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HEGEMONY, CARIB HISTORY AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ST. VINCENT

by

P. Twinn

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

PhD

University College London

2007

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ABSTRACT

HEGEMONY, CARIB HISTORY
AND HISTORICAL
CONSCIOUSNESS IN ST. VINCENT

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This thesis proposes that the Caribs of St. Vincent, who form a small minority in the island, have been the subject of a European discourse of alterity from the fifteenth century onwards. It further argues that the key tropes employed by this discourse were primarily reflexive and focused on emerging concepts of self and property. It is argued that, as a consequence of the hegemonic position that British culture attained in St. Vincent, the Vincentian population, both Carib and non-Carib alike, internalized these tropes. This has led most modern studies of the Caribs to present them as a marginalized population on the verge of extinction. This thesis argues that contrary to this misconception, the position of the Caribs has fundamentally altered in the period since independence and now features at the core of an essentialist discourse of national identity.

Following a general introduction, the second chapter deals primarily with the construction of the traditional tropes associated with Caribness. In the third chapter the relationship of the Caribs to a developing European anthropology is examined

with reference to concepts of natural law. This is followed by an analysis of the insertion of the island of St. Vincent into the mercantilist world system. In chapter four the historiography of the Caribs is considered in terms of the influence of British texts, and alternative sources of information, primarily French and Dutch, are considered in terms of the development of an historical hegemony on the island Chapter five discusses the events in the latter half of the twentieth century which served to reinforce the stereotypes of the preceeding centuries and yet which, it is argued, brought about the possibility of new forms of self-identification. The following chapter deals with the role of land ownership as a catalyst for Carib self-consciousness. The antepenultimate chapter deals with modern historiography and the influences of supra-national discourses in the Caribbean, whilst the penultimate considers the role of the Caribs in modern party politics in St. Vincent. The thesis concludes with a summary of the theoretical implications of this study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CO Colonial Office and Predecessors

CSP Calender of State Papers

HAMCC Het archief der Middelburgsche Commercie Compagnie

NCR National Census Report: St. Vincent and the Grenadines

NDP New Democratic Party

PRO Public Records Office, London

SVLP St. Vincent Labour Party

T Treasury Papers

ULP Unity Labour Party

WIBDECO Windward Island Banana Development Corporation

Chapter 1

Introduction

Theoretical perspective

This thesis focuses on the area between anthropology and history. It aims to demonstrate how historical themes are both contested and utilized in modern discourses of identity on a small Caribbean island. It seeks to illustrate the plasticity of both historical facts and lacunae within a specific ethnographic context. It does not, however, aim to provide a detailed ethnographic account of a "society" or "culture" in the established sense. Rather it attempts to address what is essentially an anthropological problem with reference to data located primarily in the past. But this is equally not a purely historical project, since the concerns of contemporary actors are reflected and to an extent, refracted in the analysis: reflected since these concerns are the object of this study which they pre-exist, and refracted since they are being analysed within paradigms which exist beyond the daily lives of the actors involved. The central ethnographic phenomenon that this thesis seeks to describe and, hopefully, provide at least a partial explanation for is the change in the way that a small ethnic category, usually termed "Carib", primarily located in the north Windward area of the island of St. Vincent, has reasserted its specific "identity", for want of a better term, in the period since independence in 1979. I say for want of a better term since the concept of identity is itself fraught with problems. In recent years identity has shifted from an essentialist, a symbolic field clustered around core meanings, to a non-essentialist concept. This has followed from anti-essentialist critiques within the social sciences notably from a feminist perspective but deriving their ideas from psychoanalysis. In this thesis the identity that is studied is primarily an ethnic identity that is contextually constructed, that is to say its construction is seen as an articulation of specific discursive formations and subjects. Throughout this thesis I use two terms, discursive formation and ideology, to indicate two interrelated but separate concepts. Ideology is here used in its original Marxist sense and is employed as a negative term to express the opacity of the social world to subjects. It is, in the words of Jorge Larrain (Larrain 1994: 84) a means "to pass critical judgement on the attempted justifications and concealments of undesirable and contradictory social situations". This reading of ideology in Marx, with its implied opposition of ideology with scientific knowledge, is most notable in the work of Althusser. This is of importance since the formation of specific subjects is analyzed with recourse to the Althusserian concept of interpellation (Althusser 1971). Moreover this view of ideology is found in several currents within the social sciences: in social anthropology in the work of Maurice Godelier on Melanesia (Godelier 1970, 1972, 1973); as well as politics (Poulantzas 1973), philosophy (Mepham 1979) and linguistics (Pechaux 1982). Ideology as a negative concept in Marxist thought has, though, a long history of being opposed by a neutral view of ideology, which can be traced back to Lenin and more importantly in this context to Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci 1971). It is this neutral reading of ideology (neutral in the sense that it is not the binary opposite of science) that I term discursive

¹ See for instance Judith Butler (1990)

formation. I propose to use a separate term in this way since the meaning of this reading of ideology is, to again quote Larrain, that it "seeks to provide an account of how certain political discourses in search of hegemony are constructed and reconstructed, expand and contract, gain ascendancy or lose it" (Larrain 1994: 84). Owing to the specific nature of this thesis, concerning itself with the concrete, historical reality of Vincentian Caribs and their articulation with the wider social formation, the neutral concept of ideology predominates. However, in order, amongst other things, to maintain the distinction from ideology in its original, negative sense, I use the term discursive formation to designate this neutral reading of ideology. I do so since although an analysis of ideology in the context of St. Vincent would be both possible and desirable; it is beyond the parameters set for this investigation.

But although this ethnic sense of identity is the most obvious element in this thesis, it does not provide the main theoretical parameters of the argument. I am not a Carib and do not write as such. Nor as an outsider am I "giving them a voice" since they are not mute but can and do express their grievances, hopes and aspirations cogently and passionately. The question that is posed here concerns voice itself, that is to say the very ability to assert/reassert one's identity. This takes us back to Marx's dictum that men make history but they do not make it in conditions of their own choosing. This assertion contains within it a paradox. On the one hand, men are the subjects of historical processes; it is through their action that the motion of history proceeds. These actions are sometimes meaningful and purposive and as such are subject to individual will. But, on the other hand, that very meaning

requires a "context world" of intersubjectivity to establish it. It requires an intentionality and direction that orientates it towards a pre-existent social and physical world, which is both construed and constructed as meaningful in relation to the purposes of the subject. That social world of intersubjectivity is given by the process of history itself and it is to this that intentionality is directed. Furthermore this social world is ontologically prior to all meaningful action whilst simultaneously being the object of that action. It is this articulation of the structural implications of historical process and the contemporaneous orientations and actions of subjects as agents that provides the central theme which I wish to address in this dissertation.

The debate regarding agency and structure has been one of the central themes in both sociology and anthropology from at least the time of Durkheim.² Indeed, it was Durkheim's argument that "social facts" existed *sui generis* and were not reducible to individual motives or any other aspect of human experience that created the intellectual terrain upon which the discipline of social anthropology was constructed (Durkheim 1897). The primacy of structural forms in the understanding of human society has, perhaps understandably, been developed more in French than classical British anthropology (and indeed as has much of the criticism of functionalism, as exemplified in the work of Malinowski, and structural-functionalism, as exemplified in the work of Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard). Similarly, in France, the basic precepts of Durkheim's work were elaborated by Mauss and, in combination with Saussurian linguistic theory (De

Saussure 1908), were reformulated by Lévi-Strauss as structuralism (Lévi-Strauss 1969). But the differences in Britain between the structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown with its emphasis on social structures as the subjects of the system and those of Malinowski, who reduced the effectivity of function to the level of the individual, hint at alternative approaches to society. The foremost of these in sociology was that of Max Weber (Weber 1947). If the Durkheimian concept of society can be characterized by its use of the corporeal metaphor, that of Weber evinced the properties of an aggregate of active subjects, it could perhaps be termed an atomistic metaphor. Within the Weberian model, society ceases to be anything other than the sum of the behaviour of its individual subjects, seen as the atoms that make up the social universe. Social institutions and behaviour are, therefore, the product of individual human agency and are ontologically predicated on this. Thus while institutions may have an effect on historical subjects, this effect is dependent solely on the interaction of those subjects and not on the existence of the social as a discrete order of reality.

The relation of structure to agency has thus been one of the main theoretical divides within the social sciences throughout the twentieth century. There have been various attempts on both sides of this debate to reconcile structure and agency, usually by giving predominance to one whilst admitting provisos that admit the effectivity of the other. An example of this can be seen in Talcott Parsons' interpretation of Weberian sociology (Parsons 1937 and 1951) wherein he asserts

² In the United States Durkheim was far less influential and the American ethnologist, Franz Boas, with his concept of culture as the superorganic, based on the physchological integration of personality, established the

the primacy of purposive action by individuals in goal-orientated tasks as the foundation of social institutions but goes on to reintroduce the social as an environment which must satisfy certain functional prerequisites for action to take place. Similarly Alfred Schutz (Schutz 1972) sought to reconcile structure and agency by positing language as the means by which actors construct a meaningful, intersubjective reality in which purposeful action can take place. Through language individual's experience of the world can be shared and a commonsense reality constructed. This phenomenological approach, deriving as much from Husserl (Husserl 1931) as Weber, avoids Parsons' problem of reintroducing institutions as part of a functional system but relocates the problem in the pivotal role that is given to language. The role of language as the medium through which experiential reality is structured has been the central tenet of much of Lévi-Strauss' contribution to anthropology. Whereas the aims of structuralism have, since Lévi-Strauss' early work on kinship, been focused on what has been termed a neo-Kantian project of the examination of abstract mind, this thesis seeks only to elucidate what might be termed historical consciousness, or, more precisely historicised consciousness (Lévi-Strauss 1969).

Therefore what is proposed here, rather than a structural analysis of how identity is enunciated through language, is to work within formulations of language as discourse following Foucault but with the important caveat that the concepts of discourse and discursive formation are considered from a dialectical perspective, as always being discourse in progress rather than as a finished article (Foucault 1970,

1972, 1976, 1977). At a methodological and theoretical level, this has both some implications and more importantly creates certain problems. The most notable of these is that of accommodating Foucault's ideas within a broadly Marxist theoretical framework.

Marx's texts themselves³ consistently demonstrate that he construed the relationship of structure and agency as a complex articulation rather than in the crude causal terms of vulgar materialism, which posited ideology as simply an effect of class relations and resulted in a deterministic view of history and society wherein the intellectual and political leadership needed only to stand back and watch capitalism tear itself apart in its own dialectically driven contradictions (Marx 1968, 1973, 1974). Agency was crucial to the radical political programme which Marx promulgated⁴. But for Marx the subject of human agency was not simply the embodied individual of, what he considered, bourgeois political economy but consisted in classes. Classes were, for Marx, the concept that mediated the paradox of agency and structure, since they were dialectical, simultaneously constructed by the latter whilst being the means by which the former was constructed. The specificity of the formation of classes, as subjects and hence as agents, was not, however, problematized by Marx at the level of either political practice or ideological representation. With certain exceptions, such as Lukács' (1971) attempt to explain the emergence of class consciousness and Gramsci, to whom I shall turn later,

³ See, for instance, Marx (1968 and 1974)

⁴ This approach is perhaps best known through the work of Nikolai Bukharin (1969)

Marxism in the first half of the twentieth century failed to attempt anything other than the crudest of theoretical positions regarding agency. In a sense, the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss was an attempt to go beyond the studies of the economic infrastructure that preoccupied Marx. Lévi-Strauss himself at times describes his work as a theory of superstructures and even pays lip service at least to the primacy of the economic. But a more overt attempt to develop a structuralist reinterpretation was made by the French philosopher Louis Althusser (1968, 1969). It was Althusser who attempted to analyse the relationship between the individual as subject and the concept of human agency (Althusser 1971). Here Althusser considered individual subjects as the logical results of the reproduction of a society or, as he termed it, a social formation, in terms reminiscent of the prerquisites of Parsonian sociology. To a large extent, the functionalist form of Althusser's argument is a manifestation of his focussing on the reproductive aspects of a system, but consequentially, as with much of earlier functionalist anthropology, the result was not only a society without agents but also one in which social change appears to be impossible.

Given the extremely schematic nature of Althusser's work on the question of agency and the problems inherent in his functionalist approach, his work on the constitution of historical subjects has perhaps received less attention than it deserves. One of the major critics of Althusser's scheme of interpellation, Paul Hirst, noted that "this something which is not a subject must already have the faculties necessary to support the recognition that will constitute it as a subject" (Hirst 1979: 405). His criticism has been widely followed and consequently the

questions raised by Althusser have not been addressed. But there have been attempts to examine how class subjects are constructed such that they are designated as non-free agents, an example of which is Paul Willis' Learning to Labour (1977). Here Willis examines the values and practices of boys at a Midlands secondary school and attempts to demonstrate how these themselves constitute some boys as working class and others as middle class. The boys are interpellated by their own identification with certain values which themselves entail practices which determine the level of the boys' academic horizons. In a sense both Althusser and Willis are describing a situation that had been designated half a century earlier by Antonio Gramsci as hegemony (Forgacs 1988); that is to say, a situation in which the ideas and values of one class are internalized by all other classes such that the latter constitute themselves in a position of subordination to the former and vice versa. But what neither Willis nor Althusser examine is the possibility of a radical negation of the terms of this subjectification. This radical negation is both inherent in the Hegelian dialectic, adopted by Marx, and precisely designated by Lévi-Strauss for what he terms mythic thought at least, in terms of binary opposition (Lévi-Strauss 1966). That is to say, to construe a as a we need also to already/at the same time have a conception of not a. This conception of not a need not be fully conceptualised and discursively articulated, although it must exist at least immanently within the concept of a. Thus, in dialectical terms, if a represents the subjectification of an object, not a will represent the objectification of the subject as subject. It is this duality that metaphorically both provides the grit that prevents the smooth reproduction of ideological systems and makes counter-hegemonic discourses possible.

It is precisely the formation of hegemonic discourses of subjectification and the objectification immanent in counter hegemony that this dissertation will address. It is concerned with processes that are contemporary and yet have an historical dimension. It is argued that British rule in St. Vincent resulted in the formation of what is termed a hegemonic discourse, an authoritative, colonialist voice, which, by and large, held sway at least until Independence. Consequently, it is necessary, in part at least, to attempt to understand how this discourse attained its hegemonic status. This entails an, admittedly brief, analysis of the existing historical record. However, in many respects, the formation of a hegemonic discourse is as much a matter of omission as it is of inclusion. Events are edited, consciously and unconsciously, by the protagonists who have the means and the intellectuals at their disposal whose task it is to do so. Since, therefore, the subject of this thesis is not simply Carib history, the formation of British hegemony and the counterhegemonic forces that oppose it, nor contemporary Carib historical consciousness, but the complex inter-relationship between all three, it is necessary for the narrative to shift back and forth between these subjects. The formation of a view of history as a hegemonic discourse does figure largely in the initial chapters of the thesis, whilst contemporary material appears to predominate in the latter chapters. The issue, however, is not a separation between the contemporary and the historical, but in the formation of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. That is to say, whilst initial descriptions of the historical record seek to demonstrate how the dominant colonial view of history evolved, later chapters in the thesis refer to contemporary debates within St. Vincent which aim at providing a subaltern postcolonialist version of history. It is this version of history based upon an emergent post-colonialist historical consciousness that forms the basis for what I term counter-hegemonic discourses of self-identification.

The concept of hegemony is therefore central to this thesis but, like the hegemony that was exercised over subaltern groups such as the Caribs, it merges into the background. The effectiveness of hegemony is directly proportional to its "naturalness", its ability to provide the political, social and cultural landscape in This hegemonic control was neither part of a smooth which events occur. accession to power nor uncontested. It will be argued that the particular form that hegemony took in St. Vincent resulted as much from contestations within competing early anthropological and philosophical discourses in Europe as they did from the physical processes of domination that occurred overseas. It is argued throughout, therefore, that historiographical control was a key element in the emergence of the hegemonic discourse of colonialism and that, prior to subaltern groups producing their own organic intellectuals, there was little or no basis for counter-hegemonic opposition to arise. One of the main tensions within this thesis is therefore the need to adequately explain the relationships within and between specific historical discourses.

The social construction of subjects in a defined ethnographic context will be analyzed with relation to the discursive subjectivity that is generated by their articulation as subjects within the hegemonic discourse that defines their specificity. Equally, in the particular case that I shall examine, I shall seek to demonstrate the

structural implications of this subjectification, such that the possibility of a counter hegemonic discourse is realisable as a consequence rather than in spite of this specific subjectification. It must be noted at this point that the focus of this study is a particular case, that of St. Vincent, and that the analysis seeks to explain subjectification through a combination of historical and ethnographic research of that area alone. Historical analysis of other locations takes place only to illuminate the role of the Caribs of St. Vincent in relation to European penetration and to provide a context in which a European discourse of alterity in relation to the Caribs occurred. This, therefore, is not a comparative study and, whilst it is recognized that it would be possible to include contemporary material such as that of Honychurch (1975) and Forte (2003, 2005), such inclusion would deflect this thesis from its main purpose. Contemporary comparative material on a regional basis is therefore only included where it has a direct bearing on the arguments put forward rather than as an end in itself. In this, I believe I am following in a monographic tradition that has been central to British anthropology since the time of Radcliffe-Brown. The aim of the thesis is therefore to present a case study through which it is possible to create an abstract concept of what a Marxist might term the laws of motion of hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourses.

This process of subjectification is, however, a Janus-like concept. On the one hand, subjectification entails the physical subjection of the Caribs through protracted hostilities that ultimately led to exile and estrangement from St. Vincent. On the other hand, there was a process of subjectification of the Caribs discursively: a process that made the Caribs subjects of particular historical discourses. This double

meaning is precisely encapsulated within the French term assujetissement and, for this reason, at times that term rather than the English term subjectification is used. Furthermore, subjects as agents of change do not appear as autonomous entities separate from and inhabiting a non-discursive space but are themselves emergent within particular discursive fields. That is not to assert that individuals are merely discursive phantoms, as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) would have it, but rather that individuals only exist as subjects discursively. In concrete terms, this dissertation will attempt to show how a specific aggregate of people, who at times appear as a category and at others as a group, are the objects of a process of subjectification by certain hegemonic, discursive practices but are able, at certain times at least, to establish a counter-hegemonic discourse with which to reconstitute themselves as subjects as a direct consequence of the specific forms which their original subjectification took. It will consider them as agents, but their agency is both engendered and circumscribed by the pre-existent discursive field in which they are located as subjects.

Whilst the term hegemony is widely used within the social sciences and has become absorbed into many areas of social commentary, it is, as has been previously mentioned, most closely associated with the Italian Marxist theorist of the early twentieth century, Antonio Gramsci. Following the publication of his early writings and later prison notebooks, Gramsci has emerged as a major political thinker of his era. However, Gramsci can be read in two very different ways: in the first, particularist way, he is viewed as a writer who combined Marxist theory with Italian sociology, notably that of Croce, and whose relevance is restricted primarily to

Italian history; in the second, general reading, he provides a critique of both economic determinism and theories of political change based on concepts of "class alliance".5 According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985), this shift from class alliance to hegemony was crucial, since whereas the former operates through "preconstituted sectorial interests" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 66), the latter marks a shift, a "movement, from the 'political' to the intellectual and moral plane" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 66). It makes possible new forms of analysis of radical consciousness no longer formulated on the basis of classes, but rather as the articulation of political subjects. The concept of hegemony thus circumvents the problem of consciousness posed by classist conceptions of society, since it recognizes that subaltern groups can be ideologically constructed through diverse forms of articulation with the dominant group. This double construction, which occurs both politically and ideologically, is close to what Foucault termed assujetissement (Foucault 1970). In this thesis it is contended that the Caribs are such a group, and that their articulation within a specific historical practice enables new forms of consciousness to emerge. The Caribs, as a subject, were constructed through a political discourse of colonialism which was dominant until the last years of the twentieth century, and still, arguably, exists today; but through the re-articulation of the Caribs within current political and ideological practices, a new political configuration was made possible that successfully challenged the pre-existing dominant discourse.

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⁵ An example of this approach can be found in Baci-Glucksman (1980).

It is necessary, however, to further explain the relationship of hegemony to that of domination, since it is frequently mooted in common parlance that hegemony simply constitutes domination without the use of coercive force. This view was frequently heard in conversation with informants during fieldwork. However, throughout the early period of Carib history, in which colonialist historiography was active in the process of creating the Caribs as a specific discursive subject, that is to say, as the archetypal savage, on the ideological plane, the colonists and the imperial administration were equally engaged in the subjection of the Caribs on the politico-economic plane. I use the term assigntissement in order to describe this double movement. The process of hegemony thus translates political subjection onto the ideological plane such that it becomes constitutive of the subjects themselves through a process of internalisation and objectification.

It would be wrong, however, to give the impression that this problematic, as Althusser (1969) termed it, in some way acts as the starting point of the investigation. On the contrary, the specific theoretical themes emerged in response to my attempts at understanding the data, both ethnographic and historical, with which I was confronted. In this sense the problematic was both historicized and emergent in relation to the concrete reality with which I am trying to deal. Thus whilst space prohibits a detailed examination of how I came to write this thesis, a brief sketch of some of this background as to how I became involved might be useful as a means of contextualizing the endeavour.

Background to the Thesis

Some twelve years ago I had a conversation with my father-in-law, a Vincentian who had settled in Britain in the 1950s, regarding the island of his birth. He described the island in glowing terms, talking of the hundreds of streams of fresh, clean, ice-cold water, of the lush verdure and the towering peaks. He described his boyhood, with the rigours and discipline of school far removed from the current practices of modern-day England, and he spoke of the people. It was at this point that he remarked that if one travelled to the far north of the island, one could see "Indians". I asked him "Do you mean Asians?" But he shook his head and replied, "We call them Caribs; they're sort of like American Indians." He related how they lived up around an area called Sandy Bay and that rather than being black, like him, they had straight hair and "clear", that is to say light brown, skin. My immediate response to this was one of incredulity. I assumed that "Carib" was just a generic term for the descendants of indentured Asian immigrants. The basis for this dogmatic refusal to accept his account at face value derived primarily from my own, albeit extremely sketchy, knowledge of the Caribbean. According to history, I believed, the conquest of the West Indies by the Spanish resulted in the mass extinction of the indigenous population through famine, disease and war. Slaves drawn from Africa and a handful of white plantation owners then replaced the Amerindian population. At any rate the Caribs, I believed, disappeared by the end of the sixteenth century. I began to probe him more carefully in order to corroborate the prejudices of my blissful ignorance of Caribbean history. But instead of confirming my initial assessment, the tenacity of his assertions of who

these people were began to undermine my own certainty. Although I was not aware of it at the time, I had just been given a lesson in both history and anthropology regarding sources and informants respectively. I was to wait some seven years before I encountered the Caribs and their apparent disappearance from history, as I imagined it, again.

Whilst studying for my Masters degree at University College London in 1995 I came across the work of Marshall Sahlins (1981 and 1985) on the relationship of Captain Cook and the Hawaiians.⁶ In these works Sahlins attempted to elucidate the encounter not just of Cook and the Hawaiians but of two totally different weltanschauungen. These two contrasting views of the world and, more importantly, what was happening in it were described by Sahlins (1985: xiv) as "the structure of the conjuncture", and it was the specificity of this structure which led to the demise of Captain Cook.⁷ But Sahlins' analysis seemed to lack something and the lacunae in his description were not in respect to the Hawaiians, whom he described in the richness and multiplicity of the emotional, mythological and political dimensions of their relationship to Cook, but rather in his handling of the Europeans. In Sahlins' work, Cook becomes a cipher for the Enlightenment and his crew fades into obscurity. Reason is clevated not merely to the status of the dominant aspect of the Europeans but becomes the all-pervading characteristic that fixes their identity. It is this de-humanising process that effects the disappearance of Cook's crew; reduced

⁶ For an alternative view of the relation of Captain Cook to the Hawaiians, see Obeyesekere (1992).

⁷ Sahlins explains his use of the term "structure of the conjuncture" as "the practical realisation of the cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of the historical agents, including the microsociology of their interaction" (1985: xiv).

to the bare bones of Reason they are brought into play simply as reconfirmation of the scientific project of the expedition. But the life-world of the crew, beyond the parameters of the voyage, is left unstated; whilst the expectations of the Hawaiians were situated in a broad, deep context, those of the Europeans were reduced to the parameters of the Royal Society. It was in an attempt to find the building blocks of the expectations that the European crew took to the Pacific that I began to examine the role that the Caribbean had played in the construction of the idea of the "Island Native". It was at this point that the Caribs re-emerged as a focus of my attention since European conceptions of the island native and the 'Noble Savage" were inextricably linked to the impact of the Carib as a metonym of alterity in European discourses of the Enlightenment.

Fieldwork location

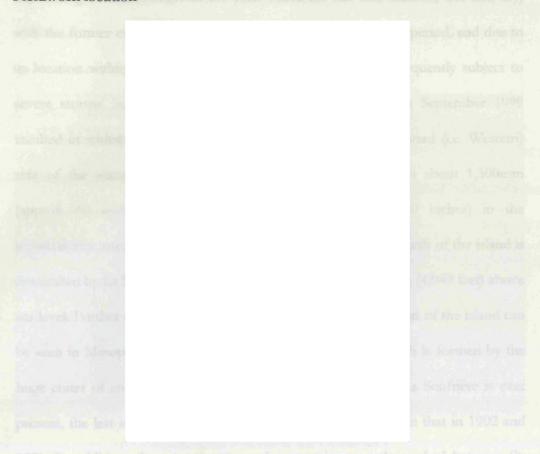


Figure 1: The Lesser Antilles

The island of St. Vincent is situated among the Windward Islands of the Caribbean Sea at latitude 13°15' north and longitude 61°12' west. It lies between the islands of St. Lucia some twenty miles to the north and from which it is separated by the St Vincent Channel, and Grenada approximately seventy miles to the south. St. Vincent is the largest island within the state known as St. Vincent and the Grenadines, comprising some 344 square kilometres out of a total of 389. The remainder of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, or SVG as it is commonly termed, consists of the Grenadines, a chain of thirty-two small islands, nine of which are inhabited. The island has a tropical climate with little fluctuation in a temperature

that averages 24'C throughout the year. There are but two seasons, wet and dry, with the former extending from May to November. During this period, and due to its location within the Atlantic hurricane zone, the island is frequently subject to severe storms. Some of these such as "Hurricane Lenny" in September 1999 resulted in widespread damage and severe erosion on the Leeward (i.e. Western) side of the island. Annual rainfall on the island ranges from about 1,500mm (approx. 60 inches) on the coast to 3,800mm (approx.150 inches) in the mountainous interior. St. Vincent is of volcanic origin and the north of the island is dominated by La Soufrière, an active volcano that rises to 1,234m (4,049 feet) above sea level. Further evidence of the volcanic nature of the formation of the island can be seen in Mesopotamia Valley in the south of the island, which is formed by the huge crater of an extinct volcano. The threat of eruption by La Soufrière is ever present, the last major eruption being in March 1979 and before that in 1902 and 1821. In addition, there is on-going volcanic activity on the seabed between St. Vincent and Grenada where a new cone is forming. This latter, known as "Kick'em Jenny", is slowly rising towards the surface and it is feared that, once a critical height is reached, further eruptions could precipitate a tsunami which could devastate the Grenadines and the southern coastline of St. Vincent, including the capital Kingstown. Whilst the continued volcanic activity is viewed by both Vincentians and outside agencies, such as the World Bank and IMF, as a handicap to development, it has, through the copious deposits of mineral-rich ash, created an extremely fertile soil suitable for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops. Unfortunately, the rugged nature of the terrain, with its central core of mountains cut through with steep valleys, depreciates its agricultural value considerably. The

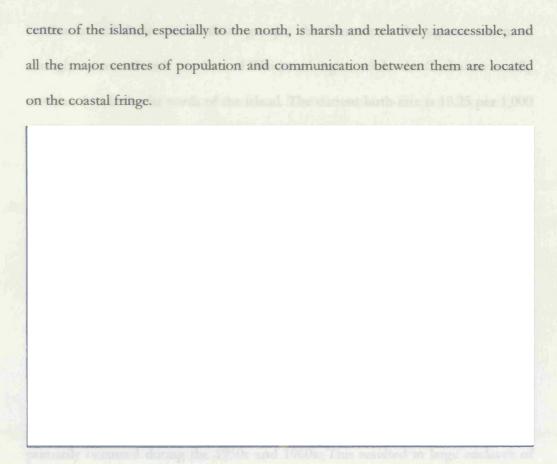


Figure 2: St. Vincent & the Grenadines

SVG has a comparatively small population of approximately 115,000 persons, 110,000 of whom live on the main island of St. Vincent. According to official statistics the population is ethnically predominantly black (some 66%) or mixed (some 19%) with a small East Indian population and a further 2% consisting of Carib Amerindians ⁸ However my own observation and conversations with locals indicates that the category "mixed" disguises both Carib and white populations, of whom those of Portuguese descent are perhaps the most significant. There is some

⁸ All data here derives from the census of 1991 (NCR 1991). Where other sources are used the sources are cited

localisation of these small ethnic groups: the Vincentian Portuguese are most strongly associated with the Central Windward region whilst the Caribs are usually associated with the far north of the island. The current birth-rate is 18.25 per 1,000 whilst the death rate is only 6.21 per 1,000 population. Overall the age structure of the population reflects the relatively high birth rate with some 30% of the population being below the age of 14 years (17,868 males and 17,263 females). The population of working age accounts for some 63% (37,377 males and 35,623 females), whilst those of 65 years and over account for some 7% (3,144 males and 4,186 females). Historically high levels of emigration, with the U.S.A., Canada and Britain having been favoured destinations, have absorbed a large part of the increase in population. Whilst emigration to the U.S. can be traced back to the nineteenth century, following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, that to Britain primarily occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. This resulted in large enclaves of Vincentian expatriates being located in Nottingham, North London, Luton and, most importantly, High Wycombe. In recent years there has been a steady stream of British based Vincentians returning to the island following their retirement from work overseas. Changes in immigration law in the UK, however, have led to a sharp decline in the opportunities for migration there, and today Canada is the favoured destination for those wishing to move out of the Caribbean region.

Large settlements on the island, as mentioned previously, are concentrated along a narrow coastal strip, Of these the capital Kingstown is by far the most important, both in terms of size, having a population in excess of 27,000 people or some 25% of the island as a whole, and as a social and commercial centre. On the Leeward

chateaubellair, but the nature of the topography, with the mountains extending down into the sea, constrains the expansion of these towns. The windward side of the island has a relatively broad coastal strip, and there are significant settlements at Calliaqua, Colonerie, Byabou and Georgetown. The latter, built at the beginning of the nineteenth century on a portion of the Grand Sable Estates, is the second largest settlement on the island and, until the mid 1980's, was the centre of the sugar industry. In general the more open nature of the terrain allows for more dispersed settlement to occur on the windward side of the island than on the leeward.

Dwellings within the settlements vary from small single-roomed wooden shacks to large two-storied, concrete-framed villas set in their own grounds. Whilst there are certainly affluent areas of the island, especially in the south to the windward side of Kingstown, most settlements exhibit a range in the size and form of construction of dwellings. Modern Vincentians tended to favour single-storied concrete-framed bungalows with an ample veranda set on a small, detached plot of land. Where the terrain is hilly, a common occurrence near the main coast road, houses are constructed to have a second level; the use and location of this second level usually depending on its position in relation to the adjacent road. Whilst similar types of housing are found throughout the island, there is a marked variation in land values, with housing land in the south being markedly more expensive than in the north. This reflects both the dominant position of Kingstown as the centre of what may be termed the social elite of Vincentian society; politicians, entrepreneurs, the intelligentsia and large land-holders and the extra value from tourism that property

in the south of the island acquires, as well perhaps from the greater risks in the north from the effects of volcanic activity.

For SVG as a whole, tourism represents the major dollar-earning sector of the economy, having overtaken agriculture in the last decade. However, the most significant areas associated with this are in the Grenadines rather than the mainland. In addition to the holiday isle of Mustique, which is owned and administered under a leasing agreement by a British company, there are resorts on Bequia, Canouan and Palm Island. These resorts cater for the top end of the tourist market and there is no inclination on the part of the present government to expand numbers by encouraging mass tourism as in Barbados and the Dominican Republic. Nor, in fact would it be easy to handle large numbers given the present limited infrastructure of the islands. The prime restriction on the development of tourism in SVG is widely recognized by both Government and ordinary Vincentians to be the lack of an international airport. At present, travellers from Europe or North America must fly to one of the so-called gateway destinations such as Barbados, Grenada or St. Lucia and then, after a lengthy stop-over of usually five to six hours, take a flight to E. T. Joshua Airport, which is located at Arnos Vale, a few miles from Kingstown on the windward side. The Vincentian government, both under the previous Prime Minister, James Mitchell, and now Ralph Gonsalves, have long attempted to expand the small airport close to the sea, but the mountainous terrain and indeed small size of St. Vincent has so far precluded their dreams becoming reality. Certainly, tourism is seen as the means by which the development of St. Vincent can be fuelled but progress is often viewed by Vincentians on the main island as being both painfully

slow and of no direct benefit to themselves. Indeed there is a marked contrast in the attitude of many Vincentians from the main island to tourists to those who live on the Grenadines. This was exemplified by an incident that occurred on Fisherman's Day, a local festival that had replaced the old Labour Day in the Vincentian social calendar.

Whilst driving in to Kingstown to visit the festival, I stopped at a shop in Arnos Vale to get some drinks for my wife and children. As I returned to the car a local beggar accosted me. I recognized him as one who spent most of his time in Kingstown asking money from tourists. When asked for money I jokingly replied that I was too poor and that besides I was a "Vincie" too and that he should try elsewhere. The banter between us took place in a relatively friendly manner but as he continued arguing I noticed that a young man in the car in front of mine was watching us through the rear-view mirror. As the beggar persisted the young man in front got out of his car and came over to us. He was short, stocky and muscular with very fair skin and long reddish hair in stark contrast to the beggar who was very black with short-cropped hair. He immediately began a tirade against the beggar for harassing us. This was not unusual since elderly women in the market or on the bus all over the island would frequently do the same. But his argument was different in that he claimed that the beggar was threatening his livelihood, that he depended on tourists to make his living and that aggressive begging would frighten off the tourists. "Dese people don wanna 'ave you come begging at dem! Go do some work fer yer money!" The response to this was that the beggar claimed that it was typical of "folks from Bequia" to come over and lord it about with their talk of tourists. "You tink you his white yerself" he replied. As tempers frayed the argument turned to mutual threats and a fight appeared to be on the verge of breaking out when I managed to intervene and separate them. Reluctantly the man from Bequia got in his car and drove off and the beggar trudged away muttering to himself. The episode highlighted the ambiguities that had been frequently expressed to me by people in the north of the island regarding the effects of tourism. For some it was an opportunity for self-advancement; for others it dragged them into a pit of dependency.



Fig. 3 Fishermen's Day in Kingstown

On St. Vincent itself, tourism is largely restricted to an area in the affluent south known as Villa opposite the tiny resort of Young Island, which lies some half a mile offshore. Unlike the beaches on the mainland itself, which are open to the public, Young Island is privately owned, and Vincentians cannot cross on the small ferry that guests use to visit it. This area is also notable in that the beaches, here as on the Grenadines, are of white sand, as opposed to the volcanic black sand which is characteristic of the island. When discussing the lack of tourism on the mainland, Vincentians often cite a supposed aversion of tourists to this black sand as one of the main reasons. Even allowing for the sand, however, the sea on the windward coast is generally considered too rough for swimming and other activities. Tales of students from the Medical College at Ratho Mill surfing at Argyll were occasionally told, but more to illustrate student foolhardiness than to demonstrate any economic potential. In general, tourism is restricted to Villa and the nearby marina at Calliaqua and although there are several areas of great natural beauty in the north of the island, such as the Falls of Balleine and La Souffière, these have not generated local tourist centres but are accessed by excursions from the south of the island. Tourism therefore, although significant to the finances of the state as a whole, has only a secondary effect on the mainland, and that marginal and largely unperceived by the population in the north of the island where I resided.

From the time of its annexation by Britain in the eighteenth century until the recent past, St. Vincent has had a primarily agricultural economy. At various times, sugar, arrowroot, cotton and bananas have formed the basis of a predominantly mono-cropping agricultural export system. Bananas remain a major export commodity accounting for some 9% of GDP However, in recent years, legal actions by American banana companies, such as Dole and Chiquita, through the WTO against the preferential treatment of Windward Island bananas by the EEC

under the "Lome Convention", have created an atmosphere of increasing uncertainty over the long-term viability of this crop. At present, WIBDECO markets the bananas grown on St. Vincent, usually on small farms (i.e. less than 10 acres) and leases container ships from Geest to export the produce to Europe. In addition WIBDECO is also responsible for the certification of farmers' competence and controls both the quality and price of the product. The nature of banana production, with a crop available to be marketed every week throughout the year, is particularly advantageous to small-scale farmers in that it allows a regular income without high capital inputs. The creation of this class of fairly affluent smallholders has been one of the main effects of the Lome Convention, and the various land reform programmes that have been initiated both before and since Independence in 1979 have enhanced this.

The other crop most associated with St.Vincent is arrowroot, the cultivation of which was practised by the Caribs prior to annexation and which, during the nineteenth century, became a commercial success, albeit a brief one. Today, arrowroot is grown primarily in the north of the island. This is due to several factors, the most notable being the rugged terrain which precludes the harvesting of many other species but, especially where the land is terraced, is suitable for arrowroot. At the time of fieldwork, the only public arrowroot processing plant was at Owia in the far north of the island, a factor which militated against growers in the south of the island cultivating it. A further consideration may be that the Caribs who inhabit the area have traditionally grown arrowroot. However, despite many Caribs recognizing arrowroot as historically important both economically and

symbolically, I never encountered anyone who used this as a reason for growing it. Indeed, the collapse in the price of arrowroot, which occurred at the time of fieldwork and led to many farmers not being paid for their crops by the Arrowroot Association which marketed the crop, resulted in a widespread and frequently voiced desire to abandon the crop altogether. In addition to these two main crops, which are grown for a global market, there are a wide variety of fruits and vegetables grown for both local and regional consumption such as breadfruit, sweet potato, plantain, citrus fruits, and coconuts. However, at the time of my fieldwork in 1999, these were still feeling the effects of an embargo placed on Vincentian agricultural produce in 1997 following an outbreak of the pink mealy bug (Maconellicoccus birsutus), by its main trading partners in the region, notably Trinidad and Tobago.

Industry in St. Vincent is largely restricted to agricultural processing and construction. Large hotel complexes in the Grenadines and a new terminal for cruise liners at Kingstown were part of a long-term strategy by the Mitchell government to enhance tourism. In addition, there have been major projects in the construction of government buildings and a new market in the centre of Kingstown. A flour mill has been established at Campden Park to the west of Kingstown and, in the 1980s, a brewery was set up, initially under the control of a German company specializing in establishing so-called "microbreweries". Whilst both of these operations have been successful, they rely on imported raw materials and a constant complaint in the north of the island was that local produce was not being utilized in this manner. Whilst the absence of tinning plants was frequently

mentioned, the lack of a sugar refinery was the most politically sensitive issue especially as, since its closure, the local distillery now had to import molasses to produce rum.

The demise of the sugar industry in St. Vincent is usually discussed either as a result of global economic processes or of party political activity. Which of these two explanations was offered would depend largely on the political affiliation of the speaker involved. Supporters of the government would state that the industry was unviable and attempts to maintain it were a drain on the economy as a whole; those who opposed the government would point to the fact that Georgetown was the traditional heartland of the old St. Vincent Labour Party (SVLP) and that the New Democratic Party (NDP), who formed the government at the time of field work, were punishing the people of Georgetown for this support. On my first visit to St. Vincent in 1997, a neighbour explained the run-down, dilapidated condition of Georgetown, or "Ghost-town" as it was sometimes jocularly called, in precisely these terms. My neighbour claimed that that he had heard the then Prime Minister, when in opposition, threaten to "get his own back" on the people of Georgetown for not supporting him. He continued, in terms starkly reminiscent of Peter Wilson's book Crab Antics (1973), "You see, if one politician do something an' it works, dem others get jealous an' wanna mash it up. Dat's how it is here. Dat's why Mitchell (the Prime Minister) shut down the refinery. He did it because it was Mr. Cato's idea." Throughout my stay in Georgetown I was to hear this type of argument repeatedly. Occasionally, though, informants would state, "Dese people jus' care about demselves. Dev got no idea about running an economy. The

government don't get much tax revenue. Sugar jus don't pay!" The argument about the tax base was used frequently. I was informed of its relevance to government policy one Friday whilst having lunch with a high-ranking NDP party official and two days later it was repeated almost verbatim at a barbecue on a beach by a shopkeeper from the central windward area. Recognizing the use of such tropes became a key element in my ability to ascertain the political affiliations of informants and exemplified how party politics were an overt fact of life throughout the island that tended to polarize people over a wide range of issues

In fact, St. Vincent has only been a sovereign state for some twenty years, gaining full independence from Britain on 27th October 1979. Its constitution is one of parliamentary democracy on the Westminster model with the Queen as titular head of state through her representative, the Governor-General. Political power rests with a government of thirteen elected members of parliament, supplemented by half a dozen appointees. At the time of my initial fieldwork the two main parties were the New Democratic Party (NDP) of Prime Minister, Sir James "Son" Mitchell, and the Unity Labour Party (ULP) of Dr Ralph Gonsalves. However, subsequently, Dr Gonsalves has won the last election, and the ULP appears firmly entrenched in government. On independence, Milton Cato of the St. Vincent Labour Party (SVLP) headed the first government, and it was he who had been instrumental in the re-establishment of sugar in St. Vincent. Since 1984 however, James Mitchell, who was still in power at the time of fieldwork some fifteen years

later, has dominated party politics⁹. The main opposition party, the ULP, is itself the product of the merging of the SVLP, Milton Cato's party, headed by Vincent Beech, with the Movement for National Unity (MNU), headed by Gonsalves.

The election of 1998 resulted in a narrow victory for the NDP, who gained seven of the thirteen seats. The exasperation of the ULP at being so narrowly defeated, in an election they had expected to win, was heightened when it had emerged that they had taken some sixty per cent of the vote and would normally, according to Gonsalves (in personal communication with the author) have expected to achieve some ten seats. This disparity can be accounted for by the narrowness of the victories of the NDP in the seats it retained compared with the large majorities in the seats that the ULP gained. As a consequence, opposition supporters have continually cried fix and made accusations of gerrymandering whilst government supporters have accused their opponents of being bad losers and state that such anomalies are part and parcel of a "first past the post" system.

It would, however, be wrong to assume that politics in St. Vincent has a neat ideological divide. As long ago as the 1960's the island had been described as "a political kaleidoscope" (John 1965) and, although Mitchell has been able to consolidate his position following three election victories, the opposition has been riven with disputes relating as much to personal ambition as policy. A clear example

⁹ In a surprise move Mitchell stepped down in 2000 in favour of the Minister of Finance Arnhern Eustace.

of this was a dispute regarding the ULP's policy of non-co-operation with the government due to the 1998 election result until such time as a new election was called. Speaking in connection with the plight of the banana industry in the face of a possible US/EEC trade war, Ken Boyea, a prominent ULP member of parliament, indicated that this was a matter on which people of all political persuasions could unite. This was construed by the press as a challenge to Gonsalves' authority and that a power struggle was occurring within the party. Within a matter of days, Gonsalves appeared on national television reiterating and explaining ULP policy on the matter. A deal appeared to have been made but, within a couple of months, Boyea had split from the ULP.

If political life in St. Vincent forms an axis upon which society is sharply divided, then religion serves both as a focus of national unity, since it is almost totally Christian, and provides for the possibility of fragmentation, given the plethora of denominations within the island. There are eight major denominations that, according to the census of 1991, had at least one thousand adherents. Of these the Anglican Church was the largest with 29,525 adherents followed by the Methodists with 16,205, the Pentecostalists with 11,101 and the Roman Catholics with 10,073. However the position of the traditional, established churches, that is to say Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic, appeared to be in relative decline due to the activities of evangelical missions on the island. The Anglicans had witnessed a fall of 11,157 (-27.4%) adherents from 1981 to 1991, the Methodists 4,249 (-20.8%) and the Roman Catholics fell by 1,256 (-11.1%). In contrast the Pentecostalists had their numbers swelled by 7,155 (+181.3%) and the Seventh Day Adventists had

increased by 4544 (105.4%). There was also a significant rise in the number of Spiritual Baptists or "Shakers" as they are often termed. This was a denomination which appeared in the late nineteenth century, principally in the north of the island, and which was banned from 1910 until the early 1960's 10. Shaker numbers too have increased dramatically from 5,814 in 1981 to 10,264 in 1991 an increase of some 76.5%. The proliferation of denominations and the widespread construction of new churches were much in evidence throughout the period of fieldwork. No matter how deprived and derelict a neighbourhood appeared, local resources were mobilised in order to construct churches to serve the community. Wherever I went there was always someone who could tell me with great pride that they either had built, or were in the process of building, a church. Christian beliefs were both widely and often deeply held, and I only once met a self-professed atheist on the island. When I revealed my own atheism to those I had come to know well, I was frequently met with looks of incredulity and horror. As a result, I rapidly became circumspect in discussing religion. But religion as an internalised sense of the transcendent should not be confused with the Church as an institution. On several occasions informants remarked that becoming a preacher was no different from becoming a lawyer, doctor or other professional and although even in these instances it was admitted that there were devout and committed priests, usually exemplified by the informant's own priest, the main requirement was to be a good

¹⁰There have, as far as I am aware been no major studies of the "Shakers" although they figure in most of the modern literature on the island. see Rubenstein 1987a, Young 1993 and Gullick 1985. The latter has also published a brief article on the subject (Gullick 1971).

performer, to be able to speak publicly with passion rather than to hold great inner conviction.

Whilst the atmosphere of fundamental religious belief was to form a back-drop to much of my research, it did not figure largely in the issues which I wished to explore and, given the general hostility with which my own beliefs, or rather lack of them, were received, I tended on the whole to avoid the issue wherever possible. In the long run this proved useful insofar as it avoided any identification of myself with a particular denomination or creed although it did close off what may have been an avenue for meeting people. The period of field research was spent primarily in two locations. The first field location was Caratel Village on the outskirts of northern Georgetown. The second was within the Carib Community itself in Sandy Bay. The geographical movement from Caratel to Sandy Bay coincided with a gradual change in the fieldwork methods that I employed. My initial contacts with people in Caratel were largely informal and I was introduced as a relative of a local farmer (my wife's paternal uncle). This often entailed a brief explanation of what I was doing in St. Vincent generally, and in Georgetown in particular. My explanation was that I was studying the history of St. Vincent and what modern Vincentians thought about their history. In the locality where I was staying in Caratel there were one or two bars where people would 'hang out' in the evening. The first couple of months of my fieldwork were largely spent doing this during the late afternoon and evening in order to get myself known by the locals. This was gradually augmented by accompanying friends working in banana fields and acquainting myself with the natural rhythm of life that followed from banana cultivation. One of the bars was owned by a local farmer whose wife ran it whilst he worked in the fields. During the evenings he would return with his workers to the bar and frequently be visited by neighbouring farmers and their labourers. However, the main clientele of that particular bar was not farmers or farm labourers, but bus drivers and their conductors, or van boys, who gathered at Caratel at the end of their shift. Here they would have their vans washed down and enjoy some food and a drink before heading for home at about 10:00 p.m. It was with these two groups, agricultural workers and bus drivers, that I had some of my earliest conversations regarding life in St. Vincent. That is not to say that either of these two groups could be said to be representative of Vincentian society as a whole. Rather, they provided an opening into what two sections of Vincentian society considered to be topical and/or relevant to my research. My conversations with them thus formed the basis of areas of research that gradually opened up. As my own archival research on St. Vincent progressed, I began to uncover events that had occurred relatively recently and could question those around me to ascertain their opinions. Similarly, contemporary events that were reported on television or in the newspapers would frequently be put to me as topics that I needed to understand. As my relationship with informants developed, conversations around particular topics became more formally structured as interviews. This in turn led me to further background literary

and archival research, and also widened the number of people willing to act as



Fig. 4 New Sandy Bay

informants. Caratel village proved to be a propitious location as it was the terminus for most of the buses that ran along the windward side of the island from both Kingstown in the south and the villages of the Carib Community, as it was known, in the north. It was thus an appropriate place from which to observe the interface of Caribs with the wider population. It was here that I sought to establish the tropes employed by non-Caribs in the process of the objectification of subjects as Carib.

Initially, I had no specific contacts in Sandy Bay amongst the Carib community. However, like many researchers before me, I was aided by Dr. Earle Kirby at the Botanical Gardens, who supplied me with the names of a few people who were active in the Carib community. Through these initial connections I began to spend more time in Sandy Bay, first by regularly visiting the village in order to interview community leaders, then by securing a house to rent there. Having established myself in Sandy Bay, I was then able both to interact informally with my neighbours

in the village and spend more time with those willing to be interviewed in greater detail. It was in this period that I concentrated on eliciting information regarding Caribs' own concepts of self-identity and their response to the interpellation of themselves as Carib by the wider community. This dual approach to the question of identification, that is to say as both objectification and subjectification, enabled a contextualization within a broad conceptual framework shared by both populations. But the questions that I shall address in this thesis also required extensive research in the archives in both St. Vincent and London and an examination, though far from complete, of both secondary historical works and descriptions within literature which themselves have played a major part in the discursive process of objectification of the Carib as a historical subject. The use of both archival and contemporary ethnographic material combined within a specific theoretical framework has resulted in frequent shifts in what may be termed "voice". This is a necessary consequence of attempting to examine the social totality which contemporary Vincentians, both Carib and non-Carib, inhabit. This social world is multi-layered and complex and, whilst this thesis makes no claims at being able to represent the social world as a totality, nonetheless the different registers that comprise that totality require their own separate voices. Just as history is always the history of today and cannot be compartmentalised away from the present but only understood in the context of the present, so too the theoretical propositions need to be grounded within the quotidian experience of fieldwork. To understand the opinion of a Vincentian informant talking about a topical subject requires familiarity with the context of social life and the form of expression used. anthropological work that expression needs to be directly reported as closely to the

informant's own words as possible, if only for the record. The analysis of those opinions, by the ethnographer, necessitates a different register. This shift in what could be termed "voice" creates a space between the emic and the etic. The relationship between ethnographer and subject is thus mediated by these changes in register. But because both conversations regarding daily life and their analysis in abstract terms refer to the same social reality they must coexist discursively, to do otherwise would be to drive a wedge between anthropologist and subject matter. Both historical records and contemporary conversations are therefore subject to what could be termed a critique that entails changes of voice. Following my return to London, where I continued with research in the Colonial Archives, I made three further trips to St. Vincent, during which I was able to more finely tune my interviews with informants, as well as assess the impact of the Unity Labour Party coming to power. Whilst this gave an extra, historical dimension to my contemporary research, it made the creation of a static ethnographic present more problematical. For the purposes of this dissertation the ethnographic present is the period of my main fieldwork in 1999, and where later material is used it is indicated as such. In recent years there have been only four major anthropological studies of St. Vincent. Of these, Rubenstein's (1987a) Coping with Poverty and Young's (1993) Becoming West Indian are local ethnographic studies of south leeward and south windward communities respectively. A further study by Neil Price (1988) dealt with a small community on the Grenadine island of Bequia. With the exception of CJMR Gullick's (1985) Myths of a Minority, there has been little written on contemporary Carib society. Gullick's study itself was based on fieldwork dating back some thirty years, and the society portrayed within it has undergone significant changes. Gullick's work is concerned with Carib recollections of their past as well as the historical records of that past. There would therefore seem to be a prima facie overlap between that work and this dissertation. However, the problematic that informs Gullick's work derives from the anthropology of the late 1960's and 70's. The focus of Myths of a Minority is based on two terms: myth and tradition. Gullick defines the two terms thus; myth is "the world view and ideological system as well as tales about a legendary past. 'Tradition' will be used to describe valued information that is handed down from one generation to another. It will often be distinguished by the words oral or written in specifying the means of transmission' (Gullick: 1985: 2). Aspects of Carib myth and historical records are then analysed using a structuralist methodology aimed at ascertaining variations on common themes. This structuralist approach is very different from that proposed here and consequently, although Gullick's work proved invaluable in the early stages of my research it does not figure prominently in the analysis given here, which operates within a totally different problematic.

The vast bulk of the modern literature on the Caribs in general has been in the field of ethnohistory. Within this general field, their role in the development of European discourses of alterity has figured prominently (Hulme 1986, Hulme and Whitehead 1992, Boucher 1992). In 1992, the quincentennial celebrations of Columbus' "discovery" of the New World provoked a backlash amongst native Amerindian groups throughout the hemisphere and led to a re-evaluation of the history of the subsequent conquests. This re-emergence of academic interest in indigenous groups such as the Caribs of St. Vincent has run parallel with the development of new

forms of self-consciousness amongst the native populations themselves. It is a self-consciousness that is articulated through renewed efforts at collaboration with other groups, the formation of ethnically-based organizations and an attempt to reclaim their own history. This rise in historical consciousness within the Carib community was set within a context of similar concerns of the broader Afro-Caribbean community as it sought to establish itself as an independent state.

The land which most Vincentians mean when they refer to the "Carib Country" extends north on the windward side of the island from the Rabacca (Dry) River through the villages of Waterloo, Orange Hill, Overland & Magum, London, Sandy Bay, Point, Owia and finally Fancy. At Fancy the coastal road ends and there are no further settlements before Richmond on the Leeward side. The whole landscape is dominated by La Soufrière, the volcano which rises to over 4,000' and which has had such a dramatic effect on life in the north of the island. Historically, a single owner, the last of these being the Barnard family, has held much of the land in what is termed the "Carib Country". The eruption of this volcano in 1979 precipitated the sale by the Barnards and subsequent break up of the last large plantation on St. Vincent, the three and a half thousand acre Orange Hill Estate. A similar eruption, though on a larger scale, had, ironically, caused the previous owner, Alex Porter, to sell up to the Barnards in the first instance. Colonial mythology credits William Young with being the first European to have scaled the summit of the volcano and name it. In fact La Soufrière was already shown under that name in earlier French maps of the island. Given the political relationship between England and France in the eighteenth century it is almost inconceivable that William Young would have



used a French name. But nomenclature here, as elsewhere in St. Vincent, manifests the long struggle for dominion over the land by Caribs and Europeans as well as Anglo-French rivalry (thus the importance of the La Soufrière myth). With the exception of Owia, all the settlements in the Carib lands bear British names often deriving from the estate with which they were associated. Rivers and physical features, on the other hand, retain their original Carib names or occasionally are corruptions of French terms such as Morne (Mons) to designate a hill. A notable exception to this is God Save the Queen River, which Caribs tended to assume derived from an action in the Carib Wars but which nobody could really identify. Some Caribs, especially politically active ones, were aware of the social dynamics involved in this naming, although they also tended to accept it as a fait accompli and there was no discernible desire to reinstate previous names and indeed little evidence that enough of a tradition had survived to enable this to occur were there such a desire.

The preponderance of English place names in the far north of the island argues against this area being central to Carib settlements in the historical period of Carib autonomy. Indeed, south of the Rabacca River there are far more settlements that have retained their Carib names such as Byera, Biabou (reputedly named after a clan of Caribs who settled there from Martinique following the French occupation of that island) and Iambou, although again settlements associated with estates predominate here.

Of the settlements within the Carib community there is a variation in size from small hamlets such as Orange Hill, with no more than a dozen or so families, to Sandy Bay, the largest village with a population of possibly upward of 4,000 and rising¹¹. Here, even more so than on other parts of the windward coast, settlement is restricted to the narrow coastal plain. In the case of Sandy Bay, this close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean has not been without difficulties. Sporadic hurricanes have destroyed a swathe of houses immediately adjacent to the shore and caused the inhabitants to relocate along the coast at London and Megum, a new village adjacent to Overland. The establishment of New Sandy Bay itself was the result of a natural disaster. Shortly after the Second World War, according to informants, there was a flood from one of the many small rivers which destroyed the village of Old Sandy Bay, which is situated about a mile to the north of the present settlement beyond Sion Hill. Old Sandy Bay was abandoned save for a few inhabitants who remained, and the new settlement was built on its present site. Little remains of the original village except ancient wells that have been preserved as archaeological sites, and the area around them adorned with designs similar to those found on the petroglyphs that occur throughout the island.

Within Sandy Bay itself there is a wide variation in the style and structure of housing, from small wooden shacks with no amenities such as water or electricity, to substantial concrete bungalows in the style typical of the island as a whole. The

¹¹ At the census of 1991(NCR 1971) the population of the whole area north of the Dry River was put at under 3000.

centre of the village is built in four tiers, which extend up the side of the hills that surround the small bay, and consists of a mixture of houses interspersed with a few general stores and bars. Immediately to the north of this area are the local primary school, post office and medical centre as well as the two telephone kiosks that serve the community. An electrification scheme reached New Sandy Bay in the mid-1990s, and this has had a dramatic impact on the social life of the village. Previous to this people had relied on kerosene lamps or, in the case of a few proprietors of shops or bars, generators to provide light. Reminiscing of these times it was often remarked how people had made their own amusement without the trappings of the twentieth century. One favourite pastime on nights of the full moon would consist of groups of people strolling around the village and along the beach singing. The construction of a modern dance hall, known as "The Hog Hole", has rapidly transformed the nightlife of the village at weekends. With bright festoons of lights illuminating it, it is a visible symbol of the changes that have taken place in the village.

To the south, the village has extended on to an area known as Big Level, an adjacent bay with a relatively broad coastal strip some six metres above the beach. The beach itself has been marked up as a football pitch, and children can always be seen there playing. Big Level itself consists of a few new concrete houses and a Seventh Day Adventist church. The land was acquired by the present occupiers from the Barnard family after the eruption of 1979. One informant related how he had bought a couple of acres for his family so that his children would be able to build houses of their own there, but such was the general antipathy by financial institutions at the

time to Caribs, who were not generally deemed creditworthy, his attempt was viewed with suspicion. It was assumed that he would not be able to find a deposit or that if he did it could only come from some illegal activity. In fact he sold some livestock, a couple of cows, and used the proceeds. Interviewing this old man he could not hide the pride that he felt in having proved the doubters wrong and that he, a Carib, had been able to provide for his family's future.

This attitude of denial of perceived stereotypical assimilation could be found throughout the village. Another resident who had purchased a house plot and who claimed descent from the Carib chiefs of the windward, had constructed a huge copper bowl used in the preparation of cassava bread, one of the few foods that the Caribs could claim as their own. Continuing some two hundred metres along the road, one encounters the Garifoona Bakery, one of the few institutions that proclaim a Carib heritage. This bakery, along with a couple of bread vans, serves the needs of this and adjacent villages, and a constant trickle of people can be seen going to and fro throughout the day into early evening. These two constructions are the only visible material evidence of the existence of the Caribs as an identifiable group, or at least category of people in Sandy Bay.

This paucity of concrete manifestations of the existence of a Carib community mirrors the lack that is frequently expressed by Caribs regarding their culture. There are sites around the island associated with pre-Columbian populations, particularly the petroglyphs, but these are scattered and not associated with existing Carib settlements. Archaeological evidence also suggests that they were in fact pre-Carib.

They symbolically belong, therefore, not specifically to the Caribs themselves but are part of the general patrimony bequeathed to Vincentians by their collective forebears. That is not to say that there is no archaeological interest on the part of the Caribs; on the contrary, local Caribs were actively involved in the excavations made by Earle Kirby, the curator of the museum located in the botanical gardens in Kingstown. Rather, it is that they feel alienated from these artefacts which, as soon as they are discovered, are removed into the safe keeping of the state. Despite containing two of the major natural excursion sites on the island, La Soufrière and the Falls of Balleine, the Carib Community has no institutionalised cultural centre. This scenario is exacerbated by the existence of precisely these types of amenities on other adjacent islands. A further irony is that present-day Caribs rely entirely on European accounts and wood-cut representations to describe traditional Carib buildings. Nonetheless, several members of the Carib community expressed a desire to see an example of a "traditional" Indian dwelling erected. One of these mentioned several locations that might prove suitable and, interestingly, stressed that what mattered most was that the building should visually represent Carib culture but could equally be constructed using a modern concrete frame. There was, throughout discussions with various members of the community, a pragmatic approach to the reintroduction of Carib architecture into Sandy Bay. The aim was never to simply recreate a building as a museum piece but to integrate it into a wide-ranging programme of development aimed at attracting tourist dollars. Culture was clearly a resource that could be commodified and utilized to regenerate the village and surrounding hinterland. That is not to say that there was no sense of art for art's sake amongst the inhabitants of Sandy Bay, as the reconstruction of an edifice, identifiably Carib, was widely viewed as an important step in the reestablishment of their culture. It was rather a recognition of the constraints imposed
by a government which itself was strapped for cash and forced to operate within
limits imposed externally. What was clearly evident from the conversations that
took place during my period of fieldwork was the difficulty in organizing anything
amongst such a fractious group. The whole village appeared to be split down the
middle regarding political affiliation and upon this political axis there were further
divisions based on religious denomination. Nonetheless, the one episode during
which the community was able to demonstrate a united front to the rest of the
island was precisely when their relationship to the land was brought into question.

Layout of thesis

This thesis consists of an analysis of the specific role of the Caribs within European discourses of alterity and the means by which new subaltern discourses have emerged in the post-colonial period. As such, it does not aim to provide a detailed or exhaustive history¹², but rather focuses on the hegemonic status that this discourse attained, notably in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, prior to Independence. Furthermore, it also seeks to examine the possibilities of counter-hegemonic discourses and their realisation within modern Vincentian historiography. However, it would be erroneous to conclude that Carib history and contemporary life in St. Vincent can be segregated and compartmentalised. The bases of a counter-hegemonic discourse existed throughout the period of what

could be termed European or, later, specifically British cultural hegemony. It did so amongst the Caribs themselves and through the writings of various European authors, who, for whatever reason, sought to promulgate a different version of history. The hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses that existed, and still exist, in St. Vincent regarding the Caribs, must therefore be considered in terms of their dialectical articulation. For this reason, I shall first endeavour to establish how the Caribs were objectified within a European, and particularly British, discourse of alterity. Thus, in Chapter Two I shall examine the early history of the contact between the Caribs and European settlers, notably the French and English. Here I shall describe how various tropes associated with the Caribs came into existence and, more importantly, discuss the form in which the historical record of this period had been transcribed within the colonial period of Vincentian history. As a partial remedy to this perspective I shall focus on the extent to which Caribs were active participants in the struggle for control of the eastern Caribbean. In Chapter Three, I shall attempt to briefly describe the dialectical nature of the discursive objectification of the Caribs. This will consider the articulation of concepts of the "Noble" and "Ignoble Savage" with reference to the discursive practices of colonialism. It will be argued that the objectification of the Carib as historical and, by implication, contemporary subject was realized through the dominance of the "Ignoble Savage" theme in what was to become the hegemonic discourse of modernism and that this process was evident before the annexation of St. Vincent in 1763. Chapter Three will also consider the crucial period of the annexation of St. Vincent and the contrasting views of land that were held by settlers and Caribs.

¹² For detailed history of early European contacts with the Caribs see Boucher, P. (1992) and Hulme, P. (1986).

It will be argued that modern Carib associations of place and identity were initiated at this point in time and that the views and interests of the settlers were themselves being contested in the developing political debates of eighteenth century Europe. In Chapter Four I will furnish an analysis of the extent to which the hitherto dominance of the British colonialist version of Vincentian history has been challenged by recent research into French sources by writers such as Hulme. I will also delineate some further areas that augment the existing Anglophone record and in which future research might prove fruitful. Using more contemporary material, I will seek to examine what Judith Butler (Butler et al 2000) has termed the "incomplete" nature of interpellation and subjectification, in this case of the Caribs as subjects, and the relevance of this for theories of hegemony and the possibility of counter-hegemony. Thus in Chapter Five I will focus on how individuals have been interpellated as Carib subjects and both the limits of this and the historical forms that it has taken. In Chapter Six I will consider the role of land as a focus for identification by individuals as being Carib and consequently the shift in consciousness from being a category of persons "in itself" to one "for itself". In Chapter Seven I will examine the impact of independence in St.Vincent and, with it, the requirement of a new national state identity on Carib self-consciousness. It will be argued that these requirements fundamentally altered concepts associated with being Carib within the political discourse of the Caribbean. It will also consider new political sources from which new positions can derive which contest the previously dominant models of colonialist historical thought. These contestations themselves will be considered within a theoretical framework deriving primarily from Gramsci's concept of hegemony. In Chapter Eight this theoretical perspective will be extended

and discussed in relation to debates regarding tradition and modernity that have occurred, and are still occurring, in St. Vincent. Finally, in the conclusion, I shall locate the specific points of the thesis within wider debates regarding subjectivity and hegemony within a broad range of social sciences.

Chapter 2

Colonial Strategy and Carib Resistance

It was in the seventeenth century that the British and French began to make inroads into the Caribbean. Previous to this it had been the Spanish, from Columbus onwards, who had sought to add to their overseas empire. It was consequently the Spanish who gave Europe its first descriptions of the inhabitants of the Caribbean. But it has been well documented that Columbus himself initially considered that he had reached the coast of Asia by a westerly route. This misconception had significant ramifications regarding the prejudices that Columbus and other Europeans were to bring to the Caribbean during the initial stages of contact. Asia, and particularly China where Columbus believed himself to be heading, had been described two hundred years prior to Columbus by Marco Polo (1959) in his *The Travels of Mano Polo*. This work, probably dictated to a fellow prisoner at Genoa following the battle of Curzola, was the first European text to describe the Far East. But behind Marco Polo's text there was a tradition of the East as a place of marvels that reached back into antiquity. In order to understand how the Caribs were

¹³ For a discussion of Columbus's initial response to his discoveries see Hulme (1986).

inserted into the conceptual world of the Europeans who came in contact with them it is necessary to briefly discuss the view of Asia that prevailed at the time.

Herodotus, writing in the latter half of the fifth century B.C., is the first surviving author to have written of the wonders of the East, although he was preceded by Hecataeus of Miletus who wrote a Periegesis, a journey round the world.¹⁴ Hecataeus's work contained a description of the countries and peoples encountered on a voyage around the Mediterranean as well as descriptions of the interior of Asia as far as Persia, Scythia and India. Herodotus in many ways followed in Hecataeus's footsteps, notably in Egypt, but he also visited Babylon and Scythia. Herodotus claimed to carefully distinguish between what he was told and what he actually saw with his own eyes; nonetheless, when writing of Asia, Herodotus' account becomes a veritable teratology. It was on the borders of Scythia that Herodotus located the Arimaspi, people with one eye (Herodotus IV: 27) and the Anthropophagi, whom he described as being "a nation by themselves and by no means Scythian" (Herodotus IV: 18). 15 Some fifty years after Herodotus, Ktesias of Knidos wrote a treatise on India in which he populated that country with fantastic beings such as the Sciapodes, with one huge foot; the Cynoscephalae, with dog's heads and others who were headless with faces on their chests.¹⁶ Following Alexander the Great's invasion in 326, access to India from Europe greatly increased and at the end of the fourth century the ambassador of Seleucus Nicator to the court of Chandragupta,

¹⁴ For details of Hecatacus see L. Pearson (1939).

¹⁵ All references from Herodotus are from the Loeb edition, translated by A. D. Godley 1921.

¹⁶ For details of the work of Ktesias see Wilson P.H., 1836, Fragments of the history of Ctesias and Bigwood, J. 1964, Ctesias of Cnidus.

Megasthenes, wrote what was to be one of the most influential treatises. Whilst it has not survived, echoes of it can be found in later authors such as Strabo and Pliny. According to Wittkower (1977: 47), "Megasthenes' report on India remained unchallenged for almost 1500 years". There were exceptions to this uncritical style of writing in antiquity of which the most notable is perhaps Strabo's Geography. But Strabo's work proved less influential in the Middle Ages than that of two Latin authors; Pliny's Historia naturalis and the Collectane rerum memorabilium of Solinus. As Wittkower (1977: 49) remarks, "Medieval writers had to rely for their geographical material on books like these, in which sound judgement and exact knowledge were replaced by imagination and fanciful stories, curiosities and marvels".

The imagination of antiquity was brought within the bounds of Holy Scripture by St. Augustine (1998). Whilst acknowledging that the monstrous races described by ancient authors may not be true, St. Augustine ingeniously sets about proving that they could in fact be the means by which God shows that deformities in humans were not a reflection on His wisdom. Thus the teratology of antiquity, which populated Asia with monstrous races, became accepted within Christian dogma. Throughout the Middle Ages there existed not only a literary but also a pictorial tradition used to illustrate manuscripts. Examples of this type of illustration are ubiquitous and confirm the extent to which Europeans expected to find monsters if only they travelled far enough. As late as 1493 Hartmann Schedel's Liber Cronicurum contained a depiction of a Sciapode and an Antipode, with feet facing the wrong way, whilst Cynoscephalae were depicted on the twelfth-century

tympanum of Vézeley, on the thirteenth century Hereford Map, and in Johann Herold's *Heydenweldt* of 1554.

The Spanish sailors of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century could hardly have broken from this view of the East. It was based on a tradition "buttressed by classical authority, believed in by the greatest thinkers, writers and scientists of the time, accepted by the Church and supported by visual material of impressive consistency" (Wittkower 1977: 86). Since Columbus believed, initially at least, that he had reached the Indies, there can be little doubt he would have had no difficulty in believing that some of the islands that he visited would be inhabited by monstrous humans. Whilst Columbus never encountered the Cynoscephalae or Sciapodes, an encounter with a group of natives from Hispaniola was seized upon as evidence of a cultural monstrosity dating back to at least Herodotus, the Anthropophagi. Evidence of this anthropophagous group, known as caniba or carib, was later given in a famous letter by Dr Chanca who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage. 18 The epithet caniba rapidly became the designation of exocannibalism, that is to say, of a practice of capturing victims in war who would be devoured. The Caribs were therefore a group beyond the pale of the sensibilities of the Western Europeans who came in contact with them. Yet, ironically, the very texts of St. Augustine which had foretold their existence, albeit in Asia rather than the Caribbean, had claimed that they were descendants of Adam and therefore not

¹⁷ Schedel, H. 2001, Liber Cronicarum. London: Taschen [1493].

¹⁸ This letter is found in Williams, E. ed. 1963 *Documents of West Indian History, 1492-1655*. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: P.N.M. Publishing, see also Hulme, P. and Whitehead, N. 1992.

beyond redemption.¹⁹ Consequently, the history of the relationship between the Caribs and the Europeans who sought to seize their land is inextricably linked with that of the Catholic Church which aimed to save their souls. Furthermore the Caribs were from the time of Columbus unfavourably compared to the gentle Arawaks. This view was further enhanced by Peter Martire who described the latter as "innocent sheep" whilst the Caribs were seen as "ravenous wolves" (Boucher 1992: 17) Henceforth those natives who resisted the Spanish state and Catholic Church were deemed to be cannibals and therefore suitable for enslavement.²⁰

Further corroboration of the existence of cannibals in the New World came from the Tupinambas of South America. Works such as Hans Staden's Nus, Feroces et Anthropophages of 1557 contained lurid descriptions of their cannibalistic predilections. Staden himself related how he came close to being cooked and such imagery confirmed that the Caribs were not alone in their savagery. Throughout the early sixteenth century a series of works were published describing the Caribs and other Amerindian groups in a similar vein.

The early history of the penetration of the Europeans into the Eastern Caribbean has tended to focus almost exclusively on the efforts of the English and French to establish themselves as the dominant colonial power in the region. The Caribs were cast as passive participants in the unfolding drama. This is true as much for

¹⁹ This argument was put forward by St. Augustine in his work, The City of God Against the Pagans, edited and translated by Dyson, R.W. 1998.

²⁰ For early encounters between the Spanish and Caribs see Sued Badillo (1978) and Thomas C. Patterson (1991)

Caribbean authors as for those from the colonial powers. In his general history of the West Indies, Eric Williams (1970) makes only four references to the Caribs. The first of these refers to Columbus and his view of the Caribs as a population fit for enslavement; the second mentions the failure of the English to settle St. Lucia in 1605 owing to their opposition; the third notes the evacuation of the Caribs from the other islands to Dominica and St. Vincent and their annihilation on Grenada at the hands of the French; and fourthly they are described as a means by which the scheming Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the French Minister of the Marine, sought to drive the Dutch from the Caribbean. These four themes, as potential slaves, opponents to European settlement, refugees and finally pawns in the strategic games of the Europeans, comprise the basis on which Carib history was considered prior to independence on St. Vincent. The only form of activity that is allowed in this narrative is one of warlike resistance, a resistance as unreasonable and obdurate as it was ultimately futile. Before Williams has reached one-third of the way through his study of the Caribbean, the Caribs have disappeared. It is the two themes of passivity and disappearance, or more accurately perhaps invisibility, which will be the main focus of this part of the thesis.

Whilst for many contemporary Vincentian Caribs the wars of the eighteenth century represent a glorious attempt to maintain their independence, there was, within the wider community, a much greater acceptance of the British colonial version. In this version, the rebels were mere puppets of French colonialist opportunism, a theme that repeats the fourth trope that we have already identified in Williams's work. There is little doubt that from the latter half of the seventeenth century the French

gained increasing influence over the Caribs. The reasons for this are by no means straightforward, and it was certainly true that during the seventeenth century it was the French who instigated the ousting of the Caribs from their islands in the north of the Lesser Antilles rather than the English. Craton (1996: 71) has noted this phenomenon, "Though the French and the English never hesitated to make treaties with the Caribs when it suited them (and to ignore them when it did not), such transactions actually aided the French infiltration into the Windward Islands, while they convinced the English that the Caribs were wily and treacherous enemies of their own expansion". Nonetheless, by whatever means, for the Caribs the English came to represent the unacceptable face of European settlement in the Caribbean, whilst the French were seemingly accorded more benign intentions. How this came about and the Carib response to these two different forms of colonial penetration will be the subject of this section with reference to the trope of passivity outlined earlier.

The first settlements on a previously inhabited island in the Eastern Caribbean, by both English and French, took place on the small island of St. Christopher's (Crouse 1940: 12). The architect of the English enterprise was one Thomas Warner²², a Suffolk man, who had been a member of an attempted settlement on the mainland of South America in 1620.²³ Under threat of attack by the Dutch and

²¹ See also Craton, M. (1982).

²² According to Williamson (1926), Warner was an acquaintance of John Winthrop, the founder of Massachusetts

²³ See for Warner's life, Warner, A (1973) Sir Thomas Warner: Pioneer of the West Indies: A Chronicle of His Family, London. A discussion of Warner in relation to his son "Indian" Warner is given in Hulme, P and Whitehead, N (1992).

unable to maintain royal approval, the auspices of the colony were not favourable, and Warner along with John Rhodes and Christopher Bims left at the suggestion of Captain Painton, who claimed to have some knowledge of the Caribbean. The small island of St. Christopher²⁴, whilst not being uninhabited like Barbados, had a relatively small group of Caribs living there. Warner apparently met a local chief called Tegremon and established a friendly relationship with him. Smith reports that Warner stayed on St. Christopher for a year before returning to England in order to enlist the support of local businessmen.²⁵ On his return to St. Christopher, probably in January 1624²⁶ with a group of would-be planters and his thirteen year-old son Edward, Warner immediately set about constructing a fort complete with loopholes. According to Hilton²⁷, the Caribs became suspicious of this and were about to mount an attack. Warner was saved by a Carib woman named Barbe who told him of the plan (du Tertre 1667: I: 5). He was able to mount a pre-emptive strike in which many of the Caribs were killed, including his erstwhile friend Tegremon, and the rest were driven from the island.²⁸ Whilst it is true that Warner had never intended to share the island with the Caribs, the reference by Hilton that they were at a drinking party does lend credence to the claim that he considered his position

²⁴ St Christopher is the modern day St. Kitts but for the purposes of this thesis I have continued with the nomenclature as it is found in the sources.

²⁵ PRO C.O.1/3

²⁶ Crouse notes that some accounts give 1623 as the date of his return but concludes that the census of modern opinion favoured the later date cf. Crouse (1940).

²⁷ John Hilton's account of these events is recorded in the Egerton MSS. 2395: 503-7.

²⁸ The identity of this Carib woman and her relationship to Warner are extremely interesting for two reasons. Firstly plans to launch an expedition were taken at an outou, a sort of drinking party from which women were excluded according to early accounts; secondly Warner had a son by a Carib woman, Thomas, known as "Indian Warner" who fully acknowledged him as his own. Warner's mother is described as a slave by Du Tertre from Dominica but his testimony is itself second hand. A full discussion of "Indian" Warner can be found in Hulme and Whitehead 1992:89-106 which gives extracts from the various surviving sources.

threatened. Labat (1772), admittedly writing much later, describes drinking parties, or oucous, as a preliminary to war and goes on to describe how the practice of throwing the boucanned limb of a deceased enemy into the assembled men and their devouring it, may have been the basis of the stories of cannibalism with which the Caribs were linked. Warner himself may have been aware of the significance of holding an oucou and acted accordingly.²⁹ It does not, however, appear to have been the mere presence of Europeans that excited the hostility of the Caribs as the attempt by them to appropriate land in a manner incompatible with their own practices and the setting up of a fortified position. Why Warner felt it necessary to build a fort is not known but his overall aim was to grow tobacco, which was enjoying high demand in England and was benefiting from a ban on its cultivation there.

A further indication that the Caribs were prepared to admit strangers, providing it was on their terms, is that, on his return from England, Warner had found a naked Frenchman living amongst them. It is uncertain how he arrived, whether the survivor of a shipwreck or put ashore to recuperate from some malady, but he appeared to be relatively unharmed and living peaceably with the Caribs. His description as going naked among the "savages" may indicate that he had been coopted into their society in some manner. There is, though, no evidence that the Caribs had enslaved him.

²⁹ In his account Du Tertre makes the attack on Tegremon occur later after the establishment of the French; he also notes that the Caribs on St. Christopher's were supported by a sea-borne invasion of up to 3-4,000 Caribs

Within a year, Warner had produced the first successful crop of tobacco and had been reinforced by the crew of a French privateer under the command of Pierre Belain d'Esnambuc. The introduction of this additional manpower was to prove fortuitous for Warner since, according to du Tertre (1667: I: 6), a force of 3,000 to 4,000 Caribs attacked the island.³⁰ The French bore the brunt of this attack, and it was only through combining their firepower with that of the English that they were able to repel it.³¹ This again highlights the Carib ability to not only defend an island but to project military force in recognition of the threat posed by European settlement.

The pattern of an initial amicable welcome followed by an attack, once it was clear that the visitors planned to settle, became a marker for the perfidious character of the Caribs within European colonial discourse. In fact, an incident occurred in 1605that bears remarkable similarities to the Carib response to Warner on St. Christopher's. A group of settlers set out for a colony in Guiana founded by Charles Leigh in 1604 on the Wiapoco River but, having strayed off course, pulled in at St. Lucia for provisions. At this point the Caribs showed no signs of hostility and not only traded fruit, chicken and turtle eggs but allowed the use of some huts by those

from the nearby islands (1667: I: 6).

³⁰ Although Crouse frequently followed the work of Du Tertre, his account of the attack by the Caribs on the colonists of St. Christopher differs with regard to the response of the Caribs to European firepower. "At the first volley the front rank fell, and the rest, seeing for the first time the deadly effects of the white man's weapons, turned and fled ignominiously to their canoes. They were pursued by the victorious pioneers, who quickly launched their boats and gave chase." Compare this to Du Tertre's account given in footnote 31 below.

³¹ Du Terte remarks that despite being driven off the Caribs fought with great resolve. "Se battirent courageusement on retraite, et tirerent un si grand nombre de fleches, qu'ils firent perir environ 100 hommes de deux Nations." (1667: I: 6).

would-be settlers who were suffering from the rigours of the crossing. It was only with the departure of the ship and the realisation that their visitors meant to occupy land on the island that relations between would-be settlers and hosts deteriorated. The Caribs turned on the interlopers who were forced to defend themselves by hiding behind a makeshift defence made of chests piled up to form a rough stockade. Of the sixty-seven men who landed in August, only nineteen survived by the end of September and of these, who fled to the Spanish Main, only four finally returned to Europe. 32 Again there is a marked difference in the response of the Caribs to mariners as opposed to settlers. Engaging as they evidently did in interisland trade, the Caribs would no doubt have been accustomed to provisioning groups and extending hospitality to travellers, a point borne out by the missionaries who lived amongst them. Mariners, therefore, might have been able to utilise this pre-existing system when they were forced to land on Carib-controlled territory. Further evidence of this type of support system for traders is also furnished by the Dutch, who were concerned only with trade and provisioning with the Caribs rather than settlement, and who consequently were able to maintain good relations with the Caribs at this time.³³

The ejection of the Caribs from St. Christopher's was the first instance of what was to be a protracted evacuation of the islands by the native population, a process that was to last one hundred and fifty years. From their position on St. Christopher's,

³² An account of this ill-fated expedition is given in An Houre Glasse of Indian News published by John Nicholl, one of the survivors of the settlement in London in 1607. For an extract of this see Hulme and Whitehead (1992)

³³ A discussion of the relationship of the Dutch with the Caribs of St. Vincent is given in Chapter 5 below.

the French were able to begin their colonization of the northern islands of the Lesser Antilles. On 25th May 1635 an expedition was sent out from Dieppe under the command of Sieur de l'Olive, the Lieutenant Governor of St. Christopher's, and Jean Duplessis who was fitting out a ship for the West Indian trade and had had useful experience on previous expeditions to the area. They were accompanied by four Dominican friars whose task was to work amongst the Caribs as well as serving the colonists. It is largely from the work of this religious order that much of our present information regarding the daily life of the Caribs derives. From the outset the attempt at colonisation had been ill conceived. It is likely that Duplessis and de l'Olive may have painted an over-favourable picture of Guadeloupe in order to receive backing in Paris. If this was so it was to seriously backfire on them. The financiers of the expedition did little in the way of supporting the colonists with the wherewithal for their survival. On one occasion du Tertre (1667: I: 81) relates that the colonists received a ship, ostensibly sent to re-supply them, only to find that the ship itself was desperately low on provisions and that, far from relieving their burden, actually increased it. Throughout this period, the Caribs, far from posing a threat to the settlers, in many ways supported them, and du Tertre records how the Caribs had been in the habit of supplying the French with occasional provisions. This came to an end when, following the death of Duplessis, de l'Olive decided to attack the Caribs in an effort to seize their supplies. The plan failed, and the Caribs received forewarning of the intended attack and withdrew, first into the mountains and then in their boats to Dominica from where they mounted a hit and run campaign in which they were aided not only by natives of that island but those of St. Vincent as well. In this episode du Tertre clearly casts de l'Olive as the villain.

On finding only an old man, his grandsons, and two other young men left in a village, de l'Olive had the old man stabbed and thrown into the sea after he had been forced to watch his grandsons being bayoneted to death before his eyes. Du Tertre (1667: I: 86) reports that de l'Olive had sent one of the boys called Marinet, the son of a prominent Carib known to the French as Le Baron, to find the women, but he had sensed danger and escaped. There is also some indication that most of the Carib men may have been away at the time, possibly aiding the Caribs of Martinique, and de l'Olive had seized the opportunity to massacre the women and children. Certainly in his depiction of the events, du Tertre only speaks of the attempts by de l'Olive to locate the women, and the only male Caribs to which he refers are either old men or young boys.

The reaction of the Caribs of Guadeloupe marks a departure from their normal policy of not allowing groups of visitors to settle on the islands. This may have been due to the fact that the original settlement, which, as the French were to discover, was hardly suitable for agriculture, rather than a change in their attitude to the settlers. The availability of land on Guadeloupe and the location of the settlers may have conspired to convince the Caribs that they were less threatened than proved to be the case. By August, a second expedition under the command of d'Esnambuc set out for Martinique. They arrived there, according to du Tertre (1667: I: 101), on the 1st September 1638 and immediately set about building a fortified position, after which d'Esnambuc left the settlers and returned to St. Christopher's.

The construction of a fort on Martinique immediately precipitated an armed response from the Caribs. However, due to their experience of the firepower of the French, they were obliged to embark on a strategy of small forays against working parties and ambushes rather than a frontal assault. This was countered by the French who emerged from their fortifications heavily armed. The Caribs in their turn modified their tactics and called for assistance from other islands. Du Tertre relates that they received assistance from Dominica, Guadeloupe and St. Vincent and were able to muster some fifteen hundred men. This raises two separate issues: the first concerns their attitude to settlers; the second their ability to mobilise manpower for warfare. Given that du Tertre claims that, following the attack by de l'Olive the Caribs abandoned Guadeloupe, then the assistance sent to Martinique must have preceded this. But we also know that at that time the settlers were in dire straits and the Caribs were aiding them by providing them with provisions. We thus have a situation where the Caribs in Guadeloupe are simultaneously aiding the colonists in their own island whilst sending men to eject them from another. One can only speculate as to the reasoning behind these two very different approaches adopted by the Guadeloupe Caribs, but it is evidence of a far higher level of political sophistication than they are normally credited with. This level of sophistication is borne out by their ability to call upon and obtain reinforcements from not only Guadeloupe to the north but also from Dominica and St. Vincent to the south. It is also worth noting that neither the Caribs of St. Lucia nor Grenada

are mentioned, and they presumably did not take part in this campaign. This may be due to demographic factors that limited their ability, or a lack of specific alliances with the Caribs of Martinique at this time; on this, though, du Tertre is silent. But even without the participation of Caribs from all the islands of the Lesser Antilles, this provides another instance of how the Caribs were able to mobilise not merely at a local or island level but on a regional basis.

The French with their superior firepower were able to withstand the combined assault of the Caribs who, reconciled to their inability to oust the colonists, attempted to come to an accommodation with them. As a consequence, the French settled on the leeward side of the island whilst the Caribs withdrew and resided on the eastern, windward side. The attacks on Guadeloupe continued for several years until they were brought to an end by French diplomacy as much as force. Following the death of d'Esnambuc in 1637, the directors of the company appointed his nephew, Jacques du Parquet, as Lieutenant Governor of Martinique, whilst the title of Governor General of the Caribee Islands was awarded in 1638 to Philippe de Lonvilliers de Poincy, a high ranking aristocrat who had served as an admiral. ³⁴ Eager to extend his influence to the surrounding islands, De Poincy dispatched his protégé, de Sabouilly, to Guadeloupe as a response to a request for aid from the island, and in particular from the company's representative, M. Voléry. Du Tertre (1667: I: 147) describes two sea battles which the French under Sabouilly fought

³⁴ Of De Poincy, Du Tertre informs us "qui estoit pour lors à Paris sans aucun employ, à cause de quelque démeslé qu'il avoit eu avec M. l'Archevesque de Bourdeaux qui commandoit l'armée navale." (1667: I: 122)

with the Caribs.³⁵ In both, the Caribs were said to be forced to retire having no answer to the superior firepower of the French, but on the second occasion the French under Sabouilly were only saved by the appearance of reinforcements sent out by de Poincy from Martinique. If the Caribs were able to engage armed French warships in this manner that can only indicate that they had devised schemes to circumvent to some extent their opponents' enormous advantage in weaponry. This indicates once again a high level of sophistication in their command structure. The setback, however, caused the Caribs to curtail their raiding for some six months while they regrouped. However, Sabouilly's position was undermined by events in France. De Poincy had intended to have Sabouilly confirmed by the directors of the company as Governor of Guadeloupe, but instead they appointed the man he had sent as his representative, Jean Aubert. The Company were only too well aware of De Poincy's power and had no wish to appoint someone they regarded as one of his cronies.36

On his return to the Caribbean in 1640, Aubert made for Martinique where he was

advised by the Governor, du Parquet, to make peace with the Caribs. Du Parquet

³⁵ Du Tertre (1667: I: 149) describes the events as follows:- "Il apperçeut à un de ses costez deux autres pirogues de Sauvages, qui s'alloient saisir d'un petit canot, où il y avoit quatre François; cecy l'obligea de faire revirer sa Chaloupe sur eux et de les poursuivre, mais il fut constraint de s'arrester tout court pour repescher ces pauvres gens, qui dans la crainte de tomber entre les mains de ces antropophages, estoient jettez à la Mer." Whilst Du Tertre frequently refers to the Caribs as savages or barbarians, it is interesting to note that the trope of cannibal still applied to them in the mid seventeenth century. Furthermore, Du Tertre clearly intimates that this view of the Caribs was common amongst the French settlers of that time.

³⁶ "La Compagnie deja bien informée des violences de M. de Poincy, craignant qu'il ne se rendit trop puissant, si on luy accordoit M. de Sabouilly (qui estoit une personne toute attachée a ces interests) pour gouverneur de la Guadeloupe, shoisit M. Aubert, et l'honora de cet employ" (du Tertre 1667: I: 189).

offered to mediate and, for his part, Aubert stopped off at Dominica where, according to du Tertre (1667: I: 192), he sumptuously entertained a group of Carib chiefs before proceeding to Guadeloupe. Shortly afterwards, we are told, a group of Caribs, having previously visited du Parquet, appeared off Guadeloupe bearing gifts of food for the new Governor. Following a meeting on the beach, a treaty was worked out, apparently in sign language, which established what was, for the French, a trading relationship (du Tertre 1667: I: 196). According to Du Tertre, a Carib chief whom the French referred to as Le Baron visited Aubert and had his son remain with the French; he also tried to induce Aubert to allow his own son to go with him but in the end had to content himself with one of the servants. Le Baron had previously been described by du Tertre as a notable Carib chief of Guadeloupe and one of his sons had been seized by de l'Olive in his frustrated attempt to attack the women and children previously described. In his dealings with the French, he adopted a French name, a process that was to continue into the eighteenth century. He is further mentioned by Raymond Breton (1929) who notes how at least some of the Carib chiefs adopted French names for use with foreigners whilst retaining their native names amongst their own people. Thus one of the chiefs on Dominica was said to be called Onkalé by the Caribs and Hannichon by the French whilst "L'autre a la cabesterre appelé Halannena, de nous, Le Baron" (Breton 1929). His acceptance of the French occupation of the island would therefore have been highly significant. The policy of appearement of the settlers rather than outright opposition to them had moved to another level, and the accommodation of the settlers on Guadeloupe had ended with its abandonment by the Caribs.

Our main source for this period of Carib history, Jean Baptiste du Tertre, had accompanied Aubert from France along with four other Dominicans. Born in 1610, the son of a Calais doctor, he had travelled widely in his youth, visiting Greenland as a seaman on a Dutch ship, before enlisting in the army and fighting at the siege of Maastricht in 1633. Two years later he joined the Dominicans. Du Tertre's major work, Histoire Générale des Antilles Habitées par les Français, published in 1667, was an enlargement of an earlier work of 1664 on the French colonies in the West Indies until 1651. He added a natural history, which included a description of the Caribs, as a second volume, and four years later two further volumes on colonial political history. The full significance of du Tertre's work in European discourses of colonialism and especially its influence on Rousseau is beyond the scope of the present study, but it is important at this juncture to consider du Tertre as part of a tradition going back to Bartolomé Las Casas. This tradition portrayed native American Indians as something more than the inhuman savages that remained the stereotype, which continued to dominate descriptions of them emanating from the would-be settlers and their sponsors (Las Casas 1992).37 In particular, du Tertre describes the Caribs as being:

just as nature brought them forth, that is to say with great simplicity and natural naivety: they are all equal, with almost no sign of superiority or servitude; and one can hardly recognize any kind of respect, even between relations such as by son for father. No one is richer or poorer than his companion, and all unanimously limit their desires to what is useful for them, and indeed necessary, and scorn everything

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³⁷ Las Casas's book *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, was originally published in Seville in 1552.

that is superfluous as not worthy to be owned (du Tertre 1667 in Hulme P. and Whitehead, N. 1992: 129).³⁸

Du Tertre is thus a key figure in the later reconstruction of the Carib as "Noble Savage" in the Enlightenment, but his work has not been translated into English and in the Anglophone Caribbean his influence is largely felt second-hand.³⁹ Du Tertre is also part of a wider corpus of work produced by the French missionaries, first Dominicans but later Jesuits as well, who were engaged to minister to the spiritual needs of the settlers and bring the Caribs within the Church.⁴⁰ Time and again the claims of a proselytising Church were used to justify the inroads of settlers and their political and commercial masters throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was even true of the English who were far more desultory in their efforts to convert the Caribs. The work of the religious missions was, in fact, one of the main factors that distinguished French colonialism from that of the English at that time. From 1635, when the first of these missions under Fr. Raymond Breton arrived in Guadeloupe, the French were able to establish a channel of communication with the Caribs. By Fr. Breton's endeavours the French

³⁸ The original French version of du Tertre (1667: II: 357) states "Les Sauvages de ces isles sont les plus contens, les plus heureux, les moins vicieux, les plus sociables, les moins contrafaits, a les moins tourmentez de la maladies, de toutes les nations du monde. Car ils sont tells que la nature les a produits, c'est adire, dans une grande simplicité. Et naïfveté naturelle: ils sont tous egaux, sans que l'on connoisse Presque aucune sorte de superiorité ny de servitude; et à peine peut on reconnoistre aucune sorte de respect, mesme entre les parens, comme du fils au pere. Nul n'est plus riche, ny plus pauvre que son compagnon, et tout unanimement bornent leurs desires à ce qui leur est utile, et precisement necessaire, et meprisent tout ce qu'ils ont de superflu, comme chose indigne d'estre possedé.".

³⁹ Whilst there has been no complete translation, a small section of his description of the Caribs can be found in Hulme, and Whitehead, eds 1992. Nellis Crouse provides what amounts to a paraphrasing of du Tertre's text in two volumes French Pioneers in the West Indies 1624-1664 and The French struggle for the West Indies 1665-1713 (Crouse 1940, 1943).

⁴⁰ Of these religious writers, one can mention: Biet, Antoine 1664; Voyage de la France Equinoxiale en l'Isle de Cayenne enterprise par les François en l'anée MDCLII Paris, Bouton, Jacques 1635. Relation de l'establissement des François depuis l'an Paris Du Puis, Mathias 1652; Relation de l'establissement d'une colonie françoise dans la Guadeloupe.

missionaries were able to learn the Carib language, especially after he produced a French/Carib dictionary, a grammar and a catechism.⁴¹ The process was far from unidirectional; the missionaries taught their own language to the Caribs and by the eighteenth century, if not sooner, French had become the language through which they communicated with Europeans. Over time, however, the adoption of French helped to frame the English perception of the Caribs as being allied to their implacable enemies, a perception, furthermore, that at various times the English settlers were able to utilise for their own ends. Nor was the fact that the main memorialists of Carib culture were attached to the missions without significant drawbacks. The aim of the Dominicans and later Jesuits was to persuade the Caribs to abandon, to their mind, pagan ways and accept Christianity; as a consequence they showed little appetite for recording their system of beliefs in any more than the most peremptory and dismissive fashion. However, it is also necessary to place du Tertre within the context of the period in which he was writing especially with regard to the struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism in Europe. Du Tertre goes to great pains to dismiss the accounts of Protestant writers such as de Rochefort. In this he proved remarkably successful, and his work provided the basis for the dominant discourse of French colonialism in the seventeenth century and beyond.

Caen; Pelleprat, Pierre 1665; Relations des Missions des P.P. de la Compagnie de Jesus. Paris Rochefort, Charles Cesar de 1667; Histoire Naturelle des Antilles de l'Amerique. 2 vols. Lyons.

⁴¹ In addition Fr. Breton also produced a history of the settlement of Guadeloupe that gives valuable information. Like du Tertre's work it has not been translated but was edited in 1929 by Joseph Rennard as Relation de l'ile de la Guadeloupe.

Carib relations with the French were regularised through the 1640s as the latter sought to consolidate their position rather than expand. Du Tertre's narrative of this time reflects the internecine struggles of various French governors such as Houël, who had replaced Aubert on Guadeloupe, with de Poincy, the Governor-General. (du Tertre 1667: I 224-267 passim). But by 1648 the French began once more to seek to extend their dominion. St. Martins, an island previously colonised by the Spanish but abandoned at this time, was apportioned with the Dutch in much the same manner as St. Christopher's with the English (du Tertre 1667: I: 412 ff). De Poincy also attempted to occupy the island of St. Bartholomew, which lay between St. Martins and St. Christopher's. Although initially successful, this colony was attacked by the Caribs and the inhabitants were killed (Crouse 1940: 187). Du Tertre is silent on where the Caribs involved in this were from and the details of what took place.⁴²

De Poincy was more fortunate in his attempt on St. Croix in 1650 and ousted the Spanish, who themselves had recently expelled a group of English and Dutch settlers there. Meanwhile, Houël had colonized Mariegalante, to the south of Guadeloupe, with fifty men. Neither of these further settlements appears to have

on en comptoit jusques a cent." Du Tertre(1667:I: 413).

^{42 &}quot;Cette petite Colonie s'accrut par les soins de quelques habitans de St. Christopher, et particulierement du sieur Bonhomme, qui y prirent des habitations, sur lesquelles ils mirent les François et des Negres, sous la conduite de quelques Commandeurs: mais comme c'estoit plûtost pour complaire à M.de Poincy, que pour entirer du profit, il ne faut pas s'estonner si elle n'a jamais esté bien peuplée. Ce fut aussi ce qui dona envie aux Sauvage d'en chaser les François, car ils y firent un si horrible carnage en l'ánée 1656 qu'elle fut absolument abandonée; ceux qui échaperent de la fureurde ces barbares n'y voulurent plus retourner, les maistres repûrent se resoudre d'y renvoyer leurs gens, jusques en l'année 1659 que la paix estant faite avec eux M. de Poincy renvoya quelques 30 hommes, qui se sont insensiblement multiplies, en sorte qu'en 1664

been of major concern to the Caribs and indeed a group of them were reported by du Tertre as visiting the commander of Mariegalante on their return from an expedition against Antigua. These Caribs, on arriving home in the Capesterre region of Dominica, found that a group of Europeans, presumably French from Martinique, had raided their homes. The Caribs returned to Mariegalante, killed the settlers and destroyed their village.

The French in Martinique under du Parquet were also expanding to the south. Late in 1648, an exploratory force was sent to Grenada, the most southerly of the Lesser Antilles, under the command of La Rivière, a sea captain who is reported to have spoken Carib. After distributing copious amounts of alcohol and extolling the advantages of an alliance against the English, he returned to Martinique and reported to the Governor. Du Parquet then embarked with a small colony and, following a meeting with a local chief called Kairouane at which he distributed gifts of axes, scythes, various tools and, according to du Tertre, a magnificent red coat adorned with silver, an arrangement was made whereby the French founded a settlement at what is now St. George's Bay. Again the Caribs had acquiesced and accepted the French, allowing them to clear the land and erect houses on the shores of a lagoon. Crouse (1940: 194 note 1) notes that in addition to du Tertre there also exists an anonymous narrative entitled *Histoire de l'isle de Grenade en Amerique 1649-1659* that gives much greater details of the events concerning the early colonization of the island and is considered more reliable by Pierre Margry in his early study of

French colonies (Margry 1879).⁴³ The account given by the anonymous author differs not merely in minor detail from that of du Tertre but in its general tone in that it clearly shows the Caribs as being opposed to the French settlement of their land and in this supports the version of events given by Rochefort; "Les Français eurent à leur arrive beaucoup de démêlés avec les Karaibes qui leur contestèrent quelques mois par la force des armes la paisible possession" (Rochefort cited in Roget; 1975: 16). The anonymous author reports a dialogue between the French commander La Rivière and the Carib leader Kairouane.

Nous n'allons point chez vous, et pourquoy venez-vous chez nous? Nous ne voulons point de votre terre et pourquoy prenez-vous la notre? Nous nous contentons du notre, que ne vous contentez-vous du vostre?

This clearly indicates that the Caribs were well aware of the implications of allowing the French and other Europeans to settle on their island. The consequences of doing so had been shown most clearly on St. Christopher and elsewhere. Be that as it may the acquiescence of some of the Carib chiefs allowed the French to once more gain a foothold.

This particular instance is of special importance since it demonstrates again the divisions that apparently operated within Carib society. Whilst some at least of the chiefs of Grenada favoured a policy of appearement of the French, granting land in exchange for alliances against the English and a few trinkets, which no doubt enhanced their prestige, their immediate neighbours on the island of St. Vincent had

⁴³ This work was edited and published in 1975 by Jacques Petitjean Roget. Whilst it contains many indecipherable words and lacunae in the text it remains an invaluable piece of informnation for the early history of the French colony on Grenada.

consistently favoured a more active policy of opposition. It is also possible that the situation on Grenada was further complicated by the possibility that there may have been two separate groups of native Americans on the island. The anonymous author states that the savages of the island were Galibis as much as Caribs. This statement is further reinforced by Pelleprat (1655) who claimed that the island of Tobago was inhabited by Galibis, that is to say Caribs from the mainland, whilst Grenada was inhabited by both Caribs and Galibis, that is to say both mainland and island Caribs.

The looting of a Carib canoe in the Grenadines, which extend between Grenada and St. Vincent, furnished the Caribs of the latter with a casus bellum, which was endorsed by their compatriots on Dominica. The Vincentian Caribs were able to send out eleven canoes and perhaps five hundred men to attack the colony. However, the French were warned by a local chief called Duquesne, which appears to be a French name and perhaps demonstrates his alliance with them. However, given that the Caribs of Grenada were generally notable by their absence from large-scale forces sent out by the Caribs in the north, the possibility that there was a longer standing dispute between the Caribs of Grenada and those to the north cannot be discounted. In any event the French retreated behind their palisade and waited for the Caribs to attack. But experience had taught the Caribs to adapt their strategy, and they contented themselves with destroying crops and setting fire to the buildings. They also attempted to start fires to the windward of the fort in an

⁴⁴ The anonymous author states that du Quesne, who was "amy de nos François" informed the French of an impending attack, allowing them to stock up on provisions to withstand a siege (Roget: 1975: 62).

attempt to ignite the wooden stockade that formed the main defence of the French. Following the failure of this initial foray the Vincentian Caribs and evidently those from Grenada as well, subsequently adopted a more hostile stance to the French. There then followed an event that was one of the defining moments of Carib identity formation. The anonymous author recounts the story of a Carib whom the French called Thomas, perhaps indicating that he had been baptised, being rebuffed by the brother of a girl he wished to wed, who was also the daughter of Duquesne. Apparently Thomas killed her brother and then fled to Martinique where he sought refuge from the French. He explained to du Parquet that he was a friend of the French and that he would help them surprise the Caribs on Grenada at a meeting that they were holding. Du Parquet responded by leading a force of three hundred men to Grenada. Once there he took a detachment and surrounded a group of about forty Caribs, oblivious to the impending threat on the top of a hill adjacent to the coast. The Caribs were totally surprised as the French opened fire on them and, unable to break out, they finally retreated back to the cliff overlooking the sea and, putting their hands over their eyes, one by one, hurled themselves off.⁴⁵ Even today the hill from which they leapt bears the name Morne des Sauteurs, and it remains a potent reminder for many modern Caribs of the realities of their history. One such resident of Sandy Bay, who had recently been on a trip to Grenada, had visited the

⁴⁵ Du Tertre (1667: I: 430) relates the events thus "ceux qui échaperent coururent vers le precipice, ou se voyant vivement poursuivis, apres avoir mis leurs mains devant leurs yeux, ils se jetterent de cette haute montagne dans la mer, où ils perirent miserablement, au nombre de quarante, outre quarante qui estoient demeurez sur la place."

site in what might be termed a sort of pilgrimage and related how he thought it far more likely that the French had driven his forebears into the sea at bayonet-point.⁴⁶

His work on Grenada done, du Parquet immediately turned his attention to St. Lucia. The reasons for this certainly needs some explaining since to reach that island he would have had to pass directly past St. Vincent which, according to the French accounts, was the home of their most implacable enemies. Clearly du Parquet did not feel inclined to hazard an attempt on that island with the forces he had available. Despite the failure of two attempts by the English to found a colony on St. Lucia, du Parquet sent out a small expedition that settled on the site of the modern Castries and, having erected a well-built fort, set about clearing the land. Again there seems to have been a change in the tactics employed to deal with the interlopers. In 1638, Thomas Warner had attempted to occupy St. Lucia by granting a commission to a local planter, one Captain Judlee (Crouse 1940: 202). The colony barely managed to survive and had to beg for provisions and reinforcements in 1640 from St. Christopher's. The parlous position of the colonists was further exacerbated by events to the north. The captain of an English ship off Dominica had invited a group of Caribs aboard and, whilst they were eagerly partaking of the hospitality that was on offer, the ship attempted to weigh anchor (du Tertre 1667: I:

⁴⁶ The *leap into the sea* has become a trope which describes the Carib response to adversity and, especially, capture. It is frequently used to describe how they responded to attempts to enslave them, ostensibly preferring death to servitude. But the suicidal nature of a leap into the sea cannot be assumed. Doubtless for most European sailors of the time, the vast majority of whom could not swim, it would appear so, but the ability of the Caribs in water was legendary. Labat tells of a Carib who killed a fifteen foot hammerhead shark, that had previously bitten off a boy's leg, armed only with a knife and earlier Spanish accounts relate how when their canoes had capsized the Caribs were still able to fire off their bows whilst treading water. Such stories are even alive today and one informant told me that when he was a boy he had been down on the beach with an older Carib who had asked him if he wanted to eat. The older of the two then proceeded to swim out and wrestled a five foot shark back to the shore by grasping it by the gills.

434). The plan was doubtless to sell the Caribs as slaves. However, on discovering what was occurring, the Caribs rushed on deck and all but four managed to hurl themselves into the sea and swim for the safety of Dominica. Once there they held an *oucon*, to which the chiefs from Martinique and St.Vincent were invited, and they organized a raid on the colony on St. Lucia as a reprisal in August 1640 (du Tertre 1667: I: 434). The majority of the settlers were killed, the buildings that had been erected were destroyed, and the remaining settlers fled the island, which remained solely in Carib occupation until the arrival of the French some ten years later.⁴⁷

The careful avoidance of St. Vincent by du Parquet was well observed as it was from there that the next challenge to French expansion came. In 1654 a Vincentian Carib, who had been accused of murdering one of the crew of a French ship, was tied to the mast and flogged. However, he escaped back to the island. This proved to be the spark that was to ignite the resentment of the Caribs of the constant encroachment on their land by the French. They first destroyed the mission on the island, which for them at least would have been a symbol of their oppressors. For all their "good works", the missionaries were viewed with deep suspicion by the Caribs and, according to du Tertre, the term "Christian" was practically an insult,

⁴⁷ Du Tertre (1667) claims that the English blamed the French for their misfortune, "les Angloise pour couvrir leur lâcheté & le negligence en imputerent la faute à M. du Parquet, croyant qu'il avoit animé les Sauvages de on Isles à cette expedition."

^{** &}quot;Au commencement de cette anée 1654 les Sauvages de toutes les Isles commencement une nouvelle guerre qui anant duré fait nâger dans le sang, le carnage & Presque toutes les Isles que nous possedons; le veritable sujet de cette guerre ne fut autre que l'establissement des François dans Mariegalande, Sainte Alouzie & la Grenade; & si les Sauvages ne s'y opposerent pas dez le commencement de toutes leurs forces, c'est qu'ils esperoient toûjours que les François n'y demeureroient pas longtemps" (Du Tertre 1667: I: 465). Du Tertre goes on to state how a dispute between a Frenchman and a Vincentian Carib led to the former drawing his pistol which, however, failed to fire. The Carib ran off and called for assistance and the Frenchman was hunted down and killed. The Caribs then attacked the Jesuit Mission, killing the two priests, R.P. Aubergeon and R.P. Guéimu. For an account of this episode see also Van der Plas (1954).

although admittedly du Tertre claims this to derive from the Spanish atrocities that occurred over a century previously.

Once again, the Caribs did not content themselves with a mere localised attack but were able to prosecute the war by sea. Their next blow fell on the nearby island of Grenada. The French were no longer centred on a fort but had now spread themselves more thinly, living in plantation houses which the Caribs were able to attack one at a time, setting fire to them with flaming arrows and driving the occupiers out. The French were only able to survive on the island due to the intervention of a shipload of soldiers from Cayenne who occupied a position on Morne des Sauteurs. Attempts by du Parquet to disassociate the Grenada Caribs from those of St. Vincent came to nothing when the force he sent succeeded in killing some eighty men from both islands. The incident further strengthened the hand of those amongst the Caribs who wished to prosecute a policy of open hostility to all settlements, and the local Caribs came out in strength. Du Tertre claims that they sent out twenty-four war canoes which, for a time at least, won control of the sea. In St. Lucia the Caribs killed the new Governor, La Rivière, and ten of his men (du Tertre 1667: I: 466). His successor, M. Haquet, lasted but two years before he was forced to retire to Martinique following an attack that left him mortally wounded.

The response of du Parquet was to plan an assault on the stronghold of St. Vincent itself. A small flotilla was organised, well armed with cannon and mortars and with one hundred and fifty hand-picked men on board under the command of La

Perrière. The French had clearly decided to make an example of the Caribs of St. Vincent, and it was ordered that all who were found, men, women and children, were to be put to the sword (du Tertre 1667: I: 467). The Caribs were well aware of the power of European gunfire and had protected the landing by filling their canoes with sand and hiding behind them. When they were finally driven from their defensive position the Caribs retreated into the windward part of the island, leaving the French to cause as much havoc as they could on their abandoned homes and killing anyone they came across.

If the French believed that this would end Carib inter-island support, they had seriously misjudged the situation. The execution of a group of eight Caribs, who had been charged with murdering five French men on Martinique, was the catalyst for a fresh outbreak of resistance on that island (du Tertre 1667: I: 467). The local Caribs appealed for assistance and soon were able, according to du Tertre (1667: I: 468), to field a force of some two thousand men who came "de toutes les Isles." These were then further reinforced by a group of runaway slaves who joined the Caribs. Du Tertre does not relate the numbers involved but it seems to have been sufficient to encourage the Caribs, who had been on the brink of abandoning their campaign. They managed to bring the colony to the brink of collapse and would have succeeded had they not been thwarted by the intervention of four large Dutch warships which disembarked three hundred well-armed soldiers.

Intimations that the African slaves might prove to be useful allies to the Caribs had already occurred on Guadeloupe. As early as 1639, two local slaves had managed to

organise a revolt that lasted some twelve days before it was suppressed (du Tertre 1667: I: 153). The slaves, attempting to flee, were tracked down and captured. The ringleaders were hung, drawn and quartered, the adult males were hung or torn asunder, and the boys were flogged after having their ears cut off. On Guadeloupe there was no possibility of finding refuge with the Caribs but, on Martinique, a similar revolt led to the slaves making their way to safety amongst the Indians. The new recruits were immediately incorporated into Carib society. Du Tertre (1667: I: 503), in a somewhat self-contradictory manner, tells how they used rouvu to disguise themselves as Caribs in battle, and fought in the vanguard. 49 Du Tertre continues that in one hand they carried a club; the preferred weapon of the Caribs for close combat, in the other a flaming torch with which to destroy the houses of the settlers. With their numbers thus increased, the Caribs were able to maintain the war of attrition for two years before an expedition finally forced them to sue for peace on 18 October 1657. By this treaty, the local Caribs were forbidden to give sanctuary to runaways, but they continued to aid them in their attempts to escape, presumably to the unoccupied islands. To counter this, the French settlers were obliged to maintain a vessel with which to patrol the shores. The treaty lasted but two years. The French began making what were ostensibly hunting trips into the Capesterre area of Martinique, that is to say the part inhabited by the remnants of the Caribs (du Tertre 1667: I: 542). One such expedition was reported to have been ambushed by the Caribs and three of the French were killed. The local Caribs

^{49 &}quot;Les Sauvages se servirent quelque-temps après de ces Negres pour recommencer leurs irruptions. Ils les armerent de fleches & de boutons; & afin qu'ils ne suffent pas reconnus, ils les rocöuerent comme eux, les Negres marchoient toûjours les premiers comme les plus hardis, le flambeau on une main pour brûler les Cases, & le boutou de l'autre pour assommer ceux qui viendroient à la rencontre" (du Tertre 1667: I: 543).

claimed that this was the work of Dominican or Vincentian Caribs and their explanation appears to have been accepted. However, a group of Frenchmen attacked a local Carib chief and some of his men whilst they were in the settlement at Fort St. Pierre.⁵⁰ Those that escaped the first volley of fire were hunted down and killed, including the chief (du Tertre 1667: I: 543). Immediately afterwards, a hastily called council decided to declare war on those Caribs left in Martinique. An expedition was sent out which made its way to the Carib camp. Outnumbered and outgunned, the Caribs tried to resist but were overcome; those that could took to their canoes; the rest were killed and the settlement was destroyed (du Tertre 1667: I: 546). The survivors made their way to Dominica and St. Vincent, whilst the French built a fort on the site of the settlement to prevent their return. That some at least did arrive in St. Vincent is attested by the local tradition there that the modern town of Biabou on the windward coast bears the clan name of the exiles from Martinique. The occurrences on Martinique bear certain similarities to those on St. Vincent a century later. In both, the mere existence of the Indians is claimed as a threat to the colonists but it is the receptivity of the Caribs to runaway slaves that is the underlying cause of friction. Indeed, the slaves on Martinique had at that stage incorporated themselves into Carib society and assumed Carib costume. This appears to indicate how the Black Caribs of St. Vincent may have developed. Whether or not any of the slaves who joined the Martinique Caribs escaped following the final French assault is not stated by the sources, but it would provide

⁵⁰ Du Tertre (1667: I: 543) names the Carib as Nicholas and describes him as "le plus fameux, le plus vaillant, & le plus redouté Captaine de tous les Sauvages."

another factor in the increase in population of the Black Caribs throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The evacuation of the Caribs from Martinique was followed a year later on 24th March 1660 by an Anglo-French treaty which sought to consolidate their position in the Antilles (du Tertre 1667: I: 573). It was a local arrangement concluded at the residence of de Poincy on St. Christopher's. It included the Governor of Montserrat and deputies from Nevis and Antigua on the part of the English and de Poincy and Houël, the Governor of Guadeloupe and the proprietor of Mariegalante, for the French. Martinique was not included in these arrangements initially but, following the later intercession of Houël, it too became a party to the treaty. The colonial powers agreed upon an alliance, "both defensive and offensive", against the Caribs. They also decided to attempt reconciliation with them. They proposed offering, in exchange for a cessation of hostilities and raiding on the part of the Caribs, to accept that "the Islands of St. Vincent and Dominica should remain wholly in the possession of the Savages, and not be inhabited by the inhabitants of either Nation". They also maintained their commitment to converting the Caribs to Christianity, and it was agreed that the apostolic missions should return to the islands. In official correspondence at least, it was always maintained that the purpose of all colonisation was not primarily the acquisition of land and resources but to save the souls of otherwise pagan idolaters. Houël then returned to Guadeloupe where he met fifteen Carib chiefs from St. Vincent, Dominica and formerly of Martinique. These chiefs are said to have stated that they could treat on

behalf of all the Caribs and that they were desirous of peace. They agreed to allow the missions under Frs. Beaumont and Olivier to return and expressed their willingness to receive instructions from them (du Tertre 1667: I: 576). There was a further request from the Baba of St. Vincent that his two nephews, who were being held on Martinique, should be released, which was accepted (du Tertre 1667: I: 579). The treaty is significant for several reasons. It demonstrates how successful the Caribs had been in disrupting the process of colonization such that they could put the existence of a settlement on any of the islands in jeopardy; Martinique and Grenada had only survived owing to the intervention of forces from outside the colonies concerned. It also marks a forced acceptance on the part of the English and French that they had to deal with the Caribs as a polity, despite their overt avowals that they were dealing with mere savages. The Carib ability to project military operations on an inter-island scale, assembling relatively large forces and coordinating their attacks for maximum effect, clearly had a profound impact on the colonists. Their ability, in particular, to mount an effective expedition shortly after a punitive raid on St. Vincent aimed at crippling their military capacity must have been a key factor in the decision to treat with them. Their tactics developed in response to superior European firepower and continued to do so into the eighteenth century, by which time they themselves had adopted firearms. More importantly, they appear to have recognized the opportunities afforded them by Anglo-French rivalry and consistently attempted to turn this to their advantage, as evidenced by the preamble of the 1660 treaty itself.

⁵¹ PRO CO/101/17

The extent to which Carib political organization also developed in response to the threat posed by the settlers is unclear. The term cacique or military leader appears in the early Spanish accounts but there is little evidence that formal, permanent chieftainship developed in the seventeenth century. There were various chiefs who appear frequently in colonial despatches and historical accounts, such as Le Baron on Dominica, whilst on St Vincent the figure with whom both the English and French are most concerned is known as "the Baba" of St. Vincent.

The term *Baba* is said by Rochefort to mean father when used as a term of personal address: "They say *Baba*, father speaking to him and *Youmaan*, speaking of him" (Rochefort 1658 translated by John Davies of Kidwelly in Hulme and Whitehead 1992: 121). This could indicate that there was either a definite ranking between the chiefs or simply that *Baba* referred to the most senior, in either age or experience, of the chiefs. It cannot in itself be taken to confirm that there existed a paramount chieftaincy with political authority that was formalized. The English, for their part, clearly felt that they were not dealing with a centralised state and that there was no sovereign chief with whom they could negotiate. The term *Baba* is not mentioned by Rochefort as a political title at all. He distinguishes instead between a village headman (*Tiouboutouli hauthe*), the captain of a canoe or pirogue (*Tiouboutouli Canaoa*), the admiral of a fleet (*Nbalene*) and a military chief (*Ouboutoul*) which corresponds to the term *cacique* in the literature. However, it may be that *baba* was used as a form of

^{52 &}quot;The said English Governor (in order to the Preservation of the Peace which they thought very insecure by reason of the little dependence that could be had on the promises of the Charibbs who have no Discipline nor any one to preside over them) applied to M. Houël". Extracts from the Records of the superior Council of the Island of Martinico. PRO CO 101/17 f14.

address to a chief, and the Europeans accustomed to hearing this took it to be a title.

Even though the Caribs may have lacked a formal permanent political hierarchy in the day-to-day maintenance of their lives, they clearly recognized the importance of effective command in war. Rochefort (1658) described how the Cacique was chosen for this purpose:

None of these Chiefs hath any command over the whole nor any superiority over the other Captains. But when the Caribbians go to the wars, among all the Captains they make choice of one to be General of the army, who makes the first assault. And when the expedition is over, he hath no authority but in his own island. True it is, that if he hath behav'd himself gallantly in his enterprises, he is ever after highly respected in all the islands. But heretofore, before the commerce of the Caribbians and foreign nations had alter'd the greatest part of their ancient politie, there were many conditions requisite to obtain that degree of honour (Rochefort 1658 translated by John Davies in Hulme and Whitehead 1992: 124).

That the advent of the Europeans in the Caribbean had an effect on Carib political organization is clear from this account, although whether this was merely a quantitative change owing to the increased amount of expeditions that needed to be fought and hence the opportunities for Carib leaders to enhance their prestige, or whether it resulted in a qualitative change whereby successful caciques were able to regularise their positions is unclear. Rochefort's statement that they had no authority after a campaign except on their own island could be interpreted to mean that each island had an accepted de facto leader. However, the practice of holding an outou before any campaign at which all chiefs who were to take part had to assent

continued into the eighteenth century, and this indicates that any development of a centralised chieftainship should not overestimated.⁵³

This early contact between Vincentian Caribs and Europeans took place primarily on the other islands of the Lesser Antilles as the French and English sought to colonize them. Throughout this period it is clear that there are changes in how the Caribs responded to Europeans. How they organized themselves and the extent to which this too evolved is more difficult to assess, since it is highly likely that the Caribs had long experience of mounting joint expeditions against other Amerindian groups and it may be that they merely modified pre-existing patterns of behaviour in the face of the threat posed by the European interlopers.

This period appears far less significant to present-day Caribs, on St. Vincent at least, when compared to the tumultuous events of the second half of the eighteenth century. It was then, however, that the Caribs fully emerged as historical subjects in European anthropological discourse, notwithstanding Shakespeare's earlier anagrammatical Caliban in *The Tempest*. Despite the presence of Caliban *The Tempest* is a European, or more specifically Mediterranean, play. Caliban himself is the subject of what could be described as a medieval discourse of anthropology such as that described by Wittkower (1987). Caliban is therefore a phantasmagoric creature

⁵³ Du Tertre (1667: 399) claims that the Caribs had three types of leader: someone who was master of his own canoe; someone who had his own household; someone who through individual valour and guile had distinguished himself in war.

who inhabits a world of spirits and fantastic creatures.⁵⁴ The relations of the Europeans to the Caribs, on the contrary, were relations between men; for only men have souls to save. But their recognition as men could not dissolve the differences that existed between them and the Europeans. This opposition of similarity and alterity was to merge with and, to an extent, impel the emergence of new explorations in what has been termed early anthropology.⁵⁵

The impact of the Europeans on the Caribs was both profound and ultimately devastating, but it would be wrong to consider this relationship as simply unilateral. Through writers such as du Tertre and Rochefort, the Caribs became a model of what was portrayed as a pristine society, as mankind in its infancy. In both England and France, this model became the origin point from which a philosophical and anthropological discourse emerged.

54 For a discussion of the relationship of Caliban to the Caribs see Hulme (1986). For a more general discussion of the historical context of *The Tempest* see Kermode's (1950) introduction to the play.

⁵⁵ Detailed discussion of the emergence of an early science of anthropology can be found in Meek (1976) and Hodgen (1964)

Chapter 3

Surveys, Surveillance and Conquest

Before proceeding with an analysis of how the English colonial writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came to form what emerged as the canonical version of events in St. Vincent, it is necessary to consider how the views of the Europeans towards the native Caribbean were modified by changes within the intellectual currents that emerged in the seventeenth century. In order to understand how these changes emerged in the seventeenth century I propose to first examine the work of M. Foucault (1970). In the previous chapter it was argued that the Europeans who encountered the Caribs in the sixteenth century still retained a view of the world based upon a concept of a "Great Chain of Being" emanating from God. Furthermore, just as God stood at the apex of this chain so the chain was made intelligible by Him. Creation was construed in terms of the handiwork of God and He had left his signature in the form of resemblances. Throughout the sixteenth century the cosmological outlook of the Europeans remained bound within these resemblances that Foucault (1970) termed the four similitudes: convenientia, aemulatio, analogy and the play of sympathies. According to Foucault (1970), convenientia was a form of resemblance based on space in the form of proximity. Foucault argues that "by this linking of resemblance with space, this 'convenience' that brings like things together and makes adjacent things similar, the

world is linked together like a chain." (1970: 17) Aemulatio, by contrast, is a form of resemblance that is not constrained by space but operates at a distance. Foucault gives the examples of the human intellect which is a pale reflection of God' omniscience and man's eyes whose "limited brightness, are a reflection of the vast illumination spread across the sky by sun and moon" (1970: 19) Resemblance here is clearly asymmetric and the asymmetry leaves the weaker subject to the influence of the stronger. Analogy, the third similitude conflates convenientia and aemulatio. It is the resemblance not of fixed points or objects but of relations, such as that of stars and sky to flowers and earth. But the central point of analogy is posited as man. Thus, the limited knowledge of the world he inhabits that man has at his disposal is analogous to the absolute wisdom regarding the cosmos of God. But in recognizing the resemblances man recreates the divine order of the world. Lastly, there is the play of sympathies, a resemblance that is fluid, mobile and exists through constant interactions. Moreover, "it has the dangerous power of assimilating, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear" (Foucault 1970: 23). It was, according to Foucault (1970), the articulation of these similitudes as a system of signification that revealed the hidden order of the world. These similitudes were the signature of God's creation and belief in them had endured for centuries. Foucault (1970) termed this view of the world an episteme and he succinctly describes the medieval episteme thus:

Let us call the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to make the signs to speak and to discover their meaning, hermeneutics; let us call the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to distinguish the location of the signs, to define what constitutes them as signs, and to know how and by what laws they are linked, semiology: the sixteenth century superimposed hermeneutics and semiology in the form of similitude (Foucault 1970: 29).

The Europeans who came in contact with the Caribs inhabited this world of similitude and, armed with the knowledge of antiquity handed down by the Church, they would, if we accept Foucault's argument, have sought understanding of those they encountered in terms of these similitudes. Thus the appearance of the Caribs; going naked save for a few feathers, painted red with *roucou*, with bands tied around knees and ankles that caused their calves to appear swollen, would have been taken to have an underlying meaning. These customs, and the appearance they created, signified the nature of the Caribs and would have been interpreted as such by the Europeans. Indeed, the red coating of the Caribs might well have seemed the visible sign of their purported bloodthirstiness and cannibalism. Certainly these two tropes were to endure long after the medieval world view of the early explorers had given way to a new episteme.

Foucault (1970) describes the work of the writer Cervantes as the cusp upon which the old episteme shifted. This would make the change occur some time after 1605, when part I of *Don Quixote* was published. By 1612 Thomas Shelton had translated this first part into English and had completed the translation of the work by 1620. That is not to say that by then the cosmology of Europe had totally changed but rather that new methods of understanding were taking shape within European thought which gradually challenged and finally superseded the previously existing forms. Indeed, given the proclivity of folkloric forms to survive amongst the general population, as distinct from the intellectual elite and even these were not immune, it would be surprising if the European settlers' and administrators' views of the Caribs did not persist, especially given that they were underpinned by political and

economic pragmatism. But throughout the seventeenth century the advances of a new scientific interpretation of the world, which resulted in the formation of natural philosophy, contributed to a reassessment of the place of mankind within the universe. A detailed exposition of the history of the developments in science that were to be precursors of this new episteme is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it may be useful to at least briefly outline certain trajectories of thought that would prove to be significant in the two centuries that followed.

In Dryden's play The Conquest of Grenada published in 1691, one of the principal characters is described as a "noble savage" which, according to Fairchild (1926), is the first use of this term in English. He also notes that the character is not so much a savage as a barbarian; but at the time of Dryden's writing this distinction had not been clearly defined. Savage was the normal term for describing the aboriginal population of the Caribbean but, for example in John Davies' History of the Caribbea Islands, itself a translation of an earlier work by Charles Rochefort (1658), the terms "savage" and "barbarian" are treated as synonyms and variously interchanged for literary effect. The distinction between savages and barbarians was an effect of an emergent European philosophical anthropology. This differentiation of non-European populations occurs in Montesquieu's (1748) De l'Esprit des Lois and is based on their relative modes of subsistence: the savages as hunter-gatherers; the barbarians as pastoralists. This distinction did not exist yet for Dryden nor would it have been relevant. The "Noble Savage" stood not as a paragon against which to judge other primitive peoples but a rod with which to beat contemporary civilized, that is to say European, society that had lost its innocence. Here Dryden connects with a theme that can be traced back to Hesiod's Works and Days in which the history of mankind is depicted as passing from a golden age through silver and bronze to that of iron, in which he was writing. The concept of the noble savage was therefore embedded within a critique of contemporary society which describes the convergence of perceived social change in Europe with an imagined unchanging New World inhabited by peoples in a temporal vacuum. But originally this was not a state of nature, certainly in Hesiod, but of divine intent; this was how god or the gods intended man should live. Nature emerged only gradually through the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the order of a god.

This movement, or perhaps, more accurately, this closure, is described by Foucault (1970) as the emergence of a new episteme based on representation: an episteme which superseded the mediaeval similitudes which had hitherto described the world. Foucault focuses on the closure of one system and the emergence of another. His change is once and for all: the old episteme is dead, long live the new episteme! But what is true for science is not necessarily true for society. That is to say whilst what may be termed the intellectual classes were subject to an epistemic shift, the older beliefs continued to exist in wider society as folklore and tradition. The practices of similitude lived on, and they lived on particularly in aesthetics, where the hand of God was still seen as leaving its mark on creation. Indians could be known to be curibe by their hideous aspect as reported by Columbus; Africans were shown by their appearance to be more primitive than Indians. Similitude linked the present to the past in which the hand of God was manifest, and it followed that those who most approximated this past existence of man were closer to God's original intent.

This anthropological view, reinforced by the social praxis in which it was embedded, continued long after it had been successfully challenged in, for example, natural philosophy. It has led Fairchild (1926) to conclude that the conditions at the end of the seventeenth century and into the first half of the eighteenth allowed the development of the concept of the Carib as *noble savage*. ⁵⁶

We may conclude then, that the Rationalism which dominated England from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century was less inimical to the Noble Savage idea than might be supposed. That idea depends upon belief in nature as a norm of innocence, simplicity and spontaneity, and on beliefs of the instinctive goodness of man. These beliefs, as old as human thought, persisted through the rationalistic period. They were among several destructive elements, which caused the decay of

⁵⁶ In recent years, Ter Ellingson has challenged the existence of the noble savage as a concept in eighteenth century European thought in his work *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Ellingson 2001). Ellingson attributes the epithet to Lescarbot, a traveller and ethnographer who published his *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* in 1609. According to Ellingson, however, the use of the term noble to describe savages was an effect of their gaining their subsistence from hunting, a pursuit restricted in France to the aristocracy. Lescarbot's work was translated into English in the same year and, in that sense, the term "noble savage" can be seen to pre-date by more than sixty years Dryden's use of the term. However, there can be little doubt that its use by Dryden would have brought it to the attention of a far wider audience than that of Lescarbot

Ellingson's main claim is that the very concept of the noble savage as a common trope within eighteenth century discourse is itself a myth. This myth emerged in the nineteenth century as part of the development of new anthropological discourses that had a specific political focus. However, whereas Ellingson is specifically concerned with the association of savagery and nobility, and therefore seeks evidence of the use of these terms in the literature of the eighteenth century and finds it lacking, the purpose of this chapter is to examine concepts of noble savagery in a broader sense. That is to say, the term "noble savage" can be seen as a cipher for more general attitudes to the inhabitants of the New World. It was never used by early writers such as Montaigne or Las Casas in their defences of the indigenous people of the Americas. Nevertheless, the particular themes that they expressed can be seen to continue and develop through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, similar terms, such as le bon sauvage, need to be seen in relation to, and in conjunction with, the concept of the "noble savage". The question arises as to the semantic content of the adjective "noble" when used to describe savages. Nobility is, here, contextually defined within a specific discourse of degeneration that describes man's condition as one of corruption and, hence, in relativistic terms, those populations which more closely approximate the condition of man in earlier times must consequently be less corrupted. Thus, whilst Ellingson's work correctly identifies the emergence of a myth of the Noble Savage, it does not constitute a rebuttal of the existence of the wider discourse that has come to be associated with the trope.

A more serious flaw in Ellingson's work is that whilst he highlights the position of J-J Rousseau as the writer most associated with the concept of the "Noble Savage", he pays scant regard for Rousseau's sources for the native peoples of the New World. Of these the most significant is du Tertre (1667). Whilst like Rousseau, du Tertre may not have used the particular trope "Noble Savage", nonetheless he specifically does extol the personal qualities of the Caribs. Thus Ellingson, despite the meticulous detail of his narrative, seems to confuse a specific trope with the discourse in which it is situated.

rationalism, and from that decay they gained sufficient strength to become two of the most important conceptions of the succeeding age (1926: 28).

Nevertheless, the emergence of Nature as part of this new discourse created the space within which social change could be reinvented, not in terms of degeneration, of the Fall, but as a progressive change that heralded the possibility of modernism. Progressive descriptions of man's development were not unknown even in Antiquity; Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura* gives such an account. But the atheistic, mechanistic view of this admirer of Epicurus had little place in a world designed by the hand of god. Similarly, Dicaearchus, the pupil of Aristotle, who wrote in the fourth century B.C., and whose theories are known to us through later writers such as Varro and Porphyry, could write of man passing through stages based on the mode of subsistence:

The earliest stage was a state of nature, when men lived on those things which the virgin earth bore, from this they passed into a second, a pastoral life....Finally in the third stage, from this pastoral life they attained the agricultural (Lovejoy and Boas 1965: 368-9).

These discourses of progress existed for the sixteenth century, but they existed in an unrealised state, as possibilities. The realisation of non-degenerative theories of human development begins with Grotius.⁵⁷ Grotius (2005: II: 427) wrote that property "resulted from a certain Compact and Agreement, either expressly, as by Division; or else tacitly, as by Seizure." It began with moveable and extended to

⁵⁷ Grotius is described by Strauss and Cropsey (1963: 386) thus: "A veritable prodigy of learning as well as a man of action, Grotius was diplomat, lawyer, magistrate, scholar, and teacher: but essentially he was a jurist."

immoveable goods. In other words, property developed stadially.⁵⁸ Grotius was also aware that the inhabitants of the New World were still characterised by the practice of holding goods in common and that for them property was an alien concept. From this it followed that they were representative of the world as it had once been.⁵⁹

All things as Justin has it, were at first common and all the World had, as it were, but one Patrimony. From hence it was, that every Man converted what he would to his own Use, and consumed whatever was to be consumed; and such a Use of the Right common to all Men did at that time supply the place of Property, for no Man could justly take from another what he had first taken to himself; which is well illustrated by that Simile of Cicero, tho' the Theatre is common for anybody that comes, yet the Place that every one sits in is properly his own. And this State of Things must have continued till now had Men persisted in their primitive Simplicity, or lived together in perfect Friendship. A Confirmation of the first of these is the Account we have of some People of America, who by the extraordinary Simplicity of their Manners have without the least inconvenience have observed the same Method of Living for many Ages. (Grotius, H. 2005: II: 421).

It was this belief that America represented a primordial state of human existence that was to be so succinctly described by John Locke thus; "In the beginning all the World was America." But progressive theories of human development necessarily make comparisons between anterior and contemporary societies to the detriment of the former. Nowhere is this more baldly put than in Hobbes' *Leviathan* (Hobbes 1651). The Hobbesian view of man in a state of nature bore no relation to bucolic

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the concept of property in Grotius see Meek 1976. For a brief summary of Grotius' general concept of man as a rational being and the main themes of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* see Strauss and Cropsey (1963:386-395)

⁵⁹ It should be noted that Grotius himself specifically sanctioned a "war of civilization", that is to say a war against barbarians or savages, and cites Aristotle to justify this position (cited in Strauss and Cropsey: 395)

⁶⁰ Locke was here specifically concerned with defining man existing in a state of nature as a precursor to establishing civil society, as he termed it, and with it true political power. Consequently he could write: "Men living together according to reason ,without a common superior on earth with authority to judge them, is properly the state of nature." Locke 2003 II: 19)

fantasies of Arcadia. Here the life of man was "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short." Here man found himself in a perpetual "condition of Warre". This position formed one side of a discursive dialectic that contested the position of Amerindian people through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hobbes's position regarding the natural state of man precluded the idealisation of the native as Noble Savage; it was the position of the planter and, somewhat ironically given Hobbes's own atheistic tendencies, the church. Both these pillars of society sought to redeem the native: the latter through an acceptance of Christianity as the path through civilization to God's forgiveness; the former through an acceptance of property as the path to commerce and the profitable use of human life. Common to both was the view that the native populations were in darkness, and it was this view that entrenched European concepts of superiority within scientific rationalism.

For Christian dogma, however, man began with Adam and Eve, whilst Cain and Abel were agricultural and pastoral respectively. There is no space here for savages, noble or otherwise. Indeed the very existence of the native peoples of the New World, unmentioned by either classical antiquity or scripture, posed a conundrum for European intellectuals. Following Grotius it was Samuel von Pufendorf (1675) who attempted to account for the existence of savages in a manner consistent with the scriptures. Like Grotius, Pufendorf is concerned with property or, as he termed it, dominion. For him the establishment of property was a cumulative process, as it was for Grotius, but Pufendorf elaborated this proposition such that two factors became determinant: the first was population size; the second, the facility for industry or, as he sometimes termed it, refinement. As a consequence, when he

dealt with non-European populations he could argue that, "Those people who to this day are but little removed from primitive community, are somewhat barbarous or simple; such, for instance, as exist on herbs, roots, natural fruits of the earth, by hunting and fishing, with no other property than a shed with some rude furniture" (Pufendorf 1991 I: 554). As population grew, however, competition for these resources would result in disputes and, to ameliorate this situation, men would apportion these given resources. Property, then, was for Pufendorf the means by which Hobbesian "Warre" was avoided, and it was formed through contract and convention. But Pufendorf's attachment to biblical authority, in which hunting, pasturage and agriculture were contemporaneous from the beginning, precludes his adoption of a fully progressive system of property. He writes from a period when the scriptures, although being challenged, still retained their power in European discourses of anthropology and due observance had to be made to them. If later modernist discourse was immanent in Pufendorf, it remained an unrealised immanence and its elaboration was left to others. But if the scriptures continued to constrain the form of his argument, the advent of the New World made the emergence of the savage/barbarian, as a central character in his arguments, inevitable. Beyond the texts of antiquity, both sacred and secular, the American Indian seemed to provide a glimpse into a lost past: a past unmediated by literary discourse or religious dogma. The importance of this lies not in the accuracy or inaccuracy of the depictions of Indian life, and writers in the seventeenth century (and later) were liberal in their additions and omissions when it suited them, as for the rupture that this caused to the existing systems of knowledge.

In many ways Locke, in his writings on property, did little more than reiterate that which Pufendorf had already adumbrated. But property was more than conventional for him. It resulted, rather, from the combination of a thing with human labour. Property here is therefore a more ubiquitous concept; it applies equally to the savage as to the European. The difference between the two is a matter of scale and consciousness:

Before the appropriation of land, he who gathered as much of the wild Fruits; killed, caught, or tamed as many of the Beasts as he could; he that so employed his Pain about any of the spontaneous Products of Nature as in any way to alter them from the state which Nature put them in, by placing any of his Labour on them, did thereby acquire a Property in them (Locke 2003).

Property was not therefore simply culturally determined, although the form it took would be culturally specific perhaps, but the result of productive human activity *in general*. When the savage took a wild fowl, by his labour (as a hunter), he converted that fowl into property. Property was, therefore, for Locke, a universal category applicable in the *carbet* (hut) of the Carib captain as much as in the court of a European king. For Locke, the Carib and indeed American Indians in general, lived in the conditions of Nature, albeit modified. The phrase "In the beginning all the World was America" (Locke 2003: 343), therefore places the Indians within a progressive evolutionary scheme with European civilization firmly at the top, and in that sense there is a qualitative shift of discourses of property beyond the constraints of scriptural authority. By the end of the seventeenth century, property

⁶¹ According to Strauss and Cropsey (1963: 406) for Locke the state of nature is characterized by a lack of a juridical authority but he sharply distinguishes this from a state of war. For Hobbes there is a simple

had become an ahistorical concept that bound together diverse human societies within a broad continuum. That is not to say, however, that this determined the way in which Europeans dealt with native populations. In fact the European settlers of the Caribbean had always acted as if the Caribs had similar concepts of property rights as themselves. It was this that frequently caused such tension between them, since what the Caribs took as a right to use, was assumed by the Europeans as a right of property.

In a sense, Locke gives no more than discursive coherence to the practices of the colonists. The gradual development of the concept of human as opposed to divine agency in history, which emerges later in the writings of Turgot (1808: 209-328), and the emergence of the ancient and modern debate, are, when taken with the previously described discourse on property, the ideological bases of the later development of a fully formed evolutionary system which placed the "Native" in a specifically anterior, and hence subordinate, position with regard to the Europeans. This ideological space was contested at different levels by the antithetical view that critiqued the optimism of proto-modernist discourse and sought to de-naturalise what it conceived as the internalised cultural constructs of its own contemporary society. The interplay of the conflicting accounts of Indians of the New World, of whom the Caribs were paradigmatic⁶², became a theme that formed a backdrop to the political debates of the eighteenth century concerning St. Vincent. It was

dichotomy between a state of nature, characterized as warre and therefore asocial, and society. Locke has rather a twofold dichotomy between a state of nature and civil society, which can each be either in a state of war or peace.

reflected in literature as much as in politics, and it was in the former that, perhaps, the most ingenious attempt to caricature the lofty debates of the Enlightenment took place.

The most commonly quoted example in eighteenth century English literature of a Carib is Defoe's "Man Friday" (Defoe 1719). Friday, though, is not portrayed in Defoe as a Noble Savage, but as the savage as *ingénue*. He is not the custodian of an immemorial wisdom untarnished by the vices of contemporary society. He has to be taught everything by Crusoe. It is true that he is not an irremediable barbarian, but the task of bringing him to proper personhood, in the terms of eighteenth century England, is not one he can undertake except under the tutelage of his European master. There is a reflection of European attitudes to be found in Crusoe, but it is an unreflective reflection. It is a partial reflection that exhibits only the end result of the debate in the author's mind rather than the conflicting images of the day. To find a contemporary text that evinces the attributes of both the noble and ignoble savage, of man before the Fall and at the beginning of an upward path, one must turn to the work of the intractable, misanthropic satirist Jonathan Swift (1726).

Gullivers' Travels was published some seven years after Robinson Crusoe. Today it is too often reduced to the level of a simple children's story, itself the victim of the processes that have reduced the Caribs. But in his description of Gulliver's voyage to the island of the Houyhnhams and his sojourn there, we have a masterful

⁶² Rousseau specifically uses the Caribs in this sense, "The Caribbeans, who having as yet least of all deviated from the state of nature". Rousseau J-J (1973: 78)

caricature of the idea of the Noble Savage. This point was well made by Fairchild in his study of the Noble Savage nearly eighty years ago. The Houyhnhnms were Swift's representation of the Noble Savage in the guise of educated, articulate horses; "The source of their virtue is the lack of everything prized in civilized society" (Fairchild 1926:46). They evinced only those qualities that Nature had bestowed upon them and were far better for it. But the Houyhnhnms' qualities of "innocence, spontaneity and spontaneity" and an underlying belief in the natural goodness of man cannot easily be reconciled with the anthropology, or rather misanthropology, which one would normally associate with the acerbic Swift.

Alongside the noble Houyhnhnms we also find the detestable Yahoos, the degenerate creatures that so shockingly resemble our hero. This term for the bestial sub-humans has been variously explained: as a derivation of a whinny (Clark 1953); "ye who behave thus" (Buckley 1967; or from the Yaios of Guiana (Kermode 1950). They have been taken to refer to both the "savage old Irish" (Williams 1959) and man after the fall from grace (Tuveson 1964). But it is also possible to give an American or possibly Caribbean reading of the Yahoos.

There is a sense in which Gulliver during his stay comes to realize that, despite all his aspirations to Reason and Rationality, he and all the rest of humanity are intrinsically, irredeemably Yahoos. But it also follows from this that modern man, as represented by Gulliver, had as his antecedents, creatures not unlike the Yahoos. Unlike Locke, for Swift it would seem that in the beginning all the World was Yahooland! Here Swift is able to play out the two opposing themes on the origins of society,

juxtaposed to the Noble Houyhnhnms were the Ignoble Yahoos. The Yahoos represented natural man as Hobbes had typified him, living a "nasty, short and brutish" existence; they were indeed mankind in an original state of nature, doomed to progress on a downward path of civilization. Yet it was to these that Gulliver to his shame at times felt the greatest affinity; at one point Gulliver even casts an envious eye over a comely Yahoo wench!

The island of the Houyhnhnms can also be seen to represent the Caribbean on a more concrete, historical level that retains its metaphorical form. Here the Houyhnhnms as Noble Savages are confronted by the Yahoos as interlopers; "They had not always been of that country" (Swift 1726) and Swift can thus make them parodies of the settlers. This parody of the settlers would have had a special resonance for a domestic audience. Frequently, the complaints of both missionaries and governors in the Caribbean would focus on the low-birth and often even lower character of these colonists. They were portrayed in the texts of the time not as the hand-picked cream of metropolitan society but the dregs that had over-spilled from its lower reaches. Their unsavoury reputation could hardly have been lost on Swift. Their greed and lust for gold is transposed as the fascination of the Yahoos for "certain shining Stones of several colours" (italics in original Swift 1726:252), a trait that in earlier English writers had typified the Spaniards. There is little doubt, therefore, which side of the argument as to man's true nature Swift himself favoured: the Noble Savage was as illusory as a talking horse.

Whilst it cannot be determined with any certainty the extent to which Swift's work is representative of eighteenth century England, nonetheless its satirical nature clearly struck a chord with the population capable of reading his work. The very success of Gulliver's Travels testifies, amongst other things, to the extent that Swift recognized the ambivalent attitude to the colonial settlers that existed at that time. Swift's work therefore forms part of the changes in outlook that began in the seventeenth century and continued into the eighteenth century. Together with the developments of jurisprudence and of both natural and moral philosophy, the basis was laid for what was to become an early anthropology. This anthropological view was cemented throughout the eighteenth century and culminated in the work of the writers of the Enlightenment. Thus by the time that Britain began to assert its claims to St. Vincent, in deed rather than mere word, the Caribs formed part of a new emerging view of the peripheral world. The settlers of the eighteenth century who came to colonize St. Vincent following the Treaty of Paris operated within a completely different discourse of alterity to that of the antecedents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The nature of the changes that occurred within European thought has been the subject of this brief digression. It is, though, a necessary digression since what were to become the canonical texts of Vincentian history up to the time of independence were formed within this emergent discourse.

In the first part of this chapter I have given a sketch of the emergent episteme of the Enlightenment into which concepts of the Caribs were absorbed and which in turn modified that episteme. I shall now attempt to describe the specific insertion of the Caribs at a political level into the mercantilist world system of the eighteenth century. Using Foucauldian notions, as expounded in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977), I shall argue that it was the nature of this insertion that fundamentally established the parameters of modern Vincentian society. This is essentially the crux of the thesis, i.e. that the ossification of aesthetic ideals characteristic of the Caribs, and their subsequent evolution within Vincentian society, was principally made possible by the subordinate character of their insertion. Carib identity is therefore determined by these power relations, ultimately economic but most clearly visible in their aesthetic manifestations.

The attitude of Europeans to the native populations which they encountered both in their voyages of exploration and in the territorial expansion of existing colonies underwent a marked change in the eighteenth century. By the time of the voyages of Cook, sponsored as they were by the Royal Society, orders were being promulgated insisting that the native inhabitants were in legal possession of their lands and that possession should be respected. This change in attitude took place gradually, not so much as a result of public opinion being increasingly better informed of the realities of non-European societies but due to a growing disenchantment with the world. If scientific rationalism gave rise to a more profound understanding of the natural order in which man was situated, the uncertainty that this involved, whilst not dispelling the emergent, progressive optimism, created a dark discursive shadow. It should not be simplistically viewed as the emergence of a new ethical foreign policy. As often as not the reasons given for forbearance and understanding were based on practical considerations of government, and the nature of government itself had undergone profound changes.

Nonetheless, these practical considerations themselves became increasingly entangled in ethical judgements regarding natives as men rather than savages and indeed the moral values of savagery itself. Within this emerging discourse, the annexation was to play a pivotal role in determining attitudes. The Caribs had, for over two hundred years, been the archetypal savages, the cannibalistic murderers of innocent settlers, who had terrorized the Caribbean. Whilst St. Vincent remained a neutral island, such considerations were largely academic, but the effects of European struggles fought out in the colonies in the mid-eighteenth century ensured that it would become central to the debate.

The neutral status of St. Vincent, which had been agreed upon by both the English and the French since 1660 and had been reconfirmed by the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle in 1748, came to an end with the Treaty of Paris of 1763. Under the terms of this treaty, which brought to a close the Seven Years War, the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique were returned to France and the hitherto Neutral Islands were divided between France and Britain. The key element in this appears to be that the French, despite all earlier stipulations to the contrary, had clandestinely settled on St. Vincent and were thereby entitled to transfer sovereignty. Article IX of the treaty deals specifically with the Lesser Antilles.

The most Christian King cedes and guaranties to his Britannic Majesty, in full right, the islands of Grenada, and of the Grenadines, with the same stipulations in favour of the inhabitants of this colony, inserted in the IVth Article, for those of Canada: and the partition of the islands, called Neutral, Is agreed and fixed, so that those of St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago, Shall remain in full right to Great Britain, and that of St. Lucia shall be

delivered to France, to enjoy the same likewise in full right, and the high contracting parties guaranty the partition so stipulated.

This article of the treaty was the basis for British claims to sovereignty over St. Vincent. Unfortunately, the native inhabitants of that island are not mentioned, and the British acted as if the French had it in their power to cede all the lands of the island. In this respect the Caribbean was treated in a very different manner to continental America. On the mainland the treaty had specifically stated that certain lands were to be reserved for the native populations. On St. Vincent and also on Dominica, the imperial powers acted as if the indigenous populations did not exist.

Henceforth the island was to be partitioned and sold to alleviate the depleted condition of the exchequer. The sale and leasing of land in St. Vincent was placed in the hands of a board of commissioners under Sir William Young. The remit of this board was to dispose of all the lands in St. Vincent for the benefit of the Crown. With regard to the French who had been settled there, this was not too difficult even though many chafed at the prospect of paying again for land that they believed they had previously purchased from the Caribs of the leeward side of the island. Throughout the 1760s there is a steady stream of sales and leases of land and the transfer of previously French owned land to British settlers. The rates for these lands were relatively high: it was claimed by disgruntled settlers that they were obliged to pay treble the price that was usual in the Caribbean. The board had from the beginning initiated a comprehensive survey of the island to facilitate its appropriation, but it was felt that any attempt to survey the lands claimed by the Caribs on the windward side of the island would make a difficult situation

potentially explosive. This problem was not restricted to the islands but on the continent too the question of land speculation and native claims figured in a wide debate within England. Shortly after the Treaty of Paris (signed 10th February 1763) reports appeared in the English press complaining of the activities of land speculators in areas deemed to be controlled by native populations in North America⁶³. The stabilization of English power in the New World was the prime concern of government at this time; the demands of settlers, on the other hand, were increasingly at odds with this. The settlers' activities came increasingly under the scrutiny of a domestic public unwilling to undertake wars for the protection of what were viewed as their ill-gotten gains. By November of 1763, reports were appearing in the newspapers complaining of the means by which land was being appropriated and the results that would ensue.

How much ... are those men to be abhorred, who under the cloak of pacific religion, will pursue their private emolument, so as to involve the whole continent in a flame, the least spark of which they will not endeavour to quench. (Americanus, *The Public Advertiser*, 1 Ph November 1763)

The author of the above was concerned with the conduct of those he termed "Pennsylvanians" but the sentiments expressed were equally applicable to the settlers who, throughout the 1760s, arrived in St. Vincent. The difficulty of making an adequate survey of the island was remarked upon as early as March 1764 (Letter of Capt. Robert Paul to the Board of Commissioners, CSP Colonial series, vol. 71, F.O. 347) enclosed with a description of the condition of the island. The Commissioners, themselves being actively engaged in purchasing land, did not improve the problems of the island. William Young himself is probably the most

⁶³ See for example *The Public Advertiser* 25th August 1763 for a report of complaints by the Six Nations.

notable of those engaged in this activity (see CSP Col series, vol. 74, fo. 280 & 282,). This twofold interest, at once official and pecuniary, is the most obvious reason for the contentiousness of the survey. It heralded a European take-over such as had already occurred in other parts of the Caribbean where the representatives of the Crown were able to exercise power for their own financial interest. But, beyond this, the very practice of surveying precipitated new forms of control that were to be exercised not only over the Caribs but also European society.

The original French title of Foucault's Discipline and Punish was Surveiller et Punir and the change in title reflects the semantic connotations of the two terms in French and English respectively. The order of disciplinarian regimes was predicated upon the surveillance of subjects rather than through the manifestation of power over subjects as had occurred in the Middle Ages. But surveillance itself was a secondary act that could only occur once the subject had been fixed and formulated. This formulation, this identification of the subject qua subject could only be achieved through the rigorous implementation of forms of abstract appropriation that could discursively reduce the world to the new forms of representation that emerged. It was the act of surveying that rendered the unknown known and named the hitherto ineffable. These new forms of naming and representing appropriated as they went, to survey was not to describe or state, rather it was an illocutionary act that transformed its subjects as it enfolded and subjugated them. Foucault himself only hints at this aspect of surveying, which in Europe was a mere preamble to the major triumphs of disciplinary regimes. The laying out of the military camp, which in Foucault becomes the benchmark for discipline, is first and foremost the reduction

of the world to a new social order in which the surveyor is a key actor. Two factors seem to be determinant in what appears to be Foucault's myopia: the first is the Euro-centrism which itself formulates and excludes areas such as the Caribbean from the privy councils of the episteme. What occurs in the colonies is necessarily peripheral, local manifestations of forces that have their origins in Westminster or Versailles. The second is the lack of a framework for dealing with the institutional grounding of power; the intentionality of power is dispensed with along with the concept of class and as a consequence the interpellatory characteristics of the survey are lost. The interpellation implicit in the survey can be traced back as far as the state form, through the Domesday Book of the Middle Ages right back to the cuneiform texts of Mesopotamian palaces. The survey always describes one thing, property. At times it wore different names, for Grotius it was dominion, but essentially the survey marked out, enfolded and subjugated/subjected its object with reference to this one relationship. Without a concept of property the survey is unthinkable.

For Europe, then, the survey was cognitively unproblematic although for many traumatic in practice. It could herald new forms of domination and power; from the survey it is but a short step to the military review and the panopticon. There appears a seamless quality about the shift from surveying to surveillance, which Foucault does well to elaborate. It was the property relation and its central place in the order of things and people that allowed this possibility. But to those who did not share the concepts and practices which, combined, create the institution of property, the survey was regarded as the nakedly hostile act that it was. For the Caribs, the survey

reduced them to adjuncts in a world of property. It interpellated them as occupiers without bestowing on them the corollary of ownership. The survey was thus the necessarily abstract extraction of the Caribs from Iouloumain, their name for the island, which would lead inexorably to their political and finally physical removal from it. To the British Land Commissioners, for whom the survey was the means by which civilization could be brought to savage lands, the reluctance of the Indians to allow it was seen as a childish recalcitrance. That, of course, is not to suggest that they were ignorant of the controlling effect that surveying would have. The survey was to be both the pretext and precursor to a road-building scheme that would strip the Caribs of the protection of the uncharted, primeval forest and plant a garrison at the gates of every one of their strongholds.⁶⁴ But even here the symbolism used is redolent of the progessivist discourse of modernity; the primeval forest was to the road what the savage was to the bourgeois. Within this discursive field the survey was metonymically related to the civilizing process itself.

The survey is thus the manifestation of power by inclusion. It was, and remains, a violent act that interpellates a non-subject as subject. Its inclusivity is intrinsically hegemonic even where its associated practices are not overtly tyrannical: hegemonic where it succeeds in constituting land as a subject within a discourse of property, tyrannical where, failing that, it appropriates the land by force. The tyrannical aspects of the survey were recognized by the opponents of the planters in England. In the parliamentary debate of the 10th December 1772 Richard Whitworth called

64 See for example the correspondence of General Dalrymple to the Treasury (8th Jan 1763 PRO T1/434).

for an enquiry into the expedition to St. Vincent and highlighted the ambiguity of the Treaty of 1763.

The French only ceded part of the island to us; that part was their property, and they had the right to cede it; but what claim have we to the other? None. The French could not cede to us what they had not; they by treaty with those people; and upon those conditions, I understand by the terms of the last peace, we are also to live with them. But I suppose some of our traders or planters have taken a fancy to their part of the island for country houses to divert themselves, and to satisfy the rapacity of those adventurers, the British arms are to be employed, and the miserable natives are to be cruelly dispossessed of their habitations and driven from their families and friends.... Nothing but the most wanton cruelty can induce us to dispossess the inoffending natives of their country. 65

That any attempt to settle the land occupied by the Caribs would provoke a hostile response was no surprise. As early as 1763, whilst formulating plans for the disposal of lands in St. Vincent, the Board of Trade and Plantations explicitly recognized this to be the case, adding that the implementation of such a course of action "should not be undertaken until their consent was obtained" (CO 106/9). Initially the land that was disposed of was situated on the leeward side of the island and was the property of French "squatters" who had purchased the land from the Island Caribs. It was in fact this action, purportedly at the invitation of the Island Caribs in return for their support against the depredations of the Black Caribs, which resulted in the island being ceded to Britain, although whether it ever enjoyed the status of an official possession of France is unclear. However, whilst the leeward side of the island was favoured by the French because of its natural harbours, unlike the harsh windward

⁶⁵ Similar sentiments had been expressed in the press of the day; e.g. Probus to Lord Dartmouth in *The Scots Magazine* 13th November 1772, vol XX: 558 "Injustice of the Proceedings in St. Vincent."

coast, and its rugged mountainous terrain was no handicap to the cultivation of coffee and cocoa, the British planters were intent on expanding the production of sugar, which had proved so successful on Barbados, Antigua and Jamaica. This led them to cast increasingly envious eyes on the land occupied by the Black Caribs, which, being relatively flat in part, offered a far more lucrative proposition than the leeward side. It was precisely contrary to this original mandate that, under pressure from the planters, the Land Commission appealed to the Government to be allowed to begin surveying the windward side of the island. The Government accepted the proposals of Young that sought to remove the Black Caribs and relocate them in a "suitable"(sic!) location designated by the Commissioners. They were to be given five years to make the move and receive compensation of £10 per acre for the land they vacated. However, the Government view remained that the survey could only take place with the consent of the Caribs and, when this was put to the Black Carib chiefs, their response was adamantly in the negative. Undeterred, the Commissioners, pressed no doubt by the planters, attempted to mark out a road through the windward side of the island in 1768 and were only prevented from doing so by the intervention of an armed force of Black Caribs. Again, in 1769, another attempt was made to force through a road, this time with the aid of a detachment of soldiers from the 32nd Regiment. Once more they were unsuccessful; they were surrounded by the Black Caribs and the commander and forty of his men were taken captive. They were finally released on the clear understanding that the British renounce "all immediate pretensions to interfere with their country and never again attempt to make roads of communication through it" (C.O. 101/13, Lieutenant Governor Fitzmaurice to Lord Hillsborough May 11, 1769).

The reluctance of the Black Caribs to countenance foreigners in their territory was in accordance with a policy that had emerged in the latter half of the seventeenth century. It had been prosecuted by the Caribs vigorously, as the reports of their successful opposition to the Dutch testify. Capt. Braithwaite's visit to the island, in 1724, confirmed the reluctance of both the Yellow and the Black Caribs to allow Europeans to settle amongst them. However, internecine conflict between various groups of Caribs at the beginning of the eighteenth century, interpreted by the French in racial terms as between Black and Yellow Caribs, resulted in the latter allowing the French to settle amongst them on land apparently vacated by an exodus of Caribs to Tobago and mainland South America. The process of retreat from the islands to the mainland had been in progress throughout the seventeenth century. The Treaty of Neutrality had, for a time at least, slowed the depopulation and, as displaced groups from the other islands made their way to St. Vincent, it is possible that the Carib population had risen, at least temporarily. What does seem to have occurred is that in the late seventeenth century the Caribs split into two groups, which are recorded as Black and Yellow Caribs, with the former being the result of unions between Caribs and ex-slaves. An indication of just how far back these unions had taken place can be seen by the fact that Breton (1665), in his dictionary of the mid seventeenth century, records three separate words to describe the children of Caribs and African women on Dominica. As mentioned earlier, the African presence on St. Vincent had always been far more significant than on Dominica, and this influx seems to have resulted in new attitudes to the land.

The main rationale that the planters initially used to justify their appropriation of land on the windward side of St. Vincent was that it was under-utilized by the Black Caribs. Using the criteria of European farming techniques and plantation production, they sought to show that vast tracts of fertile land were going to waste. By failing to properly utilize the natural resources of the island, the Black Caribs had forfeited their rights to property in it. Since the Black Caribs were only making use of a small proportion of the lands that they claimed at any given time, the planters argued that only the areas under actual cultivation could be properly claimed as property. This was, of course, to totally misunderstand, or perhaps more accurately to misrepresent, the farming technique of the Black Caribs, which was based on a pattern of shifting cultivation through slash and burn. In addition to economic rationality, the planters also attacked the provenance of the Black Carib property claims on the grounds that they were interlopers who had supplanted the rightful owners of the land, the Yellow Caribs. The main thrust of this argument was that the Black Caribs should be treated as a maroon group rather than an indigenous society. Young, himself, had proposed that the Black Caribs should submit themselves to the Crown and have the same status as other Free Negroes, a very different policy to that adopted in mainland North America. Differences between the two groups of Caribs on the island had been racialised by the Europeans, but this may have been an effect of their own subjective values as much as being derived from that of the two groups. There are clear contradictions that exist in the testimony of the Commission where it is claimed that, on the one hand, that the harmless Yellow Caribs are frightened by their bellicose neighbours and, on the other, that it would be difficult to separate the two groups because the Yellow Caribs live interspersed with them. That the Black Caribs had adopted the customs of the Yellow Caribs is acknowledged but it is again given a late date, the end of the seventeenth century, by both Young and Shephard, again adding to the impression that these were somehow ersatz indigenes. But, equally, the impact of large numbers of people of African descent on Carib customs is totally ignored by the apologists of the plantocracy.

For the planters, land was a resource, a factor of production which their industry or rather that of their slaves could turn to profit, and their inability to appreciate other forms of relationship to the land was circumscribed by their concept of property. The laws of property had been so naturalised and internalised that they could rebound on the pretensions of the planters themselves. Once naturalised, property became a universal condition of all societies whether or not they were conscious of it or how rudimentary was its development.

This is not to say that such a championing of indigenous rights marked political discourse of the eighteenth century. It is clear that the parliamentary debate on St. Vincent took place within a broader discussion of overseas expansion and reflected the particular configurations of sectional loyalties within a ruling class. Much of the debate on St. Vincent was more concerned with the conditions of the military sent to the island than with the fate of the Caribs. The fact that the expedition was to take place at the commencement of the rainy season and that it was reputedly poorly equipped would have been regrettable in a case of national emergency. Where it served to do no more than uphold the rapacious interests of an unscrupulous group of adventurers, more interested in their pecuniary advantage than the needs of

Empire and State, it became subject to the severest criticism. The planters themselves are frequently described as nouveau riche and incurred the opprobrium of the established landed bourgeoisie. But the defence of the Caribs by their erstwhile supporters in Westminster was not given without a price and that price was their recognition as political actors. To aid them it was first necessary to deprive them of the intellectual and political ability to defend themselves; they were endowed with the childlike qualities of the noble savage but without the nobility. The Caribs were recreated as the inverted mirror image of the planters and as such took on the attributes of their traditional and ancient enemies, the Arawaks. Artlessness became helplessness and has remained so. Despite over two hundred years of contact, there yet remained two images of the indigenous Caribbean, the guileless child and the savage cannibal. The strength of the former of these images may explain in part the extent to which the planters went to describe the Black Caribs as Negroes. As Caribs they already participated in a discourse of primitive nobility, but as Negroes they were excluded from this. This dissociation of the Black Caribs from the idea of a Noble Savage was one that both the Land Commissioners and the planters, whose interests they served, were eager to make.

Having failed to either cajole or intimidate the Black Caribs to relinquish their land, the planters and their agents, the Land Commissioners, sought to influence the home government. A rumour was put about that the Black Caribs had sold some 700 acres to M. Pichery, a French planter of Grenada, and were about to sell more to another, Jean Augier. The Commissioners immediately requested the Committee for Trade and Plantations to allow them to enter into negotiations to purchase land on behalf

of the Government (CO 106/12 Letter of Commissioners dated 12th August 1771). The clear inference from the Commissioners was that the French were still looking to expand their influence with the Black Caribs and that the Black Caribs thus posed a threat to the colony. That this was the reasoning behind of Commissioners is given ample support by the various memorials submitted by the Council and Assembly of St. Vincent, both of which bodies represented the interests of the planters. Following the interception of a letter purportedly from Demicoud, the commander at St. Lucia, to the "Gouveneurs et Conseillers Caraybes" in September 1771, the President of the Council and Speaker of the Assembly wrote:

(Y)et a few months since, when we daily expected to be involved in war, they but too plainly betrayed the strong attachment they had to that nation whose subjects and language they have been so long conversant, and whose interest they are ready at any time to espouse, to the prejudice of those of your majesty and to the sacrifice of our lives and fortunes. The good reception and encouragement they met from the French General were hardly justifiable even at that season; but the continuance of their intercourse, in the midst of peace, and the style of the correspondence lately discovered between the governor of St. Lucia and these rebellious people, are insults offered to your Majesty's Crown, and the clearest proof of the advantages the French intend to derive, in time of war, by preserving a good understanding with the Charibbs. In this situation, what safety, what tranquillity can we hope for? What have we not to fear, surrounded by lawless savages in strength and number far superior to ourselves, and now notoriously at the disposal, and ready implicitly to obey the commands, of a foreign enemy.

Henry Sharpe, President

John Gilbert, Speaker of the Assembly (Parliament. 1773: 616).

Here there is a clear change of emphasis in the protestations of the planters. The Caribs were to be treated as rebellious, even though they had never formally acceded to sovereignty by any European power, and their continuing assertions of

independence were depicted as an affront to the monarchy. By suggesting that the French were purchasing land, the Commissioners sought to characterize the Caribs as both perfidious and perilous to British interests in the region. From the time of the rumour on, this was to be the chosen form of argument of the planters and their supporters both in the West Indies and in Britain. What is also interesting is the change in the assessment of the size of the Carib population. At the time of the ceding of the island, Young describes the population as being insignificant, thus making the island more desirable. Here it is described as being large, thus justifying the large military force that the planters requested. The planters were clearly caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, they wished to minimise the numbers of the Caribs so that that they could justify taking large tracts of land from them. On the other hand, they had to maintain that the Caribs were sufficiently numerous to pose a serious threat to the security of the island. This conflicting interest on the part of both the Commissioners and planters has made any accurate assessment of the size of the Carib population extremely difficult.

The request to enter into negotiations was acceded to and the Commissioners met Joseph Chatoyer and some forty of his men at Morne Garou. But as with the earlier meeting, Chatoyer flatly rejected their proposals. Whether the Commissioners ever seriously entertained the idea that the Caribs would willingly relinquish their land and independence is extremely questionable, but this refusal provided them with what they claimed was no alternative but to use force. In London a group of absentee landlords: Richard Maitland, Thomas Hackshaw, Wat. Jerkins, William Young, Richard Ottley, C.P. Sharpe and William Fitzpugh petitioned the government to send

a military force to the island so that the Caribs might be forced to "acknowledge the sovereignty and dominion of his Majesty". (PRO C.O. 260 dated 22nd January 1770). Even William Leybourne, the Governor in Grenada, (and Governors were not always at one with the planters) could write to the Earl of Hillsborough, his superior in London:

I beg leave to submit to your Lordship's consideration, whether it might not be proper to take some steps to force these people to obedience, since the gentle methods that were practised by Sir William Young had not the desired effect, but, on the contrary, were looked upon to have proceeded from timidity. (PRO C.O.260 Grenada, 30th November 1771).

This contrasts with an account by the previous Governor, Melville, who in a letter to Hillsborough dated 5th July 1770, states that when he spoke to about fifty of their leaders they categorically denied any attachment to the French, saying "that this was only alleged against them by their enemies, who want to sell or buy their lands" (PRO F.O. 201). Melville further intimates that at least one charge that the Caribs were engaged in smuggling arms into the island had been fabricated.

But it was not merely military action to reduce the Caribs that was required, according to the proprietors. In another memorial to Hillsborough, Maitland, Ottley, Gordon, Sharpe and Fitzpugh claimed of the Black Caribs "their inhabiting of the island must ever prevent its further progress towards a state of prosperity". Their solution was for the Black Caribs to be forcibly removed to a location "from whence their ancestors came", that is to say Africa (CO 106/9-12). The proprietors proposed that "any unoccupied tract of 10,000 acres of wood land, upon any part of the coast of Africa, having one or more rivers running through it, would afford them all the necessaries

of life to which they have been accustomed to." The irony that the planters were of the opinion that the Caribs needed 10,000 acres in Africa whilst complaining that such an area was a profligate waste of resources, which negated any claims of property in St. Vincent, appears to have been lost on them. This ceaseless activity of the planters and their friends and supporters in London finally caused the Government to act on their behalf. In a letter to Viscount Barrington, the Secretary of War, Lord Hillsborough proposed that two regiments be transferred from North America and that they, reinforced by those already in the Ceded Islands, should "reduce them (i.e. the Caribs) to submission". William Young, now Governor of Dominica was to join General Gage, Sir Ralph Payne and Governor Leybourne in executing the operation (CO 71-3). Two days later a letter marked separate and secret was forwarded to Leybourne apprising him of the situation. However, even at that stage the government maintained that the Caribs should be allowed to remain on the island even though the planters were calling for their removal. Hillsborough also thought it necessary in May to write to Leyborne carefully distinguishing between the Yellow and the Black Caribs and noting that the former were not to be included with the latter in the carrying out of the military operations. Major General Dalrymple was appointed commander in the field and the first Carib War commenced.

During the debate in the House of Commons, which we have already mentioned, the main attack on the Government was made by Colonel Isaac Barré. Barré was by no means a typical English officer; the son of Huguenot parents and born in Dublin, he was rescued from obscurity by Wolff, under whom he served, and Shelburne, who provided him with a seat in parliament. Although one of the most vociferous of the

opponents of Lord North, he spoke from experience, having served in the Americas, and was judged to have specialist knowledge of the subject. Whilst serving with Wolff in America he had:

contracted many friendships with American gentlemen, and..... Entertained much more favourable opinions of them than some of his profession have done. (Ingersoll:1920: 321-2)

Whilst Shelburne led the opposition in the House of Lords, Barré made vituperative attacks in the Commons, and the stout resistance of the Caribs, which resulted in no real headway being made militarily, sharpened public hostility to the campaign. The onslaught was remarkably effective. Dalrymple was ordered to cease hostilities and negotiate a treaty. The perceived injustice of the war was such that Shephard (1831), writing over eighty years later and at the request of the combatants in the second Carib war, wrote:

It was finally resolved that the measure was founded in injustice, and reflected dishonour on the National Character, a violation of the natural rights of mankind, and totally subversive of that liberty it gloried to defend (Shephard 1831: 30).

Shephard goes on to give a version of the treaty that was signed between the Caribs and Dalrymple on 17th February 1773 at their camp in Grand Sable, an area close to present day Georgetown. Under the terms of this treaty, the boundary of the Carib territory was moved a few miles to the north from Iambou to the Byera River, but they were to be left in possession of the vast majority of their lands. Furthermore, their lands were to be granted to the Caribs as a community and were not subject to alienation except with the permission of the British Government. This was a real

blow to the planters since it meant that they could not acquire the land on a piecemeal basis from individuals. There is evidence, however, that the treaty as given by Shephard was not the only version. Governor Seton, who was appointed following the debacle that arose from the bankruptcy of Valentine Morris, his predecessor, was involved in a lengthy dispute regarding lands purchased within the Carib territory. A planter by the name of C. Ashwell claimed to have purchased several acres of land from a Yellow Carib in the north of the island. Seton remarks in a letter to the Secretary of State that this land was not in fact alienable since it was covered by Article IV of the treaty (CO 260/19). He also remarks that a separate tract of land had been set aside for the Yellow Caribs that had not been involved in the dispute. The fact that there were Yellow Caribs both involved and apart from the hostilities amply illustrates the complexity of inter-Carib relations at the time. The tract of land given as being allocated for the Yellow Caribs was in the Warrawarra Valley just north of Kingstown on the windward side of the island. Given that it has never been demonstrated that the Yellow Caribs of this area were involved in the insurrection, the removal of these Caribs to the north of the island has been questioned by residents in Sandy Bay. During conversations with informants regarding this phase of their history it was suggested that I might research the legal basis for their removal from this land. To date I have found no evidence amongst the archival material of a legal ruling and, though it is possible to examine the legal requirements incumbent on the colonial authorities for such a removal to take place legitimately, it is unlikely that anything would be gained by such action. However, what was at issue was not the return of ancestral land but the recognition of past maltreatment and its reparation.

The uncertainty as to the status of Yellow Caribs as insurgents or harmless bystanders is further complicated by reports that some groups of them, settled on the leeward coast, were involved in a raid during the hostilities in what is now Cumberland Valley.

Following their failure to have the Caribs ejected from the island, the planters were further disappointed by the attitude of Morris. Realising the strategic importance of maintaining a large English presence in the face of possible hostile action by France, he proposed that rather than be settled by extensive sugar plantations, land should be allocated to small-scale farmers who would create a colonial yeomanry. As with many of Morris's plans it came to nothing and had the side effect of alienating him from the planters who judged government policy by its effect on their chances of enrichment. By describing the Caribs as "the most inoffensive people breathing" (CO 101/17), Morris made it clear that under his stewardship the Treaty of 1763 would be respected. In fact Morris, through his extensive travels through the island, came to the conclusion that the treaty itself was flawed insofar as there was in reality no group of chiefs who could be said to represent the Caribs. Some twenty-nine Carib "chiefs" had signed the treaty but although it suited the British to imagine that these had the power to make peace and war this was clearly not the case. As has been mentioned earlier, the outou was the traditional mechanism by which such matters were dealt with and this entailed the attendance of all, or at least all senior, Caribs at the meeting and only those present were bound by the decisions. The planters were further incensed by the granting of a large tract of land, consisting of some 4,600 acres, to General Monkton. This compared with the 500 acre maximum which the Land Commissioners had implemented.

The lasting legacy of the early attempts by the British Government to settle St. Vincent was thus mistrust of the English on the part of the Caribs and rancour on the part of the would-be planters and their backers in London that their plans had been thwarted. But beyond this, the north-eastern area of St. Vincent became the area most closely associated with Carib resistance to colonial penetration. It was the reasonably flat coastal strip around Grand Sable that most provoked the avaricious designs of the planters. It was through this same area that the surveyors tried to force a road, and it was in order to maintain the integrity of this area of St. Vincent as an autonomous region that the Black Caribs and undoubtedly at least some Yellow Caribs fought.

The treaty between the British and the Caribs did not address the concerns of either party but was made with unseemly haste by a General (Dalrymple) who excluded both his own Governor of the island and many of the Carib participants in the hostilities. As commentators ever since have pointed out, the treaty required that the Carib signatories should acknowledge the English king as their sovereign and henceforth they were to be treated as subjects of the Crown rather than as autonomous political actors. Whether the Carib leaders were fully cognisant of the ramifications that such an acknowledgement entailed and, even if they had, whether they were acting for anything other than their own convenience under duress, remains a matter of conjecture. In the next thirty years, the events of North America and Europe provided a context in which any Carib voice was overwhelmed by the

cacophony of Francophobia that engulfed Britain, and the interests of the planters prevailed.

Chapter 4

Historiography and Carib Ethnicity

The early history of the lesser colonies in the West Indies is so obscure, and of such little importance in the present age, that it is hardly worthy of any research; there are few records to be found in any writings of those who first visited them, which are not either enveloped in fiction, or distorted by ignorance and prejudice. (Shephard 1831: 19).

The Caribs of Sandy Bay are and have, apparently, always been aware of their connections with other Carib communities, both in St. Vincent and overseas. The nature of these relationships has increasingly become the subject of debate since they form the parameters in which Carib identification in the north Windward area of St. Vincent are made. The traditional view of the relationships between various Carib groups derives primarily from colonial history, such that the distinctions made by the British planters and their spokesmen of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been largely accepted by most Vincentians. However, there have been various attempts to reinterpret and challenge the accepted wisdom of traditional Vincentian history relating to the various Carib groups, in the period since Independence. In this chapter I shall attempt to delineate some of the trajectories that have emerged in recent years and to consider their implications, both in terms of their effects on Carib attempts at self-identification and within the wider context of political life in the island. Before considering these recent developments, however, it would seem apposite to first detail the traditional view of Carib ethnicity as derived essentially from William Young (1795) and those who

have largely accepted his general formulation (Shephard 1831; Duncan 1941). These works formed the basis of modern Vincentian understanding of their colonial past and, despite recent attempts at a reappraisal, still inform many older Vincentians who attended school prior to Independence. I shall then turn to recent developments in Vincentian historiography, both in terms of reinterpretation of existing material (see for instance Adams 1996, 2002) and new evidence that has emerged as a result of the development of an interest in writing a post-colonialist account of the island by local historians. As recently as 1998, a previously unpublished manuscript has been printed in St. Vincent. The manuscript by R.P. Adrien Le Breton (1662-1736), the last of the Jesuit missionaries on St. Vincent, is of uncertain date and was found by Fr. Robert Divonne in September 1981 whilst he was conducting historical research at the Museum of Natural History in Paris. The manuscript, or rather a copy of it, was later given to Mrs Agnes Cato, the widow of the ex-Prime Minister, for "safe-keeping" and in 1996 was made available to Fr. Mark de Silva, the resident priest at the Catholic Church on the Grenadine island of Mayreau. It was through Fr. de Silva's efforts that this manuscript was finally translated and published. R.P. Adrien Le Breton, the son of Pierre Le Breton, sieur de Bardy, having joined the Jesuits in 1679, was sent to the overseas missions in 1693. After stopping off at Martinique, the centre for the missions in the West Indies, he moved to St. Vincent where he resided until 1702, when he was recalled to Martinique. His work therefore represents a body of information that was not available to earlier writers such as Duncan (1941). In addition, I shall indicate areas where modern historical and literary research, including my own archival research, has revealed other possible areas of investigation that might prove fruitful.

History is written by the victors: an old idea, but one which highlights not only the concerns of modern historians and other academics but the real problems through which the contemporary descendants of the vanquished come to deal with their very being. The history of the Caribs of St. Vincent, edited and embellished by the propagandists of the European colonial project, remains, despite all attempts at elucidation, resolutely enigmatic. But the discourse of colonialism is not a unified homogeneous flow, unambiguous in its common theme, but multicentric and polyvalent. Such is the multifariousness of the sources that the very concept of a discourse of colonialism, rather than a plurality of discourses within which colonialism is elaborated, needs to be substantiated rather than asserted. However, it is this nonuniformity and the anomalies that it entails, which enable a radical critique to take place. This is not to claim that there were no unifying principles whatsoever. Dutch, English, French, Spanish and sundry other would-be imperial powers shared a broad, common cultural heritage deriving from classical antiquity and Christianity, itself an amalgam of Judaism and Hellenism with Roman state power. But the projects in which the various European protagonists were engaged are not reducible to this commonality. They are effects of the particular class configurations operative at the time in their specific political formations; configurations that are both constituted by and are constitutive of wider political struggles. Within colonial discourse, the indigenous people of the West Indies were subordinated in the minds of the would-be colonists long before that subordination became political reality by a process that was at once both exclusive and ascriptive. The political reality was constrained by the articulation of the heterogeneous ambitions of the European powers with those of the Caribs, which themselves cannot be assumed to be homogeneous despite their assignation as such by the Europeans. Carib society throughout the period of colonization appears to be in a process of class formation.

Of the major historical sources for Vincentian history in general, and the Caribs in particular, of contemporary authors, the work of Shephard (1831) is most commonly found in the bookshops of Kingstown. During my visits to St. Vincent over a five year period, this book was always found to have a prominent place in at least one of the two or three shops that primarily supplied school texts for children. This particular text also gives the paradigmatic planters' view of the Caribs, being sponsored, as it was, by veterans of the campaign against them. It was further written, primarily, as a response to versions of the events that were more sympathetic to the Caribs and reflected the shift in English popular opinion away from the institution of slavery and towards the rights of indigenous peoples. It is therefore somewhat ironic that Shephard's work should retain such a prominent place within Vincentian popular historiography. It is, however, also true that its continued prominence on the shelves of the bookshops has as much to do with its expense, which placed it beyond the means of most Vincentians, as anything else; for most Vincentians, Duncan's work (1941) which derived from Shephard (1831)

and Young (1795) is the basis of their knowledge of the early history of the island.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, its ubiquitous availability and its influence on later colonial writers necessitates its being treated as the starting point for an investigation into present-day Carib identity.

The Carib community in St. Vincent to this day retains a distinction, made by the planters of the eighteenth century, between what they termed Yellow Caribs and Black Caribs. Residents of Sandy Bay will normally describe themselves as Caribs. They will also speak of the Caribs from Rosemont, on the Leeward side of the island. When speaking of the "indigenous" community of Greiggs however, the term "Black Carib" is usually invoked. Historically, the Caribs, (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they were usually termed "red" or "yellow" Caribs), were claimed, throughout the literature, to be the indigenous population of the island. But, from the colonialist perspective from which Shephard (1831) wrote, the Caribs belonged to pre-history, to the dark age which preceded European literacy. The history of the island of St. Vincent was for Shephard (1831) and for Duncan (1941) who followed him, primarily its history as a colony. The earliest data which Shephard introduces concern not the island itself, but Acts of Parliament with

Further details of the campaign can be found in F.W.N. Bailey's, Four Years' residence in the West Indies during the years 1826, 7, 8 and 9 by the son of a military officer, London: Kidd, 1830. There are three chapters in this work that relate to the conduct of the Second Carib War. Like Shephard's (1831) work, it was written over thirty years after the events and derives from conversations with veterans of the campaign. As such it strongly reflects the views of the colonists. Interestingly Bayley, throughout the three chapters, makes no distinction between Black and Yellow Caribs and, interestingly, simply describes the native insurgents as Charaibs. Unlike both Shephard's (1831) and Young's (1795) accounts, Bayley does not recount anything of the background and history of the Caribs and, receiving his information from former soldiers, merely distinguished the Caribs from their French allies. Consequently, although Bayley's work is of interest to scholars of the history of the Second Carib War, it does not figure to any extent in this study, especially given that the work is practically unknown in St. Vincent.

reference to St. Vincent, which at that time was known as one of the so-called Caribbee Islands.

(I)t became the chosen residence for a tribe of natives called the yellow Caribs; it was nevertheless included in the Earl of Carlisle's patent which was granted by Charles I in 1627. (Shephard 1831: 20).

The Caribs themselves Shephard (1831: 20) describes as "numerous and warlike" and "of a low stature" (1831: 22); beyond that he is silent. It should not be assumed that this is a silence of ignorance; rather it is an editorial silence. Shephard is at pains to make the Caribs bit players in his tale, like J. Alfred Prufrock, they are there "to swell a progress, start a scene or two". Through the Caribs Shephard is able to introduce the main protagonists: the so-called Black Caribs. The Black Caribs however, traditionally described as deriving primarily from runaway slaves and one or more maroon groups, were considered to be usurpers who had sought to hide their origins by imitating the cultural traits of their original hosts. Shephard's account cites Baron Humboldt (1814-29) and Bryan Edwards (1801) for the origins of the Caribs and relates how, following the withdrawal of the Caribs on to the islands of Dominica and St. Vincent, the population was augmented by the arrival of the ancestors of the Black Caribs.

That the silence of Shephard is intentional, rather than simply unavoidable, is amply demonstrated by the treatment of this period of history by William Young, the son of the Land Commissioner. Writing barely thirty-five years earlier, Young (1795) gives a fuller account of the Yellow Caribs, whom he terms Red Caribs. According

to Young, the Red Caribs came from the Orinoco and crossed to St. Vincent via Trinidad, Tobago and Grenada.⁶⁷ They subdued the native population that they found there who, according to Young (1795), were called the Galibeis, killing the men and incorporating the women into their society. This version of the events Young claims to be based on Carib tradition, and it accords well with versions of the origin of the Island Caribs dating back to the early penetration of the Spaniards under Columbus into the area. The Red Caribs were, if not autochthonous, still viewed as aboriginal to St. Vincent by Young, and that indigenous state served the purpose again of introducing the main subject of his narrative: the Black Caribs, or Black Charaibs as he called them. This distinction is important, since although Young and those who followed him are all at great pains to make it, once made the term is frequently dropped and both Red and Black Caribs are frequently termed simply as Carib (Charaib). In fact, when Young first introduces these people he calls them Negroes with the term Black Charaib adopted later. Significantly, both Young (1795) and Shephard (1831) are consistent in their descriptions of the Black Caribs as recent interlopers

(T)he population of these children of nature was suddenly increased by a race of Africans, whose origin has never been clearly ascertained. The best opinion is, that about 1675, a ship carrying out Negroes from that country for sale, foundered on the coast of Bequia, a small island near to St. Vincent, and that the slaves who escaped from the wreck, were received by the inhabitants as brethren. But this was not all, the Proprietors of the Island gave their daughters in marriage to these strangers, and the race which sprang from this mixture were called Black Caribs,

⁶⁷ For a recent survey of the archaeological evidence of Carib migration see Boomert , A. Island Carib Archaeology in Whitehead, N.L. 1995. *Wolves from the Sea*. Leiden: LITLV Press.

having preserved more of the primitive colour of their fathers, than the lighter hue of their mothers. (Shephard 1831: 22).

In this Shephard is following a tradition, with some changes of detail, recorded by missionaries ⁶⁸ of the late seventeenth century and reiterated by William Young (1795) at the end of the eighteenth century. Young's account differs from that of Shephard in that he gives a slightly more detailed description of the slave ship and asserts that, from the beginning, the relationship between the Caribs and the Africans was antagonistic.

The Negroes, or Black Charaibs (as they have been termed of late years), are descendants from the cargo of an African slave ship, bound from the Bite of Benin to Barbadoes, and wrecked, about the year 1675, on the coast of Bequia, a small island about two leagues to the south of St. Vincent's.

The Charaibs, accustomed to fish in the narrow channel, soon discovered these Negroes, and finding them in great distress for provisions, and particularly for water, with which Bequia was ill supplied, they had little difficulty in inveigling them into their canoes, and transporting them across the narrow channel to. St. Vincent's, where they made slaves of them, and set them to work. (Young 1795: 6)

Young is explicit in his statement that the Black Caribs derived from a cargo of slaves shipwrecked on the island, for a particular reason. He argues that at the time of the assertion of sovereignty of Charles I or Charles II, they had not inhabited the island. They therefore could have no claim whatsoever to be indigenous to the island since they arrived there after the English. The aim of de-legitimizing the claim of the Black Caribs to rights in the land of St. Vincent was central to his account of the origins of the Black Caribs. Any acceptance of an earlier date for the arrival of

⁶⁸ See, for instance, George Davidson (1787).

the Black Caribs would have undermined the case that his father, along with the planters, had been making since the annexation of the island following the Treaty of Paris. Given his own avowed intent, it is of little surprise that, here at least, Shephard closely follows Young's exposition of the historical tradition. This politicization of the origins of the Black Caribs, in contradistinction to the Yellow Caribs, which took place at the time of annexation, has resurfaced in current debates in St. Vincent. Whilst the origins of the Caribs of Sandy Bay are seen as unproblematic and of primarily academic concern, those of the Black Caribs, with their overtones of slavery and freedom, are the subject of fierce debate.

Young further claimed that the Caribs picked up the survivors on Bequia, which was ill supplied with water, and transported them to St. Vincent where they attempted to enslave them. Unfortunately, when the Caribs decided to kill the male offspring of these slaves and reserve the females for themselves, there ensued a general uprising, which occasioned a surprise attack on the Caribs followed by a retreat into the mountainous interior of St. Vincent. Here, it is claimed by Young (1795):

They found many other Negroes from the neighbouring islands, who, murderers or runaways, had fled from justice, revenge or slavery. (Young 1795: 7)

Precisely how these runaways had managed to survive, given the murderous intent of the Caribs and their indomitable determination to brook no permanent settlement on the island, is not explained. What Young does try to explain is the fact that this nation, as he termed it, should arrogate for itself not only the name Charaib but also many of the distinctive features of Carib culture.

The savage, with the name and title, thinks he inherits the qualities, the rights, and the property, of those he may pretend to supersede: hence he assimilates himself by name and manners, as it were to make out his identity, and confirm the succession. Thus these Negroes not only assumed the national appellation of Charaibs, but individually their Indian names; and they adopted many of their customs: they flattened the forehead of their infant children in the Indian manner: they buried their dead in the attitude of sitting, according to Indian rites: and killing the men they took in war, they carried off and cohabited with the women (1795: 8).

Thus by a process of mimesis this band of shipwrecked slaves, runaways and their wives adopted a distinctly Carib culture. Given the starting date of 1675 when the slave ship, according to Young, was wrecked, this process must have occurred in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

Shepherd does not specify the reason for a rift between the newcomers and the Caribs and further claims that the former's adoption of Carib customs occurred later.

(I)n the year 1719, many of the French inhabitants of Martinico removed to St. Vincent (following an invitation from the Black Caribs). When the French came, they brought their slaves with them to clear and till the ground, the Black Caribs shocked at the idea of resembling persons who were degraded by slavery, and fearing that in the process of time, their own colour, which belied their origin, might be a pretence for enslaving them, took refuge in the thickest part of the woods, and in order to create and perpetuate a visible distinction between their race and the slaves brought into the island, and likewise in imitation of the practice of the Yellow Caribs, they compressed so as to flatten the foreheads of all their new infants, and this was thereafter concluded as a token of their independence. The next generation became as it were, a new race, they gradually quitted the woods, erected huts, and

formed little communities on the coast; by degrees they claimed a portion of the territory possessed by the Caribs, and having learned the use of fire-arms, which they procured from the French traders, on being refused a friendly participation in the landed property, established themselves as a separate Tribe, elected a Chief and again commenced hostilities against the Yellow Caribs, and by force brought their adversaries to terms of accommodation, and they agreed to divide equally the lands situated on the leeward coast. It happened however, after this division, that the Black Caribs experienced a most mortifying disappointment, for most of the new planters from Europe, and from the French settlements in the West Indies, landed and settled near the Yellow Caribs, where the coast is most accessible (Shephard 1831: 23).

It has been necessary to quote this passage in extenso in order to highlight the irregularities in Shephard's account of the origins of the Black Caribs. Whereas for Young (1795), the slaves from the wreck of 1675 were at first assimilated into Carib society, for Shephard they lived on the island for a whole generation with their own cultural practices and then adopted those of their enemies at a time when they had already begun to dominate the island, both demographically and politically. Whereas for Young (1795), the adoption of Carib cultural practices was a process of mimesis, for Shephard it was primarily one of alterity. That is to say, its aim was to stress difference with other Negro populations in order to assert freedom, and hence it did not occur until the advent of French settlers at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Here there is a double assertion of the natural rights of the planters. Firstly, the right of the planters over the Black Caribs derived from the original condition of slavery, the Black Caribs were thus rendered juridically passive, they could be freed by their masters but could not free themselves. Furthermore, this concept is then transferred to the Black Caribs, and they are assumed to act as if they themselves recognized this. That is to say, since the law of property was seen to be based, in the eyes of the planters, on natural justice, it was

something that the Black Caribs themselves could, despite their savagery, recognize. This process could be termed *historiographical forced internalization;* by a process of extension, the rights of masters over existing slave populations are re-affirmed. By presenting the Black Caribs as an extreme and limiting case of slave resistance, their subjugation would enhance the legal defences utilized by Shephard on behalf of the Vincentian planters for whom he openly claimed to speak. Even should a slave escape, marry into and adopt all the cultural mannerisms of a host community, he still remained a slave as did his offspring until such time as he was manumitted by his legal owner.

The modern work which is most frequently cited as to the origins of the Black Caribs by the present day occupants of Sandy Bay is The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs by Earle Kirby, the curator of the museum in Kingstown, and C. Martin (1986). However, prior to this book being published, the standard version of Vincentian history was that given by Ebenezer Duncan in his Brief History of St. Vincent, published originally in 1941 and reprinted in 1970. It is this work, more than any other, which has informed contemporary Vincentians, both Carib and non-Carib, of their history. According to Duncan (1941), Columbus, who had sighted the island on 22nd January 1498:

(F)ound the island inhabited by Caribs whose name for it was Hairoun (Hiroon). From the mountains to the sea the island was covered with forest, having here and there little clearings with rude huts; but the soil was very fertile and the Caribs lived on the fruits and vegetables which grew wild, and the fishes which were very plentiful in the many rivers and the sea. They went on the sea in canoes which they made from the forest trees; and they remained in peaceful, undisputed possession of their beloved Hairoun till

1627, when King Charles I of England assumed ownership of the island, and, in a grant of lands to the Earl of Carlisle included St Vincent. After the Restoration of the Monarchy in England, the Earl of Carlisle being dead, King Charles II, in another grant, passed the land to Francis, Lord Willoughby of Parham who, in heading an expedition against the Dutch in 1666, was lost in a storm between Dominica and Guadeloupe. The king then re-issued the grant to William, Lord Willoughby of Parham (Francis's brother) who, under a Royal Commission dated 1762 (sic) was appointed Governor of Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Dominica; but up to this time no people from outside had settled the island (Duncan 1941: 17).

In this manner Duncan introduced the English into the Caribbean as the rightful rulers of St. Vincent. It must be admitted immediately that Duncan was writing a textbook intended for children of upper primary and early secondary school age. Be that as it may, it clearly sought to substantiate British control of St. Vincent, not in contradistinction to the rights of the indigenous people but to the claims of competing European powers, most notably the French. The indigenous Caribs are portrayed as the passive recipients of English foreign policy. Clearly, for Duncan, the history of the island only really begins with the British occupation in the middle of the eighteenth century. Prior to that, he is extremely sketchy, an effect largely due to the influences of his sources. Of these, the most notable was probably Shephard (1831).

Duncan also mentions other ways in which the numbers of the Black Caribs were swollen. According to him, slaves escaping from Barbados could build rafts and be carried to St. Vincent on the prevailing winds and currents. This would serve the cause of the English planters even better since, unlike the unknown provenance of the original slave ship wrecked on Bequia, coming from Barbados would have made the slaves indubitably fugitives from English law. Indeed, such was the concern of

colonial settlers that the Caribs gave sustenance to slaves who sought refuge amongst them that the return of runaways became a stipulation in a stream of treaties made with them by the various colonial powers from 1660 onward. What is clear in this account of Duncan (1941) is the limitation caused by his reliance on exclusively British sources. Young, it is true, did claim to use accounts given by the Caribs themselves as to the origin of both the Red and Black Caribs, but he certainly underestimated two significant factors: the first was the effect of European penetration into the Caribbean prior to 1700, which involved not simply the English and French but also the Spanish and Dutch amongst others; the second was a down-grading of the ability of the Caribs to maintain political and military co-operation across the islands of the Lesser Antilles. Both of these factors are, of course, perfectly explicable within the context of the English writers' various projects.

Whilst recent interest in modern St. Vincent in the origins of the Black Caribs and on Carib history in general has begun to lead to an examination of non-British sources as a means to circumvent the prejudice of the representatives of the plantocracy, these have hitherto been restricted to primarily French historiography. Writers such as de Rochefort (1658), de la Borde (1674)⁶⁹, Labat (1724), Raynal (1770) and most recently Moreau de Jonnes (1858) have assumed increasing importance in modern Vincentian historical discourse. The importance of the latter,

⁶⁹ De la Borde was attached to the Jesuit missions on Dominica and St. Vincent, where he worked with R.P. Simon Jesuit. He produced a description of the "Caraïbes" which was published as part of a collection by Louis Billaine. Hulme & Whitehead (1992) give a brief resumé of what is known about him and a selection of his narrative.

as an alternative source to the British historians who promulgated the views of the planters, has been shown in a series of articles by Peter Hulme (Hulme 2001). Through Hulme's work, Moreau has become accessible to a wider audience and plans have been made for the translation of the ethnographic sections of his work, which have hitherto only been available in the original French. Hulme focuses extensively on the ambiguous nature of ethnic groupings in St. Vincent in the eighteenth century and highlights the vast difference between the estimates of Yellow and Black Caribs in St. Vincent in the accounts of Shephard and Young on the one hand and Moreau on the other. Whereas Shephard and Young put the number of Black Caribs at 4-6000 and the Yellow Caribs at a few hundred at most, Moreau states that the Yellow Caribs were the dominant group numbering some 6000 as opposed to some 1500 Black Caribs (1858 II: 276)70. What is important here is not so much that Moreau gives a slightly higher figure for overall Carib numbers but that he totally inverts the proportions of Yellow Caribs to Black Caribs as recorded by the British sources. Indeed, the tendency to view the Black Caribs as both the politically and numerically dominant group on the island can be traced back at least to the report of John Braithwaite, published in 1726 by Nathaniel Uring, following his reconnaissance mission to St. Vincent. As Hulme rightly points out, the British planters had a vested interest in portraying the island as inhabited by runaway slaves who had usurped power, since this negated the

⁷⁰ Moreau states "le population caraïbe de St Vincent excédait, en 1795, 6000 habitants de race rouge indigene, avec environ 1500 Caribes noirs." (1858 II: 276)

⁷¹ Braithwaite was sent to St Vincent following the granting of the island to the Duke of Montagu by George 1. In his report Braithwaite remarks on the far larger force available to the Black Carib Chief as compared to the Yellow Carib chief with whom he is first acquainted

growing tide of public opinion in favour of accepting that the indigenous inhabitants of the island were in lawful possession of it.

A further discrepancy with the British sources occurs in the account of Moreau concerning the nomenclature of the Caribs with whom he had dealings. Throughout the English historical texts and indeed in treaties and other official documents, the Caribs, both those designated Black and Yellow are given French names. Young, citing the Treaty of 1772, gives the leaders of the Caribs as having predominantly French names such as Jean Baptiste, Dufont, Simon, Chatoyer, and Matthieu. (Young: 1795: 96). Moreau, however, whenever he names a Carib gives them what appears to be a native name. Thus the leading protagonists in his account, the Chief of the Red Caribs and his daughter are called Pakiri and Eliame respectively. This is of particular interest since throughout his account Moreau gives the clear impression that Pakiri is the head chief of all the Caribs, which would presumably lead him to be identified with Chatoyer. However, according to Moreau, Pakiri had already been killed before the night attack by the British on the Carib position above Kingstown during which Chatoyer died and throughout his narrative he speaks of the leader of the Black Caribs as someone other than Pakiri. If Moreau is correct then Chatoyer could only have assumed his position as Paramount Chief after the death of Pakiri. The British, for their part consistently maintain that Chatoyer is Paramount Chief throughout this period but this should be balanced against their desire to portray the Black Caribs as their main antagonists, with the Yellow Caribs as helpless bystanders. At the very least Moreau's account reinforces the view that the British had little understanding of Carib culture and that they were never accorded the degree of informality and intimacy that occurred between the Caribs and the French.

Whilst the account of Moreau throws considerable doubt on the estimations of the British sources regarding the relative size of the Yellow and Black Caribs, it does little to augment our understanding of the origins of the latter. Hulme points out that just as the planters were keen to portray the Black Caribs in African terms, Moreau was equally determined to distance them (Hulme 2001: 6). Describing a meeting of "the warriors of the two tribes, Red and the Black Caribs" Moreau recounts his surprise at the appearance of the latter:

I had not previously seen the latter, and from misleading accounts I had formed quite a false idea of them. I believed from the missionaries' tales that they owed their origin to Negro slaves escaped from neighbouring colonies. I was much amazed to find them of quite another race. In place of woolly hair, of flat nose, of a gaping mouth set with thick out-turned lips, they possessed the traits of the Abyssinians: smooth hair, long and black, more like a mane; their nose was straight, standing out from the face but slightly curved at the end and such as you would never see from Cap Bon to the Gulf of Guinea; finally their mouth was furnished with thin lips in no way like that of a Negro, except for the beauty of the teeth. They had moreover an air of sovereign pride which changed at the least opposition to a savage expression, full of threats, arrogance and fierceness (1858 II: 246).

The claims by Moreau that the Black Caribs had the appearance of Abyssinians should be taken in the context of his own knowledge of the accounts of the shipwreck. Moreau (1858) himself states that he had learned of this event from the tales recounted by missionaries. The last of the Jesuit missionaries had been Fr. Adrien Le Breton, and it is interesting to note that he describes the slaves who escaped the wreck as being Ethiopian. That is not to say that Hulme is wrong in

claiming that Moreau, by describing the Black Caribs in terms which accentuate their being African but not Negro, should be seen in contradistinction to the British accounts which consistently made them runaway slaves of West African origin, it does though perhaps explain why that particular epithet might be employed. Moreau's account goes a considerable way to redressing the balance of our knowledge of St. Vincent in the late eighteenth century, but it must be remembered that it was written some fifty years after the events described. Its importance is therefore less for the answers that it gives than for the questions that it raises.

However, despite the importance of Anglo-French relations for an understanding of the position of the Caribs in relation to European expansion, particularly in the eighteenth century, for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the situation was complicated by the activity of the Dutch. The importance of the Dutch has been relatively ignored for two main reasons. Initially, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries when the canonical historical works of an anglicised Vincentian history were being written, Holland no longer posed a direct threat to either France or Britain and indeed its position as a colonial power was supported by the latter. The Dutch had been supplanted by the English in New Amsterdam and their activities restricted in the Caribbean. As such they had little if any relevance to the British colonists. Secondly, since the main sources for Dutch West Indian history have remained untranslated into English, they remain, by and large, inaccessible to Vincentian scholarship. However, the work of the Dutch historian Cornelius Goslingas (1985) regarding the activities of the Dutch in the West Indies from 1580 onwards, provides a valuable insight into the archival

records available and offers the possibility of alternative interpretations to those of the English and French.

Goslingas is concerned primarily with the genesis of the Dutch possessions in the West Indies and the formation of descriptions of the early years of the Dutch West India Company. As such, his work is not directly concerned with the Windward Islands, which the Dutch never colonized, but with what was termed the "Wild Coast" of South America and the islands of the southern Caribbean that the Dutch settled. Nevertheless, the extensive examination of Dutch source material that Goslingas undertakes makes his corpus of work an extremely important additional resource for attempts to comprehend the period of European penetration into the Caribbean. Goslingas is of particular importance since, through him, the work of the early Dutch geographer and director of the Dutch West Indies Company, Joannes de Laet (1625), is made accessible. Joannes de Laet was born in Antwerp in 1582 and studied philosophy and theology. In 1621, however, he became a director of the Dutch West India Company and consequently travelled extensively in the Caribbean. He is perhaps best remembered for his polemical debate with Hugo de Groot (Grotius) regarding the origins of Native Americans.⁷² For our purposes, however, his relations with the Spanish in that area are the most informative. His main published work was his description of the West Indies, Nieu-we wereldt ofte Beschrivinghe West Indien, (Leiden 1625), but he also published the proceedings of the Dutch West India Company for the period when he was a director: Historie ofte

⁷² This work published under the title "Hugo Grotii dissertation alter de origine gentium americanarum, adversus abtrectatorem" was published in Paris in 1643.

laerlijck Verhael van der verrichtinhen der Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Comagnie. (Ed. by S. Naber 's Gravenhage 1931-37). De Laet therefore offers us another perspective on events in the Eastern Caribbean which, although subject to historical constraints of its own, is not subject to the polemic of Anglo-French rivalry.

Following the voyages of Columbus, the Spanish had attempted to designate the Caribbean as a mare clausum. Such a policy had as its precedents, the Mediterranean under Rome, the Adriatic under Venetian control, and the Ligurian Sea under the Genoese. As early as 1519, the French began to make inroads and by 1557, Philip II responded by sending one of his most able men, Pedro Menendez de Avila, to take charge of the defence of the area (Goslingas 1985 : 46). Menendez established two squadrons to patrol the area: one based on Santo Domingo, the other at Cartagena on Tierra Firma. According to Goslingas (1985), Menendez further instituted a convoy system that prevented the loss of any Spanish treasure fleets until 1628. He realized, however, that the root of the problem lay not in the Caribbean but in the English Channel and devised a plan, which was never acted upon, to occupy the Scilly Isles and police the sea with a squadron based there (1985 : 47). Despite the exertions of Menendez, throughout the sixteenth century the activities of both the French and the English increased.

From 1594 onwards, the reports of Spanish governors in the New World began to mention *los flamencos*, that is to say, the Dutch.⁷³ The Dutch appear to have been

⁷³ The destruction of the Armada in 1588 was a major factor in Dutch maritime expansion, henceforth the Spanish were no longer able to lay claim to or police a *mari clausum*.

seeking supplies of white salt, which could be obtained in copious quantities from the pans of the West Indies. This was needed by the herring industry although some was traded in the Baltic. It was a risky business for the Dutch since, besides taking salt for nothing instead of buying it at Spanish ports and thereby paying duty on it, they were also viewed as heretics by the Spanish. The situation had come about partly as a result of seizures of Dutch ships in Spanish ports, where they had continued to trade despite the wars in the Low Countries, at the instigation of Philip II. In general, the Dutch were only concerned with trading, but they established themselves at Araya, Tortuga, St. Martin, Curacao and Marguerita. Once a trade route was established to the latter and the mainland outpost in Guiana, the island of St. Vincent became an important stopover (Goslingas 1985: 158 and de Laet/Naber 1931, I: 85) as early as 1625 Boudewijn Hendricks is reported to have stopped at St. Vincent in order to tend to his sick. Undoubtedly, wood and water would also have been taken on board. He stayed there with his fleet for some two weeks before proceeding north. Three years later in July 1628, Piet Heyn, having crossed the Atlantic from the Canaries with secret instructions to attack the Spanish, watered at St. Vincent. Goslingas (1985: 181) notes that Heyn had to specifically order his crew not to communicate with the natives. Further evidence of the general use made by the Dutch of St. Vincent is given in 1630 by the Governor of Cuba, Don Fadrique, who discovered that there had been seven or eight Dutch ships at St. Vincent waiting to sail on to Cape San Antonio in Cuba (Goslingas 1985: 217). In the same year, we know that Admiral Ita sent a yacht to advise the commander in the Caribbean, Ruytal, that he was coming to assume command of operations against the Spanish (de Laet/Naber 1931 I: 144). On reaching St. Vincent, he received word that Ruytal would rendezvous with him at the Ile a Vache south of Hispaniola. It is clear from the foregoing that the Dutch not only stopped frequently at St. Vincent but that they had also established relations which were cordial enough to allow messages to be left. It may have been that they had established some form of trading post there. Certainly, the Dutch regularly traded with Caribs on the mainland and the action of Heyn indicates that there usually was communication between the ships' crews and the inhabitants of St. Vincent. 74 The greatest impact that the Dutch may have had on St. Vincent would have been due to their policy with respect to the slave trade. It would appear that throughout the first thirty years of the seventeenth century, there was a marked hostility to participating in the slave trade in the Netherlands. Even the Dutch West India Company discussed whether they should participate in the trade. It was widely felt that Calvinistic Christianity and slavery were incompatible. The inexorable rise in price that this human cargo could command acted as a powerful counter-argument. Be that as it may, Goslingas (1985: 341) repeats the story of a hundred slaves captured at sea and taken to Middelburg in 1596.75 The Burgomeister, Gelen ten Haeff, harangued the local populace into freeing the slaves since they "could not be kept by anyone as slaves and sold as such, but had to be put in their natural freedom without anyone pretending (to have) rights in them as his property".

⁷⁴ A despatch from the Governor of Trinidad to Madrid in 1637 shows the extent of the Dutch involvement with the native populations: "the Dutch threatened the island of Trinidad with a powerful fleet and are in league with the numerous tribes.......the Dutch being so mixed with the Indians that they marry with the Carib women as well as other tribes (USC ii Extracts: 78-83).

⁷⁵ The source for this story comes from Het archief der Middelburgsche Commercie Compagnie 1951. Leiden. Further information is given by Unger 1961 and Unger 1982. In the latter, Unger claims that the actions at Middelburg were not typical since the slaves had been captured at sea.

The Burgomeister appears not to have been alone in his opposition to the slave trade. De Laet (1931: 931-7) constantly alludes to the Dutch habit, on capturing a slave ship, of either turning it over to the slaves or, in the event that they wished to retain the ship themselves, dropping them off at the first landfall. For slave ships taken in the Atlantic, the first landfall would have been St. Vincent, and this practice may account for some of the Africans appearing in St. Vincent in the seventeenth century. The relationship that developed between the Dutch and the Caribs in the seventeenth century was ignored by the later writers, such as Young and Shephard, who sought to explain the existence of the Black Caribs. Whether or not this was deliberate, this had the effect of reducing the perceived political power of the Caribs as an independent group and helped to create a view of the history of those times in which the English and French were the sole political actors in the Lesser Antilles. Consequently, the Caribs could, all the more easily, be portrayed as merely reactive to the colonialist advances of the two European powers.

That there were Africans already living on St. Vincent with the Carib population at the time of the shipwreck mentioned by the English authors is uncertain. In the small treatise written by Fr Adrien Le Breton (1998), the last of the Jesuit missionaries to St. Vincent, a situation that is far from clear is revealed. Le Breton was resident on the island of St. Vincent from 1693-1702, that is to say less than twenty years after the date given by Young and Shephard for the shipwreck that brought the African forebears of the Black Caribs to the island. More significantly, it predates Shephard's account of the formation of these Africans as Black Caribs. Le Breton himself informs us that the wreck, which he claimed some of the Caribs

believed to have been Spanish, occurred "some fifty years ago at most" and that far from being a massed landing comprised "a small number of Ethiopians" who were welcomed by the Caribs and invited to live amongst them as slaves. It would be hard to reconcile this small number with the large numbers of Black Caribs that le Breton himself attests to inhabiting St. Vincent by 1700, and there is some ambiguity as to whom they married. Le Breton (1998) writes:

(B)y the greatest luck fortunately only one "Ethiopian" woman or perhaps two were found to have lost their lives in such a great danger. As a result, in a short time these Africans united themselves with the survivors (sibi invicem), some through the bond of individual marriage, others under the polygamous regime, which is allowed among these nations (le Breton 1998: 4).

The problem that this account has for us is why le Breton distinguished the African women from the survivors. It is possible that le Breton meant by this that they married the *other* survivors. An alternative would be to conclude that there were already Africans there, some of whom married the survivors. From the available evidence no clear conclusion can be drawn but the possibility of there being either more than one wreck or, alternatively, landings of slaves captured by the Dutch at sea cannot be ruled out. There is also no mention of the crew of the ship, and one would have expected that they would have been far more likely to survive than the slaves who may have been chained below decks. If, however, the ship had previously been intercepted by the Dutch and handed over to the slaves in the approaches to the Lesser Antilles, their escape would have been more easily explained. This would again indicate an early date for this occurrence, somewhere before 1635, certainly, and probably before 1630. Indeed, as early as 1667, a

Colonial State Paper of Britain ⁷⁶ attempted to explain the existence of Blacks on St. Vincent by the loss of two Spanish ships in 1635, a date not far from the 50 years ascribed by le Breton and close to the point at which the Dutch themselves entered the slave trade. Dutch involvement would also explain why a slave ship bound from Africa to the Spanish Main would have foundered on St. Vincent, which was off the trade routes used by the Portuguese who transported them.

It is also true to say that the terms of their staying with the Caribs, as slaves, need explaining. Le Breton (1998: 4) uses the term slaves, but says that the Caribs used it "more to snub them than because they used them as such." However, as a cautionary note, it must be remembered that the Carib term for slave was also that of son-in-law. The Caribs appear to have practised a form of matrilocal marriage, which entailed bride-service by the son-in-law for his father-in-law, providing of course that they were both Carib. From the time of the early Spanish incursions into the Lesser Antilles, reports that the Caribs had taken Arawak women in war, having killed or driven off the men, were common currency. Be that as it may, the variations in the descriptions of the Africans as, on the one hand, slaves of the Caribs and, on the other, as being wife-takers need not be as contradictory as it might appear. Nor need the snub implied by the Caribs calling the Africans slaves necessarily imply that they had at that time internalized European attitudes to slavery. It is clear that the institution of "slavery" amongst the Caribs, during the seventeenth century at least, would have been far removed from the practices associated with sugar production on European-run plantations or in the mines of

⁷⁶ Calender of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies 1675-6: 146.

the Spanish New World. De la Borde (1674) gives another early rendition of the genesis of the Black Caribs:

There are a great number of negroes who live with them, particularly on St. Vincent where their stronghold is. They have so multiplied that at present they are as powerful as them (the *Caraibes*). Some of them are fugitive maroons who were taken in war; these are slaves of the *Caraibes*, whom they call *Tamons*; but the greater part came from some Flemish or Spanish ship which was wrecked close to their islands (de la Borde cited in Hulme & Whitehead 1992: 150).

Although a member of the Jesuit mission sent to Dominica and St. Vincent, following a treaty between the local English and French Governors in 1660, de la Borde was himself a layman. In the text, he associates himself with R.P. Simon, who is known to have been one of the Jesuit priests engaged in missionary work in the latter half of the seventeenth century and was, as such, a predecessor of Adrien le Breton. There are certainly correspondences between the two accounts, and the date of de la Borde's work suggests an early date for the shipwreck. The confusion as to whether the ship was Dutch or Spanish may be further evidence that it was taken by the Dutch whilst in transit to one of the Spanish colonies. Certainly, by 1700, the Caribs would have been well aware of the status of Africans in relation to Europeans. Equally, they had both stories of their own history, which mention their subordinate status with respect to the Arawaks, and a kinship terminology that would, for a European, serve to obfuscate the situation.

From the foregoing it is evident that the precise origins of the Black Caribs, and their numbers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are far from clear. The English tradition as adumbrated by Young (1795) and Shephard (1831) clearly put the origins of the Black Caribs in the second half of the seventeenth century and being primarily the result of the shipwreck of the slave ship mentioned earlier. Furthermore, they consistently argue that by the middle of the eighteenth century the Black Caribs had become overwhelmingly superior in numbers to those termed by the English writers the original inhabitants. Both of these points have been shown, however, to be clearly linked to the political and economic goals of the English planters who had settled the islands following the Treaty of Paris. Up until this time, both English and French reports of St. Vincent describe it as being a stronghold of the Caribs. The main discrepancy between the English and French sources occurs following annexation with regard to the relative size of Carib and Black Carib populations.

Hulme and Whitehead (1992) reproduce a report of Intendant Robert (1700) for the Comte d'Amblimont, the Governor General of the French Antilles which suggests the number of Black Caribs as being 2000. Whether this figure represents the adult male population or that of the total population is unclear but, in the context, the former seems most likely.⁷⁷ Five years later in a letter, dated 3rd September 1705, from M. de Beaumont, a French official based in Grenada, regarding the mediation of R.P. le Breton,⁷⁸ there is a claim that there were "about

77 "It is a steadfast sentiment that they prefer to see 2000 negroes settled in their island than to see disembarking on 50 armed Frenchmen" (Robert 1700 in Hulme and Whitehead 1992: 174)

This monk, as he is termed in the letter, seems to be none other than Adrien le Breton, the author of the manuscript recently found and published in St. Vincent. De Beaumont claims that le Breton had served in St. Vincent for three years. In fact, le Breton had served in St. Vincent for nine years, from 1693-1702 and had thus left St. Vincent three years previously. Le Breton was the last of the missionaries on St. Vincent and

3000 negroes,, all strong, fit to send to the Spanish mines" (Hulme and Whitehead 1992: 176).

Despite being given in patents to would-be colonizers from the first half of the seventeenth century onward, it was not until 1722 that the English made an attempt to land on St. Vincent with a view to settling the island. The task of appraising the situation was given to Capt. Braithwaite. The report of Braithwaite (1726), sent by the Duke of Montagu to reconnoitre the island could give the impression that by that time the Black Caribs, or negroes as he calls them, far outnumbered the Caribs. This, however, results from him describing meetings with two chiefs. Braithwaite is initially invited ashore by two Caribs, on the leeward side of the island, to meet "their General". Braithwaite goes on to describe this meeting stating that the General had "a guard of about a hundred Indians". This is later contrasted with a meeting with the brother of the Chief of the Black Caribs who has a retinue of "five hundred Negroes, most armed with fuzees". The use of the term "General" by Braithwaite could be taken that the Carib leader was some sort of Paramount Chief and that the forces available to him were only one fifth of those available to the brother of the Chief of the Black Caribs. However, it has been shown, from descriptions throughout the seventeenth century, that there were numerous Carib chiefs. 79 Furthermore, whereas Braithwaite himself had gone to visit the Carib chief in his territory, the Black Carib chief had left the windward

would have been well acquainted with the Caribs of that island. This would explain his role as mediator in this dispute.

⁷⁹ Further evidence is of this is given as late as 1773 in the treaty that ended the First Carib War where there were over thirty signatories on behalf of the Caribs, nearly all, designated as, chiefs.

side of the island to warn Braithwaite not to attempt to force a settlement on the island. That is to say, he went with the specific intention of making a show of force. It would therefore be erroneous to attempt to extrapolate the respective numbers of Caribs and Black Caribs on the island from Braithwaite's account.

The English historiographical tradition invariably played down the role of the Caribs. Unlike the French, there were no extensive accounts dating from the seventeenth century since the English church showed little appetite for missionary work amongst the savages, as they termed the Caribs. This void gave the later writers a tabula rasa on which they could impose a view of St. Vincent that most suited their purposes and those of the plantocracy whom, on the whole they represented. In St. Vincent itself, this proved to be extremely successful. Following the defeat of the Black Caribs in 1795 and their exile to Roatan in Central America, and the virtual banishment of the remaining Caribs to the remote north windward coast of St. Vincent at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the colonial administration and the planter class that it represented were able to establish a historical tradition that totally marginalized the Caribs. As late as 1973 native resistance to English expansion was seen solely in terms of the Black Caribs.⁸⁰ Recent research into hitherto ignored French accounts such as that of Moreau de Jonnès (1858) and a wider appreciation of the range of other source materials, such as those of the Dutch, may eventually redress the balance. These accounts describe a situation on the island that cannot be reduced to the simple narratives of Young

⁸⁰ An example of this is Marshall, B. "The Black Caribs – Native Resistance to British Penetration Into the Windward side of St. Vincent 1763-1773" Journal of Caribbean History 1973.

(1795) and Shephard (1831) nor Duncan (1941) who followed them. The relationship between Caribs and Black Caribs, and indeed the relative ontology of these two terms, has been called into question. To explain this phenomenon it is necessary to turn from the historical events described in the period of Carib independence to the period when the process of marginalization of the Caribs appears to have become complete.

Chapter 5

Jack Iron: Trauma, Guilt and Assujettissement⁸¹

During an early visit to St. Vincent I discussed my proposed thesis with a local woman living in the Central Windward district of the island. She knew that I was interested in Vincentian history and that I was planning to come back to research my thesis. I began to explain that I was specifically interested in the Caribs and that I planned to stay with them in Sandy Bay. I was rapidly stopped short, however, by her reaction; her jaw dropped and her eyes widened.

Why do you want to go up there, with them people? Them Caribs are crazy! They get drunk all the time. When some aviation fuel got washed up there one time the government had to go on the radio to tell them not to drink it. But they did anyway! They'll drink anything, they're just crazy people!

I tried to explain that it was part of my research and that I was interested to find out about them, but my response merely evoked a slow shaking of the head in resignation and the weary words of someone who knew better.

Well, I know you are an educated man, Mr Twinn, but you don't know what you are doing. Them people aren't like us.

Until that conversation I had no real conception of the social distance that existed between the Caribs and some members at least of the wider Vincentian community. What made this conversation startling was that it was with a teacher, who had had a better than average education and who I presumed at the time was open to new ideas and would have been actively challenging the old prejudices of the past. But throughout my stay in St. Vincent the views expressed by that informant were

⁸¹ A version of this chapter was published in Redclift ed. (2005), see Twinn (2005)

reiterated by many, though not all, of those non-Caribs I questioned. On several occasions, informants, anxious to dissuade me from going to stay with them, described the proclivity of the Caribs to get drunk and/or fight. Given my position as a white Englishman from the University of London, my determination to do so tended to evoke a mixture of puzzlement and mild amusement. Occasionally the response would be a knowing nudge and wink, "Dere's plenty ah ganja up there and dose Carib gals are plenty hot, white man. You gonna have some good time." This was a typical young male response and, though the clear inference was still that Sandy Bay was a wild place, the emphasis had shifted away from the wild as dangerous to a wildness based on excitement. These two connotations of wildness and the ambivalence that they evoked were reiterated in conversations with different people throughout my fieldwork. To some, who might be described as aspiring to respectability, the Caribs were the negation of all the virtues that they held dear; the Caribs were quick to anger, violent, hedonistic and feckless. They lived for today and, so long as they had the price of a quarter of rum in their pockets, cared little for the future. But for other Vincentians, those aspiring to reputation, these traits were an object for emulation.82

Besson (2002), in her analysis of Martha Brae a village in Jamaica, seeks to highlight the limitations of the use of the concepts of "respectability" and "reputation" as formulated by Wilson (1995) in his book *Crab Antics*. Wilson's work focused on the tiny island of Providencia which, although part of Catholic Columbia, was both

⁸² For a discussion of *respectability* and *reputation* see Abrahams (1983), Besson (1993, 2002) and Rubenstein (1987).

anglophone and Protestant. According to Wilson, "respectability" is based on the prevailing Eurocentric value system and is most strongly associated with the ruling elite. For Wilson, the main social institution through which "respectability" was both promulgated and reinforced was the church, especially the mainstream white church. However, there was also a set of values based on "reputation" which were, according to Wilson, the basis of a counter-culture based on indigenous values that gave greater importance to self-worth rather than value in the opinion of others. For Wilson these two poles have a gendered dimension insofar as respectability is primarily the orientation of women, notably through regular attendance at church, whilst reputation was enunciated by men through verbal skills and control of land.

Besson criticizes Wilson's theory of reputation on four counts: firstly, the system of reputation "is based on unequal and exploitative gender relations" (Besson: 2002: 14); secondly, he assumes that opposition to colonial culture refers only to men; thirdly, he overlooks the degree to which women compete for status; fourthly, he erroneously asserts that modern gender relations are derived from female slaves' adoption of their masters' value system. Besson cites Sheller's work (Sheller 1998) which demonstrates the historical significance of women in areas as diverse as labour policy, control of the church and street culture.

Besson concludes that "the analysis of gender in Martha Brae therefore modifies Wilson's androcentric thesis of reputation and respectability; it reveals that women as well as men have been prominent in Caribbean culture building and development since slavery days" (Besson: 2002: 18). Whilst in general we would concur with this

criticism, it should also be noted that the existence of principles of social organization, and their conceptualization within the minds of actors, and the activity of concrete historical subjects are ontologically distinct. In St. Vincent during my fieldwork, there was a tendency to view reputation as a male gendered concept whilst respectability was orientated towards women. That is not to say that individual women were not recognized as conforming to the behavioural characteristics of reputation, nor that men, especially those of, or aspiring to, elite status were not viewed in terms of respectability. It is though, as we have noted, to make a distinction between concepts and individual behaviour.

What immediately caught my attention, however, was the similarity between the statements of present-day Vincentians and early reports by the missionaries of the seventeenth century regarding the Caribs. Three possibilities immediately presented themselves: firstly, that the Caribs had maintained behavioural characteristics over three hundred years despite the changes in their circumstances; secondly, that the discourse of the native Caribbean had been thoroughly internalized by the Vincentian population and it was this that had persisted; the third that occurred to me was that the situation might be a combination of both these factors.

The incident of the aviation fuel mentioned by my informant certainly seemed to bear out the depiction of the Caribs as wild-men, but it was only later in my fieldwork that I began to realise the full significance of the paradigmatic event that had been related to me. This significance, however, was itself far from uniform, and I rapidly learned that its effectivity as a symbol of being Carib had evoked responses from within the Carib community that sought to undermine that effectivity. The incident itself had been headline news in St. Vincent at the time and had even been reported in the British national press, a rare event for Vincentian news even in today's media-driven society, let alone the 1960's.

On Wednesday 19th November 1969, the ninety tonne schooner Ruth 114, bound for Martinique from Trinidad, ran into heavy weather and, having suffered damage to the sails and rudder, sprang a leak. Unable to stem the flow of water, the crew abandoned ship and made for the beach at Colonerie on the Windward coast of St. Vincent at approximately 0300 hours on Thursday morning. After some nine hours, the crew arrived in Colonerie and informed the local police. Despite a search by two ships from Kingstown, the vessel was not sighted but, having drifted north for several hours, finally ran aground at Big Level, a beach immediately to the east of the village of Sandy Bay. A small group of men from the village managed to board the boat and began a salvage operation to remove the cargo and any items of value. This consisted of a small quantity of rum in wooden casks as well as the main cargo of one hundred drums of methanol and one hundred and fifty drums of aviation fuel. On finding the rum, the men opened the casks and began to drink it. They then turned their attention to the other drums and sampled that too. One informant told how, having witnessed what was happening he warned the men about drinking the fuel but was told that he was just a boy and didn't understand drink. This was "Jack Iron", they claimed, a strong rum made in the Grenadines. The schooner was

by then beginning to break up and the drums were floated and dragged ashore. By this time a large group of people had assembled and quickly began to distribute the liquid amongst themselves. News of the wreck had spread rapidly, and it was believed to be a piece of good fortune for the inhabitants of the area. As news of the unexpected windfall spread, people began to arrive not only from Sandy Bay but the nearby village of Owia. That weekend the community could have a party thanks to the boon they had received.

Within twenty-four hours the situation changed as the lethal concoction's devastating effects became apparent. People began collapsing from poisoning. Some of the recipients of the drums were lucky. One man informed me how he had seen a friend with an old truck loaded with drums of methanol and that he had been given one. Fortunately he had decided to put it aside for Christmas and so avoided poisoning. Many others were not so lucky. A frantic operation began, with those unaffected trying to administer sugar and water to the sufferers. This prompt action may have saved many lives but the toll was still heavy. Nineteen people died, two were blinded and up to six hundred people suffered poisoning through drinking the aviation fuel. Amongst the dead were two children of eleven and one of twelve. The bodies of the victims of the tragedy were laid out in the small square outside the post office in Sandy Bay whilst the survivors were taken to hospitals in Kingstown, Georgetown and Chateaubelair. The situation had been made worse by the absence of both telephones and electricity in the north of the island. Getting the sick to hospital, once the alarm had been raised, was made more difficult by the tortuous

nature of the coastal road to Georgetown some eight miles away. Fortunately, the Rabacca Dry River was not in flood and vehicles were able to cross the shallow ford in relative safety, but the isolation of the Caribs, beyond the Dry River as they were, was made starkly apparent.

Amongst the local inhabitants there was a sense of shock and a feeling of bewilderment at the events that had unfolded, feelings that were heightened by the euphoria that had preceded them. One man recounted to me the sight that met his eyes when he went to the post office. "I remember going down to the square and seeing all those bodies lined up. They were just left on the ground with a sheet over them. People I knew. I had warned them not to drink it but they wouldn't listen." Even after thirty years he was visibly shaken as he talked of the events he had witnessed. But amongst the wider Vincentian population, despite the genuine grief felt at the tragedy, the incident served to reinforce old prejudices regarding the Caribs. During the weekend after the wreck of the Ruth 114, the government had broadcast warnings of the dangers of drinking the liquid on the boat. These warnings had been ignored. Henceforth the Caribs were subject to the accusation that they could not tell the difference between rum and aviation fuel. The objectification of the Caribs as wild men and the isolation of the community was complete.

On many occasions when discussing these events Carib informants expressed their belief that this was indeed the lowest point in their history. For years they had been neglected, regarded by the wider community as an incongruous oddity within the nation. They now felt the full force of their position as firmly anchored at the bottom of the social pile. But though the nadir of their social standing in St. Vincent, the tragedy served to create a positive reaction in some young Caribs. The desperation of the situation provided the catalyst for a recognition that changes in their circumstances could only come from within their own community. As one man put it, "After that I knew we could not depend on anybody else to help us. We had to do it ourselves." Having been classified as wild men, categorized as stupid and ignorant and considered as beyond the pale of respectable society in St Vincent, a growing self-consciousness of their position emerged within the community. It was this self-consciousness that made possible a re-evaluation of their position within Vincentian society by the Caribs themselves. This is not to say, though, that this self-consciousness developed on its own throughout the Carib population. It would be more accurate to say that the trauma had the effect of clearing or creating a space within which specific Caribs could constitute themselves as what Gramsci termed organic intellectuals (Forgacs 1988). That is to say, they constituted themselves as the dialectical opposite of their discursive characterization. They could do this because the events of November 1969 provided such a stark objectification of what it was to be Carib that some at least were able deny it. The pre-existing models of normative behaviour summed up in the notion of "respectability" provided an alternative to the wild man image of "reputation" that dominated discourses of Caribness.

Gramsci elaborated the concept of the organic intellectual within the wider context of the role of education and the division of labour in class formation. Traditional intellectuals, such as academics, teachers, the media, artists and the clergy, were categorized in terms of the social division of labour that assigned to them the function of discursively elaborating the material interests of the dominant group in the society with which they were usually associated. But he was equally concerned with the struggle faced by subaltern groups, principally the proletariat, for whom the problem was how to "challenge the existing order and become hegemonic in its turn, without becoming dependent on intellectuals from another class,"(Forgacs 1988: 304). Therefore in order to effectively challenge for hegemonic control of society it was necessary for classes such as the proletariat to develop their own organic intellectuals. That is to say to develop intellectuals who derived from within the subaltern group itself and who maintained practices that effectively constituted and maintained their relationship with that class. This was necessary since, according to Gramsci, intellectuals did not in themselves constitute a class but were linked to specific social classes, the paradigmatic example of this being the ecclesiastics who were "organically bound to the landed aristocracy" (Forgacs 1988: 302). It was possible for an emergent class to win over, temporarily at least, some of the intellectuals of the dominant group, but, for Gramsci, it was only by the formation of its own organic intellectuals that an emergent group could challenge for hegemonic control. The constitution of such organic intellectuals was thus a major event in group-formation since one of its major functions would be to discursively articulate social identification within the category from which group

membership could coalesce. It was precisely this process of constitution that the traumatic events of 1969 precipitated.

In this it contrasts with previous traumatic events that had occasionally brought the Caribs to the attention of the colonial administration. Of these the most calamitous was the violent eruption of La Soufrière in 1902, which resulted in widespread loss of life and damage to property. This had induced the Caribs of Morne Ronde on the leeward coast of St. Vincent to petition the King for relief. But whilst the claim for land was endorsed by John Francois, who claimed the status of Carib Chief, and five headmen, the petition itself was signed by P. Foster Huggins who is described as being "Chief and Referee by election". However, he is described in a colonial internal memo as "a white man, some sixty years of age owning some small landed property at Calliaqua and at Rutland Vale." In a further letter to Joseph Chamberlain, the Governor writes:

"I think it has probably escaped your attention that the so-called 'Chief and Referee' is Mr. P. Foster Huggins, recently pensioned from the public service.... The Caribs as a distinct race no longer exist in any large number, they have intermarried with the descendants of the African slave Negroes and there are very few pure Caribs left. The people of Morne Ronde have received every consideration and have no substantial grievance". 83

 83 CO/260 correspondence PRO

Whilst the language of the Governor typifies the attitude to the Caribs that had prevailed in St. Vincent since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the appearance of an ex-government officer acting on their behalf clearly caused some consternation to the colonial authorities. But despite the calamity that had befallen them, the Caribs had not developed spokesmen of their own but had had to act through the mediation of Huggins. That they were prepared to go to the lengths of making him an "honorary chief" so that he might speak for them indicates both the desperation of their plight and the complete lack of self-confidence that prevailed. Whilst it can be argued that Foster Huggins was acting as no more than an honest broker, it is equally clear that his was the only intervention regarding the Caribs that occurred and, in the years that followed the disaster, they disappeared once more from the colonial records. He was for the Morne Ronde Caribs a traditional intellectual, in the Gramscian sense in that he was able to discursively articulate their grievances whilst they remained mute, and it was in this role that he mediated not with the colonial administration but directly with the King to whom the petition was addressed. The tone of the Caribs' plea was strangely reminiscent of that reported by Peter Carstens (1991) for the Okanogan Indians who similarly held their relationship to Britain to be direct to the monarchy rather than through the normal channels of the administration. Shephard (1831) reports this attitude as far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century and the amnesty that brought to a conclusion the Carib Wars. Unlike the later disaster subsequent to the wreck of the Ruth 114, the eruption of 1902 did not result in the emergence of organic intellectuals within Carib society. Indeed, the misfortune that befell the Caribs was shared by many others in the north of the island and although it was they who

suffered most directly in terms of loss of life, the events were viewed as an act of God, a natural disaster that was part of the perils of living on a volcanic island. This is in marked contrast to the events of 1969 when the Caribs themselves were seen as the authors of their own misfortune. This was not a natural disaster but one that emanated from the proclivities of the Caribs themselves and served as proof of those proclivities. This disaster was not about living in a perilous location but about the perils associated with being Carib. It confirmed, in the eyes of Vincentian civil society, the depiction of the Caribs that had been current in the literature from the time of Columbus. It is this aspect of the events that allowed their incorporation into the practices by which Carib individuals were constituted as Carib subjects. But it was the specificity of this constitution, its definitive rigour that also created the possibility of denial. In order to elaborate how this constitution was possible, it is necessary first to consider how the incident of Ruth 114 contributed to the objectification of the Carib as wild man and only then can the complexity of its role in the constitution of Carib subjects be explicated.

Two key elements emerged from the incident regarding the objectification of the Caribs: the first was a confirmation of their alleged excessive proclivity to drink alcohol; the second reinforced the belief that they were unable to make rational judgements and were concerned only with the here and now, with scant regard for the implications of their actions. Combined, the two elements coalesced into a depiction of the Caribs immersed in a mindless hedonism that precluded their

⁸⁴ The main loss of life resulted from a pyroclastic surge along the Rabacca River which caught some 2,500

inclusion in the wider society, with its aspirations at the time for modernity and independence. This objectification of the Caribs, internalized, as we have already shown in previous chapters, through the discursive practices of colonialism, could be reformulated by non-Carib Vincentians in terms of the event. Henceforth it became possible for the incident of the *Ruth 114* to be used as a form of interpellation of Caribs by the non-Carib population. The way in which this occurred was described thus:

After that people below the river (Rabacca) would see us and shout 'Jack Iron' – we were the stupid Caribs who couldn't tell the difference between rum and aviation fuel. That's what they thought of us – the tragedy of all those lost lives meant nothing; it was just a joke at our expense. We were just a joke and our lives meant nothing. Sometimes, even today, when you are just walking along the street minding your own business, someone will shout out "Jack Iron". Even today, after all these years, they won't let us forget it. But it was much worse years ago. Then our people would really deny being Carib; they were ashamed (Carib resident of Sandy Bay).

Oh it's just a bit of fun; sometimes when the boys see one of them Caribs they'll shout out "Jack Iron" just to tease them (Non-Carib bar-owner).

These exchanges, for a response is clearly required and expected for it to be successful, were the most obvious means by which Caribs could be interpellated as subjects within a discourse which had a genealogy stretching back to the time of Columbus.

The term interpellation, as it is used here, refers to the work of the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1971). In his article "Ideology and Ideological State

Apparatuses" Althusser posed the question as to the constitution of subjects in terms of the functional requisites of the reproduction of the means and conditions of production in capitalism. Althusser was specifically concerned with the reproduction of labour-power, embodied as it was in concrete individuals. In order to function as labour within capitalism, these concrete individuals were required to be "competent, i.e. suitable to be set to work in the complex system of the process of production" (Althusser 1971: 126). Moreover, the processes by which this competence was acquired lay, according to Althusser, outside the normal domain of production. But competence for Althusser was not just a question of technical know-how but was:

(T)he attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for; rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the sociotechnical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination (Althusser 1971: 127).

This inculcation of knowledge thus served not only to reproduce the technical know-how necessary for capitalism but also the "subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice'." That is to say, the inculcation of knowledge served to reproduce class relations insofar as rulers needed to know how to rule and subjects needed to know how to respond to orders. The institutions of society that served to perform this function were termed by Althusser "the Ideological State Apparatus" in order to distinguish them from the State Apparatus proper or, as he sometimes termed it, the Repressive State Apparatus. Whereas the latter manifests itself as a monolithic totality, the former presents itself as a plurality of separate

social institutions such as schools and universities, trade unions, the media, literature and the arts and, perhaps most contentiously, the family.

Althusser's (1971: 152) first thesis was that the role of ideology was to give a "representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence". He does not claim that reality is illusory but that the subject's imagined relationship to it is. This leads him to a second thesis that ideology itself has a material existence since:

Every subject endowed with a consciousness and believing in the ideas that his consciousness inspires in him and freely accepts, must act according to his ideas, must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice. If he does not do so, 'that is wicked'. (1971:157)

As a consequence of this, Althusser (1971: 159) claims that "there is no practice except by and in ideology" and that "there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subject". This, of course, is not to say a great deal, merely that human action is meaningful and that that meaning derives from individuals as subjects. But Althusser makes a further claim, which is his central thesis, and it is at this point that interpellation emerges as the key concept. Thus although ideology is always by and for subjects, and is thereby constituted, it is so only insofar as ideology itself constitutes concrete individuals as subjects. For Althusser therefore:

In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning. (Althusser 1971: 160)

That is to say, ideology is nothing more than the process by which concrete individuals become concrete subjects and the means by which this is achieved Althusser terms interpellation or hailing. It is achieved, though, not through conscious ideology, i.e. not by believing as a credo, dogma or matter of fact, but in practice through the acceptance of the hail. It occurs when the concrete individual responds to the hail through the recognition that he/she is being addressed. This is a crucial point, since for interpellation to be effective the concrete individual must already be a concrete subject, must already have internalized the depiction of him/herself as the subject of the hailing. As early as 1979 Paul Hirst argued that Althusser's concept of interpellation presupposed the existence of individual subjects prior to their constitution as subjects. "This something which is not a subject must already have the faculties necessary to support the recognition that will constitute it as a subject." (Hirst 1979: 65 cited in Hall and Du Gay 1996). Even if, as in the example that Althusser gives of the policeman calling out "Hey, you there", it is still required that the individual recognize that "you" could refer to him/her and that he/she is "there". Thus to shout "Jack Iron" in the street is an invitation for the hailed individual to recognize that he is not only a Carib but also that he identifies the hail as being for him as a Carib, i.e. as an already constituted Carib subject. What is recognized is the obvious fact that Jack Iron denotes what it is to be a Carib, a fool who cannot tell the difference between rum and aviation fuel, and therefore to respond is not merely an act of recognition but also one of subjectification/subjection (Foucault's assujettissement) to the ideological discourse in which Caribs appear as wild men.

Interpellation is thus the process by which discursive formations (Foucault 1972) come to be internalized by individuals and, in the process, constitute those individuals as subjects of a particular discourse. During my fieldwork I only ever witnessed such an occurrence three times, and in all cases the Carib in question did not appear to respond but ignored the jibe. Unfortunately, on each occasion, the context precluded me from ascertaining for certain whether the Carib in question had actually heard the "hail" and deliberately chose to ignore it and, if so, what was the reasoning behind the response or rather lack of it. However, one Carib male, a member of what I have termed the organic intellectuals of Carib society, related to me how he had been subject to such a "hailing" in a work context and had been able to reverse the situation.

When I first went to college in 1982 there were four of us from up here. That had never happened before; there had only ever been one person at a time. Even then there would be comments. One guy said 'Four of you, we better get some Jack Iron in; we don't want you going to the airport to get a drink!' I said to him, 'Look, we don't need that kind of talk; we've come here to be professional and train; that's what we want – just that! I didn't expect that kind of nonsense here. We're supposed to be professional people. We should act professionally.' We were under a lot of pressure. People expected us to fail. Two of the girls nearly buckled and thought of coming back. But I tried to hold us all together. I told them we would all stick together and pull through. We all passed but only three of us came back.

In this instance the Carib had taken the position of modernity, rationality and liberalism and claimed that the attempted act of interpellation itself designated the hailer as "unprofessional", that is to say in a modern context "uncivilized". Nonetheless, the clear implication of this episode is that the Carib informant had

accepted that Jack Iron referred to Caribs and had responded to the hailing function of the aside, but as an organic intellectual his response had been the dialectical opposite of the expected. There had been no quick denial as in "I'm not like that!" but rather a denial of the hailer's competence to perform the function of interpellator.

One point that should be noted here is that in all three instances that I witnessed, the Carib who was hailed was an adult male. Although the small number of examples precludes the making of generalizations, the impression that I received was that these exchanges were primarily a male activity. Certainly, the exchanges with young Carib women would usually be far more sexual in nature and an initial "hailing" of "Jack Iron" would not have been an appropriate method of opening a conversation, though I suspect that such a trope could be utilized were a non-Carib male publicly snubbed by a Carib female. In all the attempts by non-Carib men to hail Carib women that I encountered in Georgetown, the interpellation attempted to constitute them as the subject of sexual desire. I have designated these attempts to initiate a response as interpellation only insofar as there was a specific reference to being Carib. Such activity was typical of young males "liming" and was not in other ways different from their approaches to non-Carib females. A simple hail such as "Hey, you there, Carib girl" was complex insofar as it was loaded with the ambivalence that surrounded attitudes to Carib women. It expressed both physical attractiveness and subaltern status. As such it could be used to hail fair skinned non-Carib females and combined both flattery and denigration.

One of the principle criticisms of Althusser's formulation of interpellation was that it produced a static system (see Butler 1997, Dolar 1993). Subjects were constituted through interpellation and, since they were always/already so constituted, any rejection of the hail became impossible. The functionalist concern with the reproduction of a system of power effectively produced a circularity from which Althusser could not escape. Yet Althusser did include something of a proviso that he did not elaborate when he stated regarding religious ideology:

If it interpellates them in such a way that the subject responds: 'Yes, it really is me!' if it obtains from them the recognition that they do really occupy the place that it designates for them as theirs in the world, a fixed residence...we should note that all this procedure to set up religious subjects is dominated by a strange phenomenon: the fact that there can only be a multitude of possible religious subjects on the absolute condition that there is a Unique, Absolute, Other Subject, i.e. God. (Althusser 1971: 166)

Here Althusser is concerned with the constituting Subject that is presupposed by religious ideology, but the inclusion of the term *recognition* allows the possibility of its opposite. To use Althusser's own example, we might imagine an individual who responds to the hail with "Hold on, that's not me, I'm not like that!" The more specific the hail, the more interpellation attempts to constitute the individual as a subject in totality: "That is what you are and that is all that you are!" then the greater the possibility that the hail can be denied. It is this liminal failure of interpellation that is expressed so clearly by the emergence of organic intellectuals within the category of people designated as Caribs by the interpellation "Jack Iron". But this failure itself highlights a further problem with the Althusserian formulation of the

constitution of the subject. On the one hand, Althusser attempts to explain the reproduction of subjects as occupiers of specific positions which are an effect of particular discursive formations, for example the division of labour in capitalism. Whilst, on the other hand through his adoption of concepts derived from Lacan, he also sought to develop a general explanation of the constitution of the individual as subject. It was this aspect of hailing that led Judith Butler to ask, regarding Althusser's paradigmatic scene with the police officer, who hails an individual and invokes a response, that is to say, a turn.

How might we think of this 'turn' as prior to subject formation, a prior complicity with the law without which no subject emerges? The turn toward the law is thus a turn against oneself, a turning back on oneself that constitutes the movement of conscience. (Butler 1997: 107)

An openness to the hail of the law is therefore, according to Butler, a prerequisite of interpellation. In this sense Althusser's scenario appears to be derived from an a priori condition of guilt. But this in itself reiterates the conflation of interpellation as a discursive practise with its occurrence in Lacanian psychoanalysis, especially in terms of Lacan's "mirror stage". The Lacanian mirror stage has been succinctly summarised thus:

According to Lacan, when a young child between the ages of six and eighteen months looks into the mirror, the image that stares back leads him to jubilantly test the correspondence between his own bodily movements and the movements of his image in the mirror, as well as the relationship between his specular image and those aspects of his surrounding environment that are also captured in the mirror's reflection. But the specular image actually misrepresents to the young child the nature of his own reality, for while his motor skills are largely undeveloped, the specular image appears to him as an integrated whole. As a result, the young child sees himself in an idealized way, and, moreover, comes to anticipate a future in which his current lack of coordination will have been completely overcome. For Lacan, however, the

crucial point is not that the young child's apprehension of its future (or even present) physical coordination is mistaken, but that the specular image with which he identifies suggests an underlying, unified/unifying ego structure, which the young child will then immediately internalize as an ideal. (Sherman 1999: 193)

Althusser adopts this mirror stage as the blueprint for the constitution of the individual as subject and it is essentially the paradox that derives from this confusion, between mirror stage and interpellation, which Hirst (1979) had previously described.

The mirror stage represents a primordial hailing that constitutes the subject quasubject, albeit in a necessarily misrepresentative form according to Lacan. Through the mirror stage the "me" that is to be the future recipient of the Althusserian "hail" is constituted. Prior to the mirror stage the unified subject does not exist and the consciousness of the child is located in a world of others. The establishment, through the mirror stage, of what both Lacan and Althusser term the Subject, simultaneously opens that Subject to the possibility of being discursively hailed. Thus, whilst the mirror stage constitutes the Subject within a world of others through (self) reflection, interpellation reconstitutes the subject, through a process of assujetissement, discursively. This distinction between the constitution of the Subject, in Lacanian terms, and the assujetissement of concrete individuals discursively through interpellation, in Althusserian terms, is central to an understanding of the significance of the events described. The process of assujetissement for the Caribs had taken place over a long period: dating back to their original encounter with the Spaniards who entered the Caribbean at the end of the fifteenth century. Then, their

subjection had been purely discursive. They were inserted within what Foucault termed the classical episteme that encapsulated European thought, as both a people living on the periphery of the known world and as humans who occupied a peripheral position in "the Great Chain of Being". In the sixteenth century this discursive subjectification was augmented by a political subjection that further marginalized them and, at the same time, initiated their subjectification within an emergent discourse of property relations and stadial development. Yet, as long as the Caribs retained a semblance of autonomy, this subjectification necessarily failed. Its failure rested on its inability to ensure the internalization of the tropes that established what it was to be Carib, according to the Europeans, within the Caribs themselves. Consequently, the specular characteristics of the image of the Caribs was transparent; the Lacanian mirror stage still constituted subjects as Carib subjects, albeit within a world where European intrusiveness was curtailing their ability to control much of their former lands. But the final defeat of the Caribs, the annexation of their lands and the removal of the Black Caribs to Central America, ensured that the process of subjectification in both of its moments, as both subjection and subjectification, that is to say as assujetissement, was attained. The processes by which this occurred could only be fully explicated by a close analysis of the micro-operations of power that took place in the north of St. Vincent during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Be that as it may, assujetissement enunciates a double movement that creates the Carib subject qua Subject and subsequently interpellates the Carib as subject of a hegemonic discourse of alterity that draws on a historiographical practice that has endured for some five hundred years.

After the events concerning the Ruth 114, Caribs became open to the hail of "Jack Iron" but this does not necessarily entail a predisposition of guilt as an abstract concept, as Butler perhaps suggests, but rather the internalisation of specific tropes associated with Caribness. These tropes, although part of what might be termed a hegemonic discourse, were nevertheless contextually constrained. As much as the events contributed to the depiction of the Caribs as wild men, and hence beyond normal Vincentian society, in doing so it positioned them within the conceptual opposition of respectability and reputation and hence created the possibility for their reintegration within society by a process of self-constitution. Thus, while the incident provided a reaffirmation of the Caribs' historical depiction, it provided the Caribs themselves with a more complex system of subjectification, a complexity born of the various and contradictory strategies that were open to them in terms of their own identification. It was precisely because, at the level of concrete individuals, they never existed simply as Caribs subject to a totalising discourse of assujettissement, as in the case of Foucault's prisoner, but were always subject to heterogeneous discourses of identification emanating from discrete social institutions, that the possibility of the liminal failure of interpellation was always immanent. In one of those peculiar paradoxes with which history is littered, the very moment at which every calumny aimed at the Caribs of St. Vincent appeared to be vindicated proved to be the axis upon which new forms of assujettissement could turn.

Chapter 6

Land Ownership and the Construction of Carib Identity in St. Vincent⁸⁵

To state that land is an ideological construct for Caribs in St. Vincent is, of course, a truism, insofar as what is meant by such a statement is that land is always discursively constructed as part of a social reality. That is not to assert that this is necessarily a distorted perception of land, a false consciousness, but rather that it is the ideological perception that informs the actions of individuals in relation to land. As such their ideological perception of land is part of a social discourse distinct from a strictly juridical or geological discourse. It is this particular configuration of associated ideas and sentiments that differentiates the Carib notion of land from that of other Vincentians. I use the term notion advisedly, since it conveys the nebulous quality of the term insofar as ideas associated with land are not fully conceptualized discursively but rather emerge in praxis. It is in the everyday doing and being of life and the discourse of those doings that a sense of the uniqueness of the Carib notion of land, in a Vincentian context, is made manifest.. There is, though, no specifically Carib discourse of land as a thing in itself, but the idea that "this is our Land" articulates with other norms and behaviour in a different way to that prevalent within wider Vincentian society. Whereas for most Vincentians a notion of land is predicated on the articulation of familial relations and property rights (Besson, 1987 and Rubenstein, 1987 passim), for the Caribs discourses relating to land have an

⁸⁵ A slightly extended version of this chapter was pulished as Twinn (2006) in M. Forte ed. (2006)

extra, historical dimension. It is this dimension which will be the main theme of this chapter.

Both the New Democrat Party and the Unity Labour Party had considerable support in the North Windward constituency, although in recent years the ULP appears to be becoming more dominant in its support base here as elsewhere in the island. In addition there are a significant number of Christian denominations active in the area ranging from the long established Catholics and Anglicans, through Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists and other Pentecostal groups, to the Spiritual Baptists or Shakers as they are sometimes called. Nonetheless the one episode during which the community was able to demonstrate a united front to the rest of the island was precisely when its relationship to the land was brought into question.

Before turning to this question in detail it is also necessary to consider how their position of relative isolation has modified Carib and non-Carib attitudes regarding the category of people who either are identified by Vincentians in general or identify themselves as "Carib". Public transport consisted of small buses that carried seventeen passengers huddled tightly in and carried, usually at high speed, along the twisting roads. The majority of these buses run a shuttle service to and from Georgetown, the main town in the north of the island, whilst a few make the long run to Kingstown in the south of the island. Although only just over twenty miles as the crow flies, the tortuous twisting of the roads and their general state of disrepair means that this journey takes around one and a half hours. There also remain a few converted flat bed trucks which run from Kingstown all the way to Fancy and

which double up as supply vehicles carrying hardware, building materials and bulk provisions. Since however, the vast majority of buses from Kingstown stop at Georgetown there is a general perception, especially in the south of the island, of the North Windward being a remote and isolated area. The main factors in this are two fold: first, the coastal road to the Carib country has to cross the Rabacca Dry River (which in fact is never completely dry) and lacking a bridge it degenerates into a rock strewn dirt track.86 Drivers are obliged to cross via a shifting ford that can rapidly be transformed into a dangerous torrent, following storms in the highlands. At one time, certainly in the early part of the twentieth century there had been a footbridge over the river and the failure of the government to build a new bridge capable of carrying traffic is seen as another instance of the Caribs being treated as second class citizens. The second factor is that historically, prior to the construction of a new paved road beyond the Dry River, access into the Carib country was difficult with anything other than a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Even today, passing beyond Owia in a normal saloon car is difficult and many car hire companies based in the south of the island prohibit use of their vehicles beyond the Dry River.

The improvements to transport and the advent of electricity have combined to allow Sandy Bay (nobody calls it New Sandy Bay but rather designate the original site as Old Sandy Bay) and other parts of the Carib community to emerge as a location for recreation at weekends. Below Owia village there are a series of salt ponds that have been incorporated into a small park. This park has developed into a picnic and bathing area which attracts many visitors from outside the Carib country,

⁸⁶ The ULP government has recently rectified this situation by constructing a bridge across the Dry River.

as both Caribs and non Caribs usually term it. It has become something of an institution on Easter Monday for large numbers of people to gather there and have a "cook" by the sea, and large convoys of cars, vans and even trucks heavily laden with all the accoutrements of picnicking can be seen travelling there. The economic decline of Georgetown following the collapse of the sugar industry in 1985, coincided with the growth of Sandy Bay, and whereas people would have travelled to Georgetown from Sandy Bay to sample what night-life was on offer, now the flow has been reversed. At night during the weekend the centre of Sandy Bay is full of cars that have come "over the river". This in turn has generated secondary economic activity in the form of roadside vendors selling food and drink. There is a sense in which Sandy Bay has retained connotations of the exotic for the people below the Dry River; to go beyond the river at night at least was to experience "otherness". The distinction between day and night is important. During the day, the amount of people going up to the farms of the old Orange Hill Estate to work, and the nature of the work growing bananas, makes it an everyday experience. People will visit their plots on a daily basis or go up to work as agricultural laborers from beyond the Dry River much as they might travel to Biabou or Colonerie to work. To go by day is to work, to go at night is to mingle with the Caribs and since the Caribs are perceived as wild, a trope that has endured for some five centuries, although that wildness is seen in very different terms today, the whole experience has the implication of "a walk on the wild side".

The vast majority of the population of Sandy Bay derives what income they have from the land. Many have formerly been workers on the Orange Hill Estate, growing a wide variety of crops from citrus fruit and pineapples to the ubiquitous banana and coconuts, and a substantial proportion of these had leased plots under the Government's Land Redistribution Scheme. This scheme has been one of the central planks of the New Democratic Party (NDP) policy, being the culmination of a series of estate takeovers and distributions commencing in the 1970s. The aim of this, according to one high-ranking party official, was to create a "property owning democracy" such as Margaret Thatcher had purportedly done in Britain through the "right to buy scheme". But the scheme itself does not receive the support that one might expect from many Caribs, who feel that they have somehow been deceived. The land is theirs by right and the Government is doing no more than selling them what they already should own. Whilst the Barnards still occupied the land, these sentiments could only be expressed in terms of a general anti-colonialist discourse. The eruption and subsequent departure of the Barnards redefined the relationship of the Caribs to the land away from this discourse and, as it will be argued in this chapter, made possible the emergence of a new discourse of indigenous rights. Thus whilst the present dispute over land has its immediate causes in the changes that took place following the eruption of 1979, the sentiments that are invoked have a genealogy⁸⁷ that extends back to the original annexation of St. Vincent by the British in the eighteenth century It is this historical dimension that differentiates the Carib community from the rest of the population with respect to land.

⁸⁷ The concept of genealogy that is employed here derives from the work of Michael Foucault (Foucault, 1977). Its use is based on a requirement to understand actors' use of the past not within a theorized discourse of history but rather as part of an on-going linkage with the past in praxis.

The news that the Barnard family had sold Orange Hill Estate was the catalyst that sparked a response from the Carib community and created the conditions under which various competing groups could coalesce to form a unified interest group. This is not say that prior to this there had been no emergent Carib consciousness or that Carib identity was caused, in some way, by this incident. On the contrary it was the existence of an unarticulated Carib consciousness (at the level of political action) and self-identification as "other" within the Vincentian state that allowed the sale of lands to become the means by which a hitherto unarticulated consciousness was able to articulate through apparently spontaneous political action. The perceived alienation of the "ancestral Carib lands", for such was the ideological status of Orange Hill, enabled those Caribs who were politically active to mobilize enough public support to reach a critical mass within the community. Despite the fact that land redistribution had been a central part of NDP policy there is evidence to doubt that, without the impetus of widespread social unrest within the Carib community, the Government would have embarked on what was its most ambitious scheme to date.

The circumstances of the initial sale of Orange Hill Estates led to widespread coverage in the local press of the day. The first indications of the impending sale of Orange Hill were made in the newspaper *Unity* (the organ of the Movement for National Unity) in January of 1985. Rumours abounded that the Barnard family was moving out and that the estate had been sold to an unnamed group of foreigners. Then, as now, sales of land to foreigners are covered by the "Aliens Land-Holding Act". The question immediately arose, given that the Government knew nothing of

an application under the terms of the Act, as to how its provisions had been circumvented and by whom. It transpired that on the 18 February 1985 three companies were incorporated by the office of a prominent Vincentian barrister. These were: Rose Cottage Ltd; Denver Portland Ltd and ZBF Ltd. The following day a further company Blue Ridge Ltd was also incorporated. These four companies, whose directors were comprised of four Vincentians and four Danes, then formed Windward Properties Ltd, which purchased Orange Hill Estates Ltd from the Barnard family for some \$2.1million, approximately \$5.6million Eastern Caribbean, and the deed of conveyance was registered on 22 March 1985. It further transpired that the Vincentians involved were employees of the local law firm that had arranged the transaction. These events occurred after the Government had written to Orange Hill Estates Ltd in January and again on 14 March 1985 expressing an interest in the public purchase of the lands.

The position of the government was compromised to some extent insofar as the law firm involved, that of Othneil Sylvester, was closely associated with the NDP and has acted as legal advisors to them on numerous occasions. The opposition parties were naturally not slow in advertising this fact, which was doubly embarrassing given that land reform had been one of the central planks of NDP policy and, in particular, had been associated with Prime Minister James Mitchell. Mitchell had in fact instituted the first estate take-over in 1974 with the purchase of the Lauders Estate. Therefore, the Orange Hill Estates, by far the largest at some 3,440 acres and the most productive agricultural enterprise on the island, could be construed as symbolic of the Government's commitment to creating a property

owning democracy. Its sale to foreigners could not be reconciled with this, especially as many Vincentians of various political persuasions saw it as crucial to the future prosperity of the island.

It would seem that, coming so soon after Independence, the acquisition by a foreign company was something that the general population was unwilling to countenance. But there is some evidence that the changes which the Danes made to production techniques and, most importantly, the rise in basic wages which followed were welcomed by at least some of the workers on the estate. Certainly some informants described how they had rapidly gone from earning a pittance under the Barnards to the prospect of sustaining themselves and their families at something other than subsistence level. However, the present context in which many of the recipients of land, under the government's leasing scheme, feel betrayed may lend something of a golden glow to this episode when viewed in hindsight. The plans which Windward Property advertised were certainly aimed at winning over the local workers. There was to be widespread mechanization with the latest technology; a model farm set up in which workers would be trained in modern intensive techniques, and some workers would have the opportunity to travel to Denmark and study techniques there. There was also to be an option to purchase or lease small plots of land from the company to work privately and the establishment of food processing plants such as canneries to maximize the saleable product. The lack of the latter establishments has been and continues to be the basis of widespread complaint on the island, as so much food is perceived to rot on the ground for want of a market. There was even a plan to utilize the waters of the Rabacca River to generate

electricity. From a purely economic point of view, therefore, the advent of the Danish acquisition of the Orange Hill Estates might have been welcomed within the Carib community, but it rapidly became apparent that what was at stake was far more than the ownership of a major agricultural business.

The first signs of popular protest immediately appeared as some thirty people, pointedly described as Caribs in the local press, picketed Orange Hill Estate with banners and placards demanding the handing over of the land to its rightful ancestral owners. This initial demonstration appeared to be the catalyst which galvanized the Carib community into action. In fact catalysis may be the wrong metaphor to use in this instance, for what was occurring was equally the result of a long process of social exclusion, deprivation and cultural subordination under both the old colonial administration and in the immediate aftermath to independence in 1978. A more appropriate metaphor might rather be one of crystallization, although this is only possible post hoc and itself is the result of the new awareness of Carib issues created at that time. The question is, though, precisely how were the Caribs able to overcome both their own internal divisions, the prejudices of wider Vincentian society and, specifically, the petit bourgeoisie who formed a large and vocal element within the NDP, to make the land at Orange Hill a national rather then purely Carib issue? The most obvious answer to the first part of this question is that the issue of the land transcended the political and religious differences within the community. As long as co-operation was defined by this single issue dissension could be contained. One could say, therefore, that there was a material

underpinning in the need for families and individuals to safeguard their livelihoods at a time of considerable uncertainty.

But this safeguarding always has within it a supra-material dimension, since what is being safeguarded is not in itself purely material but is culturally specific. What was being safeguarded was not family or individuals as an abstract concept but Carib families and Caribs. The context in which the purchase of Orange Hill Estates occurred was such that it could not be a purely economic act within the consciousness of the Caribs and this context consisted in a particular lineage from the genealogy of Carib history from the time of their autonomy until the present day. Within this lineage of Carib history, the principal element in the creation of Caribs as Caribs was the Carib/Land relationship. It is not that Caribs simply define themselves in relation to the land in the sense of territorial occupation, although such occupation was integral to the relationship, it was rather that both the land and the people who occupied it were mutually constructed. Within this dyadic relationship, work on the land was the process through which the dual construction of land as Carib land and people as Caribs operated, and any perceived disturbance in this could only result in a reaction by the actors involved, which itself invoked the historical lineage for its defence. How this particular historical lineage was discursively articulated can be illustrated by a brief article that appeared in the newspaper Unity (27 March 1985). Under the heading CHATOYER'S COMMUNITY FARM: NO GUARANTEE OF SAFETY, an anonymous author specifically alluded to the purchase of Orange Hill Estates in terms of the annexation by the British of the Carib lands following the Second Carib War.

This is the area where every blade of grass was covered with the blood of wounded Caribs as they fought valiantly in primitive style to defend the inalienable rights of their community. This is the place where children were killed in the arms of mothers by Foreign savages and robbers of our land.

The connection with the past is constantly alluded to and both Chatoyer and Duvalier, his brother-in-law, are invoked as the guiding spirits that will lead the insurrection against this new wave of foreign usurpers. The effects of that original expropriation are, according to the letter, also visible in the suffering that the Caribs have subsequently endured.

We have been dispossessed and distressed. We are still forgotten, neglected and mocked at but the end of our silent suffering is over in this year of remembrance of CHATOYER'S final stand against the invasion of covetous Foreign land sharks at Grand Sable which later provided fertile soil for the germination of the seeds of serfdom and the consequential destitution and dehumanisation of our people...... We are treated as fifth class citizens or as a national after thought.

The responsibility for dealing with this "neo-colonialism" as it might be termed is placed squarely at the doors of the government, who were widely seen to have connived in the land deal. Hence, the writer finishes with a call for action and a veiled reminder of an old jibe. 88 "The ambiguous question as to who is really prime minister of HAIROUN must be clarified and settled at once. ALOA HATU GRAT (CARIBS NEVER FEAR DEATH)."

This piece manifestly exemplifies the way in which the past is invoked by the writer to contextualize the present. But it is not any past. It is not the past of Vincentian

⁸⁸ For a full discussion on the antipathy that could be roused by notions of slavery and freedom and how they articulate between Carib and non-Carib in a Vincentian context see Gullick (Gullick, 1985). According to the author Caribs laid great emphasis on the fact that they preferred to die rather than be enslaved unlike the majority of the population.

school books, not the past of academic discourse, nor yet the past of stories that happened once upon a time. It is not a fictitious past but a genealogical past, a past based on assumed affinity, of relations that are fictive rather then fictitious. For although fictive, this history is not the product of imagination but of praxis; it is not simply thought but lived and lived in thought. The genealogical relationships of this historicity of the present enable and empower that present but only if that historicity itself is authenticated in praxis. The figure of Chatoyer is central to this genealogy; he stands as the true spirit of Carib resistance that cannot be vanquished. But the Chatoyer of the history bequeathed by the white planters and promulgated in the literature of the colonial administration will not serve this purpose. Within this tradition, Chatoyer is leader of the Black Caribs, a maroon leader, an ersatz indigene. But if Chatoyer is (re)assimilated within the Carib tradition, as the hero of Vincentian Caribs, then what of the exiles? They too need their ancestor and this is provided by Duvalier as genealogy demands. The Caribs of St. Vincent are thus rendered the children of Chatoyer, and their kinsmen will come to their aid in time of peril. The author thus announces the apocalyptic nature of the events that have come to pass. The world truly will be turned upside down: the private plantation estates of the foreigner will become the community farm of the aboriginal eponym. The diaspora will return and the Europeans retreat to from whence they came.

Within this discourse the Danes are no more than simulacra. Having the appearance but lacking the imperialist attributes of the old European colonists, they exist merely as the outward manifestation of a concept of European colonialist power whose embodiment allows its symbolic as well as physical expulsion. By

divesting the Danes of the land and returning it to the Caribs, it would appear that the cycle is closed, but there is more. Though the Europeans bear the brunt of this assault, the rest of Vincentian society does not go unscathed. Dispossessed and distressed may refer to the former, but forgotten, neglected and mocked clearly allude to the latter. Lost in the shadow of La Soufrière, deprived of light and power, ridiculed as too foolish to discern rum from aviation fuel, the grievances of the Caribs boiled to the surface. It was to the non-Carib majority of the Vincentian population that this diatribe was directed. Hence the need to rebut the typical stereotypes may have had their origin in the colonial plantation system, but the claim is that they have been internalized and perpetuated within the broader community. Carib women, aesthetically approximating the exotic images of a Gauguin painting, were widely sought after by resident Europeans whilst never attaining anything more then the status of casual concubines. They remain objects of desire in a society where a chromatic hierarchy dominates sexual aesthetics and where the blackness of a woman's skin may cause her to be called "Congo-arse." But the pride felt by many Caribs regarding this aesthetic appeal is tempered by a deep fear of a total miscegenation which might render them invisible. One old Carib woman remarked to me that in her day, "Carib married Carib" but now that all that had changed, she feared that hers would be the last generation that maintained a separate identity. It must also be remembered that, at the time of this piece in 1985, access to the Carib land was far more difficult and there seems to have been active discouragement of Carib girls mixing with non-Carib Vincentians. Non-Caribs from Georgetown remarked as to how Caribs were jealous of their women and attempting to talk to them led to fights.

There are also clear indications that the author (who is not named) was focusing very explicitly on the attitudes of the majority population as much as to the elite that held power on the island. The term used for St. Vincent is Hairoun which, although it has a Carib etymology, was not the usual term used by Caribs themselves to designate the island. But Hairoun, which translates as "Home of the Blessed", has become the term that non-Carib Vincentians often use to refer to the island, and Iouloumain, the original Carib term, has only recently re-emerged. The references to themselves as treated as a fifth class of citizens reiterates the sense of isolation imposed upon them by the rest of the population. But there is also a sense that this marked a realization that their fate was in their own hands and that they could not depend on the rest of the society for anything. This sense was recounted on several occasions by informants who participated in the protests with regard to the sale of the estate. The most important practical result of this tide of sentiment, of which the piece in *Unity* was both provocative and evocative, was the eventual formation of the Campaign for the Development of the Carib Community, or CDCC as it became known. A series of ad hoc local action groups emerged in the aftermath of the sale of lands to the Danes which became formalized as the CDCC. This was the first truly Carib organization to emerge on the island. Hitherto the Caribs had been courted for support by various national political parties but, beyond the runup to polling-day, their needs were largely ignored. The CDCC was to provide both a forum for an emerging historical and social consciousness and the means by which leverage could be exerted on the National Government. Although consisting mainly of local Caribs from the north of the island, one of its early organizers was

Nelcia Robinson who, although according to some informants was not herself from the area beyond Rabacca, actively championed the rights of the Carib minority on the island.⁸⁹

But for the Caribs to achieve anything in respect of the land north of the Rabacca River they needed to mobilize wider support, and this could not be attained by polarizing their community with respect to the non-Carib majority. What was necessary was for the demands of the Caribs to resonate discursively with the fears and aspirations of the wider community. The remarkable success that they ultimately enjoyed in this endeavour is demonstrated by the Government's rapid action to nationalize the land of Orange Hill Estates that was announced at the beginning of May 1984. A precise description of the factors which allowed the Caribs to gain support for their demands from the wider community would require a study in its own right, but it is clear that the timing of the events, coming so soon after independence, was crucial. The rhetoric of politicians of all persuasions emphasized what were perceived as the "neo-colonialist" ambitions of the Danes as representative of the old imperial powers. The old colonialists were Europeans who appropriated the ancestral land of the Caribs; the Danes too were Europeans who by legal manoeuvre sought to appropriate the land; ergo the Danes were colonialists.

⁸⁹ Nelcia Robinson is from Greggs, a village in the central Windward which became home to a small group of Black Caribs who were granted amnesty in 1805 and were not exiled. As such she is part of another indigenous group who are generally considered to be distinct from the Caribs of Sandy Bay, themselves descendants of "Yellow" Caribs, as they were termed by they colonial administration of the day. She therefore could at times be construed as an outsider or non-Carib coming from over the river and at others as being part of a wider indigenous resurgence, depending on informant and context. Since this chapter is concerned primarily with Carib consciousness evoked by the sale of land in the north of the island, the term Carib is used for those who live in that area, whilst it is fully recognized that in different contexts other persons will be deemed Carib and the distinction Black Carib will not be necessary.

Furthermore, ULP supporters saw this as an opportunity to embarrass the government given that prominent NDP supporters were involved in the original deal. The Danes had also received very unfavourable publicity in setting up a reform school on the island, the Richmond Vale Academy, and this had sharpened the public response to the acquisition of Orange Hill Estates. It was this confluence of the deep structural discourse of Carib identity with the immediate configuration of national political struggle that allowed the mobilization of support against the Danish acquisition of the land in the North Windward district.

An indication of how widely the take-over of Orange Hill Estates was felt by the Vincentian community as a whole can be seen from a letter on behalf of the "SVG Support Committee UK" which appeared in *The Vincentian* (April 1985) newspaper. Here the Danes who had purchased Orange Hill are compared to the Vikings who raided Europe in the early middle ages. Citing Michael Bradbury as a source, the author claims "that the Ice man – the Caucasian male - is oppressive, exploitive, sexist, racist and violent because of the conditions under which they lived during the Ice Age. Thus when the people of the ice meet the people of the sun there is a clash in cultures - and our sun culture is opposite to that of Ice Men." The private property of the "Ice Men" is contrasted with the communalism of the Africans and Caribs who share a common heritage and make up as people of the sun. The letter exhorts the government to re-establish ownership of the land on a communal basis for the benefit of the Caribs, with annual surpluses going toward the cost of repaying for its purchase. It concludes, "we say kick the Danes out. Send the Ice

men home! Give the land to the Caribs. They deserve it in recompense for all the injuries they have suffered in the past."

Not surprisingly, given its predilection for Thatcherism as a model of government, the NDP showed no inclination to set up a co-operative north of the Rabacca River. But this letter clearly demonstrates how what was essentially a Carib grievance could be exemplified as an instance of neo-colonialism at the least and imperialism at the worst. The Danes became typified as the slave-owning plantocracy reincarnated. The symbolism of ice and sun effected the disappearance of the antagonism, which at times existed, between the Caribs and the population at large in St. Vincent. It was this expansion of debate from within the confines of the Carib community into wider Vincentian society, both at home and in the diaspora, which made political action vital.

The immediate result of the public take-over was the creation of Rabacca Farms, a new state-owned company that ran the estate whilst the government sought to resolve the question of compensation. There were numerous calls for the government to confiscate the land under the terms of the "forfeiture provisions" of the Alien Land Holdings Act but, given the ambiguity that surrounded the legal status, this would have been a hazardous course and one that may have had very damaging international repercussions. The case was not resolved for some seven years, during which time Rabacca Farms slowly ran down its production. But having been mobilized in respect of the land sale, the Carib community had at least found an effective voice. The CDCC became formalized and began to actively campaign

for better conditions beyond the Rabacca River and worked to raise the consciousness of the Carib community both of its historical legacy and the links with other Carib groups, most notably the Garifuna of Belize and the Caribs of Dominica. This was given an impetus by the arrival of two staff members of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, which offered training and advice to indigenous groups in the Caribbean. As a consequence, a formal conference was held in Kingstown in August 1987. The objectives of this conference were fourfold:

- a) To give national and international recognition to the importance of indigenous people in the Caribbean community and internationally;
- b) To make a critical analysis of the social, economic and political context of the countries and communities;
- c) To share opinions and strategies on how Indigenous people can effectively advocate and address their needs, and to lay down guidelines for addressing the development needs of Indigenous peoples;
- d) To establish a basic for greater collaboration and communication between and among the Indigenous people regionally and internationally. (Mondesire and Robinson 1987.)

The conference included field trips by the delegates to the Black Carib community at Greggs and the area north of the Dry River, and the opening ceremony was held at Sandy Bay with over 1,000 people attending. It highlighted the problems that had arisen out of the state take-over of Orange Hill Estates. It was noted that, whilst the Estate was under the control of the Barnards, there had been daily work for the local population (albeit with wages at a very low level) and that, following the takeover and creation of Rabacca farms, work had been reduced to just three days per fortnight at a rate of \$10.00 EC for men and \$7.80 for women (Mondesire & Robinson, 1987). The situation for the population north of the Rabacca River, far from being ameliorated by the government take-over, was pushed further into destitution. The situation was further complicated by the legal wrangle over

compensation on the part of the Danes that was to last until November 1991, when a settlement of some \$4.7 million US was agreed.

According to newspaper reports, by 1992 the number of employees had decreased to just seven compared to the 120 permanent labourers and six managers that it previously employed (The Vincentian, 16/04/1992). There had been some reform but only a fraction of land available had been re-distributed. By 1991 some 229 farms had been established but these were all of a small size ranging from 2-7 acres and were held on a 10-year lease at a rate of \$720.00 EC after the first year and \$1,523.00 EC subsequently. This proved totally unacceptable to the ex-workers on the estate, who deemed that the years of toil by themselves and their ancestors entitled them to a bit more equitable settlement. The quincentenary celebrations of the voyage of Columbus in that year only heightened the sense of outrage felt by the Caribs along with many other indigenous groups in the New World. In July, some 400 people, mostly assumed in the local newspapers to be Caribs, marched through the streets of Kingstown and held a meeting in Union Square. Many more would-be protesters were unable to make the trip to town due to the lack of adequate transport and still others were dissuaded from attending by the local NDP representative who wished to save the government from embarrassment. At the meeting, Patricia Fraser, a Carib activist from Sandy Bay, catalogued the grievances of the Caribs and other residents north of the Rabacca River. These included: no electricity, no telephone, no proper health facilities such as a resident doctor and "to make matters worse, there is now this wicked land reform to deal with" (The

Vincentian 03/07/1992). In particular it seemed that the Carib farmers were dismayed at the high price of the lease. Some claimed that they had not been fully aware of the details and had been coerced into signing with threats that, if they did not, they would forfeit their claim to any land. In many ways this demonstration was the high point of Carib social cohesion as subsequently the Caribs were forced to accept the government's conditions or else face the prospect of the land being bought up by outside interests, that is to say farmers from "over the river". In many ways the very form that the land reform took and the way it was financed aggravated the sense of grievance within the Carib Community. The NDP government operated a zoning strategy for development on the island with certain areas designated for the development of tourism and others for purely agricultural use. The area north of the Rabacca River falls into this latter category. Indeed the financing of the scheme with a loan from the Central Caribbean Bank led to the stipulation that the various buildings that the Barnard family had lived in on the estate could only be used for agricultural purposes, thus forestalling their utilization as hotels and guest-houses.

It is clear from the foregoing that throughout the debates that surrounded the emergence of Carib claims to the land at Orange Hill, and indeed to their relationship to their land in general, there is always a historical dimension. That is not to say that history is of no importance to the non-Carib Vincentians, quite the contrary, but that the notion of land is produced using a specifically Carib genealogy of historical relations. Thus the discourse of land amongst the inhabitants of the North Windward is constructed with reference to assumptions about the past,

which though changing from time to time, are construed as permanent. It is thus to specific genealogy that one needs to turn to elaborate more fully how land, and in particular a particular area of land, became so important for Carib social identity.

Chapter 7

Historical Consciousness and Political Process

Introduction

Historical consciousness does not as a rule form part of everyday life; for most people it tends to exist subconsciously as part of what Bourdieu called the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990). People do what they do because they are who they are and vice versa. The specificity of the historical dimension of who and what people are emerges within particular contexts. These contexts require that the ineffable being of everyday historical subconsciousness gives way to a particular, in that it is context- specific, form of consciousness, a true historical consciousness. This is not to say that the substantive content of that consciousness will be true in any absolute sense but rather that it will be truly historical. It will purport to be a consciousness of a historical truth that is pertinent to the context in which it is realized. This is true for the Caribs of St. Vincent as much as it is for the rest of the island's population or, for that matter, for most people in general.

It is correct to assert that the Caribs owe their particular present-day circumstances to historical processes of war, annexation and defeat at the hands of the colonial British and that Caribs are aware of this. But this awareness, this historical consciousness, does not play a major part in their everyday lives. On several

occasions I asked people why they lived where they did. The response was always based in the past but this past was personalized.

"It was because my old man had some land here."

"I had to move because my house was damaged in a hurricane."

"That's the family house; I jus' took it over."

"I had some money from bananas and decided to build here because it's a nice spot."

It was specifically the context in which these questions were posed, usually informal interviews that often passed for simply "liming", which predisposed the interviewees to answer the questions in the way that they did. That, though, is not to say that Caribs would not freely offer historical information, often without any prompting on my part. On numerous occasions I had recourse to hitching a ride in the north of the island and, after establishing that I was interested in Carib history, I was often given information about various localities and stories associated with them. On one such occasion I was travelling up beyond Sandy Bay when the clutch gave out on the ageing jeep I had hired. A pick-up truck came past after a few minutes, and the driver offered to give me a ride so that I could call for assistance. He remarked that I had come to the right place if I wanted to find out about the Caribs. He himself looked as if he could have stood shoulder to shoulder with Chatoyer himself. His hair was close cropped, but he had all the facial features and a broad shouldered, muscular body that I had come to associate with Caribs both in my meetings with them and from old historical accounts. As he drove he casually nodded at the road in front.

"Do you know what that is?" he asked.

I shook my head, not quite understanding what he meant as the area he was directing my gaze to was a stretch of empty road winding its way tortuously along the coast.

"Its called Bloody Bridge," he informed me. "That is where Chatoyer marched his men over the mountain and came down and ambushed you British. There are lots of places like that up here. But that's the most famous."

This type of unsolicited information was a relatively common event for me, but on this occasion there was a twist in that my fellow passenger questioned whether this was the site of the ambush or whether it was further on down the road. A brief discussion ensued in which it was finally resolved that somewhere along here the ambush had taken place and that there were several traditions regarding the exact location. Neither man was willing to admit that their own tradition was geographically suspect, but both agreed that the main point was Chatoyer's feat that demonstrated his generalship.

However, most of this type of conversation occurred with people who had just come across me and was in response to my informing them of my interest in Carib history. It was part of an effort to initiate a conversation and, since I had introduced myself in that specific manner, it could be argued that I had, in fact, engineered the situation to elicit a response. Having said that, whereas Caribs usually took the opportunity to open up a conversation based on their own knowledge of history and locality, non-Caribs tended to shift the conversation around to question my

own motives. A frequent question that would immediately follow my admission to studying Carib history would be "Why is an Englishman over here studying them Caribs?" This would usually involve me explaining my connection with the island through my wife's family and the interest I had in the impact that the Caribs had made on European history. The former reason usually facilitated a shift in conversation away from Carib history to the more contemporary history of families, land and locality. "So you are related to X?" was a common response. On one notable occasion this was even extended to "Well he's my daddy so we're related too." In general though, my affinal connections merely served to locate me both geographically and socially on the island. At these times my wife's skin colour would often become an issue. There were many white Vincentians, usually associated with certain localities such as Sion Hill or the Portuguese of South River. Establishing that I was indeed married to a black Vincentian (my wife is of dual Vincentian/English heritage) caused not a little surprise, although it was always well received.

Whilst the development of what could be termed a national historical consciousness usually manifests in everyday situations, there are, nonetheless, specific forms through which it is clearly articulated. In this chapter I shall examine three particular discourses in which an emergent historical consciousness has been elaborated.

Organic intellectuals and the Press

Parallel with my initial interviews with anyone who would discuss history with me I had sought to augment my understanding of the issues and contexts in which historical discourses emerged by scanning newspapers over the previous twenty years in the National Archive in Kingstown. On one of my early visits the Chief Archivist, Yulu Griffiths, had explained that interest in history tended to be associated with certain dates. At that time, in early March, the focus was on Chatoyer. Prior to this the main celebration with heavy historical overtones was Discovery Day.

Columbus had been credited with "discovering" the island on 22nd January 1498 and, since this date was associated in the Catholic Church with St. Vincent, had named it accordingly. This story had been passed down by the writers of the colonial period without comment and had become accepted by most Vincentians as a basic truth. The veracity of this claim was brought into question by Adrian Fraser, who was able to demonstrate that at the time of the discovery Columbus was, in fact, still in Spain. Fraser is both an academic, teaching at the University of the West Indies Annex in Kingstown, and a regular columnist in *The News*, one of the local newspapers. His articles consistently broach the subject of Vincentians coming to terms with their history and as such he has been a major influence on the degree to which Vincentians have come to challenge the traditional view of history handed down to them by Duncan (1941). In my conversations with Caribs, Fraser would frequently be cited as a reference to substantiate arguments regarding Vincentian history. In this he has, perhaps unwittingly, superseded Duncan, as recorded by

Gullick (1985), as the prime reference point. But more than this, the demotion of Columbus from his position of "discoverer" formed part of a wider critical stance towards Eurocentric writers. A good example of this was given one lunchtime at a small bar cum café that I frequented. A group of trainee teachers arrived from town and were waiting to catch their connecting bus. I was quickly brought into the conversation by some of the people sitting there, or rather my interest in history was. One of the trainees, a man in his thirties, immediately complained about the history that he had to teach. It was, he said, "colonialist history"; it was "Europeans' history" and as such it could not be trusted.

"Most of it is jus' lies!" he said forcibly. "Even that story about Columbus coming here, Doctor Fraser proved that he couldn't have done that. He was in Spain so how come he discovered St. Vincent. They been telling us lies for years." There was a general muttering of agreement around the bar at this. Since, however, I nodded my head and concurred, the subject shifted to my being an anthropologist. "Why is an anthropologist wasting his time here?" he asked. He nodded towards a girl of about sixteen years of age. "Do you think people here will ever believe in evolution? No chance, they read the Bible and go to church and they believe in Adam and Eve and all that! We teach them science and they have to learn it, but they don't believe it." He turned to the girl and asked "What do you write in school when they ask questions about where we came from?" She looked up at him and replied, "I put down what they teach us; that's the way to pass tests, but I know it isn't really true. If you want the truth, look in the Bible; that's God's truth". "You see!" he cried triumphantly, "these people aren't interested in science, only this

religious nonsense. I'm interested in science; I don't believe in no God. But educating these people is impossible cos they don't want to learn". The conversation rapidly started to degenerate as everybody joined in, much to the amusement of the trainee teacher who obviously took great delight in provoking their sense of outraged indignation.

I have described this scene in some detail since the main protagonist was certainly not what one would call an average Carib, or Vincentian for that matter, since he was the only person I ever met who openly claimed to be an atheist in public. In that sense his utterance regarding Columbus might be deemed atypical. But whilst his atheistic views were roundly condemned by those around him, his assertion of the fallacious nature of much of the history that had hitherto been taught was warmly accepted. By the time the bus arrived, the discussion had moved on to the European basis of science and religion. The girl and several others had argued that science was no different from history since it was essentially "white man's science". The trainee had responded by asking where they had got their religion from, and who all those missionaries were. That the Bible could be viewed in these terms was vehemently denied by several people, primarily because it was God's word, but the trainee tried to press the connection. Unfortunately for him, since he was clearly enjoying himself, the bus arrived and he had to leave. Towards the end of my fieldwork I met him again in Sandy Bay at a bar I frequented. On this occasion he interrogated me on my knowledge of the history of the village: when it had moved; why it had moved; where the old village was located etc. He appeared pleasantly surprised, through his inebriation, at my knowledge on the subject and his

discussion of my answers showed that he had spent considerable effort in acquiring this detailed local knowledge. He epitomized the cascading effect that historical research, which tended to be frequently published in small pamphlets and discussed in the newspapers, had on the island. But it would be wrong to consider this effect as simply a top-down Weberian hierarchy of knowledge. The production of historical knowledge was indeed multicentric with a complex dynamic which involved not only university academics and school teachers but politicians and local people themselves generating information on their own localities, thereby making sense of their own existence.

The "Discovery Day" celebration and its critique were central to this process as it offered both an opportunity to critique received European wisdom and to reconstruct a new vision of history from a local perspective that was pertinent to the needs of the local population. This view was eloquently argued by Fraser in a series of articles entitled "From Whence We Came: About recovering a people's history". Fraser himself gave an overview of the reasons behind the series in the final article.

The series under the above name......comes to an end today. It got started on November 2nd 1987, a week after the eighth anniversary of independence. It ends as we prepare to celebrate ten years of independence. I make this point because the programme arose out of an awareness of the need for more information about our past. The move to independence should have sent us searching for our roots, as it has in most former colonial countries that had moved to nationhood. That 'soul-searching' was not entirely absent in St. Vincent. In fact, the Black Power Movement of the late 1960's and early 1970's stimulated the quest to discover more about themselves as a majority black people who were often depicted as unfortunate victims of history.

There are those who argue that the past has passed and our attention should now be focussed on the road ahead. The only problem with such a position is that the road ahead is inextricably linked with our past, with our roots, so to speak.

One thing which we must never forget is that we have come out of a past of colonialism and slavery, for that in itself says much. Colonialism and slavery could not have survived by force alone. A key weapon, so far as it was possible, was the suppression of aspects of the culture of the people. It included convincing the colonized of their inferiority. They were taught that they had no history, at least none that was worthwhile. Everything they had achieved that was worthwhile had supposedly come from their contact with Europeans. So it was that we were even led to believe that our history started with the arrival of Columbus. There was, one had to assume, a void before 1492. Those of us who are descendants of African slaves are told that slavery served a useful purpose in removing us from the barbarism and primitivism of Africa to the enlightenment and civilization of Europe.

What has this brainwashing done to our people? It has, to a good extent, destroyed confidence in ourselves as a people. There are those of us who still believe that we are dependant on Europe for any forward march. Independence is today largely accepted although there are occasional rumblings about life having been better under colonial rule. We still maintain contact with the colonial mother through the monarchy and the belief is quite common that there is some magic about it and that to remove it is to threaten stability and order.

Afro-American historian John Henrik Clarke in a recent article captioned "In Our Image" argues along the same lines about methods of colonial and neo-colonial control. He writes Because what we see about ourselves often influences what we do about ourselves, the role of images and the question of how they control our minds are more important now, in our media saturated society, than ever before. For the last 500 years, the history of African people throughout the world has been told through the slavery experience — only a short period in our life, considering that we are the oldest of the world's peoples'. He then went on to address the issue of the use of the media as a form of mind control in their colonization of people and information.

Recovering our history, clearing up the misconceptions and distortions of the past, is a necessary aspect of the forward movement of the people. It is important to know that our forefathers had never fully accepted slavery and colonialism, but had struggled against them and that their survival was to a large extent a result of a life of struggle and accommodation.

There is also little information about our past that is readily available to the general public. What there is, is largely stacked away in university libraries and, in any event, has been written by academics for academics. So there is virtually nothing in St, Vincent. Even Ebenezer Duncan's Brief History has disappeared.

"From Whence We Came" was meant to address some of the above concerns. It was done in a style and manner geared to spread it to a wide cross-section of people. I had to take into account the fact that most of us were completely turned off from history by the way it was taught in school. Moreover, it seemed so remote from us because until quite recently the history we learnt at school was about Kings and Queens and battles with funny names. Ordinary people hardly featured, or if they did, it was mainly as objects rather than subjects. The idea of history concerning itself with the lives of ordinary people is still a novelty to many.

There are obviously many criticisms of the programme the omissions stand out. The people of the Grenadines can justifiably claim to have been given scant attention. There are undoubtedly many more. I must make the point, partly in answer to the above, that the series was mainly based on records in my own possession. It was, moreover, a part-time activity and did not lend itself readily to the extra research that could have been needed.

Accusations of this have been levelled at the programme. No apologies need to be made for this. As was stated clearly in the beginning, there was no doubt where the emphasis was going to lie, and who were going to be the subjects. The planters and the colonial authorities have been given more than their fair due in the traditional history. The writers of history books and contemporary accounts were largely their friends and apologists. It was necessary to correct such biases.

Am I not making large claims for the series? I have only really been emphasizing the spirit in which the series has been done, and the objectives that were borne in mind. If it has stimulated some interest and forced some people to look more critically at what they had traditionally been told, it would have accomplished much.

Because of the dearth of written information on St.Vincent and the Grenadines many people have asked that the series be reproduced in book form so that the information can be more widely and permanently available.

This then becomes my next task. "From Whence We Came" ceases to re-emerge in a different form. (The News 29th September 1989).

This article clearly demonstrates the active participation of academics, through the media, in the formation of both a historical consciousness and a national identity. Here again Columbus appears as an iconic figure for colonialism who must be overthrown. The project, resonant of Eric Wolf's (1982) magnum opus, sought to reclaim the past and give a voice to those actors who had hitherto been muted. In so doing it had the effect of challenging almost all European knowledge. In fact the celebration of "Discovery Day" on the 22nd of January was discontinued in 1990 when it was replaced by "Indigenous Peoples Day", and the article must be seen in the context of the public debate surrounding this issue. There is one area, of course, that is omitted. The colonialists forever justified their actions on the basis that they were bringing the word of God to the heathen. As far back as 1667, De Poincy⁹⁰, the Governor of Martinique, had stated that that was the great goal of all their enterprises. It is true that in that particular situation he was speaking of the Caribs, but his words had a wider context of European expansion overseas. But the subject of Christianity as a European system of values and beliefs cannot be broached. To do so in such a context would undoubtedly have alienated the vast majority of the readers of "The News" and rendered the whole project of the reexamination of Vincentian history dead in the water.

Two clear problems emerge as inhibiting the development of such a historical

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⁹⁰ PRO/CO/101

consciousness: the first identified is the paucity of material on the subject; the second is the bias attributed to the authors of most of the accounts that have survived. I have addressed these two problems in combination by seeking information from an ever-widening body of data rather than relying on purely English sources. The gradual assimilation of French sources into the debates on Vincentian history (Hulme 2001) has added a further dimension. Attempts have also been made to include ecclesiastical sources (deSilva 2004). Within the public domain the highpoint of the debate came in the run-up to the Columbus Quincentenary. According to Fraser the indigenous people of the whole region wanted nothing to do with these celebrations, and he commented on how various authors such as Hans Koning and Kirkpatrick Sale had sought to offer alternative views on Columbus and his projects in the Caribbean. These alternatives were necessary since the traditional picture of Columbus had been etched so deeply into the minds of the people of the Caribbean. More significantly, Fraser quotes extensively from the Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano who confronted the issue of the relationship between Christian and Conquistador. The latter "acted in the name of God, to root out idolatry", but this point is not examined. The indigenous population were heathen but they bathed everyday; they believed in dreams and were thus in league with Satan, but in Canada elected their chiefs. In his article, having approached this vexatious question, Fraser moved on to consider the significance of 1992 not in terms of the past, real or fictitious, but in relation to the ramifications of that past in the present. As such, the forming of the single European market, which threatened the historic relationship of Europe with its excolonies, and the U.N. Conference on the environment, which was to be held in Brazil, were singled out by Fraser as the two events which were or genuine significance to contemporary Vincentian society. These two acts were in a sense inextricably linked with the process that Columbus had put in motion, and it is the effects of these processes on the lives of ordinary Vincentians that concern him. Nor was he alone in propounding this view in the press. Writing for The Vincentian (17th January 1992) under the heading "1992 An Orwellian Judgement Day", Lennox Daisley commented, "500 years after Columbus ushered in an era of colonialism, slavery, exploitation and genocide in the Caribbean, Europe will once more decide the fate of our islands". The sense of dependence was clearly felt throughout the island. However, it is equally true that not all shared Fraser's view of Columbus as villain rather than hero. Kenneth John noted that Fraser had made an oblique comparison of Columbus and Hitler in that both were significant historical figures though hardly for the good. This bracketing of Columbus with the Nazi leader led John to question whether the pendulum had swung too far in the opposite direction regarding Columbus' legacy. Indeed, quoting Michael Manley, he accused those like Fraser of "taking up permanent residence in the past".

But it is in his final conclusion that Fraser introduces a specifically Vincentian dimension to the debate.

At a time when we are trying to unearth our own heroes, we should be prepared to bury the colonial ones that were thrust on us. The real significance and heroism of Chatoyer rest in his fight against the legacy of Columbus. And the European domination that was part of it. You cannot claim Chatoyer while clinging on to Columbus. So goodbye Columbus.

This reclamation of Chatoyer as a national hero of St. Vincent contra Columbus as "discoverer" is of particular significance. The figure of Chatoyer had been transformed from the leader of a nation of "brigands" into a hero, not merely of the Black Caribs of Greggs or the Caribs of Sandy Bay, but of St. Vincent as a whole. His dual characteristics of being both representative of the minority indigenous population and the Afro-Caribbean majority and his death in battle after a lifetime of struggle made him an ideal figure. Specifically, though, Fraser offers Vincentians a choice: between accepting a historiography imposed from above and with it a specific set of cultural values that when internalized would result in a stilted underdeveloped self-identity or, through a radical critique of traditional history, the formation of a new culturally specific interpretation of their past which would form the basis of a new, robust sense of self-worth.

Reflecting on the year 1992 in the same newspaper, Fraser noted that the quincentenary had been one of the two issues that had caused most controversy⁹². As a result of his stand on the matter, he had been the subject of considerable criticism and in one instance verbal abuse. He explained the depth of feeling regarding the quincentenary precisely in terms of the process of internalization of values.

What stands out in all this is the strength of the colonial education system that put a strong emphasis on producing loyal colonial subjects. For them to

⁹¹ The war against the Black Caribs under Chatoyer had been known in Britain as the Brigands War, specifically in order to prevent it being viewed by a skeptical British public as an indigenous struggle against avaricious West Indian sugar planters who wished to displace them from the most fertile district of the island.

⁹² The other issue was the ordination of women priests by the Anglican Church.

readily accept change is to admit that they have been cheated and to devalue their education. At least that is how they seem to think. Hopefully, with the rapidity of changes in every aspect of life, including our understanding of the generation of knowledge, graduates from our schools and other institutions of learning will realise that there is very little that is carved in stone and that we must be prepared to change our assumptions and views as new facts and ways of looking at things, come to light. (Fraser 1992)

The colonial education system is seen therefore in almost Althusserian terms as the creator of individual subjects of the colonial state (Althusser 1971). This subjectification manifested itself in a strident response to criticism of traditional received wisdom. What was at stake was more than the worth of an individual's education but the position of the subject qua subject. The institutions that produced a specific view of history were the self-same institutions that produced concrete historical subjects. To call the validity of one into question was to do the same for the other. That Columbus had discovered the New World was obvious; his discovery of St. Vincent was equally obvious, otherwise it would still be called Iouloumain. It is this obviousness that militates against the possibility of rewriting history. It is not that the obvious cannot be reinterpreted; it is simply a needless and ultimately futile exercise since what is obvious will manifest itself as a matter of course, obviously. The strength of this process goes far beyond the formal structures of the colonial education system but emanates from the praxis of Vincentian everyday life. In a sense the very name St. Vincent constantly corroborated the obviousness of Columbus' historical significance.

To overcome this obviousness was no easy task, although by now it has been largely completed, since the historical research necessary for it lies outside of St. Vincent.

What made the transition from Columbus as central to Vincentian identity to becoming a peripheral figure so rapid was the fact that Fraser was himself Vincentian. The antithesis, therefore, that he suggested, itself was ultimately the product of that same colonial education system. Had such a proposition been formulated by a European or American academic it would have taken far longer to gain acceptance within Vincentian society at large. Fraser is viewed as "one of us". He is one of "We Vincie" and as such his research constitutes an auto-critique of the past. It is part of the soul searching for a sense of national identity that is common particularly to ex-colonial nations although it is not restricted to them. Furthermore, the defensive attitude upon which Fraser remarked frequently manifests a pronounced xenophobic component. The most noticeable of these is perhaps the issue of whaling where criticism of the practice was typified in letters to newspapers as the "imposition of alien values" and a "lack of respect for Vincentian culture".93 That of course is not to say that historical research and political debate of the morality of whaling are equivalent but that the source of criticism is critical to the response it provokes and especially the amount of support that can be mobilized in its favour. The production of knowledge must therefore be seen within the terms of the international division of labour. In those terms Fraser occupies the position of an organic intellectual, as Gramsci would put it, in relation to the class relations that existed between St. Vincent and the outside world, or at least outside the Caribbean. Within Vincentian society this position does not hold; as a full-time academic and regular writer in the press he holds an institutional position as part of

⁹³ For a discussion of whaling as a traditional institution and it was a subject of comment in the press see Chapter 8 below.

the Vincentian intelligentsia and this duality of institutional and organic allows the possibility, on his part, of a radical critique of the vestiges of colonialism within Vincentian society. That is not to say that Fraser is in any way unique; there are certainly other members of the Vincentian intelligentsia such as Kenneth John and Paul Lewis, who are similarly influential on the views of average Vincentians. It is rather that, in terms of historical consciousness, Fraser is paradigmatic in the role that he assumes.

The development of local history and the search for roots

The inauguration of Indigenous People's Day has facilitated the ongoing association of Vincentian Caribs with other groups in the Caribbean and beyond into mainland America. The most notable of these has been the Garifuna of Belize who view St. Vincent as their ancestral home. The Garifuna are the descendants of the remnants of the Black Caribs who were exiled from the island following the Second Carib War. From the time of their resettlement on the island of Roatan until the present, their numbers have consistently swelled, and they now occupy a large area in Central America well beyond the borders of Belize.

Within the Garifuna of Belize there are two well-developed, historical perspectives. The first, epitomized in the work of Palacio (1992), construes the Garifuna as a Creole society based on the mixture of Island Caribs and African negroes, either runaways or maroons. The second view, epitomized by Joseph Arinde, sees the Garifuna as a discrete African society that has its origins in a pre-Columbian trans-Atlantic trade between West Africa and the northern part of South America and the

Caribbean. This latter thesis is itself based on one that has been expounded by Jan van Sertima in a series of books and articles. In his book *They Came before Columbus* (Sertima 1976) he argues that archaeological evidence such as statutes with purportedly Negroid features, along with other factors such as linguistic traits, clearly demonstrate the presence of Africans in the New World prior to Columbus.

The presence of black Africans in the New World before Columbus has been hotly contested for a variety of reasons. The debate has also generated claims of racism on both sides of the argument, and for this reason it has frequently degenerated into polemic. Within the limitations imposed by this thesis, it is not possible to give a detailed appraisal of van Sertima's work, but the degree to which it has been made the basis of a particular historiographical trend in St. Vincent necessitates that its main points be, at least, sketched out. According to van Sertima, Columbus had told his son Ferdinand that he had seen black men in Central America (Columbus 1959:234) and that evidence from other sixteenth century writers corroborated this (de Gomara 1554).

However he also cites L'Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg who travelled extensively in Mexico and Central America as a missionary from 1848 to 1863 and is best remembered for his translation of the Quiche sacred text, the Popol Vuh, into French (de Bourbourg 1861). In this text he claims that "there were two indigenous peoples, the *Mandinga* (black skin) and the *Tule* (red skin)." Given that de Bourbourg was writing in the mid-nineteenth century over four hundred years after the inception of African slavery little can be drawn from this evidence. What is

problematic is that immediately preceding this statement, van Sertima cites de Bourbourg reporting on de Gomara, who was a sixteenth century author, thus creating a certain level of confusion. But van Sertima used a wide variety of sources beyond those of the Spanish travellers and conquistadors of the sixteenth century. In particular he cites the Piri Reis map, so-called from the Turkish Admiral who presented it to the Sultan. According to van Sertima (1992: 91) "(t)he map is pre-Columbian; it was redrawn in 1513 from pre-Christian maps found in the sacked library of Alexandria." The map that van Sertima reproduces shows the southern Atlantic Ocean including the west coast of Africa and the eastern coast of South America. van Sertima further claimed that the original map preceded those of both the Arabs and the Greeks since it showed the islands of the Atlantic, with "remarkable accuracy" and "in perfect longitude", and the Andes, although these were not "discovered" by a European until 1527 with Pizarro.⁹⁴

The literary sources themselves do not and perhaps could not give sufficient evidence to fully justify van Sertima's claims, as he himself admits. This is because the societies which could provide the evidence were shattered by European conquest, and the fragmentation of their cultures necessitates an archaeological approach, in the broadest sense of that term. Van Sertima therefore uses evidence from such diverse fields as: mineralogy, examining the history of the use of metals in Africa; oceanography, such as the Ra expedition by Thor Heyerdahl; linguistics most notably in the terms used for metal alloys in West Africa and the pre-

⁹⁴ The Piri Reis map has itself led to as much controversy as van Sertima. There are various explanations of its origins and provenance.

Columbian Caribbean; botany, through analysis of the spread of crops such as maize, cotton and bananas; finally he considered archaeological evidence in the form of inscriptions and statues which purportedly exhibited specifically Negroid features. The most important of these was the giant head found at Tres Zapotes in 1858. The feature that van Sertima singled out for attention was neither a broad nose nor fleshy lips, both of which could arguably be dismissed as "Asiatic" features but rather the hair as depicted on the back of the skull which was shaped in seven braids. Van Sertima (1976: 74) claimed that this was irrefutable proof of the "African" origin of the figure since "(t)here is no evidence before this, or since, of any Native American with a seven braided hairstyle".

Van Sertima has major critics within both anthropology and archaeology, for a variety of reasons. He has been criticized with regard to the debate concerning parallel evolution as opposed to diffusionism. This, according to David H. Kelley (1992), has led writers such as Bruce Trigger (1989) "to suggest that van Sertima, is belittling native peoples by attributing major elements of their cultural heritage to prehistoric visitors from the Old World." In a paper commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute as a response to a presentation by van Sertima, Kelley explained what he considered to be the five key factors in van Sertima's thesis. These were:

(1) intellectual bias, that the culture of American academia promoted, through the training of archaeologists, a view that the Americas had developed independently and had therefore provided a "cultural laboratory";

- (2) the concept of parallel, independent evolution, which we have already touched upon;
- (3) the history of watercraft, specifically the degree to which oceans form impenetrable barriers, a view that Kelley rejects;
- (4) archaeological and other kinds of evidence of contact, that archaeological evidence tends to follow from other evidence that produces a hypothesis such as the Norse settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows, which resulted from the Ingstads searching a specific site because they had already come to the conclusion, from non-archaeological sources, that such evidence would be found there (H. Ingstad 1969, A. Ingstad 1977);
- (5) control of relevant data given both the wide geographic area and the range of topics used as evidence.⁹⁵

In recent years new and equally contentious material has been produced which seems to support the claims of van Sertima that trans-Atlantic trade between the Caribbean and South America preceded Columbus. At the Institute für Anthropologie und Humangenetik in Munich, Svetlana Balabanova pulverized and dissolved hair, soft tissue and bone from seven Egyptian mummies dating from between 1070 BC to 395 AD (Balabanova S. et al. 1992.). Her analysis found traces of hashish, nicotine and cocaine at levels commensurate to those found in addicts today. Since both nicotine and cocaine are New World plants their presence raised the possibility that they were the result of a long-distance, trans-Atlantic trade.

⁹⁵ For a full discussion of these points see David H. Kelley (1976) An Essay on Pre-Columbian Contacts between the Americas and Other Areas, with Special Reference to the Work of Ivan van Sertima.

Despite arguments that this may have been the result of contamination or chemical decomposition (see for example Buckland P.C. and Panaglotakopulu E. 2001) there is now some support for her claims that the substances could only have resulted from their ingestion either during the life of the mummy or during the process of mummification itself. If this proves to be accurate then the existence of long-distance trade between Egypt and South America dating before the first millennium BC would appear to be established.

The belief in the existence of contacts between the Caribbean and Africa has, though, two distinct variants (Adams 1996). The first would see these contacts as primarily a form of long-distance trade, possibly in a form analogous to the Silk Road which linked China with the Mediterranean from at least Roman times. The second, more contentiously, would consider the connections as having a much greater degree of human population movement such that discrete African communities were established in the New World (van Sertima 1976 and Adams 1996). Within current Vincentian historiography this latter has been proposed by the local historian Edgar Adams (1996) who sees this as a possible explanation for the earliest populations that were later to be known as Black Caribs. The main source for a mass movement of people that he uses, following van Sertima (1976), is the "Masalik" of Al Umari which refers to the two expeditions of Abubakari II of Mali to explore the Atlantic between 1307 and 1312. The first of these expeditions is reported to have comprised of 400 ships, whilst the second, commanded by Abubakari himself, consisted of 2,000 ships, 1,000 of which carried supplies for the expedition.

In his first major work van Sertima introduced the writings of Al Umari as a source for his claims regarding Abubakari.

The court tradition of Mali and documents in Cairo tell of an African King, Abubakari II, setting out on the Atlantic in 1311. He commandeered a fleet of large boats, well stocked with food and water, and embarked from the Senegambia coast, the western borders of this West African empire, entering the Canaries current, "a river in the middle of the sea" as the captain of a preceding fleet (of which only one boat returned) described it. Neither of these two fleets came back to Mali to tell their story, but around this time evidence of contact between West Africans and Mexicans appears in strata in America in an overwhelming combination of artefacts and cultural parallels. (van Sertima 1976: 26)

This claim by van Sertima has provided an alternative to what might be termed the European myth of Columbus as "discoverer" of St. Vincent. As such, certain writers in both St. Vincent (Adams 1996, Fitzpatrick 2001) and the wider Garifuna community have accepted the version of events that van Sertima has popularised. In St. Vincent, there has not, however, been any attempt to subject van Sertima's thesis to any degree of critical analysis either in terms of logical coherence or the voracity of the evidence employed. Since van Sertima's thesis is now accepted by many Vincentians, it is necessary to consider the nature of the evidence on which these claims of a Malian origin of the Black Caribs is based. In doing so, the aim is not to diminish the importance of local historians working in St. Vincent but rather to emphasise the difficulties they encounter in trying to assess the claims of writers such as van Sertima (1976, 1992), given the limitations on access to source materials.

One of the earliest descriptions of the expeditions of Abu Bakr II in English was given by Trimingham (1970). According to this version of events, Abu Bakr II was in the line of succession from Sun Dyata's sister. Mansa Musa, his successor, when in Cairo mentioned that power was transmitted by heritage but did not specify by what line. He describes how his predecessor (he does not say father) sent an expedition consisting of 200 canoes down the Senegal to explore the Ocean. Only one returned to relate how the rest of the fleet had been overwhelmed in a storm. The king would not believe this and equipped another fleet of 2,000 canoes of which half were filled with provisions. He led it himself, after conferring the power on Musa, and none of them ever returned (Trimingham 1970).

The source cited by Adams following van Sertima, the Arab geographer Al-Umari, was born in Damascus in 1301 but lived most of his life in Cairo where he died in 1349. The work which provides the material on the expedition of Abubakari II is the Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār, or "Pathways of Vision in the Realms of the Metropolises", as Levtzion (Levtzion and Hopkins 1981) translates it. Levtzion (1973) notes that "along with Ibn Khaldūn's chronicle and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's eye-witness account, al-Umarī's work is a major source for the history of Mali in the fourteenth century". There is, however, one important caveat to this in that much of the detail

[%] Trimingham quotes his source for this as al Umari pp74-75 and al-Qalqashandi 294-5; the latter according to Trimingham used al – Umari as a source.

⁹⁷ The main sources used for the life of al-Umari are Nathanial Levtzion (1973) and Nathanial Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins (1981).

regarding the voyages derived from information obtained from Mansā Mūsā, Abubakari's successor, during his stay in Cairo during his hajj of 1324 and that al-Umarī was, himself, in Syria at that time. The crucial section (Levtzion & Hopkins 1981 p268-9) is itself a recounting of information given to al-Umarī by his principle source Ibn Amīr Hājib who was governor of Old Cairo and Qarāfa (the district of Cairo in which Mansā Mūsā stayed) at the time. According to al-Umarī the governor had asked Mansā Mūsā how he had become king, to which Mūsā had replied the following.

We belong to a house which hands on the kingship by inheritance. The king who was my predecessor did not believe that it was impossible to discover the furthest limit of the Atlantic Ocean and wished vehemently to do so. So he equipped 200 ships filled with men and the same number equipped with gold, water, and provisions to last them for years, and said to the man deputed to lead them: "Do not return until you reach the end of it or your water and provisions give out." They departed and a long time passed before anyone came back. Then one ship returned and we asked the captain what news they brought. He said: "Yes, O Sultan, we travelled for a long time until there appeared in the open sea [as it were] a river with a powerful current. Mine was the last of those ships. The [other] ships went on ahead but when they reached that place they did not return and no more was seen of them and we do not know what became of them. As for me, I went about at once and did not enter that river." But the Sultan disbelieved him.

Then that Sultan got ready 2,000 ships, 1,000 for himself and the men whom he took with him and 1,000 for water and provisions. He left me to deputize for him and embarked on the Atlantic Ocean with his men. That was the last we saw of him and all those who were with him, and so I became King in my own right.

There is no reason to suppose that either al-Umarī, or his informant, Ibn Amīr Hājib, were anything but truthful in what they reported, but the claim that Abū Bakr was the predecessor to Mūsā cannot be made from this passage alone. Furthermore, claims to that effect create inconsistencies with the main chronicle of the Malian

kings compiled by Ibn Khaldūn. Born in Tunis in 1332 he served various North African rulers until his death in 1406 in Cairo. His most famous work Kitāb al-Ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada' wa-'l-khabar fi ayyām al-'arab wa-'l-'ajam wa-'l-barbar (The Book of Examples and the Register of Subject and Predicate [or, of the Origin and History], on the days of the Arabs, the Persians and the Berbers) was written between 1374 and 1378. (Levitzion and Hopkins 1981 p:317). However, Ibn Khaldūn continued to revise his work throughout his life and as a result there are two editions, that of M. Quatremere in Paris (Quatremere 1858) and that of Naşr al-Hūrīnī from Cairo. The variations in these texts derive from the latter being one of the earliest versions whilst the former contains Ibn Khaldūn's revisions. However, with regard to his work on the chronology of the kings of Mali these differences are not significant. According to Ibn Khaldūn, Mansā Mūsā became king in 1312, but he did so by succeeding Muhammad the son of Qū. Qū was the grandson of Mārī Djāta who had ruled until 1270 when he had been succeeded by Qū's father. The kingship had then passed to Mansā Wali's (Qū's father) two younger brothers and then to his sister's son Abū Bakr. The kingship then fell to a freed slave called Sākūra before reverting to Qū. Mansā Mūsā is, according to this genealogy, Abū Bakr's grandson, but the Abū Bakr in question is not the son of Mārī Djāta's daughter but his younger brother who never ruled. The question then arises as to whom Mansā Mūsā was referring as his predecessor. This question was broached by a collaborator of van Sertima, Harold G. Lawrence (also known as Kofi Wangara), who makes the claim that Abū Bakr was the king who launched two expeditions across the Atlantic.

The monarch who preceded Mansa Musa was Abu Bakr II, known in Mande dialects as Abubakari, Bubakari, or Bogari. He either reigned from 1305-1307 or from 1310 to 1312, depending on whose chronology one holds most valid. At any rate, the expeditions reported by al-'Umari would have taken place either in 1307 or 1312. Although some scholars have questioned the existence of Abubakari II by reinterpreting the basic sources from which we determine the chronology of Mali Kings, such opinions yet remain theoretical. Consequently, we will consider Abubakari II the legitimate predecessor of Mansa Musa.

It is interesting that the justification given for taking Abū Bakr as the predecessor of Mūsā is given in a footnote as R. Levitzion (1963), since writing some ten years later Nehemiah Levtzion (1973), following Ibn Khaldūn, posits a genealogy of Malian kings which makes Muhammad the son of Qū, his predecessor. Interestingly, there is no mention of any expedition in Ibn Khaldūn's text by either Abū Bakr or Muhammad. But although neither al-ʿUmarī nor Ibn Amīr Hājib had a motive for lying, that may not have been the case with Mūsā who had attained the throne after his predecessor had disappeared. The case of Sākūra shows that there were precedents for usurpation. What we are left with is a third-hand account, originally given by someone with a vested interest in making his predecessor disappear without trace. 99

The second source Adams uses is, like van Sertima, Las Casas's account of the third voyage of Columbus. Specifically he states that Columbus knew from Portuguese

⁹⁸ Ibn Khaldūn stated that Khalīfa the brother of Mansā Walī was insane and his people rose up against him and replaced him with Abū Bakr and that, on his death, one of their clients called Sākūra usurped the kingship. (Levtzion 1981: 333-334)

⁹⁹ There are, though, other Arabic accounts which mention expeditions. As early as 1154 al-Idrīsī, in his book *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*, translated by Levtzion as "The Pleasure of Him who longs to cross the Horizons" (Levtzion 1981: 104) gives an account of eight cousins who embark across "the Sea of Darkness". However, in this case, the port of embarkation is not in West Africa but Lisbon.

Officials on the Cape Verde islands that "African boats periodically left the Guinea Coast and headed toward the land of the West with merchandise" (cited in Adams 1996: 9). According to Adams these West African seamen, called the Black Guanini, regularly visited the Caribbean and "it was that mixture between the Indigenous Caribs and the Black Guanini, which produced the first Black Caribs of St. Vincent and the Grenadines." The presence of African seamen on St. Vincent who had been engaged in the long-distance trade accords with what one might call the weak hypothesis, but using the figures supplied by Shepherd for the population of St. Vincent in 1730, "6000 Negroes and 4000 Caribs" leads Adams to question whether this could be accounted for in this manner even given later accretion owing to shipwrecks and runaways. Instead he moots the possibility that they were the descendants of some survivors from the expeditions of Abukari in order to explain the numerical preponderance of the Black Caribs over the Caribs.

As mentioned previously in Chapter 5, Shepherd's (1831) figures are highly suspect given that he was writing to justify the Second Carib War as not against the indigenous population but interlopers who had usurped the best land for themselves. His figures are also clearly contradicted by Moreau de Jonnès (1858), who maintained that at the outbreak of the war the Caribs were still numerically preponderant. However, even accepting Shepherd's (1831) figures for relative population between Yellow and Black Caribs, it is possible to account for the numerical superiority of the latter without recourse to mass migration in the pre-Columbian period. Shipwrecks, and runaways were augmented by the evacuation of large numbers of ex-slaves who fought with the Caribs on Martinique

and Guadeloupe, evidence for which remains in traditions linking the district of Biabou with a Carib clan from the latter of those islands (Van der Plas cited in Kirby I.E. and Martin C.I 1986). In a recent work on the history of Biabou, Robert V.W. Fitzpatrick similarly follows van Sertima's thesis. He writes:

According to many historians, the Caribs originated from the northern part of South America, while the Africans came from the ancient Mali Empire in the early fourteenth century. In 1311, Emperor Abubakari the second of Ancient Mali, referred to as "The Mariner Prince of Africa", led an expedition of 2,000 ships across the Atlantic Ocean, and, using the equatorial current, his expedition arrived in the Americas. By 1312 there was a presence of Africans (Guanini people) living in the New World. In St. Vincent, the Guanini intermarried with the Callinagoes, giving rise to the Black Caribs known as the Garinagu or Garifuna people. (2001: 1).

Both Adams and Fitzpatrick clearly follow the thesis of van Sertima that considers Al-Umari as a reliable source for the fourteenth century exploits of Abubakari. But they also follow what we have called the weak hypothesis that there was a regular continuous trade across the Atlantic in pre-Colombian times. In both, similarly, there is a general agreement with the possibility of his strong thesis that there was a large scale migration, but both also clearly argue that the Black Caribs, whatever their African origins, were the product of intermarriage between the indigenous population and the African newcomers. This strong view of van Sertima's thesis is, however, propounded most strongly by the President of the World Garifuna Organization, Dr. Theodore Arinde. Arinde claims that far from being the result of intermarriage between Caribs and Africans, the Garifuna of Central America, and therefore their antecedents the Black Caribs, represent a genuine distinct African group who settled in the Caribbean in Pre-Columbian times.

In August 2002 I attended the Indigenous Peoples Day celebration in St. Vincent which was organized between the Chatoyer Youth Movement of St. Vincent and the National Garifuna Movement headed by J. Cayetano. At this meeting Arinde addressed a massed gathering of mostly local people, despite not being part of the official delegation and indeed representing a rival organization. He spoke on behalf of "We the Garifuna" and expressed his view on their origins which were not, he was at pains to emphasise, the result of an escape from New World slavery but part of an, as yet, little known chapter of African history. Furthermore, the Garifuna were not Carib or Arawak but of purely African descent. As I listened to his speech, I was acutely aware of the reactions of the people around me. In particular one man said, "So what is this man doing in Sandy Bay if he not Carib. We struggle all these years to make links with the Garifuna and now they tell us that Caribs have nothing to do with them. Who do they think we are if not Caribs? We're being marginalized once again."

The statement that the Garifuna are not a Creole society, resulting from the intermarriage of Island Caribs with Africans, but of purely African descent was not an off-the cuff remark. At the website of the World Garifuna Organization, Dr Arinde, who styles himself both president and Paramount Chief, makes his position clear as to the origins of the Garifuna. Here the Garifuna are described as "a black people, African" who had "maintained our Africanness and African identity and race and culture as manifested in our language, food and diet, music and dance, spiritual rituals and family relationships". He admits that the precise origins of the

Garifuna may not be known but that "we might have been the great warriors of Darien who travelled to the Caribbean and other parts of the Americas before 1000BC. We could also have been members of the Abubakari the Second Expeditions to the Americas in 1311".

The immediate problem that arises from Arinda's contention that the Garifuna were a purely African group during their domicile in St Vincent lies in its total disregard for the historical record of the British colonists. That is certainly not to say that Young (1795) and Shephard (1831) provided an impartial account of the Black Caribs, as they termed the Garifuna: quite the opposite, but they themselves were constantly playing down the extent to which the latter had assumed Carib culture and intermarried extensively with them. It was precisely in the interests of the planters to demonstrate that the Black Caribs were not Native Americans but were recent African interlopers and they attempted this constantly. But even they were obliged to admit that the Black Caribs had, in fact, been created by a process of intermarriage and the adoption of Carib practices, such as the head-flattening of children, and the common language of the Caribs. Had they had the opportunity, both Young and Shephard would have used the term 'Africans' or simply 'Blacks' to describe their adversaries. The fact that both men felt obliged to use a hybrid term, Black Caribs, clearly demonstrates that the simple epithet Black would not be accepted by the British public which was, in part at least, critical of the colonizing venture against a small group that claimed indigenous rights.

A more general criticism that could be made is that for Arinde to make the claim that "language, food and diet, music and dance, spiritual rituals and family relationships" were to be considered African then the African origin of these cultural traits should be broadly identifiable. Yet Arinde himself concedes that the origin of the Garifuna is at least uncertain: "What we don't know is our origin". If the cultural traits can be clearly identified as African that can only be with reference to another African group or groups. There are various practices amongst the modern Garifuna which can be interpreted in terms of a West African origin. But for Arinde's thesis to hold, these practices should be consistently associated with a particular, identifiable area of West Africa whereas, in fact, there is no evidence to support this.

Historical consciousness and party politics

Indigenous Peoples Day has not been celebrated since 2002 and part, at least, of the reason for this seems to be owing to the competition between the two rival Garifuna organizations, the National Garifuna Council and the World Garifuna Organization. The evidence for this is anecdotal but one such example highlights the difficulty that Vincentian Caribs have when trying to operate in conjunction with these larger organizations. An attempt was made to organize a beauty pageant, which would include wearing "traditional" dress (that is to say not swimsuits), preparing and cooking a Carib meal, etc. My informant related as to how he had approached a prominent activist based overseas and had been promised her support. He then contacted another based in St.Vincent who was married to a government minister. Unfortunately, the two supported different organizations and

neither would participate with the other. That is not to say that the scheme will not be realized but rather that, if it is, it will be done purely at a local level.

The strongest reason, however, why Indigenous Peoples Day has fallen into desuetude is that it has been largely superseded by National Heroes Day, which principally celebrates the struggle of the Carib Chief Joseph Chatoyer. Whereas the former celebration was focused on a small minority, and therefore excluded most Vincentians, the celebration of Chatoyer is inclusive since he is depicted within a nationalist discourse of self-determination. The transformation of Chatoyer from perfidious arch enemy of "civilized" values to "First National Hero" requires explanation. To do so it is necessary to consider firstly his depiction in colonialist historiography.

Figure 5: Chatoyer as National Hero

The name Chatoyer first appears in historical documents as one of the signatories of the treaty signed at Maccaraca camp between the British forces under Major General Dalrymple and the various Carib chiefs engaged in the First Carib War. At this time, as a relatively young man, he was just one of the six chiefs of Grand

Sable¹⁰⁰, but over the thirty years which preceded the Second Carib War his reputation grew until he came to personify resistance to the English planters. Not surprisingly, the historical tradition of the planter class saw Chatoyer as the epitome of mendacious subterfuge and perfidy. He is constantly portrayed as a leader who professed his allegiance to the British when it suited him but who allied himself with the French at every opportunity.

Whilst what is known about the life of Chatoyer is relatively limited, his image is well recorded. The depiction of Chatoyer within St. Vincent has, since Independence, taken on an almost iconographic dimension. His figure can be seen in such diverse locations as the approach to Sandy Bay in the north of the island, a bus stop at Calliaqua in the south, and the reading room of the library in Kingstown. There is even a website set up by the Department of Tourism and Culture for the island that is adorned by a reproduction of Chatoyer's head taken from the Kingstown painting. Furthermore, his representation, immortalized in the paintings of Agostino Brunias, forms the basis for not only contemporary depictions of himself but as the generic Carib. In a recent article, Lennox Honychurch (2003) has intimated at the complex relationship that existed between Brunias and Chatoyer. Honychurch notes that Brunias himself was no more than a hired hand for Sir William Young, the first Land Commissioner. His duties were to paint at his master's bidding, and he notes that Brunias is mentioned as an item of Young's expenditure under the heading "draughtsman". Moreover, Brunias was

¹⁰⁰ Chatoyer is the last of the six chiefs mentioned on the treaty and the way it is written could indeed be interpreted that he was not a chief.

socially an outsider to English, and as was the case of St. Vincent Scottish, society. Thus whilst always occupying a position commensurate with being a European in the West Indies, he was nonetheless dependent on Young for access to the inner circle of planter society.

Figure: 6 Engraving entitled "Pacification of Maroon Negroes" This painting by Brunias has been assumed to be the meeting of General Dalrymple with the Caribs at the end of the First Carib War

The contrast with Chatoyer is here stark. Throughout this period Chatoyer appears to confront Young, if not as an equal in the eyes of the Land Commissioner at least, then still as someone who was independent and whose views had to be taken seriously. Young was fully aware that the designs of the planters in St. Vincent could not be realised without the acquiescence of the Caribs and that this would not be forthcoming in the face of opposition from Chatoyer in particular. It is no

surprise that Chatoyer should be the chief of the area known as Grand Sable¹⁰¹; the area above all others that the planters coveted as the basis for a lucrative sugar industry. Control of Grand Sable meant control of the potentially most productive region of St. Vincent, a fact not lost on both the Land Commissioners and, presumably, Chatoyer. The British, though, had been thwarted in their early attempts to seize the land during the First Carib War: the war, incidentally where Chatoyer is first mentioned.

It is clear from the correspondence of Sir William Young that he cultivated his relationship with Chatoyer in order to further the aims of the planter class of which he was a prominent member. Chatoyer would doubtless also have benefited greatly within his own community, in terms of prestige and patronage, through the fostering of this relationship. Thus it is possible to conceive of the fact that the preeminence that Chatoyer was to achieve was directly aided by Young's attempts to ingratiate himself with the young chief, primarily because the latter was in possession of the real estate that was the focus of much of the planter's attention. That Chatoyer did enjoy an extremely high status amongst the Caribs is undoubtedly true, but there is more than an element of the British seeing Carib politics only in terms of the categories of hierarchy with which they were familiar. There is an interesting tradition recorded by Kirby and Martin (1986) regarding this complex relationship between Young and Chatoyer. They recount, although they give no details of the sources for this story either literary or oral, that whilst visiting Sir William Young's estate in the south of the island, in the area now known as

¹⁰¹ This area is around what is now the town of Georgetown on the north windward coast.

Villa, Chatoyer remarked on two fine horses that he observed there. Young, no doubt keen to impress his guest with his generosity, promptly presented them to Chatoyer. For his part and in a true spirit of reciprocity, Chatoyer gazed out across the nearby bay to the small islet some four hundred metres from the coast and gave it to Sir William Young and the islet to this day is known as Young Island. What is important here though is less the veracity of this event historically than the fact that Chatoyer could be invoked to validate a claim to land, and that from the principal Land Commissioner in the Ceded Islands.

The relationship of Brunias to Chatoyer, painter to subject, would always have been mediated by Sir William Young. Chatoyer as he is illustrated by Brunias is either Young's erstwhile ally or antagonist but, throughout, there are three key tropes which epitomize Chatoyer. These are: his depiction with hair that has both African and Carib features; his association with smoking a long native pipe; and finally, his stature which is of a pronounced mesomorphic type reminiscent of the early descriptions of natives of the Caribbean given by the Spanish such as Las Casas.

The paradigmatic picture of Chatoyer is perhaps the engraving of him which shows him in profile. His hair is clearly shown as being long and protruding away from his skull. It is neither the short hair associated with the African slaves nor the long straight locks of the Amerindians. Chatoyer's hair proclaims the hybridization of Africans and Caribs that became initially the Black Caribs of St. Vincent and later, in exile, the Garifuna. It is a hybridization that is at odds with the later claims of Sir William Young Junior, son of the Land Commissioner and author of the main

contemporary text on the Black Caribs, that the latter were no more than African interlopers who had no claim to the island. The hairstyle so apparent in Brunias's engraving is also clearly apparent in the large painting of Chatoyer in the Central Library in Kingstown. Here, even more clearly, Chatoyer is shown with a shock of hair of conspicuous appearance that juts out about six inches from the top right-hand side of his head.

If the hair of the Black Carib chief designates a hybrid ancestry, then the pipe with which he is shown manifests the assimilation of Amerindian cultural practices. Although tobacco was widely used by contemporary Europeans, the pipe associated with Chatoyer is not of a style in common usage among the British or French. The pipe has the long straight stem and upright wooden bowl more redolent of North American Indians than Northern Europeans. In all the various depictions of Chatoyer, both contemporary and modern, the pipe that he carries is always of this type. Perhaps the best example of this depiction of Chatoyer stands by the main road approaching the village of Sandy Bay from the south. Its location here is noteworthy since although Sandy Bay has the largest concentration of modern day Caribs dwelling within its confines, historically the location has no significant connection with Chatoyer that can be determined with any precision. Admittedly there were claims that Chatoyer had a house in the hills to the north of Sandy Bay but documentary evidence always associates him with Grand Sable, some eight miles to the south. At Sandy Bay it is Chatoyer as the Carib chief who is depicted, and therefore the prominence of his pipe reiterates both this aspect of his identity

and his role as a National Hero in St. Vincent with whom diverse groups can identify.

The final aspect of Chatoyer that is consistently shown in illustrations of him both in eighteenth century paintings and engravings and modern reworking of these

of Chatoyer is expressed here in physical terms. His body evinces a raw physical power that is counterposed to the cultured intellect of the Europeans and, in doing so, provides the latter with a worthy opponent.

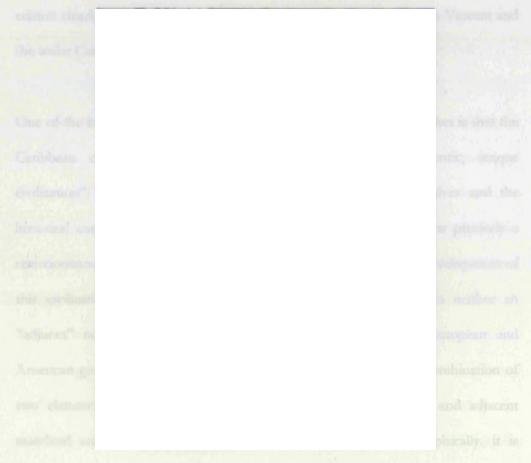


Figure: 5 "Chatoyer and his wives" by Agostino Brunias

The celebration of national heroes is seen by the present Unity Labour Party government, and the Unity Party before that under Gonsalves, as an essential aspect of the process of self-identification at a national level. Gonsalves understands how a clearly defined historical perspective of iconic figures can counteract the centripetal effects of the social divisions within Vincentian society. Consequently, he has played a prominent role, both in and out of office, in bringing it to the attention of the public and by so doing has brought the history of the island into the political arena. The argument for a National Heroes Day was fervently expressed in the editorial of *The News* during the week approaching 14th March 1999. The editorial for that edition clearly showed the influence of Gonsalves and his vision of St. Vincent and the wider Caribbean in the modern world. 102

One of the key claims, and possibly the key claim, that Gonsalves makes is that the Caribbean constitutes what he terms "an independent, authentic, unique civilization". The term "civilization" is frequently used by Gonsalves and the historical consciousness that he and the ULP strive to encourage is precisely a consciousness of the historical processes that have determined the development of this civilization. According to Gonsalves, Caribbean civilization is neither an "adjunct" not "offshoot" of Western civilization, in both its European and American guises, but exists *sui generis*. Its uniqueness arises from a combination of two elements: first, geographically, it consists of an archipelago and adjacent mainland areas in central and South America; second, demographically, it is comprised of a "migrant" population, predominantly of African and Asian origin.

¹⁰² Several other local newspapers reported these views in less detail.

These two elements have been the subject of a particular colonial history "under the hegemony" of European colonizers and settlers. The term "civilization" is quoted by Gonsalves from a speech in 1986 by Earl Barrow, the then Prime Minister of Barbados, and is used as a justification in itself for the development of a greater understanding of the historical dimension of Vincentian society. Civilizations have histories of their own and therefore to make the claim to being an independent civilization is to necessitate the reconstruction of an independent history. Civilization is counterposed to an unstated concept of culture and needs therefore to be examined if only briefly.

According to Raymond Williams in his book Keywords, the term "civilization" emerged during the eighteenth century and by the end of that century had behind it "the general spirit of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on secular and progressive human self-development" (Williams 1983: 58). However, according to Crehan (2002: 41), in her recent book on the relationship of Gramsci to anthropology, the terms culture and civilization were used as synonyms well into the nineteenth century. Indeed, as Crehan notes, Tylor in his seminal work Primitive Culture, defines culture and civilization together as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1871 quoted in Crehan 2002: 41). Crehan (2002: 41) also goes on to assert that "culture as a synonym for civilization fell out of usage in the twentieth century". But although this may be

¹⁰³ For further elaboration of Tylor's views see also Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization. (Tylor 1881)

true, it was a long process indeed! In two of the four places where civilization appears as quotes from Gramsci, it is linked to culture. The first, quoting from the Selection from the Prison Notebooks, states, "For the particular form of civilization, culture and morality which they represented is decomposing and they loudly proclaim the death of all civilization, all culture, all morality" (Gramsci cited in Crehan 2002: 84). The second, from the same source, states, "One could say that the Renaissance created a new culture or civilization" (Gramsci cited in Crehan 2002: 85). Whilst in the former Gramsci appears to be making a distinction, albeit unelaborated, between culture and civilization, in the latter he is still treating them as synonyms. This ambiguity of the use of the two terms has therefore continued. But within the concept of civilization lies the root meaning from which it derives, that is say to civilize or be civilized. This specific connotation of civilization, which Crehan (2002: 40) describes as the "Enlightenment teleology that saw all human history as leading up to its final culmination in 'civilized' European culture", itself has its roots in the eighteenth century.

Civilization and culture are therefore still closely related terms which have, however, slightly different connotations. It is argued here that culture is a relatively morally neutral term whilst civilization has specific connotations which recall the project of the Enlightenment, even if it does not include a specifically Eurocentric teleology. Culture has not retained this teleology although it remains in the passive form of the root verb to be cultured with its implications of high culture. Civilization therefore, in a sense denotes something more than culture. Any society (in the broadest sense) will have a culture although it may be rudimentary in form or transient in terms of its

longevity. The claim to be a civilization very specifically supercedes this basic culture. To make the claim that the Caribbean represents a distinct civilization aligns it historically with Ancient Egypt or Rome, with Europe of the Enlightenment or China. Within the concept of civilization there is a claim to have contributed to the progress of mankind, and it is precisely with this modernist discourse that Gonsalves wishes to connect. It is in order to demonstrate this alignment that paradigmatic figures are required and national heroes perform this function.

Of those chosen for national hero status Chatoyer is pre-eminent. He was always promoted by the ULP before they gained power and, after the inauguration of National Heroes Day, described as the First National Hero, and this despite the paucity of the information regarding his life compared to that of the other heroes. It was deemed necessary by Fraser at the time of the inauguration to produce a short pamphlet explaining both Chatoyer's historical importance and relevance to contemporary Vincentian society. Fraser himself notes the paucity of the material available and that it was precisely to inform the layman that the pamphlet was written. The project of promoting Chatoyer as a national hero is therefore intrinsic to the wider development of a specifically historical consciousness. This itself is necessary in order to establish a clear break with the colonial past. In the forward to Fraser's pamphlet, Kenneth John (2002) one of the foremost social commentators on the island, remarks that "Our country since Independence twenty two years ago, has groped gingerly in the dark, bereft of a history of our own to act as a social compass, counsellor, philosopher or guide". It is interesting to note that John, like Gonsalves, uses the term civilization: "The indigenous Callinago - whom the

Europeans chose to call 'Caribs' - were a distinct civilization which lived in settled communities practising a rude democracy".

It would seem from the foregoing that the development of a new historical consciousness in St. Vincent operates both at what could be termed ideological and at political levels. In both instances this appears to be part of a wider process of the development of a social consciousness not predicated on relationships established in a colonial past. The development of this historical consciousness therefore seeks to challenge the hegemonic status of the previous views regarding the history of the island and the wider Caribbean from a subaltern perspective. That this project aims at attaining a hegemonic status within St. Vincent can be ascertained from it having both party political and non-party political dimensions. I have shown that there are distinct differences that occur owing to the particular form of the reassessment of the historical legacy. That which has occurred through the ULP has as its focus specific details regarding Vincentian historical figures around which emergent discourses of nationhood can coalesce; that which occurred within what might be termed "civil society", essentially the pre-existing intellectuals not connected to a specific party programme, has tended to adopt a more heterogeneous series of foci some of which can be seen as part of wider political discourses emanating from political struggles within Central America and the United States.

Chapter 8

Hegemony and Traditional Values

The development of Chatoyer as the focal point of a new national consciousness can be viewed as the culmination of a process which preceded independence but which accelerated after that point in time. I have also argued that this project (in the sense of a concerted political programme) was profoundly counter-hegemonic in that it sought to overthrow the "common-sense" view of history that two centuries of British colonialism had bequeathed to Vincentian society. Moreover, I have postulated that this shift of historical consciousness has been brought about by the formation and activities of *organic intellectuals* working in conjunction and/or parallel with a political party. The reformulation of Chatoyer as First National hero and the political ascendancy of the ULP are thus both aspects of a hegemonic movement within Vincentian society.

There are many reasons that could be cited for the recent success of the ULP; such as the perceived corruption of the previous administration and a feeling that it had been in power for too long. But alongside these there runs an underlying shift. The ideological concerns of Gonsalves were articulated in their full historicity. Gonsalves and the ULP appear to have recognized that systemic analyses of how Vincentian society operated could only be understood and put into practice through

a firm understanding of the concrete, historical conditions in which they occurred. In this sense one can argue that Gonsalves, unlike many politicians and social commentators in St. Vincent, understood the concept of hegemony in a Gramscian sense.

The term hegemony was used on occasions by Vincentians during my period of fieldwork. Its use was, however, to denote a perceived power relation which existed between the United States and/or Europe with St. Vincent. This common usage was always pejorative; hegemony was imposed on "We Vincie" from outside. This use of the term hegemony as almost synonymous with imperialism or neocolonialism emerges precisely when aspects of what might be termed the value system of St. Vincent, or specifically Vincentian institutions or practices, come under criticism from external, usually American or European voices. In order to rebut such criticism, the terms imperialism, neo-colonialism or cultural hegemony, as it was usually termed, would be counterposed to "traditional" Vincentian culture or "our traditional" values. There were two main areas where this clash most frequently took place: firstly in respect to returning workers especially those who had worked for many years in Britain or the United States, where the disputes tended to be private; secondly in respect of the tourist industry, especially the expectations of tourists and their implications for Vincentian society, which had a far greater impact in the public domain.

Tourism had widely been seen, and continues to be so, as a major source of revenue and as a means to diversify the economy away from an agricultural base which was both economically precarious and predicated on a colonial discourse of subordination. However, the neo-liberal transformation of many Western economies and the concomitant shift towards greater consumerism proved challenging to local ideas of how things should be done. This situation was exacerbated by the policy of the Mitchell administration whereby tourism was zonally restricted and focused on the so-called elite part of the market (Mitchell 1998). Such elites tended to have a world view far removed from the vast majority of Vincentians but, totally integrated within neo-liberal, consumerist ideology and practices as they tended to be, fully expected Vincentian society to conform to "Western" standards of service. Consequently, within this context, hegemony was articulated by most Vincentians as a form of "cultural imperialism". Cruise liners had come to replace gun-boats, but the demands on the local population remained the same. This tension between the demands and values of tourism and the practices of the local population surfaced, during my period of fieldwork, in a debate in which the key concepts deployed were hegemony and tradition, regarding the continued practice of whaling in St. Vincent.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a member of the International Whaling Commission and enjoys a quota under the provision of the treaty relating to aboriginal subsistence whaling. As such it is grouped along with Alaskan Inuit, the aboriginal people of the North East Pacific and Greenlanders. At present the quota allocated to St. Vincent consists of two humpback whales (Megaptera nodosa) per year. Additionally, Vincentians regularly catch pilot whales (Globecephalus melas) which are not covered by the remit of the I.W.C. However, whereas the latter are

hunted from mainland St.Vincent, humpback whales are hunted from the Grenadine island of Bequia. Whaling in St. Vincent and the Grenadines dates back to the early years of the nineteenth century when American ships out of New England began operating in the Caribbean. The admission of United States ships to the West Indian ports after 1822 allowed trade to develop and, more importantly, the techniques employed by the Americans to be observed. ¹⁰⁴ The industry itself was introduced into Bequia by one William Thomas Wallace who, having served on an American whaler out of Massachusetts, opened his own whaling station in 1875/6 (Adams 1996). By 1880 he had teamed up with Joseph Olivierre, the owner of Paget Farms Estate on Bequia. These two families were to dominate whaling on Bequia, each running his own boats and whaling station on the island. The industry rapidly grew until by 1890 there were six whaling stations operating on Bequia (Adams 1996). It has been claimed that the stations at Bequia and Paget Farm employed up to 20% of the adult male workforce during the season, and the distribution of whale meat became an important food source for the island.

Whaling continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century as a small-scale industry centred on Bequia for humpbacks and the Leeward town of Barrouallie for pilot whales, or, as they are termed locally, black fish. However, the substitution of synthetic materials for whale oil led to a gradual decline in that aspect of the industry, although whales were still occasionally taken for meat.

¹⁰⁴ For a more detailed description of the history of whaling in St. Vincent see Adams (1996) and Adam (1971).

By the early 1980s the last of the Bequia whalers, Athniel Olivierre, had announced his retirement from the profession. During the latter half of the 1980s the industry was revived and its status as an aboriginal subsistence activity reconfirmed. It was widely held at the time that this was not unconnected with a large aid programme offered by the Japanese Government to promote local fisheries. With regard to support that St. Vincent has given to Japan within the I.W.C., both governments have always denied that there is any linkage, but it is regularly publicized in the British press at the time of the I.W.C. summit meetings which are held annually.

At the beginning of March 1999 a female humpback whale and her calf entered the straits between the Grenadine islands of Bequia and Mustique. They were subsequently chased and harpooned by the resident whaler on Bequia, Athniel Olivierre. Whilst the whales were being chased by Olivierre, a large number of locals joined the hunt in high speed launches. The kill took place in the shallows just off Mustique, and a local camera crew managed to film part of the slaughtering of the animals there. That evening, the events were shown on SVGTV News. As the cameras panned over the waters, the commentator remarked how the blue Caribbean Sea had turned red with blood. The atmosphere appeared to be one of great excitement, with people wading and milling around in the water whilst the whales were being butchered. It was reported that the veteran whaler had been injured by a misfiring harpoon, thus giving the report a human interest element. In the weeks that followed there appeared lively discussions in the Vincentian local press ostensibly regarding the merits of whaling. This was accentuated by the I.W.C. holding one of its annual meetings in the nearby island of Grenada, a meeting which

the representative of St. Vincent attended. But within the discussions and debates employed in St. Vincent, and I suspect elsewhere, the whaling issue was heavily overdetermined by other discursive elements. The importance of whaling as a discursive field lay not so much in its importance as an economic activity but as a locus in which conflicting and competing interests could engage.

As stated previously, St. Vincent owes its seat on the I.W.C. to its classification along with several other communities as being home to indigenous whalers. That is to say, whaling is deemed to be a customary, subsistence practice amongst these communities, and the continuance of whaling is deemed essential for the maintenance of a "traditional way of life". Unlike the other members of the I.W.C. in this section, Vincentians adopted the practice of whaling from a foreign state. This anomalous situation is recognized by the pro-whaling lobbyists whose spokesman at the time, the local Whaling Commissioner and NPD party chief, attempted to dismiss it by claiming that the I.W.C. had to call the section something. He continued that there might be Caribs living on Bequia and that they might be involved in the whaling industry (in conversation with the author). This remark is interesting in that it illustrates certain attitudes: first that "common sense" dictated that whaling was traditional and the audience accepted the fact; second, that the Caribs were the custodians or, perhaps more accurately, the ciphers through which discourses of tradition were expressed.

The first salvo in what was to become a long-running debate occurred on the 12th March 1999 when a U.S. citizen resident in Bequia wrote to several local

newspapers complaining of the slaughter and remarking on the likely deleterious effect the continuance of this practice would have on the development of tourism (The Vincentian 12.03.99). He went on to claim that many tourists on Mustique had witnessed the killing and had stated that on their return home they would actively campaign against the stance of the Vincentian government. The tone of the argument was that whaling was detrimental to the prospects of tourism, and it was therefore in the economic interest of Vincentians to oppose whaling. Whilst the writer was a non-Vincentian, there was wide support for his stance in the north of the island where I was staying. Here, tourism was seen as the catalyst which had galvanized the economies of St. Vincent's neighbours, and it appeared as the best hope for rejuvenating the local economy. There was also a strong undercurrent of feeling that the interests of a small group of NDP supporters on Bequia were being advanced at the expense of the wider population. This was not altogether surprising since Bequia was the home and constituency of the then Prime Minister, James Mitchell, and Georgetown, where these conversations took place, was the heartland of ULP support and the constituency of the leader of the opposition. The centrality of whaling to debates regarding the future of St. Vincent appeared to be not only clearly understood by many Vincentians but was viewed in party political terms. One informant predicted that this story would run for months and was subsequently proved correct.

The response to the anti-whaling letter from Bequia appeared the following week. It was notable for the vitriolic language employed even given its polemical nature. It began by attacking the hypocrisy of condemning the slaughter of whales when

millions of other animals are killed without a murmur. It then attempted to make whaling an issue of national integrity: "We in SVG will not have our policies dictated by Uncle Sam or Greenpeace" (The Vincentian 19.03.99). The activities of the anti-whaling lobby were an instance of "our increasing importation of alien values (which have) seriously undermined our society and corrupted our youth" (The Vincentian 19.03.99). Foreigners who objected to whaling were given short shrift and told to go elsewhere. Henceforth, St. Vincent would only welcome those who showed "respect for our values, customs and traditions". This was, perhaps, the most extreme response of the pro-whaling lobby and was usually roundly condemned by most people in Georgetown who expressed an opinion, even those supportive of whaling as a traditional industry. In the press the response was more muted, although one feature writer noted that the letter was regrettable in the way it characterized foreigners. Certainly, whenever whaling was introduced into a conversation, people went on to the defensive. The posture adopted ranged from outright condemnation, through embarrassment that St. Vincent practised something so uncivilized; to a defence of whaling as a Vincentian idiosyncrasy that should be respected, one instance of this being to compare it to bull-fighting in Spain. Occasionally I encountered an outright defiance of the anti-whaling lobby, which was identified with the United States, based on its ignorance of the role of whaling in Vincentian society and the true situation regarding whale populations.

Opponents of whaling overwhelmingly used pragmatic arguments regarding the benefits of economic development through tourism. Morality was not an issue that was discussed, and the concept of the whale as a highly evolved sentient creature, not a simple food resource, was never stated as a reason for refraining from whaling by anyone with whom I discussed the matter. Indeed, the writer of the first anti-whaling letter later clarified his position on this, stating that although the moral arguments were the most important, he felt that the best way to gain a response would be to appeal to the economic interests of the people (*The Vincentian* 16.04.99). Proponents of whaling did use economic grounds for defending it, citing the value of whale meat as a factor in Bequian diet. This argument was, however, always secondary to the main thrust that whaling was traditional and that attacks on it were part of a wider process of cultural imperialism. Whaling thus appears within a nexus of dichotomies: traditionalist/modernist; particular/global; and independence/imperialism.

In the months that followed, and especially at the time of the I.W.C meeting, a series of articles appeared in the press extolling the benefits of whaling. A four part article entitled "Flouting the Convention" appeared in *The Vincentian* newspaper during May. Despite the absence of the vitriol of the first letter, the main argument remained the same. That is to say, that societies could be divided between those that did and those that did not whale and that the anti-whaling lobby, whose adherents tended to belong to the latter, failed to understand the cultural significance of whaling in those societies that practised it. Whale meat as a traditional food was essential to cultural identity; "you are what you eat". Therefore to attempt to modify the eating habits of Vincentians would be tantamount to subverting Vincentian culture. In fact, during my stay on the island, I was only twice offered whale meat. The first was at a beach-front hotel which catered for tourists where, as part of a

Sunday buffet, "black fish", that is to say pilot whale, was served. The second was at a Sunday afternoon "cook" on the beach at Brighton when samples of the food were exchanged with a neighbouring group of people. Even here, though, the norm was to prepare callaloo soup as a starter followed by goat; black-fish was seen as something of a rarity, and it was offered as a gourmet delight over and above the usual fare of goat meat. But if "black fish" was viewed as a rarity even by those Vincentians who ate it, and relatively few appeared to do so, then humpback meat was clearly seen as something different again. The fact that only two could be killed a year would have made it a great rarity even on Bequia; on the mainland it appeared to play no part in the diet whatsoever. Discussions regarding what it was like to eat whale meat often entailed an elderly person relating how they had eaten it as a child, and all the people I spoke to under the age of fifty stated that they had never sampled it and did not consider it something to eat. A large proportion of those interviewed stated that they had never eaten it, and of a sample of thirty-five sixteen year-olds from Kingstown interviewed regarding what they considered traditional food, not one mentioned black fish or whale meat. Ironically, a group of men who had previously all stated that they had eaten neither, gave on one occasion, a rendition of a popular Vincentian calypso extolling the virtues of eating bread-fruit and black fish as being quintessentially Vincentian. The question of this behaviour being anomalous did not appear to arise. It was, after all, only a song. But it was a song which occurred as part of a spontaneous celebration of being "Vincie", and identification with the lyrics of the song was ensured by its context.

Whaling and the eating of whale meat are therefore polyvalent practices within which several related discourses are articulated. The vehemence with which these discourses are articulated by Vincentian subjects derives not so much from their utilitarian value but from the symbolic import that is ascribed to the practices. Debate is therefore frequently concerned with the substantive merits of the symbolic order, what is being symbolized, its worth and the appropriateness of the symbols utilized. What immediately strikes one regarding tradition in Vincentian society is the fluidity of the symbolic concepts employed; nearly all are contested and all are ambiguous. Indeed, I will argue here that ambiguity is one of the kety elements in the formation of the symbolic order. The basis for this ambiguity lies in what could be termed the neo-traditional nature of Vincentian society. The concept of neo-traditional is related in certain aspects to what Nancie Solien Gonzalez (1988) termed neoteric, but with certain qualifications. Gonzalez identifies the following characteristics which enable the neoteric society to be identified:

Varied ethnic or national origins, relative poverty and all that this implies, "openness", secularity, reliance upon technicways (replacing folkways), face to face interpersonal relationships, and a *lack* of apathy on the part of the people concerning the world and their future.

Gonzalez goes on to further associate the neoteric with consanguineal household structure and, more importantly, matrifocality, by which she means; "a general tendency to identify the mother as *the* stable figure and decision maker within the family as well as an emphasis upon her kinsmen over those of the father and his kinsmen".

Initially the term neoteric appeared particularly appropriate for the Caribs of St. Vincent, being formulated to deal with the Garifuna of Central America who regard St. Vincent as their ancestral home. In fact, there are many aspects of the term which are diametrically opposed to the position of the Caribs in St. Vincent, although it would be possible to make a slightly stronger case for designating the wider population of the island as neoteric. 105 Originally Gonzalez had attempted to designate the population she was studying with a term that would emphasize the "newness" of the society, and this is perhaps far closer to the way in which I wish to use the term neo-traditional here, with respect to Vincentian society as a whole. The most important aspect of Carib social life that precludes using the term neoteric to describe it is the perception of the Caribs themselves. Whilst many bemoan their lack of identifiable cultural traditions and artefacts, they nonetheless they have a definite sense of being Carib. This identification, as has been stated earlier, has a pronounced historical dimension. What makes them Caribs is not simply that they live in the north Windward area of St. Vincent or even Sandy Bay, the area today most associated with being Carib but that there is a perceived genealogy which links them to a pre-European past. Thus the Caribs do not construe themselves in terms that could be described as neoteric at all, quite the opposite.

The formation of modern St. Vincent as a social entity begins with the defeat of the Caribs and the total annexation of the island by the British. Prior to that, although the British laid claim to the island as a whole, that claim was contested and there

¹⁰⁵ Compare the definitions of Gonzalez with the description of the island by Rubenstein (1987) as a "culture of poverty".

was a de facto limitation on the power of the British Crown and its agents to implement the policies proposed by the Land Commission. Moreover, everything prior to the arrival of the British is, to an extent for non-Carib Vincentians at least, a form of pre-history. The important core institutions of Vincentian society such as the abolition of slavery and the advent of indentured labour were formed during the nineteenth century, albeit with antecedents in the late eighteenth century for part of the island at least. Consequently, claims of legitimization based on tradition are constrained by this time-span which constitutes the annexation by the British as a year zero. It is this formulation of a year zero which constitutes neo-tradition as a discourse within Vincentian society. Furthermore, the nature of colonial rule served to determine those social practices which were incorporated into society far more effectively in St. Vincent than many other places in the Caribbean. The problems with which "traditionalists" in St. Vincent have to wrestle concern both when and from where so-called traditional institutions were derived and to what extent they remain untarnished by both colonial government and, more especially, plantation society. This led one person to comment (in conversation with the author) that if whaling was not traditional because it was introduced by foreigners only one hundred and fifty years ago, then there was the possibility that nothing could be traditional in St. Vincent. The clear, though unstated, corollary of this was that a society without traditions could not exist: a traditionless society was, from this point of view, an oxymoron. Ergo neither time nor agency of inception were relevant in determining the "traditional" aspects of Vincentian society. Tradition in this formulation was simply an intersubjective consensus.

At roughly the same time that the whaling debate occupied the pages in 1999, a view of history was being promulgated by the main opposition party, the ULP, in its campaign for the enactment of a National Heroes Day. If whaling manifested the more vituperative aspects of the Vincentian debate on tradition, a more considered discussion of its symbolic order could be found regarding this proposed celebration of national identity. Here the symbolic content is far more overt. Furthermore, whereas the debate regarding whaling seems to be triggered sporadically, depending on catches, the debate surrounding national heroes is usually associated with the month of March. The main reason for this is that the 14th March is the date on which Chatoyer died. It was in the weeks leading up to this date that the majority of discussion took place. In 1999 there was no recognized National Heroes Day as a public holiday, although most people recognized its association with Chatoyer, and the NDP government of the day remained relatively silent on the issue. In fact, the ULP had tabled motions in parliament for the previous five years to have March 14th designated as an official National Heroes Day and public holiday. It was the ULP and its supporters who were instrumental in making it an issue. Not surprisingly, those involved in the political process were prominent amongst those listed by the ULP with both Milton Cato and Ebenezer Joshua, the two politicians who brought St. Vincent to independence, alongside George McIntosh, who is claimed to be the architect of the modern Vincentian struggle for independence, cited as candidates to be named as national heroes. These were supplemented by Hugh Mulzac and Elma Francois. Mulzac was born on Union Island in 1896 and, having emigrated to the United States at the age of seventeen, became the first black man to gain a Master's Licence to captain a ship there. Elma Francois, born in 1897,

likewise migrated, this time to Trinidad at the age of twenty two, and devoted the rest of her life to the struggle of persons of African descent to gain social justice. In September 1987, in recognition of this fact, she was proclaimed a National Heroine of Trinidad and Tobago. The fact that these two spent most of their adult lives outside St. Vincent is indicative of the important role that emigration has played in the island's history and reflects the links that are maintained with the Vincentian diaspora.

The choice of Chatoyer as the First National Hero of St. Vincent highlights the anomalies which surround national identity on the island. As the leader of the Black Caribs in the war against the British colonists, he symbolizes the quest for freedom that inspired later Vincentians to seek independence. His personal characteristics of defiance in the face of overwhelming odds and the manner by which he was able to both internally unite opposition to the British on the island and successfully play off the British and the French make him a role model for later politicians. The unseemly side of his nature, as described by Young (1795) and Shephard (1831), can easily be dismissed as the result of British imperialist bias and, if anything, serve to enhance his memory. The degree of calumny heaped upon him by his adversaries serves to reinforce his undoubted charismatic qualities. He appears in modern Vincentian tradition as a Caribbean Hannibal: a general, whose reputation is dependent on the descriptions given by his enemies and who, despite their best efforts to vilify him, emerges as an emblematic leader of his people in their struggle against an imperial power. But Chatoyer is essentially a Carib chief and a Carib hero, and his relationship to the traditions developed by Vincentian society as a whole

during the nineteenth century is tenuous. It was, after all, the antipathy of the African slaves to Carib society and their alignment with their plantation masters which is claimed, by both Young (1795) and Shephard 1831), to have been decisive in the war. Joining the Caribs, with their warlike reputation, their practice of flattening foreheads, and the harshness of their guerrilla existence in the interior of St. Vincent, was not apparently deemed by the slaves to be an option. In order for Chatoyer to become a national hero, there needed to be a general shift in historical consciousness, initially on the part of the intellectuals aligned to a party but more importantly with the wider group of organic intellectuals on the island.

Whereas most discourses of tradition in St. Vincent are centrally related to the legitimization of the present by reference to a putative past, there is a sense in which National Heroes Day seeks to legitimize the past within the value system of the present. The crucial link which articulates these two discourses is the affirmation of a continuity which is deemed to exist between their respective elements. Vincentian society in the past utilised whaling as a means of subsistence and, since modern St. Vincent is essentially the same society, whaling is a legitimate practice. Similarly, modern Vincentian society has a set of moral, social and individual values which its members, on the whole, subscribe to, and these values can be used to judge historical figures and designate those whose personal attributes exemplify such values. It would be possible to argue that whaling and National Heroes Day are merely two instances of a wider discourse of historical consciousness. However, the two debates are constituted by their articulation with the political process, and the nature of these articulations, although formally similar, is substantively different.

The issue of whaling was primarily a matter of government policy in St. Vincent and was closely associated with the NDP. Membership of the International Whaling Commission gave the opportunity for Vincentian statehood to be visibly asserted. It allowed Vincentian politicians to be seen in an active role in formulating international policy rather than as recipients of first world aid. Within the parameters of the I.W.C., St. Vincent could be seen to "take on" Britain or the United States as an equal sovereign nation. The more acerbic the exchanges between St. Vincent and its critics within the I.W.C., the more sharply the issue of national sovereignty could be brought into focus. The I.W.C. was, therefore, to the NDP what the EEC was to the conservative government under Margaret Thatcher: an arena in which national sovereignty could be asserted. What is perhaps remarkable is that, in a society which suffers from endemic polarization along political lines, 106 the opposition party, the ULP, was silent. The role of whaling and its relationship with tourism was not commented on by either the ULP itself or by its supporters in the press.

The concentration on National Heroes Day by the ULP can thus be interpreted as the means by which matters of tradition could be addressed without either aligning with the Government or alternatively adopting an anti-Government line which could be attacked as unpatriotic. One can equally argue that the whaling debate is the means by which Government supporters can make their contribution to the formulation of Vincentian tradition without following an agenda set by the ULP.

Polarization still occurs, but it is a polarization by proxy based on a non-engagement of issues. This lack of engagement illustrates the importance given by both political parties to the role of tradition in modern Vincentian society and its centrality in the formation of a national identity. The key difference is that whilst tradition for the NPD remained rooted in political opportunism and neo-tradition, the ULP firmly established it within a wider discourse of historical consciousness.

The Carib community figures to varying degrees in both of these debates. In both they offer the possibility of transcending the limitations of neo-traditional culture and thus add an element of authenticity. The Caribs, although subject to a colonial past like the rest of the population, nonetheless have a history beyond colonialism and can therefore symbolize a pristine Vincentian culture which existed, to borrow Gonsalves's (1994) term, sui generis. Ideally at least, Carib society had developed its social institutions in isolation from the colonial powers. Its customs and practices were construed as being both indigenous and particular, and it is from this that its authenticity derives, notwithstanding the long period of contact between Caribs and Europeans. This lasted from the time of Columbus to the end of the eighteenth century, during which time Carib institutions and practices were modified to accommodate the exigencies of real politik. Carib culture was not therefore constrained by direct foreign rule, nor was it derivative except and insofar as it was a variant of other indigenous cultures. An appeal to Carib tradition is thus a means by which, depending on the circumstances, arguments of invention and authenticity can be effectively countered. If a social institution can be shown to be based,

¹⁰⁶ In Georgetown this went as far as which supermarket people used, the one NDP, the other ULP.

however tenuously, on a Carib practice, its traditional provenance is thereby demonstrated. The remarks by the Vincentian Whaling Commissioner regarding the possibility of some Caribs being engaged in whaling, despite their flippancy, underline this point. 107 Indeed, it is the very strength of the notion of the Caribs as the custodians of tradition in St. Vincent that makes possible what would in other circumstances be a tongue in cheek remark. There is no evidence that the Caribs traditionally engaged in whaling, certainly not for humpbacks, and none of the early literature written by the Jesuit missions gives descriptions of it either as a subsistence technique or even mentions a single occurrence of whale hunting. But this is not an instance of the invention of Carib tradition. Rather it is the formulation of the Caribs as a cipher in the discourse of tradition; a cipher which can be loaded with different values and attributes depending on the specific project in which they are utilised. As bearers of custom, they are the traditional artefact par excellence, and their very presence bears testimony to the traditional nature of the discursive locus in which they are situated.

In his introduction to the volume *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm attempts to both define and designate the area of applicability of the concept of "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). In the first instance he attempts to demonstrate what invented tradition is not. Tradition is thus distinguished from custom since whereas the former has as its object *invariance*, the latter is more fluid and can, within certain constraints accommodate change. Custom is therefore a

¹⁰⁷ The Caribs according to Fr. Breton had a word for whale – amánna – but he does not cite whaling as a means by which Caribs obtained sustenance (Breton 1665 and Rennard 1929).

continuous interpretation of the present according to precedents set in the past, whereas tradition seeks to fix the past, presumably with reference to the needs of the present. Hobsbawm illustrates the difference by comparing what judges do custom - with the regalia and ritualized practices which accompany these proceedings tradition. A further distinction can then be made with what he terms "conventions". These, unlike traditions, are determined by practical, technical considerations and are consequently far less resistant to changes than tradition. This formulation is somewhat problematic in that there is a danger of conflating two sets of oppositions, that between conventions and traditions with that between consensual and hierarchical discourses. That is say, the relative to mutability/immutability of a practice will vary according to the regime of the particular discourse in which it is located. Hobsbawm appears not to take this factor into account. By comparing changes of type of military helmet with the costume of fox-hunting and noting the greater resistance to change of the latter compared to the former the hierarchical/consensual opposition is concealed. A far more appropriate comparison would be between regular issue uniforms (operational effectivity) and dress uniforms (ceremonial effectivity). In the latter it is the negative operational value of the context in which it is worn that allows the retention of an archaic form. Having designated what the "invention of tradition" is not, Hobsbawm can elaborate what it is: that is to say, primarily a process of formalization and ritualization. Invented traditions function, by routinization, to legitimate certain norms and practices with reference to an alleged past. They are therefore mechanisms by which certain normative claims can be substantiated. For invented traditions, these normative claims are by definition new and as such we

would expect to associate them with periods of social change. Hobsbawm(1983: 9) goes on to reduce invented traditions to three functionally specific forms:

a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities; b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and; c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.

Whilst this formulation has proved fruitful in the analysis of ethnographic and historical case studies as diverse as the May Day celebrations in North America and Europe and Polynesian land claims, it has certain drawbacks. First, the relationship of "old" traditions with "invented" ones is left uncertain. It is uncertain whether all tradition is invented at some, unspecified, point in time, or whether some tradition evolves mysteriously from customary practice. This in turn highlights the nature of the distinction between custom and tradition. If we view, however, custom and tradition as particular forms of discourse, the situation becomes a little clearer. Custom occurs where the various discourses of power, economy, kinship etc. form a coherent and relatively homogenous discursive field, each predicated on the constraints imposed by precedent. Discourses of tradition emerge, on the contrary, within a heterogeneous discursive field of competing or potentially competing discourses. Whereas custom assumes that what is done is constrained by precedent, tradition asserts that it ought to be so and selectively formulates the precedents themselves. Within a customary discursive field, the fact that a particular land claim is a reflection of the de facto political situation rather than representing a previous state of affairs does not alter the fact that it will always be construed in terms of the latter by those involved. Deviations from the norm within a customary society are, therefore, always pathological. Discourses of tradition, on the other hand, are relationally determined by their articulation with a non-traditional (primarily modernist) discourse. In post-Enlightenment Europe, invented traditions were not simply created to fill the lacunae of modern secularization but contested these spaces with both pre-existing practices and other non-traditional alternatives. To summarise, we might assert that whereas custom might be said to be monologic (in the sense that it refers only to itself), tradition is dialogic (in so far as it always exists in contra-distinction to the non-traditional), and that the former is therefore hegemonic within the social formation that it operates.

Whilst Hobsbawm and Ranger's work on the invention of tradition may form a starting point for any examination, it has, in certain respects, been superseded by further debates on the subject. Of these, one of the most relevant to the situation of the Caribs is that concerning the attempts at re-establishing Hawaiian identity. In a series of articles Jocelyn Linnekin has sought to develop an understanding of recent movements amongst what could be termed indigenous Hawaiians to re-establish aspects of their culture that they deem "traditional". (Linnekin, J. 1983, 1991, 1992 and Handler, R and Linnekin, J. 1984).

In her early work (Linnekin: 1983: 241) she remarks that "as a self-conscious category, tradition is inevitably invented". Tradition, for Linnekin, is culturally constructed in the present; It may refer to the past for its content, "but the selection of what constitutes tradition is always made in the present: the content of the past is modified and redefined according to a modern significance" (1983: 241).

Given this perspective, Linnekin examines two aspects of tradition in Hawaii: the first is the revival of Hawaiian nationalism emanating from college campuses and urban centres; the second is the lifestyle of certain rural taro-growing native Hawaiians. In a manner reminiscent of Hugh Trevor-Roper's (1983) demolition of the highland tradition in Scotland, she demonstrates that whole tracts of what is normally deemed "traditional" by present day Hawaiians, are themselves relatively modern inventions, for example the substitution of red salmon for *kumu* fish at luau feasts.

The question of the authenticity of tradition in terms of the activities of Western scholars was broached by Linnekin in a collaborative work with Handler (Handler and Linnekin 1984). Here, the constructionist perspective that Linnekin advocates becomes more fully enunciated. She questions whether tradition refers "to a core of inherited cultural traits whose continuity and boundedness are analogous to a natural object, or must tradition be understood as a wholly symbolic object" (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 273). For Linnekin, the former, naturalistic approach presents us with two problems: firstly, culture and tradition are seen as bounded objects; secondly, they necessarily have an essence apart from our interpretation of them. However, throughout both this and her previous article (Linnekin 1983, Handler and Linnekin 1984), Linnekin consistently adopts this stance on Hawaiian ethnicity, or at least, so it appears. Part of the problem with her argument is that she appears to be presenting a false dichotomy between objective history and tradition. The ineluctable fact that follows from Linnekin's arguments is that history, as anything other than a purely ideological (in its negative sense) practice is

impossible. The basis for this stems from a confusion of the concepts of "tradition" and "the past". The past can be known in many ways, such as modern historical and historiographical research, whilst tradition is a particular form that discourses concerned with the past can take; they are, though, ontologically, separate.

The distinction between Linnekin's own "constructionist" approach and the "naturalist" positions that she criticizes is most fully developed in her paper "On the Theory and Politics of Cultural Construction in the Pacific" (Linnekin 1992). Here she discusses the use of the concept of tradition within the wider debates surrounding "postmodernism" and "deconstruction". That which she had hitherto described in terms of naturalistic analyses of tradition, she here confronts in terms of "the general dissatisfaction in the social sciences with positivist and objectivist approaches to culture and related concepts in Western scholarship" (Linnekin 1993: 249). She rightly concludes that the postmodernist debate has at its core a critique of the concept of narrative authority. "Marxist and anti-colonialist objectivists claim the authority to identify colonial and/or class oppression and domination and tend to analyse contemporary cultural representation in terms of a hegemonic, mystifying function" (Linnekin1992: 254). This, however, is to over-simplify the situation. Recent work on tradition in Hawaii from what could be termed a Marxist objectivist perspective has successfully considered the systemic nature of tradition within a wider nexus of current beliefs and practices without reducing it to a mystifying function. 108 Furthermore, whilst she correctly cites Gramsci that "scholarly narratives can be seen as both embedded in and contributing to the maintenance of the dominant group's hegemony" (Linnekin1992: 250), she omits to mention that Gramsci had a clear concept of counter-hegemonic revolutionary scholarship emanating from organic intellectuals as well. In the end, despite her own criticisms of objectivist analyses, amongst which this thesis must be numbered, Linnekin bemoans the sterility of the postmodernist position. She quotes Haraway's remark that "One story is not as good as another....Attention to narrative is not instead of attention to science, but is emphasized in order to understand a particular kind of scientific practice that remains intrinsically story-laden – as a condition of doing good science" (Haraway 1989 cited in Linnekin: 1993: 261). Thus whilst Linnekin's views on the nature of tradition in Hawaii are of interest, they do not form the basis of a serious critique of the position taken here. This reflexive attitude is particularly pertinent to Vincentians' own conceptions of their past. The thesis of van Sertima that the Black Caribs originated not from slavery but from Abu Bakr's expedition, is a case in point. Whilst from a constructivist perspective it represents the formulation of a "new" tradition, consistent with a radical rupture with "colonialist" history which signifies the emergence of new forms of sub-altern historiography, it remains from an objectivist position deeply flawed. The question as to whether it is necessary to highlight these flaws is problematic from the constructivist perspective, precisely because it fails to politicize its own position. Linnekin rightly notes that taking a position on subjects that have entered the political arena is fraught with

¹⁰⁸ See Friedman (1992) where an analysis of tradition is given in terms of its articulation with modernity within the wider capitalist system.

difficulties for academics, but only for those who have previously imagined that they are somehow outside this arena themselves. The criticisms made here of van Sertima's thesis, and by implication those in St. Vincent who promulgate it, must, on the evidence, be made. Not to do so would not be an act of solidarity with Vincentian intellectuals, but a betrayal: since ignoring the evidence would constitute an abrogation of their status as intellectuals.

It is ironic that the Caribs see their own situation as totally divorced from traditional life. Indeed, there is a mood of embarrassment amongst many of them regarding the degree to which they have become separated from their cultural heritage. One Carib remarked to me at the time that although there was a picture of Chief Chatoyer on the way in to Sandy Bay, few of the children at the school there would be able to say much more than that he was a Carib chief. The need felt by Fraser (2001) to publish his pamphlet on Chatoyer similarly bears out this sentiment. That, of course, is not to say that people did not express opinions regarding him or were not able to relate stories regarding his exploits, often associated with certain landmarks. However, there was relatively little local knowledge of him that had not been either formulated or edited by the British in the nineteenth century. An example of this can be found in the death of Chatoyer. According to Shephard (1831), Chatover was killed in single combat at the hands of Colonel Leith, the officer in command of an attack on the heights overlooking Kingstown. Leith was later buried in the Anglican cathedral in Kingstown and a memorial to that effect was established there. This version of events was challenged by Kirby and Marten (1986) in their influential book on the Black Caribs. Importantly, the basis for their dispute with the traditional version of events was not an alternative Carib tradition but an analysis of the inconsistencies within Shepherd's text itself. Corroborative evidence came to light with the publication of a manuscript written by John Anderson chronicling the period of the Apprenticeship¹⁰⁹ which notes that Chatoyer was in fact bayoneted by five soldiers (McDonald 2001). What is at issue here is that there is no surviving Carib account which Kirby and Marten could call upon. Where they do use oral traditions, such as that regarding Young Island's nomenclature, these appear to derive from the British planters rather than the Caribs themselves.

Tradition for the Caribs of St. Vincent is therefore something to be rediscovered rather than a pre-existing cultural heritage. The rediscovery of this tradition has taken two main forms: the one historical, with a reinterpretation and assessment of existing documents, including those from non-British Europeans that had hitherto been closed to them; the other anthropological, with the renewal of links with other related groups in the Caribbean, most notably the Garifuna of Central America. This latter has thrown into sharp relief the fact that *being Carib* is often a subjective orientation underpinned by genetic characteristics¹¹⁰. It lacked, however, the material and cultural manifestations with which communities are usually identified. The most important of these social manifestations is their own language which none now speak. Indeed, the language appears to have died out in the last century

109 The Apprenticeship was the period between 1834 and 1838 when the previous slave population were no longer in servitude but were not yet free.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of Carib and Black Carib genetics see Crawford 1984.

and today there are not even a few phrases or words that are remembered, as occurs in the case of the Carib reserve in Dominica. This lack of language as part of social identity was highlighted by a renewed acquaintance with other Carib groups, most notably the Garifuna of Belize. The process by which the Vincentian Caribs sought to reaffirm their historic ties with other related communities proved to be the means by which their consciousness of alienation from their own culture became heightened. Vincentian Caribs appeared painfully aware that, in retaining a miniscule part of their ancestral homeland, they had paid a price by losing their culture, whereas those who had left had maintained theirs.

In a sense, this inversion partly explains the super ordinate role of land and domicile in the formation of Carib identity. To be a Carib is to live in a certain locality. Outside of that locality Carib identity, if not totally lost, is certainly not asserted. One informant, when asked if there were any Caribs living in High Wycombe, replied, "Yes, but they aren't Caribs any more. Once they're there they are just Vincentians." In practice, the relationship between domicile and identity is far more fluid. A large number of factors are involved, some of which are purely objective such as distance and means of access to the community so that communication can be maintained; others are part of a set of dispositions which determine whether communication or simply recognition of Carib identity is maintained and/or asserted. An example of this latter might be those organic intellectuals, such as Nelcia Robinson, who have moved to other islands and actively campaign for indigenous rights.

Whilst reclaiming some aspects of Carib culture is deemed important by many people, in practice it is widely recognized that this can only take place within the constraints imposed by both their own and St. Vincent's economic situation. In order to gain access to government funding, projects need to be justified both in terms of likely success in their own terms and possible financial returns. As a consequence, attempts at cultural development were generally couched in terms of their potential for attracting tourist dollars. This is not to say that tourism is the driving force behind Carib cultural regeneration; rather it is that the tourist industry is seen to offer the means by which these aspirations can be achieved. The aim is never simply to maximize tourist dollars since this is perceived as a recipe for uncontrolled development which will sweep away the last vestiges of their distinct identity. Having said that, the idea of such a development taking off in such an area, adjacent to an active volcano and remote from the existing tourist centres, is as remote as Sandy Bay is from Mustique. The idea that tourists should come to Sandy Bay to spend their holidays is never mooted, and at the moment the problems involved with mass tourism are not even considered. However, in recent years some members of the Carib community in the north of the island have become increasingly aware of how other indigenous peoples have utilised tourism for their own purposes. More pertinently, they have recognized how indigenous island history and culture have been utilised on other Caribbean islands even where there is no established indigenous group; such schemes are now found in both Grenada and St. Lucia. The core aspects of such schemes that are of interest to Vincentian Caribs concern the creation of museums and craft workshops which would serve as material foci around which a process of cultural re-education could

take place. The establishment of a museum documenting not only the Island Caribs but the earlier Amerindian cultures of the island is the most frequently expressed desire. If built in the form of a traditional Carib carbet and decorated with bamboo and roseau, a native wood, it would provide a visible link with the past. From an economic perspective it would also furnish a further site for visiting tourists and encourage them to visit the Carib community.

At present, tourism in the north of the island is largely restricted to day trips to La Soufrière, the active volcano which stands over four thousand feet high, or boat trips to the Falls of Balleine. These trips usually last one day and involve a long hike. At present, these are no facilities for a stop-over in the north of the island and, with the exception of the sale of a few drinks and snacks in Georgetown, little economic benefit accrues to those people living in the immediate area. The fact of the existence of this form of tourism, however, makes possible commercial development within the Carib community. Along with a museum, an overnight hostel has been suggested, as has been the creation of a model Carib village. The latter would include a rest area complete with hammocks and a place where refreshments and possibly craft objects could be purchased. In a sense, such an establishment might create as many problems at a cultural level as it solved at the level of economic opportunity. Essentially the Carib community would need to reexamine its own history and, more importantly, the way it had arrived at that history. It would also involve the community in making what could be termed editorial decisions regarding their history. The question of what should represent Carib culture is one rarely asked at present but such an undertaking would make it

necessary. At present, too, many Caribs are unsure of certain aspects of their past. Much of the craft production in the area is the result of modern initiatives to set up small scale industry and derives, as in the case of the Bamboo Craft Centre in Orange Hill, from techniques taught by outside agencies (in the case of the B.C.C. by the Taiwanese Government). There exists already, though, an idea of what an indigenous craft should be like deriving from the expectations of tourists, whose own expectations have been formed by a general conception of Amerindian artefacts from other islands and the mainland. But if craft production aims to create a material focus for cultural regeneration then it needs to transcend its purely financial targets. That is not to say that there are two separate agendas here. Economic development is not seen as an alternative to cultural development. On the contrary, economic development through tourism is seen as a prerequisite for developing the Carib community with its own distinct cultural heritage.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to illustrate how the constitution of "the Carib" within European discourses of history, philosophy and anthropology confronts the people of the north windward area of St. Vincent. I have argued that these discourses are in a complex articulation with attempts at self-identification by present-day Caribs and that they are not usefully examined in terms of a simple relation of structure and agency. This articulation can be summarized in a few frequently expressed phrases, as follows. "They say we were cannibals", that is to say, here is a sense in which the Caribs consider themselves to be interpellated by a discourse of European alterity which marks them as the "radical other". They are, according to this discourse, what Europeans are not: savage, uncivilized, and anthropophagous, the latter being the primal signifier that denotes all the others. "Chatoyer was a Christian man", where Christianity appears as the boundary marker between savagery and civilization and denotes the thorough-going internalisation of European values and the denial of aspects of history which do not conform to modern Carib concepts of self-hood. "We have no culture of our own!", this final paradigmatic phrase denotes the estrangement that Caribs express in their attempts to reconstitute their indigenous identity, for example, through association with other Amerindian groups

and at conferences dealing with indigenous issues. Whilst it is undoubtedly true that contemporary Caribs are attempting to deal with these issues, they are not amenable to easy resolution.

These ethnographic formulations express, in their own way, the problem that Marx presented us with in his famous statement from the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. (Marx 1968: 68)

This statement has been the starting point for an analysis of how Carib attempts at self-identification, as opposed to the identity ascribed to them by Vincentian society at large, are constrained and circumscribed by what could prosaically be termed the weight of historical discourse, or in Marx's own more florid style as "the tradition of all dead generations (that) weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." The thesis has sought to show this discourse to be highly repetitive, with similar tropes appearing over several centuries. This repetitive quality is reminiscent of the structure of myth as elaborated by Lévi-Strauss (1967). Historical discourse here operates in the space vacated by myth within Vincentian civil society, reiterating the themes which constitute the Carib as a specific subjectivity. But inherent in this process of constitution, this fixing of Carib exo-identity, there is a dual perspective. The Carib stands not so much in contradistinction to the British but rather to the Negro as slave and new citizen. The denial of slavery is a trope still employed by Caribs today when they reaffirm their own auto-identity. It is a necessary denial

since it occurs in response to claims of Carib wildness, their lack of the European attributes of civilization admired especially by "respectable" Vincentian society, to borrow Rubenstein's (1987a) term. But just as the price of denial of slavery by the historical Carib as hero was suicide, so too for Carib society, taken as a whole, it was a cultural extinction. The ambivalence of the attitude of the wider Vincentian community to the impact of colonialism, the horrors of slavery and the benefits of modernity, are transposed on to the Carib subject who, having denied the former, was consequently refused the latter. The extinction/suicide has, however, left two signifiers of the presence of the subject as non-subject or, to use Lacan's (1977) term, barred subject: phenotype and landscape. As Caribness is inscribed into the features of the subject's body so too is it projected out on to the terrain in which they continue to live. They remain wild men in a wild land. In that sense La Soufrière symbolically becomes the source of an identity that defies the attempts of modernity to control it. It both maintains the Caribs as a people apart, since having been driven into its inhospitable shadow few others follow, and reiterates the permanence of the Caribs as opposed to those who would seek to dominate the landscape. The collapse of the ventures of Alex Porter and the Barnards, who controlled much of the area throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, thus stands in binary opposition to the Caribs, whose position in the north of the island is construed as being consonant with the immutable but volatile nature of the landscape itself.

Carib phenotype and Carib landscape are thus the signifiers from which autonomous Carib subjectivity can counterpose the interpellated subjectivity of

colonial and neocolonial discourse. These two signifiers could perhaps be considered as an expression of what Dolar (1993) sees as the limit of interpellation.

Far from emerging as the outcome of interpellation, the subject emerges only when and in so far as interpellation liminally fails. (cited by Žižek in Butler et al 2000: 115)

For Vincentian Caribs, these two signifiers, already identified, mark the limit of this liminal failure. They form the twin loci around which Carib subjectivity crystallizes despite the interpellation of colonialist discourse. But that is not to say that these two factors are internal to an essentialist Carib consciousness. On the contrary, it is their very reality/externality, their object-like appearance, which pre-empts attempts on the part of a discursive "hailing" and allows a space in which denial/auto-identification can take place. It is this reality, reality in the sense that Caribs perceive these signifiers as unmediated concrete forms, which pre-exist all attempts at identification of these two signifiers and which preclude the discursive extinction/suicide of the Caribs.

We have also argued that this colonialist discourse of Carib subjectivity operates within the hegemonic form of ideology in Vincentian civil society. That is to say, the tropes that are used to identify Caribness, the attributes that delineate what it is to be Carib for non-Caribs, have been internalized by Vincentian civil society as natural. Here, landscape and phenotype are construed as the outward markers of a discursively constructed essence and underwrite rather than undermine the latter. Terrain and bodily form combine to confirm a difference that has already been

constructed in a historiographical tradition. But unlike the general form of European discourse, which through a sleight-of-hand was able to shift the symbolic form of the Carib to new islands in the Pacific Ocean, the specific historical tradition of St. Vincent was confronted by these concrete manifestations of a Carib subjectivity, and these manifestations could not be accommodated easily within the social world constructed by that tradition. This ambivalence of the Caribs, as here and yet not here, as being of the island and yet excluded from island society, as being subjects without agency, was to become crucial in the formation of a Vincentian discourse of identity, since this very ambivalence served to undermine the authority of the historical tradition of European neo-colonialism. The Caribs thus came symbolically to embody a radical disjuncture between the authoritative, hegemonic discourse of historical tradition and lived experience.

Throughout this dissertation we have utilized various concepts that derive from the work of Foucault. In particular we have sought to examine the way that certain discursive formations, to use his term (Foucault 1967), established a conceptualisation of Caribness in the form of a radical alterity. Following the paradigms given by Foucault (1970 and 1972) we sought to demarcate the specific genealogy of this discursive formation and to chart its development in relation to the island of St. Vincent. In this we have not followed other ethno-historians of the Caribs such as Peter Hulme, Neil Whitehead or Philip Boucher who have tended to consider the Island Caribs as a whole as the object of their study and who have consequently have placed greater emphasis on the early encounters of Europeans with Caribs following the voyage of Columbus. My own problematic is more

concerned with the historical consciousness of the Caribs of present-day St. Vincent and, as such, focuses on those aspects of Carib history which are either considered as being of relevance by modern Vincentians or can be seen to have contemporary resonance from an ethnographic perspective. As a consequence, this thesis does not and indeed could not provide a detailed examination of Vincentian or Carib history as such but has sought rather to ascertain certain trajectories within specific historical discourses. Within these parameters I have thus attempted to investigate the historical context in which certain ideas regarding what Caribness is and who Caribs are, came to he articulated. In addition, I have further tried to establish the specific articulation of Caribs as subjects within the emerging scientific discourse of the Enlightenment, noting how moral and aesthetic judgment of them was contingent upon the particular conceptual context in which they were positioned.

Given the preceding argument it would have been relatively easy to be led into an "iron cage" of discursive determinism in which human agency in general, and Carib agency in particular, became irrelevant. Despite the focus of this thesis on the structural as opposed to humanist side of the equation, this was never its intention. Rather, it was to examine the limits of structural/discursive formation and to demonstrate that these limits were internal to the formations themselves and that agency was a necessary aspect of this liminal failure. It was in order to achieve an understanding of how ideological forms could be both constitutive of and constituted in human activity that I have attempted to consider these ideological formations as being hegemonic. As we have seen, hegemony is not a concept that is alien to modern Carib or Vincentian consciousness. It was, in fact, an overt

reference by an informant to western cultural hegemony that led me to reappraise how I should interpret statements regarding the relationship of Caribs to wider Vincentian society, of Caribs to the authoritative traditional history and, indeed, Vincentians to the modern and increasingly post-modern world of globalization and regionalization.

Whilst concepts such as hegemony and globalization provided broad conceptual contexts in which to theorize the position of the Caribs within Vincentian civil society, they did not seem to be adequate to address the particular ethnographic situation which confronted me. The question that constantly confronted me was rather: "Why were the historical traditions and their modern variants seen as so problematic by Caribs and indeed other Vincentians themselves?" It was in order to answer this question that I began to consider the interpellatory characteristics of these discourses.

The use of interpellation as a theoretical concept expounded by Althusser (1973) would have been highly problematical within the particular ethnographic context of St. Vincent where I was working in 1999. Althusser had been concerned with the reproduction of systems of domination and had constructed his *problematique* in functionalist terms. As a consequence of this, although he was able to sketch out the interrelationships between the state and civil society in terms of the "ideological state apparatus" and the "repressive state apparatus", he created a virtually static model. This model was not only incapable of dealing with the problem of agency but furthermore appeared to preclude change as anything other than

epiphenomenal contingency. Furthermore, as previously mentioned in the introduction, Althusser merely sketched the outline of a theory of the constitution of the subject without elaborating it in detail. From the late 1970s, Althusser's theory of interpellation, along with the rest of his contributions to philosophical Marxism, fell into desuetude. However, in recent years, the specific problematic that he addressed has again become the focus of academic attention.

In The Sublime Object of Ideology (Žižek 1989) considers the Althusserian concept of interpellation from a psychoanalytic perspective. Althusser is introduced at the very beginning of this work in opposition to Lacan regarding the constitution of the subject, in contradistinction to the opposition of Habermas (1985) to Foucault. Zižek's (1989: 7) overt aims are "to serve as an introduction to some of the fundamental concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis", "to accomplish a kind of return to Hegel" and "to contribute to the theory of ideology via a reading of some well-known classical motifs". For Žižek (1989), both Habermas and Foucault operate, in very different ways, a non-problematic constitution of the subject whereas Althusser represents a fundamental rupture from this perspective, insisting, "on the fact that a certain cleft, a certain fissure, misrecognition, characterizes the human condition as such." It is precisely this misrecognition which, Žižek claims, makes interpellation possible. It is a "certain short circuit" that gives an illusion of déjà vu that makes possible the acceptance of the hailing, a possibility which Althusser himself enunciated in his proposition that "individuals are always/already subjects". But it is precisely this proposition which Žižek undermines in his quest for a pre-interpellated subject, a subject which he finds within Lacanian

psychoanalysis. This subject can only exist insofar as interpellation fails, a point that Althusser overlooks, but at the same time this failure is always relative. Interpellation is always contingent and partial rather than absolute since, in order to accomplish absolute interpellation, ideological discourse would require an absolute apprehension of reality itself. It is precisely this lack, this failure on the part of an interpellating discourse to appropriate reality, which provides the already/always subject with the possibility of refusing the discursive hailing, and the liminal failure of interpellation has its basis therefore in concrete perceptual reality. The thesis has focused precisely on the articulation of this reality with the interpellation of Caribs as subjects.

I have also sought to demonstrate that a non-literal reading of Althusser's concept of interpellation is necessary for its utility as a theoretical tool to be realized. Thus while there are marked differences of emphasis between Žižek's interpretation and that of Judith Butler (2000) both predicate their arguments on a presumed non-interpellated subject. Indeed we have sought to show that subject formation is always/ever present and does not depend on an a priori condition of guilt and that, on the contrary, self-recognition of guilt describes the liminal failure of interpellation. To return to Althusser's (1971) example, the criminal does not turn round when hailed, since he is conscious of the threat of the law, so he ignores the call, pretends not to hear, and only responds as a last resort by attempting to flee. Flight is the true interpellated response of guilt. It is the innocent, open to the suggestion, who stops, turns and asks "Who me?" We have argued that certain specific historical tropes have for the Caribs an interpellatory function and that

these tropes, which can be either contested or accepted, are part of a discursive practice of subjectification whose genealogy we have tried to trace during the course of this thesis. It is thus the nature of these tropes, which were originally constructed within the discursive formations of the Enlightenment, which has necessitated the long discussions of historical material in this thesis. It is precisely because these tropes do not appear as being historically constituted within specific discursive formations but, on the contrary, present themselves as naturally occurring, springing like Pallas Athene from the heads of the Caribs themselves, which makes the genealogical deconstruction of these tropes essential for an understanding of contemporary struggles for self-identification.

I have argued that the processes by which the Caribs were incorporated into the colonial state sought to deprive them of a distinct cultural identity but, by locating them in a specific and relatively inaccessible part of the island, which was historically associated with the armed anti-colonialist struggle, allowed a new ethnic-topographic identity to be formed. This erasure of cultural specificity in the case of the Caribs was to form the blueprint for the incorporation of all other ethnic groups within island society. This incorporation in homogeneity is recognized by modern Vincentians as a lacuna in the fabric of their culture and is expressed in phrases such as "Where are the Hindu temples or Mosques in St. Vincent?" But this feeling of total cultural subjectification was not considered as being confined to marginal or minority groups. Informants occasionally made comparisons with other islands such as St. Lucia, where a local French Creole dialect has been retained, conscious of the lack of any traces of the island's turbulent role in European colonial struggles.

I have attempted to show how in times of crisis, such as following an eruption, Vincentian Caribs reasserted their sense of identity by forming action sets and that, despite the hopes of the colonial administration that the Caribs would somehow disappear, these crises served to activate a latent agency derived from Carib consciousness of their auto-subjectivity. That is to say, these crises acted as a trauma that made transparent the limitations of hegemonic interpellation. It has been argued that they thus served to form an arena in which a sense of Caribness could articulate with the wider society. In the past, though, such reassertion appears to have subsided once the immediate perceived threat had passed and did not operate as a stable focus around which Carib subjectivity could coalesce. One of the main questions that this thesis has therefore attempted to raise has been the steady development of notions of Caribness in the period since the last eruption of La Soufrière in 1979. The attempt to form putatively enduring social institutions based on a sense of Carib community indicates that, in some way, a threshold has been crossed and that the emergent Carib subject can constitute him/herself within Vincentian civil society. The key element in this constitution would, I have argued, derive from the appropriation of a wider discourse of indigenous rights that supplies a regional, if not global context in which such a constitution can be located. For present day Caribs active in the resurrection of their specificity as subjects, such discourses provide both the context in which claims can be made and a legitimisation of those aims in universalistic terms. Indigenous claims of this sort do not merely engage what is considered as a hegemonic discourse of neo-colonialism, as one Vincentian described it, but seek to undermine that discourse from within. It uses the concepts of modern liberal democracy, upon which this hegemonic form is based, to mount a critique of globalizing forms.

I have argued that it was the coincidence of a series of further traumatic events that created the conditions in which concepts regarding Carib self-identification could crystallize. These events were: the sale of the land associated with the Caribs to the Danes; a heightened awareness of indigenous issues in the Americas, itself precipitated by the advent of the Columbus quincentenary; and the ongoing concern of the Vincentian state to constitute its own identity as a nation. These three factors, although relatively autonomous of each other, nonetheless created what could he described as a positive feedback loop. The deconstruction of colonial history, undertaken by what could be termed the organic intellectuals of the island, provided the basis for an ideological critique of the dominant political party, the NDP. Associated as it was with the establishment of neoliberal policies, themselves identified with institutions such as the WTO, IMF and World Bank, the NDP could he portrayed as following a policy that further entrenched neocolonialism in St. Vincent. The adoption of Chatoyer as a national hero exploited both the need for a focus for national identity in a post-colonial context and provided an institutional date around which such issues could be raised on a regular basis. The issue of land for the Caribs was therefore transposed from the level of local politics to the site on which issues of national integrity and identity could be played out.

Despite the creation of a quasi-institutional "Carib Community", the land reform of the late eighties and early nineties has not been an unqualified success. Problems with the form of tenancy, inadequate capital resources and lack of expertise on the part of some agricultural workers are frequently expressed causes of concern and have combined to induce a feeling of apathy amongst many of the residents of Sandy Bay. Indeed, on several occasions, regret was expressed that the Danes had not been allowed to develop the Orange Hill Estate, since the employment thus obtained would have provided greater material security than small-holding, subject as it is to the vicissitudes of the market. Whilst land reform provided a focus for Carib self-identification, through the development of autonomous Carib institutions, the resulting land-holding scheme has failed to provide a springboard for political action. To a large extent this political failure is due to the relatively small size of the Carib population, which necessitates their attachment to existing Vincentian political organizations. This constraint on the development of Carib political action has led to a drift of some prominent members of the community away from local into national politics. The importance of the campaign for land reform lies rather in the creation of a focus around which Caribs could organize and exert agency. Having thus established themselves in relation to this single political/economic issue, a framework was created that allowed the Caribs to further elaborate and question their relationship to the majority population of the island and other indigenous groups in the Americas. These factors and a renewed interest in local history, and particularly the Carib struggle for independence, remain key elements for the maintenance of a distinct Carib identity.

The reintegration of the Caribs into wider Vincentian civil society has, though, not been without a cost. Whilst their relative isolation was widely held to be responsible for the poor material quality of life for the residents of the north of the island, it was also held to have enabled the Caribs to avoid the danger of miscegenation and cultural dilution, which have, from the beginning of the nineteenth century at least, been seen as the harbingers of the extinction of the Caribs as a distinct social group on the island. Whilst it is certainly true that assertions of pure descent are spoken of with great pride by some and their mixed ancestry seen as a weakness by others, we have tried to demonstrate how genotypical purity is being displaced by a cultural attachment to "being Carib" based on a more selective genealogical perspective which can be confirmed by phenotypical traits. Today a person can assert their Caribness and only point to physical features as confirmation rather than having their identity inscribed purely on the basis of those features. Hence, nowadays, assertions of Caribness can be made independently of physical attributes. Indeed, views on miscegenation tended to be voiced far more frequently by older people who had lived through a long period of relative isolation and who expressed concern regarding the passing of the old certainties of life in the north of the island. It has also been shown that there is some evidence, usually gleaned from casual remarks and body language, that similar sentiments were felt, though less often overtly stated, by young male Caribs. Certainly male Caribs retained an awareness of the high status of Carib women within the aesthetics of Vincentian sexuality and saw non-Carib interest in what they considered to be their women as a further form of oppression. I have argued that in the long term, the cultural signification of Caribness as belonging to the land and the island as a whole, is increasingly replacing perceived racial traits in the construction of Caribness and that this trend will lead not to the diminution of the Caribs as a distinct group on the island but

will allow them to consolidate their position as custodians of a specifically Vincentian national identity. Whilst it is therefore clear that the issue of land reform provided the opportunity by which Carib agency could be reasserted, I have argued that it is equally evident that the particular forms through which Carib agency was expressed, themselves severely circumscribed the possibilities of that agency. The changes to the material conditions of life in the north of St Vincent, which resulted from the reassertion of Carib rights, have simultaneously had effects which serve to strengthen the community, for instance the greater access to media and communication with other indigenous groups, and weakened it through, for example, the development of disparities in property ownership and access to capital. Processes of what is generally termed globalization can therefore be seen to be conducive to both homogenisation and diversification.

The principle aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate how tropes, which developed as part of a European discourse of alterity and initially designated the Caribs in terms of radical otherness, are the basic material with which modern Carib identification is constructed. In that sense these tropes are reconstituted and rearticulated in new combinations in what Lévi-Strauss (1966) has termed *bricolage*. The destruction of Carib culture and language on St. Vincent in the nineteenth century created what could be termed a *tabula rasa* on which modern Vincentian Caribs have been forced to re-establish their identity. The lack of detailed oral history and traditions, and having to rely on colonial interpretations of the past, has produced a situation in which the colonialist version of events can only be challenged from within. What Europeans have recorded of the Caribs formed part

of a discourse that had as its subject the Europeans themselves, and it was from the detritus of this discourse that modern-day Caribs have been forced to reconstruct their own historical genealogy. It is in this sense that, hitherto at least, Vincentian Carib attempts at the reconstitution of their own identity resembles *bricolage*. They are, as Lévi-Strauss (1966: 18-19) noted, like the cube of oak which:

(c)ould be a wedge to take up for the inadequate length of a plank of pine or it could be a pedestal In one case it would serve as an extension, in the other as a material. But the possibilities always remain limited by the particular history of each piece and by those of its features which are already determined by the use for which it was originally intended or the modifications it has already undergone for other purposes.

These discourses of alterity constituted the Caribs in an infantile relationship to the European. They designated the Carib as childlike with both the positive and negative connotations that this implies, implications which themselves served as the rationale and justification for subjectification. This discourse based on a human development cycle metaphor had its corollary in orientalism where other non-European peoples were constituted in senility and/or decrepitude (see Said 1978). The subjugation of the Caribs of St.Vincent marks the end of the Caribbean as a locus in which discourses of infantile alterity could be played out. Henceforth, the dominant theme was to revolve around the plantation economy with questions of slavery and emancipation, which evoke a post-Enlightenment consciousness. Ironically the final demise of Carib resistance was to coincide with the establishment of alternative forms of sugar production on continental Europe that undermined the profitability of the plantation system.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the discoveries of Cook and Bougainville in the Pacific had rendered the native populations of the Caribbean anomalous. Dwindling in numbers and confined to isolated enclaves, they were lost in a shift of the discursive gaze of Europe from South Sea Islands to South Pacific. This shift was both far-reaching and comprehensive. It encompassed such diverse characteristics as the aesthetics of the native woman and anthropophagy. It was expressed in the art and literature of both nineteenth and twentieth centuries and spilled over into the cultural artefacts of modem capitalism in its depictions of paradise on earth in advertising.

The full influence of this shift is still apparent in anthropological discourses of tradition and identity, which figure far more largely in the literature of the Pacific than the Caribbean. The work of writers such as Linnekin (1983) clearly designate tropes that are as appropriate for both present-day and historical Carib society as they are for their respective ethnographic subjects. The effect of this shift has been a failure on the part of current anthropological literature, which is too often tied to geographical location to be able to identify its object as discursively constructed. To comprehend the changes that are taking place amongst Vincentian Caribs, it is necessary to go beyond the perceived "objective" condition of the Caribbean and theorize their relationship in terms of the discursive fields in which they are constituted and constitute themselves.

Paradoxically the very historical and literary practices which made the Caribs paradigmatic of the "Savage", that is to say the richness and detail of the historical

and literary narratives, also provide the means by which modem day Caribs and their sympathisers have been able to demonstrate their enduring influence on European culture and, moreover, furnishes the material with which new forms of identification can be fashioned. The critique of ethno-historical analysis of the stereotypes of the colonial venture and its apologists is therefore a means by which modern-day Vincentian Caribs are able to reappropriate their history. Thus although this thesis does not purport to provide a comprehensive account of Vincentian history, nor a complete description of contemporary Vincentian society, nonetheless it provides something of a basis for such an investigation.

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