order to sustain itself. In 1999, it has done exactly what Barthes stipulated myths needed to do. It has reached into its reserve of history and has come back revived.

IV

In Writing the Nation

In the introduction to the seminal text *Nations and Narration*, Homi Bhabha stated that the aim of the contributors was to highlight the ambivalent positions in the discourse of nationhood, between the academics that wrote about it and the people who lived the experience. What Bhabha and the other contributors wanted to do was to investigate

the nation space in the *process* of the articulation of elements: where meanings may be partial because they are in *medias res*, and history may be half-made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of 'composing' its powerful image.⁷¹

What strikes me about this statement is how applicable it is to the present situation in Barbados. Though the country has been independent for thirty-two years, it is still in the process of writing the nation. The return of the 'Little England' paradigm to prominence serves to highlight the difficulties being experienced at the present time.

It is my argument that its return is problematic because the history is, as Bhabha states, still 'half-made'. Not only do the new histories have to redress the singular

⁷¹ Homi Bhabha, 'Introduction' in *Nations and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha (Routledge: London and New York, 1994 [1990]), pp. 1-7 (p. 3).

narrative of sugar that shaped the History of the colonial period, they must also keep up with the singular narrative being made in the independence era. This is the narrative of the neo-colonial discourse. As Anne McClintock points out,

neocolonialism is not simply a repeat performance of colonialism into some new, more historic, hybrid. More complex terms and analyses of alternative times, histories and causalities are required to deal with complexities that cannot be served under the single rubric of post-colonialism.⁷²

Consequently, the return of the construct only serves to hinder the process in which these new narratives can be examined.

In this regard, the cultural authority of which Bhabha speaks, in this case the Barbados government, has been caught off-guard and ambivalent. In seeking to keep the machinery of government running and to bring in the much-needed foreign exchange, it has made tourism its sole breadwinner. In what may be seen as a paradoxical move, it then adopts the very paradigm that became its symbol of colonialism and made it the agent of tourism. This was done with apparently no thought of the consequences, especially those that may interrupt the act of writing the nation. With the return of the travel writers and the growth of the tourist venture, the act of 'composing' the cultural image is being wrestled from the hands of the cultural authority. What may make matters worse is that those in authority may not be fully aware of the battle, nor of its dynamics.

Yet understanding the dynamics of the nation space is essential especially at this time. What must be determined are the 'cultural boundaries of [the] nation'. These boundaries contain 'thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased and translated in

⁷² McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 13.

the process of cultural production.’⁷³ In this case, ‘Little England’ is a cultural boundary, which has been crossed time and again.

Summary

As a dominant discourse, the ‘Little England’ construct has proven hard to shift. It continues to serve the demands of special interests groups some two hundred years after its initial usage. As an integral part of the colonial narrative, the myth acts as a re-colonising agent in the period of decolonisation. Its continued use in the post-colonial period advocates that those who fall within its narrative become victims to its power:

We can be victims of History when we submit passively to it-never managing to escape its harrowing power. History (like Literature) is capable of quarrying deep within us, as a consciousness or the emergence of a consciousness, as a neurosis (symptom of loss) and a contraction of the self.⁷⁴

It is my argument that until we can fully understand, and be able to guard against, the inner meanings of the Little England myth, it should be withdrawn from official use. Its presence, as it comes packed with the colonial discourse, can only adversely affect the decolonisation process.

⁷³ Bhabha, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p. 70.

Chapter Four

The Barbados Landship: The Cloaking of a Heritage

when i die
 sail me thru
 these paved highways
 like a napoleon
 like a nelson
 with my navy
 of land lovers
 with my pride in my pocket
 with my pain in my penny-whistle

Winston Farrell, 'tribute' in *Tribute* (Barbados: Farcia Publication
 in association with the Commonwealth Liaison Unit of Barbados,
 1995), p. 7

We sail our words in the very depths of flattening exposure

Édouard Glissant, 'Garrotte' in *Black Salt: Poems by Édouard
 Glissant*, tr. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan
 Press, 1999 [1983]), p. 156.

Introduction

The chapter examines the historical development of the Barbadian community group known as the Landship. Located mainly in the plantation tenancies and villages for most of its existence, the Landship has had an uneasy existence in Barbadian society. The chapter argues that the Landship demonstrates how colonised labouring class Barbadians devised ways of manoeuvring and creating pockets of resistance within colonial space.

In 1931, an article in *The Advocate News* highlighted the occurrence of an unusual social event in Barbados. Entitled 'Little England's Navy En Fete', the opening paragraph read as follows:

Little England's navy was to fete last Thursday. Responding enthusiastically to the invitation of Mr. C. B. Brandford of No. 2 Bay Street, the Admirals and Commanders of about 23 units of the landship movement led a band of their officers and sailors and red cross nurses, numbering well over 300, in a well-organised train excursion to Belleplaine.¹

What then ensued was a report of a train excursion to the Barbados countryside in which a large number of persons from the labouring class, and some from the middle class, mingled and mixed for the day. The writer dubbed the event a 'social pepperpot', for among this gathering was an Oxford graduate, students of the arts and humanities and some females 'whose dress and bearing bespoke some standard of taste and degree of

¹ 'Little England's Navy En Fete', *The Advocate News*, 10 October 1931, p. 4. Though no author was given, I will demonstrate that it was probably Gordon Bell.

culture'. All present had an enjoyable time as they ate and drank and danced to the music of Bromley's Band in the Railway Shed.²

The main event of the day was the parade of the units of the Landship:

During the day the men paraded on the spacious pasture at Belleplaine firstly in companies from each ship and subsequently in mass formation, and although there is much room for improvement in their drill and manoeuvring, their turn out, on the whole, was impressive.

What can be noted is that before embarking upon this description of the parade, the writer had found it necessary to make a special plea to his readership for understanding and tolerance of the group. 'At first blush one is tempted to raise a smile of derision at what appears to be merely stupid mimicry and regular antics. But there is a deeper significance and a worthier motive underlying this movement.' He then argued that what the 'Ships' were noted for was the high instance of discipline among their members. Thrift and unity were also virtues closely adhered to in the movement. Moreover, a Landship parade provided 'an enjoyable spectacle for hundreds of country-folk whose life is one of unvarying monotony and soul-killing drabness.'

Though it is now over six decades since this report, the group referred to in the article continues to 'sail' on in Barbados. The majority of the members of the present day Landship have come together under the leadership of Captain Vernon Watson. There is now officially one ship, called *The Barbados Landship*.³ In this community group there

² Bromley has become a legend in folk history. A sanitary inspector, he operated a brass band and was infamous for his train excursions to Belleplaine at which his band would play. His band specialised in tuk band songs. See Trevor Marshall, Peggy Mc Geary and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados* (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996 [1981]), p. 69.

³ The *Cornwall*, a ship located in Carrington's Village, St. Michael, has refused to be allied with the overall unit known as the *Barbados Landship*.

are still individuals known as Admirals and Commanders who go on parade in their medals, gold tassels and peaked caps with naval emblems. There are also nurses, policewomen and other costumed representatives of naval, military and civil organisations. No longer organising impressive excursions to the countryside, *The Barbados Landship* is in great demand to appear and do their marching routine at cultural events around the island. In recent years, they have created the custom of performing every Saturday morning between the months of February and May in Bridgetown. They have now been officially deemed to be part of 'our heritage' and thus an important cultural and national institution.⁴

However, the Landship continues to present the same dilemma to which the writer of the 1931 article referred. For example, in the 1970s, when there was a revival of the Landship movement, a debate raged in the newspapers about their relevance in the independence period. The popular opinion was that the Landship was an example of mimicry of the coloniser by the colonised, in this case of black labouring class Barbadians dressing up in British naval uniforms and trying to become British.

One writer deemed the movement a 'crudity', and a 'monkey game', as well as 'an exercise which is a mock, farce, a poor joke'. For him, the Landship was unique to Barbados because 'in Barbados, aping comes so naturally.' He challenged anyone who claimed that the Landship represented the cultural development of Barbados to put on a uniform and go and parade before the crowds: 'Don't just leave it to the inarticulate but get out there and articulate it yourselves.' He ventured that the response of the families of those who did this would be to call in the psychiatrist:

⁴ Note the comments of The Minister of Education, Culture and Youth Affairs, Mia Mottley, when she took the salute in Bridgetown. See 'Landship 'part of we culture'', *The Sunday Sun*, 23 February 1997, p. 30.

This then is the balloon of the whole affair, people who encourage other people to play the monkey game in the interest of a sort of recognition. The only thing to do with the Landship is to put it out to sea where it can only perish as any useless ship would.⁵

In response, supporters argued that there was more to the Landship than just parading before laughing crowds. The charitable services they provided made them an integral link in their communities and thus a more 'interesting and valuable institution than many others supported by other and more prominent sections of the community.'⁶ Research on the group in the following years revealed a well kept secret. The Landship was organised along the lines of a Friendly Society in which the members paid contributions towards a fund from which sickness and death benefits, as well as an annual bonus could be derived.⁷

Some scrutiny of the marching routine also brought fresh insights. It was suggested that what was demonstrated in the parades were not just 'regular antics', but dance movements revealing an African-Caribbean legacy.⁸ By this token, the Landship was more an example of the process of creolisation than of acculturation. These revelations served to shift some of the stigma attached to the group, allowing it to be viewed through new, perhaps more sympathetic eyes, by the society.

Today there is still mixed reaction to the Landship. There are those who appreciate them because of their historic role in society and because of the especially entertaining performances during their parades. There are also those who see the Landship as an embarrassment and a colonial artifact, which has no place in present day

⁵ Lawson Bayley, 'Shocking State of Affairs', *The Sunday Advocate News*, 9 February 1975, p. 4.

⁶ Joe Brome, 'The Landship: It saved Many a Man', *The Sunday Advocate News*, 30 March 1975, p. 10.

See also Margaret Knight, 'Do not make fun of these people', *The Nation*, 10 November 1974, p. 24.

⁷ John Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association: 130 years: 1863-1993* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation and The Audio Visual Aids Department, 1993).

⁸ Trevor Marshall, 'A Ship on Land?', in Rachel Wilder, ed., *Insight Guides: Barbados*. (Hong Kong: APA Productions Ltd., 1990), p. 65.

Barbados. For them, it was more suited to a time when some Barbadians may have believed that Barbados was 'Little England', complete with its own pseudo navy on land.

This chapter raises questions surrounding the identity of the Landship and its relevance in a post-colonial Barbadian society. Has this cultural entity evolved because, as Bailey says, Barbadians were good at aping the colonisers? Is this the kind of paradigm of identity that black Barbadians should acknowledge in the post-colonial period? And finally, should it be allowed to die a natural death not only because it is past its use-by-date, but also to save Barbadian onlookers from the embarrassment of its existence?

and the flock of villagers
 weighting with laughter
 watching on with the point of a finger
 some turning their backs
 on the spectacle of tuk drums
 others rattling like kettle and base
 hiding their face from the culture of the poor⁹

II

Sailing with the Landship

According to Clifford Geertz, culture is an 'acted document' which can be read to see what it says.¹⁰ Thus, 'cultural forms can be treated as texts, as imaginative works built out of social materials'. When the cultural form or text is read, the emphasis is more upon discovering what is being said, than giving an account of what it is:

⁹ Winston Farrell, 'tribute', p.7. Tuk drums provide the music for the Landship to parade and dance to. There are two drums; the 'kittle' or snare drum and the bass drum.

¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993 [1973]), p. 10 and 449.

[T]o regard such forms as 'saying something of something' and saying it to somebody, is at least to open up the possibility of an analysis which attends to their substance rather than to reductive formulas professing to account for them.¹¹

When this approach to interpreting cultures is adopted, the complex web of significance that culture is becomes more accessible to those seeking to understand it. These readings lead to a greater understanding of the people of that culture.

Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity [...] It renders them accessible: setting them in a frame of their own banalities, it dissolves their opacity.¹²

The purpose of this chapter is to seek an understanding of the cultural form known as the Landship. Traditional readings have always stressed that the Landship is a good example of what happens to colonised peoples. Emphasis has been placed upon the act of dressing up in the uniforms of the British navy and adopting its norms and practices. Hence the accusation of playing the monkey game, of mimicking the coloniser, of becoming English.

However, Stuart Hall reminds us that in the creolisation process, it is more the norm to find examples where the cultures of the colonised and the coloniser have been successfully synthesised. What may appear to be acculturation is still an example of creolisation precisely because, as in this instance, the British and African cultures have been mixed. It has been the tradition to argue that a Caribbean cultural form must have an easily recognisable 'African' component to be creole. Hall argues that this tradition can be misleading:

¹¹ Geertz, *Interpretation*, p. 453.

¹² Geertz, *Interpretation*, p. 14.

Anthropologically the question of cultural identity has often been approached in terms of survivals [...] in what has lasted, in what was not broken or lost, of hidden continuities. And no one who knows the Caribbean can ignore the way that the African past of the Caribbean peoples have provided the resources of survival of a new and distinctive pattern or form of life. But the important pockets of survival in their pure form are massively outweighed in our culture by the way African-derived cultural practise and meanings have survived, by being *synthesised* with other elements in the *cultural mix*.¹³ [my emphasis]

Homi Bhabha argues that even in situations where the colonised have worked assiduously towards the target culture, the act of colonial mimicry does not result in a true image of the coloniser, but a distorted one:

colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference.¹⁴

Indeed, what is also produced by this act of mimicry by the colonised is usually a critique of the foibles and failings of the coloniser. Bhabha calls this critiquing process the menace of mimicry: 'The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.' As Childs and Williams put it, mimicry, 'as a repetition that is "almost but not quite" the same as the original, queries not only the definition but the self-identity of the "original".'¹⁵

It is my argument that the Landship is an example of the process of synthesis described by Hall. When the cultural form is read, it becomes possible to reveal some of the components, such as African survivals, which are normally hidden from view. These

¹³ Stuart Hall, 'Thinking Diasporically: Home Thoughts From Abroad', *The Distinguished Lecture Series*, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, 18 November, 1998. (Audio)

¹⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995 [1994]), p. 86.

¹⁵ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 88; Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 132.

form what I call the heritage. However, to be the Landship, the cloak or the Royal navy uniforms and all the accompanying rituals, are vital components for its identity. This is because it is a synthesised cultural form. It needs the cloak, with all confined within, to be the Landship.

The Landship also becomes an appropriate example of Bhabha's vision of mimicry. Though dressed in Royal naval uniforms, the Landship will always be 'almost the same but not quite'. Indeed, their very existence disturbed the colonial discourse. It is this element of disturbance, or the double vision provided by Bhabha's menace of mimicry, that makes them an unsettling cultural entity in the society today.

In order to pursue these debates on Landship identity, it becomes necessary to have an understanding of the history and development of the movement. What must be emphasised here is that very little research has been conducted on the group. To date, there is no comprehensive review of its history. The continuing stigma of 'playing the monkey game', combined with a lack of readily available data, has cast them as an inappropriate topic for in-depth study and analysis.

III

Key Stages in Landship History

The Landship movement has always been a black labouring class movement. For most of its existence, its core membership came from among the plantation workers. Subsequently, though some of its members may have gone to sea, many, especially the women, never left the land.

This section on the historical development of the Landship movement reflects the results of a survey of archival and secondary sources, as well as evidence gleaned from oral testimony. Newspapers of the day and Government publications such as the *Official Gazette*, have been especially consulted.

(a) *In pursuit of origins*

It is said that in 1863, a Barbadian seaman by the name of Moses Ward, or Moses Wood, created the group now known as the Landship. A former member of the Royal Navy, Moses opted to re-enact on land the discipline and camaraderie he had experienced at sea. Thus, he and his friends dressed themselves in the uniforms of the British Royal Navy and adopted the appropriate titles held by Naval Officers. A rank and file hierarchy was duly created. To complete the enterprise, it was decided that each group or ship would be named after a British vessel, preferably a British man-of-war. Hence the following examples of names of Landships over the years: *Cornwall, Iron Duke, Nelson, Vanguard*. Thus was created in Barbados the advent of a ship on land, or as is more popularly observed, the ship that never goes to sea.

In pursuing some understanding of the Landship, the first of several pitfalls is the question of the origin of the movement. Though popular discourse affixes the date 1863 and the name Moses Ward or Wood as its founder, there is no clear evidence to support this. With reference to the date, other years have been given as possible launching points.

These are 1868, and the 1890s.¹⁶ Indeed, it was only in 1972 that the date 1863 makes an appearance in the writings, just in time for the celebration of the 109th anniversary of the movement. Seeing that the precise source of this date is yet to be identified, the issue of when the movement begins remains to be resolved.¹⁷

What can be noted is that to date the earliest evidence I have found for the existence of the Landship movement is in 1898 when two Landships appear on the list of registration of Friendly Societies published in the Official Gazette. These are *The Ship Nelson* and the *Victory Naval*. I have been able to identify nineteen such Landships in the period 1898-1914. However, it is important to emphasise that this does not mean that these Landships were created at that time; rather that they came forward or were made to come forward to be registered as Friendly Societies from 1898 onwards. The extent to which the movement existed before this date remains unclear.

The other issue regarding origins is the question of the founder. Of the several issues to be addressed are his racial composition, his country of origin, and perhaps even his name. It has been claimed that he was a white Englishman who made his home in Barbados, a coloured Barbadian of Cardiff and Southampton who retired in Barbados, as

¹⁶ Gilmore gives both 1863 and 1868, but goes along with 1863. See Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association*, p. 2. Both dates are also given in the *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*. See H. Fraser, S. Carrington, A Forde & J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Jamaica: Heinemann Publishers Caribbean Limited, 1990), pp. 97-8; Hilton Vaughan gave an estimate of the 1890s. See Giraud Robinson, 'The Barbados Landship: Origins, Structure and Economic Aspects' (unpublished Caribbean Studies thesis, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1977), p. 3.

¹⁷ The date seems to have surfaced in 1972 from sources unknown. However, when interviewed in 1970, the Lord High Commander Leon Marshall, at the time the longest serving member of the Landship, did not know how old it was. See the interview between Leon Marshall and Jennifer Fields: Commonwealth Caribbean Resource Centre, (COMCARC) as quoted in S. Victor Johnson, 'Socio-Cultural Implications of the Barbados Landship' (unpublished Caribbean Studies thesis, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1976-77), p. 4. I am dependent upon Johnson for this as the COMCARC archival materials cannot be located.

well as a Black Barbadian seaman born in Barbados who returned home. The latter is the more current, and probably the more politically correct belief.¹⁸

There is also the question of his name: Moses Wood or Moses Ward. It was in the 1953 Wells report on Friendly Societies in the West Indies that the name 'Wood' first appeared. In 1964, Louis Lynch appears to be paraphrasing what Wells had written, but puts in the name 'Ward' instead. Whether this was a correction to the Vaughan submission or an error in transcription remains to be determined.¹⁹ What can be noted is that by the 1970s, the Ward alternative had become a prominent feature in the writings with one writer asserting that the first name was David. It then became the practise to write Ward or Wood as the name of the founder. This practise continues today.²⁰

This issue of Moses Ward or Moses Wood and whether he was Barbadian or British remains to be resolved. To date I have been unable to identify a Moses Wood or Ward who might fit any of these descriptions and show some connection to the Landship movement. I have also been unable to trace him in the 1850-1880 Royal Navy and Merchant Seaman records.²¹

What observations can be made regarding this question of the origin of the Landship movement? The most obvious one is that much of the story of its genesis cannot be verified. Landships could have been in existence well before 1898. Indeed, in

¹⁸ For the claim of white Englishman, see Lawson Bayley, 'Shocking State of Affairs'. For coloured Barbadian see A. F. and D. Wells, *Friendly Societies in the West Indies: Report on a Survey and a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the West Indian Governors dated 15th May, 1952* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953). For Black Barbadian see Trevor Marshall, 'A Ship on Land', p. 65.

¹⁹ Wells wrote: 'Mr. Vaughan tells us that Landships are said [...] to have been started in Barbados by Moses Wood, a Barbadian seaman, who lived in Cardiff and Southampton.' Lynch writes: 'Wells says it was introduced by Moses Ward, a Barbadian seaman who lived in Cardiff and Southampton.' See D. Wells, *Friendly Societies*, #253; Louis Lynch, *The Barbados Book* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1964), p. 224.

²⁰ For the David Ward submission see Victor Gittens, 'Barbados Landship (BAL.'S.)', *The Barbados Communicator*, 11 (1973), 10-11 (p. 10).

²¹ Royal Navy and Merchant Seamen Records, 1850-1880 (BT 98-99)

my research, I have come across references to 'marching'. For example, in 1871 the following report appeared in *The Times*:

Richard Shannon and Richard Taylor, severely pleaded guilty to beating drums on the public highway. Corporal Small deposed that he was on duty on the 2nd, and that he was sent by Superintendent Sergeant DaRoclia to where the Reverend St. Clair's society was *marching* in Westbury road, Passage road, Baxter Road and King Street-and he saw the two defendants beating drums for the society.

His worship did not consider that this case came under the meaning of the act, and dismissed the claim.²² [my emphasis]

I take the reference to 'society' to be a Friendly Society, in this instance, led by a Reverend St. Clair. There is no mention of other instruments, such as the 'penny whistle' and the triangle, which might indicate if a traditional tuk band was playing. There is only the mention of drums; the playing of which had been outlawed since 1688 as a measure to control slave activity. Though Emancipation had been granted in 1838, this law was still in force. This means that the two Richards had effectively broken the law. Being members of Reverend St. Clair's society had rescued them from certain imprisonment.

What is interesting to this discussion is that the society was described as 'marching' through the streets. Yet if the marching and drumming had been routine, as in the military style to which the island was accustomed, the law would not have been broken.²³ Though this is speculation, I believe that either the drums that were being played were the traditional African drums, or the rhythms that resounded were the creolised African - Caribbean rhythms for which the tuk band have become known. Whichever of the two, the law was brought into force. The judge chose to ignore the act of drumming and focus more on the purpose. As will be demonstrated, a Friendly Society

²² 'Police Court', *The Times*, 11 January 1871, p. 2.

²³ From the eighteenth century, Barbados became the headquarters for the British West Indian Army. At any one stage 8000 soldiers would be resident. Parades and tatoos were regularly held using military style drums.

marching to creolised drum rhythms are three of the key elements of what constitutes the Landship. Though there is no mention of the term 'Landship', it is my contention that there is a connection here.

Again in 1875, for the Harvest Home celebrations in St. John, it was reported the labourers were 'accommodated with marchings, and dancing'. It was ventured that such 'marchings' were the norm at these events.²⁴

Perhaps the term 'marching' was the descriptive way of *hailing the cultural entity* that becomes known as the Landship. It could also be an early version of the elaborate twentieth century form. It has been asserted that the 'white uniformed crews', the uniform of the twentieth century Landships, were seen in the 1870s.²⁵ The term 'Landship' was not used.

It can be noted that the very term 'Landship' is itself problematic. It has thus far defied definition. In my opinion it is a more descriptive term for which references to date can only be found in the twentieth century. Thus, it is 'a ship on land' and 'a ship that never goes to sea'. Sometimes it is just a Friendly Society that holds parades. Recently, one writer cancelled all ship references and opted to call it a 'colourful institution'.²⁶ This integral part of its identity, the name it has become known by, is yet to be reviewed.

One of the reasons why such an analysis is yet to be undertaken is the given

²⁴ 'St. John Correspondent', *The Times*, 7 July 1875, p. 3.

²⁵ Lynch, *The Barbados Book*, p. 224.

²⁶ Gilmore calls them 'a ship that never goes to sea'. See Gilmore, 'The Barbados Landship Association', p. 1; Collymore calls them 'a sort of friendly society which frequently holds organised parades dressed in naval uniform'. See Frank A. Collymore, *Notes for a Glossary and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1955), p. 59; Allsopp calls them a 'Friendly Society; its functions exclusively on land, but is organised and best known as a ceremonial copy of the British Navy'. See Richard Allsopp, ed., *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p. 80; An article in *The Visitor* described them as follows: 'It hasn't very much to do with either a ship on land or sea [...]The Landship is a self-help association, but it is also one of Barbados' oldest and most colourful institutions.' See *The Visitor*, 27 April – 3 May 1998, p. 1.

genesis story. As part of the colonial discourse, this story has constructed an identity for the group. It has given it a starting point as well as one individual leader. It advocates that the original purpose of the group was to mimic the British Royal Navy and for its members to have as much licence as British seamen seemed to do. What this genesis story presents is a rather fixed account for a cultural institution that *evolved* to become this entity and then *changed* with time. This preoccupation with fixity is very much part of the colonial discourse:

An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition.²⁷

Consequently, in pursuing some understanding of the origins of the Landship movement and the various stages of its evolution, it becomes important to seek out other narratives and voices that may shift this fixed nature of the discourse. This is not to disparage the Moses Wood or Ward debate in any way. Rather it is to relieve the Landship of the trap of this colonial discourse which sees mimicry of the coloniser as the driving force of the group.

(b) The Early Stages

Preliminary studies established that the Landship was part of the Friendly Society movement in Barbados. An English working class and nonconformist tradition, Friendly Societies were introduced into Barbados by the Anglican Church before emancipation.

²⁷ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 66.

Their development and impact was essentially a post-emancipation one that continued into the first half of the twentieth century. Friendly Societies were self help groups in which members contributed small amounts of money on a weekly or monthly basis.

These went towards a fund for sick relief and funeral benefits to be used by the members and their dependants.

The claim that the Landship was part of this development is attested by the 1953 Report on Friendly Societies in the West Indies:

In the latter years of the last century the 'Landships' seem to have been a picturesque feature of popular life in Barbados. They were societies giving themselves names suggestive of ships of war. 'The Ship Nelson' was an example. Their President had the title of Lord High Admiral, the secretary was the Pay-Master, the marshal was the Dock-Master and there was a Lord Doctor as well. There were women members called Nurses. The societies' meeting rooms were got up to look like ships, with, for example, masts and wires on the roof; members wore dress resembling naval uniforms and there were ceremonies reminiscent of naval drill and routine. Sometimes the insignia included a model ship. Mutual aid was combined with the ceremonial.²⁸

The extent to which it can be held that the Landship movement evolved through the Friendly Society movement is yet to be debated. There are other issues to be addressed. For example, were *all* Landships Friendly Societies? Was this feature constant throughout its history? Also, with reference to the final statement in the report, is it possible that the inverse is more accurate? Was it that aspects of the ceremonial, which indeed predated Friendly Societies, became combined with mutual aid? In this quest to understand the identity of the Landship, these are some of the issues to be pursued.

Though Friendly Societies existed before emancipation, it was only in 1884 that

²⁸ D. Wells, *Friendly Societies*, #261.

they were required by law to report and register at the office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies. Bi-annual reports were laid before the House of Assembly detailing the total number of Societies in the island. Other details given were the names of Societies which were newly registered, the ones which had their rules amended and those which had been dissolved. The Friendly Society Act of 1905 made further adjustments to the previous Acts and their amendments. As a result, several groups were made to register as Friendly Societies or otherwise face legal sanctions.

The *Official Gazette* published the entries of the half-yearly reports submitted by the Registrar of Friendly Societies to the House of Assembly. For the survey I have reviewed the reports published in the *Gazette* between 1890 and 1914.²⁹ The task has been to identify any Societies known to be Landships, as well as those whose names suggest that this may have been their identity.

For example, these are some of the traditional names of Barbadian Friendly Societies: 'Corn In Egypt', 'Faith and Hope', 'Sweet Home' and 'St. Silas Village Try Again'. It thus becomes glaring to see Societies with names such as 'The Ship Nelson', 'Dreadnought' and 'Queen Mary'. Through this exercise of reviewing names I have identified nineteen such Landship Societies.

From 1890 to 1897 the number of new Societies is very small and the names do not suggest that there were Landships. It is only in 1898 that the first identifiable Landships can be found. The table overleaf highlights the frequency of the use of the term from the period 1898 to 1912.

²⁹ *Official Gazette*, 1890-1914, CO/32/20 to CO/32/48.

TABLE 4.1: LANDSHIP SOCIETIES 1898-1912

YEAR	NUMBERS	NAMES
1898	2	The Ship Nelson, Victory Naval
1906	4	Carlisle, Diamond, Monarch, Prince George
1907	4	Braggs Hill, Dauntless, Olive Blossom, Prince of Wales
1908	2	Anchor of Hope, Indefatigable
1909	1	Armada
1910	1	Dreadnought
1911	2	Queen Mary, Steam Launch
1912	3	George the Fifth, Good Hope, New Zealand,

Of the two Societies registered in 1898 that are known to be Landships, *The Ship Nelson* is the more famous. Mention was made of it in the 1953 report on Friendly Societies. It is also one of the Landships which the majority of the present day members has heard of. Ironically, *The Ship Nelson* Friendly Society was dissolved on 1 April 1905 after only seven years in existence. Presumably it suffered from what plagued other Friendly Societies: loss of members, disappearance of funds or lack of funds. To date I am unaware of whether this Landship was 'raised' at a later date, though I believe this to be so. It has been the practise for new ships to 'refloat' former Landships that had achieved prominence in the community.

Other easily identifiable Landships during this period are the *Dauntless*, the *Queen Mary*, and the *Indefatigable*. The *Dauntless* is another famous Landship remembered

today. It was one of those listed in the *Landship Review* in 1932. The other two are well known ships that still have members within the combined group now known as *The Barbados Landship*. For example, the female officer, M. P. Eastmond, was a longstanding member of the *Queen Mary* that was located in Richmond Gap, St. Michael. The Secretary, Victor Springer, was a member of the *Indefatigable* that had been 'refloated' in the Ivy in St. Michael in 1972 and dissolved by 1974.

Seeing that Landships are said to have carried the names of ships, particularly ships of war, then the Societies registered as such can be presumed to be Landships. For example, the Society calling itself the *Dreadnought* was presumably named after the famous warship of World War One. Other armoured ships listed in *The Naval Annual 1912* and which are named as Friendly Societies are *Monarch*, *Prince George*, *Prince of Wales*, *Good Hope*, and *George the Fifth*. Two battle cruisers also listed as Societies are the *Diamond* and *New Zealand*.³⁰

In the case of the society calling itself the *Carlisle*, this is the name of the bay in which all ships were docked in Barbados. The *Olive Blossom* was the name of the seventeenth century ship which brought the English colonisers to Barbados.

Some Friendly Societies can be identified as Landships through a process of deduction. Braggs Hill is a village in the parish of St. Joseph that has been the headquarters for another outstanding Landship: the *Vanguard*. For various reasons, Friendly Societies oft times registered the area in which they were located and not the name of the society. At the time of registration they may not have yet decided upon a name. As will be demonstrated, Landships are also known for this practise. Subsequently, there is a strong argument that the society registered as 'Braggs Hill' was, or became known as, the *Vanguard*.

Finally, though I have no evidence to support this claim, I have corralled the *Anchor of Hope*, *Armada* and the *Steam Launch* into the gathering of Landships, because their names resonate with naval imagery.

On reviewing the list of Landships, several observations regarding the naming process can be made. For example, there seems to be a direct correlation between ships plying the harbours in the Caribbean and which stop at Bridgetown, and the names of Landships. The Society *Diamond* can be matched to the ship *H.M.S. Diamond* which, according to the *Official Gazette* of 1906, was reportedly docked at Bridgetown. Similarly the *Indefatigable*. In the same 1906 *Gazette*, constant note is taken of the movements of the *H. M. S. Indefatigable* as it plied the route between St. Lucia, Grenada and Barbados. Indeed, the *H.M.S. Indefatigable* had played a vital role in the rescue operations mounted after the eruption of the Soufrière volcano in St. Vincent in 1902.³¹

A similar observation can be made with reference to the *Queen Mary*. The *Official Gazette* of 25 March 1912 had carried the following news. ‘The battle cruiser “Queen Mary” England’s biggest Dreadnought, has been launched at Jarrow. She out classes the “Lion”’. It is curious to note that registration of the Landship *Queen Mary* was granted after a previous application had been denied in February. News of the construction of the ship would have circulated long before the launch. Hence, those persons ‘raising’ the ship would have been provided with the choice of the name. This is strong evidence to suggest that this Landship had been purposely named after the ship.

A closer examination of events is needed for understanding the significance of the

³⁰ Viscount Hythe, ed., *The Naval Annual 1912* (London: William Clowes & Sons Ltd., 1912), pp. 83-5.

³¹ See the *Official Gazette* 31 January 1906 for the *H.M.S. Diamond* and 21 February and 12 March 1906 for the *H.M.S. Indefatigable*. For the volcano rescue operation see Bonham Richardson, *Economy and Environment in the Caribbean: Barbados and the Windwards in the late 1800's* (Jamaica and Florida: The Press University of the West Indies and The University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 202.

Olive Blossom. It is now established in Barbadian history that the English settlers landed in Barbados in 1627. However, for most of the time prior to this century, it was believed that the landing had taken place in 1605. Indeed, there were elaborate celebrations commemorating the tercentenary of the landing at Holetown in 1905. Such details as the name of the ship that brought the first settlers were widely publicised and a commemorative obelisk was erected. There was also the special issue of an *Olive Blossom* stamp as part of the events for the commemoration. The *Olive Blossom* Friendly Society was registered two years later in 1907. This is strong evidence to suggest a connection between the two events.³²

An even more curious connection can be made for the Landship *Dauntless*. The *H.M.S. Dauntless* visited Barbados in 1852. This visit has been etched in the history because sixty members of the crew were buried in Barbados in 1852, after an outbreak of yellow fever at sea. An inscribed tomb was erected in their memory. Whether the Landship *Dauntless* was one of the early Landships, or whether the event remained in the folk memory and influenced the leaders to name their Landship after this ship cannot yet be determined. Their action of naming it the *Dauntless* recalls the memory of an historic event.³³

It seems clear enough to state that Landships were named after British ships. What appears to be happening is that any British ship known to be connected with the history of Barbados, or to be plying the seas at the time, were identified and selected by the Landship movement.

³² The obelisk is known as the Holetown Monument.

³³ The inscription reads as follows: 'H.M.S. *Dauntless*, 33 guns, 330 men. Edward Bellew Halstead, Captain. Around this tomb rests the remains of 15 officers and the Captain's steward of H.M.S. Frigate *Dauntless*, who together with 38 seamen, 2 marines, and 10 boys, buried in the Garrison and one Officer, three seamen, six marines and one boy committed to the deep, all perished by Yellow Fever, which broke out at sea on leaving the harbour of St. Thomas on November 10th 1852'. See Edward A. Stoute, *Glimpses of Old Barbados* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1989 [1986]), p. 19.

However, it is important to note that this was not the pattern maintained. By the 1930s, the evidence suggests that a Landship may not have carried a ship name but would certainly function and is known as one. In the following section, the 'raising' of the *Blue Centre* of St. Thomas will be discussed. This ship was named after the colour of the place where the members met. If this is the case, then it is possible to conclude that though in the early stages the pattern might have been to adopt ship names, as the cultural form evolved other ways of choosing names developed. Indeed, until further evidence comes to hand, it cannot be determined the extent to which Landships in the early stages carried both ordinary names as well as ship names.

Nevertheless, what can be determined is that in the cases where ships were identified, they had to be British. These Landships appear to be evolving before and during the times of the Boer War and World War I. In this light it is not surprising that this example of identification occurred. It can be argued that it would have been a very unpatriotic and indeed a treasonable act, to adopt the names of ships of the enemy. However, the act of deliberately identifying with Britishness allows for the conclusion to be drawn that with regard to the naming process, it was indeed an act of mimicry, regardless of how ambiguous such acts may be.

(c) 1920s & 1930s

Though it is certain that Landships existed at least from the 1890s, it is still not clear exactly what they were up to. It is only in the 1920s and 1930s that a greater understanding of the movement can be garnered. Not only is this the time when recorded data can be found, but it is also when the folk memory comes into play.

Band Major Daniel Hope of the *Cornwall*, has been a member of the Landship since 1935. He is 83 years old. He has always been the 'flute man', the person who blows the flute or pennywhistle for the tuk band. A resident of Carlton, St. James, Band Major Hope remembers when, in the 1920s, there were at least two Landships in each of the eleven parishes in Barbados. The city parish, St. Michael, had many more. In the 1930s, the 'ships' were so large that at times two tuk bands would be used to play for the march and the parade. One would lead the group while the other one would be placed in the middle. The Landships of the northern parishes (St. James, St. Peter, St. Lucy) would visit each other and on occasion, parade together. He distinctly remembers that in the parish of St. Peter there were Landships in Speightstown, Mile and a Quarter and Black Bess. The *Cornwall* would visit these and other Landships around the island.³⁴

The oldest active member of the Landship today is Lieutenant Lloyd Adams of the *Director*. Now 89 years old, he recalls that when he was 10 years old in 1919 he used to 'follow dem about'. At that time he was called 'the skylight boy' because of his young age. He was not a member of any particular ship but would attach himself to any one of them parading through his area, or he would travel to where he could view them on parade. As a child, what attracted him to them was the music of the tuk band; he would follow them and do the dance manoeuvres. When he was old enough he did become a member of the Landship. He believes that he first joined the *Cornwall* of St. Michael before linking up with a ship which was 'raised' in Hopewell near where he lived.

We did raising a lil one up here but we dine have no name for it. A one-foot fella used tuh carry we, whenever he would hop pon de stick, we would go from hey to all down by the Factory down dey behind the Church. All down Weston

³⁴ Personal Interview with Band Major Daniel Hope, 19 May 1998.

[neighbouring parish of St. James] he would carry we pon a Friday night. At that time I did like the walking: we used to travel that kinda way.³⁵

Over the years Lieutenant Adams has been attached to many Landships in various parishes. Not only was he a member of the *Cornwall* and the *Blue Centre*, (the name eventually given to the Hopewell Landship), but he was also a member of the *Warpole* of Porey Spring, St. Lucy, the *Queen Mary* of St. Michael and the *Director* of St. Thomas. He too believes that the 1930s was the period when there were many Landships all around the island in large numbers.³⁶

This claim of the 1930s as an important period in the history of the Landship movement is substantiated by what documented evidence there is to be found. Take for example this observation written in 1935:

Still further down in the social scale there arose the Landship movement. Landships have been in existence for at least half a century, but never in such numbers, nor with such definite aims. Among the unthinking their humble origin gave rise to a certain contempt which more and more threw the landships back on themselves and retarded their development along useful or enlightened lives. But for a brief period in 1932 these societies had a glimpse of a brighter future. They had never attempted so much before; nor, it must be admitted, had they ever received such sympathetic consideration.³⁷

The 'sympathetic consideration' to which Hilton Vaughan refers appears to have come from some members of the middle class whom he calls 'Benevolent outsiders' who helped the Landship with 'time, money and advice'. Though little is known about them, mention has been made by George Bernard of a group to which Vaughan might be referring. Known as the Bridgetown Brotherhood, members of this group appear to be

³⁵ Personal Interview with Band Major Daniel Hope, 19 May 1998.

³⁶ Personal Interview with Lieutenant Lloyd Adams, 14 May 1998.

³⁷ See Hilton Vaughan, 'Some Social and Political Tendencies', in J. M. Hewitt, ed., *Silver Jubilee Magazine: 1910-1935* (Barbados: 1935), pp. 31-33 and 57-61 (p. 60). Hilton Vaughn was a black lawyer who became one of the leading historians in Barbados.

from the educated black and coloured middle class. In the 1920s, the Landship movement enjoyed their 'patronage and encouragement'. Landship persons were invited to have meetings with this group at Bethel Church in Bridgetown. Officers of the Landship were given prominent seats at these meetings. The Bridgetown Brotherhood appears to have had a short life span for Bell calls it 'that ill-fated organisation which did not live long enough to fulfil its glorious promise.'³⁸

Large numbers of ships were a definite feature of the movement in the 1930s. Vaughan referred to what he termed a 'grand parade' which had been held at the Anglican Cathedral in the capital in Bridgetown. At that parade there were three 'fleets' of 60 Landships comprising 3000 men and 800 women. The Governor had taken the salute.

From the combination of documented evidence and the folk memory, I have been able to identify thirty-three Landships of the 1930s that may have been at that parade. Listed accorded to parish, (with the exception of five which could not be specified), they are as follows:

³⁸ George Bernard, *Wayside Sketches: Pen Pictures of Barbadian Life* (Barbados: 1934), p. 15. Also S. Victor Johnson, 'Socio-Cultural Implications', p. 5.

TABLE 4.2 : LANDSHIPS: 1930-39³⁹

PARISHES	NUMBERS	NAMES
St. Michael	15	Calcutta, Combine, Cornwall, Dauntshire, Despatch, Dorsetshire, Indefatigable, Iron Duke, Melbourne, Nelson, Norfolk, Queen Mary, Revenge, Sydney, Warspite
Christ Church	2	Hermine, Southampton
St. Andrew	1	Jupiter
St. George	1	Glasgow
St. James	1	Cornwall
St. Joseph	3	Vanguard, Vivid, New Zealand
St. John	1	St. Lucia
St. Lucy	1	Warpole
St. Philip	1	Rodney
St. Thomas	2	Dorothy, Blue Centre
Unknown	5	Hood, Invincible, Orient, Royal George, Shark

³⁹ The majority was listed in *The Barbados Landship Review*. See by S. Victor Johnson, 'Socio-Cultural Implications', p. 25 and Giraud Robinson, 'The Barbados Landship', Appendix, Captain Watson supplied the names *Director* and *Vivid*, Lieutenant Adams supplied the name *Warpole* and Band Major Daniel Hope supplied the name *Cornwall*, St. James.

The imbalance in the numbers of Landships for the parish of St. Michael as against the other parishes may be more a reflection of the way the data was recorded than the reality of the situation. Yet it can be conceded that as the central parish with the largest population, St. Michael would have had more Landships than the others.

With these large numbers Vaughan states that there had been plans for some sort of incorporation of the ships. These were never realised due to the depression of the 1930s which resulted in a reduction in numbers of the ships, as well as in the attention given to them by the 'friends of the movement' who had their own affairs to worry about. In his concluding statement, Vaughan gave a definition of the *Landship*:

These were the potential village clubs, working hand in hand with the Friendly Societies. They still remain the only popular school for discipline, decorum, orderly conduct of mutual business, and social relaxation.⁴⁰

It can be noted that some eighteen years later when Vaughan reported to Wells on Friendly Societies in Barbados, he did not describe them as 'potential village clubs', but as full-fledged Friendly Societies.

It is my belief that one of the 'friends of the movement' to which Hilton Vaughan referred was Gordon Bell. Writing under the name George Bernard, he devoted much of his writing not only to reporting on the activities of the Landship, but also to the task of persuading the public to view them in a more favourable light.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Vaughan, p. 61.

⁴¹ It was against the law for a civil servant to write for a public forum. Thanks to Kevyn Arthur for the references to the 1931 articles. For Bell's references to the Landship see George Bernard, *Wayside Sketches: Pen Pictures of Barbadian Life* (Barbados: 1934), pp. 15-18.

It is this name, George Bernard, which appeared in 1931 as the writer of an article entitled 'Monster Landship Parade' in 1931.⁴² In it he records the events of a parade held on 9 November 1931, in which 'the combined Landships under the command of Lord High Admiral Walcott turned out to parade *en masse*'. Held at the famous black cricket ground, the Empire Club, the parade was witnessed by over a thousand spectators. The ship that seemed to impress the onlookers, was the *Warspite*. It contained the young male recruits called the 'Blues'. The No. 3 Company, under the leadership of Commander Hunte, also gained great applause for its 'march past'.

The parade was addressed by Sir Frederick Clarke. Sir Frederick was the speaker of the House of Assembly and one of the few members of the plantocracy admired by the general populace for his knowledge and impartiality.⁴³

In that slow and commanding method of delivery for which he has become famous, Sir Frederick complimented the men upon their neatness and paid special tribute to the nurses and the youthful blue jackets. With a twinkle in his eye he confessed that he was unaware of the various ranks of the many peaked capped officers, and laughingly ascribed his ignorance to the fact that he was a military man and unacquainted with the intricacies of naval accoutrement. He stressed the importance of preserving discipline and reminded the companies that upon them rested the success or failure of the Landship movement.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Hugh Cummins, a prominent member of the educated coloured middle class who would eventually become Premier of Barbados in 1958. He was more than likely another one of Vaughan's 'friends of the movement'. The

⁴² George Bernard, 'Monster Landship Parade' *The Advocate News*, 12 November 1931, p. 5.

⁴³ Clennel Wickham, a black journalist who wrote scathing commentaries about the local plantocracy, found Sir Frederick Clarke 'a triumphant exception. He is most decidedly the right man in the right place [...] His knowledge of parliamentary law and procedure is altogether admirable, his patience is exhaustless, and his impartial ruling over the House of Assembly for the past generation, can never be too highly esteemed.' See Clennel Wickham, *Pen and Ink Sketches by a Man with a Fountain Pen* (Barbados: Barbados Herald, 1921), p. 5.

parade ended with three cheers being raised for Sir Federick and another set for the visitors. The National Anthem was played and the Landship Companies were dismissed.

The other key feature of the 1930s was the publication of a magazine devoted to Landship affairs. Published in 1932, *The Barbados Landship Review* recorded all activities concerning the group such as dates of parades, weddings and funerals. It was published by the *Combine*.⁴⁴ It seems that there was only one publication, possibly due to the withdrawal of financial support by the benefactors.⁴⁵

Contributors to the *Review* appear to be keen on capturing the camaraderie and spirit of competition that Landship parades brought about. Perhaps this *piece of writing*, which resonates with naval imagery, was written in anticipation of the next grand parade?

The *Iron Duke* is quite capable of beating the *Indefatigable*, but I think she must give way to the *Despatch* which is trying to overtake the *Sydney* which is going great guns for the *Norfolk* with the *Calcutta* leading the city squadron. The *Revenge* is sulking with the *Dorsetshire* in the rear, thus the St. Michael division is disputing among themselves, forgetful of the giants of Christ Church, St. Joseph, St. Thomas, St. Philip, St. John and St. George, with the *Jupiter* in St. Andrew looking on.⁴⁶

Johnson noted that the contributions to the magazine came from the Landship and the outside benefactors. However, his recordings of the articles indicate a bias in contributors from the educated middle class. An agenda seems to come through these writings, as is evident in the following quotation of an article written by Charles E. Daisy G. M. V. C.

⁴⁴ In 1970, Commander Leon Marshall doubted the authenticity of the magazine because it had been published by the *Combine* and thus did not represent all Landships. See Johnson, 'Socio-Cultural Implications', p. 7. Recordings of the contents of the *Review* are rare and a copy of it is yet to be found. I have had to rely on secondary sources.

⁴⁵ Vaughan hints at this: 'But with the increased depression, membership fell off, finances dwindled, the magazine expired, and the friends of the movement were for the most part too worried over their own affairs to attend to the "ships"'. See Vaughan, 'Some Social and Political Tendencies', p. 60.

⁴⁶ George Bernard, *Wayside Sketches*, p. 16. Lynch also quotes this paragraph, but his source was probably George Bernard. See Lynch, *The Barbados Book*, p. 223.

Mus.⁴⁷ Here Daisy places emphasis on discipline and adherence to the status quo; a mantra which was very much part of the discourse of the middle classes.

Landshipmen, ye are the salt of Barbados, ye are the salt of the community, ye are the salt of your race. If you [...] whose duty it is to set examples to your juniors, will not obey your leaders, will not obey orders given to you [...] how can you expect your juniors to obey you? To be a great commander you must first learn as a humble sailor that humility, obedience and civility mingled with self-respect will sail the Barbados Landship Association o'er every tide and weather.⁴⁸

Consequently, being the 'salt of the community', a biblical and imperial image that the Afro-Anglo-Christian society of Barbados could have easily related to, also meant respecting the social hierarchy. In this instance, that hierarchy was represented by the middle class. Daisy is advocating the preservation of the status quo.

Therefore, both the folk memory and documentation indicate that the 1930s was a vibrant and vital period in Landship history. In terms of early constructs of identity, what Gordon Bell and the 'friends of the movement' chose to highlight was the cloak, that is, the naval uniform and its resonances and the colonial allegiance shown by the group. Gordon Bell, for example, never did give a description of the dance movements or the marching routine of a Landship parade. He never tackled the accusation of 'regular antics', but opted to emphasize the aspect of discipline as dictated by the wearing of a British naval uniform.

This then became the guiding tool for perception of the movement. They were 'Little England's navy', a claim which in those times of Empire would have been deemed

⁴⁷ The initials G. M. V. C. Mus. may be read as follows: Graduate of the Manchester Victoria College of Music. I am grateful to John Gilmore for this interpretation.

⁴⁸ See Johnson, 'Socio-Cultural Implications', pp. 5-6.

to be more complimentary than derogatory. Consequently, it becomes ironic that in trying to rescue the Landship from the mocking condemnation of the middle class, Bell enfolded them within a paradigm of identity that simultaneously suffocated and hindered alternate readings of them.

(d) Independence and beyond

Only one Landship, the *Cornwall*, appears to have been active in the last years of the colonial period.⁴⁹ However, for the ceremony marking the Independence of Barbados on 30 November 1966, a combined squadron of Landships was on parade. This belied the real situation; membership and moral were low and the movement seemed to be heading for extinction.⁵⁰

It is thus interesting to note that some seven years later, an entire editorial in *The Advocate News* would be devoted to the group. Entitled 'The Landship Has Arrived', the editor extolled the virtues of an organisation which was 109 years old and thus extended beyond four generations. He placed emphasis on its 'grassroots' character and its ability to keep 'sailing' while similar 'grassroots' enterprises had gone under.

For years the parades of the Landship of Barbados have attracted the attention of hundreds of Barbadians, who, if not amused might well have questioned the sanity of those involved. But we have now come to realise that this sort of expression

⁴⁹ The *Cornwall* was on parade at the ceremony marking the start of the West Indies Federal Parliament in 1958. Their presence was noted at the rehearsal: 'Among those present were the officers and crew of the BLS Cornwall representing the Barbados Landship. They presented a very colourful spectacle with their drums and uniforms and received tremendous ovations from the crowds.' See 'Rehearsal held for Federal Pageant', *The Barbados Advocate*, 24 April 1958, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Though I am yet to locate a Landship person who was actually on parade for the Independence ceremony, all Landship persons today make reference to it. There is a brief reference to their presence at a rehearsal for the ceremony: 'Also seen parading through Broad Street were members of the famous 'Landship'. See *The Advocate News*, 21 November 1966, p. 5.

coming from among the people, is just as creative in its origins as that inspired at other levels.⁵¹

He then informed readers that the Government was among those who were now assisting in the organisation of the movement, an event he welcomed because with Government interest, 'it might well preserve the movement for posterity.' Yet he found it necessary to advise that while the new interest in the Landship was welcomed, it should not lead to a sophistication which would markedly change the Landship and deprive it of its "grassroots" association. 'We say this not out of any cynicism, but out of a conscious desire to ensure that the movement does not lose its originality. If this should happen, it will die.'

What then followed was a quick review of the genesis story in which Moses Wood and the year 1863 was emphasised. The readership was then informed that the current number of Landships was twenty-four and that the emphasis for the members was not only on entertaining the public, but also on maintaining that respect for discipline for which they were known. The editor concluded by making a special plea to his readership:

We sincerely hope that the Landship Movement will always strike Barbadians as being relevant. For it is to do with Barbadians and their search for originality. Furthermore, it is one of the few remaining organisations that have come from among the people.

With such editorial and middle class blessings, the Landship had indeed 'arrived'.

There are several points in the editorial which require comment. There is the call

⁵¹ The Editorial, *The Advocate News*, 14 February 1973, p. 2. See also the earlier observations of Flora Spencer in Flora D. Spencer, 'Landship has made mark on Society', *The Sunday Advocate News*, 29 October 1972, p. 14.

to authenticity as the 109 years banner is waved in the face of all. As stated earlier in this chapter, the proclaimed starting date of 1863 had been a recent invention. Once acknowledged, the date provided those working towards a revival of the movement the necessary momentum. Persons such as Commander Leon Marshall of the *Cornwall* had worked assiduously after Independence at resuscitating the Landship. He encouraged old Landships, such as the *Director*, to refloat. He also set about raising new ones. The Chief Welfare Officer of the Barbados Welfare Department, Clyde Gollop (now Sir Clyde Gollop) had also taken an interest in the Landship. In 1970, he worked along with Commander Leon Marshall and other Landship Officers. He became their Patron in 1971, a position he still holds today. Also involved was Lieutenant Colonel Banfield of the Barbados Regiment. He was instrumental in getting the Landship included in such national events as the Independence Day parade.

Thus it was that in 1972, there was the re-launching of the Landship as they proceeded to set sail amidst these new 109-year-old winds of authenticity. On 29 October 1972, six Landships assembled to parade before the crowds. The following is a list of the ships present and their leaders:

TABLE 4.3: LANDSHIPS RE-LAUNCHED IN 1972

Landship	Name of Leader
<i>Cornwall</i>	Commander Best
<i>Director</i>	Captain Vernon Watson
<i>Iron Duke</i>	Commander Burrowes
<i>Queen Victoria</i>	Captain Jones
<i>Rodney</i>	Captain Vernon Parris
<i>Vanguard</i>	Captain E. Holder

It can be noted that for this re-launch, the Landship received the ultimate sanction as on this occasion alone the Church, the Government, the Opposition and the Army had all seen it fit to give their blessings to the movement.⁵²

After this October launching, the Landship proceeded to sail again at full mast. In January 1973 they appointed a Council to head the organisation.⁵³ In the following years several ships were launched and refloated, such as the *Indefatigable* and the *Queen Mary*. Captain Watson of the *Director*, St. Thomas, organised the raising of another *Director* Landship in St. Michael. This became known as the *Director II*.⁵⁴

Soon there appeared to be Landships everywhere as various 'ships' took part in national functions, such as the Independence Day parade and the recently revived Crop Over Festival. They were also appearing at dinner theatre shows as entertainers for the guests in the hotels. Along with these, they continued the tradition of visiting each other's docks as well as visiting various churches throughout the island.

By the late 1970s, the 'ships' began to founder. Though the editorial spoke of the existence of twenty-four ships in 1973, Johnson and Robinson found only ten when they did their survey in 1976-77.⁵⁵ These 'ships' were themselves fast losing members. In some cases numbers were so low that they could not muster a crew to host a parade.

⁵² A look at the proceedings of the ceremony illustrates this. After the reading of the bible lesson by Canon Oliver Haynes, there were two addresses. One was by the Minister of Home Affairs, Rameses Caddle and the other by the Minister of Tourism, Peter Morgan. Prizes for the winners of the afternoon's competitions were given out by the Minister of Education, Senator Dennis Hunte. Lieutenant Colonel Banfield of the Barbados Regiment was the judge of the competition for the best parade manoeuvres. The vote of thanks was given by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. M. G. M. Tom Adams. See 'Landship Parade to Mark 109th Year' in *The Advocate News*, 29 October 1972, p. 5. Also 'Caddle Calls on Barbadians to Promote the Landship' in *The Advocate News*, 30 October 1972, p. 1.

⁵³ The President of the Council was Admiral Eric Holder of the *Vanguard*. The other were as follows: Consul St. Clair Lorde of the *Cornwall* was the Vice President, Captain Vernon Watson of the *Director* was the Secretary, Captain DaCosta Eversley of the *Vanguard* was the Assistant Secretary and Lord High Admiral Leon Marshall of the *Cornwall* was the Treasurer. See 'Landship Names First Council', *The Advocate News*, 7 January 1973, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Personal Interview with Captain Vernon Watson 5 June 1997.

⁵⁵ These were as follows: the *Cornwall*, *Devonshire*, *Director I*, *Director II*, *Duke of York*, *Iron Duke*, *Queen Mary*, *Queen Victoria*, *Rodney*, and the *Vanguard*. See Appendix II in Johnson, 'Socio-Cultural Implications', p. 25. Also Appendix in Robinson, 'The Barbados Landship'.

In the 1980s, a decision was taken by the Officers of some of the remaining Landships to unite all Landships under one umbrella body called the Barbados Landship Association. The individual Landships would be effectively combined. However, this decision proved to be an unpopular one especially among the rank and file, as many members wanted to retain their sense of individual Landship identity. Others were not in favour of Captain Vernon Watson of the *Director* as the head of the Association. The union proceeded though at a loss of members out of an already much reduced membership.⁵⁶

Today the movement is called *The Barbados Landship*. It sails under the command of Captain Vernon Watson formerly of the *Director*. Many of the members still retain the badges, which state the name of the Landship they once belonged. Indeed they introduce themselves as members of the *Director*, the *Indefatigable* and the *Queen Mary* for example. There are approximately thirty crewmembers between the ages of 5-20 years and 45-90 years.

To the Barbadian public this is the Landship. However in 1997, the *Cornwall* broke away from the Association and re-launched themselves at a ceremony held in April 1997. They now sail under the leadership of Commander St. Clair 'Pa' Lorde. There are a small ship with the average age of their membership being sixty five years. In May 1998, Commander Lorde spoke to me of bringing the *Cornwall* out for parades in Trafalgar Square, (now National Heroes Square), in the following months. He was very

⁵⁶ Personal Interview with Captain Perch 6 June 1997. Personal Interview with Captain Watson 5 June 1997.

concerned that the public is aware of their existence as a separate unit outside of the one combined Landship.⁵⁷

IV

(a) *A Landship Parade*

The Yoruba verb for 'to parade' is *pagbo*. 'Pa' means to bring things together, while 'agbo' refers to doing things in a circular fashion. Along with *pagbo*, there is also the verb *yide*. This refers to the circular rolling movements of the entertainer and his entourage. As Robert Thompson puts it: 'Egungun maskers do not enter a town in straight lines; they enter in a circular manner, they roll into the city to roll away discord, death, and terror'.⁵⁸ Thus 'to parade', in these examples, represents a fluidity of movement, in which the forms of the masqueraders are ever changing as they spin and roll and circle and visually hypnotise the spectators.

It is interesting to read this argument of Thompson in relation to Caribbean masquerade. Thompson argues that in the Caribbean, there was a fusion of *pagbo* and *yide*. This allowed them to reinforce themselves and continue the tradition of the parade. What would have prompted this was the importance of the parade in their own and indeed, in West African cultures. For some cultures like the Bakong, spiritual rebirth and fortune was brought to the village by the processioners with their circular movements:

⁵⁷ Personal Interview with Commander 'Pa' Lorde, 23 May 1998.

⁵⁸ Robert Farris Thompson, 'Recapturing Heaven's Glamour: Afro-Caribbean Festivalizing Arts' in *Caribbean Festival Arts: each and every bit of difference*, ed. by John Nunley and Judith Bettleheim, (Seattle: Saint Louis Art Museum and University of Washington, 1988), pp. 17-29 (pp. 19-20).

Just as it is important to Yoruba that the Egungun maskers 'roll away' bad luck and other impurities with their ceremonial visitation, so Bakongo believe that an entire village can be ritually circumscribed by a band of masker celebrants. Circling the village brings the ancestral otherworldly power back to the center. Sometimes maskers circle the council hall at the heart of the village, rather than the whole settlement, in socially geometric shorthand.⁵⁹

For Thompson it was easy to see the blend in Caribbean masquerades as witnessed in the various carnivals.

For this theory to be applicable in relation to the Landship, what must be acknowledged is that the fusion of the parade continued across cultural spectrums. In the case of the Landship, what evolved was the combination of the western style of the parade with its straight lines, as well as the traditional West African circular movements. However, as this section illustrates, the two forms are fused only to an extent. For their ceremonial parades, the Landship marches out in straight lines. However, when the drums of the tuk band strike up, those circular, rolling movements begin.

Trevor Marshall argues that the Landship parade was a form of Barbadian masquerade:

For most Barbadians, the landship was masquerade on a small scale as the 'sailors' and 'ratings' went through their 'manoeuvres' and 'duties' on board 'ship'. These Landship parades became a feature of public holiday entertainment as the bands travelled through several villages and parishes, playing popular tunes, and inviting persons to contribute their own compositions, however innocent or suggestive in lyrics, or simple or intricate in melody.⁶⁰

Indeed, performing for the general public is one of the highlights of being in the Landship. Performance gives Landship members a special boost of satisfaction. Whether this performance consists of a route march, in which they march on the road on their way to or

⁵⁹ Thompson, p. 20.

⁶⁰ Trevor Marshall, 'Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados' (unpublished seminar paper, Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1985) p.24.

from a Church service, or an actual parade, in which they perform their manoeuvres, they are acutely aware of the onlookers as audience. They speak of doing 'a good performance' and of the extra lift a large and enthusiastic crowd gives them when they are on parade. Lieutenant Adams of the *Director* has always felt this:

It use to be a pleasure for me when I on and I see anybody laughing and thing. I use to feel good, [spectators comment] look how we drilling. I use to feel natural good, true, true.⁶¹

The Landship are also aware that the performance includes looking their best and giving their all. In this way their uniforms function as costume when on parade. For example, Inez Griffith was the Matron of the *Director* in the 1970s. She remembers the reception Captain Watson and the *Director* would receive wherever they performed.

Wherever he go tuh drill, people use tuh baal fuh de *Director*. Wherever we go and ting so, de *Director* ship use tuh carry de sway all de time. Even when we go to party and ting so, we would hear people call fuh de *Director*, de *Director* ship. Drill best, clothes best, every sort uh ting. Uniform use tuh be the brightness, everything. Use tuh get de prize fuh dat, de *Director* uniform.⁶²

M. P. Boucher of the *Iron Duke* also recalls being on parade. As the policeman of the *Iron Duke*, Boucher had the authority to round up wayward Landship persons and report them to the authorities of the Landship tribunal. His uniform was integral to his Landship identity. When on parade, however, it was important that he looked his best, or that he looked 'sweet'.

⁶¹ Personal interview with Lieutenant Lloyd Adams, 14 May 1998.

⁶² Personal interview with Matron Inez Griffith, 14 May 1998.

One time we went tuh some parade up de Garrison. When I get out, we get in town, dey tek me, de peetle [people] yuh know, some big shot tek me photuh. Man jesu chrisis man, I use tuh look too sweet. De Landship. White yuh know. Bare white. Man I use tuh look sweet enough. Man say oh shite man looka de M.P.! Stan up dey man and do so [stiffened his body] and when yuh hear de shout, man tek de photuh! And dat did all about in de paper.⁶³

Landship uniforms, when on parade as costumes, create quite a spectacle. Traditionally, the men, as Officers, wore all white. Both shirt and trousers were starched until they were stiff. There would also be a dazzling array of ceremonial ropes, badges and stripes, in colours such as purple and yellow, on the shoulders and along the trousers. At an early stage of the history the Officers also carried real swords, but this was soon outlawed. However, in the 1970s, the swords once again became a part of the Officer's uniform. The head gear for Officers ranged from peaked caps with naval emblems to cork hats covered in plumes. At a 1931 parade, Lord High Admiral Walcott wore 'a cocked hat such as Nelson wore'.⁶⁴ The 'marines' of the ship wore khaki, while the young boys wore blue and were known as 'Blues' or 'Blue Jacks'.

Today the trousers for the Officers and crew are black, a more practical arrangement, though some of the older members, such as Lieutenant Adams, still treasure and keep their white trousers. Ropes, badges and tassels are still a feature of the Officers uniform. The young boys still wear blue.

Women traditionally were the 'nurses' of the ship. It is believed that between 1913-16 they entered the movement. Some of them wore blue uniforms, others wore white. At what period their uniforms became blue is unclear, but it is interesting to note that by the 1930's 'nurses' in blue were called 'Stars'. As has been observed, this has

⁶³ Personal Interview with M. P. Boucher, 14 May 1998.

⁶⁴ Bernard, 'Monster Landship Parade', p. 5.



Figure 2. The Barbados Landship on parade, Independence Day, 30 November 1973. Leading the parade is the Sailing Master, Leo Howard, of the *Vanguard*. Behind him to his right is the Admiral of the *Cornwall* Cleveland Roach. Captain Leon Perch of the *Iron Duke* marches directly behind.

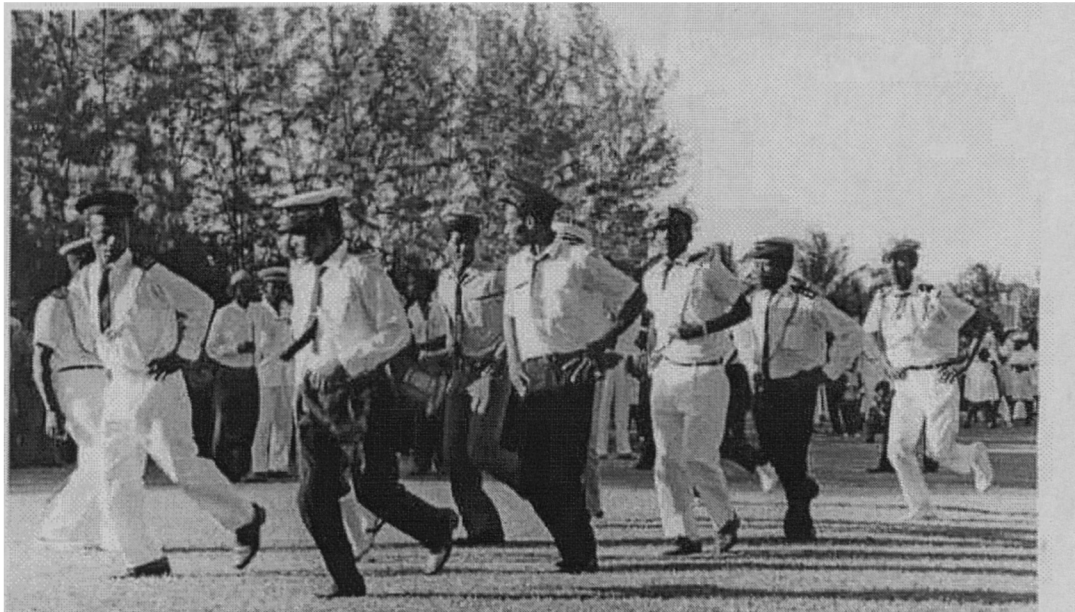


Figure 3. The *Rodney* performing their 'hop/drop' exercise at a Landship parade, October 1974.

echoes of the Garveyite movement of the same period. Some of the nurses who were dressed in white carried a cane, wore gloves and a cork hat.⁶⁵

Today the women are still predominantly the 'nurses'. The new entrants wear blue while the established Landship women wear white, a trend that reflects the modern day distinction between trained and untrained nurses. Also, unlike previous times, women in the movement today can be Officers. For their Saturday parades in Bridgetown, for example, Commander Patricia Nurse leads the *Barbados Landship* troupe out to the Parade Square.

An onlooker at a Landship parade would simultaneously hear the music of the tuk band and see the Landship march out. The tuk band is known as the 'engine' of the Landship. As Captain Watson comments: 'I don't know if you could get a ship to cross the waters without an engine.' The tuk band provides the driving rhythm for the 'crew' to dance, be it the 'wangalo' or the maypole. Captain Watson explains:

The band is made up of four pieces of instruments; the bass drum, the kettle drum, the flute and the steel. The essence of that is the drum provide that sound or that beat where the members listen to guide them in their movements or drill. The kettle provides what you call the rhythm which drums follow. And the flute provides the melody, which is accompanied by the steel. The steel adds that extra, cause in case you don't got a flute, the steel substitutes for the flute. That is actually how it is. The bass drum is very important. The bass drum provides the beat. We will find it very difficult to drill with a kettle alone. It's this bum bum, this beat, this bass beat, which we listen to and move by.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See Robinson, 'The Barbados Landship', p. 6; Personal Interview with Daniel Hope, 19 May 1998; Gilmore, *The Barbados Landship Association*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Personal Interview Captain Vernon Watson, 5 June 1997.

Indeed, the first sound an onlooker hears is the distinct beating of the bass drum. The flute or 'penny whistle' then strikes up a tune, such as 'Adam and Eve' or 'A Little More Oil In My Lamp', and the Landship crew marches out on to the parade square.

Gordon Bell witnessed a grand parade in the 1930s. He gave the following description:

When the combined ships cruise the high seas the band leads the way, followed by the Lord High Admiral, every available inch of whose manly breast is covered with medals, stars, and gold ribbons. He is closely attended by his Aide de camp and body-guard composed of the officers of the fleet: Sea-Lord, Fleet Admiral, Vice Admiral of Combine, Rear Admiral of Combine, Fleet Admiral etc. The various ships then follow on, officers in the van, followed by the petty officers, then by the Blues, then by the Stars each of whom has a pair of scissors suspended from her waist. The khaki-clad marines bring up the rear.⁶⁷

Depending on the type of ceremony, there might be an address by a guest speaker who would have been invited to take the salute. At the Saturday parades in 1997 and 1998, there was always a guest speaker who would be invited to inspect the parade before giving the address.⁶⁸ The main focus, however, is the Landship dancing their naval manoeuvres.

These movements are known to the Landship as the drill. Thus a Drill Master, who would not necessarily be the highest ranking Officer, would call out the routine for the crew to dance. Over time, efficient Drill Masters who 'dine mek no sport' gained the respect of their peers and become near mythical figures. Examples of such Drill Masters are Commander Clarke of the *Director* and Commander Mings of the *Vanguard*.⁶⁹ It must be noted that Officers do not drill; only the rank and file. For an Officer to take part in the drill, he or she must request permission from the Commanding Officer.

⁶⁷ Bernard, *Wayside Sketches*, p. 17.

⁶⁸ In 1997, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Minister of Education and Culture and the Deputy Director of the National Cultural Foundation were among those who addressed a Landship parade.

⁶⁹ Captain Perch of the *Iron Duke* and Lieutenant Adams of the *Director* have both been Drill Masters for their ships as well as *The Barbados Landship*. The current Drill Master is Captain Watson.

The Drill Master takes the Landship members through their marching routine ensuring that all on parade get the naval manoeuvres right. However, getting it right, Landship style, is very unconventional, for in marching, the right hand must swing out at the same time as the right foot! This is a difficult move that comes only with much practise or drill. Further assaults on conventional styles of marching quickly surface once a parade gets under way:

With all the starch and shoeshine afforded to a serious review of arms, the sailors, lively and straight-faced, demonstrate their formation marching discipline as only Afro-Barbadians steeped in British pomp and circumstance can. The 'wangle-low' is semi-limbo, and the 'centre-march' is done in time to African rhythm and in a formation that would leave poor Lord Nelson spinning in his briny grave and most civilian onlookers in hysterics.⁷⁰

The 'wangle lo' and the 'centre march' are only two of the many dance steps that spectators witness, once a Landship parade is in full swing.

As the Drill Master gives the command, the Landship members perform them. The emphasis is on the creation of patterns that display excellence at co-ordination. These are achieved with commands such as 'left turn', 'right turn' and 'quick march'. The command, 'open files', causes the two lines of the crew to part and branch out as they march. 'Inward' causes them to wheel and march in towards each other. 'Closing files' causes them to come together and march in double lines.

Then they are the movements which are performed to show dexterity, such as 'Section 20'. For this the knees are lifted as high as possible in the air and the body is tilted backwards. Crowd favourites are usually the 'wangle lo' in which the performers

⁷⁰ Marshall, 'A Ship on Land?', p. 65.

with hands on hips, slowly lower their bodies to the ground in a circular motion in time to the rhythms of the drums. They come up slowly and 'go down' once again. The other crowd pleaser is called 'rough seas', which some Landship members call 'hand exercise'. The Drill Master calls 'yuh gine rock out de ship now.' In a motion similar to the action of sails spinning on a windmill, the entire Landship dances around the parade square, rocking their bodies from left to right, their hands doing the action of the windmill sails.

As part of the parade, *The Barbados Landship* also plaits the maypole. (It can be noted here that though the maypole has been traditionally viewed as quintessentially English, it has been argued that it may have West African origins as well.)⁷¹ When the Landship plaits the maypole, one member will sit on a chair and hold a white pole which has eight ribbons of varying colours attached to. When the King of the Maypole, who is the Boatswain, gives the order, the intricate plaiting of the ribbons begins. By dancing in and around each other, the Landship maypole dancers layer the ribbons one over the other until most of the pole has been plaited. Then they reverse all the moves and undo the intricate layering until the eight ribbons dance freely from the top of the maypole once again. The entire exercise is done to the rhythms of the tuk band.

In the 1970s, only the *Cornwall* plaited or danced the maypole. However, for its entertainment value and its display of dexterity, Captain Watson decided to add it to his itinerary. It is a favourite among Landship members with many boasting that they have ten years and more experience in the exercise.

Today, when the thirty members of *The Barbados Landship* perform in Bridgetown, they create quite a stir with the 'wangle lo' and the 'rough seas' and the

⁷¹ See Fraser, A-Z, p.97.

twirling of the ribbons around the maypole. One can only imagine what a sight it must have been to see three thousand men and eight hundred women 'wangling lo' in the 1930s. The spectacle of starched stiff white uniforms as well as the blue and the khaki marching to the sounds of many tuk bands must have been memorable.

(b) *Deck, Dock and 'Waters'*

For the Landship, the ship is an important icon. Imagery surrounding a shipping culture becomes integral to the identity of the group. This goes beyond the names of Landships as it permeates all aspects of Landship culture.

For example, it extends into the language used whether it is the 'raising', 'launching', or 'refloating' of a Landship. A Landship in financial trouble 'founders' before it is 'sunk' or closed down. When Captain Watson addresses the crew at a parade, he addresses them from the 'deck' of the ship. Any civilian, such as a guest speaker, has to be granted permission to 'go aboard' the Landship and stand on the 'deck'.

The headquarters of a Landship is called the 'Dock' and the surrounding lands are called the 'waters'. Captain Perch of the *Iron Duke* spoke of the practise of Landships sending invitations to each other to visit their Docks:

Like if they invited other ships, cause in those days we uses to invite other ships, or, ships would write you and tell you that they coming into your waters at such and such a time. Here now our waters would be wuh yuh call Major Road up de road.⁷²

⁷² Personal interview with Captain Leon Perch, 6 June 1997.

Indeed, it is incumbent upon a 'Dock' to always have a 'marine' on watch over the 'waters'. If a visiting 'Ship' chose to 'sail' into their 'waters' and they were unguarded, the 'Ship' could 'bomb' the 'Dock'.⁷³

The Landship itself is organised along naval lines. Captains and Commanders and other officers seen on parade actually function as such within the Landship movement. For example, Lord High Commander Leon Marshall was in charge of the Landship fleet. He held this post until his death in 1973. Captain Vernon Watson holds that position today.

There are other ranks in the Landship hierarchy which are guided by naval and military culture. For example, 19 year old Ryan Gilkes is the Valet to Captain Watson. His duty is to assist Captain Watson and take over the running of the ship if he is not around. Military Policeman Boucher of the *Iron Duke*, did exercise his authority on several occasions when, for example, the Landship had gone to a Sunday service and some shipmates left the Church for a sojourn in the local rumshops. M. P. Boucher would round them up and write them up in his book. They would be officially charged once they got back to the Dock. It is the duty of the M. P. to ensure that all are aboard the Landship before they set sail.⁷⁴

In the 1930s, some Landships took the ship imagery even further. There was the practise of attaching small replicas of ships to the roof of the Dock. Some Landships actually used ropes to create the shape of a ship, when on parade. The members on the outside of the formation held the rope while the Sailing Master marched on ahead. With many Landship members being seamen, rituals such as the use of flags were incorporated

⁷³ Personal Interview with Captain Leon Perch. It seems that the 'bombs' would be those used for the annual Guy Fawkes celebration which were held in Barbados on 5th November. The 'bombs' would be available all year.

⁷⁴ Personal Interview with Ryan Gilkes 26 June 1997. Personal Interview with M. P. Boucher 14 May 1998.

into the parade. In the 1950s, Band Major Hope instructed the members of the *Cornwall*, St. James, on the various signals.⁷⁵

In the cursory readings thus far on the Landship, this aspect of ‘ship’ has been constantly overlooked or treated as accidental. Yet this is an integral aspect of Landship identity which can lead to other readings of the cultural form. The following section provides an analysis of the ship image that resonates so strongly in Landship culture.

V

Towards a greater understanding of the Landship

(a) Creating space through the ‘body voice’

As such, it is the avatar and living monument to those countless voiceless millions dead who made their mark unmarked before this could be so. It has become the body voice: brief but enduring signatures in space: of those who footstepped crouched leapt or were hurled onto what becomes the stage [...] the record of a people’s cross & crossing: creative burden of colliding continents⁷⁶

Here Brathwaite is writing about the National Dance Company of Jamaica led by dancer and academic Rex Nettleford. He argues that the Company, though formed in 1962, was in a sense a lot older. It was part of the continuum of rebirth for the region, of the ‘stark sonorous destruction & renewal of the dream that the Caribbean has been involved with

⁷⁵ Personal Interview with Band Major Hope.

⁷⁶ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, ‘Foreword’ in Rex Nettleford, *Dance Jamaica: Cultural Definition and Artistic Discovery: The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica 1962-1983* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1985), pp. 7-11 (p. 11).

since 1962 since 1865 since 1834 since 1492.’ In this way it was part of the rebuilding exercise of revising History, of revealing memories and of making space for other voices. As it was dance, it becomes for Brathwaite the ‘body voice’. It is tangible and yet ephemeral, ‘brief but enduring signatures in space.’⁷⁷

I find this a most appropriate paradigm for the Landship. Firstly because when the Landship is on parade, it is dance. It is a dance that demonstrates the difficult exercise of negotiating with colonialism. For the negotiation exercise, the colonised must be well mannered and come appropriately dressed. While the critics hurl the accusation of mimicry, what is being hidden within the cloak is an African-Caribbean dance legacy. The dance steps may be fragments of their former glory, but it has been proven that there is enough there upon which entire dance sequences for theatre companies can be built.⁷⁸

Moreover, within the Landship, the ‘body voice’ has captured other fragments, other histories that provide alternate readings in the discourse. The very image of the ship highlights the painful shipping legacy of the Caribbean. As Paul Gilroy reminds us, the ship is ‘a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion’. Thus the image of ships is important to the imagination of those of the Black Atlantic:

Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Brathwaite, ‘Foreword’, p. 11. The dates signal important events in Jamaican and Caribbean history. In 1962, Jamaica and Trinidad were granted independence. The major post-emancipation Morant Bay uprising in Jamaica occurred in 1865. In 1834 British West Indian slavery was abolished. 1492 marks the coming of the Europeans to the archipelago and the demise of the indigenous populations.

⁷⁸ In the 1970s the Yoruba Dance Company studied the Landship movements and then composed a Landship dance for the stage. Also the Pinelands Creative Workshop now use the Landship dance as one of their main performance pieces.

⁷⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993)

The ship is especially central to the Caribbean imagination. Whether it is the invasion of the Europeans in their Galleons that signals the demise of the indigenous populations, or the arrival of indentured Irish servants into the barbarous worlds that *Los Barbadoes* and Antigua were to become, or the ships crossing the middle passage burdened with their enslaved human cargo, or the those ships that brought the indentured labourers in the post-slavery period. In the Caribbean imagination, the ship is a pivotal icon.

In this sense the Landship, as a 'ship', re-enacts and lives their cross with every parade. Every time they dance they present what Kwame Dawes describes as an 'instantaneous narrative of journey'. In this way they can be likened to Joseph Johnson, the nineteenth century Black British beggar who wore an actual replica of a ship on his head. Reviewing this act Dawes posits the following:

On the one hand, the attire connected him to West Africa where similar headdresses were and still are quite common. On the other hand, however, Johnson's 'costume' seemed to reflect his intense pragmatism and his penchant for both irony and diplomacy. He literally wore the badge of his immigrant status – his sense of alienation and difference – on his head. The ship on his head was his instantaneous narrative of journey. It would mean everything to him and to those he encountered, for it was that vessel that explained his presence in England as a black man, and at the same time proclaimed his alienness and his marginalised and migrant status.⁸⁰

Likewise with every Landship parade, there was an explanation for their presence in Barbados. Also, there was the demonstration of the struggle to be a part of that society. They danced in the master's clothes, but their dance relived their journey and proclaimed their alienation within Barbadian society.

⁸⁰ See Kwame Dawes, 'Negotiating the Ship on the Head: Black British Fiction', *Wasafari*, 29 (1999), 18-24 (p. 18).

By being the 'body voice', the Landship have also roped in other traditions peculiar to Barbadian society. For example, though Landships have on the odd occasion paraded without their resplendent uniforms, a Landship cannot go on parade without its tuk band. The band is integral to the movement for it provides the music for its 'crew' to dance and do their 'naval manoeuvres'. What is intriguing about this point is that the tuk band predates the Landship by more than a hundred years. It is yet to be determined how the two became linked.

Whatever the process, with the music of the tuk band came such dance steps as the 'wangle lo'. When guided by the shipping imagery, these dance steps became 'naval manoeuvres'. The dance steps also predate the shipping ritual, like they predate the tuk band and the *friendly society movement*.

Consequently, the 'body voice' becomes the clever weave of several cultural forms. Therein lies its strength. It is, as Brathwaite says, the 'living monument to those countless millions' who contributed to the African-Caribbean legacy.

(b) A poet's view

In the poem 'tribute'⁸¹, performance poet Winston Farrell provides insight into the Barbadian cultural entity known as the Landship. He sees the Landship as a testimony of the triumph of the African spirit over the threefold legacy of slavery, colonialism and

⁸¹ Farrell, 'tribute', pp. 6-8.

imperialism. This cultural form evolved to provide an avenue of escape from the pain of this legacy, as well as a beginning to the healing process.

let my children know
 how i have manoeuvred
 a century or more
 of rough seas
 from the hole of my ship
 to the deck of my
 horse and buggy
 from pond-grass and plantations
 to a new lan-
 guage of drums borrowed
 rhythms that now cash
 my own mortgage

For Farrell the Landship provided a way for the Black Barbadian labouring class to manoeuvre within the constraints of a plantation society. They became a 'navy of land lovers' as elaborate rituals surrounding a shipping culture evolved on the plantation tenancies and in the towns. This group refused to be psychologically trapped within the stagnant confines deemed by the colonisers and the plantocracy to be Barbadian reality. They were able to 'sail' through 'paved highways' and to express and refute their history of pain through dance and music: 'with my pride in my pocket/ with my pain in my penny whistle'. Indeed, Farrell sees music and dance as integral to this psychological manoeuvring, as these Black Barbadians refused to be physically and spiritually confined:

with a skip
 hop/skip
 with a dip
 down low/
 in a wangalo
 with a hip
 hop/high

with a low
 low tongue
 with a low
 down whisper

The manoeuvring stretched beyond the psychological into the real as the ‘ships’ found ways of making their resistance tangible. Poverty, which was the core existence for the majority of Black Barbadians, could not place limitations on these Landship people. They incorporated their African system of savings, known as the *susu*, into the movement and proceeded to eek out an existence.

let my children know
 how half cent stretched
 meant a tuppence saved in de susu
 and the back house built
 from shingle to soft-stone
 from shop-counter to mini-mart

The ultimate triumph came with the successful sailing of the Landship by persons who had risen from poverty to be perceived as Captains, Commanders, and Admirals within Barbadian society. They and their crew also came from areas that had been deemed to be nurseries for those destined to fail. For fighting this stigma and pursuing their dreams, Farrell calls for their recognition in the narratives proclaiming Barbadian history:

proclaim my independence
 rest me in the bosom of history
 for my children’s sake
 when i die.

It is intriguing that Winston Farrell has visualised the Landship in this way. His is an Afrocentric reading which centres around the development and survival of an African-Caribbean heritage within and despite of institutional slavery and British colonisation.

His emphasis is on the African resonance in the creolisation process. What Farrell has done is to provide fresh insight into these controversial issues of identity. Though at times he outlines a valiant, perhaps idealistic view of their development, what he as a poet has perceived in the Landship is a spirit of resistance that has refused physical and mental enslavement. Instead, what it provided these descendants of the enslaved were ways for survival and longevity within the Barbadian community. In response to all the critics who wish to abolish the Landship, Farrell argues that the Landships' independence should be proclaimed, and that its place should not be at the bottom of a Barbadian sea, but in the foreground of Barbadian history.

(c) *Running your hands over the Cloak*

The cloak is very complex. Though I have drawn its silhouette, the cloak itself is an intricate weave of the tensions that can be found in a colonial and post-colonial society.

The cloak of the Landship is similar. It originated in colonial Barbados when the labouring classes had to exercise what Brathwaite has called 'psychological maroonage'.⁸² Due to the limitations set by emancipation and the constraints set by the size of the island, there was little option but to stay and work on the plantations. What these labourers exercised was a psychological freedom, of 'sailing' and 'marching' to and in their own reality. Their use of the colonisers' uniform allowed them to do this.

Furthermore, what they did to the uniform assisted in this construction of a Landship reality, and thus their own emancipation. In my interview with Band Major

⁸² Kamau Brathwaite, *Bajan Culture Report & Plan* (Barbados: UNESCO/Ministry of Education and Culture, March 1979) p. 7.

Daniel Hope, he argued that the Landship should strictly observe the rules and regulations of the British Royal Navy. Fishing out his copy of the 1948 Naval Manual, he pointed out to me the emblems for the caps of the Officers, as well as the shoulder stripes, and lamented that none of the present Landship crew had got them right. The emblems were of various designs and the stripes were too many.

Yet it is precisely this act of not getting it right, (like the marching step of right hand, right foot), that frees the Landship from the accusation of mimicry of the coloniser. Everything is done *in excess* on their uniforms. There are several gold and purple ropes on the Officers; large bunches of yellow plumes on the plummets and a wide variety of medals of every kind. Yet, in the majority of cases, the result is not caricature but blend. It is the synthesised cultural form of which Hall speaks. What the Landship has done is to add a Caribbean flair to a very pristine British Naval livery. The effect is to produce what Bhabha calls 'a partial vision of the colonizer's presence; a gaze of otherness.' He sees this partial presence as the basis of colonial mimicry.⁸³

What results is a cloak that interrogates the coloniser while it seems to bestow praise. Unfortunately, the other members of the colonised society, in this case Barbadian society, are encouraged to view the cloak as the coloniser sees fit. Over time, the cloak as bestowing praise upon the coloniser is deemed to be the only interpretation:

The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'.⁸⁴

⁸³ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 88.

⁸⁴ Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, ed., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 392-403 (p. 394)

As a result, instead of seeing the Landship as a cultural document that critiques colonialism, Barbadian society chose to make the Landship become the Other. In doing this, the society failed to recognise that it was being made to see life through the eyes of the coloniser. It had also become the Other.

VI

Summary

The popular belief in Barbados today is that the Landship is unique to the island. This has become its main claim to authenticity: its supposed one-of-a-kind nature. Armed now with this passport, it has gained a sort of pseudo-acknowledgment by elements of the society that would have once before rejected it.

However, what this acknowledgment adds up to in real terms is a positioning of the Landship to the status of a side-show featuring freak entertainment at a circus. What is embraced at a very superficial level is a combination of the genesis story and the performance aspects of the movement. The connections with Friendly Societies, and the African resonances in the dances, have caused some members of the society to view them as an anomaly, as something that is *not like them*. It has also resulted in pushing the Landship story into the realm of folklore.

What is ironic about the Landship is that to a great extent, it provides Barbadians with a rather unpleasant and tangible image of themselves. The adoption of some of the cultural norms of the imperial master was very much the agenda of the middle classes. What they may pride themselves on is that they have succeeded at this particular game while their fellow Landship persons did not.

In reality the Landship demonstrates similar success and more. Mastery of the rules and regulations of the British Royal Navy was not easy for lay persons with little or no education, yet they achieved it. By combining this mastery with essential elements of themselves, like the African-Caribbean dance movements such as the 'wangle lo', the Landship kept a close grip on a main stream of their identity. It can be argued that the middle classes eagerly dismissed, or were forced to dismiss these elements, as they struggled to be as anglicised as possible. What the Landship provides for them is the mask of success as it slips from the wearer. They see both at the same time: an uncomfortable and distorted image of themselves.

Chapter Five

The Crop Over Festival: The Re-Emergence of Traditions

Can you hear a distant drum
Bouncing on the laughter of a melody
And does the rhythm tell you 'come'
Does your spirit do a dance to
This symphony?

David Rudder, 'Calypso', *The Gilded Collection 1986-1989*, CD, 1993.

The unity is submarine.

Kamau Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Mona: Savacou, 1985 [1974]), p. 64.

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical analysis of the Barbadian festival known as Crop Over. The chapter argues that though the Crop Over festival can locate some of its early beginnings in the English festival of Harvest Home, what is presently celebrated is not simply a retention of an English-inspired festival. The chapter posits that from its inception during slavery, the festival underwent significant changes because of the African-Creole traditions of the enslaved. These traditions continued to shape the celebrations in the post-emancipation period, and have influenced the development of the present day Crop Over celebration. As a result, the present day festival has created avenues for the exploration and redefinition of Barbadian identity.

The celebration of the Crop Over Festival begins officially in July and goes through until the first Monday in August. Its timing is such that it always ends with the first Monday; the day that, until 1997, was designated to be the official celebration of the August 1st Emancipation date.¹

This festival is promoted as a revived version of an old plantation festival that took place at the end of the sugar cane season. A slavery and post-emancipation experience, it was originally an English folk festival called Harvest Home, which was implemented in some territories of the British West Indies. Sponsored by the planter, there was a feast and much drinking and dancing in the plantation yard. In Barbados, the festival was celebrated on various plantations in the island into the late colonial period.

¹ However, as of 1 August 1997, Emancipation Day has been celebrated as a national holiday.

The modern day Crop Over has changed significantly from its predecessor. Celebrated on a national scale, it is a time for the visual artists and crafts people to display their art. It is also the time for ordinary men and women, oft times with no formal training in musical arrangements and song writing, to produce biting social commentaries or witty satires through the artform of the calypso.² Moreover, it is the time for spectacle, for masquerade. The last day, known as *Kadooment Day*, is the day of collective creative expression, during which costumed bands parade in the streets and the masquerade comes alive.³ It can be noted that the July to August period is also the time when ardent opponents of the festival, mainly religious groups, hold activities in what they term as a 'counter culture' to the festival, particularly marked by an all day observance of prayer on Kadooment day.

This chapter debates several issues regarding the Crop Over festival. It argues that the promotion of the festival as a reincarnation of the English Harvest Home plantation celebration misrepresents key elements of its identity. What will be demonstrated here is that the plantation Harvest Home festival created a space for the continuation of older traditions that the African enslaved and their African-Creole descendants had practised on the plantations for two centuries. These traditions significantly changed the character of the celebrations of the English Harvest Home.

By extension, it is in this light that the phenomenon of the present Crop Over festival should be reviewed. In recent times, it has been argued that to have thousands of Barbadians in the streets celebrating and enjoying the masquerade every *Kadooment Day*

² Calypso – 'A popular satirical song in rhymed verse [...] commenting on any recognised figure(s) or aspect(s) of Caribbean social life, and more often performed by a male singer with much body gesture and some extemporisation directed at anybody in the audience.' See Richard Allsopp, ed., *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.131.

³ Pronounced ca-doo-ment. Allsopp gives the meaning as: 'Much noise and confusion.'. See Allsopp, *Dictionary*, p.324.

is a very 'un-Barbadian' thing to do.⁴ These pundits argue that Barbadians are known for their reserve and their serious manner at all times. It has been projected that these recent changes in Barbadian identity have arisen through mimicry of the neighbouring island Trinidad, known for its more unrestrained carnival culture. Consequently, when supporters of the modern manifestations of Barbadian culture cry that Crop Over is part of 'we culture', there are those who vociferously object. They refuse to ally themselves with these new elements of Barbadian identity.

Yet when it is acknowledged that what is being witnessed in Barbados is the revival of traditions more than the invention of them, this question of mimicry of other Caribbean cultures cannot hold true. It is my argument that the Independence era has provided a vibrant and creative space in which a distinctly Black Barbadian identity is being forged. The Crop Over festival is one of the major conduits for this unfolding identity.

II

The Carnival Paradigm

The concept of carnival that is usually referred to is the Bakhtinian one. For Mikhail Bakhtin, participation in the carnival brings on what he calls a 'two-world condition'. Medieval people subsequently lived in 'a second world and a second life outside officialdom' when carnival time came around:

⁴ See, for example, the argument of Al Gilkes, Chairman of the National Cultural Foundation, as he found himself having to defend the Barbadian form of dancing during the masquerade. See Al Gilkes, 'Not my kind o' wine', *Sunday Sun*, 13 April 1997, p. 9A.

While carnival lasts, there is no life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants.⁵

What Bakhtin emphasises is that carnival is part of the festive life of the people. He sees the feast as 'an important primary form of human culture' whose function goes beyond the practical one of providing periodic rest:

The feast had always an essential, meaningful philosophical content. No rest period or breathing spell can be rendered festive per se; something must be added from the spiritual and ideological dimension. They must be sanctioned not by the world of practical conditions but by the highest aims of human existence, that is, by the world of ideals. Without this sanction there can be no festivity.⁶

Bakhtin argues that when the feast is an official one, whether it is sponsored by the state, or it is feudal or ecclesiastical, *it does not realise its true potential. It cannot take the people into their second world, because the purpose of the official feast was to acknowledge and reinstate the existing world. This is why the carnival was so special; it created a space to exit from the official world and to enter into the second world created by a festive truth:*

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed.⁷

⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, tr. by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1968), pp.6-7.

⁶ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, pp. 8-9.

⁷ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 10.

This Bakhtinian theory on the carnival is widely quoted and accepted in the main. It has also received severe criticism. For example, Umberto Eco, whilst enjoying this Bakhtinian thesis, laments that the theory is 'unfortunately false'. He argues that while he can see that there was a drive towards subversion of the norm and liberation of the self in the medieval carnival, '[t]he hyper-Bakhtinian [sic] ideology of carnival as *actual* liberation may, however, be wrong.'⁸

His contention is that in the purer feast or carnival, there is an absence of the rule of law. Eco challenges this:

Carnival, in order to be enjoyed, requires that rules and rituals be parodied, and that these rules and rituals already be recognized and respected. One must know to what degree certain behaviours are forbidden, and must feel the majesty of the forbidding norm, to appreciate their transgression. Without a valid law to break, carnival is impossible.⁹

Consequently, Eco argues that carnival is an '*authorized* transgression'.

It is interesting to note that two cultural theorists on Caribbean culture have objections to both the Bakhtin and Eco carnival paradigms. Both Antonio Benítez-Rojo and Richard D. E. Burton base their objections on the need for these theories to establish a two-world system, that is, a carnival world and a non-carnival world. When they examine the Caribbean carnival paradigm, they find other elements that challenge the authenticity of this premise.

Antonio Benítez-Rojo argues that while Bakhtin sees carnival as the momentary degradation of the power of the authority, and Eco sees carnival as reaffirming the old

⁸ Umberto Eco, 'The frames of comic 'freedom'', in *Umberto Eco, V. V. Ivanov, Monica Rector Carnival!*, ed., by Thomas A. Sebeok and assisted by Marcia E. Erickson (Mouton: Berlin: New York: Amsterdam, 1984), p. 3. For other views on the role of carnival in society and of the Bakhtinian carnival study, see Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 1-26. Also Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso and NLB, 1981), pp. 143-172.

⁹ Eco, 'frames', p. 6.

order, he sees carnival in a much simpler light. For him, carnivals are simply paradoxical practises:

Notice that the carnival symbolizes a double sacrifice that is paradoxical in itself; through it — I repeat — the groups in power channel the violence of the oppressed groups in order to maintain yesterday's order, while the latter channel the former's violence so that it will not recur tomorrow. Culturally speaking, the complexity of the carnival cannot be reduced to binary concepts. It is one thing and the other at the same time — like the crab canon's center — since it serves the purpose of unifying through its performance that which cannot be unified (the impossible desire to reach social and cultural unity — socio-cultural synthesis — that runs within the system). In this sense, and only partially in the Bakhtinian sense, we can say that Caribbeanness functions in a carnivalesque manner.¹⁰

On the other hand, Richard D. E. Burton takes particular objection to the emphasis in the Bakhtin paradigm that asserts a distinct difference between what happens for the three to four days of carnival and the other three hundred and sixty days of the year. He argues that when the Trinidad carnival is examined, what occurs during the four days of carnival in Trinidad is 'not *fundamentally* at variance' with what happens during the remaining three hundred and sixty-plus days of the year. Burton then quotes Nancy Scheper-Hughes who made a similar discovery when she examined the Brazilian carnival. What she saw was a 'ritual of intensification' of what happens in ordinary life.¹¹

Consequently, Burton posits that any analysis on the Trinidadian carnival should not concentrate solely on the carnival, but on what he calls *The Carnival Complex*. These are

the various strands of 'normal' Trinidadian social and cultural life that knit together to form a nexus of particular intensity during carnival time. The principal hermeneutic opposition employed is not Bakhtin's opposition of 'high' and 'low' and the related opposition of 'classical' and 'grotesque' bodies that have proved

¹⁰ Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 307.

¹¹ Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 156-7.

so fertile in the analysis of carnival in premodern Europe... Rather than high/low, the crucial opposition used here involves the dialectic of inside and outside and of private and public [...] These oppositions are in their turn inseparable from the dialectic of 'reputation' and 'respectability' (and correlatively of 'male' and 'female').¹²

In view of this thesis, especially the dialectic of inside and outside, of private and public, what becomes an important factor for the Caribbean carnival is the street. Carnival is the occupation of the street, which can lead to a psychological taking over (in the Bakhtinian sense) of the nation. For the Anglophone Caribbean, the street culture that prevailed was cricket. As Burton points out, most English boys may have learnt their cricket in gardens, but Caribbean boys developed their batting, bowling and fielding skills on the street. George Lamming best captures this connection between the street culture and cricket:

We had learnt our cricket in the road, on the beach and over any ploughed up grass piece. What with dirt, sand and dust flying at the same speed as the ball, any good batsman from Barbados had a sound education in seeing what was coming at him.¹³

Hence the street is a focal point in Caribbean culture. J. Michael Dash argues that in street plays of the Caribbean, the street becomes an important and problematic area in Caribbean writing:

A fundamental departure from the world of the pastoral, the street is, in a unconventional sense, profoundly unpoetic. It is the zone of the public self, the collective unconsciousness. The street represents movement, chaos, and anonymity.¹⁴

¹² Burton, *Afro-Creole*, p. 157.

¹³ See George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), pp. 213-4. See also Burton, 'Cricket, Carnival and Street Culture in the Caribbean' in *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture*, ed., by Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 96.

¹⁴ J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998), pp. 122-3.

For this analysis on the Barbados Harvest Home festival and the modern Crop Over, many of the theories discussed here are very appropriate. It is my contention that the Harvest Home festival that was introduced by the slave planters fits the Bakhtinian notion of the official feast. However, my research shows that the prevailing African-Creole traditions, which were brought out for the celebrations, served to quietly subvert the intention of the authority. In this way, the Burton Carnival Complex becomes pertinent.

It is sound to state that until the Independence era, Barbados did not have a carnival street culture. The ritual of the masses taking control of the street in the masquerade was not part of the Barbadian experience. As the last chapter demonstrated, Landship activities formed a sort of proto-carnival, while the 1930s activities came as close as ever to a Barbadian street carnival. What the modern Crop Over has provided is the occasion to reach for that space of which Bakhtin speaks. Though only twenty-five years old, the signs are there to indicate that the transformation to the Bakhtinian 'true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal' is underway. Whether, as Eco and Eagleton argue, this state of becoming is a utopian one in the Barbadian context, is left to be seen.

III

Historical development of the Festival

What the brochures and the promoters of the festival constantly repeat is that the present festival is based on the English celebration known as Harvest Home. As will be argued later in this chapter, this claim harps on mimicry and colonial absorption and retentions, and is not taken to kindly by many. The point that these pundits fail to make is that

while the slave planters introduced Harvest Home, they did not invent dancing and masquerade, especially the African –Creole traditions of masquerade and music.

The present Crop Over has its roots not only in Harvest Home, but more in the traditions that make up the Carnival Complex. The very concept of the festival was one treasured by the slaves. Handler and Frisbee provide the following argument: '[T]here is much evidence to warrant the assumption that the value slaves attached to free time over the weekends and holidays was much greater than that perceived by even the more liberal Europeans who commented on their way of life.'¹⁵ What Handler and Frisbee point out is that while the planters provided the holidays as a way to keep the slave system intact, the slaves utilised them as a way to renew and develop their traditions.

Then there is the question of the nature of the festivities that took place at these festivals. During slavery, a dance called the *Joan and Johnny* had evolved and was a centrepiece for every celebration. Captain J. E. Alexander, who visited Barbados in 1831, gave a vivid description not only of this dance, but also of the atmosphere that was engendered by the dancers and musicians.

Whilst sitting on a veranda of a plantation house, Alexander was encouraged to seek out the drums that he could hear being played in the distance:

[I] immediately repaired to where the negroes were amusing themselves under the mild rays of the Cynthian Queen. On a level spot, surrounded by small houses of coloured and black people, was a bench, on which stood a man shaking violently a calabash filled with stones and reeds, and singing with contortions of an African air. The crowd formed a ring, and those who wished to dance the Joan-Johnny stepped forward, presented the leader of the band with a bit, and he

'Bid the fiddle to the banjar speak
The banjar to the calabash without'

¹⁵ Jerome Handler and Charlotte Frisbee, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Content.' *Caribbean Studies*, 11: 4, (1972), 5-46 (p. 12).

and a couple would twist their bodies, thump the ground with their heels, and circle round one another to the inspiring strains.¹⁶

What Alexander has described is an atmosphere in which the percussion sounds provided by the drums and the rattles filled the air. The banjar and the fiddle ‘spoke’ as well, in the traditional call and response pattern of which West African cultures are noted. The ring formed by the crowd had also created an intense focus. The dancers themselves then became an extension of the entire ritual, which included all present.

Thus, the *Joan and Johnny* is not merely the dancing, but the entire moment created by the dance. It is important to emphasise this aspect of the cultural form and remember it whenever note is made of its performance.

Charles William Day witnessed the *Joan and Johnny* being danced in Barbados in the post-emancipation period:

The first movement was an *en avant* by both, the feet close together toeing and heeling it very gently, the *retirez* the same; then the feet were straddled in a somewhat indecorous manner for ladies, moving along and round *à la fundago*, with the motion similar to that exceedingly droll one used by tragic actors in a booth ‘bent on deeds of blood’, who sidle up to their victims by an alternate action of the heels and ball of the foot, without lifting their pedal extremities off the ground. Here, however, the ladies turned down the outer ankles as near the earth as possible, meanwhile, advancing and retiring together, and then ‘slueing around’ each other, holding up their frocks *a la minuet de la cour*, with their heads looking down at their feet.¹⁷

Day calls these moves the ‘grand postures’ of the dance. It was a short dance, which ended with the two dancers leaving the space to be immediately replaced by two more.

On one level, the dance itself might not seem to retain many of the African elements of

¹⁶James Edward Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches, comprising visits to the most interesting scenes in North and South America and the West Indies, with notes on Negro slavery and Canadian emigration*, vol. 1 (London: 1833), pp. 130-131.

¹⁷Charles William Day, *Five Years Residence in the West Indies* (London: 1852), pp. 47-8.

the dance tradition, especially that energy which Alexander emphasised. Note, however, the wry comment from Day:

I must not omit to remark that the feet did *not* take the most active part in the dance, as that was executed by a prominent part of the person, commonly understood to be that peculiarly African development on which 'Honour holds her seat'. That wriggle transcends description: none but itself could be of its parallel.¹⁸

Though his description is of a typical European nature, in which the 'native' becomes the wonderfully exotic, there is important information to be gleaned from this statement. This 'wriggle' to which Day refers, is part of what is termed the polyrhythmic character of African dance. Lomax argues that in this form of dancing, the emphasis is on bodily polyrhythm, in which 'the shoulders and pelvis erotically rotate and twist, often to two separate and conflicting meters.' Thus, Handler and Frisbee conclude that when the reactions of European observers are noted, the description they provide of the dance, 'particularly in the spirit of its performance, bodily movements, physical expressiveness, agility, and rhythmic precision' indicate that it is clearly African in origin.¹⁹

Note also the musical instruments that accompanied the dance. Day speaks of fiddles, 'a rude African-looking tambourine', 'a tum-tum' or 'tump', and 'de shot'. According to Day, the 'shot' acted as a sort of rattle: 'This was the property of the "funny man", who rattled it against his hand, and screamed a sort of song, which gave the initiated much delight, but was quite unintelligible to me.' The 'tum tum' was a drum 'played by an alternate thump of the open-handed knuckles on the parchment, and then a slap of the palm on the wood.'²⁰

¹⁸ Day, *Five Years Residence*, p. 48.

¹⁹ Lomax as quoted in Handler and Frisbee, 'Aspects', p. 34.

²⁰ Day, *Five Years Residence*, pp.46-7.

What Day describes here is the same type of band that played the music for the *Joan and Johnny* at the 1831 event. Thus, the Day version of the actual dance may have become more stylised, but the instruments used to provide the music had not changed. Consequently, that atmosphere that was noted for Alexander would have been there at the Day example.

In the data to be presented on the Harvest Home festival, it is my argument that these instruments will be part of any band referred to. Also, when reference is made to dancing at the festival, it is more than likely that it is the *Joan and Johnny* that forms one of the dance moments. This becomes especially clear in the 1930s when descriptions of the dance, as it was performed at the festival, are given. What this will demonstrate is that for at least one hundred and fifty years, the *Joan and Johnny* was a major part of the performance culture of the Barbadian labourers. Also, that the musical instruments and their rhythms noted during slavery continued to inform this culture in the emancipation period.

It is important to emphasise that this continuity of the African-Creole traditions took place within the ambit of the official feast. In this way, the Harvest Home became a conduit for the exploration and survival of the traditions.

The following is a review of the Barbados celebrations of the Harvest Home festival from slavery through to the end of colonialism. Seeing that little research has been conducted on this festival, the main purpose of this review is to provide a comprehensive historical analysis of the proceedings. Also to be determined is the extent to which the African-Creole traditions changed the character of the festival, from that of the official feast, into the realm of the carnival.

(a) *Harvest Home*

It has been described as the feast of ingathering; that is, the celebrations that took place at the end of the harvesting of a crop. In Medieval England, the celebration was called *Harvest Home*. In Scotland, it was called *Kirn*. In the north of England, it was called the *Mell-Supper*. In all, however, the feast of ingathering was meant to bring about the melting of social differences. It was to be the time when the employer thanked his labourers for their work during the year. He provided a banquet and he and his wife presided over the festivities. Thus, Lord and Lady and labourers would sit down to a meal under one roof. With this act, argues Chambers, 'all conventional distinctions [sink] under the overpowering gush of natural, and, it may be added, religious feeling, which so well benefits the time.'²¹

The crop that was gathered was corn, and several elements of the festival involved this crop in some way. In England, the last grains of corn were brought in on a *Hock Cart*, while the pipe and tabour were played. In the north of England, there was the making of the *Corn Baby*, which was a doll dressed up with the last cuttings of the corn. Once dressed by the 'bonniest lass', the *Corn Baby* was taken to the centre of the activities, to the music of fiddles and bagpipes. There was also the practise of *Crying the Mare* in Hertfordshire and the Isle of Skye. For this, the labourers gathered the last grains of corn and tied them together. They then cut it down by throwing their sickles at it while shouting a chant.²²

If the Bakhtin paradigm of the feast is applied to this feast of ingathering, then this is an official feast. For Bakhtin that meant that the purpose of the feast was not to upset

²¹ See R. Chambers, ed., *The Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiques in Connection with the Calendar*, vol. 2 (London: 1899), p. 376.

²² Chambers, pp. 377-79.

the existing world order, but to preserve it. This type of feast asserted that 'all was stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political and moral values, norms, and prohibitions'.²³ Key to identifying the official feast was the question of preservation of the status quo:

The suspension of all hierarchical precedence during carnival time was of particular significance. Rank was especially evident during official feasts; everyone was expected to appear in the full regalia of his calling, rank, merits and to take the place corresponding to his position. It was a consecration of inequality.²⁴

Consequently, the Chambers argument that this feast allowed for the melting of inequalities cannot hold. This type of celebration was based on patronage and the preservation of the status quo. Indeed, Chambers inadvertently admits this when he laments the loss of these types of feast with the rise of the Harvest festival sponsored by the Anglican Church. He argues that the Harvest festival lacked one essential element seen in the feast:

It provides no particular means for attaching the labourers to their respective masters. If the labourer have any unpleasant feeling towards his master, he will feel ashamed of going to his house to partake his hospitality, but he will attend without a scruple a general feast provided by many contributors, because he will feel no special obligation to his own master [...] The hospitality of the old-fashioned harvest-supper, and other similar agricultural feasts, was a bond of union between the farmer and his work-people of inestimable value.²⁵

Hence, a key reason for the festival was, as Bakhtin says, the 'consecration of inequality'.

That element of the carnival, in which the world was turned inside out, was missing.

²³ Bakhtin, p. 9.

²⁴ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p.10.

²⁵ Chambers, *The Book of Days*, p. 380.

When the English Harvest Home is viewed as an official feast, then it is not surprising that the slave planters implemented it in the British West Indies. What it offered was a way for the planters to preserve the status quo while controlling and channelling the celebrations. In addition, they could join in the festivities. It is my argument that the extent to which the planters realised their aims was determined by the extent to which the prevailing African-Creole traditions changed the character of the festival.

When the planters introduced Harvest Home to the West Indies, they were layering this English custom on top of the African and African-Creole traditions that already existed on the plantations. For example, in Jamaica in the 1820s, Alexander Barclay witnessed the bringing in of the last of the canes and the ensuing Crop Over or Harvest Home festival. He noted the following:

In the evening they assemble in the master's or manager's house, and as a matter of course, take possession of the largest room, bringing with them a fiddle and a tambourine. Here all authority and all distinction of colour ceases; black and white, overseer and book-keeper, mingle together in the dance.²⁶

Again in the 1820s, F. N. Bayley, witnessed the celebration of Harvest Home in St. Vincent. He commented that for the slaves, 'croptime is their grand jubilee'. Before giving a description of the Harvest Home events, Bayley thought it necessary to quote Barclay verbatim. He then argued that the same could be held for St. Vincent, with a few exceptions:

[I]t is more usual for the august assembly of sable revellers to carry on their gaieties on the green lawn before the dwelling of the proprietor, than to take possession of one of the rooms in the house. The music also is sometimes of

²⁶ Alexander Barclay, *A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies* (London: 1826), p. 10.

wonderful variety. An empty barrel [...] ‘par example’, with a large piece of parchment over the top, a kettledrum, a tambourine, a pipe, a *gumbay* or *bonja*, with sundry other instruments, and these aided by the vocal efforts of men and women, boys and girls, do verily emit sounds of most terrific merriment, and might frighten and amuse an unaccustomed bystander.²⁷

In both the Barclay and Bayley observations, the planter has sponsored the festivities. However, note that the dancing is accompanied by the musical instruments of the African-Creole tradition, like those that Day described. Note also that, as Handler and Frisbee advised, Bayley has difficulties with the sounds being emitted from the musical instruments, another clear indication that they were not familiar to European ears. This means that the music being played is clearly of African origin.

Consequently, the traditions serve to create a pulse that changes the character of the celebration. The formal ceremony of bringing in the last of the crop is preserved, for example, but the festivities that ensue have been creolised. The task now is to see the extent to which such transformation occurs in the Barbadian version of the Harvest Home festival.

(b) *The Slave Period*

It is not known exactly when the Barbadian plantocracy introduced Harvest Home to their slave plantations, but the evidence so far suggests that it was during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The earliest indication for the Harvest Home celebration can be found in the ledgers of the Newton Estate. Note was made of the festival in a 1798 letter from manager of Newton: ‘a dinner and sober dance—‘twas a celebration of Harvest Home

²⁷ F. N. Bayley, *Four Years' Residence in the West Indies* (London: 1833), p. 437.

after the crop'. Handler asserts that Newton continued to celebrate the festival in the nineteenth century.²⁸

Other evidence of early examples of the Harvest Home celebration can be found in the novel popularly known as *Creoleana*. Published in 1842, much of the narrative refers to the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. In the following passage, the young Miss Fairfield, daughter of a respectable white Barbadian family, looks forward to the merriment that ensues when the sugar is being harvested:

It was at that cheerful period generally denominated 'crop time', when the proprietors and managers feel more generous and sociable, and in which the slaves also, perhaps, from kindlier treatment, look more sleek and comely, are more happy and healthy, that this young lady, [Miss Fairfield], who being a great favourite among all her acquaintances, was sure to be 'where'er the merry dance was trip't among.'²⁹

In 1819, the Codrington estates, which were run by the Society for the Promulgation of the Gospel, introduced the festival to its slaves. Called Harvest Home by the management, the festival came to symbolise 'fresh meat, dance music, and a plenitude of prayers and sermons for the blacks who had undergone the hard labour of bringing the crop'.³⁰

In my review of the 1828 ledgers of the Mount Gay plantation of St. Lucy, I found one entry which referred to the celebration. The payment of the sum of twelve shillings and six pence had been noted for the following: 'Music for the Negroes to dance at their Harvest Home'. This was the only reference made to the celebration in the ledgers that spanned the period 1809 – 1836. However, it is my argument that this was not necessarily the only occasion on which the festival was celebrated. Rather that, on this

²⁸ Personal communication with Jerome Handler.

²⁹ J. W. Orderson, *Creoleana: Social and Domestic Scenes and Incidents in Barbados in Days of Yore* (London: 1842), p. 121.

³⁰ J. Harry Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados 1710 - 1838* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), p. 103.

occasion, a band was hired for playing the music and the expense was noted, thus bringing the tradition to the fore.³¹

By the end of the slavery, Harvest Home had become a regular celebration on many estates. As the following section indicates, it continued to be celebrated in the post-emancipation period.

(c) Post-Emancipation

Full emancipation was granted to the Barbadian slaves in 1838. The sugar industry, though threatened by crisis after crisis during the aftermath of emancipation, continued to survive. It remained the mainstay of the Barbadian economy for the rest of the nineteenth century and into most of the twentieth.³² This meant that the planters in Barbados, unlike other territories such as Jamaica, could continue to host the celebration of Harvest Home as a reward for the ex-slaves. It has been argued that in places such as Jamaica where sugar was not maintained, or was not sufficiently prosperous, the festival died a natural death.³³

It is my argument that the Harvest Home festival was regularly celebrated in Barbados in the second half of the nineteenth century. What follows is a cross section of

³¹ Mount Gay (June 1809-Dec. 1836). Thanks to the management for granting me access to the ledgers.

³² For example, there was the sugar crisis of 1842, the effects of the Sugar Duties Act of 1846, problems of the 1860s, the threat from beet sugar and the depression that followed with the fall in sugar prices and the increasing competition on the European market from Cuban sugar. For a full discussion of the effect on the Barbadian sugar industry, see Chapter One.

³³ Note the comment in *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage*. They say that with the fall of the sugar industry in Jamaica in the 1840s, the Harvest Home celebrations dwindled away. They argue that with the rise of peasant crops, the festival itself had no value. See H. Fraser, S. Carrington, A. Forde and J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Jamaica: Heinemann Publishers Caribbean Limited, 1990), p. 54.

reports that refer to the celebration. A mixture of newspaper articles, observations of travel writers and the reflections of the Moravian missionaries, they track the occurrence of the festival at various points in time. It is my argument that they present a fairly reasonable barometer of how the celebrations were viewed. However, like all data of this period, the views of the labouring classes are not represented and so have to be inferred from what has been given.

(i) *The Early Years: 1838-1899*

In 1858, the following report of a Harvest Home celebration was given in *The Barbadian* newspaper:

Report of a Harvest Feast given on Saturday at Selman's in St. Thomas to the labourers of that estate by their liberal and kind-hearted employer, Dr. George Walton. The Dr. had a fat ox slaughtered on that occasion on which he feasted a select number of his personal friends and the entire of his labourers who cordially drank to the health of their employer in wine and falernum, and expressed themselves truly grateful to him for a long continuation of acts of kindness and attention to their welfare both as their employer and their gratuitous physician. Dancing was kept up until after 10 o'clock, when the assemblage broke up.³⁴

The slaughtering of the ox and the other provisions granted by Dr. Walton make this fit the official feast paradigm. The creolised elements can be noted in the drinking of the Barbadian speciality known as falernum.³⁵ Also, it can be safely assumed that the dancing and the music provided would have been similar to that witnessed during the slave celebrations.

³⁴ See *The Barbadian*, 24 July 1858, as quoted in *JBHMS*, 25: 3 (1958), 123.

³⁵ Falernum: 'A light alcoholic syrup, the main ingredients of which are said to be rum and lime juice, used as a liqueur or as a base for rum-mixed drinks.' See Allsopp, *Dictionary*, p. 223.

Rev. Greville John Chester lived in Barbados between 1867-68. Consequently, it was in 1868 that he witnessed a Harvest Home celebration. In view of its full description, and it being one of the most complete descriptions there is of the celebration of the festival in the West Indies, it is quoted at length:

A kind of harvest-home generally takes place at the end of the crop-gathering upon each estate. A cart laden with the last canes is drawn by mules decorated with ribbons, and attended by a crowd of labourers; the principal women being attired in white muslim. The mill and other estate buildings are gay with coloured kerchiefs which do duty as flags. Some ancient negro is put forward to make a speech to the planter, which he often does with considerable humour and address. Then the planter replies, and a glass of 'falernum' — a beverage compounded of rum, lime-juice, and syrup — is handed round to each. Then dancing begins, and is carried on to a late hour to the sound of the fiddles and tambourine. Sometimes the proceedings are varied with the introduction of a 'trash man', a figure, *i. e.* stuffed with cane trash and tied upon the back of a mule, which, being finally let loose, gallops about with his incongruous burden, to the great delight of the spectators.³⁶

The key elements of the celebration here are as follows: the parade of the last canes cut on the plantation, brought in on a colourfully decorated cart; the gathering of the labourers in the plantation yard; the making of speeches by the Head man or appointed labourer; the reply by the master; and the general merriment. Lastly, there is the spectacle presented by the trashman, the stuffed figure. As this chapter will show, these elements of the festival formed the core of the celebrations on the various plantations.

In an 1875 article in *The Times*, the writer calls the festival a 'treat', a term that is used in the plantation ledgers as well. He notes that with the recent end of the harvest season, the plantations would be having their 'treats':

³⁶ Greville John Chester, *Transatlantic Sketches in the West Indies, South America, Canada and the United States* (London: 1869), pp. 81-82. Also John Gilmore, ed., *Chester's Barbados: The Barbados Chapters From Transatlantic Sketches, (1869) by the Reverend Greville John Chester* (Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1990). p. xi and pp. 33-4.

Where a 'treat' has not yet been given the labourers, in acknowledgement of the large crop rect [received], and the lively and prominent part they took in it, if we can rely on the information furnished us, they yet have good reasons for expecting one. Almost invariably such treats are accompanied with marchings, and dancing.³⁷

The writer states that the labourers are very grateful for provision of this treat as they 'give vent to words and expressions intimating their best wishes for Massa, Missis and the children, earnestly desiring every success to crown their undertakings'.³⁸ Here the writer places emphasis on planter patronage and indicates that the labourers recognise the actions of the benevolent employer. However, the evidence of the ritual of marching and dancing indicates that the labourers saw the treat as the opportunity for the performance of their traditions.

There is another report of Harvest Home celebrations in 1875, this time for the Clifton Hall and Haynes Field plantations in St. John. Note of them was taken by the Moravians at Mount Tabor Church. Of particular concern to these Moravians was devising a suitable form of punishment for the female members of the mission who participated in the Crop Over activities. Having decided that the penalty would be exclusion from at least two communion services until they had confessed their sins, the Helpers went further in their comments:

The Conference could not help remarking that the conclusion of the last crop the Island had was made occasioning such fearful demoralisation among the people, was a subject deeply to be regretted. The interests of religion and the discipline of the Church had been seriously injured, and it was deeply to be deplored that it was a very current report that the Anglican ministers had said that those dancings were of no possible harm. It was mentioned that the rejoicings at *Clifton Hall* were of a most heathenish description; the people in a mass being drunk - man and woman all drank, and swearing and exhibiting their very persons in the most shockingly indecent manner. It was also to be deplored that at *Haynes Field*; where the authorities had always been most careful not to tempt the people into any breach

³⁷ St. John Correspondent, *The Times*, 7 July 1875.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

of the rules of our Church by providing dancing at the conclusion of the crop, the people were supplied with a band of music, and tempted to give up themselves to an amusement forbidden by the orders of our Church.³⁹

Though there are several issues to be remarked upon here, it is the struggle between the wishes of the Moravians and the desires of the labourers that is most apparent. For the labourers, the end of crop celebrations were the opportunity to turn their world 'inside out', in the Bakhtinian sense, and revel in the celebrations. Their normal composure was disregarded, an act that greatly dismayed the Moravians. Not wanting to lose their congregation, however, the Moravians devised a penalty that demonstrated their displeasure, as well as their willingness to forgive.

It is also interesting to note the conflict between the planters, the Anglican Church and the missionaries. The planters of Clifton Hall and Haynes Field apparently had broken their promise not to host such revelry. In the true fashion of the official feast, they had provided the music and encouraged the dancing. The Anglican Church also upset the Moravians through their support for the festival. Between these two groups and the renegade female members of the congregation, the Moravians found themselves fighting a losing battle over stamping out the acts of 'heathenish dancing' that prevailed.

Harvest Home definitely continued through the 1880s and the 1890s. The following section illustrates how the plantations continued to sponsor the festival with the provision of food and rum. Often they also paid for the band.

³⁹ Helpers Conference, 25 July 1875, *Mount Tabor Helpers Conference Minutes*, July 1872-July 1885.

(iii) *Plantation Ledgers 1878-1894*

This section presents the results of a survey of the Harvest Home/Crop Over celebrations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The survey is based on records of Harvest Home expenditure that can be found in plantation ledgers.⁴⁰ Its purpose is to provide another form of evidence of the practise of the festival at the end of the nineteenth century.

Each plantation kept yearly records of all expenses incurred in the running of the plantation during the year. The entries might have been made on a monthly basis, though occasionally several months would be covered in one entry. Some estates would record their expenses at the end of the year. For example, in the Edgecombe plantation ledger for 1897, a single entry was made for expenditure incurred from 1 January to 30 October for purchasing rum for the plantation labourers.⁴¹

There are always entries in the ledgers for the expense of 'Rum for Labourers'. These entries are usually made for December, thus reflecting the Christmas celebrations, as well as other festive occasions during the year, like Easter and Whitsuntide. What I was looking for were entries in the ledgers relating to the Harvest Home celebrations. These entries were usually recorded during the period May-July, the months in which the festival was celebrated. However, it was not uncommon to note entries for the celebrations in October, or even as late as December. It is my argument that when the term 'Treat' is used to describe an entry for October, for example, it is the Harvest Home

⁴⁰ The ledgers are housed in the Barbados Archives.

⁴¹ Some of the entries in the ledgers were brief and made note only of expenses relating to the payment of wages and the cultivating and reaping costs for the year. For example, for the 1895 ledger for Windsor and Frenches plantations, there was the general category 'Labourers' with the lump sum of \$2 843.53. No breakdown was provided. On the other hand, some ledgers were extremely detailed and recorded the most incidental of expenses on the estate. For example, in the Bromefield and Hannays ledgers for 1878, there is the following entry: 'Straightening used nails for use the second time — 20 cents'. Again, in 1882, there is this entry: 'sending servant to Bridgetown — 72 cents'.

celebration that was belated noted in the month of October, but was actually celebrated in the May-July period.

Entries for the Harvest Home festival mainly appear under the following heading: 'Plantation expenses paid for Sundries'. The actual entry can carry the title 'Treat for Labourers at end of crop', or, as one detailed ledger had it, 'Sundries at Harvest Home'. Further detail is offered when note is made of precisely what the expense is for. 'Rum for Labourers' is a regular feature; another one is 'Music for Labourers'. Thus, for example, in the inland parish of St. Thomas, the festival was celebrated at Welches plantation. In 1878 and 1879, note is made of the expenditure of \$2. 40 for the month of May of each year. For 1878, the entry read as follows: 'Given Labourers at end of crop'. For 1879, it was noted as: 'Treat to Labourers at end of crop'.

The following is an example of entries taken from the ledgers of three plantations in the western parish of St. James. The plantations are Carlton, Sion Hill and Rock Dundo and the ledgers are for the period 1887 – 1896. Owned by the same group of persons, the accountants were the meticulous Grannum & Skeete. Consequently, these present a most complete record of plantation expenses. The following table shows the entries that specifically refer to the festival over the period.

TABLE 5.1**PLANTATION LEDGERS: CARLTON, SION HILL AND ROCK DUNDO, ST. JAMES (1889–1894)**

YEAR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<u>CARLTON</u>		
1889 June	A treat to Labourers	\$8.00
1889 June	Bread for Labourers	\$6.60
1889 June	Rum for Labourers	\$4.20
<u>SION HILL</u>		
1888 June	Treat to Labourers at end of Crop	\$ 5.00
1889 June	Treat to Labourers finishing Crop	\$ 6.00
1890 June	Given Labourers at end of Crop	\$10.00
1891 June	Given Labourers at end of Crop	\$ 8.00
1892 June	Treat to Labourers	\$ 3.00
1893 Dec	Treat to Labourers at end of Crop	\$ 8.46
1894 June	Rum for Labourers	\$ 1.50
<u>ROCK DUNDO</u>		
1888 June	Treat to Labourers at end of Crop	\$10.00
1888 June	Bread for Labourers	\$.90
1889 June	Treat to Labourers at end of Crop	\$ 5.00
<u>ROCK DUNDO & CARLTON</u>		
1890 July	Treat to Labourers at end of Crop	\$25.00
1891 June	Treat to Labourers	\$15.00

Several observations can be noted here. The first is that the celebrations were a regular feature on these estates. These entries indicate a seven-year span for the celebrations. Note how the term ‘Treat’ is preferred for most of the entries, though ‘Given’ carries the same implication. This confirms that for the planter, this act of staging Harvest Home was an act of patronage.

In assessing the amounts spent, the difficulty lies in determining what precisely the amounts could have been spent on. Where 'Rum for Labourers' is not a specific entry, it can be presumed to be included in the general amount. Thus, the \$10. 00 spent in 1890 at Sion Hill would have been for the rum, the additional food and perhaps the band. Certainly, with the joint account of Rock Dundo and Carlton, the total of \$25. 00 for the treat in 1890 would include all those aforementioned. Yet, in view of the other amounts that I have seen for the celebrations, such as the Welches example, it is my argument that these plantations spent well above the average on their labourers.

For an idea of how these amounts can be further broken down, the following table proves helpful. It notes the expenditure for the celebrations as recorded in the ledgers of Charnocks Plantation, Christ Church.

TABLE: 5.2

PLANTATION LEDGER: CHARNOCKS, CHRIST CHURCH (1888–1889)

YEAR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
1888 July	Music for Labourers	\$ 3.00
1888 Nov	J. Hoad & Co. for Treat to Labourers	\$16.97
1889 July	Music for Labourers	\$ 3.00
1889 July	Treat for Labourers	\$17.18

Firstly, it can be noted that Charnocks hired a band to play for the estate labourers, the cost of which was \$3.00. Secondly, note that the large amounts were seen in addition to the expenditure for the band, and thus were given a separate entry. This is because the items were probably acquired on credit from the merchant. Here, the merchant company is J. Hoad and Co. They were wholesalers who specialised in a wide range of imported

foodstuffs such as fancy biscuits, confectionery, bread, and groceries such as meat. They were located in the capital, Bridgetown.⁴²

To have an understanding of the actual items that the management of Charnocks may have chosen from J. Hoad and Co., to purchase for their feast, it is interesting to note what another wholesaler provided. In June 1879, the following advertisement was placed in *The Barbados Herald*:

TABLE: 5.3

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE ICE ESTABLISHMENT: JUNE 1879

**The Ice Establishment is replete with all
Necessary
For the Approaching Festival:**

York Hams, Wiltshire Bacon
Double Gloster Cheese, North Wilts. Cheese
Family Beef
Raisins, Currants, Citron, Lemon and Orange Peels
Sultana or Pudding Raisins
Prunes — Crystallised Fruit's, Plum Pudding
Mince Meat

⁴² See their advertisement in the *Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, 3 May 1897. For an early twentieth century photograph of the building of John Hoad & Co., see [H. W. Parkinson], *Barbados Yesterday and Today: No. 1: Parkinson's Barbados*, foreword by E. Stoute (Barbados: Barbadian Heritage Publications Trust, [1978] 1979), p. 16.

The timing of the advertisement indicates that the Ice Establishment was referring to the Harvest Home festival.⁴³ They had imported the items especially for the celebrations. Though it is difficult to state whether the labourers were the ones to receive the Double Gloster or North Wilts. Cheese, it is plausible to assume that the ham and beef would have been served at the Harvest feast. Also, such items as the raisins, currants, lemon and orange peel, are essential ingredients for cakes, especially the dark fruitcake which is a speciality in Barbados.

If the management of Charnocks chose to purchase these items for their celebration, then it is probable that their bill would have amounted to the totals noted in the ledger.

The final table shows the entries for two plantations located in the northern most parish of the island. The ledgers for Bromefield and Hannays in St. Lucy span the period 1875 – 1886. However, the first appearance for the end-of crop celebrations appears in 1878. The following table is composed of the entries referring to the celebrations for both plantations between 1878 and 1886.

⁴³ See *The Barbados Herald*, 9 June 1879.

TABLE: 5.4**PLANTATION LEDGERS: BROMEFIELD & HANNAYS, ST. LUCY (1875–1886)**

YEAR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<u>BROMEFIELD</u>		
1878 May 18	Rum for Labourers 3 gallons	\$ 2.88
July 6	Rum for Labourers	\$ 0.62
1881 May 7/21	Sundries at Harvest Home	\$56.40
May 7	W. L. Johnson for one barrel Crackers	\$ 2.25
<u>HANNAYS</u>		
1882 June	Given Labourers at end of Crop	\$20.04
June 30	35 pints of Rum	\$ 4.20
1883 May 3 –26	Labourers at Harvest Home	\$29.64
1884 Dec 31	Sundries at Harvest Home	\$41.12
1885 -----	-----	-----
1886 Oct 2/30	6½ gallons Rum given to Labourers at Harvest Home	\$ 7.20

Several observations are to be made here. These estates provide the most intricate details of expenses on the plantation. For example, specific reference is made to the purchase of crackers. The amounts of the rum purchased are also specified. It can be noted, however, that the amounts of expenditure are the largest I have seen noted for the celebrations. In view of what can be deemed as the average expenditure at the time, it can be argued that the large amount for 1881 possibly reflects the total spent for both plantations in that year.⁴⁴

To have some idea of the value of these amounts witnessed in these ledgers, the following is useful. In the late 1870s to early 1880s, the cost of sixty bottles of rum was

⁴⁴ Other observations for the large amounts of expenditure are as follows. It is interesting to note that neither of these estates were in debt and thus in Chancery, which at this time was very rare occurrence. The other entries for the labourers show a generosity on the part of the owners. Labourers' gratuity, hospitals and pensions are noted. Perhaps the most interesting thing to note here is that women owned these estates. The extent to which this affects the totals for the celebrations, and the generous amounts allocated for the welfare of the labourers, needs further investigation.

approximately \$15. 00. The Charnock labourers and, more especially, the Hannays and Bromefield groups, were probably better off than their fellow labourers on other estates.⁴⁵

(iv) Winding down: 1900-1966

When J. Graham Cruickshank visited Barbados early in the twentieth century, one of his main aims was to make note of any examples of remnants of the African heritage that he saw within the Barbadian. A linguist, he paid close attention to the speech of the labourers and the context in which words and phrases were used. He found that the Crop Over celebrations provided the opportunity for the exploration of key West African traditions:

Particularly would the African dialects come to their own, and blossom abundantly, on such occasions as Christmas and Crop-Over. Then would be heard again the old songs of the African bush,- the true poetry and romance and tragedy of Negro-land. The old heads would 'pull 'Nansi story',- not in Bakra tongue where the thing loses half its sweetness, but in the natural dialect of the tale, -Buru 'Nansi's own, own native language.⁴⁶

Whereas we have noted the continuation of dance and music traditions, here is the first indication of the African tradition of storytelling. Moreover, the stories are about Anansi, the spider folk hero of the Akan tradition. It is interesting to note the observations of Martha Beckwith who visited Jamaica in the 1920s. She found the Anansi tradition alive and well. At that time the stories said that he was a famous fiddler as well as a magician.

⁴⁵ Fraser, A-Z, p. 54.

⁴⁶ J. Graham Cruickshank, *Black Talk being Notes on Negro Dialect in British Guiana with (inevitably) a Chapter on the Vernacular of Barbados* (Demerara: 1916), p. 3.

He could fool domestic animals and entrap them.⁴⁷ Once again, the Barbadian Harvest Home celebration has shown itself to be an avenue for the exploration of African-Creole traditions.

The festival continued to be held on plantations. In 1940, a group of men of the white Barbadian elite, who were members of the Barbados Museum, sat around telling stories of their early childhood. Frederick Clarke, who, as Speaker of the House of Assembly, was noted in the last chapter as giving the feature address at the Landship parade, gave his memories of the festival. He made particular mention of the dancing and the music:

When the parade was over they would adjourn to the shade of some evergreen tree and have a great dance, and every now and then would repair to the table with the punch and drinks. It got quite lively at times. One of the dances was the Joe and Johnnie, then some of the oldest people were chosen to dance, with all sorts of contortions and peculiar motions. Bands provided by the estates accompanied the processions.⁴⁸

Note that the *Joan and Johnny* was still the main piece of the dance. Note also the social and cultural distance between the labourers and Clarke, as he was at a loss for words to describe the dance. It became 'all sorts of contortions and peculiar motions'. Finally, the older generations do the dancing, a possible indication that it was not practised by the young, and thus it was on its way out.

However, what needs further clarification is the make up of the band. Edward Stoute, in his reflections of the festival as he witnessed it in the 1930s, made note of the band:

⁴⁷ Martha Beckwith, *Black Folkways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1929), p. 219.

⁴⁸ 'Old Plantation Customs' in *JBHMS*, 7:3, (1940), 108-115 (p. 111).

There was the Tuk band, playing away with its merry tunes [...] and the 'tilt ma'. Some of these men stood on stilts about ten feet high. [They danced] to the music of the Tuk band, comprising a 'penny flute', a steel, a banjo, sometimes a guitar, and a couple of drums, one small, and one large. These provided all of the music for the dancing of the 'Joe and Johnny' and several other types of dance.⁴⁹

Thus, the band that Day had heard had probably become the tuk band that we have noted for the Landship. Stoute also calls it the 'bumbalum band.'⁵⁰ This band played the music for the *Joan and Johnny*.

Also note the other traditions which Stoute alerts us to. The 'tilt ma' were the stilt men, popularly known as the *Moco Jumbie* in other Caribbean cultures. These men walk on stilts, in this case some ten feet in height. Stilt walking is a particular West African tradition connected with the rituals of the spirit world:

The earliest Moco-Jumbies were simply spirits made up as women, at first on quite short stilts. The Moco-Jumbie teased, frightened and mocked women and children. The reason that stilts were used was because tradition had it that the images of spirits—Jumbies—can float on the air, and so elevation was part of the 'costume'.⁵¹

It is interesting to note that in the Barbadian tradition, the tales of the spiritual connection have been lost. What has come through it all is the form, the art of stilt walking. This, however, does not deflect from the main argument. Its presence at the festival in the 1930s, when added to that of the *Joan and Johnny* and the tuk band, further bolsters the argument that these creolised cultural forms served to undermine the intentions of the official feast. However, as the stilt walking example demonstrates, these forms themselves bear wounds from the cultural battle.

⁴⁹ Edward Stoute, 'What is a Kadooment?', *The Advocate Magazine*, 27 May 1979, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Edward Stoute, 'Crop Over' gay custom that has died out', *The Advocate Magazine*, 2 December 1973, p. 11.

⁵¹ As quoted by Allsopp, *Dictionary*, p. 385. For a review of how the Moco Jumbie characters were portrayed in the carnivals of Trinidad and St. Vincent see Errol Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1972), p. 12.

From my research I surmise that the festival continued to be celebrated into the 1960s. The historian, Pedro Welch, remembers going to work at the Agricultural Station in St. George at that time. When the crop had been reaped, the labourers sat around drinking and proceeded to tell 'Nancy stories. Each labourer told an Anansi tale. There was general merry making before the company parted.⁵²

The occurrence of this event is interesting on several points. Firstly, the date indicates that the practise continued some 20 years after it was thought to be rapidly on the decline. It has been traditionally argued that by 1940 it had 'very nearly died out'.⁵³ What this example in the Agricultural Station alerts us to is that plantation labourers consciously chose to maintain this aspect of traditional plantation life. As has been argued throughout this chapter, such occasions as the end of the crop provided the opportunity for the celebrations of the African-Creole traditions. They used the timing of the festival to perform their traditions.

Thus it can be argued that when the planter authority withdrew its stamp from the feast, it resorted to what it had begun as, in the Bakhtinian sense. It provided an avenue for the exploration of what he terms the festive 'truth'.

⁵² Personal Interview with Pedro Welch, 22 May 1998.

IV

Crop Over in the Era of Independence

This section examines key aspects of the present Crop Over festival. What I am particularly interested in noting is how the African-Creole traditions have evolved and have been renewed through the festival. Moreover, close attention will be paid to the ideological tug-of-war over the identity of the festival that has haunted it since its inception in 1974.

(a) 'an invented tradition': 1974-1977

In coining the term 'invented tradition', what Eric Hobsbawm referred to were those deliberate acts of creating a tradition in the present, which claimed an authentic stake in the past. It did not matter whether the past was a moment in time, or a period of time. What defined them for Hobsbawm was their fictitious claim on this past:

However, insofar as there is a reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.⁵⁴

I find this theory a most appropriate one for this discussion on the early years of the festival.

In 1974, a group of persons, under the instructions of the Barbados Tourist Board, found it necessary to re-introduce the tradition of Crop Over. They claimed that it was

⁵³ As quoted in Fraser, A-Z, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-14 (p. 2).

built on the historic past, that is, on the old English festival known as Harvest Home, which was brought to Barbados by the planters. In this act of reclaiming, no mention was made of the African-Creole traditions that had become so vital a component of the festival's identity. What was called upon was the official feast sponsored by the planter elite. This deliberate omission served, as Eric Hobsbawm would point out, the purpose of fixing the past; of casting Crop Over into a predictable, unchanging mould. It called upon a formalised practise and upon ritual, and thus imposed the notion of repetition, not innovation, upon the festival. It is in this light that I argue that this early celebration of the Crop Over festival was an invented tradition.

Why the year 1974 for the commencement of the festival? Independence had been granted in 1966, so it was an event of the new era. Yet its occurrence signals more than this. This example of bringing back a tradition indicates a certain angst in the society:

[W]e should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side.⁵⁵

In the case of Barbados, independence had provided that change in the social pattern of which Hobsbawm speaks. Though certainly not rapid or drastic in character, what independence did bring with it was a challenge to the old traditions and to the old institutions of power. Consequently, for example, the immediate years after 1966 witnessed the event of what could be considered white flight, when significant numbers of white Barbadians immigrated to countries such as Australia, Canada and South Africa.

⁵⁵ Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5.

It was said that they were unsure about the future and their role in an independent Barbados.⁵⁶

Yet, the 1966 event of independence does not fully account for the invention of this particular tradition. What needs to be acknowledged is the space which independence encouraged. The greater impulse of the 'rapid change' of which Hobsbawm speaks also came from that space created by the effects of the black power movement in Barbados. Thus, the late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed an explosion in Barbadian cultural energies. Such cultural icons as *Yoruba House*, for example, which in a short space of time became a cultural institution in Barbados, would have had no psychological space in which to exist before independence. This is because *Yoruba*, as it was popularly called, represented not only a space in which traditional Yoruba languages, dances and drumming were taught. It also represented a rejection of the notion of the very anglicised and colonised Barbadian. As Ian Estwick, former Chairman of the National Cultural Foundation explained, being an active member of *Yoruba*, or just a member of the audience at a performance, caused you to be labelled a 'rebel' in Barbadian society. You were seen as rejecting the Barbadian norms.⁵⁷

Yet it is precisely because *Yoruba* set about encouraging the rebirth and growth of the African-Creole traditions in Barbados, especially in the 1970s, that it is accorded special note when attempting to explain the reasons for the surge in creativity that Barbados witnessed at that time. Special attention is also paid to its leader, Elton Elombe

⁵⁶ See the Editorial, 'Whites should Adjust to Change: Whites going "down under"', *The Advocate News*, 26 November 1974, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Personal Interview with Ian Estwick, 19 June 1997. *Yoruba House* was an institute created by a group of artists led by Elton Mottley. It specialised in the teaching of African performance culture, such as drumming, dancing, stilt walking. They obtained funding and brought in two drummers from Nigeria to teach drumming and dance to young members of the group. They went into villages and researched the folk culture. They were the first to perform the Landship dance on stage. *Yoruba House* also staged the first Crop Over calypso tents. See, for example, Harold Hoyte, 'Yoruba', *The Bajan and South Caribbean*, February (1973), 36-37 and 40. Also, Ayo Femi, 'Yoruba Review', *Bajan Woman*, April/May, (1977), 14-17.

Mottley, who himself went on to be the first Chairman of the National Cultural Foundation.

When this concept of creative cultural space is coupled with the advent of independence, it becomes clearer why Crop Over came about in the form it did in 1974. The members of the white and coloured elite opted for a cultural entity with which they were familiar. These 'Back-to-Africa' manifestations sharpened their awareness of the rapid change of which Hobsbawm speaks. Thus, this elite reached for the Bakhtinian official feast in order to control the form and the content of the manifestations of Barbadian culture at the time.

The opportunity for the re-staging of the familiar was provided through the needs of tourism. At that time, the months of May to August were the months in which there were reduced numbers of tourists to the island. In the industry it was called the 'low season'. The idea of re-introducing the festival gained sanction because it would provide a new incentive to attract visitors. What the organisers wanted was a colourful event that would encourage European and American tourists to travel to the sunny Caribbean island, not to escape the winter, but to enjoy Barbadian 'culture'.⁵⁸

With tourism given as the main reason for its reintroduction, the battle lines for the ideological war were clearly drawn. At a time when there was avid interest in the reshaping of black Barbadian identity, the festival was cast in the role of portraying Barbadian culture at its most superficial level; through the lens of tourism. About this effect of tourism on culture, Derek Walcott is very clear:

The lean, sinewy strength of the folk dance has been fattened and sucked into the limb of the nightclub, the hotel cabaret, and all the other prostitutions of a tourist culture: before you is a vision of a hundred Havanas and mini-Miamis, [sic] and

⁵⁸ See the recent comments of the then Minister of Tourism, Peter Morgan in *The Nation*, 29 July 1999, p. 5.

who dares tell their Tourism Boards and Cultural Development Committees that the blacks in bondage at least had the resilience of their dignity, a knowledge of their degradation, while their descendants have gone flaccid and colourful, covering their suffering with artificial rage or commercial elation?⁵⁹

Thus it was that the Crop Over festival magically appeared in 1974. As one writer commented: 'The idea having come from 'above' where time, resources, organisational skills, drive etc. are possessed in abundance, presto! Crop-Over Festival arrives, lock, stock and barrel.'⁶⁰ The table overleaf shows the 1976 programme of Crop Over events and illustrates the tensions that the festival was experiencing, because the idea had come from 'above', with little intention of including those from 'below'.

By 1976, the festival had been staged for two years. It quickly established what were to become some of the key events of the festival. These have been italicised in the table. There are the ceremony for bringing in the last canes; the thanksgiving service; the donkey cart parade; the Farley Hill concert; and the burning of Mr. Harding. These events were based on the plantation practise some fifty years earlier, with the Farley Hill concert being a way of staging the entertainment for which the plantation festival was renowned.

With these events aside, a large number of the events of the festival were organised around what can be termed as high culture. Note the large number of barge concerts, courtyard concerts and flower shows. Also note the events that have been underlined in the table: the 'Regatta and Aquatic Sports' event, as well as the 'Buccanneer Costume Ball', the 'German Shepherd Championships' and the 'Gymkhana & Show Jumping'.

⁵⁹ Derek Walcott, 'What the Twilight Says' in *What the Twilight Says: Essays: Derek Walcott* (New York and London: Faber and Faber, 1998), p. 24.

⁶⁰ A Correspondent, 'Barbados Crop-Over Festival, 1975', *Bulletin of East Caribbean Affairs* 1:5 July (1975), 6-7 (p. 6).

TABLE:5.5 CALENDAR OF CROP OVER EVENTS: 1976⁶¹

29 May:	<i>Ceremonial Cutting of Last Canes; Queen of the Crop Finals</i>
30 May:	<i>Thanksgiving Service</i> <i>Donkey Cart Parade</i>
31 May:	1 st Concert; Dinner & Dance at Sea on Jolly Roger (again on 7, 14, 21 June)
1 June:	1 st Courtyard Concert—Museum (again on 8, 15 & 22 June) Talent Show—Trents Community Centre: St. James.
2 June:	1 st Barge Show (again on 9, 13, & 23 June)
3 June:	Musical Evening (again 10 and 17 June)
4 June:	Fancy Dress Ball—Jaycettes
5 June	1 st Arts & Crafts Demonstrations and Displays (again on 12, 19 & 26 June) Crop Over Fair : Spencers Plantation
6 June:	Crop Over Festival: Garrison All Day Kiddies Festival: Marine House
8 June:	Talent Show—Rockfield Community Centre: St. Lucy.
11 June:	A Moonlight Night at Miss Maxwell's Atlantis
12 June:	Crop over Fair: Colleton Plantation <i>Bajan Spectacular: Farley Hill</i>
13 June:	<u>Regatta & Aquatic Sports</u> 'Sugar and Its People': Photographic Competition
15 June:	Talent Show—Gall Hill Community Centre: St. John.
18 June:	Square Dance Competition; <u>Buccanner Costume Ball.</u>
19 June:	1 st International Night Crop Over Fair: Springhall Plantation.
20 June:	2 nd International Night <u>German Shepherd Championships; Donkey, Goat and Scurry Racing</u>
21 June:	3 rd International Night
22 June:	Talent Show—Rockhall Community Centre: St. Thomas.
25 June:	Ole Mas Competition: p.m.
26 June:	<u>Gymkhana & Show Jumping; Air Display: Seawell.</u> Aero Club Dance: Seawell.
27 June:	<u>Gymkhana & Show Jumping: All Day; Burning of Mr. Harding</u>

⁶¹ This programme of events can be found in John Wickham, 'Questions For Crop Over To Answer', *The Bajan and South Caribbean*, April (1976) 7-10, (pp. 9-10).

Moreover, note that the latter formed the events for the culmination of the festival. These events were organised for the elite, who owned the yachts and the horses and would have participated in equestrian sports. It is my argument that this was their culture, which was staged to serve as an example of what was deemed to be the appropriate representation of Barbadian culture.

On the other hand, note the events that were clearly earmarked for the masses. Plantation fairs were a key feature of the festival. As the table indicates, in 1976 there were plantation fairs on the 5, 12 and 19 June. As Trevor Marshall remarked, for these fairs the organisers brought back quaint plantation customs, such as the greasy pole and the greased pig, 'in an effort to recapture some of the spirit of the original crop-over festival'.⁶² It was also in the effort to regain control of the culture by fixing it into the old sterile plantation mould that they remembered, in which the emphasis was on activity, not creativity.

A key feature of these early years, not indicated by the table, was the events based in and around the hotels. Edward Stoute provided a description of a 1976 event that was held at Fairholme Hotel. There was a parade led by a Majorette and a Major Domo. An effigy of Mr. Harding as well as a decorated tray to represent the last canes was on display. There was also dancing from members of the Libra Club as well as a band which played 'strictly old Barbadian music of the last century'. The parade was followed by cars and people lined the streets, though, Stoute asserts, no prior notice had been given. The event had been organised by the manager of the hotel, Mr. Hugh Grannum. He had obtained police permission for the parade and had organised the route.⁶³

⁶² Trevor Marshall, 'Crop-Over - Harvest Season of Bajan Culture', *The Bajan*, June (1979), pp.39-40 (p. 39).

⁶³ Edward Stoute, 'Give Crop Over full support', *The Advocate Magazine*, 31 October 1976, p. 15.

This early example, when coupled with the programme of events, illustrates several key points about this stage of the festival. In many cases, the events for the festival were organised on an individual basis, with the elite, as the patrons, in charge. There was no official or government agency involved. Thus, Mr. Grannum staged a spectacle using the basic forms of the festival. Note the absence of any of the performance groups who were part of the creative energy at the time. This is important because it indicates that in the midst of a burgeoning creative space, this early form of the festival *deliberately* ignored the African-Caribbean cultural manifestations that were erupting out all around it.

It is my contention that what the elite was attempting was a strengthening of the colonial discourse in the post-colonial era. Their invented tradition could not accommodate the newly developing forms of the Independence era. What they aimed to do was to contain the cultural explosion, and dictate its growth.

This resulted in the general opinion that the festival lacked depth and a sense of authenticity. For example, it was noted that when African-Creole traditions were used at an event, they were added to the festival more for their decorative nature than for their content. Trevor Marshall thus captured a central argument at the time when he noted that in hosting the festival, the Board of Tourism had 'hit on a cultural and financial gold mine, but its perspective was limited, and the focus narrow'.⁶⁴

It is my argument that several factors intervened to alter this form of the official feast that the festival found itself trapped in. There was a public outcry in some quarters of Barbadian society, as well as the intervention of the government in the creation of a

⁶⁴ See Marshall, 'Crop-Over Harvest', p. 39. For the arguments about the misuse of the traditions see a 'Young Bajan' as quoted in 'Barbados Crop Over Festival, 1975', p. 7.

cultural agency that became responsible for the festival. Moreover, the very traditions that had been deliberately omitted were called upon, not just to decorate, but to inject energy into the festival. With these on board, the festival gained other components to its identity that could fight the prevailing colonial discourse.

(b) Kadooment and the Consolidation of Crop Over

Bakhtin pronounced the mask to be ‘the most complex theme of folk culture’. For him it was a ‘playful element of life, based on interrelation of reality and image’.⁶⁵ In one of the earliest studies on the Trinidadian carnival, Errol Hill articulated what Bakhtin may have intended when he referred to the ‘interrelation of reality and image’. Note the following observation:

As the ‘glorious morning’ approaches, the true masker becomes a changed person. For weeks he has been getting into his part. No seasoned actor ever worked harder on a role. He has visualized his character a hundred times over. He has watched its outward form take shape slowly under skilful hands. All that remains for his complete metamorphosis is to enter his costume and step into the street. For two days he will be the living embodiment of his most fancied imagination.⁶⁶

What the mask did for this reveller was allow him to slide between his lived reality and his imagination. Through the mask and through the street masquerade, the reveller experienced what Bakhtin called the ‘temporary liberation from the prevailing truth’.⁶⁷ The mask was an essential element in realising the potential of the carnival.

⁶⁵ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, pp. 39-40.

⁶⁶ Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, p. 84.

⁶⁷ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 9.

In 1978, the newly appointed Cultural Division, charged with the responsibility of organising the festival, saw it fit to introduce a new element.⁶⁸ They brought in the masquerade. Calling it *Kadooment*, the Barbadian word meaning confusion and merriment, they reserved the last day of the festival for this experiment. The results were overwhelming. With 30 masquerade bands, what *Kadooment* did was to produce, as Marshall put it:

a scene of Bajan masqueraders in their hundreds parading the streets, dancing, singing, and miming their characters to the accompaniment of music provided by steel bands and pop music. *Kadooment* 1978 was a turning point in the growth of this festival as a national event, and a sign post to the future development of Crop Over.⁶⁹

It is my argument that with the introduction of *Kadooment*, that Bakhtinian transformation of the festival, through the mask, had begun.

What must be emphasised is the genuine surprise experienced by all at the response to this masquerade event. Indeed, anything involving gatherings on the street received overwhelming response. In that same year, the organisers staged one of the events in the streets of Bridgetown. To everyone's surprise some ten thousand people turned up to support it. Kamau Brathwaite captures the general feeling at time: '[I]t was a national explosion (people didn't believe it was possible to have 10 000 people in the streets)'.⁷⁰

What seems to have turned up from nowhere was the Barbadian example of the street element of carnival, soon to be strengthened in the ensuing years. The other street activities, such as the weekend gatherings at Baxter's Road, where music bands

⁶⁸ The Cultural Division was created in 1978 and was attached to the Ministry of Education. The Minister was Louis Tull. Chief among its concerns was the organising of the Crop Over Festival.

⁶⁹ Marshall, 'Crop-Over Harvest', p. 9.

⁷⁰ Brathwaite, *Bajan Cultural Report and Plan* (Barbados: UNESCO/Ministry of Education and Culture, 1979), p.11.

performed, or there was a disc jockey, drew even more crowds and became one of the more popular events. Indeed the element of crowds, one that was not normally associated with Barbadians except for the watching of a cricket match, became a regular feature at the Crop Over Festival.

However, it was in the *Kadooment* celebrations that the occupation of the street reached its zenith. In 1979, the year following its introduction, *Kadooment Day* was proclaimed a national holiday. Costumed revellers paraded in front of spectators at the National Stadium and then jumped along the parade route in the street. This time the scene was indeed one of confusion, as the following report indicates:

Kadooment was one mass of confusion from beginning to end, with long waits by the masqueraders, and crowd bottle-necks along the route, which was too long, and not well controlled by the authorities. At the Stadium the crowd, variously estimated at 12, 15, 20 000 even, spilled over from the stands and on to the parade track, jostling masqueraders, obstructing the view of the spectators in the stands. The route-judging was made meaningless by the crush of spectators, and the onset of darkness. Once again, 'Mr. Harding' was burnt to the accompaniment of rowdiness by, (mercifully) a few.⁷¹

Confusion or not, *Kadooment* was nevertheless judged a success and the organisers set about in ensuing years mapping various routes in the effort to address the problem of congestion. Very quickly, a tradition was built in which the names of Masquerade designers became easily recognised. In the 1980s, Winston Jordan, Gwyneth Squires, Marcia Chandler and Robert Weekes were the top designers who won awards for the King and Queen of the band and Band of the Year, for example.⁷² They, and other Band

⁷¹ Marshall, 'An Evaluation of Crop Over', *The Bajan*, (August) 1979, 14-16 (p. 16).

⁷² Winston Jordan had entered the first Kadooment competition in 1978 with a band called 'To Jenkins and Back'. He proved to be the most consistent of bandleaders, winning Band of the Year in 1983 and 1984. Gwyneth Squires entered her first Kadooment band in 1980 and won Band of the year titles in 1985-1987. Marcia Chandler brought bands out from 1979 and won the King of the Band title. Her band was called 'Sugar We Thing'. She went on to win King and Queen of the Band, as well as Band of the Year in 1982. Robert Weekes entered the Kadooment competition in 1984 with a small band called 'Obeah Ritual'. His Queen, called 'Madame Cadaver', won Queen of the Band in that year. He went on to win Queen of the Band in 1985 and 1986. See *The Official Crop Over Festival Magazine: 9 July-1 August: 1988* (Barbados:

leaders, built their group of masqueraders who would always 'play mas' with them each year. The numbers of revellers grew each year for both the children's masquerade, which was called *Kiddies Kadooment* and the adult masquerade which was called *Grand Kadooment*.

And in the Bakhtinian belief that 'carnival does not know footlights', what *Kadooment* became was a collective expression in which those who came to watch the masquerade participated in the entire event. In stating that carnival was not meant for the footlights, what Bakhtin emphasised was that an essential part of carnival was the spectacle:

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because the very idea embraces all the people. It has a universal spirit.⁷³

What the *Kadooment Day* masquerade allowed Barbadians to do was to create the spectacle. Like the 1833 scene described in *Transatlantic Sketches* and quoted earlier, the thousands of Barbadians who lined the street and watched the masquerade were themselves creating the atmosphere for the festival. In this way, *Kadooment* and the Crop Over festival became part of the collective expression of the people.

The other important Crop Over event connected to *Kadooment* that evolved in the 1980s, was the advent of the calypso competition. As Hill had noted years earlier, 'carnival is inconceivable without music.'⁷⁴ The early version of the Crop Over festival had played down the role of the calypso music form. As Table 5.5 demonstrated, there were no Calypso competitions slated in the official programme.

National Cultural Foundation and the Board of Tourism, 1988), pp. 34-41. These four designers dominated the Kadooment Band arena in the 1980s and continued to hold sway in the 1990s.

⁷³ Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, p. 7.

⁷⁴ Hill, *The Trinidad Carnival*, p. 43.

Yet there had been a Barbadian tradition of calypso which the early organisers of the festival chose to ignore. Based on the African-Creole tradition of the folk song, the Barbadian calypso artform slowly evolved in the twentieth century. By the 1940s, Calypsonians such as the Mighty Charmer had emerged, soon to be followed by others in the 1950s and 1960s, such as DaCosta Allamby, Lord Radio, Mighty Dragon, and Sir Don.⁷⁵ Events, such as calypso tents, in which the singers showcased their music and competed for prizes, were regularly held in the 1970s. Indeed, in the early stages of the Crop Over festival, Yoruba hosted a calypso tent, though the official organisers of the festival never acknowledged its existence.

With the advent of Kadooment and the generally changed approach to organising the festival, the Barbadian Calypso art form came into its own. Indeed, the Crop Over festival became 'a festival marked by the proliferation of calypsoes'.⁷⁶ Utilising many of the rhythms of the tuk band as well as other music forms, a distinctly Barbadian calypso art form eventually emerged. Two competitions were created for the festival to showcase this music. One was called *Pic o' de Crop*, in which the winner of the two best calypsoes would be proclaimed Calypso Monarch. The other one was called *Tune of the Crop*. This title was awarded to the calypsonian or band whose tune was the most popular to be played on the road during *Kadooment*.

Perhaps the greatest exponent of the Barbadian calypso in the 1980s was the Mighty Gabby. He penned calypsoes that defiantly rejected many of the measures by the ruling power. For this, his music was banned from being played on the airwaves. For example, in 1985 he sang 'Boots', a commentary about the increasing role of the military in Barbados and the Caribbean. The opening verse and chorus of 'Boots' are as follows:

⁷⁵ Marshall, 'Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados', (unpublished seminar paper, Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1985-86), pp. 25-30

⁷⁶ Curwen Best, *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture* (New York: AC Inc., 1995), p. 61.

Is it necessary to have so many soldiers in this small country
 Nooo Nooo Nooo Nooo
 Is it necessary to shine soldier boots with taxpayers money
 Nooo Nooo Nooo Nooo
 Well don't tell me, tell Tommy he put them in St. Lucy
 Unemployment high an' de treasury low so he
 buying boots to cover soldier toe

I see them
 (chorus)

Boots, boots, boots and more boots
 On de feet o' young trigger happy recruits
 (I see them)
 Boots boots boots an' mo' boots,
 Marching threatening army troop
 Tell Tom I say that would'nt do he go
 To see 'bout me and you
 An' most of all our lil' children
 An' stop them soldiers from marching
 Left right left right to de government
 Boots de government boots⁷⁷

The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, the state television and radio station, banned 'Boots'. The Chairman, Ronnie Hughes, issued a statement saying: 'the lyrics denigrate the Defence Force and may well harm relationships with St. Vincent and are in other words factually incorrect.'⁷⁸ It can be noted that 'Boots' went on to become a popular calypso, not only in Barbados, but also in the Caribbean. What Gabby had captured through the calypso 'Boots' was the general feeling of unease in the Caribbean regarding the growth of standing armies in the region.

Perhaps the most intriguing impact of the 1980s version of the Crop Over festival came with the rapid acceptance of a new cultural institution called the National Cultural

⁷⁷ Best, *Barbadian Popular Music*, p. 71. The Prime Minister at the time was Tom Adams, thus the references to 'Tom' and 'Tommy'.

⁷⁸ 'C.B.C. Bans "Boots"', *The Nation*, 16 June 1985, p. 1.

Foundation, or the NCF. Created by an Act of Parliament in 1983, the NCF was charged with the responsibility of stimulating and facilitating the development of culture. It was specifically charged with the task of organising festivals.⁷⁹ In its first annual report, it demonstrated how in a short space of time, it had been involved in encouraging the development of cultural forms both at the community and national levels. It had facilitated a number of workshops and other activities, such as Stiltwalking, as part of its dance program.⁸⁰

However, it can be noted that regardless of the expanse of its activities, to the general public, the NCF became closely associated with the Crop Over festival. The festival and the NCF became a twin reality.⁸¹ In 1984, the NCF had organised seventy-three events at the community level and eight major events at the national level.⁸² What this organisation became was a central body that organised the festival. In the ensuing years, the NCF developed a love-hate relationship with the Barbadian public. It might find itself praised by the public one year for the staging of a marvellous *Cohobblopot*, the cultural extravaganza that happened on the last weekend of the festival. The next year, it would be soundly attacked for its mishandling of the same event. With an appointed Director of Culture and Cultural Officers, it gave a certain legitimacy to the cultural enterprise on the whole, and the festival in particular.

With the introduction of *Kadooment*, along with the growth of the Calypso artform, and the establishment of the NCF, the Crop Over festival became more of a people's festival. The African-Creole traditions formed an integral part of the festival,

⁷⁹ *The National Cultural Foundation Act 1983-8*, Supplement to Official Gazette, 17 March 1983. For the list of functions of the Foundation, see 3 (1) (a)-(d).

⁸⁰ See the *National Cultural Foundation 1984 Annual Report* (Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1985), p.9.

⁸¹ See, for example, the argument of Ronnie Yearwood, in which he states the following: 'Some people even have the preposterous idea that we only have a culture at Crop Over time, that it is something found at the National Cultural Foundation (NCF). Crop-Over is only one way in which Barbadian society expresses its culture.' Ronnie Yearwood, 'Culture more than "wukkin up"', *Daily Nation Extra*, 15 April 1998, p. 4.

⁸² Annual report, p. 15.

spurring on the growth and development of other cultural forms. For example, it became necessary to have the Landship perform at the cultural events. Tuk band was also required, and such characters as the Stiltwalkers, and the Shaggy Bear, a folk character whose costume is made up of brightly coloured rags, were a common sight. Thus, the various workshops run by the NCF served to increase the number of persons who could play the tuk band music or who could perform on stilts.

In this way, the festival was redefining what was seen as Barbadian or Bajan culture. What was evolving was an insistence that the African-Creole traditions be recognised as an integral part of that culture.

The following table, Table: 5.6, gives a list of the events for Crop Over 1989. In the ensuing years since 1976, the festival became more focussed, with a greater emphasis on mass participation.

TABLE: 5.6 CALENDAR OF CROP OVER EVENTS: 1989⁸³

15 July:	Ceremonial Delivery of the Last Canes
16 July:	Crop Over Promenade
19 July:	Opening of Best of Barbadian Art Exhibition
21 July:	Farley Hill Concert
22 July:	Bajan Culture Village
23 July:	Decorated Cart Parade Pang-A-Lang
24 July:	Opening of Best of Barbadian Fine Craft Exhibition
28 July:	Pic-O-De-Crop Semi-Finals
29 July:	Junior Kadooment
30 July:	Plantation Feast Junior Calypso Monarch
4 Aug:	Pic-O-De-Crop Finals
5 Aug:	Bridgetown Market
6 Aug:	Cohoblopot King & Queen of Band Competition
7 Aug:	Grand Kadooment

Note the ritual of beginning the festival with the delivery of the last canes. By this time the tradition had evolved which saw the Spiritual Baptists, a Barbadian group which practises an African-Barbadian form of worship, leading the proceedings in song, drumming and chanting. The donkey cart parade of the early years had evolved to become the *Decorated Cart Parade*, in which all modes of transportation could be decorated and entered for judging. Note also the scheduling of the calypso competitions for both the children, (*Junior Calypso Monarch*), and the adults. Note as well that the festival culminates with *Grand Kadooment*. Though not specifically stated, the festival ends with the burning of Mr. Harding.

Thus by the 1990s, the key elements of the Crop Over festival had been set. Barbadian calypso became as popular in the other Caribbean territories as it was in Barbados. Indeed, one band, Krosfyah, can also now cite as one of its accomplishments,

⁸³ See *Crop Over '89 Festival Handbook* (Barbados: Lighthouse, 1989), pp. 2-3.

the provision of five tunes for the sound track of a 1998 Merchant-Ivory film called *Side Streets*. Its cultural colleagues, Square One, are also in demand. The 1999 schedule of their tour dates between April and November included appearances in Barbados, and the Caribbean, as well as New York, Miami, Toronto and London.⁸⁴ Their music has also won them several awards.

With the establishment of *Kadooment* and the advent of the *Calypso*, the 1990s saw the festival grow into its own. Little change was made to the program. During this period, Barbados, with the establishment of the Crop Over festival, could announce its membership in the Caribbean carnival paradigm. It is my argument that the festival engendered a cultural confidence which fed into the national consciousness, and assisted in the evolution of a more Caribbean oriented Barbadian.

Summary

In 1998, Barbados celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Crop Over festival. However, in the true nature of the carnivalesque, it was the twenty-fourth year. This premature celebration possibly had something to do with the impending elections, as the ruling political party wanted to make an impression on the populace and make them see the national festival as one of their achievements. Consequently, with elections due in 1999, the twenty-five years had to be jacked up into the twenty-fourth anniversary.

What this event demonstrates for me is further evidence of the continuing struggle

⁸⁴ For the data on their schedule and the awards they have accumulated, see their website at <http://www.square1-music.com>

within the Crop Over paradigm. By no means as strong as in those early years, that old official feast discourse is still around. In this instance, what mattered was that the nation recognise the national festival, not as part of the national collective, but as a part of the agenda of the ruling party.

Another example arose as recently as August 1999. Peter Morgan, who was the Tourism Minister when the festival began, called for it to be brought back to its original intention. He laments as follows:

Though Crop-Over has evolved into one massive party enjoyed by tens of thousands of Bajans, and has encouraged creativity and provided opportunity for artists of all kinds, I wonder to what extent it is still serving its original purpose [...] In fact, one gets the impression that the vast majority of people who come to the island to enjoy Crop – Over are visiting friends and relatives.⁸⁵

He argued that in 1974 when Crop Over began, there was no competition from other Caribbean islands for that slot in the calendar. Now there was. He noted that competition had also increased from America and Europe for activities during this time period. For him then the challenge to the Tourist Board was to find something new to attract visitors. As he put it: ‘Sun, sand and sea don’t suffice any more and carnivals are becoming old hat. I wish them success.’⁸⁶

What both of these examples are demonstrating is a reluctance to acknowledge the festival as part of the collective consciousness of the nation. In the first case, the festival is seen as a source of votes, in the second as a source of foreign exchange. In both cases, the true potential of the festival will not be realised if the pursuance of these agendas becomes its main aim.

⁸⁵ Morgan, ‘Another PM’.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

When it is noted that the festival is indeed twenty-five years old, it becomes clear why it must be allowed to reach its true potential. As a twenty-five-year-old entity, the festival has been the primary example of Barbadian culture to an entire generation. This generation has grown up not knowing anything but Crop Over, and not knowing Barbados without the festival. Crop Over thus forms an integral part of their Barbadian identity. It is to this group that the organisers need to look for new ideas and to encourage its growth. It is also for this group and those to follow that *the festival must* continue to serve its role of engendering a national consciousness.

Concluding Contradictions:

A Memorandum to the Ministers of Culture and Tourism

In a 1999 interview about how Barbados had changed over the years that he had been visiting the island, British film director and Style columnist, Michael Winner, stated the following:

It used to be a Caribbean island in the romantic sense of the word [...] You got out at the airport and drove through cane fields, past sugar mills with local Barbadians in little huts sitting on their porches. Now you arrive and drive down a four-lane highway with garages at the side and shopping developments everywhere. It's beginning to look like East Grinstead.¹

Eerily echoing the strains of the fabled tale of El Dorado, Winner went on to comment that a significant change was that the 'very nice old-moneyed people' had been replaced by the 'new-money types, who are a little more robust'. Consequently, the inevitable had occurred: '[t]he tranquillity of the place has taken a severe knocking. But I've seen this happen all over the world, including the south of France.' With this loss in tranquillity, Barbados, presumably like the South of France, was no longer 'Paradise', as hinted at in the title of the article.

Winner's observations serve to remind us of some of the arguments presented in this thesis. This thesis has argued that key to understanding the dynamics that create Barbadian cultural and structured space is the battle between the culture of the surface, and the culture of the submerged mother. The Winner argument is the discourse of the surface culture, that is the 'Little England' discourse, or the prevailing colonial discourse in the post-colonial

¹ 'Trouble in paradise', *The Sunday Times*, 28 November 1999, pp. 2-3.

period. On the one hand, here is Barbados in 1999, struggling, as the Nelson exercise indicates, to create spaces for the evolution of new identities suited to its independent state. On the other hand, here is the tourist discourse intent on preserving the old order. By doing so, it wants to restrict and re-colonise the nation space, and thus frustrate the fledging attempts to evolve new identities.

And yet the Barbados that Winner desires, the extended countryside with the vista of sugar mills and huts with little porches, is the Barbados that Barbadians, in the post-colonial period, have been working assiduously to change. Their concept of home demands the construction of four-lane highways, and shopping developments, and improved living and working conditions. What the tourism claim does is to challenge the concept of home. For example, Winner's idea of the unique Barbadian experience, the sugar mill, is the very thing that Edward Kamau Brathwaite drew upon to explore the history of pain for the Barbadian labour force. The 'iron tooth'd ratchets' of the mill had 'eaten' Brathwaite's labourer 'lame'.² For Winner, the sugar mill represents all that is quaint; for Brathwaite it represents collective agony.

This is how 'Little England' operates as the colonial discourse in the post-colonial space. With regards to questions of home, 'Little England' reclaims that cultural and ideological space. In view of the current rush by wealthy would-be vacationers to acquire land in Barbados, it also fuels the drive to reclaim real space. Barbadian real estate agent, Paul Altman, says that in the industry, this rush is known as the 'Concorde effect':

² Edward Kamau Brathwaite, 'Milkweed', *Mother Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 [1977]), p. 52. See the full verse in Chapter One, p. 43.

The explosion started when the first Concorde arrived in Barbados back in 1987. Today we are providing houses for people who never ask the question “Will I get my money back?” There is nothing they will not spend to have the most beautiful spectacular home here on this island. It’s the place of escape for the filthy rich.³

In this way, the colonial discourse continues to challenge the claim of Barbados as home by the majority of Barbadians who have descended from the enslaved population. While these Barbadians may think of the island as theirs, what the colonial narrative of ‘H’istory shows is that it has belonged to everyone else but them: the British and European settlers, the planters, and the white and coloured elite. Subsequently, as the evolution of the cultural entity known as the Landship has demonstrated, this working class majority has always had to find ways of *manoeuvring* within the space relegated to them, of *creating* their own spaces of home.

This is where the evolving histories, or the revised narratives of Barbados, become vital to the decolonisation process. Rituals, such as the Crop Over festival, indicate ways in which the post-colonial space can be manoeuvred to encourage the emergence of new identities. In this way, the project of decolonisation begins to realise its true potential. Such was the vision held by Frantz Fanon for the national project, as explained here by Neil Lazarus:

for Fanon, the national project also has the capacity to become the vehicle — the means of articulation — of a social(*ist*) demand which extends beyond decolonization in a merely technical sense, and which calls for a fundamental transformation rather than a mere restructuring of the prevailing social order.⁴

³ ‘Trouble in Paradise’, p. 2.

⁴ Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 79. See also Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, tr. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1990 [1961]).

At present, the process of decolonisation in Barbados has been hindered by the limited aspirations of some members of the Barbadian black and coloured elite. What the debates surrounding the Nelson statue indicate is an evolving climate of change. Such cultural elements as the Crop Over festival also assist in engendering this change.

Yet, as this thesis has illustrated, Crop Over has found itself once again in conflict with tourism. Both Crop Over and Tourism are at a stage where the surfaces of cultural space are being claimed and where traditional representations of the Barbadian are being challenged. Crop Over presents revised cultural images of the Barbadian that clash with the 'Little England' tourism ones. In this clash of usage over the cultural space, the observations of Nigel Thrift are instructive:

Each life path is, effectively, *an allocation of time* between different locales. In any particular organisation of production, certain of these locales would be *dominant*; that is time *must* be allocated to them'.⁵

Thrift goes on to say that during capitalism, 'the allocation of time to "leisure" (a specifically capitalist term) is determined, in the first instance, by hours of work'. He further notes that leisure may include what he calls 'counter institutions'.⁶

Following Thrift's observations, it is my argument that the crucial locales of Landship and Crop Over, for example, have been allocated by the Barbadians themselves for the *re-working* and *re-creating* of Barbadian identities which will serve the post-colonial time. Thus, these cultural entities must be safe guarded.

⁵ Nigel Thrift, *Spatial Formations* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 81.

⁶ Thrift, p. 83.

It is therefore my contention that the present cultural battles, especially seen in the tensions over the Crop Over festival, needs official intervention. Cultural policy needs to be formulated which not only engenders the growth of the festival, but also provides and safeguards its cultural space. Now that the festival has been released from the bind of the official feast, the very traditions that had fuelled its growth on the plantations in the slave and post-slavery periods continue to do so in the post-colonial period. These African-Creole traditions provide the cultural irrigation for the ritual. This, to a very large extent, explains its incredible success. In a short space of time it has become a prime conduit for engendering the cultural confidence necessary for the process of decolonisation. Seeing that new readings of cultural identity will always be confronted by the old colonial discourse, such rituals as Crop Over must not be restricted in any way.

Finally, what this thesis has shown is the validity of the theory of the submerged mother. In the case of the Landship, the African-Creole traditions that were under attack from the state were hidden within the naval cloak of the colonisers. It was from this working class group that performance traditions were offered to the cultural practitioners of the post-colonial period. Indeed, what events like the Emancipation Day celebrations, the recent wrestling with colonial residues such as the Nelson statue, and the Crop Over festival signal are emerging post-colonial spaces within the Barbadian cultural landscape. In these, new Barbadian cultural identities are being negotiated and formed. What the submerged culture continues to do is culturally irrigate the surface culture, making possible the provision of those spaces.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(b) England*Manuscripts located at the Public Record Office (PRO)*

- Royal Navy and Merchant Seamen Records: 1850–1880 (BT 98, 99)
- Minutes of Meeting of Barbados House of Assembly 11 Dec. 1888 (CO/31/77)
- Petition concerning difficulties of finding employment for Barbadian seamen, 1937. (CO/28/317/7)

2. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS(a) Barbados

- Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Bajan Culture Report & Plan* (Barbados: UNESCO/Ministry of Education and Culture, March 1979)
- The National Cultural Foundation Act 1983-8, Supplement to *Official Gazette*, 17 March, 1983.
- *The National Cultural Foundation 1984 Annual Report* (Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1985)
- *The Official Crop Over Festival Magazine* 9 July – 1 August: 1988 (Barbados National Cultural Foundation and the Board of Tourism, 1988)
- 'Tourist arrivals – July 1997' (Barbados: Government Statistical Department, 1997)

(b) England*Colonial Government Publications located at the Public Record Office (PRO)*

- Official Gazette, Barbados : 1884 – 1915 (CO/32/7 – CO/32/53)
- F. and D. Wells, *Friendly Societies in the West Indies: Report on a Survey and a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the West Indian Governors dated 15th May, 1952* (London: Colonial Office, 1953)

3. INTERVIEWS

Personal interviews conducted in Barbados: 1997-1998

- Captain Vernon Watson, *The Barbados Landship*, 5 June 1997.
- Captain Leon Perch, *Iron Duke*, 6 June 1997.
- Rt. Rev. Rufus Brome, Anglican Bishop of Barbados, 12 June 1997.
- Ian Estwick, ex-Chairman of the Board of the National Cultural Foundation, 19 June 1997.
- Valet Ryan Clarke, *The Barbados Landship*, 26 June 1997.
- M. P. Boucher, *Iron Duke*, 14 May 1998.
- Matron Inez Griffith, *Director*, 14 May 1998.
- Lieutenant Lloyd Adams, *Director*, 14 May 1998.
- Band Major Daniel Hope, *Cornwall*, 19 May 1998.
- Dr. Pedro Welch, Lecturer in History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 22 May 1998.
- Commander 'Pa' Lorde, *Cornwall*, 23 May 1998.

Personal interview conducted in England: 1998

- Peter Simmons, High Commissioner of Barbados to the United Kingdom, 22 November 1998.

4. PERIODICALS

Barbadian Periodicals located in the British Newspaper Library, Colindale, England: 1837-1966

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • <i>Barbados Advocate</i> | (21 Jan. 1926 – 21 May 1940) |
| • <i>Barbados Globe and Colonial Advocate</i> | (4 Sep't 1837– 9 Sep't 1840) |
| • <i>Barbados Herald</i> | (3 Apr 1879 – 27 Apr 1883) |
| | (1 June 1885 – 25 July 1896) |
| • <i>Barbados Mercury and Bridgetown Gazette</i> | (15 Jan. 1839 – 7 April 1840) |
| • <i>Barbados Observer</i> | (4 Jan. 1958 – 28 Nov. 1964) |
| • <i>The Advocate</i> | (1 Sep't 1966 – 1 June 1968) |
| • <i>The Barbadian</i> | (6 Feb. 1839- 8 April 1840) |
| • <i>The Barbados Agricultural Reporter</i> | (2 Dec. 1870- 28 Dec. 1888) |
| • <i>The Times</i> | (3 Nov. 1875 – 7 May 1879) |
| | (16 Oct 1880 – 29 Dec 1888) |

5. VIDEO

- *Beautiful Barbados*, produced by Ronnie Carrington and Jimmy Walker (Barbados: Best of Barbados Ltd., 1997)

6. MUSIC

- David M. Rudder, 'Calypso', *David Rudder: The Gilded Collection: 1986-1989*, CD, 1993.

7. AUDIO

- Stuart Hall, 'Thinking Diasporically: Home Thoughts From Abroad', Distinguished Lecture Series, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, 18 November 1998.

II BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- Abrahams, John and John F. Szwed, ed., *After Africa. Extracts from British Travels Accounts and Journals of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries concerning the Slaves, their Manners, and Customs in the British West Indies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983)
- Adonijah, 'Who is this Lord Nelson?', *Weekend Nation*, 16 April 1999, p. 25.
- 'B' dos Black "Gentilhommes" wish to forget Africa, Slavery, Emancipation', *Caribbean Contact*, December 1984, p. 15.
- Alexander, James Edward, *Transatlantic Sketches, comprising visits to the most interesting scenes in North and South America and the West Indies, with notes on Negro slavery and Canadian emigration*, 2 vols (London: 1833)
- Alleyne, Mervyn, *Roots of Jamaican Culture* (London: New Beacon, 1988)
- Alleyne, Warren, *Historic Bridgetown* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1978)
- Alleyne Warren and Henry Fraser, *The Barbados-Carolina Connection* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1988).
- Allsopp, Richard, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, with a French and Spanish translation ed. by Jeannette Allsopp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso: London and New York, 1991 [1983])
- Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 [1996])
- Arthur, Kevyn, 'Toujours Nelson', *Sunday Advocate*, 25 October 1998, p. 3.
- Bailey, Martin, 'Nelson "snapshot" Revealed', *The Observer*, 8 September 1991, p. 64.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, tr. by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1968)
- Barclay, Alexander, *A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies or an examination of Mr. Stephen's slavery of the British West Indian Colonies, containing more particularly an account of the actual condition of the negroes in Jamaica: with observation on the decrease of the slaves since the abolition of the slave trade, and the probable effects of legislative emancipation; also structures on the Edinburgh review, and the pamphlets of Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bickell* (London: 1826)

Barthes, Roland, *The Rustle of Language*, tr. by Richard Howard (London: Blackwell, 1986)

——— *Mythologies*, tr. from the French by Annette Lavers (St. Albans: Paladin, 1976 [1957])

Barton, G. T., *The Prehistory of Barbados* (Nova Scotia: The Layne Company, 1979 [1953]).

Bayley, F. W. N., *Four Years Residence in the West Indies* (London: 1830)

Bayley, Lawson, 'Shocking State of Affairs', *The Sunday Advocate News*, 9 February 1975, p. 4.

Beckles, Hilary McD., *The Development of West Indies Cricket Vol: 1 The Age of Nationalism* (Jamaica and London: The Press University of the West Indies and Pluto Press: 1998)

——— *An Area of Conquest: Popular Democracy and West Indies Cricket Supremacy* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1994)

——— 'Kalinago (Carib) resistance to European Colonisation', in Alan Cobley, ed., *Crossroads of Empire: The Europe-Caribbean Connection 1492-1992* (Barbados: The Department of History and the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1994), pp. 23-37.

——— *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

——— *Natural Rebels A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (London: Zed Books Ltd. and New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989)

——— *Afro-Caribbean Women and Resistance to Slavery in Barbados* (London: Karnak House, 1988)

——— 'Black People in the Colonial Historiography of Barbados', in Woodville Marshall, ed., *Emancipation II: Aspects of Post-Slavery in Barbados* (Bridgetown: National Cultural Foundation and the Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1987), pp. 131-143.

Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart, ed., *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture* (London and Kingston: Manchester University Press and Ian Randle, 1995)

Beckwith, Martha, *Black Folkways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1929)

Bell, J. Bowyer, *The Secret Army: The IRA 1916 – 1979* (Ireland: Poolbeg Press, 1990 [1970])

- Benítez-Rojo, Antonio, 'Three Words towards Creolisation' in Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnes Sourieau, ed., *Caribbean Creolisation: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature and Identity* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press and Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1998), pp. 53-61.
- *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd edn, tr. by James E. Maraniss (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996 [1992])
- Bennett, J. Harry, *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados 1710- 1838* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958)
- Bernard, George, *Wayside Sketches: Pen Pictures of Barbadian Life* (Barbados: 1934)
- 'Monster Landship Parade', *The Advocate News*, 12 November 1931, p. 5.
- Best, Curwen, *Barbadian Popular Music and the Politics of Caribbean Culture* (New York: AC Inc., 1995)
- Bhabha, Homi K., *Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995 [1994])
- 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the *modern nation*' in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (Routledge: London and New York, 1994 [1990]), pp. 291-322.
- 'Introduction' in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha (Routledge: London and New York, 1994 [1990]), pp. 1-7.
- 'Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition' in *Black Skins White Masks*, London: Pluto Press, 1986 [1957]), pp. vii-xxv.
- Boomert, Arie, 'Notes on Barbados Prehistory', *JBMHS*, 38:1 (1987), 8-43
- Bouquet, Gilles, *La Dictionnaire Caraïbe –Francaise*, (France: Auxerre, 1655)
- Bowen, Charles Packer and E. G. Sinckler, *Royal Visits to Barbados written in Commemoration of the Jubilee of Her Most Excellent Majesty Queen Victoria* (Barbados: 1887)
- Bousquet Ben and Colin Douglas, *West Indian Women At War: British Racism in World War II* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991)
- Brassey, T. A., ed., *The Naval Annual, 1911* (William Clowes and Sons Ltd., 1911)

- Brathwaite, Edward Kamau, 'Foreword' in Rex Nettleford, *Dance Jamaica: Cultural Definition and Artistic Discovery: The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica 1962-1983* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1985), pp. 7-11.
- *The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. (London: New Beacon Books Ltd, 1984)
- *Mother Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 [1977])
- *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Jamaica: Savacou, 1985 [1974])
- *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)
- Braudel, Fernand, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II Vol 1*, tr. from the French by Siân Reynolds (London: Collins, 1972 [1966])
- Brome, Joe, 'The Landship! It Saved Many a Man', *The Sunday Advocate News*, 30 March 1975, p. 10.
- Brown, Stewart, ed., *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite*, (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1995)
- *The Art Of Derek Walcott* (Bridgend: Seren Books, 1991)
- Burton, Richard, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997)
- 'Cricket, Carnival and Street Culture in the Caribbean' in Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart, ed., *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995)
- Campbell, Peter, *Some Early Barbadian History* (Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth Limited, 1993)
- Carmichael, Trevor, ed., *Barbados Thirty Years of Independence* (Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1996)
- Carr, E. H., *What is History?* (London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1961])
- Cashmore, Ellis, *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, 4th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Chambers, Douglas, '“My own nation”: Igbo Exiles in the Diaspora', in David Eltis and David Richardson, ed., *Slavery and Abolition*, 18:1 (1997), 72-97.
- Chambers, R., ed., *The Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiques in Connection with the Calendar*, 2 vols (London and Edinburgh: 1888 [1864])
- Chandler, M. J., *A Guide to Records in Barbados* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965)

- Chandos, Dane, *Isles to Windward* (London: Michael Joseph, 1955)
- Chang, Victor, ed., *Three Caribbean Poets on their Work: E. Kamau Brathwaite, Mervyn Morris and Lorna Goodison* (Jamaica: The Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1993)
- Chapman, Matthew James, *Barbadoes, and other poems* (London: 1833)
- Chester, Greville John, *Transatlantic Sketches in the West Indies, South America, Canada and the United States* (London: 1869)
- Childs, Peter and Patrick Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Prentice Hall, 1997)
- Clarke, Austin Tom, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (Cuba: Casas De Las Américas, 1980)
- Cohen, Robin, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: UCL Press, 1997)
- *Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others* (London and New York: Longman, 1994)
- Coleridge, Henry Nelson, *Six Months Residence in the West Indies, in 1825* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970 [1826])
- Colley, Linda, *Britons Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Vintage, 1996 [1992])
- Collingwood, R. G., *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959 [1939])
- Collymore, Frank, A., 'This Land', *New World Quarterly* 3: 1 & 2 (1966-67), pp. 77-8.
- *Notes for a Glossary and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1955)
- Connor, Steven, *Theory and Cultural Value* (London: Blackwell, 1992)
- Cookey, Rev. Father C., 'The First Barbadian', *Timehri*, 2:1 (1912), 142-4.
- Cordle, Edward A., *Overheard: Poems Originally Published in the Weekly Recorder* (Barbados: C. F. Cole, 1903)
- Cowley, John, *Carnival Canboulay and Calypso: Traditions in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1998 [1996])
- Cruikshank, J. Graham, *Black Talk' being Notes on Negro Dialect in British Guiana with (inevitably) a Chapter on the Vernacular of Barbados* (Demerara: 1916)
- Curtin, Philip, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969)

- Dash, Michael, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998)
- ‘Marvellous Realism: The way out of Negritude’, in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffins and Helen Tiffin, ed., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 199-201.
- Davis, Robert, ‘Peaceful Origins: The Early Geological History of Barbados’, in Sassie Stears, ed., *Simply Barbados: An insight into the Elegant Lifestyle of the Island* (Barbados: Peter J. Sassman, 1995), pp 10-11.
- Dawes, Kwame, ‘Negotiating the Ship on the Head: Black British Fiction’, *Wasafari*, 29 (1999), 18-24.
- Day, Charles William, *Five Years Residence in the West Indies* (London: Colburn, 1852)
- Dickson, William, *Letters on Slavery* (London: 1789)
- *Mitigation Of Slavery* (London: 1814)
- Drayton, Kathleen, ‘Art, Culture and the National Heritage’, in Trevor Carmichael, ed., *Barbados: Thirty Years of Independence* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996), pp. 197-237.
- Drewett, Peter, ‘The Spring Head Petroglyph Cave: A Sample Excavation’, *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 50-58.
- Drewett, Peter, with contributions from Mary Hill Harris, ‘Excavations at the Pre-Historic Sites at Silver Sands, Little Welches and Heywoods, 1995: A Preliminary Report’, *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 59-68.
- Drewett, Peter, with contributions from Mary Hill and Quetta Kaye, ‘A Late Saladoid Site at Hillcrest, Bathsheba, Barbados, 1993: An Interim Report, *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 102-114.
- Drewett, Peter, with contributions from Elizabeth Wing, Mary Hill Harris, Caroline Cartwright, Robert G. Scaife, Sandy Rogers and David Rudling, *Prehistoric Barbados* (London and Barbados: Institute College London and Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1991)
- Dunn, Richard S., *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies 1624-1713* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973 [1972])
- Eagleton, Terry, *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso and NLB, 1981)
- [Easel, Theodore, *pseud.*] *Desultory Sketches and Tales of Barbados* (London: 1840)

- Eco, Umberto, 'The Frames of Comic Freedom', in Thomas A Sebeok ed., and assisted by Marcia E. Erickson, *Umberto Eco, V. V. Ivanov, Monica Rector Carnival!* (Berlin: Mouton: 1984)
- Edghill, J. Y., *About Barbados* (London: 1890)
- Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, tr. by Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 1990 [1961])
- *Black Skins, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986 [1957])
- Farrell, Winston, *Tribute* (Barbados: Farcia Publication in association with the Commonwealth Liaison Unit of Barbados, 1995)
- Femi, Ayo, 'Yoruba Review', *Bajan Woman*, April/May (1977), 14-17.
- Ferguson, James, *A Traveller's History of the Caribbean* (Gloucestershire: The Windrush Press, 1998)
- Fewes, J. Walter, 'Archaeology of Barbados', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States*, 1:1 (1915), 47-51.
- Finch, Julia, 'BA flies the flag Once More', *The Guardian*, 7 June 1999, p. 22.
- Forde, G. Addinton, *de mortar-pestle. A Collection of Barbadian Proverbs* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation, 1987)
- Franck, Harry A., *Roaming Through the West Indies* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1920)
- Fraser H., S. Carrington, A. Forde and J. Gilmore, *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (Jamaica: Heinemann Publishers Caribbean Limited, 1990)
- Fraser, H. and R. Hughes, *Historic Houses of Barbados* (Bridgetown: Barbados National Trust, 1982)
- Fraser, H., *Treasures of Barbados* (videotapes), Parts I & II, (Bridgetown: Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation & Sissons Paints, 1989)
- Frere, George, *A Short History of Barbados, from its first discovery and settlement, to the end of the year 1767* (London, 1768)
- Froude, J. A., *The English in the West Indies* (London: 1888)
- Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993 [1973])
- Gikandi, Simon, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)

Gilkes, Michael, *Creative Schizophrenia: the Caribbean Cultural Challenge*, The Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture, (Warwick: University of Warwick Printing Co. Ltd., 1986)

————— ‘Barbados Heading for Revival of African Cultural Traditions’, *Caribbean Contact*, February 1979, pp. 10-11.

Gilmore, John, ed., ‘A 1789 Description of Barbados’, *JBMHS*, 43 (1996/97), 125-142.

————— *Chester’s Barbados: The Barbados Chapters From Transatlantic Sketches, (1869) by the Reverend John Chester* (Barbados: National Cultural Foundation, 1990).

————— *The Barbados Landship Association: 130 years: 1863-1993* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation and The Audio Visual Aids Department, 1993)

————— *The Toiler of the Seas: A Life of John Mitchinson Bishop of Barbados* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1987)

Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London and New York: Verso, 1993)

————— *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1993)

Gittens, Victor, ‘Barbados Landship (BAL.’S.)’, *The Barbados Communicator*, 11 (1973), 10-11.

Glissant, Édouard, *Black Salt: Poems by Édouard Glissant*, tr. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999 [1983])

————— *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, tr. and with an introduction by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1989)

Gomez, Michael A., *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998)

Goodridge, Richard, ‘The African Background of the Barbadian Population’, in Alan Gregor Copley and Alvin Thompson, ed., *The African-Caribbean Connection: Historical and Cultural Perspectives* (Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, and the National Cultural Foundation, 1990), pp. 28-48.

Greene, Jack P., *Imperatives Behaviours & Identities Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville and London: The University Press of Virginia, 1992)

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)

- Greenfield, Sidney, *English Rustics in Black Skin: A Study of Modern Family Forms in a Pre-Industrialised Society* (New Haven: College and University Press Service, 1966)
- Hall, Stuart, 'Introduction: Who Needs Identity?', in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, ed., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 1-17.
- 'When was 'the post-colonial'? Thinking at the limit', in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, ed., *The Post-Colonial Question Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (Routledge: London and New York, 1996), pp. 242-260.
- 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities', *New Left Review*, 209, Jan-Feb (1995), 3-14.
- 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, ed., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 392-403.
- Handler, Jerome S., 'Escaping Slavery in a Caribbean Plantation Society: Maroonage in Barbados 1650s-1830s, *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 71 (1997): 183-225.
- *Supplement to a Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627 – 1834* (Rhode Island: The John Carter Brown Library and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 1991)
- *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627-1834* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971)
- 'Father Antoine Biet's Visit To Barbados in 1654', *JBMHS*, 32:2 (1967), 56-76.
- 'Aspects of Amerindian Ethnography in 17th Century Barbados', *Caribbean Studies*, 9:4 (1969-70), 50-72.
- Review of *English Rustics in Black Skin* in *American Anthropologists*, 71:2 (1969), 337.
- 'The Amerindian Slave Population of Barbados in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Caribbean Studies*, 8:4 (1968), 38-72.
- Handler, Jerome S. and Jo-Ann Jacoby, 'Slave Medicine and Plant Use In Barbados', *JBMHS*, 41 (1993), 74-98.
- Handler, Jerome and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978)
- Handler, Jerome, and Charlotte Frisbee, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Content.' in *Caribbean Studies*, 11: 4 (1972), 5-46.

- Harlow, Vincent, T. ed., *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana: 1623-1667* (London: 1925)
- *A History of Barbados 1625-1685* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1926])
- Harris, Wilson, 'History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas' in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: the Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999)
- Hawkins, Kathleen, *Barbados West Indies: The Olden Days in Pictures and Verse* (Barbados: Letchworth Press, 1986)
- Hearne, John, 'What the Barbadian Means to Me', *New World Quarterly*, 3:1-2 (1966-1967), 6-9.
- Hill, Errol, *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1972)
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)
- Hoyos, F. A., *Barbados: A History from the Amerindians to Independence* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean, 1978)
- Hoyte, Harold, 'Yoruba', *The Bajan and South Caribbean*, February (1973), 36-37 and 40.
- Hughes, Griffith, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London: 1750)
- Hutt, Maurice Bateman, *Exploring Historic Barbados* (Nova Scotia: The Layne Company Printers & Publishers, 1981)
- Hythe, Viscount, ed., *The Naval Annual 1912* (London: William Clowes & Sons Ltd., 1912)
- Ignatieff, M., *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993)
- Iremonger, Lucille, *The Young Traveller in the West Indies* (London: Phoenix House, 1955).
- Inglis, Fred, *Cultural Studies* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1995 [1993])
- *The Cruel Peace: Everyday Life in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1991)
- James, C. L. R., *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Hutchinson, 1963)

- Johnson, Amryl, *Sequins for a Ragged Hem* (London: Virago, 1988)
- Johnson, S. Victor, 'Socio-Cultural Implications of the Barbados Landship' (unpublished Caribbean Studies Thesis, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1976-77)
- Knight, Margaret, 'Do not make fun of these people', *The Nation*, 10 November 1974, p. 24.
- Laclau E., and C. Mouffe, *Socialist Strategy and Political Hegemony* (London: Verso, 1985)
- Lamming, George, 'George Lamming: Concepts of the Caribbean', in Frank Birbalsingh, ed., *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English* (London and Basingstoke: Warwick University Caribbean Studies, Macmillan Caribbean, 1996), pp. 1-14.
- *Coming, Coming Home: Conversations II* (St. Martin, Caribbean: House of Nehesi Publishers, 1995)
- *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960)
- *In The Castle of My Skin* (London: Longman, 1995 [1953])
- Lazarus, Neil, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Lewis, Gordon, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983)
- Lewis, Kingsley, *The Moravian Mission in Barbados 1816-1886: A Study of the Historical Content and Theological Significance of a Minority Church Among an Oppressed People* (Frankfurt am Main, Benn, New York: Peter Lang, 1985)
- Ligon, Richard, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (London: Frank Cass, 1976 [1657])
- Lloyd, William, *Letters from the West Indies During a Visit in the Autumn of MDCCCXXXVI and the Spring of MDCCCXXXVII* (London: 1839)
- Lowenthal, David, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)
- Lynch, Louis, *The Barbados Book* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1964)
- Mannington, George, *The West Indies With British Guiana and British Honduras* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925)
- Marryat, Federick, *Peter Simple* (London 1834)

- Marshall, Trevor, 'The Lord Nelson Myth', *The Barbados Advocate*, 23 October 1998, p. 9.
- 'A Ship on Land?' in Rachel Wilder, ed., *Insight Guides: Barbados*, 2nd edn. (Hong Kong: APA Productions Ltd., 1990), p. 65.
- 'Cultural Development and Cultural Problems in Barbados: An Historical and Contemporary Analysis', (unpublished paper presented at The Fourth Conference of Commonwealth Arts Administrators, Barbados, 1988)
- 'Notes on the History and Evolution of Calypso in Barbados' (unpublished seminar paper, Department of History, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1985)
- 'NIFCA- Its Theme and Focus', *The Bajan*, November (1984), 26-7.
- 'An Evaluation of Crop Over', *The Bajan*, August (1979), 14-6.
- 'Crop-Over- Harvest Season of Bajan Culture', *The Bajan*, June (1979), 39-40.
- Marshall, Trevor, Peggy Mc Geary and Grace Thompson, *Folk Songs of Barbados* (Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1996 [1981])
- McClintock, Anne, *Imperial Leather: Race Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995)
- McKinnen, Daniel, *A Tour through the British West Indies, in the Years 1802 and 1803 giving a particular account of the Bahama Islands* (London, 1804)
- McLellan, George H. H., *Some Phases of Barbadian Life: Tropical Scenes and Studies* (Demerara: The Argosy, 1909)
- Mielche, Hakon, *Calypso Islands*, tr. from the Dutch by Maurice Michael (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962)
- Mintz, Sidney W. and Richard Price, *The Birth of African American Culture. An Anthropological Perspective*. (Boston: Beacon, 1992 [1976])
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, ed., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 196-220.
- Morgan Phillip, 'The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African Regional Origins, American Destinations and New World Developments', in David Eltis and David Richardson, ed., *Slavery and Abolition*, 18:1 (1997), 122-45.
- Morgan, Peter, 'Another PM: We need more than a carnival', *The Nation*, 29 July 1999.

- Morris, Robert, 'Slave Society in Barbados', in Alvin Thompson ed., *Emancipation I: A Series of Lectures to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation and the University of the West Indies: 1984), pp. 33-44.
- Moxly, J. H. Sutton, *An Account of a West Indian Sanitorium and a Guide to Barbados* (London: 1886)
- Naipaul, V. S., *The Middle Passage* (London: Penguin Books, 1969 [1962])
- Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, *Decolonising the Mind* (London: Heinemann, 1986).
- Ober, Federick, *Our West Indian Neighbours* (New York: James Pott, 1916)
- Oldmixon, John, *The British Empire in America containing the History of the Discovery, Settlement, Progress and State of the British Colonies on the Continent and Islands of America* (London: 1741 [1708])
- Orderson, J. W., *Creoleana : Social and Domestic Scenes and incidents in Barbados in Days of Yore* (London: 1842)
- [Parkinson, H. W.], *Barbados Yesterday and Today: No.1: Parkinson's Barbados*, foreword by Edward Stoute (Barbados: Barbadian Heritage Publications Trust, [1978] 1979)
- Parry, Benita, 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', *Oxford Literary Review* 9, 1&2: 1987.
- Parsley, David, 'BA to fly the flag again and ditch ethnic tail fins', *The Sunday Times*, 6 June 1999, pp 1 and 28.
- Patton, William Agnew, *Down The Islands. A Voyage To The Caribees* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1887])
- Pattullo, Polly, *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996)
- Phillips, Anthony De. V., *Modernising Barbados 1880 - 1914* (Barbados: Advocate Creative Services, 1996)
- Phillips, Henry Albert, *White Elephants in the Caribbean: A Magic Journey through all the West Indies* (New York: Robert McBride, 1937)
- Pinckard, George, *Notes on the West Indies; Written during the expedition under the command of the late General Sir Ralph Abercromby; including observations on the island of Barbadoes and the settlements captured by the British troops upon the coast of Guiana*, 3 vols. (London: 1806)
- Poyer, John, *The History of Barbados, from the First Discovery of the Island, in the Year 1605 till the Accession of Lord Seaforth, 1801* (London: Frank Cass, 1971 [1808])

- Richardson, Bonham C., *Economy and Environment in the Caribbean: Barbados and the Windwards in the late 1800's* (Jamaica: The Press University of the West Indies and Florida, The University Press of Florida, 1997)
- Roberts, Alison, 'Nelson Controversy stares Historians in the Face', *The Times*, 21 October 1992, p. 10.
- Robinson, Giraud, 'The Barbados Landship: Origins, Structure and Economic Aspects' (unpublished Caribbean studies thesis, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1977)
- Rohlehr, Gordon, 'The Rehumanization of History: Regeneration of Spirit: Apocalypse and Revolution in Brathwaite's *The Arrivants* and *X/Self*', in Stewart Brown, ed., *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite* (Seren: Poetry Wales Press, 1995), pp. 163-207.
- Rohter, Larry, 'Barbados, All business awaits Clinton', *New York Times*, 7 May 1997, p.15.
- Rorty, Amélie Oksenberg, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976)
- Rouse, Irving, *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People who Greeted Columbus* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1992)
- Rutter, Owen, *If Crab No Walk: A Traveller in the West Indies* (London: Hutchinson, 1933)
- Said, Edward W., *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994, [1993])
- *Orientalism: Western Conception of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995 [1978])
- Samuel, Raphael and Paul Thompson, ed., *The Myths We Live By* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)
- Sandiford, Keith and Brian Stoddart, 'The elite schools and cricket in Barbados: a study in colonial continuity', in Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddart, ed., *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture* (London and Kingston: Manchester University Press and Ian Randle, 1995), pp. 44-60.
- Sauer, Carl Ortwin, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966)
- Savage, Raymond, *Barbados: British West Indies* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1936)
- Schomburgk, Robert H., *The History of Barbados: Comprising a Geographical and Statistical Description of the Island: a Sketch of the historic events since the settlement and an account of its Geology and Natural Productions* (London: Frank Cass, 1971 [1848])

Sealy, Donna, 'Mighty Whites — Blacks Still Afraid, Says Lamming', *The Nation*, 28 April 2000, <http://www.Nationnews.com>

Sewell, Tony, 'Its booming in Barbados', *The Voice*, 9 August 1999, p. 9.

Shapinker, Michael, 'Passengers force about-turn on BA's flight of fancy', *Financial Times*, 7 June 1999, p. 8.

Sheppard, Jill, *The Redlegs of Barbadoes: Their Origins and History* (New York: KTO Press, 1977)

Shilstone, E. M., 'The Thirteen Baronets', *JBMHS*, II, (1935), 89-92.

Sinckler, E. G., 'The Indians of Barbados', *Timehri*, (1918), 48-55.

——— *Handbook of Barbados* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1912)

Smith, Anthony D., *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Spencer, Flora D., 'Landship has made mark on Society', *The Sunday Advocate News*, 29 October 1972, p. 14.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, ed., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994 [1993]), pp. 66-111.

Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1986)

Stoute, Edward A., *Glimpses of Old Barbados* (Barbados: The Barbados National Trust, 1989 [1986]), p. 19.

——— 'What is a Kadooment?', *The Advocate Magazine*, 27 May 1979, p. 11.

——— 'Give Crop Over full support', *The Advocate Magazine*, 31 October 1976, p. 15.

——— 'Crop Over' gay custom that has died out', *The Advocate Magazine*, 2 December 1973, p. 11.

Taylor, Charles, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 [1989])

——— 'Modernity and Identity', (unpublished paper presented to 25th anniversary conference School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1997)

- Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1985])
- Taylor, Ronald V., ed., *Source Materials for the Study of Archaeology and pre-history of Barbados, with unpublished chapters by C. N. C. Roach* (Barbados: s.n., 1991)
- Theater, David, 'Multinationals turn tail on Britishness', *The Guardian*, 8 June 1999, p. 27.
- Thompson, E. P., *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1963])
- 'The Long Revolution', *New Left Review*, 9: May-June (1961) 24-33 and 10: July-August (1961) 34-39
- Thompson, Robert Farris, 'Recapturing Heaven's Glamour: Afro-Caribbean Festivalizing Arts' in John Nunley and Judith Bettleheim, ed., *Caribbean Festival Arts: each and every bit of difference* (Seattle: Saint Louis Art Museum and University of Washington, 1988), pp. 17-29.
- Thorne, John Albert, '*Britania's Pride*': *Barbados the gem of the Antilles. Patriotic ode* (Kingston: 1920)
- Thrift, Nigel, *Spatial Formations* (London: Sage, 1996)
- Trollope, Anthony, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (London: 1859)
- Trowbridge, William R. H., *Gossip of the Caribbees: Sketches of Anglo-West Indian Life* (New York: Taitt, Sons & Company, 1893)
- Van Dyke, John C., *In the West Indies* (New York: Charles Schubner's Sons, 1932)
- Van Sertima, Ivan, *They Came Before Columbus* (New York: Random House, 1976).
- Vaughan, Hilton, 'Some Social and Political Tendencies', in J. M. Hewitt, ed., *Silver Jubilee Magazine: 1910-1935* (Barbados: 1935), pp. 31-33 and 57-61.
- Verrill, A. Hyatt, *West Indies Today* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1931)
- Walcott, Derek, 'What the Twilight Says' in *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (New York and London: Faber and Faber, 1998)
- The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory: the Nobel Lecture* (London and New York: Faber and Faber, 1993)
- Walcott, O. and A. Holder, *The Principal Islands and Towns of the West Indies, with a full description of Barbados and outlines of the British Empire* (Barbados: 1930 [?])
- Warner, Oliver, *Trafalgar* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1959)

- Warner-Lewis, Maureen, 'Africa: Submerged Mother', in Stewart Brown, ed., *The Art of Kamau Brathwaite* (Seren: Wales Press, 1995), pp. 52-61.
- Watson, Karl, 'A Brief History of Barbados', in Arif Ali, ed., *Barbados Just Beyond Your Imagination* (Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1996), pp. 33-98.
- 'The Caribbean Before and After Columbus', in Alan Cobley, ed., *Crossroads of Empire: The Europe-Caribbean Connection 1492-1992* (Barbados: The Department of History and the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 1994), pp. 15-22.
- 'The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (with special reference to Barbados)', in Alvin Thompson, ed., *Emancipation I: A Series of Lectures to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation* (Barbados: The National Cultural Foundation and the University of the West Indies: 1984), pp. 16-25.
- *The Civilised Island Barbados: A Social History 1750-1816* (Barbados: Caribbean Graphic Production Limited, 1979)
- Watts, David, *The West Indies: Patterns of Development and Culture and Environmental Change Since 1492* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- Waugh, Alec, *Love and the Caribbean: Tales, Characteristics and Scenes of the West Indies* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1958 [1930])
- White, Hayden, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)
- Wickham, Clennel, *Pen and Ink Sketches by a Man with a Fountain Pen* (Barbados: Barbados Herald, 1921)
- Wickham, John, 'Questions for Crop Over to Answer', *The Bajan and South Caribbean*, April (1976), 9-10.
- Wiles, Donald, ' "Little England" and the "Barbarous Barbarians" ' in Sassie Stears, ed., *Simply Barbados: An insight into the Elegant Lifestyle of the Island* (Barbados: Peter J. Sassman, 1995), pp. 36-39.
- Williams, Eric, *From Columbus to Castro: the History of the Caribbean* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970)
- *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1967 [1944])
- Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976)
- *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961)

Wilson-Tagoe, Nana, *Historical Thought and Literary Interpretation in West Indian Literature* (Florida and Oxford: James Curry, 1998)

Wolf, Eric, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1982)

Yearwood, Ronnie, 'Culture more than "wukkin up"', *Daily Nation Extra*, 15 April 1998, p. 4.

Yonge, Gary, 'Caribbean at the Crossroads', *The Guardian*, G2, London, 15 April 1999, pp. 1-3.

Yuval-Davis, Nira, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage 1998 [1997])

Zephirin, Angela, ed., *Barbados*, Barbados: Board of Tourism, 1985)